QUESTIONING IN WRITING CENTRE CONSULTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Writing centre consultations are described as one-on-one, tutor-guided interactions driven by institutional and disciplinary objectives and individual students' needs. An important component in these writing centre interactions is tutors’ use of questions as part of tutoring strategies. Tutors use questions to direct students towards a better understanding or towards an appropriate answer and to encourage students to ask questions in order to motivate learning and sustain their participation in the consultation. Previous research predominantly focused on what questions disclose about the role of tutors and how they are used to control dialogue throughout the consultation. A lack of research exists regarding the specific types and functions of questioning strategies used in writing consultations. This study examines the functions of the different questioning strategies used by tutors in writing consultations and how these strategies promote students’ engagement and learning. The naturally occurring conversations of participants in writing centre consultations were recorded and transcribed. Two cycles of coding organised the data according to predetermined coding schemes, based on theories in pragmatics (specifically that of micro- and macropragmatics), for a grammatical (textual) analysis and pragmatic analyses in order to examine interrelationships between the different coding types and functions and the tutors’ illocutionary intents. The grammatical analysis examined the declarative and interrogative grammatical structures of tutor questions. Interrogative questions were coded as either yes/no or wh-questions. Consultants primarily used yes/no questions to elicit yes/no responses from students when discussing specific ideas in students’ writing and used wh-questions to elicit specific information concerning an aspect or concept of a student’s writing. The pragmatic analyses included micro- and macropragmatic analyses to establish consultants’ illocutionary intents when asking questions. The questions were identified as Directive, Presumptive, Politeness, Information-gap, Leading and Scaffolding questions. The macropragmatic analysis examined the conversational, physical and psychological acts (emotions, e.g., laughter) guiding tutor questions to determine the extra-linguistic context guiding tutor questions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and focus of the research

In order to counter the formal role of teacher-student in writing centre tutorials and to promote the role of supportive peer or collaborator, writing centre tutors are encouraged to use questions as a key method of instruction. As a result, questioning has been established as one of the most important strategies in structuring conversation and facilitating learning in writing centre tutorials (Brooks 1991; Harris 1992; Limberg, Moday & Dyer 2016; McAndrew & Reigstad 2001; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014). Tutors use questions to direct students towards a better understanding or towards an appropriate answer (Morrison 2008: 11) and also encourage students to ask questions in order to motivate learning and sustain students' participation in the consultation (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 38). The aim of this dissertation is to examine the different strategies of questioning in writing centre consultations to determine how questioning techniques promote student engagement and learning. The context of the research is broadly the South African higher education sector and, more specifically, the Writing Centre at the University of Pretoria.

This chapter provides a background to the study which comprises an overview of the broader educational context and the local setting in which the research is situated. This description highlights the real-world problems that underpin writing centre pedagogy and research. A brief overview is given of questioning as a strategy in writing centre consultations to further contextualise the study. The empirical research conducted is motivated and underpinned by the gaps in previous research on questioning in writing centres at the levels of both theory and methodology. These gaps inform the research questions and objectives formulated for the study as well as the chosen methodology and the potential benefits of the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the ensuing chapters.

1.2 Research context and background

This section provides an overview of the changing higher education context that resulted in an international and national need for academic literacy assistance for students from disparate school systems lacking writing abilities expected in higher education curriculums. Writing centres were established as a response to this need and the section below outlines the prominent tutor approaches in these centres.

1.2.1 The higher education context

Three progressive pedagogical movements in the 19th century have altered the aristocratic nature of higher education. These movements granted access to higher education for individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds. This transition to universal access to higher education has resulted in considerably more diverse groups of students seeking such access. Often these students demonstrated various levels of competence in academic literacy, where students from disparate school systems often lacked the abilities for academic success expected in higher education curriculums. This enhanced internal and external demands for accountability.

1.2.2.1 The international context

According to Scott (1995: 12), three pivotal shifts occurred during the 19th century, resulting in the need for a more comprehensive higher education system. The first shift was the democratic revolution, where the advancement of working-class consciousness accentuated the importance of education as a means of emancipation, enlightenment and social control, or the notion of 'self-improvement and acquiring the capacity to contribute to the common good' of society (Dorn 2017: 28). The second shift was the industrial revolution, which established a need for a more complex branch of labour, centred on specific professional skills. This required the development of technological and mechanic-specific institutions (Goastellec 2008: 2, 3; Scott 1995: 12).

The third shift was the emergence of professional societies, where the growth of systematised occupations and the establishment of a bureaucratic government produced new training requirements and skills. Twentieth century universities continued to be shaped by these three shifts, however they occurred on a much larger scale. The democratic revolution expanded to mass entitlement and empowerment, the industrial revolution resulted in urbanisation and commercialisation and professional society was now defined by skills it encompassed rather than its values (Scott 1995: 12). These shifts established the context for the development of mass higher education systems.

Mass higher education systems first emerged in the United States and are the institutional responses established in the context of these larger transformations (Scott 1995: 12). Well into the twentieth century, higher education in the United States and Europe was essentially only accessible to members of the upper and middle classes, as only the 'elite' had the wealth and leisure to pursue it. The political, industrial and societal transformations resulted in a fundamental shift in higher education from higher education for the elite to higher education for the masses (Sursock & Smidt 2010: 15). The first mass educational system was developed, and the American system was regarded as the hegemonic model for future developments (Scott 1995: 8). Combined with globalisation, higher institutions became connected regionally, nationally and internationally, resulting in changes in other parts of the world as European universities began experiencing higher levels of participation and had to change policies as a response to international trends (Goastellec 2008: 2; Sursock & Smidt 2010: 6, 10).

The development of mass higher education is one of numerous modernisations that took place in late-twentieth century society. Mass higher education developed into a broader phenomenon, and higher education systems in various countries are constantly transforming (Scott 1995: 2). Today, as part of this international movement, more students are completing high school, subsequently pushing higher education institutions to serve more of the population as opposed to being preserved for the upper class. Institutions devoted to massification have enhanced access to higher education in various countries and are especially beneficial to social groups who have previously been discounted from the elite structures of higher education (Goastellec 2008: 4, 10).

These shifts in higher education further resulted in new trends: changes in pedagogy, diversity, and accountability.

Returning to Our Roots (1997), a report of the Kellogg Commission regarding the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, presented three fundamental changes that institutions are obligated to conform to: they must develop into learning communities, they must be student centred, and they must focus on providing a healthy learning situation for both students and staff (Mullin n.d.: 185). This led to dramatic changes in the demographics of students, as students from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds gained access to higher education (Goastellec 2008: 2). Many of these students have not been exposed to the criteria and expectations of higher education, especially with regard to standards of performance. Massification has further produced additional problems in higher education, such as funding, organisation and the under-preparedness of students, contributing to the historical approach of 'academic Darwinism' or the survival of the fittest, e.g., students who do not pass were not academically 'fit enough' (Van Zyl 2014: 2).

According to Lillis and Scott (2008: 8), the escalating participation of students in higher education and their linguistic, social and cultural diversity was associated with: a) public discourses on deteriorating standards as students' written languages are seen as symbols of declining university standards and b) minimal focus on language in higher education pedagogy. Academic literacies thus arose from this identification of the inadequacies (by teachers and researchers of language and literacy) in the rapid transformation of higher education systems (Lillis & Scott 2008: 7). Universities are accountable for 'confronting social inequalities deeply rooted in history, culture and economic structure that influence an individual's ability to compete' (Altbach et al. 2009: p.v.), stemming from this diverse student body.

1.2.2.2 The South African context

South Africa has a problematic background concerning the global objective of access to higher education. According to Boughey and Mckenna (2016: 1), the literacy practices that are vital for university arise from particular disciplinary backgrounds, and students are regularly expected to master these practices as part of their general knowledge.

Since 1994, Higher Education in South Africa has focused on equality in order to rectify the injustices of the past. This transformation specifically concentrates on redressing the disparities that were present in South Africa prior to the establishment of democracy (Badsha & Harper 2000: 27). The Apartheid policy distorted South Africa's cultural, racial, linguistic and social diversity for social engineering and divided development intentions, resulting in the presence of various diversity issues on campuses today.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, previously white universities began to allow students of all races to enrol, which initially seemed to counter the historical racial inequalities of tertiary education (Archer & Richards 2011: 6). However, this diversity of the various personal, social, educational and economic backgrounds of students who are accepted to higher education often led to cultural and academic alienation (Beckham 2000: 23, 29). Educators detected that the years of educational deprivation gave rise to the adverse comparison of students from poor educational backgrounds to those from privileged education environments (Archer & Richards 2011: 6).

Spaull (2013: 6) outlines these differences through his description of two distinctive public-school systems in South Africa: smaller and larger public-school systems. Smaller public schools endorse the wealthiest 20-25% of students who then attain higher grades than the larger system supporting 75-80% of students. This discrepancy in varying educational levels, result in students entering higher education systems from disadvantaged schools that have not adequately equipped them with the academic skills required (Beckham 2000: 27). These proficiency issues result from years of poor schooling, an undifferentiated post-school approach and matters regarding the validity of the new National Senior Certificate examination that provide access for university study (Ogude, Kilfoil & Du Plessis 2012).

In South Africa, academic literacy is a continuous issue among the diverse group of students that enrol for higher education every year (Boughey & McKenna 2016: 2). English is the primary discourse and medium of instruction at the majority of higher education institutions in South Africa. It is important to note the difference between 'discourse' and 'Discourse'. Gee (1990:115) describes 'discourse' as combined 'stretches of language…[that] make sense to some community of people.' He then describes 'Discourse' as:

> Composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognisable identities engaged in specific socially recognisable activities. (Gee 1990: 155)

As time progresses, certain Discourses are favoured due to their relationship with particular social settings. In the 1980s, scholars on academic developments began to acknowledge that academic Discourse is socially and politically constructed. The idea that acquiring the use of genre-specific Discourse provides individuals with access and authority in unfamiliar circumstances progressed the perception of academic literacy (Archer & Richards 2011: 6).

Academic Discourses are favoured in higher education and go beyond a student's competence of Standard English, where students need to be fluent in vocabulary, syntax, and phonology as well as other language elements, such as having the capacity to construct texts to exhibit academic methods of structuring and organising text (Bartolomé 2012: 343). If a student's primary Discourse is directly associated with academic Discourses, the acquisition of this discourse is straightforward. This is usually the situation for students that come from educated, middle class backgrounds. However, a student whose home discourse is considerably distinct from those of the university will perceive higher education discourses as foreign and inconceivable (Boughey & Mckenna 2016: 4). Academic literacy includes the norms and standards of higher education as established in discipline-specific practices. Students are presumed to acquire these practices, and the fundamental epistemologies without formal instruction (Mckenna 2004: 269).

As a result of the language diversity in South Africa, many students are studying in a language that is not their first language (Beckham 2000: 17). Therefore, academic literacy practices cannot be detached from acquiring the manner in which Discourse operates, or from the social aspects and political repercussions of learning the language of academic competence (Archer & Richards 2011: 6). Van Zyl (2014: 3) notes that there are significant differences in the academic success levels of these diverse groups of students. Students are hindered by having to absorb conceptual notions in a language that is not their home language. This is described as the 'language problem' and is used to account for the racially distinguished success rates (CHE 2016).

Tertiary institutions need to implement measures to address these issues, as rejecting these students on account of poor language proficiency would simply repeat past inequalities (Rambiritch 2014: 72). Institutions are required to modify institutional practices to advocate for student needs and academic success, where a noticeable discrepancy exists between the ‘elementary cognitive level’ necessary for schoolwork and the ‘higher-order thinking skills’ expected at university level (Joseph & Ramani 2004: 238). Institutions have internationally and locally taken different approaches to addressing academic literacy concerns among students. Many have set up academic support programmes, departments and units, while others have put forward degrees and diplomas on an extended programme system to guarantee that the appropriate academic support is offered (Rambiritch 2014: 72). As part of non-curricular support, institutions have offered tutoring in small and large groups, as well as writing support in writing labs and centres.

1.2.2 Writing centre responses to the changed higher education landscape

Several scholars (Boquet 1999; Grandy 1936; Harris 1985; North 1984; Stanley 1943) have contributed to the methods and practices used in writing centres. Movements throughout the twentieth century gave direction to writing centres as a major scholarly field. Researchers from various disciplines formulated theories regarding writing centre pedagogy that remain relevant today.

Writing labs and centres are a North American concept and have featured since at least the 1920s but were more widely established in the 1960s and 70s as a response to the open-admissions policies that resulted in the admission of underprepared students to higher education (Runciman 1990: 30).

Since then, writing centres have extended to most of the foremost universities in the United States and also to other institutions where English is the medium of instruction but not necessarily the first language of the students (Winder, Kathpalia & Koo 2016: 323). According to Trimbur (2010: 89), the social justice and democratisation of tertiary education have continuously been a key aspect in the mission of writing centres.

Higher education institutions had to implement support programmes to address the effects of poor schooling, disparate education practices and the under-preparedness of first-year students. Thus, the academic needs of students internationally have demanded the rise of writing centres.

Early writing centres acted as extensions of classroom environments that operated solely as remedial services to largely underprepared student bodies, developing writing instruction and presenting the chance for students to revise their writing. The centres acted as spaces that facilitated students with deficient writing proficiencies to enhance their basic writing and grammar through repeated drills and writing exercises (Waller 2002). However, not all writing centres accepted the roles of supporting writing completed in traditional classrooms, resolving writing difficulties amongst underprepared students or promising the improvement of graduates' writing (Carino 1995: 107; Waller 2002). Practitioners began to explore other areas of study (not only in English departments or the Humanities) to establish what different faculties required (Russel 1991: 273), advocating programs for writing in all disciplines or writing across the curriculum (WAC) (Waller 2002).

The function of writing centres assumed different forms at various institutions and coalesced with prevailing notions of academic development at local, national and international levels. Longstanding theoretical facets of writing centre objectives in the United States involved non-directive tutoring approaches, which focused more on the writer rather than the writing (Bruffee 2001; North 1984). In the late 1970s, journals such as *CCC* and *College English* published articles that predominantly focused on staff selection and non-directive tutor training in writing centres (Boquet 1999: 475; Clark 1988: 5; Lunsford 1991: 3). Research, such as Bruffee's (1978) *Liberal Education* article, emphasised the non-authoritarian positioning of peer tutors in the writing centre. Writing centres began to employ peer tutors as opposed to programs imitating traditional classroom environments, resulting in long-term implications for the site-practice contrast in writing centres (Boquet 1999: 476). The manifestation of peer tutors established human contact and an environment where students and tutors could 'learn and practice judgement collaboratively' (Bruffee 1978: 450).

By the 1970s and 1980s, forums for writing centres were established and active participants, such as Bruffee, Harris and North, described issues in writing centre communities (Boquet 1999: 476; Bruffee 1980; Kail 1982). Teaching writing developed into a major scholarly field, and researchers from various disciplines formed theories on written language and its education. This resulted in considerable changes in the practices of teaching writing at secondary and tertiary levels of education (McAndrew & Reigstad 2001: xi). The inception of Harris' *Writing Lab Newsletter* in 1977 and the *Writing Centre Journal* three years later enabled writing centres of today to locate themselves in relation to historical practices (Carino 1995: 103). Harris' (1985) guide for tutors, *Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference* has been used to prepare a whole generation of writing centre tutors and directors as well as setting the tone for the manner in which scholars and practitioners addressed writing centres in the future (Pemberton & Kinkead 2003: 7).

Harris considered the possibilities for writing centres as fundamental places for teaching, learning and research, where the best way to determine students' writing issues is to engage them in dialogue about their writing. Throughout the 1980s, Harris endorsed the importance of writing centres as influential learning environments where students 'could reap valuable cognitive benefits from talking about their writing and receiving feedback from interested peers' (Pemberton & Kinkead 2003: 6). Writing centre consultants began to implement many forms of engagement in order to create a learning community. Workshops became their primary setting for application. Kinkhead and Harris' (1993) *Writing Centres in Context* and Fulwiler's (1987) *Teaching with Writing* (a guide to faculty development workshops) described various methods in which writing centres could collaborate with faculty (Mullin n.d.: 187).

North's (1984) publication, *The Idea of a Writing Centre,* is widely accepted as the most concise and effective examination of writing centres and their functions. He characterises writing centres as 'a resource centre for writers and teachers of writing' (North 1984: 433). He further argues that contrary to popular beliefs, writing centres are not there to fix editorial errors but rather focus on developing general patterns of thinking and writing, that students implement throughout the writing process. Writing centres need to concentrate on progressing the general competence of student writers rather than focusing only on specific writing tasks (North 1984: 435).

Writing centres in South Africa represent institutional responses concentrating on the literacy needs of the students enrolled in these institutions by presenting cognitive support powered by connection and dialogue (HELTASA 2015). Writing centres form part of the curricular academic support that must be provided to ensure that students are presented with the opportunity to develop those skills and abilities that may place them as 'at risk' in achieving academic success. The first writing centres in South Africa were established in the mid-1990s at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and have now extended to most tertiary institutions (Trimbur 2011: 1). Writing centres have thus existed next to mainstream academia in South Africa for more than two decades (Archer & Richards 2011: 5).

The early 1990 initiation and progression of larger classes due to the open admissions policy or 'massification' of higher education in South Africa ensued in small-group tutoring becoming a familiar feature of teaching and learning. In these early stages of South African democracy, the American concept of democratising the function of writing centres appeared to encourage the changes in teaching and learning practices in prevailing institutions (Nichols 2017: 184).
Nichols (2017: 183) mentions the 1995 conference conducted by the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town regarding the establishment of writing centres in South Africa. The conference attracted various representatives from across the country in order to discuss the idea of writing centres and their validity. Contributors at the conference were confident that writing centres are a valuable tool in encouraging academic access, evading the stigmas and the demeaning act of remediation as well as endorsing collaborative networks of learners within universities. This conference founded what has developed as characteristic of writing centres in South Africa:

> A generous network of colleagues across universities who support each other and the work of writing centres, even when their home institutions are less convinced of the significance of their role. (Nichols 2017: 184)

Writing centres are thus driven by an ethos of a student-centred approach and a pedagogy of collaborative learning that permit a more flexible approach to education.

The aim is to equally focus on advancing students' reading and writing skills to encourage cultures of scholarship, community and transformation (HELTASA 2015).

Writing centres in South Africa presented opportunities for research that could enlighten and affect mainstream education. The first book on writing centre practice in South Africa, *Changing spaces: Writing centres and access to higher education* (Archer & Richards 2011), presents research conducted by various institutions and academics across the country. The research articulates the eagerness regarding the position of writing centres in the South African transformation of higher education (Trimbur 2011 cited in Archer & Richards 2011: 2). New writing centres seemed to be conscious of difficulties concerning identity, power and access and the manner in which writing centre tutorial practices could allow interaction with students, aid students in developing tacit knowledge and to expanding on this knowledge. This first book on writing centres in South Africa depicted writing centres as safe spaces in an otherwise culturally antagonistic environment. Various writing centres incorporated creative writing as a means of confirming the manifestation of cultures and identity facets that were previously omitted by hegemonic academic Discourse (Nichols 2017: 184). Throughout the next two decades, writing centre practitioners' perceptions of national community increased, although practices varied between writing centres, and were repeatedly modelled according to the culture of the institutions in which they were established (Nichols 2017: 185).

The University of Pretoria (UP) supports language development through the implementation of compulsory academic literacy modules, tutorial programmes and the Humanities Writing Centre. The Unit for Academic Literacy offers a range of faculty-specific academic modules to the Humanities, Economic and Management Sciences, Health Sciences, Theology, Engineering, and Natural and Agricultural Sciences as part of curricular support. The Humanities Writing Centre at the University of Pretoria was established in February 2014 to offer the necessary non-curricular writing support to mostly first-year students.

The establishment of writing centres as institutional responses to varying levels of academic writing competency amongst diverse students required extensive research regarding the practices, theoretical frameworks and tutoring approaches on which they are based (Rambiritch 2019, personal communication). The most prominent of these tutor approaches are discussed in the following section.

1.3 Tutor approaches in writing centres

Between the 1920s and 1940s, writing centres gradually transformed from being a system of instruction to having a recognisable position in higher institutions (Carino 1995: 107). These early writing centres reflected the rule-constrained characteristics of the Current-traditional approach (Carstens & Rambiritch 2020: 237). This form of teaching was deemed necessary by the public and university administrations to acculturate underprepared students (Carino 2003: 100). Writing centres were referred to as 'labs' and 'clinics', evoking the medical and scientific connotations of this approach. The writing laboratory was perceived not as a place but was instead viewed as a method of instruction (Boquet 1999: 467). The role of the instructor was 'to eliminate errors or other weaknesses at their source and not to allow their use at all, thus precluding the possibility of their becoming habitual through thoughtless repetition' (Horner 1929: 218). Students were allowed to self-correct mistakes in their writing and, if they were unable to do so, the instructor would instantaneously correct these mistakes (Boquet 1999: 467).

As mentioned earlier, in the 1940s tension began to surface between the institutional position of the writing centre and the distinctive pedagogies performed in their settings. Writing centres continued to be directly related to the traditional classroom environment and became a key player in the institutional aim to monitor students based on proficiency (Boquet 1999: 467). However, pedagogically, consultants began to recognise the advantage of writing centres as distinct from the executive hierarchy setting in which they operated (Boquet 1999: 467). Stanley (1943) and Grandy (1936) constructed writing centre practices as dialectic, therefore supporting dialogue between consultants and students, as performed at present.

Stanley's (1943) article was one of the first articles to question the pedagogical importance of writing centres and the incongruity of their presence compared to other institutional systems. The article urged students to become autonomous writers and intellectuals, questioning whether writing centre pedagogy should be confined to the mechanical rules implemented in traditional classroom practices. Writing centres then became more independent and bound to their own curriculums and were often associated with remedial learners (Boquet 1999: 468).

The Expressivist movement viewed teaching as a type of 'cultural imperialism' (Carino 1996: 34) and applied a psychotherapeutic approach to writing practices. Psychotherapists asked questions to extract knowledge from their 'patients' (students). Knowledge was viewed as inherent in the student and it was the tutor's role to extract this knowledge using a Socratic or non-directive approach (Boquet 1999: 470; Lunsford 1991: 7). However, this approach lacked the theoretical principles required to assess good writing (North 1987).

In the non-directive approach, writing centres implement peer writing tutorials where tutors do not take on the position of writing teacher by administering writing directions to students who are perceived as inexperienced and novice writers. Tutors are rather positioned alongside students and collaborate with them in the advancement of their written materials. Writing tutorials are process-orientated and student-centred (Munje et al. 2018: 337). These traditional pedagogical approaches in writing centres are thus dialogic, where collaborative interaction occurs between tutor and student in order to facilitate learning, as opposed to the hierarchal, directive approach used in classrooms (Blau, Hall & Strauss 1998: 20). A one-to-one tutoring approach is argued to be an effective method of instruction, as it achieves individually tailored instruction that focuses on every student's unique knowledge deficits through the establishment of a safe, conversational setting (Limberg et al. 2016: 374). Harris (1995: 27) states that tutorial instruction is very different from lecturing situations as it 'introduces into the educational setting a middle person, the tutor, who inhabits a world somewhere between student and teacher.'

The idea of collaborative learning amongst peers originates from Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cultural Theory (SCT) and his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that puts forward the notion of learning in social environments (Nordlof 2014: 45; Van der Stuyf 2002: 6). SCT suggests that human cognition is constructed in social and cultural experiences, therefore social interaction has a significant function throughout the learning process (Raymond 2000: 176; Van der Stuyf 2002: 7). Vygotsky defines the ZPD as 'the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Cherry 2018). Thus, peers who are more knowledgeable are needed for learning through social interaction. In the language-learning context, this social interaction (with a more knowledgeable other) occurs between peers/tutors and students and is described as collaborative learning. Collaborative learning provides an alternative approach to traditional classroom teaching that fails to prepare students for the academic requirements of higher education. This is especially significant at various institutions in South Africa, and many tertiary institutions are obligated to take measures in supporting these students. Bruffee (1984: 638) states that:

> What distinguished collaborative learning in each of its several types from traditional classroom practice was that it did not seem to change what people learned so much as it changed the social context in which they learned it. Students' work tended to improve when they got help from peers; peers offering help, furthermore, learned from the students they helped and from the activity of helping itself.

The rationale for this approach also relied on Vygotsky's notion of socio-constructionism which maintained that knowledge is arbitrated through community and culture. Individuals encounter various identities through questioning, investigating and associating (Lillis 2003: 198). Vygotsky's ZPD and Bruner's (1983: 163) concept of scaffolding suggested that tutors should focus on functions that have not yet developed but are progressing towards. The tutor is then characterised as a 'coach' or as 'the person who stands on the side lines watching and helping - not stepping in to make the field goal' (Harris 1986: 35).

From the 1990s, researchers began to critique the collaborative, non-directive approach in writing centre pedagogy, with new studies encouraging a more adaptable approach to tutorials (Babock & Thonus 2012; Blau et al. 1998; Harris 1992; Grimm 2009; Lunsford 1991; Nordlof 2014; Thonus 2001). Thonus (2001) used ethnography and participant observation to examine how writing centre participants view the consultant's position. She observed that consultants often diverge from their training and are regularly authoritative and directive in their sessions, taking on the role of teacher rather than peer. Mackiewiczs (2001) also notes that consultants regularly align themselves as writing experts rather than embracing the peer role as depicted in writing centre theory. Lower-order concern (LOC) subjects often entailed a higher position from consultants, whereas higher-order concern (HOC) subjects did not. Similarly, Davis, Hayward, Hunter and Wallace (1988) researched consultation styles in writing centres and found that tutor talk comprises qualities of both teaching and non-teaching dialogue, as tutors engage in a particular amount of teacher-structured conversation but also participate in extensive segments of peer discussions. They concluded that tutors do not function solely as either peers or as teachers but rather as a combination of both (Davis et al. 1988: 49).

Other scholars (Harris 1986; Hyland 2016; Ivanič 2004) have alluded to the flexible view of tutors acting as both peers and teacher. Harris (1986: 35) states that 'tutors have a whole wardrobe of hats to put on, and…may need to change hats every few minutes' and refers to tutors as playing roles of writing coaches, commentators and peer counsellors in writing conferences. Hyland (2016: 27) states that many different approaches (to writing) are 'applied unevenly and in different ways.' The writing process combines aspects of cognition, the writer's background and previous experiences, identity, and circumstances of the writer, and one single approach cannot be applied to all writing contexts (Hyland 2016: 24). Writing is thus viewed as a communicative event occurring as part of real-life social interactions that cannot be taught using one single approach. Educational institutions and writing centres themselves act as social settings, presenting possibilities for successful communication between those who operate in them (Ivanič 2004: 234-237). The following section describes the use of questioning strategies as part of writing centre interactions between tutors and students.

1.4 The role of questioning as a pedagogical strategy in writing centre consultations

Through the investigation of work that takes place in writing centre tutorials, researchers can establish the practices in writing centres, which can improve and inform the theory on which the work is based. The aim is, as stated by Denny (2014: 48), to 'understand the frame of writing centre action and the footing, or the ways in which participants align themselves during interactions to understand communicative purposes' and, more specifically, the role of questioning throughout this interaction.

1.4.1 Questions as part of tutor strategies

Writing centre interactions are one-on-one, tutor-guided conversations driven by institutional and disciplinary goals as well as individual students' needs and take place in a controlled timeframe. A significant aspect of the mechanics of writing centre interactions and of general dialogue is the use of questions as 'a basic means of structuring discourse and exchanging information as a pivotal source of learning' (Limberg, Modey & Dryer 2016: 372). Tutor and student questions are established as one of the primary tutoring strategies in writing centre tutorials and are constantly implemented in all other tutoring strategies, such as instruction, cognitive and motivational scaffolding (Morrison 2008:17, 29).

Tutors employ questioning and other conversational cues identified in face-to-face communication. The exchange can shift focus depending on what the tutor or student regards as suitable, and the tutor can ask about the student's writing practices and listen to his/her answers to various questions and further employ these responses as input for further questions. Questions can guide students to present knowledge they did not deem as necessary and to elucidate these answers through additional questioning (Harris 1995: 29). These questions are 'real', sincerely revealing an interest in who students are and what they want to express. Consultants further ask questions to support students in developing their writing skills and are advised to encourage students to ask questions in order to prompt learning and to allow students to actively participate in sessions (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 38).

The notion of questioning in learning situations can be described and applied in various settings as one of the primary tutoring strategies in writing centre consultations (Blau et al. 1998; Harris 1995; Morrison 2008; Nordlof 2009). Questioning is a significant instrument used by peer tutors to establish an interactive environment with students that incites engagement, participation and heightens the attainment of consultation goals (Limberg et al. 2016: 372). Questioning throughout writing centre consultations can be viewed as an 'age old tradition that needs to be nurtured because of its unquantifiable value, especially in ensuring that skills achieved are valued beyond a particular session' (Munje, Nanima & Clarence 2018: 338). Fundamentally, opening a peer writing tutorial with questions that encourage students to participate in conversation and which allows them to sense that their voice is valued, establishes a productive setting for conversations about writing. This approach develops what writing labs and writing consultants advocate and could permit students to achieve sufficient feedback to advance their writing skills (Munje et al. 2018: 338). It is therefore important to establish the functions of questioning in writing tutorials in order to determine how these questions scaffold learning and to better inform current tutoring practice.

1.4.2 Overview of research on questioning in writing centres

In the past, writing centre literature has supported anecdotal research rather than evidence-based research, resulting in the complexity of validating practices with evidence (Driscoll & Perdue 2012: 16). Over the last thirty years, there has been a call for a more practice- and inquiry-based research as an attempt in legitimising the discipline and progressing over the 'lore' that has previously moulded writing centre identity (Babock & Thonus 2012; Blau et al. 1998; Denny 2014; Driscoll & Purdue 2012; Morrison 2008; Nordlof 2009; North 1984; Thonus 2001).

Writing centres experienced rapid growth throughout the 1970s and 1980s, which, according to Thompson et al. (2009 cited in Denny 2014: 13), might explain why a considerable amount of writing centre theory is based on lore. Lore can be defined as 'common sense, common knowledge, and common practice based on experience and observations of others' (Babcock & Thonus 2012: 32).

This dependence on lore could also explain the lack of evidence-based research in research on writing centre disciplines, as training resources are often built on fictionalised rather than 'real-life' settings (Denny 2014: 14)

North's (1984) article comments on the lack of practice-based research informing the theory that validates the daily practices in writing centre tutorials. North (1984: 434) states that 'the principles for tutoring and tutor training…need to be tested [and] need to be studied.' Therefore, there is a need to overcome the discipline's 'tradition of using anecdote and personal experience as data and content' (Babcock & Thonus 2012: 6). This is confirmed by Driscoll and Perdue's (2012) articles published in *The Writing Centre Journal* examining whether the discipline has presented evidence-based research as a system of RAD (replicable, aggregable, and data supported). The authors observed a historic tendency where composition scholars move away from empirical-based approaches to research. They found that less than half of the articles published on writing centres were categorised as RAD research (Denny 2014: 15). Research studies drew upon long-standing and lore-based articles without making connections between current research-supported practices and developing evidence-based approaches (Driscoll & Perdue 2012: 32).

The bulk of previous research on questioning in writing centre consultations has focused on what questions uncover regarding the role of tutors and their control in consultations (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 38). Davis et al. (1988) studied the oral interaction that ensued between undergraduate writers and graduate student tutors and analysed four conversations, lasting 45 minutes each, from various students and tutors. Each conversation was audio-taped, analysed and coded according Fanselow's (1977) classroom analysis instrument. They discovered that tutors predominantly control writing centre conferences but occasionally accept less teacher-like and more peer-like roles (Davis et al. 1988: 33). Morrision (2008) investigated the teaching strategies of instruction, cognitive scaffolding, motivational scaffolding and question asking used by tutors in peer writing consultations. He examined one video-taped tutor conference according to the categories of teaching strategies described by Cromley and Azevendo (2007) and Chi et al. (2001).

He established that tutors ask multiple questions throughout writing centre consultations in order to accomplish the other three teaching strategies (instruction, cognitive and motivational scaffolding) and to elicit information. Predominantly open-ended questions were used, especially for cognitive scaffolding (Morrison 2008:30). However, he determined that these results should not be generalised and applied to all tutors and writing centre contexts but rather calls for a focus on the lack of research on teaching strategies in writing centres (Morrison 2008: 33).

Certain studies have focused on the role of both tutors *and* students. Blau, Hall and Strauss (1998) examined the collaborative nature of tutor/student relationships by analysing three rhetorical strategies – questioning, echoing and the use of qualifiers. They examined the linguistic elements in 30 writing centre conferences to clarify the characteristics of tutors' relationships with students. Each tutor was required to record and transcribe one consultation and both the tutor and student completed a questionnaire evaluating the degree of ease and gratification received from the session. Tutors were also expected to write an analysis regarding their view of their strengths and weaknesses indicated by the conversations. The study concluded that tutors exhibited 'informed flexibility' in all the strategies but emphasised their concerns that several collaborative consultations lacked focus and achieved less compared to more directive sessions (Blau et al. 1998: 38). Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014) examined the function of questions in both tutors and students. Questions were examined by modifying Graesser, Person and Huber's (1992) view of questions as inquiries rather than simply interrogatives and were categorised according to the type of response that the questioner aims to elicit (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 41). The study revealed that questions in writing centres have various instructional and conversational purposes (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 37).

Whereas considerable research regarding second language (L2) writers concentrated on consultants' teaching practices, rather than students' responses, Park (2017: 253) conducted a conversation analytic study in order to investigate the manner in which L2 students resist the consultant's advice. The study specifically concentrates on the students' use of questioning as advice resistance and identifies two questioning practices: asking a reversed polarity question and suggesting an 'alternative candidate revision' (Park 2017: 253).

The analysis revealed that students use advice-resisting questions to initiate further exchanges concerning key writing concerns, thus presenting students with the opportunity to consider reasons for the advice, review the advice or replace their manner of revising (Park 2017: 253, 265).

In South Africa, Munje et al.'s (2018) study is the only research specifically focusing on the role of questioning in writing centre consultations. Their paper examined the types of questions asked in tutorials, the difficulties that students and tutors encounter and the repercussions for teaching strategies. The data was obtained from tutors' written reports on writing tutorials with students and the students' feedback after the consultation. The data was not analysed according to a specific methodology, but rather the various types of questions were documented and divided into three categories: introductory, task-related and writing-related questions. The analysis established a general guideline of the roles of questions in different stages of writing centre consultations and the manner in which these questions facilitate learning. They concluded that questioning establishes a student-centred conversational space that is advantageous for tutors and students, but that tutorial conversations cannot be constructed based only on question types, as students have different writing concerns (Munje et al. 2018: 336). However, Munje et al. (2018) only focused on three types of questions and used data from reports written on tutorials and the students' feedback after tutorial sessions, and the data was not analysed using a specific approach. There is thus a need for systematic analysis of questions in large data corpora that exhibit the daily practices in writing centres and the role of questioning within these practices.

Research in writing centres is still a relatively new field in academia. Various scholars encourage writing centres to integrate their practices within the institutions they aim to serve, rather than remaining on the side-line. There is a general call for further research regarding educational practices in writing centres (Babcock & Thonus 2012; Denny 2014; Gardner & Ramsey 2005; Nordlof 2009; North 1984). Many studies on questioning tend to analyse questions as indictors of their assumed role often associated with controlling discourse, rather than analysing all the manners in which questions can function in writing centre tutorials (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 28).

In South Africa, only Munje et al. (2018) examined the role of questioning, with the focus again associated with controlling discourse, rather than the specific function of questions in writing centre practices. This study aims to fill this gap by analysing the function of questions and their responses in writing centre consultations and what they reveal about the effectiveness of tutor questioning strategies.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions arose from the gaps in the previous research. This study is informed by the following two-pronged question:

How does a systematic analysis of a corpus of video-recorded writing centre consultations;

i. shed a light on the different questioning strategies and functions used in writing consultations?
ii. demonstrate how different questioning strategies and functions can support students' engagement and learning when developing academic writing skills?

.

1.6 Research objectives

The aim of this research, in conducting a systematic analysis of video-recorded writing centre consultations, is to:

i. explore different questioning strategies and functions in writing centre consultations; and
ii. describe how different questioning strategies and functions can support students' engagement and learning when developing academic writing skills.

The findings of the research should assist writing centre directors and scholars in improving writing centre pedagogy and inform future tutor training programs.

1.7 Overview of the methodology

This research study forms part of a larger study, *Student-consultant interactions in a writing centre: identifying enablers and impediments through multimodal analyses* conducted at the Unit for Academic Literacy at the University of Pretoria. The larger study provided the recordings and transcripts that are used in this study.

The research primarily follows a qualitative design focused on the collection and coding of qualitative linguistic data. The data from the recordings and transcriptions is analysed through both content and discourse analysis, more specifically, micro- and macropragmatic analyses.
Content analysis refers to a systematic effort of recognising the frequency with which particular words, functions or phrases appear in a text. The aim is to investigate the context of occurrence or 'breaking down a text and providing evidence for interpretation' (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 35). Content analysis progresses by identifying the corpus, the unit of analysis or meaning, the codes used to label the units and the frequency with which each code occurred (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 34).

This study also employs a discourse-analytic approach, more specifically, pragmatic analyses to study questions in writing centre tutorials, focused on the textual and contextual principles of analysing transcripts (Paltridge & Wang 2015: 211). The textual analysis examines the grammatical structures of tutor questions, and the contextual analysis studies the linguistic and extra-linguistic acts directing tutor questions. The tutor questions are coded according to their micro- and macropragmatic functions in order to explore the question types and how they function in the Humanities Writing Centre.

1.8 Chapter Preview

Chapter 2 presents a theoretical overview of questioning both as a linguistic theory and as writing centre pedagogy and how the conventions of micro- and macropragmatics can be implemented to analyse these practices. The chapter also provides an overview of previous research on questioning in writing centres and a summary of research gaps and opportunities.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology, based on social constructionist ontology, and describes the qualitative methods of data collection, coding, pragmatic and content analyses of tutor questions. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the grammatical, micro- and macropragmatic analyses. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of these findings and how they can be used to inform tutor strategies, concluding with a description of the perceived benefits of the research, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine the different questioning strategies used in writing consultations and how these strategies could promote students' engagement and learning when acquiring academic writing skills. The previous chapter provided background to the study in order to demonstrate the practical problems underlying writing centre pedagogy, stressing previous gaps in both theory and methodology. This chapter provides a theoretical overview of how questioning has been theorised and consists of two sections.

The first section describes questions in linguistics. An overview of the question types, as distinguished in traditional English grammar, is presented, followed by a brief overview of basic pragmatic foundations and a discussion of leading theories in micro- and macropragmatics. A preliminary conceptual model, that serves as a framework for the analysis of the data gathered for this study, is constructed and explained. The purpose of the model is to demonstrate how the pragmatic functions of questions are underpinned by Speech Act Theory and how conventionalised practices in writing centres can be merged with Speech Act Theory to constitute a theory-led model that may justify and guide decisions and actions by writing centre directors and consultants.

The second section describes how questioning is conventionally applied in writing centre consultations, the emphasis does not only fall on its functions or intended purposes as a facilitation strategy but also how it operates during the different stages of the writing consultation as a partially institutionalised speech event. This section also offers an overview of previous research on questioning in the tutorial environment and problematises the gaps and shortcomings of these studies, among others, with reference to pedagogical sources (cf. Stivers, Enfield & Levinson 2010: 2515). The chapter concludes with a conceptual model for the analysis of questioning, shaped by linguistic pragmatics and further influenced by previous research in writing centre practices.

2.2 Theoretical underpinnings of questioning

2.2.1 The grammar of questions

The English language encompasses three main moods: the declarative mood, the imperative mood and the interrogative mood. Asking questions concerns the interrogative mood (Sinclair 1990: 197). Interrogative sentences are divided into two main categories depending on their syntactic and semantic characteristics: yes/no questions and wh-questions (Konig & Siemund 1985: 11).

2.2.1.3 Yes/no questions

Yes/No questions are interrogatives that require a 'yes' or 'no' response regarding the validity of the complete predication. These questions usually begin with an operator followed by the subject and the predication.

> Did John search the room? – 'Yes'
> Did he give the girl an apple? – 'No'
>
> (Quirk & Greenbaum 1977: 24)

The response to a yes/no question is not always 'yes' or 'no' and may include alternative answers such as 'sometimes' or 'never'; however, these answers are still considered as yes/no questions where the questioner expects a 'yes' or 'no' answer (Sinclair 1990: 197).

The syntax of yes/no questions have three different structures:

i. Intonation and subject-auxiliary inversion

Yes/no questions are syntactically coded by merging three grammatical devices: intonation, morphology and word order. Intonation in yes/no sequences often exhibit an elevated melody. Word order inversion is characteristic of the syntactic structure of yes/no questions and always contain an auxiliary verb (Givon 1993: 249). Subject-auxiliary inversion alters a declarative sentence to an interrogative sentence, for example:

John is eating dinner.
Is John eating dinner?

(Givon 1993: 249)

ii. The placement of auxiliary verbs

If the yes/no question contains an auxiliary verb, the auxiliary verb is placed at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the subject and the main verb.

Are you staying here, by any chance?

(Sinclair 1990: 198)

iii. Declaratives without an auxiliary or ‘be’

When declarative clauses lack an auxiliary or the word ‘be’, the auxiliary ‘do’ is used in yes/no questions. This auxiliary is then positioned in the same original location as other fronted auxiliaries, for example:

The fronted auxiliary ‘do’:
John ate dinner. – Did John eat dinner?

(Givon 1993: 251)

Yes/no questions also comprise different variants that are individually discussed below.

a) Alternative Questions

Alternative questions occur when responses are capable of being extracted from the question itself. Responses are selected from a number of alternatives presented in the question (Huddleston 1984: 366). The conjunction ‘or’ marks alternative questions, for example:

Is he coming or not?

(Givon 1993: 251)

b) Tag questions

Tag questions are grammatical structures created through the insertion of a positive or negative interrogative fragment or 'tag' such as 'isn't it?' into a positive or negative declarative or imperative statement (Sinclair 1990: 198), for example:

John did eat the cake, didn't he?

The response will either be 'yes' or 'no' depending on whether a positive or negative expression is inserted into the declarative or imperative statement (Sinclair 1990: 198).

c) Either/or Questions

Either/or questions are sentences with an interrogative structure and intonation that involve two or more possible responses combined with the conjunction 'or'. The response is expected to include one of the possible answers cited within the question, for example:

Is it a boy or a girl? – It is a boy.

(Sinclair 1990: 199)

2.2.1.2 Wh-questions

Wh-questions, or constituent questions, are normally utilised when the speaker accepts that he/she and the hearer communicate the same comprehension of a proposition regarding an event or experience. The proposition functions as part of the assumed background or pragmatic context within which the wh-question is asked (Givon 1993: 252). When the speaker asks a wh-question, he/she requires a specific response regarding a distinct person, thing, place, reason, method or amount, rather than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Wh-questions begin with wh-words that include interrogative pronouns, adverbs and determiners that begin with 'wh', excluding 'how' (Sinclair 1990: 199). The main wh-words consist of the following:

how
what
when
where
which
who
whom
whose
why

(Sinclair 1990: 199)

The interrogative focus of wh-questions characteristically demonstrates the subject, object, verb, predicate, time, place, manner etc. Any component of the clause, noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase or an adverb can be subjected to interrogative focus (Givon 1993: 252). Various wh-questions can be constructed through the use of interrogative pronouns, for example:

i. Subject wh-question:
   Who gave John a chocolate?
ii. Object wh-question
   What did Mary give to John?
iii. Indirect-object wh-question:
   To whom did Mary give a chocolate?
iv. Manner wh-question:
   How did Mary give John a chocolate?
v. Time wh-question:
   When did Mary give John a chocolate?
vi. Place wh-question:
   Where did Mary give John a chocolate?
vii. Possessor wh-question:
   Whose chocolate is it?
viii. Reason wh-question:
   Why did Mary give John the chocolate?

(Givon 1993: 252)

Additionally, ‘which’ is used as a pronoun or determiner to elicit a response regarding a particular person or thing from a group of people or things (Sinclair 1990: 200), for example:

Which is the best university?

If the speaker requires the question to come across as more emphatic, ‘whatever’, ‘wherever’ or ‘whoever’ can be used rather than ‘what’, ‘where’ or ‘who’ (Sinclair 1990: 203), for example:

Whatever is the matter?

(Sinclair 1990: 203)

The syntactic order of wh-questions is categorised through the (1) pre-posing of the wh-word and (2) subject-auxiliary inversion (Gavon 1993: 259), for example:

(1) The pre-posed position of wh-words is demonstrated in all of the previous examples, such as:

Who gave John the chocolate?

(2) Subject- auxiliary inversion are not applicable to subject wh-questions. If the clause contains an auxiliary, the auxiliary is positioned after the wh-word, for example:

Declarative: She will do it.
Interrogative: What will she do?
(Givon 1993: 260)

2.2.1.3 Open-ended and closed-ended questions

In addition to the grammatical classes of questions mentioned above, questions can also be categorised as open-ended and close-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow the listener to respond with a free-form answer. Close-ended questions are answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' and have a limited group of possible responses (Farrell 2016).

The contextual meaning of questions is not simply a function of the meanings of the individual words and the syntactic structure. For example, based on the speaker's preference and the context, he/she may use the structure of, for instance, a declarative, to get the hearer to behave in a particular way – linguistically, conceptually or physically. These aspects of the meanings of questions is catered for by micro-speech act theories and discussed in the following section.

2.3. Questioning within a pragmatic framework

2.3.1 Definition and background

Pragmatics as a discipline is relatively new and its induction as an individual field of research in semiotics only occurred in the early twentieth century by Charles Morris, who was influenced by the work of philosopher Charles S. Peirce (Bublitz & Norrick 2011: 1). Pragmatics thus originated as a branch of philosophy and was previously regarded as the 'waste basket of linguistics' (Mey 1994: 12) but has since progressed into its own academic discipline that extends to various other disciplines (Biletzki 1996: 456). The delimitation of the domain of pragmatics has undergone shifts from largely philosophical approaches to a more social approach (Mey 1994: 24), aligning with new ways of understanding and theorising language (Feldman 1986). What is understood as pragmatics today originated as 'pragmatism' in papers published by Peirce in 1877 and 1878 and an address given by William James in 1898 (Leary 2009: 5). Peirce first articulated his notion of pragmatism in the 1870s, although he did not specifically use the term 'pragmatism'. The term 'pragmatism' was first used by James in his 1898 lecture series titled 'Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results', which described his philosophical stance regarding the role of chance, the nature of inference and the community's position (Leary 2009). His fundamental idea of pragmatism resonates with the Peircean theory of signs, where signs are expressive features that symbolise something. These signs represent aspects in the world through their description of concepts existing in the user of the sign's intellect. Unfortunately, Pierce and James confused their meanings of the word 'pragmatism' and Pierce's explanations were difficult to comprehend without a knowledge of the logical and theoretical limitations of the entire approach (Feldman 1986: 405, 411).

Morris rediscovered Peirce's philosophies and was the first to coin the term 'pragmatics' as 'the study of the relation of signs to interpreters' (Morris 1938: 6). He established the conventional division between syntax, semantics and pragmatics within his structure of a science of signs or 'dimensions of semiosis' (Bublitz & Norrick 2011:1; Morris 1938: 1).

This division described syntax as studying the relationship between signs and other signs, semantics as the relationship between signs and objects and pragmatics as the relationship between signs and their performers thus confirming the theoretical foundations underlying modern pragmatics (Bublitz & Norrick 2011: 1; Feldman 1986: 407).

However, the first provisional attempts at determining and theorising pragmatics as a branch of linguistics only occurred in the late 60s and early 70s (Mey 1994: 19). Pragmatics was founded, according to Levinson (1983: 35), as an 'antidote to Chomsky's treatment of language as an abstract device.' Chomsky's publication of *Syntactic Structures* (1957) deviated from prevailing theories of the time, and his theory of Universal Grammar as innate to native speakers inspired a new interest in linguistics. Chomsky's Syntacticism was scrutinised as new discoveries regarding the syntax, phonology and semantics of different languages proliferated (Levinson 1983: 36), especially where his theory failed to account for the more complex aspects of language without describing a speaker's communicative intention, occasion of use or the context of the interaction (Feldman 1986: 409). Linguists began to research supposed performance-phenomena and George Lakoff and John Robert Ross were the first to oppose the syntactic conformities by proposing various alternating frameworks focusing on generative semantics. This 'pragmatic turn' was furthered by Austin (1962), Searle (1976) and Grice (1989), who were concerned with the meaning of utterances as opposed to sentence or word meaning, for example, reviewing the distinctive historical occurrences established by real speakers to perform linguistic acts in real-word situational contexts with the aim of completing certain objectives (Bublitz & Norrick 2011: 2). Austin's work, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), and Searle's publication, *Speech Acts* (1969), marked the protest against Chomsky's theories and established a pragmatic area of research (Mey 1994: 23). As research increased, Levinson published *Pragmatics* (1983), which meticulously compiled all the recent work of the time regarding the pragmatic facets of language, resulting in a rising interest in pragmatics and pragmatic problems (Mey 1994: 18).

Since the 1970s, this early Anglo-American framework of pragmatics in linguistic research has extended vastly to research in Continental Europe and other parts of the world, establishing the first shift from the structuralist approaches (lexical meaning in opposition to syntactic meaning) to speech act theory.

Coinciding fields of study described several aspects in which language constitutes context. Speech act theory (Austin 1962) focuses on the social effects of communication, Gricean approaches to communication emphasise speech as a cooperative encounter dependent on the maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner (Grice 1989), and relevance theory correlates with the cooperative principle and concentrates on inference as an essential aspect of speech (Hanks 2009: 119). These developments modified context as independent (the individual speaker's speech act) to being more collaborative, interrelating with cognitive, situational and socio-cultural aspects (situated influences on communication) (Bublitz & Norrick 2011: 3).

Due to its elaborate history, the concept of pragmatics remains complicated, and, consequently, no general definition of pragmatics prevails in linguistics. This study moves away from previous approaches to pragmatics as outlined by Searle and Austin to a modern pragmatic approach, as outlined by Mey (1994), concerning the process of language production and its producer's perspective rather than the final production of only language. This approach reflects the view that language users are also constrained by societal suppositions or 'extralinguistic' elements or context, where society regulates access to linguistic and communicative resources. Mey (1994: 5) defines pragmatics as studying 'the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society' (Mey 2001: 6), taking into consideration the non-verbal aspects (gestures; body movements) of communication, emphasising the language user (Mey 2009: 789). This is necessary when a deeper, multifaceted and practical explanation of human language behaviour is desired (Mey 1994; 2001).

The following section provides a brief description of speech act theory by discussing the typologies or taxonomies that are relevant to the conceptual framework of this study.

2.3.2 Micropragmatic theories

2.3.2.1 Theories of speech acts

Austin (1962) was influential in establishing the first versions of speech act theory (or micro-speech act theory). He distinguished utterances according to performatives and constatives.

Performative speech acts modify the conditions present in the world, as the performative utterance allows the speaker to do something if particular real-world conditions are satisfied, for example, to say ‘I do’ in a certain situation confirms the act of marrying someone and alters their real-world conditions, as illustrated in the following example:

> I request you to stay seated.

This utterance is typically deemed as performing the action identified by the verb, with sentences usually being auxiliary-less sentences encompassing a performative verb, written in present tense, with a first-person subject (Geis 1995: 4).

Austin (1962 cited by Levinson 1983: 236) divided speech acts according to how they are performed rather than their form:

1. Locutionary act:

   The locutionary act refers to the essential production of a significant utterance. The act relates to the hearer, and if the hearer is unsuccessful in comprehending what the speaker has uttered, the speaker has produced an unsuccessful locutionary act (Cultural Reader 2018), for example:

   > He said to me, ‘You can’t do that.’
   >
   > (Austin 1962: 102)

2. Illocutionary act:

   The illocutionary act refers to the communicative intention of the locution (Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015: 251). Speakers produce utterances for a specific reason in order to converse with someone or provide information (Cultural Reader 2018). The intended purpose of the illocutionary act is described as the illocutionary force, where speakers can utilise various locutions to accomplish the same illocutionary force (Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015: 251), for example:

   You cannot treat me in this way

3. Perlocutionary act:

   The perlocutionary act describes the outcome of the illocution. Illocutions result in hearers performing actions, and, to this degree, they are perlocutions or the effect of the locutionary and illocutionary act (Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015: 251), for example:

   Speaker: It's cold in here.
   The hearer gets up and closes the window.

Much of the focus of early speech act theory (1960s to 1970s) was placed on illocution and Austin proceeded to classify performatives according to their illocutionary force:

1. Verdictives (giving a verdict by a jury or arbitrator, e.g. estimate, reckon, appraise).
2. Exercitives (exercising of powers, rights or influence, e.g. appoint, vote, advise, warn).
3. Commissives (promising to commit to something, e.g. declare, agree).
4. Behabitatives (associated with social behaviour, e.g. apologising, congratulating, cursing).
5. Expositives (describe how utterances participate in conversation, e.g. reply, argue, illustrate).

(Austin 1962: 150-151)

Searle (1969; 1975; 1976; 1999) was influenced by Austin's work and concentrated on the characteristics of utterances as a certain category of speech. He criticised Austin's classification based on six complications within Austin's taxonomy: continuous misperceptions exist between verbs and acts, not all verbs can be regarded as illocutionary, several classifications overlap, the classifications are too heterogeneous, various verbs described in each class fail to agree with their definition, and no consistent principle of classification is provided (Searle 1976: 9-10).

Searle (1976) then presented an alternative taxonomy of illocutionary acts based on the felicity conditions of these acts: all comprise of propositional content stipulating which propositional content the speaker has to articulate, preparatory conditions that are contextual but related to the speaker's internal principles, sincerity and essential conditions that describe the type of illocutionary act that the speaker aims to perform (Searle 1976: 10). His taxonomy is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Searle's (1975) classification of illocutionary acts

Classification	Description	Example
Representatives or Assertives	These are assertions that embody reality and can be established as being either true or false.	describe, call, classify, identify, state, claim, telling, asserting, suggesting
Directives	These acts are aimed at encouraging the hearer to perform an action.	ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, pray, entreat, invite, permit, advise
Commissives	These speech acts devote the speaker to a specific future development of action.	promising, threatening, intending, vowing to do or to refrain from doing something
Expressives	These acts denote the speaker's psychological state or approach to a previous action or state of affairs.	thank, congratulate, apologize, condole, deplore, welcome
Declaratives/Performatives	These are speech acts that create the state of affairs that they mention. They are generally present within social groups and depend on the speaker being accepted by the community in order to be successful. These acts are performed under specified conditions, for example the hiring of a new employee.	blessing, firing, baptising, bidding, passing a sentence, excommunicating

(Searle 1976: 10-14)

According to Searle's taxonomy, questions form part of directives and mainly function as a type of request. However, the following section reveals that questions can be structured as an interrogative, but rather function as a declarative. Thus, it is important to distinguish between direct and indirect speech acts, as questions are often disguised as declaratives exhibiting different illocutionary intents.

Searle (1975: 168) classified speech acts according to their structure. English provides a straightforward structural distinction between three basic sentence types (declarative, interrogative and imperative) and three general communicative functions: statement, question and command or request (Yule 1996: 55).

Direct speech acts occur when there is a direct correlation between sentence structure and function, for example:

Table 2: Direct speech acts

Speech Act	Sentence Type	Function	Example
Assertion	Declarative	Communicates information; can be either true or false	John ate the food.
Question	Interrogative	Elicits information	Did John eat the food?
Orders/Requests	Imperative	Results in the hearer altering his/her behaviour	Take the food, John!

(Pragmatics 2018)

Indirect speech acts occur when there is no direct correlation between sentence type and function. Indirect speech acts commonly express the speaker's emotion through a negative approach and various structures can be employed to achieve an identical function, such as in the following sentence:

Do you have to stand in front of the television?

The sentence follows an interrogative structure but functions as a request and also conveys the speaker's negative attitude.

Bach and Harnish (1979) refined Searle and Austin's theories and produced their own taxonomy of speech acts. The underlying notion in their taxonomy is that illocutionary intents, according to which types of illocutionary acts are classified, are all homogeneous as per speech act theory thus aligning more with Searle than Austin.

Bach and Harnish also include Directives and Commissives, but additionally specify Constatives and Acknowledgements as types of communicative illocutionary acts. Their category of Constatives resembles Searle's Representatives, as Constatives convey the speaker's belief and his/her intention or aspiration that the listener develops a similar intention.

Like Searle's Expressives, Bach and Harnish's Acknowledgements communicate feelings concerning the listener or the speaker's purpose of using his/her utterance to fulfil a social expectation to convey the appropriate feelings. In addition to these categories, they also provide subcategories for Constatives, Directives and Commissives as depicted in the following figure:

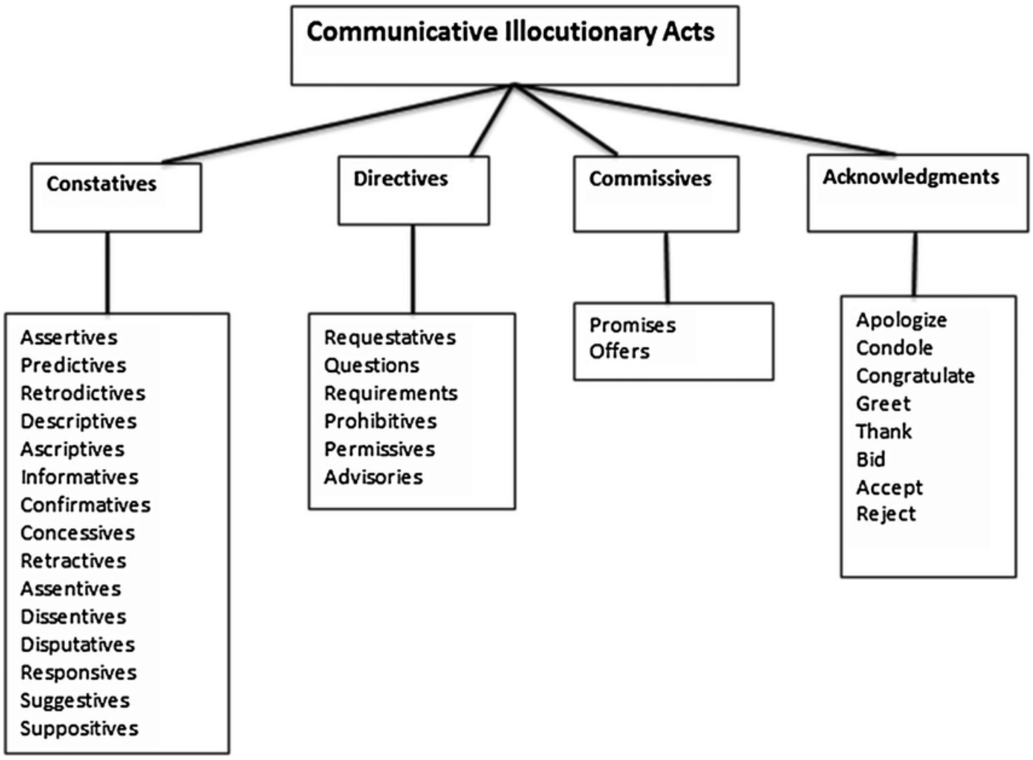

Communicative Illocutionary Acts
Constatives
Directives
Commissives
Acknowledgments
Assertives
Predictives
Retrodictives
Descriptives
Ascriptives
Informatives
Confirmatives
Concessives
Retractives
Assentives
Dissentives
Disputatives
Responsives
Suggestives
Suppositives
Requestatives
Questions
Requirements
Prohibitives
Permissives
Advisories
Promises
Offers
Apologize
Condole
Congratulate
Greet
Thank
Bid
Accept
Reject

Figure 1: Bach and Harnish's (1979) categorisation of communicative illocutionary acts

Bach and Harnish contest Searle's description by allocating a definite role to the hearer (*H)*, rather than the speaker (*S*) as being the primary focus. They describe directives as expressing (*e*) the speaker's view regarding the hearer's prospective action (*P*) as well as communicating the speaker's objective (intention, desire) that his/her utterance or the feeling it conveys encourages the hearer to act (*A)* (Bach & Harnish 1979: 51).

According to Bach and Harnish's classification, questions are part of directives, agreeing with Searle's classification. Questions as a subcategory of Directives are described by means of the following:

> Questions: (ask, inquire, interrogate, query, question, quiz)
> By uttering *e, S* questions *H* as to whether or not *P* if *S* expresses:
>
> i. the desire that *H* tells *S* whether or not *P*, and
> ii. the intention that *H* tell *S* whether or not *P* because of *S*'s desire.
>
> (Bach & Harnish 1979: 51)

Both Searle's (1975, 1976) and Bach and Harnish (1984) taxonomies of illocutionary speech acts classify questions as a type of request for information as part of Directives. Therefore, their taxonomies are only applicable to questions where answers are assertive utterances, disregarding questions that elicit answers involving other illocutionary acts. At times, answers to directive utterances do not give information to the hearer but rather to the speaker, often requiring a decision from the hearer for example:

> Speaker: Will you give me the book?
> Hearer: Yes, I will.
>
> Alternatively, the speaker can also hand over the book.

In this case, the speaker may want to know whether the hearer will promise to do this by perhaps responding with, 'yes, I will', requiring the hearer to make a decision. Otherwise, the speaker could be asking a rhetorical question, requiring the hearer to decide to physically hand over the book thus excluding the expectation of a verbal response and rather acting as Representatives/Assertives. Therefore, it is unclear whether Searle and Bach and Harnish's 'requests' are requests for information or requests for decisions, as they do not provide these definitions (Irie 2015: 41; 44).

It is essential to differentiate between question illocutions and interrogatives, as tutors and students can perform additional illocutionary acts through interrogatives, for instance, making suggestions or requests. A tutor who wants to examine a student's assignment page could say, ‘Why don’t you show me your assignment page?’, instead of, ‘Show me your assignment page’. In this case, the illocutionary act is a Directive and not a question, although the illocutionary act follows interrogative syntax. Questions can also exhibit non-interrogative syntax, for example, a question such as, ‘I add a heading here?’ is a confirmation question structured as a declarative (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 40).

According to Austin’s (1962) taxonomy, questions form part of speech acts (what a speaker performs with their utterance) and elicit a response from the listener. The illocutionary act of questioning is often associated with the interrogative syntactic structure of English, previously discussed. In both Searle (1975, 1976) and Bach and Harnish’s (1979) taxonomies, questioning is a directive speech act that influences the manner in which knowledge is structured and is conventionally related to eliciting information directly (Konig & Siemund 1985: 11).

As utterances communicate more than one type of meaning, the meaning of questions is somewhat determined by the social contexts in which they take place (Athanasiadou 1990: 107). Questions differ from declaratives with regard to modality, as questions communicate the diverse feelings of the speaker towards the propositional content (Rakic 1984: 695). Therefore, questions can also be further categorised according to the pragmatic aims of their speakers rather than just functioning as a request for information. Rakic (1984: 693) provides additional categories of questions other than requests and reduced interrogative speech acts to presumptive, informative and rhetorical questions.

Presumptive questions

Presumptive questions occur when the speaker has a presumption regarding the content of the question and can also elicit a yes/no response (Rakic 1984: 698), for example:

Have you been to Italy?

Informative questions

Information questions are used to elicit information from the hearer and contain the wh-words previously discussed, for example:

What is her name?

Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions do not require the hearer to elicit an answer. Generally, rhetorical questions exhibit 'the illocutionary force of an assertion of the opposite polarity from what is apparently asked' (Han 2002: 201), for example:

> What has John ever done for Sam?

Rhetorical questions can have various functions, such as providing information, capturing the listener's interest or expressing astonishment through an exclamative. The speaker's aim is to emphasise a certain idea. In contrast to informative questions, rhetorical questions reduce the emphasis on obtaining information and rather focus on the social elements concerned and are sometimes viewed as the opposite of informative questions (Athanasiadou 1990: 109).

As previously mentioned, the social function of questions is guided by speech act theory when determining the purpose of utterance within social communication. Speakers use questions within various social activities in order to request information, presume content or capture the listener's interest (Stivers, Enfield & Levinson 2010: 2615). The following is a conceptual framework for examining questions according to speech act theory, based on the theories presented by Searle (1962), Bach and Harnish (1975) and Rakic (1984):

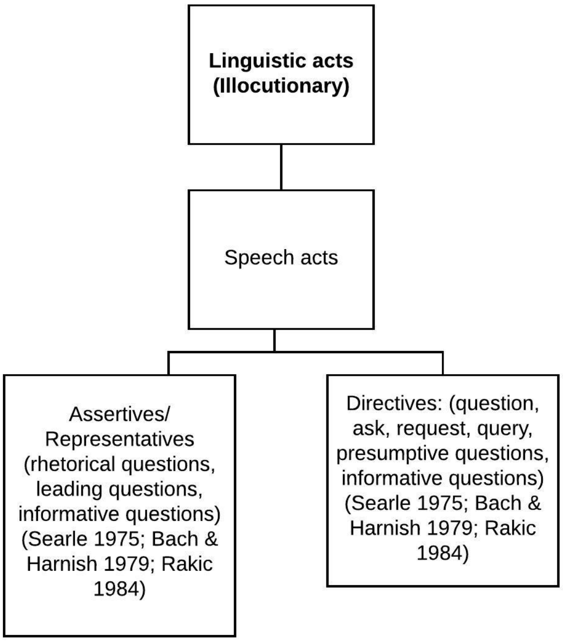

Linguistic acts (Illocutionary)
Speech acts
Assertives/ Representatives (rhetorical questions, leading questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)
Directives: (question, ask, request, query, presumptive questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)

Figure 2: Conceptual framework for speech acts

The figure depicts a preliminary conceptual framework for the analysis of questions. Linguistic acts can be divided into direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. The speech act classification consists of the classification of questions in speech acts according to Searle (1975), Bach and Harnish (1979) and Rakic (1984). The figure includes Searle and Bach and Harnish's classification of questions as Directives as well as Rakic's classifications of other types of questions, which do not request information, but rather act as Representatives/Assertives.

2.3.2.2 Limitations of micropragmatic theory

The Searlean approach to speech act theory (and by implication, the theories of Austin and Bach and Harnish) is criticised for disproportionately focusing on 'speech' to the exclusion of other extralinguistic factors. Consequently, some linguists recommend that the term 'speech act' should be substituted with a more conventional term, such as 'act of language' (Mey 2009: 747). If actions such as questioning, requesting etc. are only viewed as speech acts (linguistic acts) then they tend to correlate with the use of certain linguistic structures.

Both Austin and Searle have founded their theories based on their perceptions as to how single, deliberately composed sentences, which are separated from real-world contexts, could possibly be used (Geis 1995: 13).

These speech act theorists have thus neglected to explore the reality in which individuals use words in conversation and to account for the influence of contextual circumstances in which these utterances take place. Geis (1995: 13) argues that communicative actions are social events rather than limited to only speech (linguistic) acts. Communicative acts can be accomplished non-verbally and not only through speech as well as being influenced by other expressive and contextual considerations, such as the social relationships between participants, psychological states and attitudes (Geis 1995: 13). Mey (2009: 748) argues that individuals do not necessarily represent their communicative intentions as well-structured intellectual formulations or speak in correct sentences complying with the rules of grammar. Consequently, it is important to note that speech acts are never performed in isolation but are accompanied by a variation of other acts which influence their performative success.

This action-oriented view of questions, as instantiated by micro-speech act theory, is still not adequate for describing questioning behaviour, as it does not describe or explain questioning in larger components of speech; or the role of other modalities in realising the intentions and the effectiveness of the semiotic presentation in order to attain maximal communicative success. These shortcomings are accounted for in more recent macropragmatic theories discussed in the following section.

2.3.3 Macropragmatic theories

Macropragmatic theories account for extralinguistic context of communication. The dynamic interpretation of context is significant when clarifying the correlation between micropragmatics and macropragmatics or the shift from a discourse-participant to a discourse-analytic position. The micro-level analysis or micropragmatics (pragmatics of the utterance) is confirmed by the macro-level analysis or macropragmatics (pragmatics of the discourse), resulting in the reinterpretation of the initial analysis.

This reinterpretation often points towards the transformation in the number and type of textual (linguistic) cues expended before the macropragmatic analysis. The linguistic cues (or co-text, the context of the text itself, e.g., grammatical cohesion) of micro-analysis are directly accessible, where some of the social cues (or context) are not (Cap 2011: 55).

Although other researchers (cf. Cap 2011; Cummings 2005; Levinson 1979; Linell 1998) have investigated the relationship between micro- and macropragmtic theories, only Mey (1994, 2009) and Acheoah (2015) developed their own macropragmatic frameworks for analysis as attempts to elucidate initial models and difficulties of analysing human communication. Mey's (2009: 751) Pragmatic Act theory is an attempt to resolve shortcomings in previous Speech Act theories. His focus is on the situation in which utterances take place from which possible meanings are deduced in order to explain what is said:

> The emphasis here is not on rules for use of individual speech acts but on characterising a typical, pragmatic act as it is realised in a given situation.

These situated acts are guided by extralinguistic aspects of communication, such as: physical environment, socio-cultural background gestures, intonation, facial mimics, posture, head movements and laughter. Therefore, the association between action and speech cannot be confined to that of 'speech acts' alone, and these actions should be defined as 'pragmatic acts' where the various linguistic and semiotic structures come together and are suitably ordered in communication (Mey 2009: 751). Mey's Pragmatic Act theory is illustrated in the following figure:

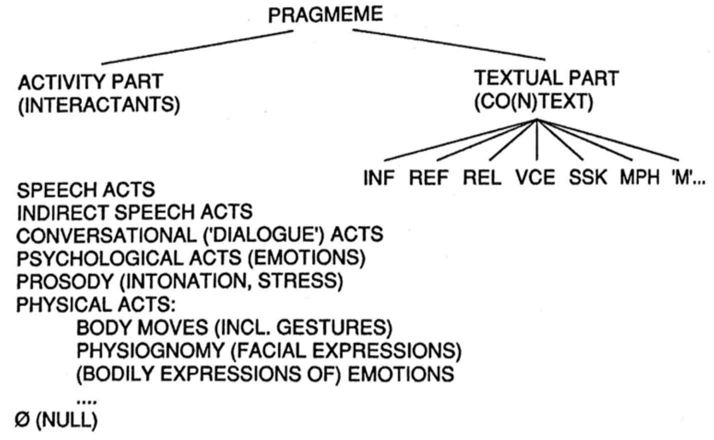

PRAGMEME
ACTIVITY PART
(INTERACTANTS)
TEXTUAL PART
(CO(N)TEXT)
INF
REF
REL
VCE
SSK
MPH
'M'...
SPEECH ACTS
INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS
CONVERSATIONAL ('DIALOGUE') ACTS
PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS (EMOTIONS)
PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS)
PHYSICAL ACTS:
BODY MOVES (INCL. GESTURES)
PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)
(BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS
....
Ø (NULL)

Figure 3: Mey's (2009) Pragmatic Act theory

Mey's theory contains a super-ordinate term 'pragmeme', which is similar to standard linguistic terminology such as morphemes, phonemes and lexemes. Individual pragmatic acts, realising a specific pragmeme, is called a 'pract' and every pract embodying a particular pragmeme is an 'allopract.' A pract captures the 'activity' and 'textual' constituents of discourse (Mey 2009: 752), summarised as follows by Carstens and Rambiritch (2021):

i) the activity part (or interactants) depicts the roles of the individuals participating in discourse, such as: speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational acts (dialogue), psychological acts (emotions), prosody (intonation, stress) and physical acts (gestures, facial expressions).

ii) the textual part (or co(n)text) involves the different contextual variables that interact in discourse situations, such as: inferencing, reference, relevance, voice, shared situational knowledge, metaphor and metapragmatic joker (any component that focuses the attention of the interlocutors on something occurring on the metapragmatic level, e.g., word order).

Acheoah (2015) established the Pragma-crafting theory that describes the systematic, predictable and understandable nature of discourse.

He argues that successful communication is, in essence, a 'pragmatic' process of 'crafting'. This involves the efficient selection and organisation of verbal and non-verbal constituents of communication from smaller to larger structures in order to accomplish illocutionary goals (Acheoah & Ibileye 2016: 3). He labels this process 'Pragma-crafting' (Acheoah 2015: 22). Crafting entails the discourse strategies used by individuals when structuring communication and begins with the micro-level unit of discourse; then progresses to the macro-level body of discourse.

Pragma-crafting includes illocrafting, uptake and sequel, where P-crafting is a super-ordinate pragmatic act that constructs linguistic and extralinguistic features of communication. The discourse structure of Pragma-crafting consists of the binary structure of P-crafting (Acheoah 2015: 24):

i) EVENT involving the interactive and non-interactive participants of discourse. Interactive participants produce linguistic acts (speech acts, segmental features, supra-segmental features, phones, exclamations and lyrical music), extralinguistic (socio-linguistic variables, non-lyrical music, body movement, laughter, drumming and semiotic particulars) and psychological acts (the emotions conveyed through the linguistic and extralinguistic acts); and

ii) TEXT involving P-crafting features (indexicals, shared macro-knowledge, shared contextual knowledge, shared knowledge of emergent context, geo-implicature, linguistic implicature, contextual presupposition, behavioural implicature, pragmadeviant, object referred and operative language).

These features are devised to support the analysis of the linguistic, extralinguistic and psychological acts, but are further accompanied by:

- THEME: the messages disclosed in the text through topic-suggestive words and P-crafting features; and
- SETTING: the physical context disclosed by TEXT and is used with discretion as not all texts expose a SETTING.

Acheoah (2015: 30) maintains that Pragma-Crafting Theory supports pragmatic analysists when uncovering implicit, presupposed and inferred meanings in communications, where micropragmatic theories overstated speech act taxonomy beyond the aspects of natural communication. Acheoah (2015) admits to weaknesses in his Pragma-crafting theory which influence its credibility as an independent conceptual framework for this study (Acheoah & Ibileye 2016: 8):

i) Shared knowledge of the prescribed aspects of language may not provide an explanation for speaker meaning.
ii) No principle accounts for the classification of illocutionary acts as fundamental to the study of meaning.
iii) More emphasis is placed on occasional meaning, forfeiting the standard meaning of language in discourse.
iv) Possible facets of 'language use' and 'meaning' in indirect speech acts are not considered in the theory.
v) The theory does not attempt speech act taxonomy.

P-crafting theory is formulated specifically for social ideological analyses, thus not all the features are relevant to the video-recorded data of this study, as different students were only recorded in one-hour consultation session instead of longitudinally studied as required by this theory. Due to the shortcomings in Acheoah's (2015) framework, the conceptual framework for this study is primarily based on Mey's (2009) Pragmatic Act theory with a few amendments from Acheoah's theory as explained below.

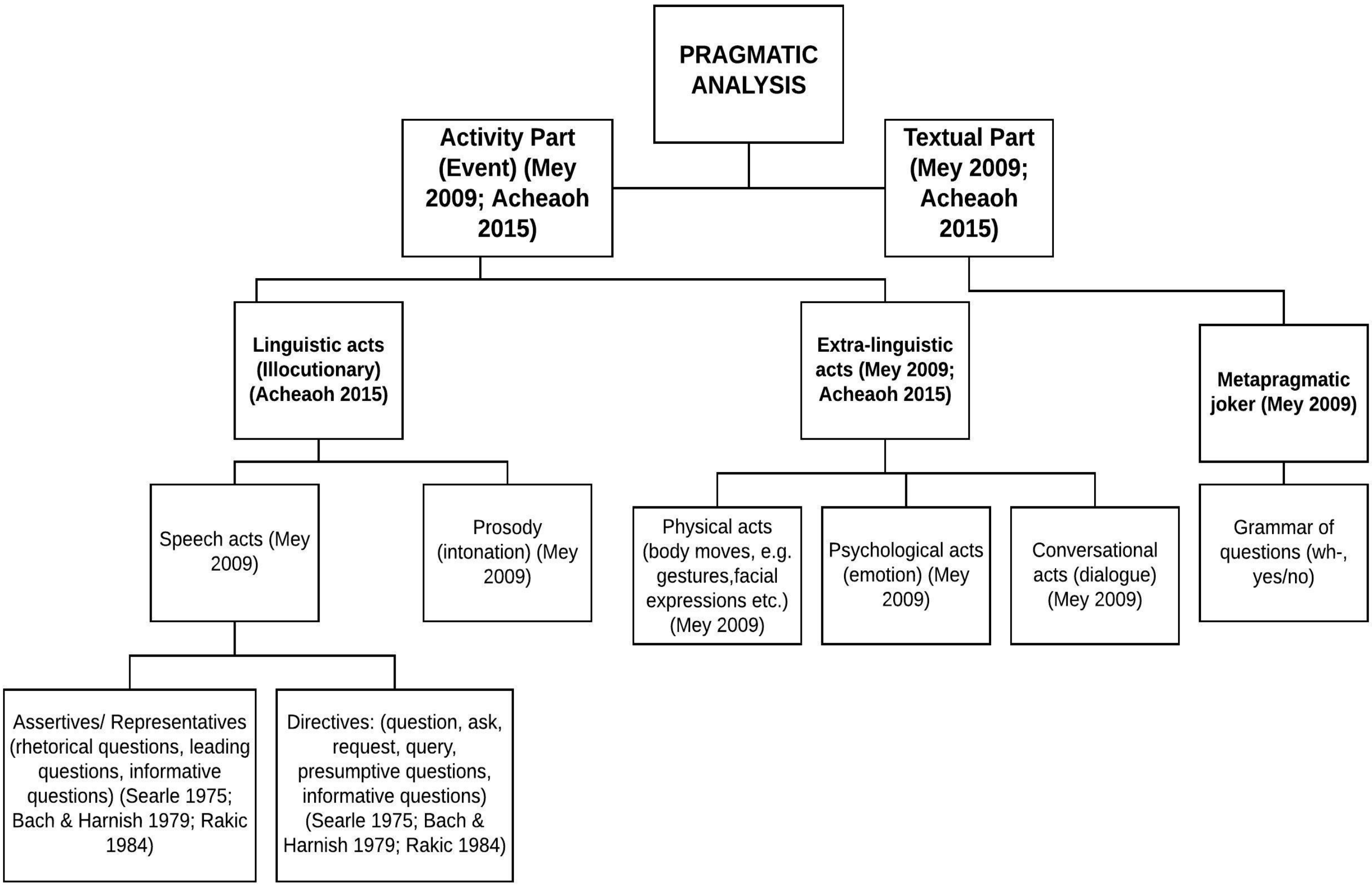

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS
Activity Part (Event) (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Textual Part (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Linguistic acts (Illocutionary) (Acheaoh 2015)
Extra-linguistic acts (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Metapragmatic joker (Mey 2009)
Speech acts (Mey 2009)
Prosody (intonation) (Mey 2009)
Physical acts (body moves, e.g. gestures,facial expressions etc.) (Mey 2009)
Psychological acts (emotion) (Mey 2009)
Conversational acts (dialogue) (Mey 2009)
Grammar of questions (wh-, yes/no)
Assertives/ Representatives (rhetorical questions, leading questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)
Directives: (question, ask, request, query, presumptive questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)

Figure 4: Preliminary conceptual framework for the analysis of questions

Following Mey (2009) and Acheoah (2015), the framework above captures both the 'activity' and 'textual' divisions of discourse. The textual part provides the contextual variables in discourse and entails Mey's (2009) metapragmatic joker that analyses something occurring at a metapragmatic level, in this case, the grammatical structure of questions. Mey's (2009) other textual categories (inferencing, reference, voice, shared situational knowledge and metaphor) are discarded, as they focus more on discourse categories other than the role of questions in communication. The activity part portrays the roles of individuals participating in the discourse and are divided into 'linguistic' and 'non-linguistic acts' as in Acheoah's (2015) framework. The 'linguistic acts' section focuses on illocutionary speech acts and prosody (intonation). The speech act section is then divided into Directives and Assertives/Representatives as previously explained in the micropragmatic section.

The intonation of questions is predominately raised, and this classification is only used where the structure of the question does not follow that of traditional grammar.

The 'extralinguistic acts' section comprises of physical acts, psychological acts and conversational acts, according to Mey's (2009) Pragmatic Act theory. His separate division of indirect speech acts was discarded as indirect speech acts form part of speech act theory and only differ from other speech acts regarding the speaker's intention (Searle 1975: 168). Mey's (2009) division on prosody was also discarded as it does not align with the scope and objectives of this study.

As described previously, the extralinguistic aspects of communication are important when determining the meaning of utterances. Extensive research has been conducted regarding the role of gestures, body movements, eye contact, facial expressions, emotions and other multimodal aspects of communication (cf. Argyle 1975; Kendon 1986; McNeill & Levi 1982; McNeill 1992). For the purpose of this study, the physical and psychological acts are only examined in order to determine the extra-linguistic context in which tutor questioning occurs. The sections below provide reduced definitions for the analysis of the physical and psychological acts guiding tutor questions.

The physical acts and psychological acts, as part of the preliminary framework of this study, comprise any significant body movements accompanying tutor questions, such as gestures, facial expressions and emotions. Gestures are defined as the 'intentional movement of hands, arms, shoulders and head occurring within communicative acts' (Rossini 2012: 23). The framework only includes co-verbal gestures, which are gestures linked to and co-occurring with speech (in this case, tutor questions) within communicative acts (Rossini 2012: 23).

Facial expressions, as part of the extra-linguistic context, communicate thoughts, ideas and emotions (Frank 2001: 5230) and therefore coincide with psychological acts. These expressions provide information regarding the speaker's emotions (fear, frustration, surprise), cognitive activity (concentration, thinking, boredom) and personality (traits, sociability, shyness) accompanying verbal communication.

These aspects, such as the raising of eyebrows when expecting answers to yes/no questions, are important when analysing tutor questions, as they indicate whether students understood the utterance or whether tutors need to provide additional information (Berger 2006: 63).

The following section discusses the role and influence of questions in writing centres. These studies reveal the main question types used in writing tutorials, which are included in the conceptual framework of this study.

2.4 Questioning in writing centre discourse

In writing centre consultations, speech act theory is relevant when examining the pragmatics of questions and the responses they elicit from both tutors and students. According to Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014: 61), questioning within writing centre consultations has various instructional and conversational functions, permitting tutors and students to facilitate the dialogue of the consultation and promoting both tutor and students' committed participation. The functions of questions can be understood by the outcome they have on the listener, through the student's response 'in attempting to clarify a matter, by generating new thoughts, establishing common ground and following the tutor's guidance' (Limberg et al. 2016: 377).

2.4.1 Previous studies on questioning strategies in writing centre pedagogy

Tutors implement questions to support students in advancing their writing skills and are urged to encourage students to ask questions to not only motivate learning but also to keep the student engaged in the session (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 38). Tutors' questions can direct students, present them with information they did not deem necessary and explain their answers through additional questioning in order to direct consultants and achieve a beneficial outcome (Harris 1995: 29). The types of questions in the collaborative approach are mostly open-ended, as tutors aim to provoke critical thinking and encourage learners to come to their own conclusions; however, studies have also determined that closed and rhetorical questions are used to incite the correct response from students (Blau et al. 1998: 23).

According to Limberg et al. (2016: 374), ‘questions are multifunctional and multivalent: while they are commonly used to elicit information, they can also be used to monitor common ground in writing centres and can be utilised to communicate information, as well as prompt information from the student’. Questions are used to disclose discrepancies within the students’ knowledge and to promote thoughtful reasoning concerning ideas for advancement (Limberg et al. 2016: 375). The tutor’s position as guide and interlocutor, as opposed to teacher, is fundamental to this dialogic, student-orientated approach to learning which is controlled by questions rather than answers (Munje et al. 2018: 339).

According to Gillespie and Lerner (2008: 29), tutor sessions often begin with a few basic questions before exploring the writer’s draft. This process differs between tutors but often include the following questions:

> What is the assignment?
> What are your main arguments?
> What concerns you, or what do you want to focus on?

Gillespie and Lerner (2008: 30) then recommend that the next step in the session is to ask the writer to read the paper aloud whilst the tutor takes notes; however, this is not a general pedagogical practice in all writing centres.

Tutors should then turn their focus to higher-order concerns (HOCs). Higher-order concerns are often responsible for the critical difficulties in students’ writing, whereas lower-order concerns (LOCs) describe less severe problems but are equally important. HOCs are the qualities in a piece of writing that occur outside of sentence level issues, such as the unambiguity of the thesis, satisfactory development and sufficient information in the writing (McAndrew & Reigstad 2001: 25). In addressing HOCs, the following questions are often asked:

> Is the writer fulfilling the assignment requirements?
> Is the writing structured appropriately?
> Does the writing exhibit appropriate levels of critical thinking?
>
> (Gillespie & Lerner 2008: 35)

These questions allow students to revise their papers and demonstrate the tutor's trust in the writer's decisions. The aim is to allow students to see what types of questions they should ask about their writing and tutors should effectively model these questions (Gillespie & Lerner 2008: 37), emphasising collaborative and student-centred approaches in writing centre pedagogy.

Towards the end of writing centre consultations, tutors should focus on LOCs. LOCs are qualities in a sentence that fall on the level of words or punctuation, such as sentence structure, grammar, usage and spelling (McAndrew & Reigstad 2001: 25). Many sentence-level difficulties are often not the outcome of a writer's lack of understanding but result from the writer attempting to express complex ideas in unfamiliar topics. Tutors must not act as editors but should rather communicate techniques that students can use to edit their own writing (Gillespie & Lerner 2008: 35).

Various writing centre researchers (Blau et al. 1998; Limberg et al. 2016; Morrision 2008; Munje et al. 2018; Park 2017; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014) have studied the practice of questions by classifying questions according to their type and grammatical structure. Studies by Limberg et al. (2016) and Munje et al. (2018) have established a general guideline in determining the specific roles of questions within different stages of the writing centre consultation. However, although these studies purport to focus on the function of questioning during the different phases of the writing consultation, it is not always clear which phase is at stake. Limberg et al. (2016: 382) note that the opening section of writing tutorials are shaped by introductory questions that pose as icebreakers, which influence the overall success of the consultation. Harris (1995 cited in Munje et al. 2018: 339) recommends that introductory questions must be used to depict the tutor as a peer who is prepared to help without exhibiting judgement, establishing rapport with the student. Information-seeking questions that obtain background information about the student, class, assignment and former experience also take place at this stage. This permits the student to articulate his/her concerns and creates an agenda for the remainder of the consultation (Limberg et al. 2016: 383). Most questions are used during the diagnosis or problem-solving section of the consultation that focus on HOCs.

This phase is more complex and involves identifying the problematic sections of the writing and resolving these matters. A combination of questions is employed at this stage, including information-seeking questions and organisational questions.

Limberg et al. (2016: 384) recognise that writing centre consultations also involve a section where tutors and students discuss topic sentences. The implementation of topic sentences (the first sentence of a paragraph explaining its theme) is often problematic in student essays, and questions within this section are used to complete phase-specific functions. Questions are expressed as tags attached to declarative statements to assess the student's participation. The utilisation of tags establishes a dialogic environment where the student is both a passive listener regarding the tutor's suggestions and is also encouraged to evaluate these suggestions. For example, in the case below where the tutor is explaining the four aspects that make a thesis statement:

> Tutor: Ok, why is it not arguable?
> Is it specific?
> Student: No, so it's not arguable cause it's not specific.

The tutor's insertion of the phrase 'is it specific?' and the student's response 'no' (Limberg et al. 2016: 384) encourages the student to evaluate their own thesis statement.

Once the student reaches an understanding of all the questions, the tutor will begin with a new series of questions that facilitate the formation of new ideas to construct coherent arguments. These questions are more specific and concern particular issues in the student's paper. The questions are asked to urge the student to devise new ideas and to activate the student's input in the consultation (HOCs). The student becomes the one asking questions and explaining what he/she is trying to accomplish in their writing, and the tutor then asks fewer questions compared to previous sections of the consultation (Limberg et al. 2016: 385).

Before the closing of the consultation, the tutor will begin to focus on the language-related problems in the student's writing (LOCs). The tutor asks display questions as an efficient method to save time and to advance the student in the direction of suitable answers. As the consultation is coming to an end, question types that produce distinct answers are employed to steer the conversation.

Limberg et al. (2016: 391) conclude that questions ‘constitute the heart of tutorial talk’ and are a vital instrument for solving problems in the student’s writing. The multiplicity of question types within tutorials show that tutors rely on a range of questions to guide the conversation when facilitating students. Questions assist the development of interaction in the tutorial and tutorial discourse is principally structured by questions (Limberg et al. 2016: 291).

Munje et al. (2018) also analysed the use of questions in a writing centre tutorial but only discuss three stages of questioning. In agreement with Limberg et al. (2016), the study determined that tutorials often begin with introductory questions that act as icebreakers in order to put students at ease, once again establishing rapport. Tutors ask questions to establish familiarity with student writers from a universal perspective. These questions encourage students to describe the specific issues that need to be resolved but also gently unlock a reflective environment for the tutorial (Munje et al. 2018: 345).

The next stage of the tutorial, in this analysis, involves task-related/content questions to discover and examine students’ comprehension of their assignment (HOCs). These questions inspire students to evaluate their assignments from various viewpoints and focus on extracting their knowledge of the particular instructions regarding their assignments. Tutors also ask questions in this section to establish whether students’ verbal inquiries correspond with these instructions. These questions focus on the most significant sections of the assignment (higher order concerns) and are often succeeded by follow-up questions to help students in self-identifying gaps in their writing (Munje et al. 2018: 345).

Writing-related/language-related (LOCs) questions are then asked at the final stage of the tutorial in order to investigate and broadly advance students’ knowledge of academic writing. These questions aim at progressing students’ general knowledge of academic writing beyond their knowledge of the existing assignment. Munje et al. (2018: 345) state that a balance must exist between writing-related questions and task-related questions. If the tutor concentrates excessively on the immediate assignment, students are inclined to associate learning in all fields with that distinct context and may become dependent on this specific type of assistance.

However, if the questions only centre on general aspects of writing, students may fail to improve with particular assignments. Tutors need to ask specific questions to design a setting that is beneficial for long- and short-term student learning (Munje et al. 2018: 348).

Questioning in the writing centre environment has a vital function in modelling how writing centres operate in higher education. The types of questions tutors ask and their responses allow students to divide power regarding the regulation of pace and procedures in tutorials, allowing students to find their own voice in other educational environments and to critically evaluate their writing (Munje et al. 2018: 350). This confronts the more traditional, hierarchal power structures found in other areas of academia (Harris 1995: 37). Writing centres challenge the classroom approach by giving students the confidence to communicate their personal thoughts and difficulties without feeling criticised. However, using different questions to construct productive interactions with students is not a linear task, as students come from different backgrounds and have different concerns regarding their writing. The role of questioning is to assist tutors in meeting students' needs and supporting them in the writing process (Munje et al. 2018: 350).

The following section examines prior studies done on the types and functions of questions in writing centres.

2.4.2 Overview of previous research on questioning in writing consultations

In addition to the two studies discussed above, various other writing centre researchers, such as Blau et al, (1998), Morrison (2008), Park (2017) and Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014) have analysed the grammatical and functional aspects of questioning in writing centre consultations abroad. In South Africa, Munje et al.'s (2018) is the only research that focused specifically on questioning in writing centre consultations.

Blau et al. (1998) examined the collaborative nature of tutor/student relationships by recording and transcribing tutorial sessions for two consecutive semesters.

They implemented a linguistic analyses of writing tutorials where questions, echoing and qualifiers formed part of their analyses. With regard to questioning, the first recording showed that questions were mostly open-ended to encourage the students to critically engage with their writing. However, they also found that seemingly closed leading questions were also used when yes/no responses were required. The second recording showed that the tutor begins the consultation by asking many open-ended questions to create a collaborative environment (Blau et al. 1998: 24). However, as the appointment progressed, the tutor adapted a more direct style and implemented direct statements posed as questions. The study concludes that tutors implement open-ended questions to maintain a collaborative approach, but that tutors often avoid direct questions when the answer is already known, resulting in the mismanagement of time (Blau et al. 1998: 38).

Morrision (2008) investigated four teaching strategies of instruction, cognitive scaffolding, motivational scaffolding and question asking used by tutors in peer writing consultations. The study analysed one tutor session according to the descriptions of these teaching strategies (Morrison 2008: 17). Questions were examined as a way for tutors to gather information. The analysis determined that questions were used throughout the other three teaching strategies and that tutors use numerous questions during writing centre consultations. Questions were used for the purpose of instruction to cognitively scaffold the learner and to offer students positive and negative feedback. Additionally, the tutor employed questions to obtain information from the learner and to collect information regarding the student's assignment. Morrison (2008: 33) concludes that the findings of the study should not be generalised and applied to every tutor in every writing centre, but that focus should be placed on the lack of research on teaching strategies in writing centres (Morrison 2008: 33).

Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014) examine the function of questions in a corpus of eleven writing centre tutorials that generated 690 questions, with 81% of the questions being asked by tutors. They adapted a coding scheme based on previous research on questioning in other fields of quantitative tutoring, such as maths and science, for the analyses. Questions were categorised as knowledge deficit questions, common ground questions, social coordination questions, conversation control questions and leading and scaffolding questions.

The study indicated that questions in writing centres have various instructional and conversational purposes. Questions allow both tutors and students to fulfil knowledge deficits and to verify one another's understanding. The research also established that questions allow tutors and students to assist writing centre conversations and facilitate students' participation. Tutors also use questions to assist students in explaining what they want to achieve and recognise difficulties in their writing (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 37).

Park (2017) used conversation analysis (CA) to examine the manner in which second language writers resist the advice of tutors. The study, which analysed six hours of video recordings from eight tutoring sessions using CA, focused specifically on the students' use of questions for advice resistance and identified two questioning practices: reversed polarity questions and alternative proposals for candidate revision (Park 2017: 253). Reversed polarity questions alter between wh-questions and affirmative or negative yes/no questions, while the students also use advice-resisting questions to propose alternatives to the tutors' suggestions (Park 2017: 257, 263). The analysis revealed that students use advice-resisting questions to initiate 'the expansion of the sequence' (Park 2017: 253) and present participants with the option of discussing and revising the rationale behind their advice. Additionally, the study reveals various ways in which participants are involved in the application of writing centre pedagogy through their construction of advice that indicates the student's specific writing concerns (Park 2017: 253).

Munje et al.'s (2018) study (also discussed in the previous section) is the only research that specifically focuses on questioning in writing tutorials within the South African context. Their research focused on the different types of questions asked in writing tutorials and how these questions facilitate the learning process (Munje et al. 2018: 336). Tutors' experiences throughout tutorials and written reports containing their reflections on these tutorials were examined to analyse questioning. Various types of questions were identified in the data sources and then divided into three categories: introductory, task-related and writing-related questions (Munje et al. 2018: 342). The research concludes that questioning is significant in modelling the work of writing centres in higher education. Questioning establishes a student-centred conversational space that poses several advantages for peer tutors and tutees.

However, it is challenging to construct tutorial conversations according to the different types of questions, as each student approaches the writing centre with different needs. Thus, the role of questioning is to assist tutors in identifying students’ concerns and to create steps in solving these difficulties (Munje et al. 2018: 350).

The table below provides a summary of the types of questions found in previous studies on questioning in writing centre tutorials.

Table 3: Summary of question types according to writing centre literature

Question types		Description/Example	Source
Questions that elicit information/ prompt information	EIQ	These questions elicit information regarding the subject matter of the student's assignment or writing. They generate responses concerning content or writing issues, for example: So what class is this?	Blau et al. (1998: 23) Limberg et al. (2016: 380)
Monitor common ground	MCG	Questions that elicit general background information on what the student needs, wants, knows, and understands about an assignment, for example: What did your teacher say are out-of-bounds topics for this paper?	Limberg et al. (2016: 380) Thomson and Mackiewicz (2014: 42)
Questions that encourage or request the hearer to perform a certain (physical) action	QPA	Questions that ask the student to perform an activity or relates to the actions of the student throughout the consultation. These questions have the illocutionary force of directives, for example: Would you read this sentence aloud? Why don't you go home, have lunch, and come back later?	Limberg et al. (2016: 380) Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014: 43)
Questions that provoke critical thinking, thoughtful reasoning	QCT	These questions promote further thinking about the student's writing that results in the generation of new ideas from aspects in the writing, for example: Can you think of another way to say it? What kind of word is magic?	Blau et al. (1998:23) Limberg et al. (2016: 380)
Scaffolding questions	SQ	Questions pushing the student towards reviewing their work or brainstorming. The answer is not 'yes' or 'no', for example: What do you think? How might you incorporate examples into this paragraph?	Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014: 42)
Leading questions	LQ	Questions that lead the student to an answer. The tutor scaffolding seems to already know what the student will answer, which is often 'yes' or 'no', for example: Tutor: Do you think you should write about going downstairs? Student: Yes	Blau et al. (1998: 23) Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014: 42)

Writing related questions (HOCs)	WRQ	Writing-related questions investigate and advance the students' knowledge of academic writing in general by concentrating on skills needed in higher education regarding writing forms and styles, for example: What about the conclusion?	Blau et al. (1998: 23) Munje et al (2018)
Language related (LOCs)	LRQ	These questions test the student's knowledge regarding formal aspects of writing (grammar), for example: Tutor: Contribute TO or will be useful FOR? Student : Contribute to	Blau et al. (1998: 23) Limberg et al. (2016: 380)
Open questions	OQ	Invites discussion	Blau et al. (1998: 23)
Closed questions	CQ	Invites the correct response	Blau et al. (!998: 23)
Introductory questions	IQ	These questions act as icebreakers to establish rapport between the student and the tutor. The intention is to make the student feel welcome and comfortable, for example: Tutor: Hi, welcome to the writing centre. How are you today?	Munje et al. (2018: 343)

2.5 Summary of Research Gaps and Opportunities

The examination of studies done on questioning in writing centres reveals various gaps in the literature both in methodology and in analyses. Regarding methodology, few systematic analyses have been done on questioning in writing centres. The majority of studies are based on purposive selection of questions/tutorials by researchers and an application of a range of typologies based on functions of questions at specific phases in consultations. Only Park (2017) specifically used the discourse-based method of CA for analysis. None of the studies used pragmatics as a framework for distilling codes and categories or considered extralinguistic influences.

Further research can also be done on the analyses of questions, as only a few studies (Blau et al. 1998; Limberg et al. 2016; Park 2017; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014) specifically focus on both the grammatical forms, types and functions of questioning in writing consultations. Previous studies also fail to identify regularities and irregularities in question-answer sequences in the corpora examined, and fail, too, to analyse questions in terms of direct and indirect speech acts. Another gap can also be identified regarding the multimodality of questioning in writing centres, where no study examines the different modes of communication concerning questioning in writing centres or considers the extralinguistic factors presented in pragmatic analyses.

In the South African context, a rather large gap exists in the study of questioning in writing centre consultations with only Munje et al.'s (2018) study specifically concentrating on the role of questioning in facilitating writing consultations. However, Munje et al. (2018) only focused on three types of questions and not on their functions or multimodality. This study provides an opportunity for the fulfilment of these gaps in the literature by aiming to analyse the various grammatical forms, types and functions of questions in writing centre consultations while taking into consideration the extralinguistic factors that influence communication.

2.6 Conceptual framework for this study

Based on the gaps identified in empirical research, a new conceptual framework was constructed for the analysis of questions in writing centre consultations.

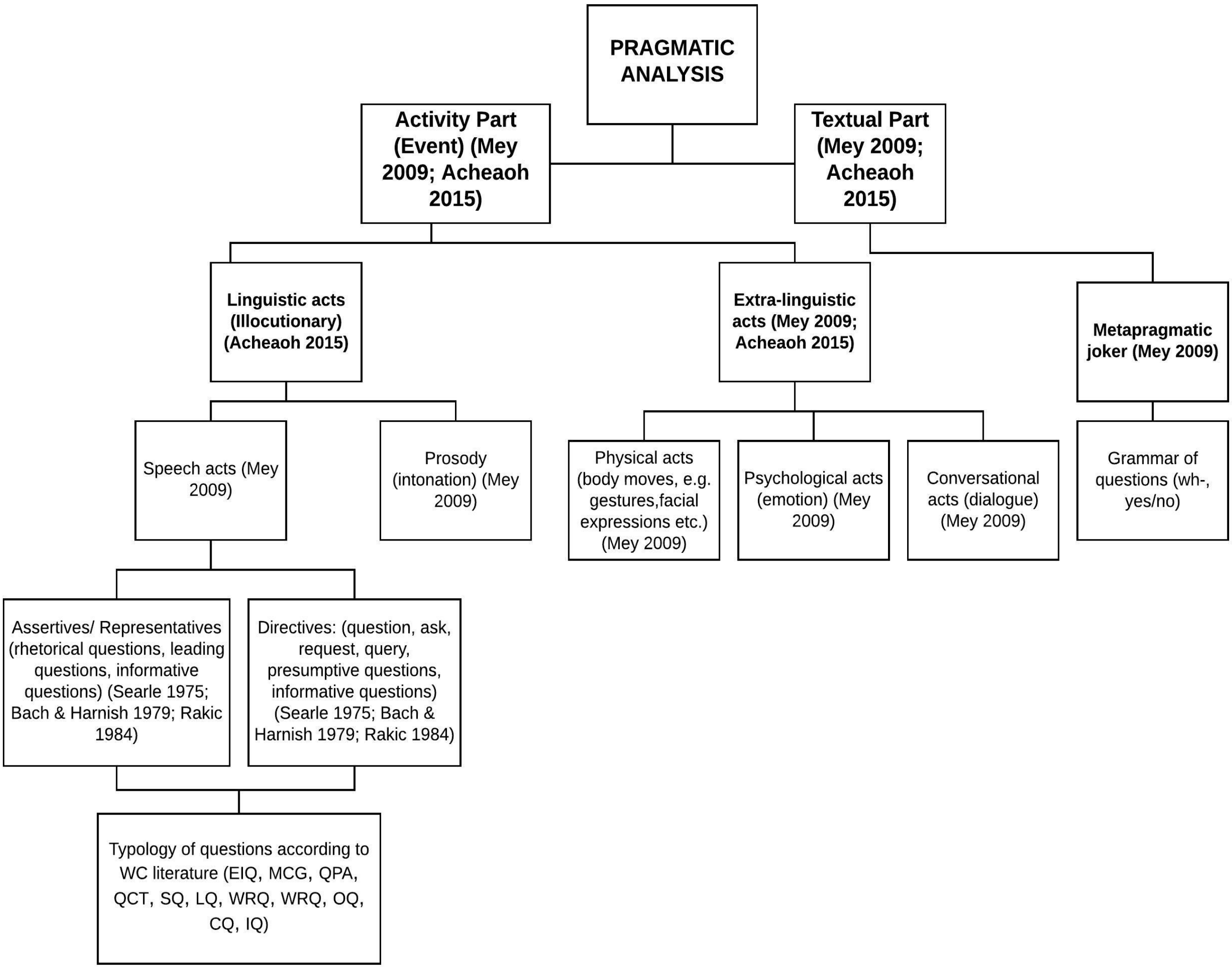

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS
Activity Part (Event) (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Textual Part (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Linguistic acts (Illocutionary) (Acheaoh 2015)
Extra-linguistic acts (Mey 2009; Acheaoh 2015)
Metapragmatic joker (Mey 2009)
Speech acts (Mey 2009)
Prosody (intonation) (Mey 2009)
Physical acts (body moves, e.g. gestures,facial expressions etc.) (Mey 2009)
Psychological acts (emotion) (Mey 2009)
Conversational acts (dialogue) (Mey 2009)
Grammar of questions (wh-, yes/no)
Assertives/ Representatives (rhetorical questions, leading questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)
Directives: (question, ask, request, query, presumptive questions, informative questions) (Searle 1975; Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984)
Typology of questions according to WC literature (EIQ, MCG, QPA, QCT, SQ, LQ, WRQ, WRQ, OQ, CQ, IQ)

Figure 5: Conceptual framework for analysing questions in writing centre consultations

A pragmatic analysis was chosen as the conceptual framework for this study to account for previous gaps in both methodology and theory, allowing for the investigation of the nature of the object being studied (questioning in writing centre tutorials) and its association with other users and objects (or within its theoretical framework – in this case, the students and tutorial practices) instead of examining the object in isolation.

The framework consists of sections derived from theories in micro- and macropragmatics, with an additional section for analysing the typology of questions according to previous studies in writing centres. This section falls under the 'Speech acts' section, as the questions in writing centres function as illocutionary acts (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 40). These questions can either be Assertives/Representatives or Directives, depending on their structure and communicative intent. Questions are thus classified according to their type of illocutionary speech act, as well as their function in the writing centre context, which include questions that: elicit information, monitor common ground, encourage the hearer to perform a certain action, provoke critical thinking, scaffold, focus on HOCs and LOCs, are open/closed, lead the student to an answer and are introductory. These categories will reveal the pragmatic aims of both the speaker and the hearer, as guided by the other activity or textual parts of analyses, where the extralinguistic influences in communication in writing centres are also considered.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of questioning and consists of two sections. The first section describes questions under linguistics, focussing first on their grammatical structure then on pragmatic aims of questions according to micropragmatic Speech Act Theory and finally on macropragmatics. It is important to note that micropragmatics does not consider the influence of extralinguistic factors on communication, thus it is not sufficient as a conceptual framework without amendments made by macropragmatics. A preliminary conceptual framework comprising of both micro- and macropragmatics is constructed. The second section focuses on the role of questions in writing centre tutorials. An overview of previous research determined the various typologies of questions prominent in these tutorials, contributing to the final conceptual model of this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe and justify the research methodology of this study. The chapter begins with a description of the ontology and epistemology that underpin the case study strategy selected for this study. Furthermore, a description is provided of the qualitative research design, the methods of data gathering and analyses and the procedures followed to ensure that ethical principles are observed throughout the research process.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is the philosophical worldview underlying the research approach and has three main components: ontology (views regarding the nature of reality), epistemology (views on the nature and acquisition of knowledge) and methodology (the research approach employed to explore reality) (Phakiti & Paltridge 2015: 16). This research takes place within a social constructionist paradigm.

The social constructionist paradigm maintains a relativist ontology with a subjectivist epistemology that is associated with post-modern thinking (Levers 2013: 3). The relativist ontology considers reality to be structured through human interaction, where reality is not in existence before social construction. Therefore, perceived realities can be multiple, as determined by the context and the participants of the study, coupled with the researcher’s task to recognise and describe the social settings or events as they occur (Phakiti & Paltridge 2015: 17). The nature of knowledge (epistemology) is perceived as created by humans and is subjectively constructed through social and cultural experiences (Kim 2001); thus social constructionism deems that individuals strive to find meaning through social interaction. In this paradigm, research is led by the researcher’s accustomed views and outlooks regarding the world and how it should be interpreted and analysed.

Various meanings and methods of discovery are accepted and acknowledged through representations of a subjective reality (Levers 2013: 3). According to Harris (2010: 3-5), social constructionist analyses are either objective or interpretative. In an objective analysis, the actual behaviours, conditions or entities are constructed whereas an interpretive analysis formulates meanings of the phenomena being studied. This study uses an interpretative analysis – as meaning-making is dependent on the researcher's practices – by analysing how meanings are created by and for participants of a certain social setting, in particular, the writing centre.

The social constructionist paradigm is typically used in qualitative research where subjective meanings are numerous and diverse, prompting the researcher to search for the intricacy of meanings rather than reducing meanings to specific ideas (Creswell 2009: 8). Therefore, researchers motivated by social constructionism propose that a phenomenon cannot be described 'objectively' but is rather constructed through the comprehension of social action (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 33). Social constructionists aim to focus on the participant's view of the condition being researched and on the interactional procedures between individuals and their different life settings (Creswell 2009: 8). This approach cannot be condensed to one specific methodology, as constructivists anticipate the subjective nature of the world, regarding meaning as being socially constructed and 'to have a special concern with the unique character of human activity and of the agency which creates social action' (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 90). Social constructionists should implement detailed and reflexive procedures built on the notion that the methodology being used is also a social construct (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 33).

In this study, social constructionist research is appropriate, as language and discourse are analysed in a naturalistic setting where various descriptions of the world are appropriate. Thus, the 'texts' (speech in the case of writing centres) are exposed to several interpretations (White 2004: 7). In this study, the researcher interprets the functional use of questions against the background of the categorisation of questions in the literature on linguistic pragmatics, the description of questioning as a strategy in writing centre consultations and the perceived pragmatic aims of the speakers in the research data, as influenced by the institutional and local context.

3.3 Research approach

This study primarily follows a qualitative design in that categories are assigned primarily to linguistic data; results will only be quantified when indications of frequency and distribution could aid in demonstrating the salience of a particular category or phenomenon.

Qualitative research can be described as the approach to empirical research that depends mainly on the collection of qualitative data, such as nonnumerical information. This approach focuses on various modes of subjective data and studies people in certain contexts in their natural environment (Christensen, Johnson & Turner 2015: 68). The research depends on the results of the analysis or 'the observation of behaviour' (Creswell 2003: 19). It includes many different methodologies, however all the methodologies normally concentrate on phenomena taking place in natural or 'real world' settings and capturing and analysing the intricacy of those specific phenomena. These observations are hardly ever simplified but identified as having many different elements that are presented in multifaceted forms (Leedy & Ormrod 2015: 269).

Qualitative research can be interpreted as a research approach that focuses on specific words or ideas as opposed to the collection and analysis of numerical data. Qualitative research primarily uses inductive reasoning for describing the correlation between theory and research, where an understanding of social reality is represented as 'a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation' (Bryman 2012: 36). However, qualitative research is often not exclusively inductive, as researchers typically use both inductive and deductive reasoning (Leedy & Omrod 2015: 100). The researcher begins by deductively only focusing on questions in the data and then moves to induction as new codes emerge regarding the functions of questions.

In case study research, as is relevant to this study, the researcher's role as an objective outsider is to comprehend the data from the participants' subjective perspectives and to understand the insiders' views (Christensen et al. 2015: 68). Researchers prefer to emphasise the significance of meaning and holistic themes instead of statistic variables and standardisation and formulate meanings and explanations for their observations.

Researchers utilise procedures, such as individual or group interviews and naturalistic observations, through audio or video recordings as means of answering the research questions (Phakiti & Paltridge 2015: 14).

Qualitative research in applied linguistics is characteristically aimed at understanding language as a social phenomenon and language learning or use in context (in this case, questioning) as it takes place in natural settings, such as social or classroom environments (in this case, the writing centre). Therefore, human behaviour, such as the use of language, is aligned with the context in which it appears (Phakiti & Paltridge 2015: 13). In this study, the naturally occurring verbal and non-verbal behaviour of participants was recorded in writing centre consultations; particularly in events aimed at empowering students to write academically in the conventional genres of the academy through the asking of questions by writing centre consultants. In particular, the researcher subjectively interpreted the recorded and transcribed interactions between consultants and students to understand the functions of questioning in writing centre consultations.

3.4 Research strategy: case study

Case study methodologies encompass the systematic collecting of sufficient data regarding a specific individual, social setting, event or group that allows the researcher to successfully comprehend the manner in which it operates. Case studies are a detailed examination of a single unit and the interaction of this particular unit within its context (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 281) and are 'literally an example of something – a unit of analysis – in which something could be a school, a person…depending on the particular interest of the researcher and the field' (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 16). The unit of analysis for this study are the questions asked by three writing centre consultants in six writing centre consultations. These questions are analysed according to the case study types outlined by Stake (1994) and Yin (2003).

Stake (1994 cited in Berg 2001: 229) states that researchers have different motivations for the study of specific cases. He classifies case studies according to three categories: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Instrumental case studies offer insights into a specific phenomenon or enhance theoretical understandings, whereas collective case studies comprise the extensive analysis of many instrumental case studies. Intrinsic case studies are relevant when researchers want to improve their understanding of a particular case. The researcher's task is not to test abstract theory or to create new theoretical explanations but to form a better understanding of the intrinsic aspects of the particular organisation being studied (Berg 2001: 229). This study involves a combination of instrumental and intrinsic case studies, as the question types and functions in writing centre consultations are described to explain the underlying aspects of consultations and how questions are used to facilitate learning thus providing a better comprehension of this tutoring strategy and refining current theories on tutor practices.

Yin (2003: 5), on the other hand, classifies case studies according to the following types: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. This study follows both exploratory and descriptive case study designs. An exploratory case study aims to describe the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study or to establish the practicality of the preferred research practices, where the purpose is to observe a social phenomenon in its natural structure (Yin 2003: 6). This study analyses questioning in writing centre consultations as they occur in their natural environment in order to answer research questions pertaining to the role of questioning in current tutor practices. A descriptive case study provides a thorough description of the phenomenon in the context in which it occurs (Yin 2003: 5). This study is also descriptive, as it provides an understanding of the functions of tutor questions in the writing centre context.

The context and types of data are also be described when conducting a case study (Yin 2003: 4). This particular study takes place in an institutional context, as it focuses on a particular practice within an institution (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 281): in the first place, the practice of consulting senior peers for language support and, in the second place, the practice of using questions as a facilitation strategy.

Case studies may concentrate on an individual, group or community and can apply various data types and techniques, such as life histories and documents (Berg 2009: 225). In this study, the primary strategy is document analysis supported by the contextualisation of video-recorded consultations. It is thus important to describe the setting and participants involved in the study as done in the following section.

3.5 Setting and participants

3.5.1 Setting

A description of the setting in which a case study plays out is particularly important in order to gain a better understanding of the dialogue taking place. In the case of an institution, the description of the exact physical setting provides insight into the rules, regulations and practices that apply (Halliday 2013: 50). With regard to this study, it is important to mention that the students who intend to visit the Writing Centre first make an appointment online with a particular consultant to book a time slot. The student then comes to the Writing Centre in the time slot that he/she has booked and sits down at a desk with the consultant. The online system allows students to upload drafts of their assignments prior to the consultation, however, in the case of undergraduate students the assignment is not uploaded online before the consultation as students bring along a draft of the assignment they would like to discuss. A computer is available, should a student bring the assignment on a USB.

Consultations usually lasted between 30 and 50 minutes, depending on the student’s writing concerns and the input the consultant deems necessary to address these concerns. Traditionally, consultants are forbidden to write on the student’s draft (Boquet 1999; Clark 1988; Lichtenstein 1983), but the Humanities Writing Centre does not strictly abide to this practice. Some Writing Centre consultants use paper and coloured pens for students to highlight parts of their own documents to support their explanations.

The atmosphere in the Writing Centre is more informal than in lectures, and consultants aim at creating a welcoming environment - by establishing rapport within the first few minutes of the consultation to put the student at ease and sustaining an atmosphere of openness and trust throughout the consultation.

3.5.2 Participants

The participants in the larger study, of which this study forms part, comprised of writing centre tutors and undergraduate students from various faculties at the University of Pretoria who visited the Writing Centre for the first time. Both consultants and students gave informed consent that the consultation may be video recorded. A more detailed description regarding participant selection is provided in the section 3.6.2 Sampling. The demographic profiles of the participants in the selected videos are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Demographics of participants

Video no.	Participants	Level of Study	Gender
1. MV0064 MV0065	Student	First year	Female
	Consultant 1	Postgraduate	Female
2. MV0068	Student	First Year	Female
	Consultant 1	Postgraduate	Female
3. MV0069	Student	First Year	Female
	Consultant 2	Postgraduate	Female
4. MV0070	Student	First Year	Female
	Consultant 2	Postgraduate	Female
5. MV0000	Student	First Year	Female
	Consultant 3	Postgraduate	Male
6. MV0001	Student	First Year	Female
	Consultant 3	Postgraduate	Male

Subsection 3.6.1 below provides detail on how the participants were sampled in various phases of the larger and the smaller (this) research project.

3.6 Data collection methods

Qualitative researchers regularly collect various forms of data in a single study, e.g., observations, interviews and written documents. The data collection methods must comply with the ethical requirements discussed in section 3.9 of this chapter, describing how participants must be informed regarding the nature of this study (Leedy & Ormrod 2015: 278). The data for this study was collected through purposive sampling techniques, selecting only undergraduate students visiting the Writing Centre. These consultations were video recorded, and the recordings were then transcribed. Thus, both video recordings and transcriptions act as data for this study.

3.6.1 Sampling techniques

Sampling is the process of selecting instances from an observed population (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 164). The population for a study is the group (generally of people) from which the study derives conclusions (Babbie 2016: 116) or the 'specified aggregation of study elements' (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 174), which may include artifacts produced by the people studied. The population relevant to this study comprises writing consultants who facilitate sessions aimed at improving the writing of (mostly undergraduate) students.

A 'study population' is chosen from a larger population as mentioned above. A 'study population' can be defined as the 'aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected' (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 174). The 'study population' in this study can be viewed as the writing consultations taking place in a particular writing centre, namely the Humanities Writing Centre at the University of Pretoria during a particular time frame, since the focus of the video recordings were not on particular consultants or particular students, although only consultations with undergraduate students were considered.

From a study population, 'sampling units' are then identified. A sampling unit is the element or set of elements that are contemplated for selection at some stage in the sampling process.

In single-stage samples, the sampling units are equivalent to the units of analysis (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 174). This study comprised two distinct stages of which the larger study represents one stage and this study another. In the case of this study, the sampling units are the verbal and non-verbal contributions of three writing consultants in the Humanities Writing Centre, particularly focussing on the questions used by the consultants during these consultations. This type of sampling is a type of probability sampling known as purposive or judgmental sampling which occurs when the selection of a sample is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, its characteristics and the nature of the research objectives or purpose of the study (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 166). According to Bryman (2012: 418), most qualitative research includes a type of purposive sampling. The sampling is managed by referring to the research aims to allow units of analysis to be selected in terms of criteria that answer the research questions, thus participants are sampled strategically.

Purposive sampling is considered as subjective when researchers use their own judgement and discretion concerning a specific phenomenon (Gaurte & Barrios 2006: 227). As previously mentioned, the researcher purposely selected consultations facilitated by three writing centre consultants (from a potential five), as these three were the only consultants who conducted two consultations each from the corpus of consultations that were video-recorded and transcribed. This selection gave the researcher the opportunity to study the use of questions in tutor talk (as a particular institutional genre) and, at the same time, control for possible extralinguistic features of consultants' questioning techniques.

3.6.2 Data-collection instruments

The type of data collected in applied linguistics are diverse and encompasses anything seen or heard which assists the researcher in resolving problems outlined by the research questions (Halliday 2013: 51). The data types in this study involve video recordings and transcripts.

3.6.2.1 Video recordings

Case studies in applied linguistics consist of systematic, concentrated observations of participants in a natural context (classrooms, workplaces etc.), specifically when concerning a particular linguistic performance or speech event (Duff 2008: 139). Audio-visual recordings encompass everything that is essentially seen and heard and therefore provide richer data than audio recordings. They also provide a clear extra-linguistic context for the analysis of communication rather than exploring tutor-talk in isolation. These video recording observations give the researcher the opportunity to also focus on non-verbal features of the dialogue, such as prosoding and extralinguistic aspects of language interaction, including intonation, gestures, smiling, laughter, head nodding and participants' orientation in relation to the camera (Duff 2008: 140). In this study, a camera was set up to record these appointments prior to the student's arrival. The student's permission was asked, and both the student and the tutor then signed a consent form, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the data provided. In the larger study, a corpus of ten videos from ten writing centre consultations was recorded and professionally transcribed. The researcher chose six of these video recordings, as they offer two recorded consultations per selected consultant for comparison (as previously discussed). These consultants also work specifically with undergraduate students, which are the focus of the study.

3.6.2.2 Transcriptions

The first step in the data analyses was to convert the recordings to text. The transcriptions of this study were done by a professional transcription agency using predetermined transcription conventions. The transcription conventions relate to discourse analysis methodology (later discussed) where researchers focus 'not only on what has been said, but also how it has been said' (Ten Have 2007: 94). However, it is important to note that transcripts do not reflect the full social context in which the data is collected, as they do not offer information on facial expressions and sufficient detail on gestures (Rosner & Wann 2010). Thus, the video recordings are used complementary to the transcripts to determine which speech segments are questions and what the intent of the questioning was in the particular context.

3.7 Data analyses techniques

The videos and transcripts were analysed according to the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. Six videos were subjected to grammatical and pragmatic analyses, which include the textual and activity parts of the conceptual framework. In the 'textual part', the grammar of questions is identified, and their number of occurrences are tabularised. In the 'activity part', the linguistic acts (speech acts) of questioning are analysed as well as the extralinguistic acts, which include the psychological, physical and conversational acts involved in questioning.

3.7.1 Grammatical analysis

The formal grammatical analysis concerns the 'textual part' of the conceptual framework. Textual approaches concentrate on analysing formal language preferences, meanings and patterns in texts. The researcher critically evaluates the underlying meanings and aspirations in the text (Paltridge & Wang 2015: 211). The grammar of questions was categorised according to their sentence type, either declarative or interrogative. Interrogative types where then further categorised according to their grammatical structures: yes/no questions and wh-questions. The number of occurrences of these types were then also tabularised to reveal the amount of tutor questions and their format in the text. These questions were further subjected to a pragmatic analysis to reveal the situational aspects in which these speech events take place.

3.7.2 Pragmatic analyses

The pragmatic analyses of the transcripts, complemented by the videos, is based on a customised theoretical framework. It involves a type of discourse analysis, as various features of language used in discourse analysis are also relevant to the field of pragmatics. Pragmatic analysis may potentially involve three principal approaches to analysing transcripts or texts relevant to this study: textual, critical and contextual (Paltridge & Wang 2015: 211).

This study involves primarily textual and contextual approaches, and the analyses is carried out according to the conceptual framework of this study presented in Chapter 2, Figure 5. The textual part of the analyses involves the grammatical analysis discussed in the previous section. The contextual approach, or activity part, considers the situational aspects of communication in the analysis, which include the linguistic, paralinguistic (prosodic) and extra-linguistic acts (Mey 2009: 752). Linguistic patterns that appear throughout the spoken and written texts are identified through functional (speech act) analyses, where questions are classified according to their micropragmatic function. In addition, knowledge concerning language use outside of word, clause, phrase or sentence meaning, required for successful communication (the macropragmatic analysis e.g., extralinguistic factors) is considered. These extralinguistic factors include the physical, psychological and conversation acts performed by the participants. The association between language and the social contexts in which it is used (how questions inform tutor practices in the Writing Centre setting) are then identified (Paltridge & Wang 2015: 207).

In addition to the grammatical and pragmatic analyses, the data were also subjected to qualitative content analysis by establishing the codes and distilling themes from the coded data as discussed in the following section.

3.7.3 Content analysis and coding

Babbie (2016: 323) states that 'content analysis is the study of recorded human communication.' Content analysis typically refers to a systematic effort of recognising the frequency with which certain themes – which may be encapsulated in particular words, functions or phrases – occur in a text. The aim is to investigate the context of occurrence or 'breaking down a text and providing evidence for interpretation' (Bryman 2012: 557; Hammond & Wellington 2013: 35). Kohlbacher (2006: 21) argues that content analysis is the most appropriate for case study research as it investigates real-world data, exposes complex social positions and allows the researcher to comment on them. This involves assigning labels to different themes in the data, thus overlapping with coding approaches (Bryman 2012: 558). Coding includes processes where specific fragments of the text are assigned to significant key

labels or codes (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 493) in order to convert raw data into a standardised system (Babbie 2016: 328).
This discussion begins with a description of qualitative content analysis and its relevance to the study then moves to a description of coding and the steps followed when coding for this study.

Qualitative content analysis progresses by identifying the corpus, the unit of analysis or meaning, the codes used to label the units and the frequency with which each code occurred (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 34). Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) categorise qualitative content analysis into three different approaches: conventional, summative and directed content analysis. For the purpose of this study, directed content analysis is used for data analysis. The aim of the directed approach is to confirm, or expand on, existing research. This approach follows a more structured design, as codes originate from prior research or theory and are defined before and during analysis as done in Chapter 2. Researchers start by recognising main concepts or variables as initial coding classifications and then determine operational definitions for each classification through the use of a conceptual framework (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 281).

A coding-scheme is then composed based on the specific research objectives (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 413). Researchers first develop operational definitions (code) of the variables in the inquiry chosen for examination then decide which variables to observe and analyse the data collected according to the coding-scheme (Babbie 2016: 324). These codes are either inductive or deductive codes, depending on their chosen epistemological approach (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 35).

The coding process is typically divided into two cycles. First Cycle coding processes can vary from a single word to full sentences to a page of text. They are preliminary coding methods that aim to organise the raw data. In the case of directed coding, this involves provisional coding which begins with the accumulation of a predetermined list of codes prior to the analyses. These codes can be predictable categories that are produced from foundational or prior research, such as studies in the conceptual framework or the literature review (Hedlund-de Witt 2013: 130). Second Cycle coding methods involve more enhanced methods of reorganising and reanalysing the data that was coded by using First Cycle methods. Second

Cycle methods include the examination of the interrelationships among various codes and categories in order to develop a logical synthesis of the data (Hedlund-de Witt 2013: 14). According to Babbie & Mouton (2001: 492), the coding process can be reduced to the following eight steps:

1. Determining the level of analysis.
2. Selecting the number of concepts to code.
3. Deciding to either code for frequency or existence.
4. Setting up a framework to distinguish between concepts.
5. Establishing rules for the coding of texts.
6. Choosing what to do with information that does not relate to the research question.
7. Coding the documents.
8. Analysing the results.

However, not all these steps are necessarily followed and not in this specific order. In this study, codes were derived deductively from a predetermined framework and the process proceeded as follows:

1. Setting up a framework to distinguish between concepts.

The conceptual framework of Pragmatic Acts was set up in Chapter 2 of this study, and the distinction between the 'textual' and 'activity' parts underlying the analysis were identified and discussed.

2. Determining the level of analyses.

The analyses aligned with the 'textual' and 'activity' parts outlined in the conceptual framework of the study. The first analysis was the textual analysis examining the grammar of the questions. The second stage of the analyses involved the pragmatic analyses or 'activity part' evaluating the linguistic and extralinguistic factors influencing questioning.

3. Identifying the concepts to code and providing their definitions.

This study follows two phases of coding. The first phase was used for grammatical (formal) coding. The purpose was to identify the structure of tutor questions and the frequency of their occurrence.

Only two codes were relevant: questions can follow either a declarative or interrogative sentence structure. Interrogative questions are further divided into yes/no questions or wh-questions, depending on their grammatical structure. Yes/no questions are further categorised according to their structures, which include alternative, tag, and either/or questions. The codes for the grammatical analysis are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Codes for grammatical analysis

Grammar of Questions				
Elements of typology		Definition	Source	Code
Declarative		Communicates information; can be either true or false, for example: John ate the food. Questions can be structured as a declarative, but function as interrogative, for example: I add a heading here?	Pragmatics (2018)	Dec
Interrogative		Elicits information, for example: Did John eat the food?	Pragmatics (2018)	Inter.
Yes/no questions:		Yes/No questions are interrogatives that require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response regarding the validity of the complete predication.	Quirk and Greenbaum (1977: 24)	Y/N
	a) Alternative Questions	Alternative questions occur when responses are capable of being extracted from the question itself. Responses are selected from a number of alternatives presented in the question. The conjunction ‘or’ marks alternative questions, for example: Is he coming or not?	Givon (1993: 251) Huddleston (1984: 366)	Alt
	b) *Tag questions*	Tag questions are grammatical structures created through the insertion of a positive or negative interrogative fragment or ‘tag’ such as ‘isn’t it?’ into a positive or negative declarative or imperative statement, for example: John did eat the cake, didn’t he?	Sinclair (1990: 198).	T
	c) *Either/or Questions*	Either/or questions are sentences with an interrogative structure and intonation that involve two or more possible responses combined with the conjunction ‘or’. The response is expected to include one of the possible answers cited within the question, for example: Is it a boy or a girl? – It is a boy.	Sinclair (1990: 199)	E/O
Wh-questions		When the speaker asks a wh-question, he/she requires a specific response regarding a distinct person, thing, place, reason, method or amount. Wh-questions begin with wh-words.	Givon (1993: 252) Sinclair (1990: 199)	Wh-

The second phase involved functional (speech act) coding, where the aim was to reflect the tutor’s illocutionary intent when asking questions.

These coding categories were adapted from the conceptual framework of this study. Certain categories were merged, as they share illocutionary intent, and their types and functions were modified according to questioning categories previously discovered in writing centre literature. These types and functions are described in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Codes for pragmatic analysis

Linguistic Acts: Speech acts				
Elements of typology	**Definition**	**Function in Writing Centre**	**Source**	**Code**
Directive questions	These acts are aimed at encouraging the hearer to perform an action (e.g. ask, request).	1. Instructing Questions that ask the student to perform an activity or relates to the actions of the student throughout the consultation, for example: Would you read this sentence aloud? 2. Advising/Suggesting Expressing the tutor's belief that his/her words will encourage the student to perform a specific action that may lead to the improvement of the writing. You just, literally (.) I think you needed to say 'argue'. Alright?	Bach and Harnish (1979) Carstens and Rambiritch (2021) Searle (1976)	DQ
Presumptive questions	Presumptive questions occur when the speaker has a presumption regarding the content of the question and can also elicit a yes/no response.	Monitor common ground: questions that elicit general background information on what the student needs, wants, knows, and understands about an assignment, for example: What did your teacher say are out-of-bounds topics for this paper?	Rakic (1984)	PQ
Information-gap questions	Information-eliciting questions are used to elicit information from the hearer and contain the wh-words previously discussed.	1. Introductory questions: questions act as icebreakers to establish rapport between the student and the tutor. The intention is to make the student feel welcome and comfortable, for example: Tutor: Hi, welcome to the writing centre. How are you today? 2. These questions also elicit information regarding the subject matter of the student's assignment or writing. They generate responses concerning content or writing issues, for example: So what class is this?	Blau et al. (1998) Limberg et al. (2016) Rakic (1984) Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014)	InQ
Scaffolding questions	Questions that form part of the scaffolding process of instructional techniques.	These questions push the student towards reviewing their work or brainstorming. The answer is not 'yes' or 'no', for example: How might you incorporate examples into this paragraph? Questions that provoke critical thinking or thoughtful reasoning, for example: Can you think of another way to say it?	Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014)	SQ

Checking for Understanding Questions	Tutor questions that confirm whether the student understands what the tutor just said or explained.	These questions ensure whether the student understands the concept. Do you understand? Does this make sense?	Limberg et al. (2016)	CU
Leading Questions	Leading questions lead the student to an answer. The tutor scaffolding seems to already know what the student will answer, which is often ‘yes’ or ‘no. Rhetorical questions form part of this category and do not require a response from the hearer.	1. These questions guide the student towards an expected answer, for example: Tutor: Do you think you should write about going downstairs? Student: Yes. 2. As rhetorical questions, they can provide information, capture the listener’s interest or express astonishment, for example: Tutor: Do you know how many times my supervisor has sent work back to me?	Athanasiadou (1990) Blau et al. (1998) Rakic (1984) Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014)	LQ
Politeness questions	Tutor questions relating to the flow of the conversation, feelings of rapport, solidarity and self-confidence between tutors and students.	These questions stablish rapport and solidarity between tutors and students in order to create a caring learning environment. Tutor: Shame are you struggling? Student: I’m really struggling.	Thompson and Mackiewicz (2013; 2014)	PQ

Table 6 describes and defines the codes used for the linguistic pragmatic analysis. The question types are organised according to the micropragmatic speech acts that apply to writing centre discourse: directive, presumptive, information-gap and assertive/representative questions (Bach & Harnish 1979; Rakic 1984; Searle 1976). Directive questions include questions that encourage the hearer to perform an action, such as asking the student to read aloud or questions that provoke critical thinking. Presumptive questions are asked when the speaker has a presumptive assumption regarding the content, such as questions that monitor common ground between student and consultant. Information-gap questions include all questions that elicit information from the hearer, such as introductory questions or questions that result in the agenda of the consultation. Leading questions have two functions: (1) questions that lead the student to a specific answer and also include (2) hearer's attention or expressing interest, e.g., rhetorical questions. Scaffolding questions are questions used to push students to re-evaluate their writing. Checking for understanding confirm whether students understand the tutor's explanation of a certain concept. The last category, politeness questions, are tutor questions associated with feelings of rapport, solidarity and self-confidence between tutors and students. These questions also politely manage the conversation and the tutor's agenda throughout the consultation.

4. Coding the documents.

The documents (transcriptions) were coded according to the first and second phase coding categories discussed above.

Prosody (intonation) was used to code utterances as interrogatives. Intonation illustrates how the voice rises and falls in discourse. There are three main patterns of intonation in English: rising, falling and fall-rise intonation. Table 7 outlines the types of intonation and the symbols used to indicate them.

Table 7: Intonation

Intonation	Use and example	Symbol
Falling	Wh-questions When does the film ↘**start?**	↘
Rising	Yes/no questions Are you ↗ **thirsty**?	↗

Falling intonation demonstrates how the speaker's voice falls in his/her final phrase or utterance and often occurs in wh-questions. Rising intonation demonstrates how the speaker's voice rises at the end of his/her utterance and often occurs in yes/no questions.

5. Analysing the results.

The results of the coding were then analysed to reveal how prominent the categories were in the six sampled consultations, and the video recordings were closely studied to determine the contextual responses of the students and, in this way, establish how the students' responses differed between the different functional categories of questions.

6. Comparison of data sets.

The data from the textual (grammatical) and activity (functional) analyses are then compared in order to introduce new perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of the functions of questions.

7. Controlling the quality.

The quality and validity of these results were measured according to specific criteria, namely: the triangulation of data, thick descriptions and the clarification of researcher bias, discussed in the following section.

3.8 Controlling the quality

As qualitative researchers use various 'interconnected interpretative practices' (Duff 2008: 27) to understand the subject being researched, the credibility of findings must be considered. Certain criteria are applicable when regarding trustworthiness to evaluate the collection and examination of data where naturalistic inquiry is involved (Casanave 2013: 127). The criteria include the triangulation of data, rich descriptions and clarification of researcher bias as strategies for credibility (Creswell 2014).

3.8.1 Triangulation of data

Researchers can triangulate or converge various data sources by analysing results from the sources and employing these sources to construct coherent validations for the themes revealed through the analysis (Creswell 2014). Triangulation thus includes multiple methods of data collection or analysis, where the researcher views the situation through several lenses. The data is documented through different processes, and the first documentation offers confirmatory evidence regarding the phenomena being examined, and the second documentation further enhances this evidence with more contextual descriptions (Remenyi 2012: 95).

In this study, the data was documented through video recordings and the transcriptions of these recordings that both confirm the content. The video recordings were analysed in retrospective to the document (transcription) analysis to enrich the content of the transcriptions by depicting the context and extra-linguistic aspects that occur with the questions documented in the transcriptions.

3.8.2 Thick descriptions

In qualitative research researchers typically use rich, thick descriptions to communicate the findings of the study.

These discussions should provide a detailed description regarding the setting and perspectives about the theme or unit of analysis, allowing for more realistic and valid findings (Creswell 2014). The aim of thick descriptions is to establish credibility through the reader's lens by contextualising the participants or situation concerned. This assists the readers in understanding and perceiving the account as credible and to make decisions involving the applicability of the findings to other settings or related contexts (Creswell & Miller 2000: 128).

Thick descriptions were particularly useful for the macropragmatic analysis evaluating the extralinguistic factors that influence the illocutionary intent of the questions. This establishes credibility through the explanation of the context, setting and perspectives in which questioning takes place, thus legitimising their interpretation as opposed to only examining the text. The analyses of both the transcriptions and the video recordings ensure the credibility of interpreting the function of tutor questions as well as the gestures, emotions and accuracy of the conversational aspects accompanying these functions.

3.8.3 Clarification of researcher bias

Qualitative research should consider and clarify the bias that human interpretations add to the study. The researcher's self-reflection and recognition of this bias establishes an open and authentic description of the findings as shaped by his/her subjectivity (Creswell 2014). In this study, the researcher has experience working in the Writing Centre, but bias is minimised as the researcher did not analyse consultations where she was the acting consultant. This distance enabled the researcher to recognise the presence of bias when interpreting the research and apply the relevant filters, allowing readers to gain insight into the findings. However, in an interpretivist study where the researcher is familiar with context, practices and theory of writing centre pedagogy bias can never be ruled out completely.

3.9 Ethical considerations

In order to conduct social research, researchers have to be aware of the general agreements between researchers regarding proper and improper practices of scientific inquiry (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 524). This study, as well as the larger study of which it is part, received ethical clearance from the Faculty of Humanities Research and Ethics Committee (clearance no. GW20180524HS and HUM050/0519) based on the description of the research protocol followed.

The six participants and three consultants used for analyses were aware that the consultation would be recorded prior to the appointment and all signed letters of informed consent. The letter of consent communicated the option to not participate as well as the option to withdraw informed consent at any time throughout the process. The research is further conducted with honesty and the true results and findings are thoroughly conveyed.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explain and justify the research methodology employed for this study in order to answer the research questions set out in Chapter 1. The reasons for conducting a case study of tutor questions in writing centres were given, and descriptions of the setting and the procedures were provided. The methods of data collection, along with the approaches to analysing the data, were discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the functions of tutor questions, based on the question codes described in Chapter 3, are reported. In keeping with the conventions of directed qualitative content analysis, the data was first organised in two coding cycles and then analysed through thick descriptions of the question functions in their linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 493; Bryman 2012: 558). The questions are first analysed grammatically in correspondence with the 'textual part' presented in the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2. The functions of tutor questions are then further described in the micro- and macropragmatic analyses in correspondence with the 'activity part' of the framework. The micropragmatic analysis organises questions based on their (functional) speech act code and these functions are then substantiated by the conversational, physical and psychological acts as part of the macropragmatic analysis.

4.2 Data analyses

The transcriptions were read several times to identify and establish the number of questions in the text. The data was then coded according to the two cycles outlined in Chapter 3. The codes were allocated per tutor utterance rather than per turn, as turns often encompassed more than one pragmatic act. The first cycle aimed to organise the raw data according to the predetermined coding schemes for the grammatical (textual) analysis and involved coding tutor questions based only on their grammatical structures. The second cycle of coding focused on the pragmatic analyses in order to examine interrelationships between the different coding types and functions and the tutors' illocutionary intents. This cycle included references to the macropragmatic or extralinguistic factors in order to contextualise the functional coding and shed light on how coding at the level of the utterance (micropragmatic level) may be influenced by factors operating at the macropragmatic level.

This was done to avoid a myopic depiction of tutor questioning techniques and involved capturing the most significant physical acts, gestures and emotions accompanying questioning strategies and their role in writing centre consultations. A 5% in coding discrepancy between the researcher and the supervisors occurred where question functions conformed to more than one code. The extract below describes how discrepancy between the researcher and supervisors was considered. In the extract below, the tutor and the student are discussing the type of essay the student has written.

> **Tutor 1 Video 1:**
> 37. Tutor: Oh: **so, this is your argumentative essay, am I right?**
> 38. Student: Ja. (laughter)

The tutor asks the question, 'so this is your argumentative essay, am I right?' (turn 37). The researcher coded the question as presumptive because the question is eliciting task-related information. The supervisors agreed with this code, but also categorised it as a leading question, because the question expects the student to respond with 'yes', which the student does in turn 38. It was then determined that these codes would overlap, as it can be argued that the specific tutor question incontestably held more than one function. This illustrates how the researcher and two supervisors cross-checked the coding for reliability and reached a consensus on 95% of the coding.

4.2.1 Grammatical analysis

The grammatical (formal) analysis formed part of the first phase of coding and concerned the 'textual part' of the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2. The grammatical analysis arranged questions according to their grammatical structure, as the sentence level analysis alone cannot account for the function of questions, thus reiterating that strict grammatical categories are influenced by their function within utterances and their extra-linguistic contexts.

The researcher first identified and marked the tutor questions in the video transcripts and then coded them according to their grammatical structure.

The questions were coded as following a declarative or interrogative sentence structure (no imperative structures were found to fulfil a questioning function). Questions that were structured as declaratives but functioned as interrogatives and elicited a student response were marked as declarative questions, for example:

> **Tutor 1 Video 2:**
> 12. Tutor: Wonderful. Okay. So. Is this your first time? [visiting the writing centre]
> 13. Student: Yeah, it's my first time being here.
> 14. Tutor: Your first time. Okay.
> 15. Student: Yeah.
> 16. Tutor: **And the module that you're working on? (declarative question)**
> 17. Student: It's philosophy.
>
> **Tutor 1 Video 2:**
> 23. Student: The thing is I've been getting twos on my essay I didn't know (inaudible).
> 24. Tutor: Two (.) out of ten?
> 25. Student: Two out of ten.
> 26. Tutor: All right. **And no feedback from the tutors? (declarative question)**
> 27. Student: No feedback from the tutors so that's why I said I must consult before I submit this one.

Interrogative questions were divided into yes/no or wh-questions, where yes/no questions required a yes/no response and wh-questions used wh- question words (who, what, where, when, which, how). Tutors used wh-questions when eliciting specific information regarding a distinct aspect or concept of the student's writing or assignment as described in the example below.

> **Tutor 1 Video 1:**
> 468: Tutor: So that's a cohesive unit? And then. The conclusion**. What do we do (.) in a conclusion? (wh-question)**
> 469: Student: We summarise everything we've said to one (2s) ja. It's the last punch.
>
> **Tutor 3 video 2:**
> 36. Tutor: **So wh- what were you trying to (.) say here? (wh- question)**
> 37. Student: I was (.) just restating my thesis.

Tutors used conventional yes/no questions to elicit a yes/no response from students regarding a specific aspect or concept of the student's writing or assignment, for example:

Tutor 2 Video 2:
177. Tutor: **Is all of that a direct quote? (Yes/no question)**
178. Student: Yes.

Tutor 3 Video 2:
48. Tutor: This is really good. Uhm:. (.) But ja, let's just (.) **Did the referencing make sense? (yes/no question)**
49. Student: Yes.

Certain yes/no questions were then further classified as alternative, tag and either/or questions. Alternative questions expected the student to select a response from a number of alternatives presented in the tutor question, for example:

Tutor 2 Video 1:
216. Tutor: Okay. (nods) Good. No then I'm not going to change it. Okay and et al. **I don't think it goes in italics. Or does it? (alternative question)**
217. Student: Ja it does go in italics.

Tag questions included the use of 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' and 'right' following a declarative or imperative or reinforced a wh- or yes/no interrogative. Tutors primarily used these tags at the end of a declarative or imperative to obtain confirmation or agreement from the student, for example:

Tutor 3 Video 2:
18. Tutor: Okay, so here (.) **we just need to link our paragraphs a bit better, nê? (imperative and 'nê' tag)**
19. Student: Okay.

Tutor 2 Video 2:
367. Tutor: **But you probably got these from a website, right? (declarative and 'right' tag)**
368. Student: Yes.

Either/or questions presented the hearer with two or more possible responses combined with the conjunction 'or'. The tutor expected the student's response to include one of the possible answers posed in the question, for example:

Tutor 2 Video 2:
10. Tutor: Okay? (3s) **And are you arguing for or against that? (Either/or question)**
11. Student: Against.

Tutor 2 Video 2:
253. Tutor: Of (.) Animal testing. Okay. (tutor reads in silence on the laptop screen for 4 seconds, from 15:40 to 15:44) okay so remember when you have a direct quote **did you get this from a book or a website? (Either/or question)**
254. Student: From a website, it was like this.

The number of occurrences of these grammatical question codes were then tabulated to reveal the number of tutor questions and their format in the text.

4.2.1.1 Number of questions per grammatical structure

Following the identification and coding of questions according to their grammatical structure, the researcher then counted the frequency of occurrence of every code per video. The table below presents the number of declarative, wh- and yes/no questions per tutor and video transcript after 95% agreement between the three parties regarding the codes, was reached.

Table 8: Number of questions according to grammatical structure

TUTORS	VIDEO	DECLARATIVE	INTERROGATIVE (WH)	INTERROGATIVE (YES/NO)			
				Standard Yes/No	Tag	Either/Or	Alternative
Tutor 1	Video 1	21	25	40	10		
	Video 2	8	9	20	1		
Tutor 2	Video 1	10	6	12	3		1
	Video 2	10	5	24	6	2	
Tutor 3	Video 1	2	6	18	3		
	Video 2	8	13	22	13		
TOTAL		**59**	**64**	**136**	**36**	**2**	**1**

The analysis revealed that the transcripts included a total of 298 tutor questions.

The table indicates that tutors predominantly asked yes/no questions (136), followed by wh-questions (64), questions structured as declaratives (59) and tag questions involving the use of ‘okay’, ‘nê’, ‘you know’, ‘you see’, ‘alright’ and ‘right’ (36). Alternative and either/or were the least frequent, with only one alternative question and two either/or questions present in the six transcripts. The grammatical question categories are depicted as percentages in the chart (Figure 6) below.

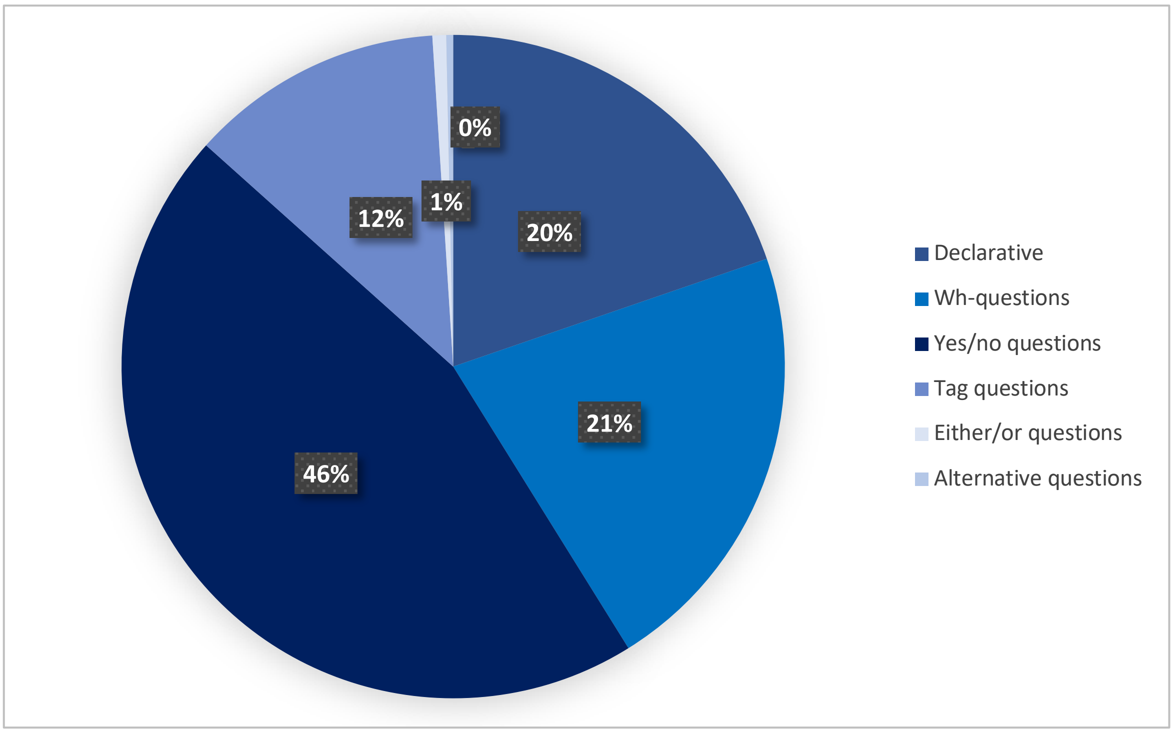


Figure 6: Percentage of questions per grammatical code

The chart indicates that yes/no questions comprised 46% of the tutor questions asked, followed by wh-questions (21%), declarative questions (20%) and tag questions (12%). Either/or questions comprised only 1% of the data and alternative questions comprised less than 1% of the total tutor questions asked.

The grammatical analysis revealed that tutors predominantly used yes/no questions that elicited a yes/no response from the student, either to confirm a specific declarative or imperative and frequently through the insertion of a tag.

Declaratives and wh-questions questions shared a similar function, requiring students to provide specific information communicated in the tutor's question. Due to the scarcity of alternative and either/or questions, they did not have a significant impact on the data.

These findings provide an overview of the grammatical structure of the questions found in the data, but not how the question functioned within the tutor utterance. The questions were then subjected to a second cycle of coding based on the tutors' illocutionary intent. The function of each question type is described as part of the pragmatic analyses in the following section.

4.2.2 Pragmatic analyses

This section discusses the results from the micro- and macropragmatic analyses. The micropragmatic analysis coded questions according to their (functional) speech act code, as well as questioning categories previously established in writing centre literature (cf. Table 6, Chapter 3; Blau et al. 1998; Limber et al. 2016; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014;). Questions were coded as Directive, Presumptive, Politeness, Information-gap, Leading and Scaffolding questions. The macropragmatic analysis examined the conversational (dialogue), physical (any significant body movements accompanying tutor questions, such as gestures and facial expression) and psychological acts (emotions, e.g., laughter) present as the question occurs, in order to establish the extra-linguistic context. Overlaps between the categories occurred when questions encompassed more than one function, depending on the tutor's illocutionary intent. In the analysis below, each code is discussed individually, and the most significant examples of each question type and function are analysed in detail, together with any significant macropragmatic elements.

4.2.2.1 The use of tags with interrogative intonation

In the first cycle of coding (grammatical analysis), 116 questions were coded as tag questions (see Table 8 above).

However, in the second cycle of coding (micro-and macropragmatic analyses), it was discovered that in certain cases, sentences containing an ‘okay’, ‘alright’, ‘right’, ‘you see, ‘you know’ or the use of the Afrikaans word ‘nê’ (meaning ‘isn’t it?’, or confirming what is said) at the beginning or end of the tutor utterance with an interrogative intonation, served more as an opening or closing gambit to either emphasise the tutor’s declarative (statement), imperative (suggestion) or to indicate the end of the utterance turn. Where the student does not interpret the interrogative word as a question tag or the tutor does not expect a response, it was determined that no interrogative function was present.

These questions then had to be re-examined and recoded based on clear conditions validating their function as an interrogative, significantly decreasing the original amount of what was previously perceived to be tag questions. This reduction is depicted in Table 12 below, where the amount of tag questions in the second cycle was reduced from 116 to 36 upon re-examination, thus 80 of the original 116 tag questions were, in fact, not questions at all.

Table 9: Frequency of non-tag and tag questions

TAG QUESTIONS	NON-TAG QUESTIONS	TOTAL
36 (31%)	80 (69%)	116

In order to differentiate between these cases and to code accordingly, the researcher adapted Gibson’s (1974) classification of the Canadian use of, what she refers to as, the particle ‘eh?’, as a question tag at the end of the utterance to refine these codes. The use of ‘okay’, ‘nê’, ‘you know’, ‘you see’, ‘alright’ and ‘right’ were coded as question tags when they followed the correct grammatical structure and were accompanied by the relevant macropragmatic gestures. Grammatically, the tag had to either follow a declarative, as described by the conventional grammar rules for tag questions (Sinclair 1990: 198) or reinforce a wh- or yes/no interrogative. The following table explains the categories used for the grammatical classification.

Table 10: Grammatical elements of tag question classification

Grammatical elements of tag question classification		
Function	**Structure**	**Example**
Functions as question tag following a direct statement (combination of a statement and a question) or suggestion (combination of a suggestion and a question) with the expectation of student response	Declarative + nê/okay/right/ alright /you see tag Imperative + nê/okay/right/alright/you see tag	Tutor 2 Video 2: Tutor: **Check the guide. Okay?** (turn 371) Student: Student: Okay check the guide. (writes) (turn 372) Tutor 3 Video 1: Tutor: **I just think once you change that, that'll be fine. Alright.** (turn 62) Student: So, is it clear where the thesis stamen is? (turn 63)
Reinforces an interrogative (yes/No and wh-questions)	(1) Wh-/yes/no question + nê/okay/right/alright tag	Tutor 1 video 1: Tutor: **So, the pink was your, ja, the background, nê?** (turn 361) Student: Hmm. (turn 362)

(Adapted from Gibson 1974)

Together with the grammatical conditions, the use of 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' and 'right' also had to accompanied by the relevant macropragmatic component (Mey 2009), including student response time, tutor gaze and rising question intonation in order to be coded as a question. The relevant response time expected the tutor's anticipation for confirmation, agreement or disagree from the student after the question tag was used. Tutor gaze anticipated confirmation, agreement or disagreement from the student through the tutor's direct gaze at the student after the question tag was used. Together with these two components, the tag also had to follow a rising intonation in order to be coded as a question. The table below describes the categories used for the macropragmatic classification of these tags.

Table 11: Macropragmatic elements of tag question classification

Macropragmatic elements of tag question classification	
Element	**Description**
Response time	(1) Tutor anticipates agreement or disagreement from the student by waiting for a response. (2) Tutor seeks confirmation from the student by waiting for a response.
Tutor gaze	(1) Tutor anticipates agreement or disagreement from the student by looking at the student. (2) Tutor seeks confirmation from the student by gazing at the student.
Intonation	The question particle has a rising intonation as indicated by the rising arrow in the utterance (↗).

4.2.2.2.1. Example:

Figure 6 below illustrates the macropragmatic elements accompanying the question tag 'okay?' and is further explained below. The verbal exchange is as follows:

Tutor 3 Video 2

46. Tutor: Okay. **I think (.) I think other than this like this is really good. ↗Okay?**
47. Student: (nods head)

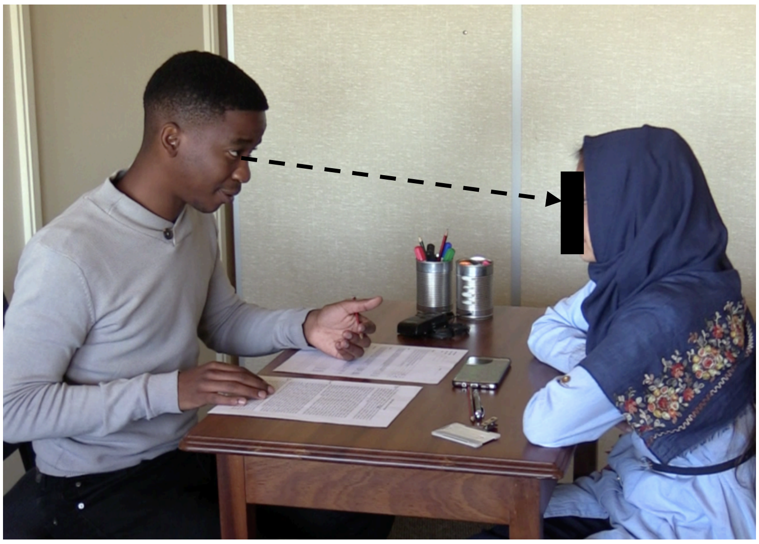


Figure 7: Example of macropragmatic elements in a tag question classification

In this case, the tag '↗okay' (turn 46) is coded as a question, because it is accompanied by the tutor's gaze, rising intonation and requires confirmation from the student. The tutor looks up at the student after his utterance, indicating that he anticipates confirmation from the student, thus presenting it as a question. The student nods 'yes' as a response, showing that she understood the tutor's utterance as a question.

In cases where the use of 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' and 'right' did not follow the relevant grammatical structure and were not accompanied by the relevant macropragmatic component, they did not qualify as question tags. In these cases, the use of 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' and 'right' simply reinforced imperatives, indicated utterance turns and did not require a response from the student and were, therefore, not considered question tags. The table below illustrates the elements present with non-tag question classifications.

Table 12: Elements of non-tag question classification

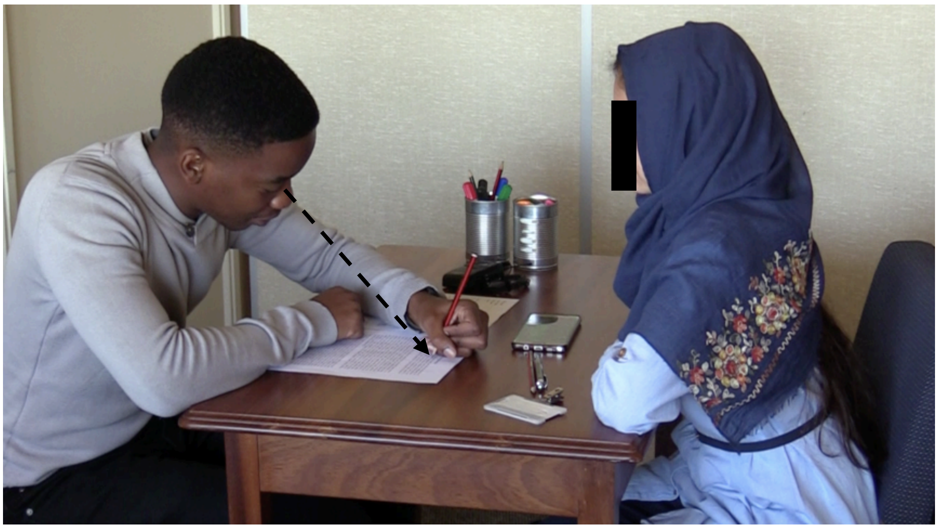
Elements of non-tag question classification		
Function	Description	Example
Reinforcing imperatives or declaratives	The particle acts as an opening or closing gambit to emphasise an instruction or suggestion without expecting confirmation from the student.	Tutor 3 Video 1: 164. Tutor: Like just reading your essay, you've got so much evidence. I think (.) that's really good. **Like it's so: (.) substantiated. You know?** (closing gambit) Tutor 3 video 2: Tutor: **So just give a brief description why, nê.** (turn16)
Indicates an utterance turn	The particle acts as an opening or closing gambit to indicate the end of an utterance turn.	Tutor 2 video 2 Tutor: Just to be safe? **Just always reference whatever (.) you didn't come up with.** (turn 391) Student: Okay. (turn 392) Tutor: **Okay?** (turn 393)
Student does not interpret the okay/nê particle as interrogative	The student does not interpret the particle as interrogative and does not offer a response.	Tutor 3 Video 2: **Um. I think the only thing we need to change is 'that this essay will argue'. (.) Okay?** (.) **So, because (.) it's an argumentative essay, nê?** And **you just want to reflect which side you're on, okay?** (turn 16) *No response from student*

4.2.2.2.2. Example:

Figure 7 below depicts how the absence of tutor gaze, rising intonation and student response accompanying the tags 'okay?' and 'nê' do not classify them as question tags. The verbal exchange is as follows:

Tutor 3 Video 2

16. Tutor: Oh, okay. So, you are for state intervention neglect. Okay, that's very good. Okay. (.) So, just looking at this checklist, there is a clear introduction, body and conclusion? There is a thesis statement and plan of development. Okay. (.) Okay, no, that's good. We will go on from there. I like your thesis statement, that's very good. (2s) **Uhm. I think the only thing we need to change is 'that this essay will argue'. (.) Okay?** (.) **So, because (.) it's an argumentative essay, nê?** And **you just want to reflect which side you're on, okay?** Uhm: (.) (reads from the essay for 20 seconds, from 02:32 to 02:52) Okay. So here? you say childhood obesity should be considered a form of neglect.



[redacted]

Figure 8: Example of non-tag question classification

In this case, the tag 'okay' and 'nê' (turn 16) are not coded as questions, as they are not accompanied by the tutor's gaze, rising intonation and do not require a response from the student. In this case, these tags are simply used to emphasise the tutor's imperative, 'the only thing we need to change is "that this essay will argue". (.) Okay' and declaratives, 'because (.)

it’s an argumentative essay, nê? and you just want to reflect which side you’re on, okay?’. The tutor then continues with his explanation and does not look up at the student or expect a response from the student after his utterance, thus not acting as a question.

Below, a micropragmatic analysis of the most significant examples corresponding with the described functions of questions in a specific speech event are analysed to demonstrate the purpose of directive questioning as a tutor strategy. The extra-linguistic context (conversational, psychological and physical acts) in which the question occurs is then discussed as part of the macropragmatic analysis to establish the complete function of the tutor question. Turn numbers and dialogue are presented in the left-hand column, and the specific question function is presented in the right-hand column. The context in which the dialogue occurs is first explained, followed by an analysis of the question’s function within that specific context as illustrated by the relevant figure guiding the tutor question. The particular question function of each excerpt is emphasised in bold for every turn of tutor utterance presented and the tutor and student’s macropragmatic acts are illustrated with arrows and circles on the figures.

4.2.2.2 Directive questions

Directive questions were coded according to their functions of either (1) encouraging the student to perform an activity or (2) providing an answer relating to the consultation or a specific aspect of the student’s document. These questions also often begin with a verb and require a yes/no response from the student. The transcriptions showed that all three tutors used directive questions according to the functions mentioned above.

4.2.2.2.1. Stronger examples of directive question functions

The excerpts below illustrate the strongest examples of how directive questions were used to either encourage the student to perform an activity, provide an answer relating to the consultation or a certain facet of the student’s writing.

The examples were selected based on their level of correspondence to the described functions of directive questions in the coding table. If the student's response to the directive question satisfied both the tutor's illocutionary intent and the directive question function, it was marked as 'strong'.

Excerpt 1:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION OF TUTOR QUESTION
TURN 30	
Tutor: Can,↗ can you please give me the ↗assignment? Yes, yes, yes. (reads from the book in silence for 20 seconds, from 01:21 to 01:41, while student accesses a file on the laptop)	Encourages the student to perform an activity
TURN 31	
Student: (turns laptop over to tutor)	
TURN 32	
Tutor: Thank you. (5s)	

The excerpt above takes place at the beginning of the consultation, where the tutor has already established rapport with the student and now intends to begin examining the student's assignment. The tutor asks a directive question, beginning with the verb 'can' in turn 30: 'Can, can you please give me the assignment?', which then prompts the student to hand the assignment to the tutor in turn 31. The student's returning action satisfies the tutor's illocutionary intent of the directive question, and she confirms this by responding with 'thank you' in turn 32. This is a straightforward example of how a directive question is used to prompt action from the student.

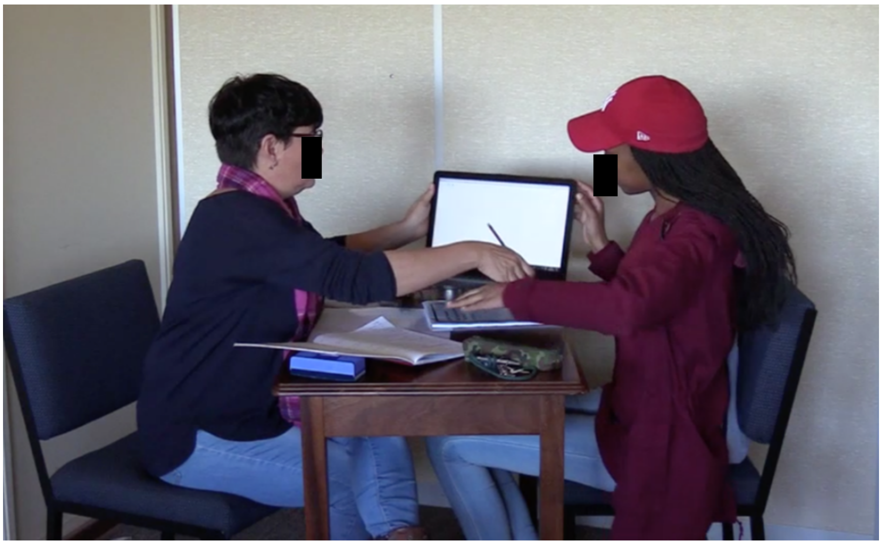

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Figure 9: Student's response to a directive question

In this extract, the macropragmatic context includes the physical act of intonation in the tutor's question and the gesture from the student as shown in Figure 9 above. The tutor's question, 'Can, can you please give me the assignment?' (turn 31), ends in rising intonation, thus the student hears it as a question. The student responds to the question by physically handing over the laptop, once again indicating that she did interpret it as a question even though she did not verbally respond with a 'yes'.

Excerpt 2:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	**FUNCTION**
TURN 520	
Tutor: Yes. Okay but there's one idea. All right. The second idea in the meantime (reads aloud) okay that's a second idea.	
TURN 521	
Student: It's a very long sentence.	
TURN 522	
Tutor: Yes. (reads aloud) that's another idea? Um. (reads aloud) is actually another, **can you see that?**	Provides an answer relating to a specific aspect of the writing
TURN 523	
Student: (nods)	
TURN 524	
Tutor: (reads aloud) That is a whole completely (laughter) new…	
TURN 525	
Student: (laughter)	
TURN 526	
Tutor: So, I actually see three (.) or four sentences	
TURN 527	
Student: Sentences (nods) (.) in one. (laughter)	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing the student's error of using run-on sentences. The tutor has established the essay writing rule of having one idea per paragraph to avoid this error and focuses on correcting this in the text. The tutor facilitates the student's identification of this error in his/her own writing by asking whether the student can see that her sentence contains more than one idea in turn 522, 'Can you see that?'.

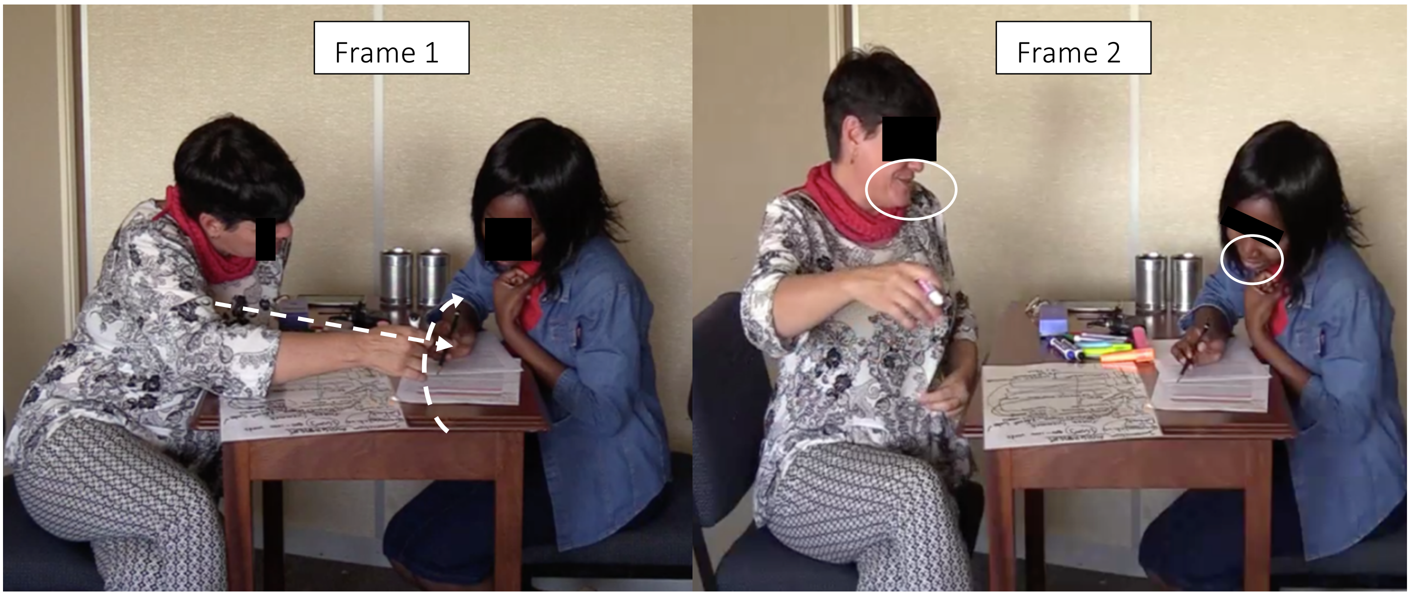

Figure 10: Physical and psychological acts guiding a directive question

Figure 10 depicts the extra-linguistic context of the directive question in turn 522. The student's response by nodding 'yes' in turn 523 (Figure 10, Frame 1), as a physical act, corroborates the illocutionary intent of the tutor's directive question relating to that specific aspect of the student's writing. As the tutor is asking whether the student 'can see' (turn 522) that she has more than one idea in her paragraph, the tutor points (Figure 10, Frame 1) to the specific error in the student's writing. As part of the psychological act, the tutor then laughs and elicits laughter from the student in turn 524 (Figure 10, Frame 2) when she again identifies the same error, 'that is a whole completely (laughter) new…'. The student's response with laughter in turn 526 reinforces her own identification of the error, where the laughter accompanying the directive question reduces the negative tone often associated with identifying errors in students' writing and, therefore, does not discourage the student.

Excerpt 3:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 57	
Tutor: She doesn't. Okay. Uhm (tutor reads the document in silence for 4 seconds, from 02:01 to 02:05) Okay so this is actually more just a definition.	
TURN 58	
Student: Ja.	
TURN 59	
Tutor: **Why don't you rather uhm paraphrase this?** Instead of starting with a direct quote.	Performs an action
TURN 60	
Student: Okay (nods)	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing the concept of paraphrasing in academic writing rather than using direct quotations. In turn 59, the tutor uses a directive question, ‘Why don’t you rather uhm paraphrase this?’ as a suggestion that prompts the student to later perform the physical action of rewriting the direct quote in her own words.

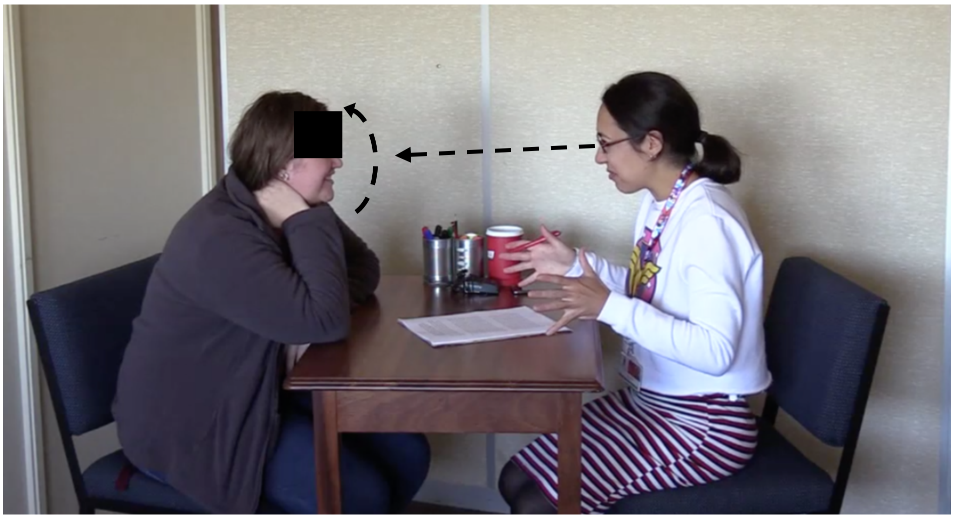
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Figure 11: Student laughing and nodding as a response to a directive question

Figure 11 illustrates the physical acts guiding the tutor’s question. The tutor looks up and makes eye contact with the student as she asks the directive question (turn 59). The student then verbally responds with the conversational act ‘okay’ accompanied by the physical gesture of nodding in turn 60, confirming the student’s comprehension and implies that the student will later perform the tutor’s suggestion.

4.2.2.2.2. Weaker examples of directive questions

A few directive questions only formed interrogatives through the insertion of a question tag. These questions were marked as ‘weaker’ directive questions, as they consisted of declaratives or imperatives followed by the insertion of ‘okay’, ‘alright’, ‘right’, ‘you see, ‘you know’ or the use of the Afrikaans word ‘nê’. In these cases, the declaratives followed by the tag word were only marked as questions if they encompassed rising intonation, tutor gaze and anticipated a response from the student.

Excerpt 4:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 369	
Tutor: So. You have to describe (.) the (.) picture? So maybe you can say quote by Michael O Levitt [?].	
TURN 370	
Student: Hm. (nods)	
TURN 371	
Tutor: Uhm. (2s) And then. Ja**. Check the guide.** ↗**Okay?** I don't know it off by heart.	Performs an action
Turn 372	
Student: Okay check the guide. (writes)	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing how the student should reference a picture in her essay. The tutor then asks the student the directive question, 'Check the guide, okay?' (turn 371) and the student responds by confirming the tutor's suggestion. In this instance, the function of the directive question was to instruct the student to perform an action. The 'okay?' tag (turn 371) in this case, indicates that the tutor expects a response from the student. The student responds with, 'Okay, check the guide' (turn 372), confirming that she will check the study guide for the correct referencing format, thus corroborating the illocutionary intent of the tutor's directive question.

In order for the 'okay' tag in excerpt 4 to be coded as a directive question, the question had to be accompanied by three macropragmatic elements: tutor gaze, rising intonation and student response. These elements are illustrated in the figure below.

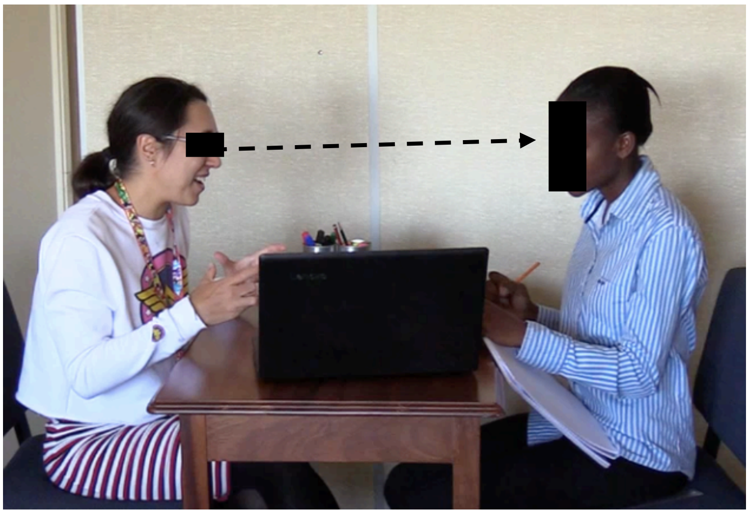

Figure 12: Example of a directive tag question

Figure 12 illustrates how the directive question in Excerpt 4 (turn 371) is accompanied by the appropriate macropragmatic gestures: tutor gaze and rising intonation (physical acts) that require confirmation from the student. The tutor looks directly at the student after uttering 'okay', signifying that she expects the student to signal that she understands the tutor's question. The student's response, 'Okay, check the guide' reinforces the tutor's question and authenticates the function of the directive question.

4.2.2.2.3. Overlaps with other question types

Directive questions occasionally overlapped with scaffolding, leading and checking for understanding questions where the question coincided with both the directive function and the leading/scaffolding/checking for understanding question function. The examples below present a micropragmatic analysis of the dual function of the directive question and another question type.

Excerpt 5:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 2	**FUNCTION**
TURN 243	
Tutor: Okay but **do you see the topic sentence is short (.) and sweet?**	(1) Directive: provides an answer relating to a specific aspect of the student's writing (2) Leading: pushes the student to answer in a specific manner based on the question's structure.
TURN 244	
Student: Hmm. (nods)	
TURN 245	
Tutor: And it's just got the main idea.	
TURN 246	
Student: Yes.	

The excerpt above illustrates the dual functions of a question as both a directive and a leading question. The tutor and the student are discussing the use of topic sentences in the student's writing. The tutor is attempting to clarify whether the student understands the concept by asking the question, 'do you see the topic sentence is short and sweet?' (turn 243) as she looks at the student.

The student responds with ‘hmm’ and then performing the physical act of nodding ‘yes’ (turn 244) describing the macropragmatic context guiding the question (Figure 13 below).

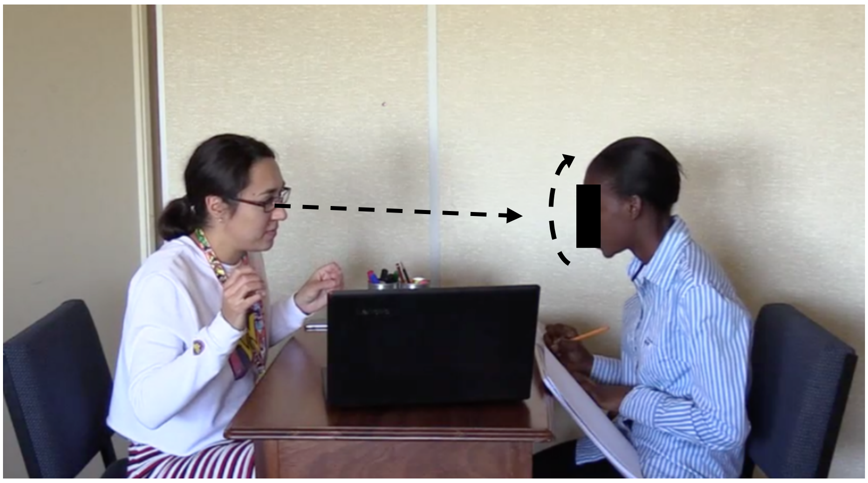
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Figure 13: Student nods 'yes' as a response to the directive/leading question

In first view, the question is interpreted as having a directive function by prompting the student to answer a question regarding a specific facet of her writing and then further requiring a ‘yes’ response from the student. In the second view, the question is interpreted as leading where its function is to urge the student to respond with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ based on its yes/no grammatical structure. The student’s response by nodding ‘yes’ (Figure 13) satisfies the function of the leading question.

Excerpt 6:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 183	
Tutor: Okay so I did not read (.) any further (.) than your um introduction. **So, can you please highlight me your…in a different colour uh your plan of development.**	(1) Directive: encourages the student to perform action (2) Scaffolding: pushes the student to review his/her writing and prompting critical thinking
TURN 184	
Student: On my…	
TURN 185	
Tutor: In your introduction. Yes.	
TURN 186	
Student: (student highlights on the document) But I don’t think it’s a good plan of development.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor requires the student to identify the three components of a good introduction: background, thesis statement and plan of development. In the first view, the tutor uses a directive question that requires the student to identify the plan of development and to highlight it in a specific colour. The tutor gestures by pointing (Figure 14, Frame 1) to the student's writing as she asks the question, 'can you please highlight me your…plan of development' (turn 183). The student's response by physically highlighting on the document corresponds with the directive question function of performing an action (Figure 14, Frame 2).

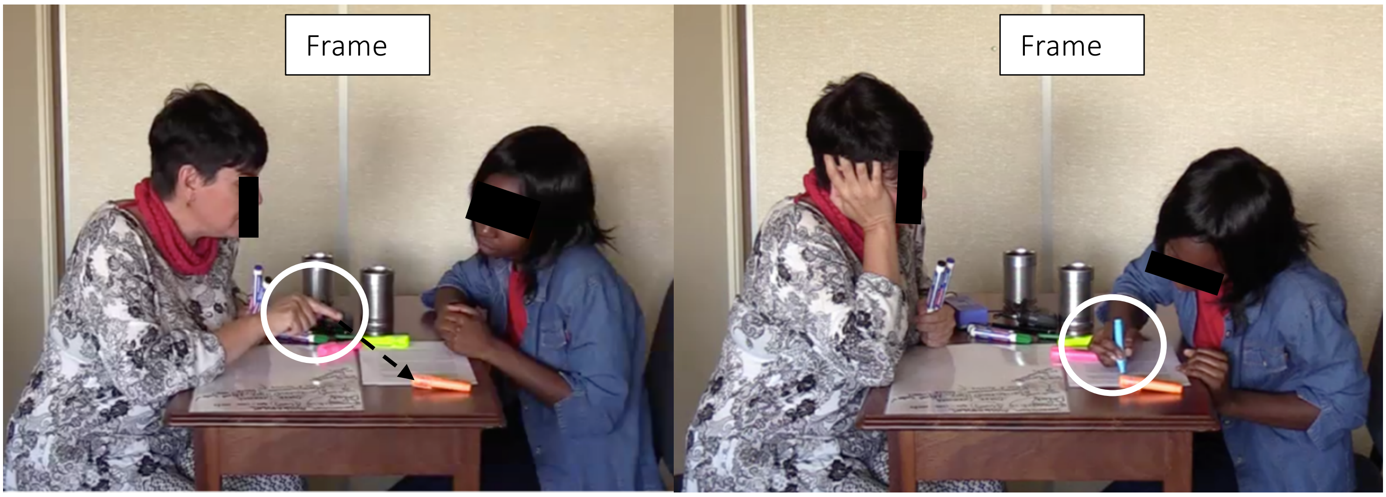

Figure 14: Tutor's physical gestures guiding the directive/scaffolding question

In the second view, the question also acts as a scaffolding question as it encourages the student to review her own work after identifying and highlighting the plan of development (Figure 14, Frame 2). The student's own evaluation of her plan of development prompts the response in turn 186, 'I don't think it's a good plan of development', confirming the tutor's illocutionary intent of provoking critical thinking from the student.

4.2.2.3 Scaffolding questions

Scaffolding questions were coded according to their functions of either (1) pushing students toward reviewing their work (2) prompting students to think critically or (3) asking students to brainstorm. These questions are also characteristically writing related and future related. The transcriptions disclosed that all three tutors used scaffolding questions in accordance with their outlined functions.

4.2.2.3.1 Stronger examples of scaffolding question functions

The excerpts below illustrate the strongest examples of how scaffolding questions were used to push students to review their work, think critically and brainstorm. These examples were selected based on whether they distinctly satisfied the functions of scaffolding questions mentioned above.

Excerpt 7:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 404	
Tutor: So: **is there any way that you can (.) sort of ease your reader into this paragraph?**	Pushes the student to review their work Asks the student to think critically and brainstorm
TURN 405	
Student: (reads document in silence for 5 seconds, from 02:34 to 02:39) Let's see, the influence of a fatty diet. Uhm. Many people think that (2s) an unhealthy fat but no, but it won't be (inaudible).	
TURN 406	
Tutor: Okay now. We need those linking words and that is why I actually need (.) and I'm going to run.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing how to link different paragraphs and ideas together. Rather than tell the student to use linking works, the tutor decides to scaffold the answer from the student. The tutor asks the scaffolding question, 'Is there any way you can sort of ease your reader into this paragraph?' (turn 404). As the tutor utters 'ease' and she moves her hands forward (Figure 15) to illustrate the process of guiding the reader through the paragraph. This movement ensures that the student comprehends the question, and the student is then encouraged to review her own work and to think of an answer.

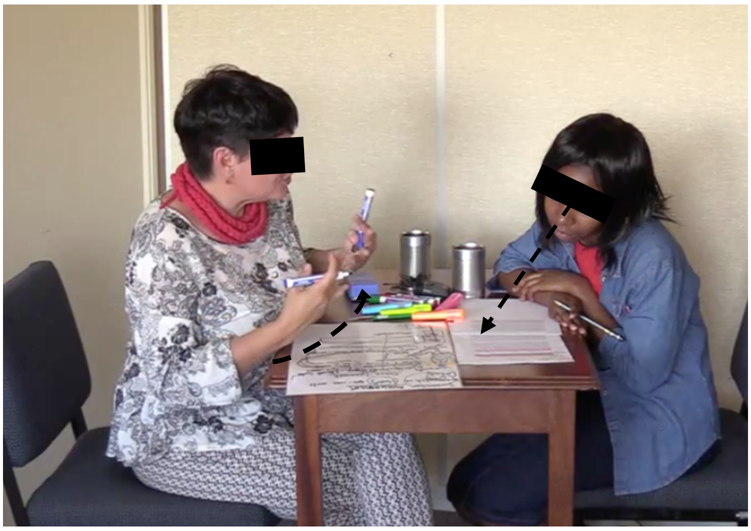
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Figure 15: Tutor's gestures guiding the scaffolding question

The student's response by reading the document (Figure 15), shows that she is reviewing her writing and brainstorms a possible answer in her response in turn 405, 'Let's see, the influence of a fatty diet. Uhm. Many people think that an unhealthy fat but no, but it won't be…' satisfies the function of the scaffolding question. The hesitation in her response demonstrates that she is critically evaluating her own work and corroborates the tutor's illocutionary intent.

Excerpt 8:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 221	
Tutor: **So, can you maybe (.) come up with a topic sentence (.) while sitting here?**	Asks the student to think critically and brainstorm
TURN 222	
Student: Well a topic sentence isn't it like that it explains like everything that I'm going to write here? So.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing the concept of topic sentences. The tutor performs the physical action of looking at the student (Figure 16) as she asks her to devise her own topic sentence in order to confirm whether the student understands the concept (turn 221). The tutor smiles at the student as she asks the question in Figure 16, indicating that she attempts to put the student at ease.

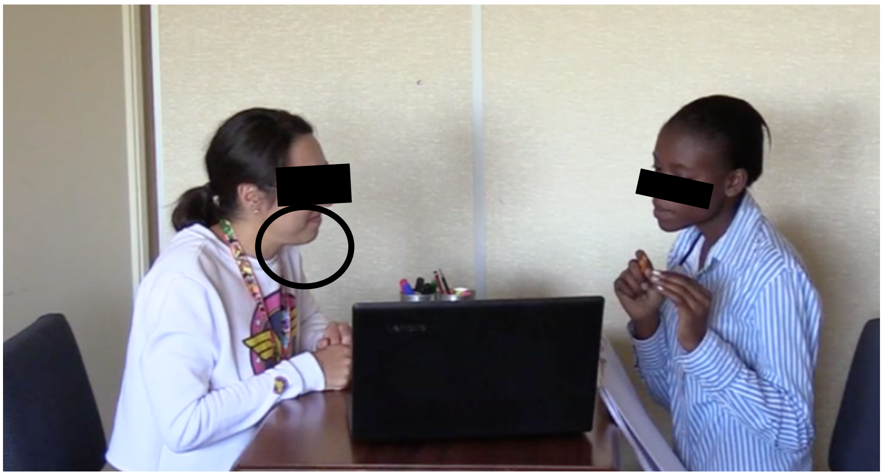

Figure 16: Tutor asks a scaffolding question

The student’s response in turn 222 confirms that she does not completely understand topic sentences which then prompts an explanation from the tutor. In this case, the tutor’s purpose behind asking the scaffolding question was to encourage the student to think critically and perhaps devise her own example before immediately explaining the concept.

4.2.2.3.2 Weaker examples of scaffolding question functions

As with directive questions, scaffolding questions that only formed interrogatives through the insertion of a question tag ‘okay’, ‘alright’, ‘right’, ‘you see’, ‘you know’ or the use of the Afrikaans word ‘nê’ were marked as ‘weaker’ scaffolding questions. Only one scaffolding question comprised of imperative followed by the tag ‘okay’. In this case, the question had to be supported by rising intonation, tutor gaze and confirmation from the student. The example is discussed below.

Excerpt 9: Weaker scaffolding questions

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 3 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 105	
Tutor: No, no, no. You just, literally (.) I think you needed to say 'argue'. Alright? 'This essay will argue the issue of'. Or 'will argue that'.	
TURN 106	
Student: Mm.	
TURN 107	
268. Tutor: Um. **Tell us what it will argue. (.) Okay?**	Pushes the student to review her work
NO CONVERSATION TURN	
Student: (nods)	

In Excerpt 9, the tutor and the student are going through the assignment rubric provided by the lecturer to ensure that the student included all the elements necessary in an essay. The tutor suggests that the student uses the term 'argue' in the thesis statement in her introduction to indicate the point of the essay. The tutor states, 'tell us what it will argue, okay?' (turn 107), and the utterance is structured as an imperative followed by the tag 'okay'. The student does not offer a verbal response in the transcript, thus the macropragmatic elements following the utterance had to be examined in order to code it as a question.

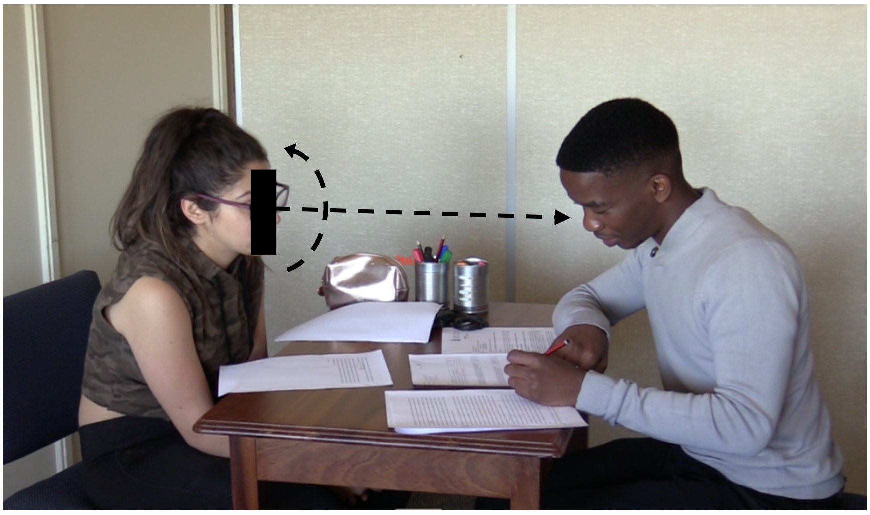

Figure 17: Example of a scaffolding question tag

Figure 17 depicts the student’s response to the tutor’s utterance in turn 107. The student responds by nodding her head, indicating a ‘yes’ response as well as looking up at the tutor, indicating that she interprets the utterance as a question. The utterance is thus coded as a ‘weaker’ scaffolding question, as it does push the student to review her own work and re-examine her thesis statement.

4.2.2.3.3 Overlaps with other question types

Scaffolding questions overlapped with directive and presumptive questions where the question agreed with the characteristics of scaffolding, directive and presumptive question functions. The example below analyses the twofold function of a scaffolding question that also acts as a presumptive question.

Excerpt 10:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 108	
Tutor: Now. What you now need to do (.) is (.) the reasoning. (2s) **How do I tie (.) that evidence (.) to ↗my?**	(1) Scaffolding: asks the student to think critically (2) Presumptive: elicits general background information on what the student understands about the assignment
TURN 109	
Student: To: conclusion oh claim.	
TURN 110	
Tutor: To my (.) claim.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor is explaining how an argumentative essay requires supporting evidence to substantiate the claims made in the essay. In the first interpretation, the tutor uses a scaffolding question, ‘How do I tie that evidence to my?’ (turn 108) as she gazes at the student in Figure 18, which requires the student to think critically and provide the correct answer to complete the tutor’s sentence. The rising intonation on the word ‘↗my’ (turn 108) indicates that the tutor expects the student to complete the sentence. The student responds by suggesting ‘conclusion’ (turn 109) and then correcting herself by responding ‘oh claim’ (turn 109) and the tutor confirms her answer ‘to my claim’ (turn 110). The tutor looks up at the student as she repeats ‘to my claim’ (Figure 18) to confirm that the student understands the concept and her own correction.

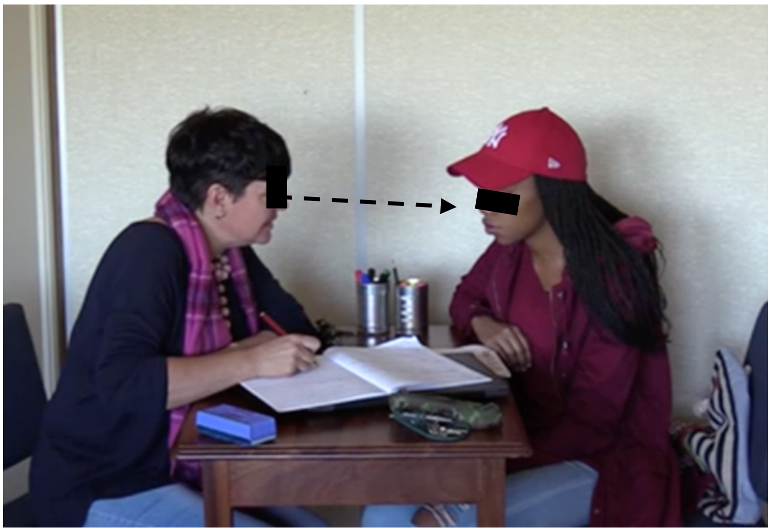
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Figure 18: Tutor gaze accompanying a scaffolding/presumptive question

The student's response by correcting herself and critically reviewing her answer coincides with the scaffolding function of the question. In the second interpretation, the question also performs a presumptive function, as it determines whether the student understands the concept of providing supporting evidence for every claim made in her argument. The student's response in turn 109 demonstrates that she understands the concept.

4.2.2.4 Information-gap questions

Information-gap questions were coded according to their functions of eliciting information from students regarding the subject matter of their assignment or the principles of writing that are assumed as background information or knowledge. These questions also produce responses regarding essay content or writing issues and usually start with wh-words. The transcriptions revealed that all three tutors used information-gap questions according to their described functions. The most significant examples are discussed below.

4.2.2.4.1 Examples of information-gap question functions

The excerpts below analyse the strongest examples of how information-gap questions were used to obtain background information regarding the student's assignment or their comprehension of certain writing principles. As with previous codes, these examples were selected based on their level of correspondence to the described functions of information-gap questions and are discussed below. In several cases of yes/no information-gap questions, the student responses were short as the tutor only expects a specific answer regarding the task.

Excerpt 11:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 Video 1	FUNCTION
TURN 39	
Tutor: Okay. (laughter) **Um, uh, is there anything specific that you think we can help you with?**	Elicits information regarding the student's writing principles
TURN 40	
40. Student: You know, I'm not so sure about my essay. Every time I do writing, I think like it's boring and it doesn't have the (.) juice and all that. (laughter)	

The excerpt above occurs at the beginning of the consultation and the tutor's aim is to identify the student's specific writing needs. The tutor asks the information-gap question, 'is there anything specific that you think we can help you with?' (turn 39), as she gazes at the student and smiles (Figure 19), to which the student responds, 'I'm not so sure about my essay' (turn 40), and the student then looks down and gestures towards her assignment on the table (Figure 19).

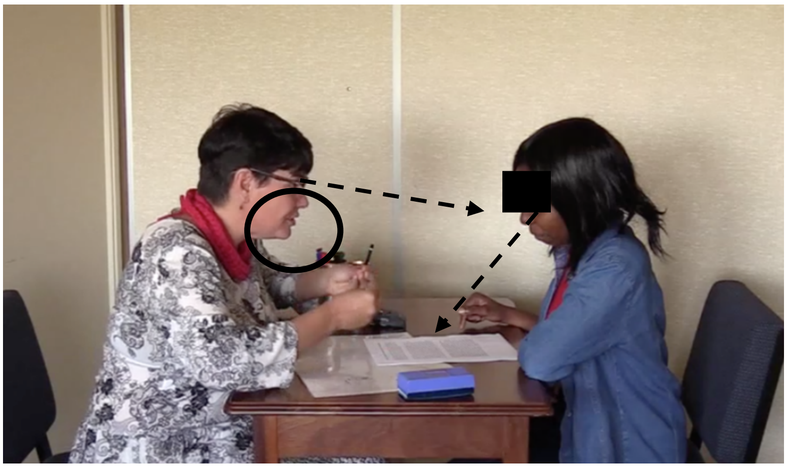

Figure 19: The use of an information-gap question to set the agenda

In this case, the information gap question functions as a means of setting the agenda for the remainder of the consultation to determine the student's specific writing concerns. The tutor smiles in Figure 19 as she asks the question to make the student feel welcome. The tutor's illocutionary intent aligns with the function of information-gap questions to elicit information concerning the student's writing.

Excerpt 12:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 Video 2	FUNCTION
TURN 8	
Tutor: **What was your ↗topic?**	Elicits information regarding the content of the assignment
TURN 9	
Student: Uhm I chose um: experimentation on animals as an essential part in medical research.	
TURN 10	
Tutor: Okay? (3s) And **are you arguing ↗for or ↗against ↗that?**	Elicit information regarding the content of the assignment
TURN 11	
Student: Against.	

Excerpt 12 demonstrates the typical use of information-gap questions throughout the consultations to obtain information regarding the content of the assignment. The tutor asks, 'What was your topic?' (turn 8) as she looks at the student (Figure 20) and the student responds with the topic of her argumentative essay. The tutor then continues to ask, 'And are you arguing for or against that?' (turn 10), and the student answers 'Against' (turn 11).

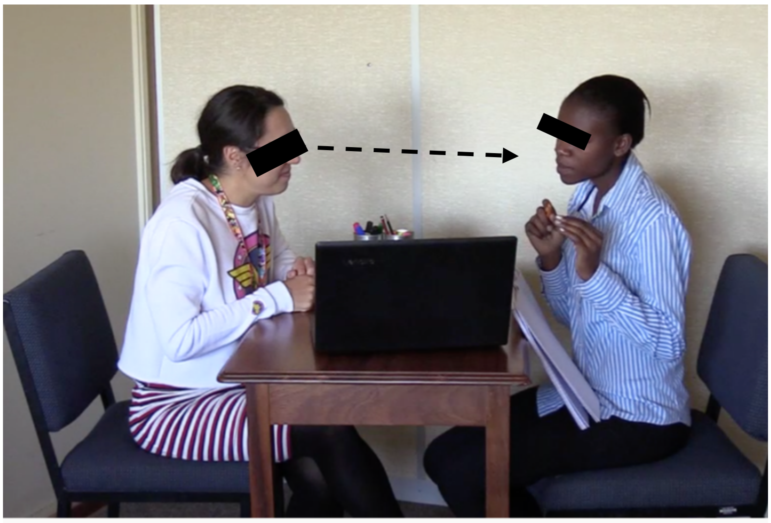

Figure 20: Tutor gaze guiding an information-gap question

The function of both the tutor's questions is to extract information regarding the content and aim of the assignment, allowing the tutor to contextualise the subject. As part of the macropragmatic context, information gap questions are mostly accompanied by the physical acts of gazing at the student and rising intonation as the question is asked as depicted in both Figure 19 and 20.

4.2.2.4.2 Overlaps with other question types

Information-gap questions overlapped with presumptive and checking understanding question codes when the question aligned with the described functions of information-gap questions and presumptive or checking understanding question codes. The excerpt below depicts the dual functions of information-gap and presumptive questions.

Excerpt 14:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 Video 2	FUNCTION
TURN 96	
Tutor: All right so. (closes laptop) I'm going to close this now. (2s) in an argumentative essay (1s) **have you ever written an argumentative ↗essay?**	(1) Information gap: elicits information regarding the content of the assignment (2) Presumptive: elicits general information regarding what the student understands about the assignment
TURN 97	
Student: Ja I've written (.) it.	

In Excerpt 14, the tutor and the student are discussing the concept of argumentative essays. The tutor asks the student, ‘have you ever written an argumentative ↗essay?’ (turn 96) as she looks at the student (Figure 21), and the student responds, ‘Ja I’ve written it’ (turn 97).

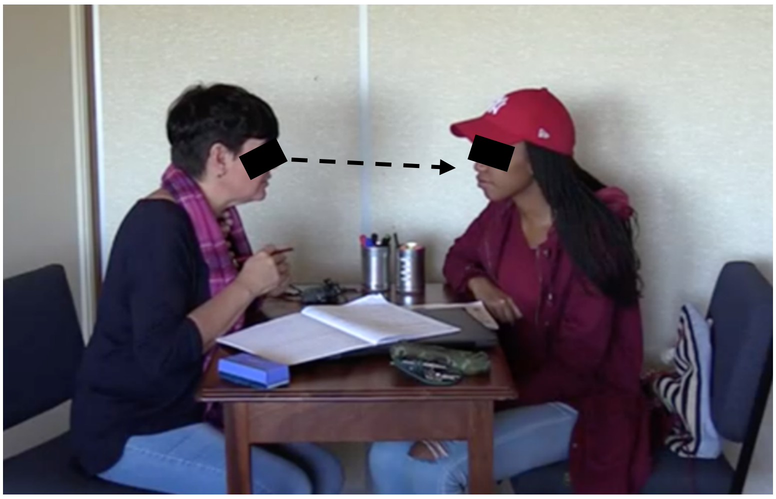

Figure 21: Tutor gaze guiding an information-gap/presumptive question

The question functions as an information-gap question, as the tutor is eliciting information regarding the subject matter of the assignment. This also aligns with the physical acts often accompanying information-gap questions of the tutor looking at the student and using rising intonation as the question is asked (Figure 21). The question additionally functions as a presumptive question, as the tutor is attempting to establish whether the student possesses any prior knowledge concerning argumentative essays.

4.2.2.5 Presumptive questions

Tutors used presumptive questions in correspondence with their described function of eliciting general background information on what students need, want, know or understand about their assignments. These questions were often task related and demonstrated whether students had prior knowledge of the assignment topic.

4.2.2.5.1 Stronger examples of presumptive questions

The following excerpts describe the strongest examples of presumptive question functions. The examples were selected according to the described functions of presumptive questions outlined above. The questions that conformed to these functions were marked as 'stronger'.

Excerpt 15:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 Video 1	FUNCTION
TURN 93	
Tutor: There's your background information, so you just paraphrase that, and your thesis statement and your plan of development, so have everything that you need there. Good. **Did you have questions about the introduction?**	Elicits information about what the student understands about the task
TURN 94	
94. Student: No, no I, I'm good. Ja.	

In Excerpt 15, the tutor has completed her explanation regarding the components of a good introduction: background information, thesis statement and plan of development. The tutor asks the presumptive question, 'Did you have questions about the introduction?' (turn 93), and the student responds with, 'No, no, I, I'm good' (turn 94).

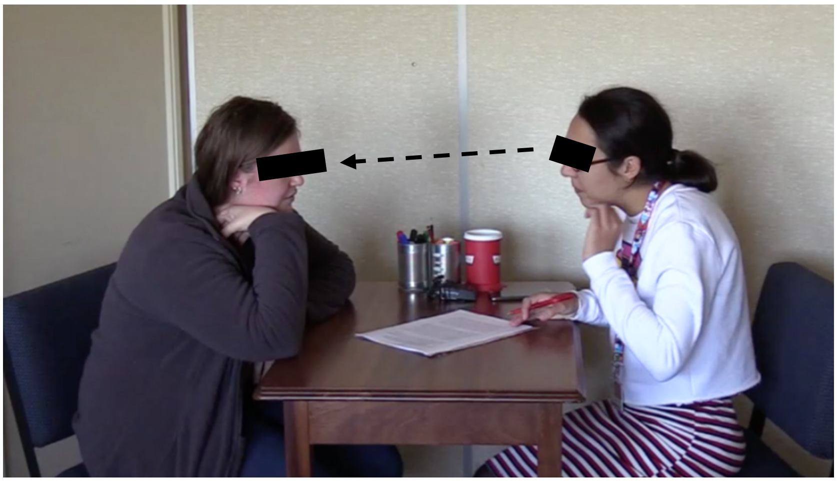

Figure 22: Tutor looks at the student when asking a presumptive question

In this case, the purpose of the presumptive question was to elicit information from the student regarding writing an introduction.

As part of the physical acts guiding the question, the tutor looks at the student in Figure 22 when asking the presumptive question, indicating that she needs to know whether the student understands the task before continuing with the consultation.

Excerpt 16:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 Video 2	**FUNCTION**
TURN 90	
Tutor: Ja. So, if you have that in your head that knowledge, then it's easier to find (.) that conclusion. **So, do you know what a conclusion is?**	Elicits information about what the student understands about the task
TURN 91	
91. Student: (2s) Yeah, I know what's a conclusion.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and student are discussing the 'conclusion' section of the assignment. The tutor asks the student, 'So do you know what a conclusion is?' (turn 90) as she looks at the student (Figure 23), and the student responds with, 'Yeah I know what's a conclusion.'

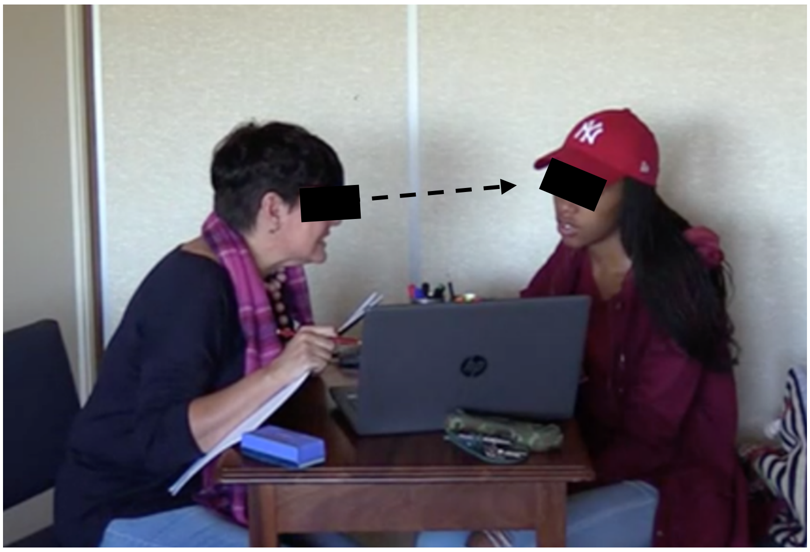

Figure 23: Tutor gaze guiding a presumptive question

In this instance, the tutor asks the presumptive question in turn 90 to elicit a response regarding what the student understands about the final section of the task. The tutor's aim is to determine whether the student has any background knowledge about writing conclusions and whether she should explain it to the student.

The student’s response confirms that she does have prior knowledge about the structure of conclusions, thus corroborating the tutor’s illocutionary intent.

4.2.2.5.2 Weaker examples of presumptive questions

Presumptive questions structured with a declarative or imperative and the tag ‘okay’, ‘alright’, ‘right’, ‘you see’, ‘you know’ or the use of the Afrikaans word ‘nê’ were marked as ‘weaker’ presumptive questions. As with previous question codes, instances where these questions occur had to be supported by rising intonation, tutor gaze and confirmation from the student in order to qualify as a tag question. The example below illustrates the use of a presumptive tag question accompanied by the appropriate confirmation.

Excerpt 17:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 3 Video 2	FUNCTION
TURN 12	
Tutor: Okay, I, I’m really glad (.) Let’s go through it. (smiles) (reads from the document for 10 seconds, from 00:33 to 00:43) Okay. This is a good introduction. **I see you put in a hook, ↗né?**	Elicits information about what the student understands about the task
TURN 13	
Student: (nods)	

In Excerpt 17, the tutor and the student are discussing the components of a good introduction. The tutor asks the presumptive question, ‘I see you put in a hook, ↗nê?’ (turn 12) that is comprised of a declarative followed by the tag ‘↗nê’ and points to the ‘hook’ sentence on the page (Figure 24). The ‘↗nê’ contains rising intonation, indicating that the tutor expects a response from the student.

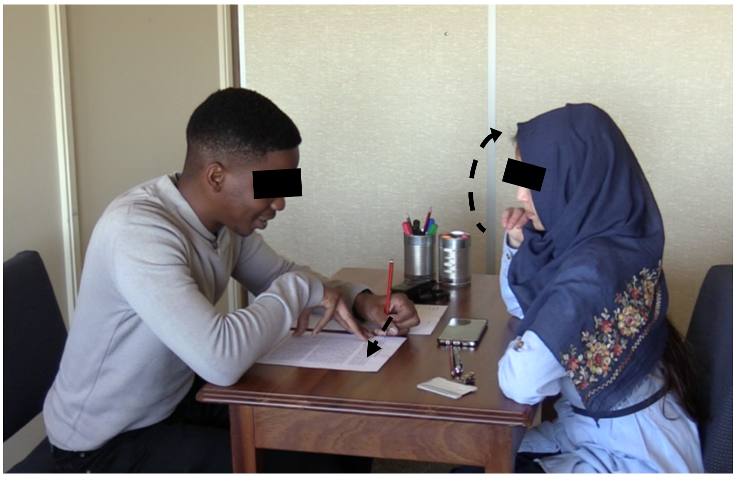

Figure 24: Presumptive question tag with 'nê'

The function of the question is to elicit information regarding what the student understands about the ‘hook’ in the introduction. The student confirms that he did provide a ‘hook’ by nodding ‘yes’ (turn 13) (Figure 24). The student’s response indicates that she perceived the tutor’s utterance as a question and therefore it was coded as a presumptive question as described by its function.

4.2.2.5.3 Overlaps with other question codes

Presumptive questions overlapped with information-gap and checking understanding question codes when the question supported the described functions of presumptive questions and the other question codes. The excerpt below depicts how a presumptive question can also function as a checking for understanding question.

Excerpt 18:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 3 Video 1	FUNCTION
TURN 56	
Tutor: Okay. **So, you understood like state intervention as the child being removed like from (.) the family?**	(1) Presumptive: elicits a response about what the student understands about the task (2) Checking for understanding: confirms whether the student understands what the tutor explained
TURN 57	
Student: Ja:.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing the assigned topic of the student's argumentative essay. The tutor asks, 'So you understood like the state intervention as the child being removed like from the family?' (turn 56) as he looks at the student and moves his hands from the table towards himself on the word 'remove' to indicate that the child is being taken away (Figure 25). The student responds with 'ja' (turn 57), meaning yes, indicating that she understood the tutor question.

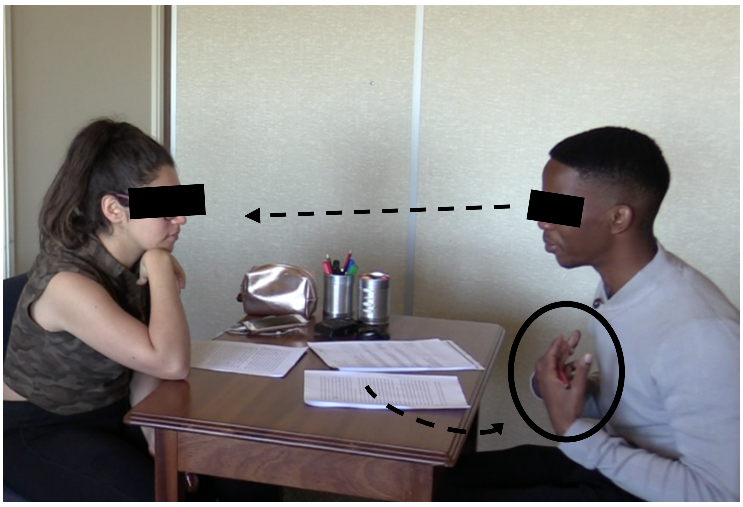

Figure 25: Tutor gestures guiding a presumptive/checking for understanding question

In the first view, the question functions as a presumptive question, as the tutor aims to elicit a response regarding whether the student understands the concept of 'state intervention' in relation to the assignment topic and the student's argument. The student's 'ja' in turn 57 confirms that she understands the task. In the second view, the tutor's question also functions as a checking for understanding question, as the tutor aims to confirm whether the student understands the concept of 'state intervention' in general or whether she requires further explanation from the tutor. The student's response confirms that she does not require further explanation of the concept.

4.2.2.6 Checking for understanding questions

Checking for understanding questions were coded as per their function outlined in the coding table: to confirm whether the tutor and the student share the same understanding of a particular subject, or whether the student understands what the tutor has just said or explained. These questions are often structured as tag questions or words appended as interrogatives. The examples below illustrate the stronger and weaker functions of these questions.

4.2.2.6.1 Stronger checking for understanding questions

The following excerpts analyse the strongest examples of the manner in which checking for understanding questions were used to confirm whether the tutor and the student have the same understanding of a certain subject or whether the student requires further explanation. As with previous codes, these examples were selected based on their level of correspondence with the described functions of these questions in the codebook and a few examples are analysed below.

Excerpt 19:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 Video 1	FUNCTION
TURN 309	
Tutor: **So, do you understand the (.) the introduction as a unit?**	Confirms the student's understanding of a certain subject
TURN 310	
Student: Ja. I do.	
TURN 311	
Tutor: Okay. **And can you see that that is a launch pad?**	Confirms the student's understanding of a certain subject
TURN 312	
Student: (nods)	

Excerpt 19 shows how the tutor uses two checking for understanding questions to determine whether the student understands the subject. The exchange follows after the tutor had explained the three parts of writing an introduction: background information, thesis statement and plan of development and how they function as a unit. The tutor then asks, 'So, do you understand the introduction as a unit?' (turn 309) and forms a square with her hands to indicate a 'unit' (Figure 26, Frame 1).

The purpose of the question is confirmed whether the student understands the concept of writing an introduction. The student's response 'Ja (yes), I do' (turn 312) confirms that she understands and thus corroborates the function of the question.

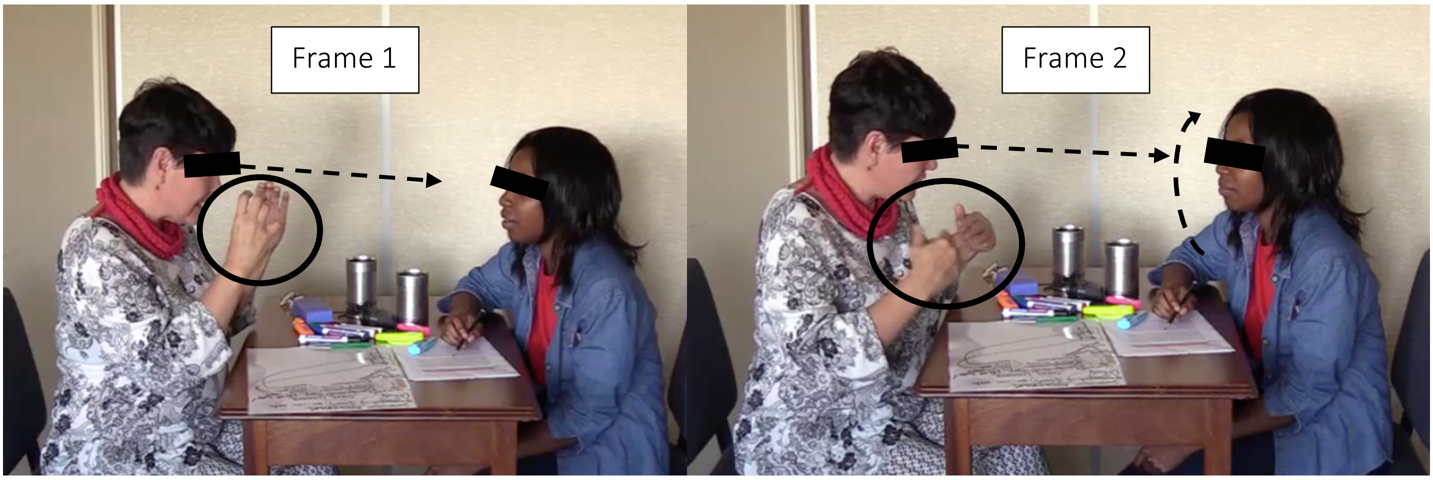

Figure 26: Tutor gestures to confirm the student's understanding of the subject

The tutor then continues with another question to confirm whether the student understands, 'And can you see that that is a launch pad?' (turn 311) while looking at the student and forming two flat surfaces with her hands to indicate a 'launch pad' (Figure 26, Frame 2). In this case, the tutor refers to the introduction as metaphorically being the 'launch pad' of the essay to confirm whether the student understands that the introduction functions as the starting point. The student confirms that she understands the concept by nodding 'yes' (Figure 26, Frame 2), thus showing that the checking for understanding question was successful.

Excerpt 20:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 103	
Tutor: Uhm (reads) On the essentiality (.) of animals. (2s) Okay I think you need to make a bit clearer. Because actually from that thesis statement, it seems like you agree with that.	
TURN 104	
Student: (3s) Really? Well actually I'm disagreeing that uhm.	
TURN 105	
Tutor: Yes.	
TURN 106	
Student: Animals shouldn't be used.	
TURN 107	
Tutor: Yes. Well, if I say, this essay will argue on the essentiality of animals being used in medical research, it sounds like (.) this essay will argue that it is essential (.) for animals to be used in research, **do you understand what I mean?**	Confirms the student's understanding of a certain subject
TURN 108	
Student: Yes, I understand.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing how the student's thesis statement can be confusing to the reader by not clearly reflecting the student's stance in her argumentative essay.

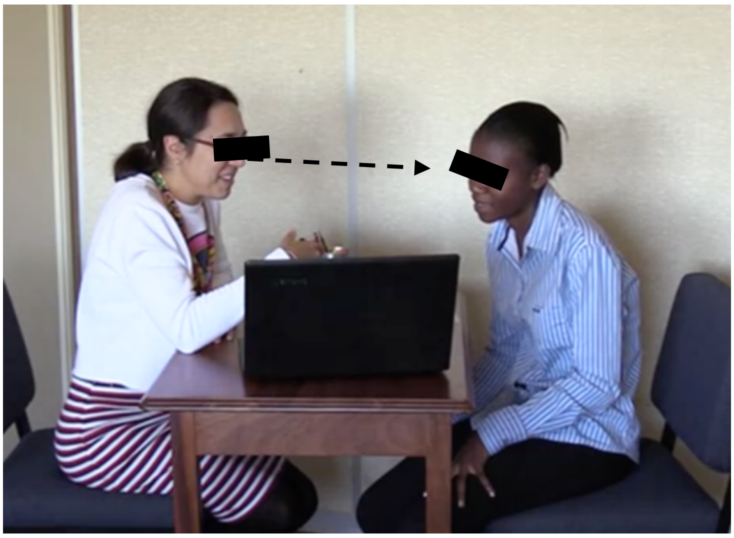
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Figure 27: Tutor gaze guiding a checking for understanding question

The tutor explains why the thesis statement does not correctly reflect the student's argument and then wants to confirm whether the student understands her explanation by asking, 'Do you understand what I mean?' (turn 107).

As the tutor asks the question, she looks at the student and smiles in Figure 27, indicating that she expects a yes/no response from the student. The student confirms that she understands by responding with, 'Yes, I understand (turn 108), thus satisfying the tutor's illocutionary intent.

4.2.2.6.2 Weaker checking for understanding questions

Checking for understanding questions that were structured with a declarative or imperative and the tag 'okay', 'alright', 'right', 'you see', 'you know' or the use of the Afrikaans word 'nê' were marked as 'weaker' checking for understanding questions. This code in particular contained the most tag questions possibly due to the stylistic South African or culture-specific language switches (McCormick 2003:181) of using these tags to mark the opening or closing gambits in discourse or to confirm whether the listener understands the speaker. In order to code these phrases as questions, they had to be accompanied by rising intonation, tutor gaze and confirmation from the student in order to qualify as a tag question. The example below illustrates the use of a declarative and a question tag with the support of the appropriate macropragmatic element to function as a checking for understanding question.

Excerpt 21:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 3 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 18	
Tutor: You can start the next paragraph with 'as such' (.) and then you go on. Or 'given this (.) these serious consequences of obesity' then tell us. Okay. So, it's just a nice way of (.) you know, being able to: (.) keep the reader (.) following what you're saying. Okay? Um:. (reads from the essay for 54 seconds, from 05:48 to 06:42) Okay, this is good. This is good. I just wanted to: (reads from the essay for 13 seconds, from 06:45 to 06:58) Okay, so here (.) **we just need to link our paragraphs a bit better,↗ nê?**	Confirms the student's understanding of a certain subject
TURN 19	
Student: Okay	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing coherence between paragraphs. The tutor asks the question, 'we just need to link our paragraphs a bit better, ↗nê?' (Turn 18) and points at the paragraph with his pencil (Figure 28). The student responds by nodding 'okay' (turn 19) (Figure 28).

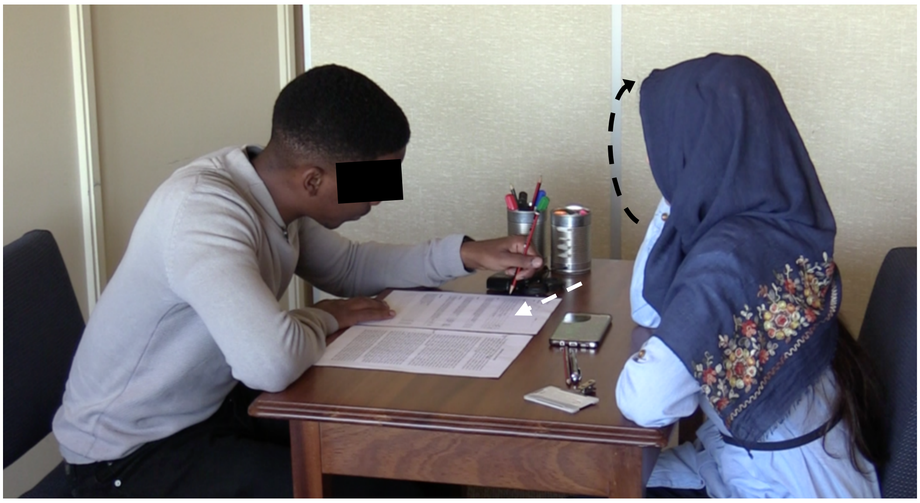

Figure 28: Use of the tag 'nê' in a checking for understanding question

In this instance, the tutor utterance consists of the tag ‘nê’ and a declarative, but is considered a question, as the ‘↗nê’ contains rising intonation and the student responds to it as a question. The tutor asks the question to confirm that the student understands that she needs to improve the transitions between the paragraphs of her assignment. The student’s response by nodding ‘okay’ (turn 19) indicates that she interpreted the tutor’s utterance as a question and understands what she needs to improve on her document, therefore satisfying the tutor’s illocutionary intent.

4.2.2.6.3 Overlaps with other question codes

Checking for understanding questions overlapped with directive, leading, information gap and presumptive question codes where the question supported the described functions of checking for understanding questions and the other question codes. The excerpt below depicts how a checking for understanding question also functions as a leading question.

Excerpt 22:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 412	
Tutor: **Can you see that you are-**	
TURN 413	
Student: Ja.	
TURN 414	
Tutor: **Laying, laying a platform.**	(1) Checking for understanding: confirms the student's understanding of a certain subject (2) Leading: pushes the student to answer in a specific manner
TURN 415	
Student: And you're telling them like (.) in the first place. (laughter)	

In the excerpt above, the tutor is explaining the use of transitional words in paragraphs to ease the reader into the first argument of the essay. Prior to the question in turn 412, the tutor used a document on her phone with examples of transitional words to illustrate their use in a paragraph. The tutor asks the question, 'Can you see that you are…laying, laying a platform?' (turn 412-414) as she looks at the student and points to the examples on her phone (Figure 29). The student interrupts with 'ja' (yes) (turn 413) as a response to the tutor's question.

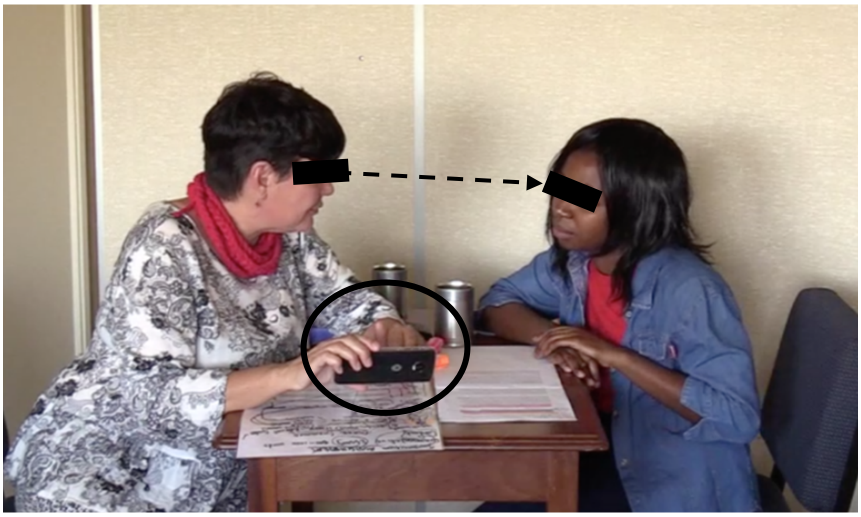

Figure 29: Tutor gestures guiding a checking for understanding/leading question

The question functions to check whether the student understands the concept of topic sentences, and the student's response in turn 13 confirms that she comprehends the tutor's explanation.

The question is also leading, as it pushes the student to either answer with yes or no, and the student's intersecting 'ja' (yes) response indicates that she was led to a response in advance before the tutor could finish the question.

4.2.2.7 Leading questions

The analysed transcripts confirmed that the function of leading questions was to push the students to answer in a specific manner, often yes or no, based on the way in which the tutor framed or phrased the question. Rhetorical questions were considered to be a type of leading question. These questions implicitly assumed a preferred (usually negative) answer asked to produce an effect, capture the listener's interest, or express astonishment, rather than elicit information. The extracts below provide an analysis of how tutors used leading questions according to their described function.

4.2.2.7.1 Stronger leading questions

As with previous codes, the strongest examples of how leading questions were used based on their function of pushing students towards a specific response, were selected based on their level of correspondence with the described functions in the codebook. The excerpts below illustrate the manner in which tutors used leading questions in agreement with their defined function.

Excerpt 23:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 3 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 268	
Okay. Let's just look at the conclusion one more time. **So, were you summarising your main ideas in this conclusion?**	Pushes the student towards a specific response
TURN 269	
269. Student: (shakes head from side-to-side)	

In Excerpt 23 the tutor and the student are going through the essay check list provided by the lecturer to ensure that the students included all the necessary sections.

In this instance, the tutor has already observed that the student's conclusion does not summarise the main ideas of the essay as required, but he wants to push the student to also identify the error on her own.

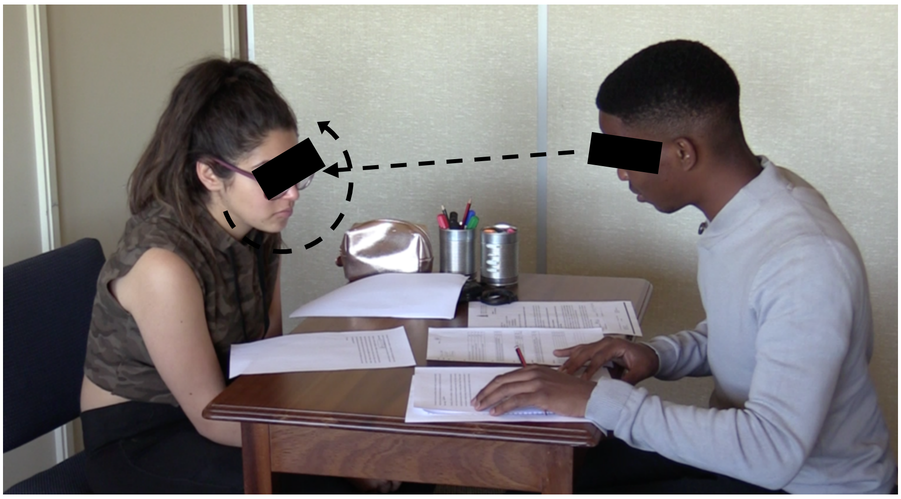

Figure 30: Physical acts guiding a leading question

The tutor the asks the leading question, 'So were you summarising your main ideas in this conclusion?' (turn 268) and looks up at the student (Figure 30), pushing the student towards answering 'no'. The student responds by looking down at her document and then shaking her head from side-to-side in Figure 30, representing a 'no' answer, thus the function of the leading question was successful.

Excerpt 24:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	FUNCTION
TURN 662	
Tutor: But you know that a comma can make a difference.	
TURN 663	
Student: Ja.	
TURN 664	
Tutor: Let me show you quickly. A comma is actually uhm (.) some um a case of life and death. Just (.) have a look at this. (writes) Let's (.) eat (.) grandma. Let's eat gogo, okay? I'm a gogo, so I can say that. Let's eat gogo. **That means we are going to-**	Pushes the student towards a specific response
TURN 665	
Student: Eat the granny.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are discussing the importance of using commas to avoid confusing the reader.

The tutor uses the example *let's eat gogo* (let's eat grandmother) and *let's eat, gogo* (Let's eat, grandmother) to illustrate how commas can change the meaning of the sentence.

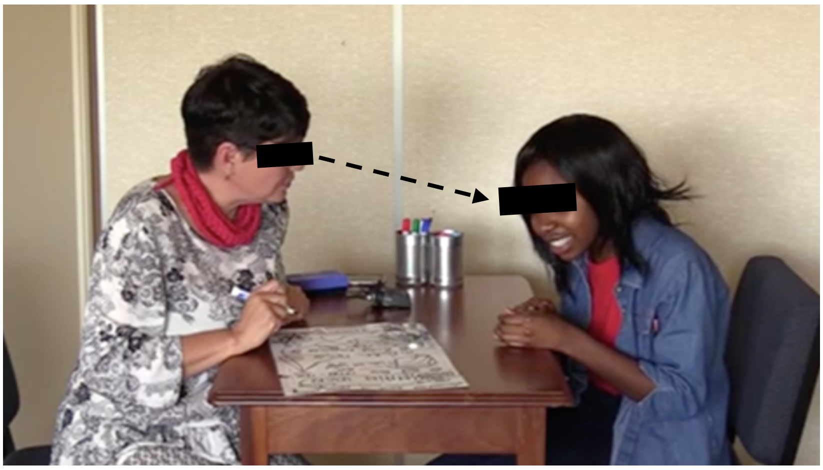

Figure 31: Tutor gaze guiding a leading question

Throughout turn 664, the tutor confirms the incorrect use of the comma by repeating 'let's eat gogo' and then ending the utterance with the leading question 'that means we are going to-' and looks up at the student (Figure 31), indicating that she expects a response.

The tutor purposively omits the correct answer to push the student to complete the sentence with the expected answer. The student provides the expected response, 'Eat the granny', completing the tutor's utterance and fulfilling the function of the leading question.

4.2.2.7.2 Weaker leading questions

Leading questions that only formed a question by adding the tag 'okay', 'alright', 'right', 'you see', 'you know' or the use of the Afrikaans word 'nê' to declarative or imperative statements were marked as 'weaker' leading questions. In order to be coded as questions, these utterances had to be supported by rising intonation, tutor gaze and confirmation from the student. The example below describes the use of leading tag question accompanied by the appropriate confirmation.

Excerpt 25:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 VIDEO 2	FUNCTION
TURN 367	
367. Tutor: **But you probably got these from a website, ↗right?**	Pushes the student towards a specific response
TURN	
368. Student: Yes.	

In the excerpt above, the tutor is asking the student where she obtained a specific source in the essay. The tutor's leading question, 'But you probably got these from a website, ↗right?' (turn 367) is structured as a question by adding the tag '↗right' to a declarative with rising intonation.

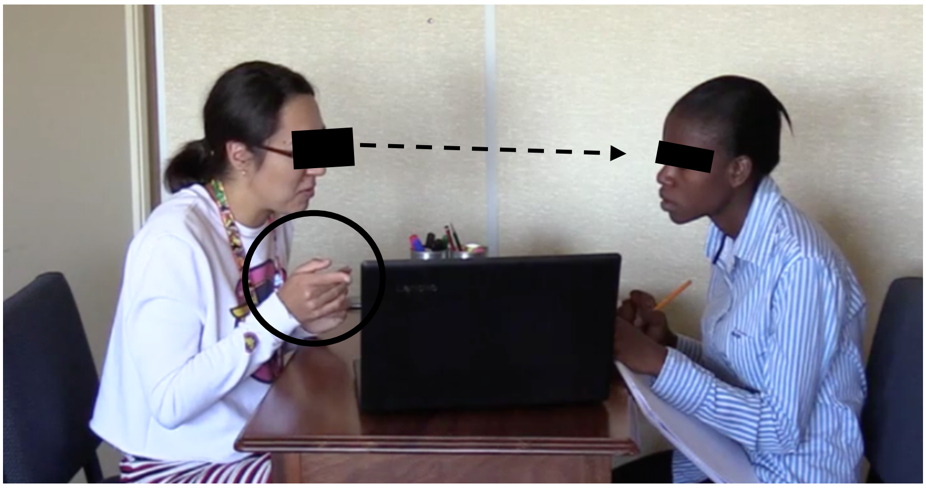

Figure 32: Leading question with the tag 'right'

The tutor points to the laptop as she asks the question and then directs her gaze at the student in Figure 32, indicating that she expects a response. The utterance is coded as a question as the student interprets it as a question and responds verbally. The question pushes the student to respond with either a yes or no, and the tutor's gesture towards the laptop (Figure 32) also does not allow other possible answers. The student answers 'yes', aligning with the function of the leading question.

4.2.2.7.3 Overlaps with other question codes

Certain leading questions also aligned with the functions of directive, scaffolding, presumptive and checking for understanding questions.

In these instances, the questions were coded as both a leading question and as the other question code associated with its function in the utterance. The excerpt below describes the double function of a leading question and a presumptive question.

Excerpt 27:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 1 VIDEO 1	**FUNCTION**
TURN 37	
Tutor: Oh: **so, this is your argumentative essay, am I right?**	(1) Leading: pushes the student towards a specific response (2) Presumptive: elicits information regarding the student's assignment
TURN 38	
Student: Ja. (laughter)	

The excerpt above occurs at the beginning of the consultation where the tutor is trying to establish the purpose of the consultation. The tutor asks the question, 'so this is your argumentative essay, am I right?' (turn 37) while looking at the student in Figure 32 and the student answers 'ja (yes)' (turn 38).

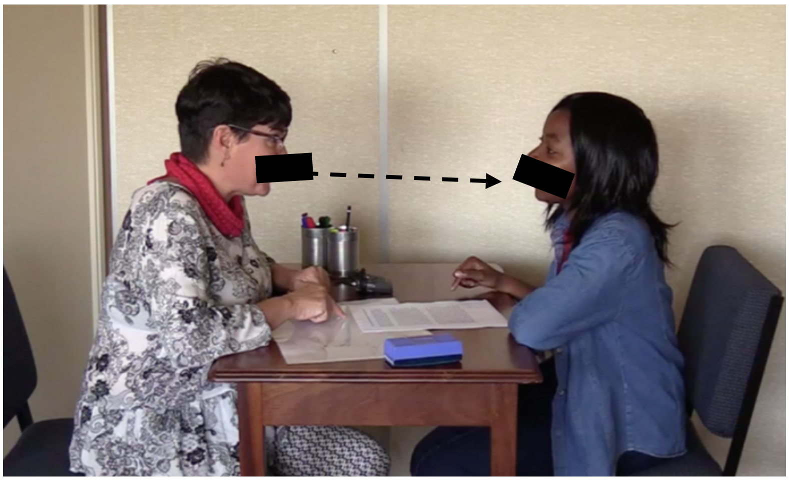

Figure 33: Tutor gestures guiding a leading/presumptive question

The question functions as a leading question, as the question pushes the student to either answer 'yes' or 'no' and the student's 'yes' response supports the function of the leading question. The question also functions as a presumptive question as the tutor uses the question to elicit information about the student's assignment in order to create a context for the writing.

The student confirms that it is an argumentative essay, thus supporting the question's illocutionary intent.

4.2.2.8 Politeness questions

For the purpose of this study, politeness questions are defined as questions relating to feelings of rapport, solidarity and self-confidence between tutors and students, based on the study conducted by Thompson and Mackiewicz (2013). The analysis presented no distinction between stronger or weaker politeness questions, as none of these questions were constructed through the insertion of tags. The excerpts below provides examples of how politeness questions functioned throughout consultations.

Excerpt 28:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 Video 2	FUNCTION
TURN 195	
Tutor: Okay. But let's go back to the first paragraph. (laughter) We're jumping ahead now. (2s) **Okay can I read the first paragraph?**	Establishes feelings of rapport
TURN 196	
Student: Hmm. (nods)	

In Excerpt 28, the tutor and the student are focusing on the first paragraph of the student's assignment. The tutor politely asks the student, 'Can I read the first paragraph?' (turn 195) as she looks at the laptop (Figure 33) in order to create feelings of rapport, encouraging the student's mutual participation in the conversation.

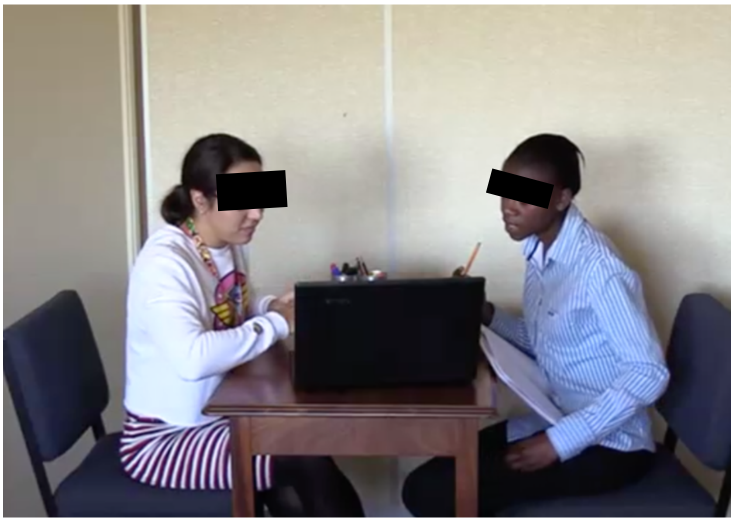

Figure 34: Tutor asks a politeness question to establish feelings of rapport

The student responds with ‘hmm’ and nodding ‘yes’ (Figure 33). The tutor’s laughter preceding the question in turn 195 indicates the tutor is establishing rapport and trying to make the student feel more comfortable as they focus on the first paragraph of the assignment.

Excerpt 29:

TURNS AND DIALOGUE: TUTOR 2 Video 1	**FUNCTION**
TURN 363	
Student: I hate writing essays like this.	
TURN 364	
364. Tutor: **Really?**	Establishes feelings of rapport
Turn 365	
Student: It’s really, I, I hated it at school, I still hate it (laughter) It’s really.	

In the excerpt above, the student is expressing her personal opinion regarding argumentative essays. As the session concludes, the student and the tutor seem to be more at ease in each other’s company.

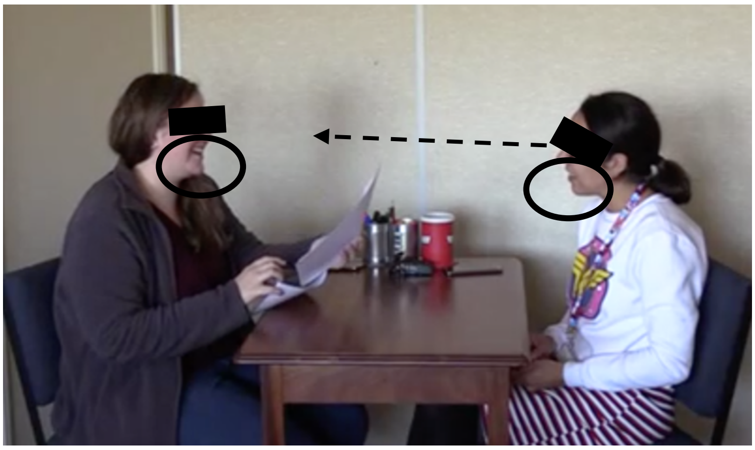

Figure 35: A politeness question is used to establish rapport

In Figure 34, the established rapport is demonstrated by the student, as the tutor closes the discussion, but the student reopens it by confiding in the tutor, stating her personal opinion about writing argumentative essays. The tutor's politeness question, 'really?' (turn 364) shows that she is interested in the student's view, and the tutor's smile (Figure 34) prompts the student to elaborate on her feelings. The question therefore functions to further develop the rapport between both parties and the success is depicted by the student's smile (Figure 34) as she elaborates on her statement in turn 363 after the tutor's interest is shown.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the transcripts and video recordings of six writing consultations were analysed to identify the functions of tutor questions. The functions of tutor questions were described based on their grammatical and functional (pragmatic) codes. The functional analysis included a micro- and macropragmatic analyses. The micropragmatic analysis described question as Directive, Presumptive, Politeness, Information-gap, Leading and Scaffolding. The macropragmatic analysis then elaborated on these functions by explaining the conversational, physical and psychological acts accompanying tutor questions as part of the extra-linguistic context.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research findings to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The chapter further provides an overview of the motivation of the study, the research methodologies, and data collection and analyses. This is followed by a discussion of the contributions and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research pertaining to the use of questions in writing centre consultations and their influence on writing centre practices.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The following section discusses the findings from the micro- and macropragmatic analysis of tutor questions in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

5.2.1 Relating the findings to the first research sub-question

This study was informed by a two-pronged research question, where the first section asked:

How does a systematic analysis of a corpus of video-recorded writing centre consultations;

i. shed a light on the different questioning strategies and functions used in writing consultations?

The research objective, in conducting a systematic analyses of video-recorded writing centre consultations, was to explore different questioning strategies in writing centre consultations. Six videos and six transcripts from three different tutors and six different undergraduate students were coded and analysed.

The micropragmatic data analysis demonstrated that consultants at the University of Pretoria's Humanities Writing Centre used seven different question types: Directive, Presumptive, Politeness, Information-gap, Leading, Checking for Understanding and Scaffolding questions.
Each of these categories had a distinct function throughout the writing consultation, while some questions employed functions from more than one category.

Directive questions were used to encourage students to perform an activity or to present answers that link to an aspect of the consultation or to students' writing. Scaffolding questions were used to encourage students to think critically or brainstorm regarding certain aspects of their writing, therefore pushing students to review and critique the writing. Information-gap questions worked to elicit information from students concerning assignment subjects or background knowledge regarding writing principles. Presumptive questions functioned to elicit prior background information from the student regarding what students want, know or understand about their assignment topics in order to set up an agenda for the consultation. Questions were also used to check student and tutor's understandings of a certain topic or whether students understood concepts that tutors had just explained. Leading questions worked to push students to respond in a specific way, mainly yes or no responses, through the tutor's question structure or phraseology. These questions anticipated a particular answer to promote students' engagement concerning their writing. Politeness questions functioned throughout consultations to encourage feelings of rapport, solidarity and self-confidence amongst tutors and students.

The macropragmatic analysis showed that tutors employed conversational (dialogue), physical (nodding, pointing, rising intonation, gestures that illustrate words/concepts) and psychological acts (smiling, laughter) to guide the illocutionary intents and functions of their questions. Questions were primarily accompanied by rising intonation and tutor gaze. Other significant macropragmatic acts included the students performing actions as responses to directive questions and students reviewing or structuring new concepts in their writing as a result of leading and scaffolding questions. For example, the student highlighting and identifying a specific aspect (such as a topic sentence) in his/her essay as a response to the tutor's question, 'Can you please highlight your topic sentence?'.

Questions that aimed to confirm whether students understood a specific concept were sometimes guided by gestures illustrating specific words, for example, the tutor using flat palms to indicate that an essay introduction acts as a 'launch pad' for the writing that follows, and the student's understanding was then often confirmed by nodding 'yes'. Additionally, politeness questions were mostly accompanied by laughter and the tutor smiling to emphasise the feelings of rapport and solidarity associated with the more informal nature of writing centre settings.

These macropragmatic actions confirmed the importance of both the linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts when analysing tutor utterances, as a textual analysis alone would result in the misinterpretation of tutor utterances as questions. This was illustrated when utterances comprising the tags 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' or 'right' were coded as questions in the first cycle of coding. However, in the second cycle of coding, upon evaluation of the extra-linguistic contexts in which these utterances occurred, it was discovered that only 31% were intended as questions based on the analyses of tutor gaze, rising intonation, and student response.

In response to the research question outlined in 5.2.1 above, the systematic micro- and macropragmatic analyses confirmed that tutors use various questioning strategies throughout consultations. The micropragmatic analysis emphasised the use of tutor questioning strategies as they operate within tutor utterances and the macropragmatic analyses stressed the importance of considering the physical acts, gestures and emotions directing the meaning of tutor questions and how students respond.

5.2.2 Relating the findings to the second research sub-question

How does a systematic analysis of a corpus of video-recorded writing centre consultations;

iii. demonstrate how different questioning strategies and functions support student's engagement and learning in developing academic writing skills?

The aim of this dissertation was to examine the different strategies of questioning in writing centre consultations to determine how questioning techniques promote student engagement and learning as he/she develop academic writing skills.

The systematic micro- and macropragmatic analyses of tutor question strategies and the actions accompanying them demonstrated how the various types of questions used by writing consultants throughout consultations can be used to facilitate students' participating and development of academic writing principles. The extra-linguistic actions accompanying these questions supported question functions in ensuring that students interpret and respond to questions appropriately, increasing the possibility of maximising their time in the writing centre.

In response to the research question posed in 5.2.2, Table 13 demonstrates a framework for question functions in writing centre consultations and how tutor questioning strategies encourage student engagement and learning when developing academic writing skills.

Table 13: Framework for questioning strategies in writing centre consultations

Question type	Question Function	When to use the question	Example of how to use the question	How the question promotes student learning and engagement
Politeness	Establish feelings of rapport, solidarity and self-confidence between tutors and students and politely manage the conversation throughout the consultation.	Opening	What do you need help with today?	Makes the student feel welcome and 'breaks the ice'
		When discussing the writing	Is it okay if I first read through your document?	(1) Allows the student to feel secure and confident in discussing their writing concerns (2) Promotes the collaborative environment of writing centres (3) Ensures that tutors and students do not get distracted from the aspects of the writing
		Closing	Is there anything else I can help you with?	Allows the student to feel more comfortable in addressing additional/ future writing concerns
Information-gap	Elicit information from the student regarding the subject matter of students' writing	Opening	What module is this? Is there anything specific I can help you with?	(1) Introduces the student to writing centre practices (2) Sets the agenda for the consultation, promoting the productive use of time constraints
		When discussing the writing	Is this a direct quote? Did you get this information from a book or a journal?	Establishes what the student understands about the task
Presumptive	Presumptive questions occur when the speaker has a presumption regarding the content of the question	Opening	Do you know how an argumentative essay works?	Establish what the student understands about the task
		When discussing the writing	Do you know what a topic sentence is? Do you know how to write a conclusion?	Establishes background knowledge regarding what the student understands about academic writing, providing insight into what the tutor should focus on.
Directive	Encourage the student to perform an activity	When discussing the writing	Can you please highlight your thesis statement?	(1) Promotes students' active participation in the consultation (2) Promotes action for visual and kinaesthetic learners

Scaffolding	Questions that form part of the scaffolding process of instructional techniques	When discussing the writing	Can you perhaps come up with your own topic sentence for this paragraph?	Equips the student with future writing skills outside of the current document
Checking for understanding	(1) Confirms whether the student understands what the tutor just said or explained (2) Confirm that tutors and students are or share a mutual understanding	When discussing the writing	Do you start with your argument? Is this your counter argument? Do you understand the introduction as a unit?	(1) Avoids misunderstandings regarding the students' concerns or confusion regarding the writing (2) Ensures that students leave consultations feeling satisfied that their writing concerns have been addressed
Leading questions	Leading questions lead the student to an answer. The tutor scaffolding seems to already know what the student will answer	When discussing the writing	Do you see that this sentence is short and sweet? Do you notice how you are summarising your ideas?	Leads the student to the answer, rather than overwhelming the student with new concepts, allowing the student to feel more accomplished when providing the tutor's expected answer

The data illustrated that the seven question codes had distinctive functions regarding students' understanding principles of academic writing and participation in writing centre consultations. Information-gap and presumptive questions played a crucial role to ensure that tutors and students understand what consultations should focus on and whether students require additional explanations regarding task- and writing related concepts. Scaffolding questions promoted students' active participation in consultations, and when equipping students with skills for future writing assignments through; critically thinking, devising their own attempts at certain concepts, and identifying errors in their writing. Questions that checked for understanding ensured that both tutors and students have a mutual comprehension of the writing concept or task being discussed. Directive questions pushed students toward performing specific actions, e.g., highlighting their thesis statement on the document, which allowed them to identify what was missing or needed in their writing, potentially aligning with kinaesthetic and visual student learning styles. Politeness questions also had a significant function pertaining to students' engagements in consultations, as they allowed students to feel more comfortable in addressing their writing insecurities. Leading questions guided students towards specific answers without overwhelming them with new concepts, permitting the student to feel more accomplished when providing the answer that the consultant expected.

These question functions were only revealed through the systematic micro- and macropragmatic analyses, where the extra-linguistic context provided insight into the illocutionary aims of tutor questions. As previously mentioned, certain utterances could only be coded as questions once confirmed by the relevant conversational, physical and psychological acts guiding the utterance, therefore providing a better understanding of the influence of different questioning strategies and the actions guiding them when promoting student engagement and learning when developing academic writing skills.

5.3 Overview of the study

Writing centre consultations are described as one-on-one tutor-guided interactions managed by institutional and disciplinary objectives as well as individual students' needs. An important component in these writing centre interactions is the function of questions as a primary tutoring strategy (Limberg et al. 2016: 372). Tutor questioning strategies play a significant role in structuring conversation between tutors and students, facilitating students' engagement and learning when developing academic writing skills, directing students towards appropriate responses and to support students' participation throughout consultations (McAndrew & Reigstad 2001; Thompson & Mackiwicz 2014; Brooks 1991; Harris 1992; Limberg et al. 2016).

Consequently, the recognition of questioning as an important tutoring strategy resulted in various studies (Morrison 2008; Blau et al. 1998; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014; Park 2017) analysing the specific functions of questions in consultations, mainly focusing on what questions disclose about the role of tutors and how they control dialogue throughout the session. However, Morrison (2008) and Blau et al. (1998) analyse questioning as part of other tutoring strategies, such as instruction, cognitive scaffolding and motivational scaffolding. Thompson and Mackiewicz (2014), Limberg et al. (2016) and Park (2017) are the only studies specifically aimed at identifying both the grammatical forms, types and functions of questioning in writing consultations, where only one study by Munje et al. (2018) analysed the role of questioning in facilitating writing consultations in South Africa. However, Munje et al. (2018) only described three question categories and how they are used to direct conversation throughout different phases in writing centre consultations, rather than the specific function of questions.

This review of previous research concerning questioning strategies in writing centres uncovered several gaps regarding the methodologies used for analyses. In terms of methodology, the conventional approach to analyses focused on the purposive selection of questions or tutorials through researchers' application of various typologies, based on functions of questions at specific stages in consultations (Blau et al. 1998; Morrison 2008; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014; Park 2017).

However, questions as part of writing centre dialogue and as a mode of communication between consultants and students also need to be assessed according to their linguistic and extra-linguistic (contextual) pragmatic functions. Based on these aspects, only two studies used discourse-based methods for analyses. Park (2017) used CA for analysis and Blau et al. (1998) focused specifically on tutor language in consultations. No study examining the different modes of communication concerning questioning in writing centres as well as the pragmatic intentions of the tutor had been conducted.

Thus, this study presented the opportunity to address the gaps in the literature through the analyses of various grammatical forms, types and functions of questions as shaped by theories in pragmatics, specifically that of micro- (Speech Act Theory) and macropragmatics (Austin 1962; Searle 1969; Mey 1994; Mey 2009; Bublitz & Norrick 2011). The framework of this study modelled largely on Mey's (2009) Pragmatic Act theory, maintaining that action and speech do not occur in isolation. This study focused on both the textual (grammatical) aspects and the activity aspects (linguistic and extra-linguistic acts) of tutor questions to determine the pragmatic aims of both the tutor and the student.

The aim of this research was to examine the functions of different questioning strategies used by tutors in writing consultations and how these strategies promote students' engagement and learning. As previously indicated, the study forms part of a larger study focusing on tutor training practices at the Unit for Academic Literacy at the University of Pretoria. The setting was the Humanities Writing Centre, and the participants were writing centre consultants and undergraduate students from different faculties at the University of Pretoria visiting the Writing Centre for the first time. The larger study also provided the recordings and transcripts used in this study, for which ethical clearance had been sought.

This study was guided by the socio constructionist research paradigm, principles of qualitative data analysis and case study research strategies. As outlined by the social constructionist paradigm, the data analyses focused on the researcher's interpretations and intricate meaning-making of the functional use of questions in a naturalistic setting (White 2004: 7) in order to evaluate the pragmatic aims of tutors.

Therefore, the research primarily followed a qualitative design as it focuses on language as a social phenomenon, and the naturally occurring linguistic and extra-linguistic acts of participants were recorded in consultations. The researcher then subjectively interpreted the recorded and transcribed interactions between consultants and students. The research strategy aligns with exploratory and descriptive case study designs (Yin 2003: 5-6), as the data analyses involved the description of question functions to answer the specific research questions pertaining to their role in facilitating the development of academic writing skills and the context in which tutor questions occur.

The data was analysed through qualitative content analysis, more specifically grammatical, micro- and macropragmatic analyses. Content analysis involves the systemic identification of specific themes in human communication (Babbie 2016: 323) or to make sense of the text to justify data interpretations (Hammond & Wellington 2013: 35; Bryman 2012: 557). Organising the texts requires the allocation of different labels to different themes in the data, thus coinciding with coding processes (Bryman 2012: 558). Accordingly, the transcriptions were analysed based on two coding cycles.

The first cycle of coding included the grammatical analysis and arranged the data based on sentence structure of tutor questions as either declarative or interrogative. Interrogative questions were further coded as either yes/no or wh-questions and tag questions. Consultants used wh-questions when their intention was to elicit specific information concerning an aspect or concept of students' writing. Yes/no questions made up 46% the data and elicited yes/no responses from students when discussing a specific idea in students' writing. Yes/no questions were then further coded as either tag, alternative or either/or questions, with the last two categories not playing a significant role in the analysis. Tag questions were mostly related to individual tutor mannerisms and were questions structured as declaratives followed by the use of 'okay', 'nê', 'you know', 'you see', 'alright' and 'right', which the tutor or student interpreted as a question. These results provided an overview of the grammatical structure of the questions in the data but failed to describe how the question functioned within the tutor utterance, reiterating the importance of the linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts when interpreting speech.

The questions were then subjected to a second cycle of functional (speech act) coding, where micro- and macropragmatic analyses were used to establish consultants' illocutionary intents when asking questions. The questions were labelled as Directive, Presumptive, Politeness, Information-gap, Leading and Scaffolding questions. The macropragmatic analysis examined the conversational (dialogue), physical (any significant body movements accompanying tutor questions, such as gestures and facial expression) and psychological acts (emotions, e.g., laughter) guiding tutor questions, thus describing the extra-linguistic context. Overlaps between the different codes were discovered when specific questions were identified as having more than one function, based on tutors' illocutionary intents.

5.4 Contributions of the study

The analyses and findings of this study support the notion of conducting practice-based research when examining methods of tutoring in writing centres. The research reviewed previous studies examining questioning strategies (Blau et al. 1998; Morrison 2008; Park 2017; Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014) to inform the analyses of questioning, as well as pragmatic theories for analysing utterances in context to establish a new framework for analysing tutor questioning strategies. This approach to analysing dialogue in writing centres views asking questions as a mode of communication, contributing to the use of discourse-based methods for analysing writing centre conversations.

The analyses of tutor questioning functions and strategies also contributes to the literature by confirming previous studies' findings that tutors use questioning strategies throughout consultations to gather information, scaffold responses, verify the comprehension of concepts and assist in student participation.

These results also confirm the use of different types of questions, where the leading, scaffolding and information-gap questioning categories coincide with Thompson and Mackiewicz's (2014) findings that leading, scaffolding and knowledge-deficit questions are used in tutorials. The tutors' use of presumptive and information-gap questioning types in this study align with Munje et al.'s (2018) task-related and writing-related question types.

Further contributions include the micro- and macropragmatic analyses of questions based on their linguistic and extra-linguistic (contextual) functions, as previous studies do not conduct analyses of the different modes of communication concerning tutor questions or focus on the pragmatic aims of tutors guiding the question. The analyses of the conversational, physical and emotional actions associated with each question type revealed the functions of tutor questions in context, illustrating the importance of evaluating the different modes of communication and tutoring practices in writing centres.

5.5 Limitations of the study

There were several factors that limited the study. Firstly, the scope of the study and time-constraints only allowed for the analyses of six videos and transcripts, while the analyses of more videos involving more diverse students might have provided further insight regarding additional question categories and functions. Secondly, this study only focused on the function of tutor questioning amongst undergraduate students visiting the writing centre for the first time and not on how questioning strategies could further assist experienced writers or postgraduate students. Finally, it is also important to note that these results cannot be generalised and applied to all teaching and training practices in writing centres.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

As previously discussed, past writing centre literature focused more on anecdotal research than practice-based research. In the last thirty years, the demand for more practice-based inquiries have grown to counter previous theories based on 'lore' or what was accepted as common practices (Babock & Thonus 2012; Denny 2014; Driscoll & Perdue 2012). In keeping with North's (1984: 434) notion that principles for writing centre tutor training require reviewing and testing, this study's examination of tutor questioning strategies in real-life consultations aligns with previous research-sustained practices with evidence-based findings regarding question functions.

Accordingly, this study presents further opportunities for more practice-based research on questioning and tutor strategies in South African writing centres.

This research also presents the opportunity for future studies to analyse writing centre discourse from the perspective of pragmatic acts (Mey 2009). The micro- and macropragmatic analyses of this study provided insights into the social and institutional functions of questions and the illocutionary intents of tutors, thus moving away from previous methodologies of analysing tutor-student dialogue in writing centres which lacked such discourse-based methodologies for analysing speech. The analyses of this study described questioning as part of larger sections of tutor and student interactions, as well as the role of extra-linguistic acts guiding speakers' illocutionary intents. The research shifts from the pragmatics of tutor utterances to the pragmatics of tutor and student discourse as it occurs in the writing centre context (Cap 2011: 55), presenting the opportunity for future writing centre research to follow the same approach.

Within the South African higher educational context, the monolingual policies at many institutions have resulted in many students studying in their second or third language (Boughey & McKenna 2016: 2). For this reason, pedagogies in writing centres cannot be separated from evidence-based research with regard to the social aspects and contexts in which writing centre discourse operates (Archer & Richards 2011: 6). Writing centres in South Africa, as institutional responses to concerns with student writing and academic success, need more evidence-based research for guiding tutor practices. With regard to the functions of questioning supporting the development of students' writing in writing centres, this study now forms part of only two studies conducted in South Africa, the other being Munje et al.'s (2018) evaluation of three question categories used in different consultation stages.

Most research on questioning in writing centre consultations only focus on what questioning reveals about the role of tutors and their command of writing centre conversations (Thompson & Mackiewicz 2014: 38) rather than the pedagogical functions of these questioning strategies.

The types of questions asked by tutors and their responses permit students to divide control regarding the regulation of pace and procedures in consultations, allowing students to uncover their own voice in other educational settings and to critically evaluate future academic writing assignments (Munje et al. 2018: 350). In this sense, many additional studies, founded on practice-based research on a larger corpus, are needed to reveal the extensive practices of questioning functions in writing centre consultations and how these functions enhance student engagement and learning when acquiring academic writing skills in students. This could result in a platform for designing future tutor training manuals and redirecting past writing centre practices.

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