

Instructional Routines and Questioning Patterns in ESL Composition Classes

Ho-Jung Yu & Chang-In Lee
(Arizona State & PaiChai University)

Yu, Ho-Jung & Lee, Chang-In. 2005. **Instructional Routines, Questioning Patterns in ESL Composition Classes.** *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 13(4), 1-30. The goal of this study was to investigate the nature of the English as Second Language (ESL) composition class with regard to discourse patterns or communication between teachers and students, using classroom discourse analysis. The foci of this study were on instructional routines and questioning patterns. This study was conducted based on the belief that the analysis of classroom discourse is a powerful means for understanding the discourses in the ESL composition class and its impact on students' writing. This study explored the functions of oral language in ESL composition classes at a state university in the US. For the exploration, oral communication for two ESL composition classes was audiotaped and transcribed to examine discourse patterns in different activities, such as an introduction of a new unit, topic invention, text analyzing, and conferencing. In analyzing these activities, a set of discourse categories were employed. This study discovered that teachers in two ESL used different routines, and procedural question was most frequently used in these two classes. The results of this study using classroom discourse analysis will be helpful in achieving the productivity and flow of teaching ESL composition, along with useful engagement among discourse participants. In addition to helping teachers better manage the talk occurring in their composition classes, the applications from this study can be employed to meet different instructional goals.

Key Words: Discourse Styles, Speech Moves, Instructional Routines, ESL, L2 Composition, IRE

1. Introduction

This study was motivated by the finding that there has been little research on discourse studies in the field of L2 composition, even though noticeable discursive patterns or frameworks are employed in L2 composition instruction. These instructional frameworks were noticed from a field work in a tertiary institute in the US, as well as the existing studies, albeit limited in terms of the number.

The field work was involved in teaching a required English composition course to first-year students in a public university in the US. This opportunity offers us valuable experience in understanding the process of constructing a text in a composition class. Prior to teaching the composition class, teaching assistants (TAs) have to attend a four-week preparatory session where they are informed of classroom contexts and design their own syllabus, guided by an experienced faculty member from the Department of English. Even during the semester, they have to attend a TA seminar course where they learn composition theories and pedagogies and share their concerns occurring in their own class. These experiences in teaching and communicating with my colleagues led me to a conclusion that, in a composition class, a certain structure composed of different processes exists in constructing a text moreover, there are commonly employed routines or activities, such as topic generation, text analysis, peer or group feedback, etc., even though there is a tendency that the diversity or flexibility of each process depends on competence or experience.

In spite of this instructional framework, little research on this area in the context of the classroom instruction has been conducted. The frequently discussed topics in ESL composition mostly include "assessment, peer feedback, teacher feedback, writing prompts, audience, voice, computer-based text analysis, contrastive rhetoric, computers and the writing process, ideology, genre, second language writing processes, plagiarism, and placement" (Kapper, 2002, p. 1). Although this wide range of topics can cover the important areas in relation to ESL composition study, more explicit descriptions of composition instruction

are needed due to the absence of a common descriptive framework to account for teachers' behaviors in ESL composition instruction (Cumming, 1992). Cumming proposed that teaching practices for L2 composition be adequately documented in order for curriculum innovations to be sensitive to the nature of ongoing classroom practices.

In regard to research on ESL writing classrooms, Cumming (1992) conducted a naturalistic case study aiming to identify common instructional routines in the classroom performance of three experienced L2 composition instructors. He defined, routines, which is a major term of this study, as "behavioral units which serve to structure and focus pedagogical activities through sequences of verbal exchanges between teachers and students" (1992, p 19). He uncovered the sequential flow of six teaching routines: 1) attracting the attention of the whole class, 2) assigning tasks, roles, or objectives, 3) establishing criteria, heuristics, or conventions, 4) collectively constructing interpretations, 5) providing feedback, and 6) guiding individual development through elicitation, clarification, or alternative perspectives (p. 22). He noticed that the three experienced teachers, who participated in his study, used these six routines consistently and alternately over the period of the courses.

Instead of Cumming's focusing on the instructional routines, Weissberg's study (1994) explored the functions of oral language in the ESL composition class, considering the interaction between teachers and students. His study was conducted with five composition classes in an ESL program at a mid-sized state university where the students represent a broad range of writing abilities, L1 backgrounds and the teachers represent diverse teaching styles. This study produced following five speech moves: 1) text-instruct moves dealing with the strategies, techniques, conventions or rules of writing, 2) text-generate moves in which potential text is spoken aloud before or just as it is being written, reflecting a writer's attempt to formulate or rehearse text orally at the point of transcription, in a sense, "writing out loud," 3) text-analyze moves that students or teachers make to explain, discuss, or ask about a sample of written text, 4) text-read moves where teachers or students read written text aloud particularly during pair

revision activities and in-group composition sessions, 5) exploratory moves made by teachers and students when they were developing or rehearsing ideas related to an assigned composition topic. The speech move categories are quite legitimate in analyzing and comprehending individual discourse styles in the L2 composition class, reflecting each class of different subject matters and levels.

All in all, the two studies reviewed in this section can be insightful guidelines for understanding the nature of L2 classrooms from some aspects. The above research, also, provided a fundamental framework in launching the study about specific routines of two ESL composition classes that we looked into.

The patterns of communication or interaction between a teacher and students play a significant role in understanding the ecology of a particular subject classroom. Much research has been conducted to delve into classroom talk in order to better understand a certain classroom context and apply the findings to another context (Christie, 2002). Some findings contribute to generalizing particular patterns within classroom talks, which is recursively applied to new research in relation to classroom discourse. The work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) has been unarguably accepted as repeated lesson patterns of student-teacher classroom interaction, known as IRE (Initiation, Response, Evaluation). That is, the IRE sequence begins with a teacher's initiation, followed by a student's response, and then the teacher's evaluation, as follows:

(1) Teacher: *What is a concept?*

Student: *Subject, idea.*

Teacher: *Absolutely.*

According to Christie (2002), the IRE pattern has become the subject of extensive discussion for many years in educational research to criticize teaching practices that constrained students through use of the pattern, and it also led to research into ways to generate the more open and exploratory patterns of talk, in which students would have a greater opportunity to initiate the talk with their willingness to talk.

Concerning the discussion of the IRE pattern, teacher's initiation can be a crucial factor since it directs the production of the sequential pattern. In this sense, the study of the teachers' questions can be a tool to generate the way of meaningful interaction.

The study of questions also plays an important role in understanding the nature of a certain class. A competent teacher uses the question and answer recitation for a distinct instructional purpose. Questioning has been viewed as an important classroom behavior of teachers for a long time (Zahorik, 1971). Zahorik noticed that it is and has been an indispensable tool of the teacher, and without some proficiency in its use, the value of the teaching-learning act would be diminished. By analyzing and criticizing the study of the subject and his/ her own attempts at questioning with trials and failure, it is possible for the teacher to develop a technique in questioning, just as it is possible to develop a technique in any other art. In addition, by posing a particularly timely or provocative question, teachers can act in direct ways to shift classroom discourse from monologic to dialogic patterns with little or no transition (Nystrand et al., 2003).

Teachers' questioning behaviors have been examined in a few second language studies concerned with the extent to which teachers' questions might facilitate either target language production or correct and meaningful content-related responses by students. Teachers' questions constitute a primary means of engaging learners' attention, promoting verbal responses, and evaluating learners' progress, although there is considerable debate as to whether language teaching methodology requires this sort of interaction (Chaudron, 1988).

It is more simplistic to count the number of questions a teacher uses than to determine whether they are good questions or not, in particular because every question is deeply rooted in the context in which it was asked (Myhill & Dunkin, 2002). By video recording a whole class taught in literacy, numeracy, and one other curriculum area, Myhill and Dunkin categorized all of the questions into four types, as follows:

- (2) a. *Factual questions*: questions requiring a predetermined answer, e.g. What sound does 'ch' make?
- b. *Speculative questions*: questions inviting a response with no pre-determined answer. The answers to these questions were often opinions, hypotheses, imaginings or ideas, e.g. What would you do if you found out your friend was being bullied?
- c. *Procedural questions*: questions relating to the organization and management of the lesson, e.g. Where do you put your books at the end of the lesson?
- d. *Process questions*: questions inviting children to articulate their understanding of learning processes or explain their thinking, e.g. How can you tell that that word is a verb?
- (Myhill & Dunkin, 2002, p. 8)

From the research, findings reported reveal that the frequency of each question differs according to the subject matter. For example, they reported that speculative, open-ended questions were far more frequent in literacy than in numeracy. So, examination of the types of questioning indicates the characteristics of the class, suggesting good questions in a particular context.

Based on the theoretical conclusion that Cumming's study about the teaching routines and Myhill and Dunkin's study about questioning patterns drew, the following study closely examined the instructional routines, which constructed an overall structure of the composition process in building a text, and questioning patterns in two ESL composition classes. In doing so, the investigation lasted the duration of two specific writing projects which were detailed in the following section, including the illustration of the units of this project, lessons, routines and other related activities.

In this present study, the existing research results were employed to review their applicability and discover other useful implications in order to get a better picture of the ESL composition instruction. The findings

of the present study will show that teaching routines should be modified fitting in these two particular composition classes. In addition, this study reported an exploratory investigation of the functions of teachers' questions in the ESL composition class, so its result will show an example of the extensive research on IRE, which has been accepted as a general sequence for the interaction in classroom communication between teachers and students. The further examination of the IRE was conducted by looking into different types of questions which generated different responses or evaluations to better understand the questioning patterns in composition classes, thereby finding out questioning types which generated the most participation. The findings about these patterns, also, provided important guidance in proposing questioning types that produce the most participation in ESL composition classes.

2. Context of the Study

To address the research inquiries, a naturalistic case study was conducted involving two ESL composition classes which international undergraduate students take as required courses at a public university in the US. The international students must complete a two first two semester English composition course, ENG 107 and 108, which is equivalent to ENG 101 and 102 which are required to every native English speakers. The students who are qualified to take ENG 107 have at least 500 or more scores in TOEFL. The seventeen students in Amy's (a pseudonym) class represented a variety of demographical backgrounds: Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Swedish, Middle-Eastern, African, and Indian. The eighteen students who completed ENG 107 in Jim's (a pseudonym) also represented a variety of ethnicities: Indians, Koreans, Japanese, Middle-Eastern, and students from other Asian countries.

ENG 107 instructor Amy held a doctoral degree in a relevant discipline for English composition, and she has been teaching English composition about twenty years. For about four years before she taught ESL and other composition classes, she held an advisory position where

she taught and mentored international graduate students in composition. She seemed to have a clear understanding of the composing patterns and common errors that international students frequently made, since she collected and summarized the patterns and errors in her teaching material. ENG 108 instructor Jim is studying in a doctoral program and has five years teaching experience in different ESL composition classes. Both of them had a solid understanding and experience of ESL English composition classes based on my personal observation.

3. Data Collection

In order to examine the instructional and questioning patterns in ESL composition classrooms, data was collected through audiotapes of lessons, class observation, course syllabi, and the institution's course description. In addition to these sources, thanks to their willingness, we visited the instructors in their office hour and sent emails, so that we could confirm the detailed composing processes of the classes, receive students' demographic information, and collect some information about the instructors.

Each teacher's classes were documented for a project period over the duration of one course (three weeks for Amy's class and Jim's). The two teachers taught fifty-minute lessons, meeting three times a week. The data is composed of eighteen hours of observation with eighteen sets of field notes and eighteen audio recordings. Notes were taken on the teachers' spoken discourse and actions and students' responses and behaviors. The notes included tracking interactions and activities based on timeline and detailed interaction or phenomenon in the classroom with an ethnographic approach. Therefore, these notes took on the significant supplement of the transcription from audio recordings to explicate the detailed interaction between teachers and students. Audio recordings were employed since Amy showed her willingness to do this, saying that recording and our observation would not be intrusive for her class. Sometimes after classes, we talked with her to obtain students' individual improvement through this class. She was genuinely

willing to show her interest and even asked us for feedback from our observations. During this process, a good rapport has been developed.

4. Data Analysis

In this descriptive research, data were analyzed in order to describe the phenomena in a L2 composition class, a natural setting without manipulation and the data are analyzed based on the predetermined categories. In regard to identifying instructional routines, the findings in Cumming's study were the predetermined categories for identifying the instructional routines of the data from the present study. The analyzing categories in teaching routines mostly were 1) *attracting the attention of the whole class*, 2) *assigning tasks, roles, or objectives*, 3) *establishing criteria, heuristics, or conventions*, 4) *collectively constructing interpretations*, 5) *providing feedback*, and 6) *guiding individual development through elicitation, clarification, or alternative perspectives*. However, some routines have been modified, since Cumming's instructional routines were not identical to the routines in the two studied ESL composition classes. This modification reflected on the differences between two classes in terms of genres and teaching techniques. The specific illustration about the differences was reported in the section of data analysis. Regarding the analysis of questioning patterns, the four types of questions—*factual, speculative, procedural, process*—Myill and Duckin illustrated were the predetermined criteria for identifying questioning patterns from the data for the present study. The analysis categories were used without modification. Also, the frequency of each question was calculated to find the most frequently used questioning pattern in the composition classes and then propose a questioning pattern in order to generate students' participation.

5. Findings

As the results of this study, the overall class structures of two classes, instructional routines of each teacher, questioning patterns of each class will be described in the following sections.

5.1. The Overall Structure of Amy's and Jim's Class

The overall goal of the course that Amy taught was to increase students' ability to develop ideas, to express ideas effectively, and to engage different literacies, giving special attention to expository and persuasive writing. In addition, through critical reading of articles, speeches, and other non-literary texts, students were guided to understand the rhetorical process, to analyze audience and its cultural contexts, and to foresee the audience's response. The composing requirements included five formal essays and a final reflection paper. The topics of each paper were "Remembering events", "Strong response paper using closed-form essay with a thesis", "Explaining a concept," "Arguing a position," and "Proposing a solution." The completion of each topic took approximately three weeks and required three drafts for each paper. This paper looked closely into the third writing project, "Strong response paper using closed-form essay with a thesis."

A "summary/strong response" essay required a summary of approximately 250 words of a reading students have chosen from the library and a strong response to that reading in which they would evaluate the reading from their own critical thinking, personal experience, and values. The process of completing this topic included article selection, three drafts, group conference, and oral presentation. The further illustration will be in the section of expressing instructional routines.

Jim's course was primarily on argumentation. The course was based on the assumption that argument existed everywhere: in school, at home, on the job, and in the nation and international spheres, and the

goal of the course was to help students to understand the concepts and vocabulary of argument, also assisting them to find persuasive reasons for the intended audiences. The achievement of the goal of this course required students to complete four argumentative papers: "Definitional Arguments," "Causal Arguments," "Evaluation and Ethical Arguments", and "Proposal Arguments." The period of completing each paper lasted approximately three weeks. At the end of the semester, students were to compile a Writer's Portfolio to analyze and assess their progress. This paper explored the processes of the second writing project, "Evaluation and ethical arguments."

To accomplish this paper, students focused on a clear issue after choosing a problematic or controversial issue and also summarizing alternative views for either refutation or concession. The logistics of completing this topic included paper proposal, text analysis, different types of group work, in-class writings, three drafts, and peer review workshop. In addition to these processes, students were required to finish readings and four written assignments to enhance their understanding of this project. In spite of the complexity and demanding amount of homework for this paper, the students' participation and productivity was highly achieved, and the class was seamlessly managed.

5.2. Instructional Routines

The findings from Cumming's study demonstrated a predictable sequence of events in composition classes. First, the teacher attracted students' attention and then introduced a task or set of tasks to be performed. While students performed the task, the teachers provided individual feedback, guided individual development, established criteria to be followed in the task, and constructed an outline (for composition), an interpretation (of a reading), a paradigm (for rhetorical or linguistic forms). According to Cumming, these optional routines occurred alternatively, and each instructional function was presented via a different kind of verbal routine. Although most routines overlapped, the

findings from this study showed the following instructional routines in the process of completing an assigned writing project.

5.2.1. The Instructional Routines in Jim's Class

In Jim's class, five instructional routines were dominant, whose usages were explaining with different contexts in the following sections.

5.2.1.1. Assigning Tasks, Roles, or Objectives

The routine of introducing a task occurred for the purpose of indicating how students were to perform particular tasks. This routine occurred within three different objectives or tasks. First, the routine was used to introduce a project that students accomplish for the next couple of weeks. At the beginning of the project, the instructor distributed the guidelines of the project in order to help students conceptualize the nature of the project and specific requirements, which included the nature of argument, basic steps in composing the paper, some concerns, research, and essay format requirements. The instructor told students to read the handout thoroughly prior to clarifying the assignment with students' questions and the teacher's comment.

(3) *How are we doing today? Let's try and pretend that we all are awake. That will be good. Here is some preliminary info on this project. I know you did your reading about proposal and solution. (The teacher distributes a guideline for the new assignment) This is a piece of preliminary info for next project. So take a look at it. As always, whatever the questions you guys have, makes, I like to talk about. (April 6)*

The second purpose was to assign reading controversial pictures and texts as a group task. This task was utilized in order for the teacher to help students to enhance their awareness of characteristics of argumentative essays and apply the understanding to construct their

own essay.

- (4) a. *People present some photographs and pictures. They are not neutral pictures. Why did the prosecutor prefer 7.1 the first one? Why would the defense attorney use the other one? Enhance an argument of emotional appeal. That's on page 73. Pathos again is an audience's feeling. If you have any questions, I'll try to fill you in. Three to four students, again select someone who's gonna be a note-taker and select a spokesperson in your group.* (March 23)
- b. *Read without taking too much time. Or if you wanna take time, do that. First one, start page 25. Read this and make note about important stuff as you read. Let's say Group 1, 2, 3, you should formulate a consequence-based argument in favor of biotech agriculture. Group 4 and 5, you should construct an argument, consequence-based argument against biotech agriculture. We will do this over two class periods, today and on Monday.* (March 25)

Categorizing speech moves occurred in the ESL composition class, Weissberg (1994) illustrated text-analyze moves that students or teachers make to explain, discuss, or ask about a sample of written text, and text-explore moves that teachers and students make when developing or rehearsing ideas related to an assignment composition topic. In fact, those moves are intermingled in the assigned tasks in this ESL composition class, as shown in the above tasks.

In addition to the purposes described above, this routine occurred when students carried out a peer review workshop. For this writing project, students completed two drafts before submitting the final draft. To provide students guidelines for the peer review workshop, the teacher distributed a handout with which students acknowledged the points they would focus on.

- (5) *Let me go over this peer editing sheet to see if everything*

makes sense. I hope that part one is clear. Okay, part two. Number one is what particular audience is the author addressing? What has a stake in this ethical evaluation? Think of the evidence, reasoning, and example that uses to support their ethical claim. (March 28)

5.2.1.2. Establishing Criteria, or Heuristics for the Invention Process

The teacher frequently stressed the points that students had to consider in order to establish the strong flow of their own composition. This routine directed students to use, adhere to, and remember these as a basis for performance or learning. It occurred in the beginning of assigning a new writing assignment, and also in the middle of related tasks to the new assignment.

- (6) *Just brief comment. What really is very important is to think of criteria. When you claim that something is good or bad, right or wrong, positive or negative, you always have to have a finite, definite list of criteria. You are claiming that Terminator 3 is an excellent movie. You need to have a clear set of criteria against which you will match that claim and prove that is an excellent movie. Or if you claim that capital punishment is ethically wrong, you would need to have a set of criteria against which you will compare that. (March 21)*

5.2.1.3. Collectively Constructing a Logical Organization

Before students composed their paper, the teacher directed an exercise to help students to understand and formulate a logical structure of the essay. Since the logical development of the composition was a significant factor in writing, especially in the particular argumentative essay, he exemplified an issue and constructed a logical structure of the issue with students in the whole class. The goal of this exercise was to help students comprehend the coherent structure of the argumentative

essay; afterwards, they would apply this organizing structure to their individual composition.

- (7) *I am assuming that you already know what you are going to present that. So, this is an example. The ethical issue's here, "Is regular homework of two or more hours a night a good educational policy for elementary school children?" The audiences are teachers and prospective teachers. The claim is "assigning regular homework of two more hours a night is a bad educational policy for elementary school child. Do you understand the claim? Here is the reason, "because it jeopardizes children's sleep and health when they have to stay up too late regularly doing homework. Ground, what is ground? (S: Facts.) Yeah, grounds. What do the grounds support? The grounds consist of evidence to support reasons. (March 21)*

5.2.1.4. Clarifying Concepts, or Terms

During the class, the teacher often illustrated concepts, terms, or even vocabulary items related to their writing process. The clarification helped students utilize the concepts in their actual composition, and at other times, the teacher asked their attention to explain vocabulary items in their reading and analyzing an assignment.

- (8) a. *I would like to stop here for about two minutes to explain something that is called "cost benefit analysis."You propose something. You wanna see whether or not your proposal is good, feasible, cost-effective, you know. Let's say what are the costs, how much will it cost, and what are the benefits? If the costs are lower than the benefit, that is good. If the costs are higher than the benefit, then it is not a good proposal. Here, when you're taking about the cost benefit analysis, if the consequences outweigh the negative consequences, then... (March 28)*

- b. *Just from curiosity. Do you understand nature ? Naturopathic or naturalpathic. It's fairly new branch that is typically non surgical, non pharmaceutical approach.* (April 1)

In general, these five verbal routines occurred proactively, meaning that the teacher either presented them to the whole class or planned in advance to help students in their writing process (Cumming, 1992). These routines were initiated and sustained by the teacher. On the other hand, the following verbal routines occurred in a reactive or responsive way that when students asked questions, the teacher responded to the questions individually to lead students' development through clarification or alternative perspectives.

5.2.1.5. Guiding Individual Development through Clarification, or Alternative Perspectives

The routines are based on students' asking questions, so this routine occurred when the teacher responded to their questions. Sometimes the teacher responded to the student who asked a question, and at other times, he took it to the whole class to explore alternative perspectives.

- (9) a. *(S: There is no effective way of rebuttal) Wonderful question! That's an excellent question! Something black or white. When you come to a complex issue, heavily disputed. As you said, what do I do? I can't respond. There are several ways to go about.* (March 28)
- b. *(S: I am arguing some consequences, strong argument is that it's so expensive. If I avoid it, my argument may sound better. But anyway, anybody understands it is a little better. It totally ignores a whole thing.) Before I respond to this, I am gonna ask to the class. What do you guys think? I am here for what to do, when people say it is expensive. (S1: You can say that. Even though it's expensive, the long term*

costs they're going to be low. (March 28)

Each of these five instructional functions was most commonly realized through a different kind of verbal routine. However, every routine always did not occur in a mere purpose. Even though a fine line in every routine did not exist, the above routines were primary in this particular ESL classroom. To complete the project, the instructor utilized classes to help them better understand all of the concepts or process in writing through individual or group activities. The extended assignment beyond the classroom also required students to make progress based on their class learning. It seemed that this class with the five primary instructional routines worked seamlessly.

In addition to the above routines, the instructors are attracting students' attention and closing the class with different ways.

5.2.2. The Instructional Routines in Amy's Class

Different from Jim's class, Amy employed three routines dominantly, and the explanation about the three routines were in the following sections.

5.2.2.1. Assigning Tasks, Roles, or Objectives

The instructional function of this routine were primarily twofold. One was to assign a new writing project in the sense that the teacher informed students of the purpose of the project and specific requirements, and the other was to indicate to students the way to perform particular tasks. As the in-class tasks, the teacher employed students' reading text aloud within a small group of four and also the whole class to receive feedback from other students.

- (10) *Okay, well we've got Lena and Rad in here. We have to start. We have four people reading aloud today. If you are not reading aloud today, take four pieces of paper. If you are*

reading aloud, take three because you are not gonna evaluate yourself. Okay, let's take four. You will get some comment on listening to the person reading his or her paper. (S started reading his paper.) You need to slow down and speak aloud. (February 11)

5.2.2.2. Establishing Criteria, or Heuristics for the Inventing Process

In the distinguished routine in Amy's class, the teacher stressed the criteria or heuristics at the beginning stage of the new assigned writing project. If the routine was understood literally, the first half of this verbal direction seemed to be the instructional function to assign task and objectives. However, this verbal routine was presented before another activity to let students confirm an understanding of their work; therefore, based on the context, the function of this routine was to help students understand the heuristics of the assignment.

- (11) *The idea was to choose a very long article, but to choose more than controversial. You can get one or two pages from it. The assignment is to get you to summarize. That is very important technique or strategy that you will use in many courses that you take. You need to learn how to summarize. By looking at the article and doing what it "says" and "does" as we talked about in the class, it doesn't literally tell me how essay is organized. How is the author convincing his or her material. Once you get the "says" article done, those become your summary. (February 11)*

5.2.2.3. Providing Feedback

According to Cumming (1992), providing feedback was one of the distinguished responsive routines. In giving students feedback, three types were discernible: "corrective feedback, where the teacher provided

a "correct" version or answer; prompted feedback, where teacher posed questions or provided alternatives directed at a student formulating an accurate version or answer; explanations for inaccuracy" (Cumming, p. 26). The teacher employed three class periods for group conferencing where students read their drafts and the other group members, including the teacher, provided them feedback.

(12) a. *One of things you used the word, "also". You didn't want a sentence to begin with it. Let me read the sentence, "also?" (She explained "also," saying that it should be placed in the middle of the sentence.) What kind of words could you use instead of "also"? (S: In addition.) "In addition," very good. You can substitute "in addition" instead of "also." Everyone understand that? (February 18)*

b. *It tries to be a little less informal. You're responding to the author. Your writing is pretty good, your summary. Although there is a purple pen going, nonetheless, the information that you have is great. You have one page. You did a good summary. Only thing you didn't do the title of the article and author at the title. You should have been making you own title and subtitle. (February 18).*

All in all, the routines are dominantly spoken in two composition class in the process of completing each writing project. In addition to these routines, the teachers of each class utilizes *getting students' attention in the beginning of class by using rumor, or casual talk, checking the students' current writing projects, evaluating class activity or confirming the benefits of the activity, closing class by announcing the task for next class, or assigning homework, etc.* Although they are not directly related to the writing project, these routines were considered as essential in the seamless management of the composition classes.

5.3. Questioning Patterns

As is discussed in the preceding section where the relevant literature was reviewed, the IRE pattern has been accepted as a general sequence for the interaction in classroom communication between teachers and students. In this sequential pattern, 'I', referring to teacher's initiation, can be a crucial factor, which functions as a director in the following interaction. In this sense, the study of the teachers' questions can be a tool in understanding classroom communication and, furthermore, proposing productive questioning or communicative patterns.

According to Myhill and Dunkin's (2002) research on the type of questions in different disciplines, four types of questions occurred in a classroom context: factual, speculative, procedural, and process questions. These questioning patterns were particularized in different genres of classes. In this section, the findings about questionings are reported to find out the frequently used questioning patterns in ESL composition classes, afterward proposing a question type to generate students' high level engagement for the production of a text.

First, factual questions which required a predetermined answer were used to ask grammatical functions of grammar or words or the meaning of vocabulary items.

(13) T: *What kind of words could you use instead of "also"?*

S: *In addition.*

T: *In addition. Very good.* (February 18 in Amy's class)

Second, inviting a response with no pre-determined answer, a speculative question was used in asking students' opinions. For instance, Amy asked the meaning of certain in-class activities, thus emphasizing students' participation. Also, the speculative questions are utilized to clarify the criteria of the type of composition that the students were assigned, as in *what is the strong response in your opinion? What is the difference between making a clean summary and a strong response?*

(14) T: *What is the benefit of giving people written suggestion with this little piece of paper?*

S: *It gives chance to his writing to be improved.*

T: *Yes, for later paper.* (February 11 in Amy's class)

Third, procedural questions were related to the organization and management of the lesson. Although many questions were not directly relevant to produce students' critical thinking in composition, these types of questions were necessary to direct or remind the requirements and manage classroom activities. The examples of these questions are *Other questions before we start reading?*, *Does everyone understand the parallelism?*, *Is that making any sense?*, etc.

Fourth, process questions were defined as the ones inviting students to articulate their understanding processes or explain their thinking (Myhill & Dunkin, 2002). However, in this study, process questions were viewed as a series of questions that generated students' engagement in order to help students to construct a text.

(15) T: *What kind of evidence would you use?*

S1: *Study.*

T: *What kind of study?*

S2: *Psychological.*

T: *Very good. From psychology, excellent! To prove what you're saying.*

S3: *Doctor.*

T: *Medical studies, exactly. Lack of sleep is detrimental to students' health, right? Medical studies that would suggest if children do not have enough sleep. Also, studies from the field of education, like evidence that underslept children perform worse than the children who have had enough rest.*
(March 21 in Jim's class)

Table 1. The Frequency of Four Types of Questions in Each Class¹⁾

	Factual	Speculative	Procedural	Process	Total
Jim's Class	4	6	7	4	21
Amy's Class	7	8	26	1	52
Total	11	14	33	5	73

According to Table 1, procedural questions are the most dominant, and the process questions are least. The result from Myhill and Dunkin's study illustrated that speculative questions were far more frequent in the literacy class than in the numeracy. As shown in Table 1, procedural questions were more frequently addressed than any other type of questions in two ESL composition classes. This result inferred that many in-class activities occurred in ESL composition classes and the teacher needed to make sure of students' following the tasks. Although these types of questions indicated the ecology of ESL composition classroom, these types of questions hardly generate the most participation.

6. Discussion and Implications

This analysis uncovered an elemental systematicity in the discourse of two ESL composition classrooms where five dominant teaching routines in Jim's class and three dominant teaching routines in Amy's

1) Table 1 shows the number of each question. In counting each question, if the teacher addressed a question and then reworded it, the question was counted once. In addition, the type of each question was interpreted and put into the categories, based not on forms, but on meanings in contexts. Before a task was moved to a following stage, the teacher showed his tendency to confirm students' understanding of the task or the content of the task by addressing an interrogative form of utterance, as in *do you have any comment?* Sometimes, students responded to the question by sharing their opinions, while, at other times, they didn't respond but considered it as a mechanical utterance for a transitional discourse marker. Therefore, whether the question is speculative or procedural relied on students' response and context the questions were addressed.

prevailed. The dominant teaching routines in Jim's class included 1) *assigning tasks, roles, or objectives*, 2) *establishing criteria or heuristics during the invention process*, 3) *collectively constructing a logical organization*, 4) *clarifying concepts or terms*, and 5) *guiding individual development through clarification or alternative perspectives*. And those in Amy's class were 1) *assigning tasks, roles, or objectives*, 2) *establishing criteria, or heuristics for the inventing process*, and 3) *providing feedback*. These routines served to structure classroom activities related to students' performance of writing, reading, and group discussion tasks, while providing teacher input and managing the classroom. However, it is noticeable that, in Amy's class, the two teaching routines, *collectively constructing a logical organization* and *guiding individual development through clarification or alternative perspective*, are absent. This result was caused by two reasons. First, regarding the routine, *collective constructing a logical organization*, Amy did not demonstrate a fixed template or organization for developing the writing project, "strong response paper using closed-form essay with a thesis." However, Jim provided a specific organizational style, called the Toulman System²⁾, in order to encourage students to apply it to their own arguments. Second, regarding the routine, *guiding individual development through clarification or alternative perspective*, Amy might help students develop their texts by email, written comments, and conferencing which she frequently used. For more thorough investigation than this current study, the definition of "classroom teaching" might be extended as all teaching activities involved in the completion of a particular writing project, including in-class and out-of-class activities.

This study about teaching routines can be viewed as the extension of research conducted by Cummings (1992) with three experienced teachers. However, it was discovered that, although the teaching

2) Toulman system was introduced by British philosopher Stephen Toulman in *The Uses of Argument* (1958). He provided a method, Toulman System, that described the way of making convincing arguments, and this system consists of *claim, reason, warrant, backing and grounds*, and *qualifiers* (Lunnsford & Ruszkiewicz, 2004).

routines can be verbalized within the categories Cummings found, the categories were bound to be modified to fit into different instructional settings. For example, the routine, *clarifying concepts or terms*, was added to analytical categories. In addition, unlike this study, Cummings's study did not illustrate the specific objectives or contents of each course that his findings were based on. To achieve more applicable generalizability about ESL composition instruction, more detailed research should be conducted from a variety of perspectives, at the same time explicating the detailed logistics or processes of the course.

Although some routines occurred repeatedly, other routines were distinct predominantly in Jim's class. This tendency might reflect on the particularity of different variables in each class. The present analyses and routines were preliminary and based on the cases of only two teachers working at one institution. This study showed one faade of many different ESL composition classes in terms of topics, goals, students' level, teaching methodologies, and teacher or institutional ideology, just to name a few. In the present study, for instance, the focus in Amy's class was on helping students to write a summary and response with an article randomly selected by them based on their interests. Thus, the goal of this project was to familiarize the students with writing summary and response, which are rudimentary skills in academic writing, relatively less requiring the students' own voice. In providing feedback on students' papers, Amy focused on format, structure, punctuation, clarity of meaning. According to her, the reasons were twofold. First, one was the nature of the assignment. Second, she believed that those areas were the ones where ESL students should be improved in academic writing. In this regard, her teaching included the ideology or philosophy that the teacher accumulated from her experience.

On the other hand, the goal of Jim's class was to help students to compose different types of argumentative essays by developing their research skill, so the texts students constructed included their personal opinions. The goals or foci of each class were not identical thus, the teachers were highly likely to use different methodologies. I noticed that

Jim rarely provided feedback with grammar-related issues. This discrepancy between two classes can indicate that two classes had different natures in content, goals, and teaching philosophy. For this reason, further data need to be accumulated in other contexts to confirm and refine the present findings, categories, and descriptions. The further study through classroom discourse analysis about each specific composition classroom is expected to help teachers, especially inexperienced ones to better understand the nature of ESL composition classes in advance. In addition, in the absence of data on students' learning, the present study is not able to determine whether the teaching routines described are, or are not, especially effective for ESL composition instruction. Future research can include the progress of the students' learning to determine whether certain routines would produce efficacy.

The study of questioning patterns through classroom discourses illustrated their uses of questions in composition classes, also indicating the certain types of questions in promoting the most participation of students. As observed in the example of Jim's class, the teacher generated students' involvement in the process of constructing a text more through the process question than the other types of question. As a result of this finding, it is implied that ESL composition teachers should make efforts for students to be closely engaged in classroom communication by creating process questions. However, more examples should be provided to support this idea, since I couldn't record the students' talks in the data collection.

Table 1 shows that the numbers of procedural questions in Jim's and Amy's class are 7 and 25 respectively. The significant difference can be explained by the fact that the language competence in the students in Jim's class is higher than those in Amy's class, who took ENG 108 after completing ENG 107; therefore, Amy used the procedural questions frequently in order to check students' understanding of lessons. However, there is also the possibility that the frequent use of procedural questions reflected Amy's personal teaching style. Therefore,

in addition to the inquiry about the questioning patterns and their frequency according to the type of class, a study about these based on the proficiency level of class or students will help the result of this study to be enhanced.

The findings of questioning patterns help to clarify and describe the nature of the teaching act, point out possible deficiencies in types of questions, and suggest types of questions to function to guide the students' writing process. So, by posing a particularly timely or provocative question, teachers can act in direct ways to shift classroom discourse from closed to open patterns. That is, dialogic discourse is a strategic device that teachers can use to foster student engagement and construct a classroom environment conducive to learning. The teachers need to develop a way of utilizing process questions for inviting students' active participation.

Overall, a potential value for this line of research would be to inform teachers, in particular inexperienced ones in determining their own instruction, becoming a good guide for constructive writing curriculum. teaching routines in Jim's class and three dominant teaching routines in Amy's prevailed. These routines served to structure classroom activities related to students' performance of writing, reading, and group discussion tasks, while providing teacher input and managing the classroom. The present study about teaching routines can be viewed as the same line of research conducted by Cumming (1992) with three experience teachers. However, it was discovered that although the teaching routines can be verbalized within the categories Cumming found, the categories were bound to be modified to fit in different instructional settings, as this study presented. In addition, unlike this present study, Cumming's study did not illustrate the specifics of each course that his findings were based on. To achieve more applicable generalizability about ESL composition instruction, more detailed research should be conducted from a variety of perspectives, at the same time with explicating the detailed logistics or processes of the course.

Although some routines were repeatedly occurring, other routines were distinguished in either of the two classes studied. This tendency might reflect on the particularity of different variables in each class. The present analyses and routines were preliminary and based on the cases of only two teachers working at one institution. This study showed one facade of many different ESL composition classes in terms of topics, goals, students' level, teaching methodologies, teacher or institutional ideology, and just to name a few. In the present study, for instance, the focus in Amy's class was on helping students to write a summary and response with the article randomly selected by them based on their interests. Thus, this goal of this project was to familiarize the students with writing summary and response, which are rudimentary skills in the academic writing, relatively less requiring the students' own voice. In providing feedback on students' papers, Amy focused on format, structure, punctuation, clarity of meaning. According to her, the reasons were twofold. First, one was the nature of the assignment. Second, she believed that those areas were the ones that ESL students should be improved in academic writing. In this regard, her teaching included the ideology or philosophy that the teacher accumulated from her experience. On the other hand, the goal of Jim's class was to help students to compose different types of argumentative essays by developing their research skill, so the texts students constructed included their personal opinions. The goals or foci of each class were not identical, thus using different methodologies. We noticed that Jim rarely provided feedback with grammar-related issues. This discrepancy between two classes can indicate that two classes had different natures in content, goals, and teaching philosophy. For this reason, further data need to be accumulated in other contexts to confirm and refine the present findings, categories, and descriptions. The further study through classroom discourse analysis about each specific composition classroom are expected to help teachers, especially inexperienced ones to better understand the nature of ESL composition classes in advance. In addition, in the absence of data on students' learning, the present study is not able to determine whether the

teaching routines described are, or are not, especially effective for ESL composition instruction. The future research can include the progress of the students' learning to determine if certain routines would produce efficacy.

The study of questioning patterns through classroom discourses illustrated their uses of questions in composition classes, also indicating the certain types of questions in promoting the most participation of students. As shown in the study, the process questions invited their active engagement. So, by posing a particularly timely or provocative question, teachers can act in direct ways to shift classroom discourse from closed to open patterns. That is, dialogic discourse is a strategic device that teachers can use to foster student engagement and construct a classroom environment conducive to learning. The teachers need to develop the way of utilizing process questions for inviting students' active participation.

Overall, a potential value for this line of research would be to inform teachers, in particular inexperienced ones in determining their own instruction, becoming a good guidance for constructive writing curriculum.

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Ho-Jung Yu
Department of English
Arizona State University
Box 870302
Tempe, AZ 85287-0302
Phone: 1-480-326-8536
Email: ho.yu@asu.edu

Chang-In Lee
Division of English Language and Literature
PaiChai University
14 Yeon Ja 1Gil, Seo-gu,
Daejeon, Korea 302-735
Phone: 82-42-520-5320
Email: cilee@mail.pcu.ac.kr

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