



**MANAGEMENT OF TOPICS IN ONLINE ONE-TO-ONE
ENGLISH CONVERSATION INSTRUCTION: A MICRO-
ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED
COMMUNICATION**

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**Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

PHD in Education and Applied Linguistics

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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February 2012

ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study is to investigate how participants manage topics in online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication. To date, much work has been done on text-based media in the field of CMC. Recently, researchers have started becoming interested in examining spoken interaction. However, no research has yet been done on topic management in online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. This study is the first to conduct a micro-analysis of non-verbal elements, such as pitch, volume, intonation, laughter, pauses, inhalations and exhalations, as well as verbal elements, to investigate what sort of interactions participants in online one-to-one conversation classes develop to manage topics during their classes. Thus, this study is expected to play a pioneering role in promoting further research into such classes.

In order to illuminate how the participants in the online English classes managed topics during their conversations, four research questions were developed: first, how are topics *initiated*? second, how are topics *maintained*? third, how are topics *terminated* and *changed*? and fourth, how does trouble and repair in topic management *occur*? The research findings were obtained through the analysis of the spoken data from the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA) so that paralinguistic forms as well as the interactional and sequential organisation of talk the participants produce could be analysed in order to answer the research questions.

The findings obtained from the analysis revealed various actions associated with topic management that were performed during the online conversation classes. It was found that the participants initiate or proffer topics using questions and statements including topical items, that they maintain topics by employing two fundamental strategies: giving a preferred response or giving a response showing interest, and that they change topics mainly by engaging in collaborative topic transitions forming a topic boundary. It was also found that trouble and repair in topic management occurs: that is, inadequate lexical knowledge, rejection of a proffered topic, and technical problems and other interference affect the sequence of topic management. The findings of the current study will therefore contribute to current research into social interactions that occur during the management of topics in online English one-to-one conversation classes, since this is a subject that has not previously been studied in the fields of either CMC or CA. Accordingly, this study is also expected to fill a gap in these areas of research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my main supervisor, Professor Steve Walsh, whose supervision, encouragement and support have enabled me to complete my research successfully. Without his consistent help, this thesis would not have been possible. Another person that I would like to thank is my second supervisor, Dr. Alan Firth, who gave me invaluable suggestions regarding my data analysis at the MARG data session. I will never forget them.

I am also extremely grateful to Professor Paul Seedhouse and Dr. Jane Evison for the invaluable advice, guidance and encouragement they gave me.

In addition, I would like to send special thanks to Dr. Finn Shay Millar, for her careful reading, suggestions and invaluable aid in the preparation of the first to the final drafts.

My sincere gratitude is also due to my friends, Dr. Alberto Fajardo, PhD candidate Suratno Antonius, Dr. Pornpavee Sukrutrit, Dr. Aadam Brandt, and PhD candidate Andrew Harris, who have supported me during my studies.

Also, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor ChangKook Lee and Dr. Jongwon Park for encouraging me to complete this study in England.

All of my family deserves special thanks. Without my wife, Misook Kim, and daughter, Hein Jeon, I would have not been able to enjoy life while conducting my doctoral studies in the U.K. My deepest gratitude also goes to my beloved parents, Woojae Jeon and Daeheon Kim, and sister, Jinyoung Jeon, in Korea. My parents and sister have all given me love, warmth, boundless support and encouragement, which have given me the energy I needed to complete my thesis.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The focus of this study is on how Korean learners of English as a foreign language and an Indian tutor of English manage the topics under discussion in their English conversation classes using Skype, a synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication tool. This chapter begins by describing the motivation for and background to research into online conversation classes and introduces computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC), language education, computer-assisted language learning (henceforth CALL), and the practical application of voice-based CMC to language learning. The purpose of the study is then described. This is followed by the presentation of the research questions, which clarifies what the study seeks to discover, along with an outline of the methodology employed. The significance of the study is then explained. Finally, an outline of the organisation of this thesis is presented.

1.1 Research motivation and background

The online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC analysed for the current study is designed to provide Korean learners of English as a foreign language with opportunities to increase not only communicative competence but also interactional competence through interpersonal communication with a native-like tutor. In the current study ‘online one-to-one English instruction (or class)’ refers to free English conversation classes unless otherwise noted. The motivation for undertaking this research was as follows: (1) although online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC offered to Korean learners of English as a foreign language by education providers in Korea has increasingly been developing as an alternative way to improve communicative and interactional competence, no research has yet been conducted by scholars in any field into this online one-to-one English conversation instruction; (2) it was deemed necessary to investigate how participants take or organise their turns as well as how they produce social actions when managing topics in online one-to-one English conversation classes; and (3) it was also deemed important to discover what

sort of interactions take place in the online one-to-one conversation classes compared to interactions in ordinary classrooms.

The online one-to-one English conversation class emerged from CMC learning. Thus, an explication of the relevance of CMC to language learning will help in explaining the aims and content of the present study more clearly. There are several advantages of language education conducted through CMC. CMC can help students not only to take part in communication with low emotional tension (Bump, 1990; Warschauer, 1995/1996; Beauvois, 1998; Gray and Stockwell, 1998; Meunier, 1998; Roed, 2003) but also to improve their linguistic proficiency in the target language (Kern, 1995; Gray and Stockwell, 1998; Kern and Warschauer, 2000). The use of CMC can also assist teachers in developing plans, materials and ideas to supplement their lessons, and this can be done in collaboration with other teachers (Singhal, 1997). Warschauer (1996, p.9) maintains that “CMC, which has existed in primitive form since the 1960s [...], is probably the single computer application to date with the greatest impact on language teaching.” Other researchers have also found that learning and teaching English through CMC seems to be beneficial for both language learners and teachers (Klemm, 1998). To date, much research has been conducted into the application of text-based CMC to language teaching and learning in order fully to understand its effectiveness. Recently, researchers have broadened the scope of the research to voice- or video-based CMC.

1.1.1 CMC and CALL

CMC as used in language education is considered a part of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). It is believed that the basic concept of CALL was developed when computers were first used for education, or more specifically, for language education. With regard to the origin and development of CALL, Warschauer (1996) explains that CALL has developed through three phases: behaviouristic CALL, communicative CALL and integrative CALL. Each phase had its own system or software developed for language learning and teaching based on a theory or a method and the influence of the existing computer technology.

According to Warschauer's explanation (1996), the first phase of 'behaviouristic CALL' (1960s - '70s) was conceived in the 1950s and was based on behaviourist theories. It included the repetition of language drills to improve reading and writing skills. In communicative CALL (1970s - '80s), on the other hand, much more significance was attached to communication than to language repetition and drills. The courseware or software, designed for a limited amount of interaction between learners and computers, was developed on the basis of communicative language teaching principles in order to improve listening and speaking skills. Integrative CALL (1990s - the beginning of the twenty-first century) began with the appearance of both multimedia computers and the Internet. Multimedia resources can provide more authentic learning, integrated skills, learner-controlled learning and more plentiful content for language learners. Network technology developed along with the development of computer technology. People were able to use the Internet much more easily than before (Ryan, 2010). As a result, people started to communicate with each other using networked computers.

CMC applied to learning is said to have come out of the phase of integrative CALL. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, CMC started to affect every part of human life, and language learners began communicating with each other either asynchronously or synchronously by using email or communication software. Networked computers have enabled language learners to use computers for communicating, without place and time restrictions, with others who also have computers connected to the Internet. The influence networked computers have had on language learning and teaching is illuminated below:

Computer networking allows a powerful extension of the computer-as-tool in that it now facilitates access to other people as well as to information and data. Computer networking in the language classroom stems from two important technological (and social) developments: (1) computer-mediated communication (CMC) and (2) globally linked hypertext. (Warschauer, 1996; Kern and Warschauer 2000, p.11-12)

Although a primitive type of CMC was introduced in the 1960s, the widespread application of CMC to language learning only began in the late 1980s, so language learners who had networked computers could have conversations with other learners or with native speakers asynchronously or synchronously (Warschauer, 1996; Kern and

Warschauer 2000, p.11-12).

In contrast to the argument of Kern and Warschauer that CMC is a part of CALL, stated above, some researchers think that learning through CMC is different from CALL. Their argument is that although CMC can be said to have emerged from CALL from the point of view of developments in computer and networking technology, learning through CMC is different from the other fields of CALL in terms of learning methods. CMC learning can be said to be based on the interactions that take place between or among learners, while other fields of CALL can be said to involve repetition taking place between learners and computers. Thus, Harrington and Levy (2001) state that the functions of computers in CALL are to evaluate learner input and to instruct learners, while in CMC learning computers are used as just a tool.

1.1.2 CMC and language education

CMC refers to people communicating with each other through networked computers. Warschauer et al. (2000) define CMC as communication that occurs through using networked computers which may be asynchronous or synchronous. The development of CMC has led to many changes in communication between people. Networked computers now play a role in many aspects of human life. With the rapid development of network technology, computer users can now connect with each other as easily as when using the telephone. For example, people who have computers connected to the Internet can now talk to and see each other using communication software installed on their computers connected to a video camera, as well as communicate with each other through email exchange, text or oral conversation (Pelletieri, 2000). Consequently, it is possible to talk to people anywhere in the world over the Internet in a very economical manner compared to conventional telephone communication.

In asynchronous CMC, for instance, when using a text medium such as email, a bulletin board or a discussion forum on the Internet, the communication includes time delays. However, these media may soon acquire the characteristics of synchronous CMC as the relevant software technology becomes more sophisticated. On the other hand, people can conduct communication in real time through a synchronous CMC

medium such as text, voice or video streaming. With the recent development of suitable communication tools, software such as Yahoo Messenger and Skype can be used on the Internet at little or no expense.

CMC has been applied to the field of language education. It was first employed to teach a target language in the classroom. When it became popular, ordinary people began to use it to practise speaking their target language with native speakers or other learners outside the classroom by using communication software (Jenks, 2009a, b). Now, thanks to CMC applications, anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can have conversations in virtual space, the cost of communication has been reduced, and barriers such as time and place have almost disappeared. Language learners no longer have to engage in monotonous, repeated language practice using language education software installed on their computers. The adoption of CMC is said to have transformed the practice drills and repetition that form part of language learning based on the cognitive learning theory into communicative language learning.

In order to understand clearly the use of CMC in language education, it is necessary to define language and language learning. Definitions of language vary widely depending on the viewpoints of researchers. Brown (2006) asserts that there are eight possible composite definitions (for more details see, e.g., Brown 2006, p.6). These eight statements seem to be sufficient to provide a general understanding of what language is. However, there is another definition of language based on a different perspective. Cook (2010) categorises 'language' in six ways from the perspective of SLA: Lang1 a human representation system; Lang2 an abstract entity; Lang3 a set of actual or potential sentences; Lang4 the possession of a community; Lang5 the knowledge in the mind of an individual, and Lang6 a form of action.

According to Cook, Lang5 is taken to represent the generally understood meaning of language. It implies that language is something that can be used to connect a speaker with the world outside him or her, and that language competence exists within the speaker. If a speaker uses a language officially in the community where that language is spoken (Lang2), then language competence is constructed in the speaker (Cook, 2010). If Cook's definitions are applied, it is unnecessary to distinguish between

a second and a foreign language, since the definition applied to the language a speaker uses can be different depending on the place where he or she speaks it. With respect to the definition of what constitutes a ‘second language’, Kramsch (2000) introduces the definition of ‘second language acquisition’ used on a Ph.D. programme in SLA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as follows:

The term “second language acquisition” refers to the acquisition of any language (foreign or second, third or fourth) beyond the native language (also known as “mothertongue”) (p.314).

1.1.3 The practical application of synchronous voice-based CMC to language education

Synchronous voice-based CMC was first used for conversation between people. In synchronous voice-based CMC, normal face-to-face conversation is replaced by talk unaccompanied by body language, so “lack of bodily representation also requires new ways of fostering socialization and community-building” (Hampel and Hauck 2006, p.8). Synchronous voice-based CMC was applied to communication taking place between non-native speakers in classroom language learning through the participants’ use of communication tools such as ‘Yahoo messenger’ (Sauro, 2004) and ‘e-English’ (Jepson, 2005), and was also applied to conversation taking place in voice-based chat rooms on the Internet, where people could talk with native speakers or other learners of the target language using the ‘Skype’ communication tool. Recent studies related to synchronous voice-based CMC have investigated conversations taking place between learners (Sauro, 2004) or among people anonymously entering virtual chat rooms such as Skypecasts on the Internet to talk in English outside the classroom (Jenks, 2009a, b).

1.2. Research purpose

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the spoken discourse of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC, focusing on the topic management of the participants. The investigation of topic management is focused on understanding how online one-to-one conversation classes are organised as well as on investigating what sort of social actions participants develop

while managing topics. The reason for this focus on topic management is that the online one-to-one conversation class is designed for students to practise speaking English, so each session consists of a series of topics for the participants to discuss during the session. In this regard, Gan et al. (2009) argue that the analysis of topic organisation in talk produced in language tests will make it possible to discover which factors contribute to the continuation of conversation among participants, to determine how topics are negotiated and terminated and how topicality is negotiated through the collaboration of the participants, as well as to identify differences in linguistic performance between peer participants, since the ability to initiate, maintain and change topics properly is an essential part of communicative competence. Another reason for conducting such an analysis of topic management is that the ability to launch, develop and maintain topics is considered to be a clear indicator of coherence, which is one of the main criteria used in language testing and is another indicator of communicative competence.

In CMC research, according to Luppicini (2007), research into the application of CMC to language learning can be categorised into two groups. The first includes general studies of CMC in education, looking at topics such as the medium's influence on learning and comparisons between different media, considerations of how CMC may be applied to language instruction, online writing, collaborative decision making and group work. The second group of studies considers factors affecting CMC in education, such as the characteristics of the learners and teachers, the effect of teaching practice, integration of CMC, training and professional development, and social factors such as gender and anonymity.

In the field of CA, very little research has been conducted into conversations taking place in online one-to-one conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. With regard to topic management, in particular, conversation analysts have done research on topics or topic organisation in mundane conversation or telephone talk, focusing on only particular aspects of topic management: that is, there has been little research into all the procedures of topic management, including trouble and repair in topic management.

1.3 Methodology and research questions

The current study is conducted from the perspective of conversation analysis, which refers to studying the talk-in-interaction in mundane conversation. There are three reasons why CA was chosen as the methodology for this research. First, the aim of the current study is not to assess language learning or acquisition, but rather, to investigate language use, including the social actions taking place in online one-to-one English conversation classes in situ. Second, there are no predetermined theoretical assumptions for investigating language usage in topic management. In other words, when CA is employed, the spoken discourse data themselves answer the research questions. Third, the micro-analysis of the verbal and non-verbal elements of the spoken discourse data enables the researcher to adopt the same viewpoint as the participants in investigating social interactions relating to topic management. As Markee (2000, p.24) maintains, “CA is designed to account for language use, not its acquisition.” Thus, in the current study, the paralinguistic as well as the linguistic forms the participants produced are analysed in detail from the perspective of CA in order to answer the research questions.

However, more recently CA researchers have begun to apply CA not only to investigate the social actions that take place in mundane conversation but also to the field of language learning or acquisition. With regard to language learning, researchers who adopt the conversation analytic perspective seem to view learning as occurring through the interaction that takes place between the learners. Jenks (2010, p.153) maintains that learning is accomplished by an individual’s working out “how to change his existing knowledge of an interactional practice to accommodate his fellow interactants”. In terms of language acquisition, Young (2007, p.263) argues that second language acquisition is a situated, co-constructed process that occurs among conversationalists. In line with this, Kasper and Wagner (2011, p.117) maintain that language acquisition can be seen as learning to take part in not only institutional but also ordinary routines. In addition, Seedhouse (2011, p.346) states that the fundamental attribute of CA that deals with language as a form of social action and the increasing applicability of CA has led to a connection between CA and applied linguistics.

This study explores the types of repeated patterns or conversational features

produced when the participants - a tutor and a learner of English as a foreign language - manage topics in online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. How the participants initiate, maintain, terminate and change topics and ways in which trouble and repair in topic management occurs will be illuminated with reference to the following research questions:

RQ 1. How are topics *initiated* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 2. How are topics *maintained* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 3. How are topics *terminated* and *changed* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 4. How does trouble and repair in topic management *occur* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

1.4 Significance of the study

The current study is expected to have significance in three respects. First, the focus of the study is on topic management in online one-to-one conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. The investigation of topic management will help to determine whether a coherent conversation is taking place. As mentioned earlier, coherence is an important measure of a well-organised conversation. In regard to this issue, Seedhouse and Harris (2011, p.4) state that “the key indicators of coherence are logical sequencing of sentences, clear marking of stages in a discussion, narration or argument, and the use of cohesive devices (e.g. connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) within and between sentences.” Research has been conducted into topics in mundane conversation, but little work has been done on topic management during online one-to-one conversation classes. It is difficult for teacher and students to develop several topics in the limited amount of time available for each student in the traditional language classroom. In contrast, in online one-to-one instruction it is usual for participants to deal with several topics, since the classes are designed specifically so that they can practise speaking a target language. Accordingly, in order to gain a clearer understanding of how these online classes are organised and of how participants take part in them, it will be

helpful to find out exactly how the participants initiate, maintain, terminate and change topics during their sessions.

Second, the method of collecting data for the current study is different from that used in other conversation analytic studies. The normal conversation that takes place between teacher and students who are in the same classroom is not difficult to record or tape. However, the participants in the present study were a long way away from each other: the tutor was in Kuwait and the students were in Korea, so it was not easy to record their conversations. It was found that ordinary software that is commonly used to record sound was not able to record online conversations between two parties who were at a distance from each other. However, eventually a suitable software application was found, making it possible to obtain the recorded data. Another factor which affected the data collection for the current study was the Internet connection: if the connection was poor or unstable, this affected the quality of the sound, and therefore of the recordings. Accordingly, the method of collecting data employed in this study is significant.

Finally, the current study is meaningful in that it reveals how participants use practical English in online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. The online classes are designed so that the students can practise speaking English with the tutor, not so that they can repeat the tutor's talk or have a guided conversation. Accordingly, although the principal focus was on topic management, it was expected that the investigation would reveal the ways in which the students used practical English in the sessions to talk to a native-like English speaker. It was also hoped that the patterns of practical English the students developed in their online classes would be of use to English language teachers generally.

1.5 Thesis outline

The thesis comprises seven chapters, each of which has subsections, as follows:

Chapter 1 has explained the motivation for and background to the research, including CMC and CALL, CMC and language education, and the practical application of voice-based CMC to language learning. The research purpose was then stated, and an

explanation was given of why the study is important, drawing attention to the gap between previous research and the current study. The reasons for adopting CA as the methodology for the study were then discussed and the research questions were presented. Finally, the significance of the study was described.

In **Chapter 2** a review of the existing literature on CA institutional discourse perspectives, language teaching and classroom interaction, CMC and topic management is presented. Definitions of the types of CMC are given. Previous studies on text-based and voice-based chat through CMC are then described. Finally, a review of the literature on topic management defines the term and sheds light on the organisation and management of topics during conversation, focusing on the three aspects of topic initiation, maintenance and transition.

In **Chapter 3** the methodology used in the thesis: conversation analysis (CA), is examined in detail. Various aspects of CA methodology relevant to this study are described, including the definition and epistemological background of CA, ethnomethodological principles, and fundamental CA assumptions. The chapter also includes a description of how the data were collected and analysed using CA, and an explanation of the reasons for choosing CA. The limitations of CA methodology are then discussed and comparisons are made between CA and other discourse analytic approaches (discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis). Finally, the advantages of applying CA in the current study are explicated.

Chapter 4 presents details of the specific design of the present study. The aims and focus of the study are described along with the research questions. Online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC as a new trend are explored. The design of the study and the process of data analysis are then discussed, including details of the research setting, the participants and the researcher, and methods of data collection and analysis. Finally, issues of reliability, validity, reflexivity and ethical considerations relevant to the current study are examined.

Chapter 5 contains the analysis of selected extracts from the data, which were chosen because they included the elements necessary to answer the research questions.

The analysis reveals the repeated patterns and distinctive conversational features of the interactions between the participants related to how they manage topics during online one-to-one English conversation.

Chapter 6 begins with a review of the research interest. Then the findings concerning topic initiation, topic maintenance, topic transition and trouble and repair in topic management obtained from the analysis of the data are discussed in the light of the findings of previous research.

Chapter 7 provides a brief summary of the thesis, including answers to the research questions based on the findings. Next, the implications of the findings obtained from the study are described both in terms of academic research and pedagogical issues. The contributions and limitations of the study are then described. Finally, suggestions are put forward for further research into topic management and online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. The chapter concludes with a personal evaluation of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical framework adopted to investigate how topics are managed during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) is described. In order to develop this framework, a review of the literature related to a CA institutional-discourse perspective, language teaching and classroom interaction, CMC, synchronous voice-based conversation conducted through CMC and topic management was conducted. In this chapter, first, a CA institutional discourse perspective and the way in which it differs from the CA perspective are discussed. Second, several aspects of language teaching and different types of classroom interaction are elaborated with regard to second language (henceforth L2) teaching. Third, a concrete concept of CMC is constructed on the basis of various definitions, characteristics and types identified in the literature. Fourth, typical text-based and voice-based chats through CMC are illuminated in detail, taking into account the findings of previous studies, since the subject of the present study is synchronous *voice-based* CMC. Finally, the various techniques of initiating, maintaining, terminating and changing topics during conversation as described in the relevant literature are examined in detail.

2.1 CA institutional discourse perspective

The current study is conducted from the perspective of CA. The focus of CA is not language per se but social action involved in talk-in-interaction between participants (see Chapter 3). The interactions play a key role in helping understand how the participants have built up their relationship and understood each other in everyday life, since all social institutions are constructed based on the participants' interactions. Atkinson and Heritage (1984) described the importance of analysing these interactions as follows:

...the description and explication of the competence that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organised interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by which

conversationalists produce their own behaviour and understand and deal with the behaviour of others (p.1).

Talk-in-interaction taking place not only in common settings but also in institutional settings can be analysed by CA. The former type of talk is called ‘mundane or ordinary talk’ or ‘mundane or ordinary conversation’, while the latter is called ‘institutional talk.’ With respect to ordinary conversation, Drew and Heritage (1992, p.19) stated that “the basic forms of mundane talk constitute a kind of benchmark against which other more formal or “institutional” types of interaction are recognised and experienced.” Heritage (1998, p.2) also specifically argued that ordinary conversation refers to a certain type of interaction which is free from the restrictions of particular settings or the accomplishment of specific tasks. On the other hand, if talk-in-interaction takes place in a specific institution such as a classroom, a court room and the like, the interactions between the participants can reflect the characteristics of that institution, since they talk to each other to achieve the purpose of the institution. However, the setting of institutional talk is not considered as an indispensable factor in determining the characteristics of the institutional talk, since the members of the institution do not always talk to each other solely in order to achieve the goals of the institution. With regard to this issue, Drew and Heritage (1992) stated the following:

Institutional interactions may take place face to face or over the telephone. They may occur within a designated physical setting, for example a hospital, courtroom, or educational establishment, but they are by no means restricted to such settings. Just as people in a workplace may talk together about matters unconnected with their work, so too places not usually considered “institutional,” for example a private home, may become the settings for work-related interactions. Thus the institutionality of an interaction is not determined by its setting. Rather interaction is institutional insofar as participants’ institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to work activities in which they are engaged (p.3-4).

The discourse of a specific institution can exhibit its own distinctive characteristics. This is because institutionality is constructed through the conversation between the participants who are trying to achieve the goals or tasks of the institution. It can be explained by the ethnomethodological principles established by Garfinkel (1967) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3). Thus, conversations taking place between members of an institution who want to achieve the goals or tasks of that institution lead to the construction of the principles of indexicality, the documentary method of interpretation,

reciprocity of perspectives, normative accountability, and reflexivity. In other words, the construction of ethnomethodological principles is influenced by the institutional goals or tasks and these principles in turn affect the nature of the discourse. That is, the institutional discourse is affected by the institution, so traces of institutionality can be found in the discourse.

Regarding the issue of the setting having an influence over the interactions occurring in a conversation, Gumperz (1982, p.162) stated that any aspect of linguistic behaviour, as a contextualisation cue, means that those aspects of the context are related to clarifying what a speaker wants to say. Goffman (1983a) also specified the relationship between language use and the activities taking place within institutional settings:

Nor is it to say that forms of interaction can't themselves be responsible to the institutional setting in which they occur. (Even apart from what is said, turn-taking rules in informal talk differ somewhat from those in family therapy sessions, which are different in turn from those in classroom teaching, and these in turn differ from the practices found in court hearings. And these differences in form are partly explicable in terms of the special tasks under-taken in these several settings, which in turn are determined by extrasituational concerns.) (p.11).

Schegloff (1992) argues that “both our casual and our studied examination of interaction and talk-in-interaction provide a lively sense of the occasions on which who the parties are, relative to one another, seems to matter, and matter to them” (p.105). Seedhouse (1996, p.60) specifically maintains that distinctive interactional features have to be taken into account in the interactional (or institutional) environment in which they take place.

Accordingly, it can be inferred that an institutional talk can be affected more markedly by its setting than an ordinary conversation. When analysing institutional discourse, Schegloff (1991) argued that if institutional features can be found in some interactions, these features should be represented in the participants' actions. Drew and Heritage (1992) identified six features of conversation which should be examined in order to detect the institutionality of a discourse: turn-taking organisation, overall structural organisation of the interaction, sequence organisation, turn design, lexical choice, and epistemological and other forms of asymmetry (Drew and Sorjonen, 1997;

Heritage, 1997; Seedhouse, 2004).

Finally, the need for a CA institutional discourse perspective was recognised by Seedhouse (2004). He illustrated how institutional discourse could be analysed from the perspective of CA. For example, from an institutional discourse perspective, the IRF/IRE cycle (see Section 2.2.2) and display questions show interactional features taking place for the purpose of achieving the goals of learning L1 at home or learning L2 in L2 classrooms; the same features can thus be found both in education and in the learning context of a certain culture or age (Seedhouse 1996, p.60). Seedhouse (2004) also states:

CA institutional-discourse methodology attempts to relate not only the overall organisation of the interaction, but also individual interactional devices to the core institutional goal. CA attempts, then, to understand the organisation of the interaction as being rationally derived from the core institutional goal (p.96).

When institutional discourse is analysed from the perspective of CA, the goals or tasks of the institution have to be taken into account. This is because a peculiar and individual goal and a unique organisation of the interaction related to accomplishing that goal are included in all institutional diversities of discourse, as Seedhouse (2004, p. 98) pointed out. This is also in accordance with the findings of Levinson (1992). In conclusion, a CA institutional discourse perspective can be expected to play an important role in the more rigorous analysis of an institutional talk.

2.2 Language teaching: speaking activities and classroom interaction

Language teaching tends to focus on improving language learners' speaking skill, since the priority in language learning is to communicate. Thus, various classroom speaking activities are developed to improve speaking skills effectively and efficiently, and the interactions produced in the activities are analysed from various perspectives.

2.2.1 Language teaching

Language teaching involves teaching a language to learners who want to use the language for communication according to their own purposes. Seedhouse (2011, p.348)

argues that the aim of language teaching is to make it possible for students to acquire linguistic knowledge and skills that will help them to remove present restrictions and have as much communicative competence as the teacher or native speaker. Regarding the categorisation of language teaching, Cook (2009) states that

Language teaching has to be clear whether it is teaching

- A local language to people who want to take part in a monolingual local language community, whether Finnish in Finland or Basque in Spain
- A central language to people who want to take part in a multilingual community where the language is used, say English in London or Delhi
- A supercentral language to people who want to use it for specialist cross-national uses, say French for diplomacy
- A hypercentral language to people who want to use it for a range of purposes across the globe (p.70).

The number of people who learn languages other than their own is increasing steadily every year. The reasons why people learn an L2 vary according to their personal, social, historical and geopolitical situations. It was reported that 56 per cent of the population of the EU know at least one foreign language (EuroBarometer, 2006 cited in Cook 2008, p.194). Cook (2008, p.205) argued that it is important that an L2 user does not want to become a member of native speaker groups, but to become a member of many groups and one of a new group of L2 users, and he also categorised groups of L2 users into eight types, as follows:

1. People speaking their native language.
2. People using an L2 within the majority community.
3. People historically from a particular community (re-)acquiring its language as L2.
4. People speaking an L2 as short-term visitors to another country or to short-term visitors to their country.
5. People using an L2 with spouses or friends.
6. People using an L2 internationally for specific functions.
7. Students and teachers acquiring or conveying an education through an L2.
8. Pupils and teachers learning or teaching L2 in school (p.202).

The goals of teaching an L2 are closely related to the role and functions of the L2 in the society in which the learner lives, or to the learner's aims in learning the L2. Thus, when describing the sorts of role second languages play, who uses a second language, and what second language is used, Cook (2008) classified the goals of teaching L2 into three categories: central, international and individual, as follows:

1) Central goals of teaching

- . Assimilationist language teaching: minority speakers learn the majority central language and relinquish their first language.
- . Transitional language teaching: minority speakers learn to function in the majority central language for some purposes, without giving up the first language.
- . Language maintenance and bilingual language teaching: minority speakers learn to function in both languages.

2) International goals of teaching

- . Careers that require a second language
- . Higher education
- . Access to research and information
- . Travel

3) Individual goals of teaching

- . Understanding of foreign cultures
- . Understanding language itself
- . Cognitive training
- . General educational values
- . Learning the second language as an academic subject
- . L2 learning as social change

(Cook 2008, p.212).

The history of language teaching is associated with the development of teaching methodologies, methods or techniques based on philosophical or educational theories. There have been many methods and approaches used in language teaching; the most important of these are the ‘Grammar translation method’ (19th century), ‘Direct method’ (1900s), ‘Audio-lingual method (ALM)’ (1950s), ‘Communicative language teaching (CLT)’ (1970s ~ 80s) and ‘Task based language learning (TBLL)’ (1990s). According to Cook (2008),

The interlanguage concept had a major impact on teaching techniques in the 1970s. Teaching methods that used drills and grammatical explanations had insisted on the seriousness of the students’ mistakes. A mistake in an audio-lingual drill meant the student had not properly learnt the ‘habit’ of speaking; a mistake in a grammatical exercise meant the student had not understood the rule. The concept of the learner’s own system liberated the classroom and in part paved the way for the communicative language teaching methods of the 1970s and 1980s, and the task-based learning of the 1990s (p.14).

Walsh (2006, p.155) also pointed out that the number of research studies on ‘process’ or ‘task-based’ language teaching methodology is now increasing. Most research into task-based language learning has paid attention to learners’ tasks or activities in the

classroom and their effectiveness in improving L2 acquisition.

2.2.2 Speaking activities and classroom interaction

Language teaching and learning takes place for the most part in the classroom. The participants in language teaching and learning engage in various activities in order to achieve the goals or tasks of the teaching in the classroom. One of these goals can be a good command of speaking the target language, since speaking skill is essential in L2 teaching and learning (Kayi, 2006). Harmer (2001, p.269) argued that “the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language ‘on the spot’.” Celce-Murcia (2000) also stated that the overarching characteristic of classroom speaking activity is to supply the students with a genuine opportunity to make individual meanings understood and to use all their knowledge related to the second or foreign language.

Activities designed to enable learners to master speaking skills are varied and can include such activities as “discussions, role play, simulations, information gap, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, picture narrating and find the difference” (Kayi, 2006). Harmer (2007) categorised classroom speaking activities into six types: “acting from a script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaires and simulation and role-play”. Three of these activities also have subcategories, as follows: “Acting from a script” has “playscripts and acting out dialogues”; “Communication games” includes “games-information-gap games and television and radio games”, and “Discussion” has “buzz groups, instant comment, formal debate, unplanned discussion and reaching a consensus” (for more details see, e.g., Harmer 2007, p.348-352). On the other hand, Richards (2006) classified speaking activities into the following three types: “talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance”. “Talk as interaction” refers to interactions engaged in in order to create comfortable relationships, and includes greetings, small talk, chit chat, recent experiences and the like. “Talk as transaction” refers to focusing on information exchanged or goods or services obtained during conversation. “Talk as performance” means talk produced in front of an audience: for instance, morning talks, public announcements and speeches.

The classroom interactions that take place between students and teacher or students and students during classroom speaking activities are of various types and include a variety of distinctive features. Walsh (2011, p.2) describes interaction in the classroom as follows, “Not only is the interaction very fast and involves many people, it has multiple foci; the language being used may be performing several functions at the same time: seeking information, checking learning, offering advice and so on.” The interactions that take place between participants in the classroom have been investigated by researchers who have different backgrounds and who have adopted different research approaches, in order to develop more effective language teaching methods or to gain a better understanding of these interactions (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Ellis, 1984; Edmondson, 1985; Tsui 1985, 1995; Van Lier, 1988; Drew and Heritage, 1992; Levinson, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Seedhouse, 1996, 2004; Holliday, 1997; Foster, 1998; Hester and Francis, 2001; Walsh, 2006, 2011). In particular, more attention has also been paid to the interaction taking place in the ESL classroom. The participants in the ESL classroom can be categorised as “pupils and teachers learning or teaching L2 in school”, which is one of the eight types of L2 users (see Section 2.2.1).

Research into classroom interaction has been conducted by recording or taping conversation between teacher and student(s) or between student(s) and student(s) in the classroom. Even if the amount of collected data is small, these data include important features that need to be considered. Thus, Walsh (2006) emphasises the importance of the data collected in the classroom as follows:

First, they are highly context-specific and offer detailed insights into teaching and learning processes; second, they allow teachers and researchers to gain a detailed understanding of the ‘text’ of the lessons which have been recorded; third, they permit understandings to be developed and enhanced in other contexts (p.2).

The IRE/IRF sequence in interactions in the L1 classroom was presented by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) from the perspective of discourse analysis. This is a typical sequence which can easily be found in any classroom. It is called the IRF sequence in British schools, and consists of teacher initiation (I), learner response (R) and teacher follow-up or feedback (F). In American schools, teacher follow-up or feedback can be replaced by teacher evaluation (E), in which case the sequence is called the IRE sequence. Thus, the sequence was called the IRE/IRF cycle by Seedhouse

(2004, p.56). Walsh (2011) describes the usefulness of the sequence as follows:

it enables us to understand the special nature of classroom interaction; it enables us to understand why teachers talk so much more than learners: for every utterance made by a learner (**R**), teachers typically make two (**I**, **F**); and it allows us to see how, if overused, classroom interaction can become very mechanical, even monotonous. Teachers need to be aware of this (p.18).

An example of an IRE/IRF cycle is given below:

Extract 1.7

1 Teacher:	So, can you read question two, Junya.	I
2 Junya:	[Reading from book] Where was Sabina when this happened?	R
3 Teacher:	Right, yes, where was Sabina.	F
4	In Unit 10, where was she?	I
5 Junya:	Er, go out...	R
6 Teacher:	She went out, yes.	F

(Walsh 2001, cited in Walsh 2011, p.17)

The IRE/IRF cycle, however, has inherent limitations in explaining all interactions taking place in classrooms. The IRE/IRF cycle can superficially explain the extrinsic factors of interactions. In other words, it can clearly explain an external relationship between teacher and student based on interactions that consist of sequences such as the teacher's display question, the student's response and the teacher's evaluation or feedback. However, the IRE/IRF cycle cannot precisely explicate how each turn of the cycle is designed and organised in its relationship with each turn in the context. Thus, Seedhouse (2004) argued that reliance on the IRE/IRF cycle and display questions in the analysis of talk-in-interaction has the unavoidable consequence of monolithic and acontextual overgeneralisation, and pointed out the limitation of the cycle as follows:

Form-function mapping or speech move DA is certainly undertaken, but it forms only a part of a much broader perspective which concentrates on the relationship between pedagogical focus and the organisation of the interaction, in particular the organisation of turns, sequence, repair, and topic (p.66).

Walsh (2011, p.84) also asserted that DA approaches do not sufficiently explain the

variety of contexts operating in a lesson and the relationship between pedagogic purpose and language use.

Teacher's roles and the pedagogical goals can have an enormous influence on the interactions taking place in the L2 classroom. Walsh (2004, p.5) argued that "the features of L2 classroom discourse are easy to identify and present a very clear structure, where teachers control both the topic of conversation and turn-taking." Thus, the teacher's influence can be interpreted as being related to the pedagogical goals of the classroom. Seedhouse (2004, p.204) supported this view, arguing that the L2 which is used by teachers and/or learners, focusing rationally on pedagogy, develops interaction.

L2 classroom interactions are also classified into several types according to the perspective of researchers. Seedhouse (1996) introduced several types of classroom interactions which are variously classified into five types (Ellis, 1984), three types (Tsui, 1987), four types (Van Lier, 1988) and four frames (Abdesslem, 1993), while EFL classroom interaction is classified into five types (Hasan, 1988) (for more details see, e.g., Seedhouse 1996, p.71-72). All the types of L2 classroom interactions introduced here are not dependent on only a CA perspective (Seedhouse, 1996). Thus, Seedhouse (2004) suggested four L2 classroom contexts, as follows: "turn taking and sequence in form-and-accuracy contexts"; "turn taking and sequence in meaning and fluency contexts"; "turn taking and sequence in task-oriented contexts"; and "turn taking and sequence in procedural contexts".

Among the interaction classifications mentioned above, only Seedhouse's four contexts are based on the perspective of conversation analysis, so reliability and validity are higher in this case than in the others. Furthermore, it involves not the simple application of CA to the analysis of L2 classroom interaction but its application to the analysis of L2 classroom interaction relating to the pedagogical goals or tasks of the L2 classroom. That is, the classroom interactions are observed and analysed from a CA institutional discourse perspective. Concerning this issue, Seedhouse (2004) stated:

So a CA institutional-discourse approach to L2 classroom interaction is very much founded on and compatible with the many studies of L2 classrooms undertaken in a DA paradigm. The CA approach is, however, able to take the exploration much further and create more connections with social and institutional

context. Most importantly, CA is able to portray the reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction, whereas DA is not (p.66).

Seedhouse (2004) also discussed three repair contexts from the four L2 classroom contexts mentioned above: “Repair in Form-and-Accuracy Contexts, Repair in Meaning and Fluency Contexts and Repair in Task-Oriented Contexts”. These are different from linguistic error correction that can easily be found in L2 classrooms, since the three repair contexts are developed based on pedagogical focus (Seedhouse 2004, p.143).

2.3 Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Various terms have been used to define CMC. It has been defined as “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (Herrings 1996, p.1), “communication that takes place via networked computers” (Warschauer et al. 2000, p.2), “human communication via computers” (Simpson 2002, p.414) or “communications mediated by interconnected computers, between individuals or groups separated in space and/or time” (Luppicini 2007, p.142). The above definitions all have two terms in common: ‘communication’ and ‘networked computers’. However, Bodomo (2009) asserts that the above definitions are no longer adequate, since they do not reflect the fact that CMC has extended into every field of human life, including computer science, IT, education and the like, nor do they reflect the rapid development of computer technology and networks. Thus, a new definition has been proposed, as follows:

CMC is defined as the coding and decoding of linguistic and other symbolic systems between sender and receiver for information processing in multiple formats through the medium of the computer and allied technologies such as PDAs, mobile phones, and blackberries; and through media like the internet, email, chat systems, text messaging, YouTube, Skype, and many more to be invented (Bodomo 2009, p.6).

The definition above emphasises the increased number of technological devices and types of software which can be currently used in CMC. However, the core phrases in this definition are “the coding and decoding” and “through the medium of the computer and allied technologies”; these phrases can be interpreted as corresponding to ‘connection’ and ‘electronic machines using networks’ respectively. The word

‘communication’ refers to the connections between people, and the term ‘networked computers’ refers to electronic machines using networks. Accordingly, CMC can be defined as human communication via electronic machines using networks such as networked computers or mobile devices akin to smart phones or tablets. The particular electronic machines that are used can change following the developments in technology.

2.3.1 Characteristics and types of CMC

Different characteristics of CMC and communication technology can generate different types of CMC. CMC possesses one of two characteristics: it is either asynchronous or synchronous (Warschauer et al., 2000). Asynchronous means that there is a time delay and synchronous means that the communication takes place in real time (Smith, 2003). These classifications, however, can only indicate whether the communication takes place in ‘real time’ or in ‘not real time’. On the other hand, the different types of media used in CMC can also produce different types of CMC: text-based, voice-based and video-based CMC. The former two characteristics combined with the latter three media thus in theory result in six types of CMC: namely, asynchronous and synchronous text-based CMC, asynchronous and synchronous voice-based CMC and asynchronous and synchronous video-based CMC. In fact, it is possible to use all of these in CMC communication, but in practice only four types are utilised: asynchronous and synchronous text-based CMC, synchronous voice-based CMC and synchronous video-based CMC. The description above conflicts with the opinion of Bodomo (2009), who claims that CMC should be classified into two categories only: text- and video-based, since network technology such as broadband and Internet connections have developed so rapidly that it is not easy to determine whether the communication is synchronous or asynchronous. Although this seems to be a persuasive argument, the present study follows the types of CMC based on the combination of characteristics and media of communication tools. The reason for this is that although in developed countries, text-, voice- and video-based CMC are used widely by individuals to communicate with each other, in developing or underdeveloped countries, it is still mainly text-based (e.g., email) and voice-based (e.g., Skype) CMC that are used.

The first types of CMC to be developed were the synchronous and asynchronous

text-based types, and these are now widely used. Email, for instance, as an example of asynchronous text-based CMC, is very familiar to people (Warschauer et al., 2000; Smith, 2003). Warschauer et al. (2000, p.3) argued that communicating via email is more convenient than any other method of communication, although bulletin boards on the World Wide Web (WWW) are also used. With regard to synchronous text-based CMC, there are several types of synchronous text-based CMC chat: for instance, MOOs (multiple-user object oriented environments), Internet-based chat such as ICQ or AOL instant messenger, real-time group discussion and text-messenger. Users can conduct text chat as simultaneously as voice chat using a software application installed on their computers that allows them to exchange text messages.

In the category of asynchronous and synchronous voice-based CMC, voice-mail can be used as a type of asynchronous voice-based CMC, but it is not as practical as email or text chat. On the other hand, synchronous voice-based CMC is used by many people because the users can talk to each other just as they can on the telephone. One of the popular software applications for synchronous voice-based CMC is Skype, which can be downloaded for free (Godwin-Jones, 2005). If people use Skype, they can conduct text chat as well as talk to other people who are using Skype at the same time. Thus, Skypecasts, as a type of synchronous voice-based CMC, is a virtual place where people can talk with others anonymously without any restrictions in chat rooms hosted by Skype (Jenks 2009a, b; 2010). The service was discontinued in 2009, but it is still possible for an individual to have a one-to-one or one-to-many talk with people who want to talk to him or her by using Skype.

Video mail is a type of asynchronous video-based CMC, although it is not as well known as either email or text chat. Synchronous video-based CMC, on the other hand, is more similar to face-to-face communication than any other type of CMC (O'Conaill et al., 1993). In synchronous video-based CMC, people can talk with each other and see each other's faces in real time if they use networked computers with a video camera. When synchronous video-based CMC was first introduced, a special room equipped with instruments for video-conferencing and an ISDN phone line service was required (Katz, 2001; Azuma, 2003). With the development of technology, Microsoft NetMeeting or CU-SeeMe for personal computers were developed and used

as software applications for synchronous video-based CMC (Warschauer et al., 2000). Thus, participants can now see each other by means of small images on the computer screen through a video-conferencing tool like NetMeeting (Hampel and Hauck, 2006). Wang (2004) tested the performance of NetMeeting, a communication tool, for both the development of more convenient communication software and distance education, comparing it with other tools such as CUseeMe 5.0, Video VoxPhone Gold 2.0 and ICUII 4.9. Furthermore, Skype also enables people to have synchronous video-based communication with others if a video camera is connected to networked computers, so a special room or a phone line such as ISDN are not needed for video-conferencing (Godwin-Jones, 2005).

Synchronous video-based CMC naturally includes not only synchronous voice-based CMC but also text-based CMC, depending on which communication tools are available. When it was first introduced, synchronous video-based CMC was used as a type of video-conferencing. The video conferences were conducted in special rooms equipped with audio and video equipment including monitors, TVs, projectors, a VHS player and recorder and interactive video cameras, and used the ISDN phone line service. With the development of Internet web page applications, ordinary people were able to engage in synchronous video-based communication on their computers using software such as NetMeeting or Skype. They would be able to see each other on their computer screens through a video-conferencing tool like NetMeeting if their computers were connected to a webcam or video (Hampel and Hauck, 2006).

In summary, two types of CMC: for example, text- and voice- based CMC or text- and video-based CMC, can take place simultaneously. Developments in technology have meant that people are now able to communicate with each other in real time through text messages, or by talking to each other in the same way as they would on the telephone, or through the medium of video, which means that they are able to both see and talk to each other using communication software on their computers.

2.3.2 Previous studies on text-based and voice-based chat through CMC

The increase in the use of CMC has paralleled technological developments in both

computers and networks. What is now known as the Internet was originally a communication network system between computers called ARPANET, developed for the military, and therefore not available for use by members of the public (Ryan, 2010). When the commercial network was first provided for ordinary people in 1986, some people were able to use a sort of email. However, the number of people using the Internet was very small, and the use of CMC for personal interaction was minimal. It was not until the World Wide Web system was introduced on the Internet in 1991 that ordinary people were able to access the Internet more conveniently and personal use of CMC began to grow in popularity. Various communication tools became readily available for CMC: for instance, email, IRC and video-conferencing, both the spoken and written forms of language, the textual, aural and visual forms of interface, and the various forms of interconnectivity: one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-many (Harrington and Levy 2001, p.21).

Research into asynchronous text-based CMC has focused on the use of email, bulletin boards, discussion forums and mailing lists. In the mid-1990s, some educational institutions provided their students with network access to asynchronous text-based CMC for the purpose of learning (Lamy and Hampel 2007, p.7). Email, an example of asynchronous text-based chat, became popular because it was faster and more economical than sending letters and because a message could be sent to one person or to many people if needed, although receivers were not able to respond simultaneously. An Internet electronic bulletin board called NEWS was used to teach writing as part of an Italian-language course (Cononelos and Oliva 1992, cited in Chun 1994, p.19). Taylor (2001) states that 'Caucus', an asynchronous computer conferencing system, was used to provide a forum for writing instruction; it helped to develop the relationship between teachers and learners as well as giving learners writing experience.

More research has been conducted into synchronous text-based chat than into any other type of CMC. Synchronous text-based CMC includes IRC (Internet Relay Chat), local area networks (LANs), MUDs (Multiple-User Domains), MOOs (MUD, Object-Oriented) and virtual communities on the Internet (Herring, 2001; Simpson, 2005b). For example, MOOs, a synchronous text-based virtual reality system, was used for tandem language learning (Donaldson and Kötter, 1999; Kötter, 2001;

Schwienhorst, 2004) and for interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers or others (Weininger and Shield, 2004). Kern (1995) found that language learners who had written interaction in the classroom using 'Daedalus InterChange', a local area computer network for exchanging texts or emails, produced more turns and better output in using morph syntactic features such as plural forms and discourse functions. He also found that use of this network increased both reliance on peer learning and motivation in language learning, and that it reduced the learners' reliance on their instructor and their communication anxiety, compared with learners engaging in face-to-face interaction. Negretti (1999) applied conversation analysis to analyse written discourse obtained from interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers' chat at 'Webchat', a global network for exchanging texts, and found that the use of CMC media can affect the overall structure of turn-taking. Sotillo (2000) explained discourse functions and syntactic complexity in text chatting between ESL students and an ESL instructor on 'Relay Chat (mIRC)', a user-friendly real time chat program, by comparing the discourse of a discussion forum using asynchronous text-based CMC with one using synchronous text-based chat and analysing the outcome in a quantitative manner.

Text chat on virtual spaces on the Internet is another focus of research into synchronous text-based chat through CMC. Blake (2000) investigated the interactions that participants construct when performing a series of online tasks such as doing a jigsaw, information-gap activities, or decision making, using 'Remote Technical Assistance' (RTA), a synchronous text-chat program, which also performs the function of recording all the chat. Kitade (2000) found that there was no 'turn-taking competition' in text chat or IC (Internet Chat). Tudini (2002) compared the discourse of face-to-face interaction with that of synchronous text-based chat in 'UniSAnet', which is a virtual space used for language education, to identify the crucial elements of interactions in the context of the text chat between foreign language learners in the classroom. Simpson (2005a) examined the concepts of collaboration and scaffolding in language learning by analysing discourse obtained from 'Webheads', a virtual community for language learners of English on the Internet, which is a place where teachers and other interested parties can meet. In another study, Simpson (2005b) also found that 'Webheads' influenced patterns of turn-taking in synchronous text-based chat

through CMC, but that Internet relay chat rooms (IRC), local area networks (LANs) and multi-user domains (MUDs and MOOs) did not, as shown by the finding of Kitade (2000). Sanders (2006) examined the relationship between student collaboration and language acquisition by analysing text chat in WebCT, a chat room.

Two aspects of the previous research into text-based chats through CMC are of particular interest. First, synchronous text-based CMC became so popular that Simpson (2005a, b) and Sanders (2006) refer to it as simply synchronous CMC (SCMC), which can be interpreted as an indication of the important status they accord synchronous text-based communication in the field of CMC. Second, researchers started to focus on the construction of written discourse. Kern (1995), Blake (2000) and Sotillo (2000) analysed written discourse data in a quantitative manner, focusing on turn-taking and types of interaction (see, e.g., Chun, 1994; Sullivan and Patt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996; Pellietieri, 2000). In contrast, Negretti (1999), Tudini (2002) and Simpson (2005a, b) analysed the written discourse data obtained from synchronous text-based chats from the perspective of conversation analysis, which suggests that their focus was on the social action taking place through the written discourse.

Research into synchronous voice-based chat through CMC started to be conducted after voice-based communication tools were introduced. Like synchronous text-based CMC, synchronous voice-based CMC is available in the form of one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-many communication. The characteristics of face-to-face conversation are reproduced in synchronous voice-based chat through CMC, although without non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expression and eye contact. Thus, Hampel and Hauck (2006, p.8) emphasised the fact that “lack of bodily representation also requires new ways of fostering socialization and community-building.” Sauro (2004) investigated how two non-native speakers constructed their interactions when they changed the media from text to voice or vice versa using the communication tool, ‘Yahoo! Messenger’, by comparing the written discourse of text chats with the spoken discourse of voice chats. Jepson (2005) maintains that synchronous voice-based conversation is closer to face-to-face interaction than synchronous text-based chat, because live speech interactions are easier to conduct in synchronous voice-based chat than in synchronous text-based chat through CMC. He based his argument on a

comparison between the written discourse of text chat of two groups of non-native speakers with the spoken discourse of their voice chat at ‘e-English’, an online English school, with the aim of identifying their repair moves. The two sets of data were analysed in both a qualitative and a quantitative manner. In contrast, conversations taking place in chat rooms on the Internet outside the classroom were investigated, focusing on the turn-taking and interactions the participants developed during the voice-based chats (Jenks, 2009a, b; 2010; Sukrutrit, 2010; Brandt, 2011).

The methods employed to collect and analyse data on synchronous voice-based chat conducted through CMC have varied depending on the researcher. Sauro (2004) and Jepson (2005), for instance, focused on the conversations that their language learners had with other learners during online chatting in the classroom, and analysed the data quantitatively, focusing on turn-taking and the expressions they used during the conversations. In contrast, Jenks (2009a, b; 2010), Sukrutrit (2010) and Brandt (2011) collected out-of-class spoken discourse data from chat rooms on the Internet, where people can practise speaking their target languages with native speakers or other participants in virtual spaces, and focused on turn interactions and sequences from the perspective of conversation analysis.

2.4 Topic Management

Topics are of central importance in enabling participants to sustain talk over a period of time. However, the number of studies on topic management from a conversation analytic perspective is small compared to the amount of research into other topics such as adjacency pairs, discourse markers and the like. According to Seedhouse (2004, p.38), this is because topics are not organised interactionally and do not follow CA norms, such as being context-free. He states that “unlike the organizations of adjacency pairs and turn-taking, topic is not oriented to normatively” and argues that “topic is not treated at all in recent introductions to CA such as ten Have (1999) or Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008). However, it is extensively discussed by Sacks (1992).” Thus, in CA, topics have not been researched as thoroughly as other aspects of conversation, such as turn-taking, repair and adjacency pairs. Some of the references related to topic management in the current study are therefore not as up to date as references to these

other aspects.

In order to gain a complete understanding of what topics are, conversation analysts have focused on how topics are initiated, maintained, terminated and changed during conversation (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Maynard, 1980; Button and Casey, 1984, 1985; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992a, b; Svennevig, 1999; Abu-Akel, 2002; Radford and Tarplee, 2002; Holt and Drew, 2005; Sukrutrit, 2010). Thus, most of them have examined the kinds of turns and sequences that are organised by participants when managing topics during a conversation, although some researchers have focused on only one or a few aspects of topic management or organisation. In particular, Sukrutrit (2010) examined the overall subject of topic management as one phase of interaction in synchronous voice-based chat rooms. According to Maynard (1980, p.263), ‘topicality’ refers not only to the content of a conversation but also to the procedures adopted to produce a turn that is appropriate to a prior turn. Svennevig (1999, p.163) also maintains that topic is managed “based on the fundamental assumption that topic structure is not an incidental (by-) product of talk, but an orderly interactional achievement.” Accordingly, this study focuses on what kind of patterns and distinct features the participants - the tutor and the students - develop when they manage topics during online one-to-one conversations in English.

2.4.1 Definitions of topic in the literature

As is evident from the number of definitions of ‘topic’ put forward by researchers in various fields of study (e.g., Brown and Yule, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Button and Casey, 1984; Jefferson, 1984a; Schegloff, 1990; Drew and Holt, 1998; Stokoe, 2000; Gan et al., 2009), it is not a simple term to define. Before attempting a definition for use in this research, therefore, it was necessary to examine the literature relating to this subject. Abu-Akel (2002, p.1788) argues that linguists analyse topics within a sentence or a clause in terms of syntactical level. Discourse analysts such as Keenan and Schieffelin, on the other hand, enlarge the scope of topic to include a semantic level by introducing ‘propositional’ topics, although these are still confined within the clause and sentence level. Conversation analysts such as Schegloff, by contrast, treat topics “in terms of the overall structural organization of conversations, that is to say, the organization of turns

(i.e. turn-taking) and their exigencies as accomplished through talk.” In addition to the fact that researchers have different viewpoints on what constitutes a topic depending on their field of study, Svennevig (1999, p.167) also points out another difficulty associated with defining topic, arguing that “topic may be formulated at different levels of abstraction and from different subjective positions.” Pomerantz and Fehr (1997, p.87) mention that topical organisation is omitted in the five areas of CA analysis (see p.120) because of the difficulties in the study of topic itself.

A topic is something participants in a conversation co-construct and share with each other in order to maintain the conversation over a period of time. Givón introduced the concept of topic at the level of discourse and considered that “the topic is only ‘talked about’ or ‘important’ if it remains ‘talked about’ or ‘important’ during a number of successive clauses” (cited in Alonso 2006, p.10). Van Dijk (1977, p.136) introduced the notion of sequence and defined the topic of a sequence as “a proposition entailed by the joint set of propositions expressed by the sequence.” Givón and van Dijk’s notions of topic are on different levels, but they have in common the fact that a topic is developed in a series of related meaningful compounds. That is to say, they both see topic in terms of production.

Unlike Givón and van Dijk, Maynard (1980, p.263) argues from the perspective of CA that topicality reflects a speaker’s understanding of a prior turn and the subsequent production of an appropriate response as well as reflecting content. Taking the viewpoint that topics are co-constructed, Clark (1996) asserts that topics have to be reciprocally developed and Svennevig (1999, p.168) argues that “a topic may be proposed by an individual, but depends on the other’s uptake in order to be established as the discourse topic.” What their definitions of topic have in common is that a topic is not understood by only a speaker or only a listener, but rather that it is understood and co-constructed by both speaker and listener. This view is supported by the studies of Schegloff and Sacks (1973), Sacks et al. (1974) and Sacks (1992a). Seedhouse (2004, p.38) also states that, “topic is a central concept in the analysis of talk and is co-constructed by participants during the course of the talk.”

In conclusion, the different definitions of topic can be categorised into two views: the product and the process, or as Svennevig (1999, p.164) states, “a product of

constituent parts of the discourse and a process, a set of techniques for establishing boundaries and coherence patterns in discourse”. The product view focuses on what is talked about, while the process view focuses on how conversationalists maintain their conversation by arranging what is talked about through interactional cooperation and the use of certain patterns. Thus, in order to examine how a topic progresses and how relationships between topics are organised in online one-to-one conversation classes (which generally include not just one but a series of topics), it is the process view which will be employed in the following sections in the investigation of the four aspects of topic management: topic initiation, topic maintenance, topic termination and topic change.

2.4.2 Topic initiation

Topic initiation takes place when participants launch the topic they want to talk about or induce their interlocutors to introduce another topic during the conversation to prevent the conversation from suspending. However, participants do not initiate or elicit topics without thinking, but instead follow certain conversational norms. These are described in Chapter 3. Regarding this issue, Svennevig (1999, p.173) argues that participants show their intention to introduce a topic by doing one of two things: “checking the reportability of an item or by projecting an extended trajectory of talk.” Topic initiation can take place either after the opening sequence or during or after a prior topic. In the former case it is called ‘first topic initiation’ and in the latter, ‘subsequent topic initiation’.

2.4.2.1 First topic initiation

The initiation of a first topic can take place near the opening sequence: participants generally launch a first topic in order to keep the conversation going after exchanging greetings and identification sequences with their co-participants in the conversation. According to Schegloff (1986), a first topic initiation takes place after or during the ‘anchor position’, that is, after the completion of the second ‘how-are-you’ sequences. Gardner (1987) also states that first topic initiation takes place after the beginnings of a talk (greetings, identification and the like) are finished. Thus, considering the opening

sequence, Button and Casey (1988) claim that the place where a first topic occurs is an “interactionally negotiated” place. With regard to the importance of a first topic, Sacks (1992b, p.159) claims that “‘first topic’ is not merely a way of talking about some topic that happens to be first, but is in fact a thing that we can give an analytic name to.” The importance of first topics is described in more detail as follows:

Topics that are minor developments by the receiver of the conversational opening of “how are you” inquiries, are not heard or treated as ‘first topics’. Rather, we want to note that to make of a topic a ‘first topic’ is to accord it a certain special status in the conversation. Thus, for example, to make a topic ‘first topic’ may provide for its analysability (by coparticipants) as ‘the reason for’ the conversation, that being, furthermore, a preservable and reportable feature of the conversation. In addition, making a topic ‘first topic’ may accord it a special importance on the part of its initiator (a feature which may, but need not, combine with its being a ‘reason for the conversation’) (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, p.300).

For instance, in a mundane telephone conversation, after the usual introductions, a caller generally informs the recipient of the reason for the call, and this usually becomes the first topic.

A first topic can have different content depending on the type of participant involved in the conversation. Acquainted participants can start a first talk about an event which is not related to the place or surroundings in which the talk is taking place, whereas the first talk of unacquainted participants normally does relate to these. Thus, acquainted participants have fewer time and place restraints than unacquainted participants. Concerning this issue, Svennevig (1999, p.116) argues that “In contrast to friends and acquaintances, who may exploit mentionables from previous conversations to introduce first topics, strangers are obliged to begin by introducing ‘brand new’ topics. In this situation they use either setting talk... or the self-presentational sequence to get started.” Setting talk will be discussed in Section 2.4.2.2 (see p.35).

2.4.2.2 Subsequent topic initiation

The initiation of a first topic occurs after the opening sequence, whereas the initiation of subsequent topics usually takes place when a topic-in-progress has been terminated and a new topic is needed. Subsequent topic initiation is said to be the second part of the process of topic transition, which will be discussed in Section 2.4.4 (see p.49). That is

to say, after a topic-in-progress is collaboratively exhausted or terminated through the cooperation of the participants, the participants will then try to introduce a new topic in order to continue their talk over a period of time. The procedure of switching from a topic-in-progress to a new topic can be either natural, in which case it is referred to as 'stepwise topical movement' (see p.66), or noticeable, in which case it is called 'boundaried topical movement' (see p.70).

Various researchers into topic organisation have identified different ways of initiating topics. Downing (2000, p.33) studied ways of organising turns for topic initiation from the perspective of linguistic form, and argues that there are two main strategies used to launch a first or a following topic: "by means of an informative statement and by asking a question". In other words, there are two basic normative ways for participants to initiate a topic in their turns: by means of an enquiry or by means of a statement. These two strategies appear to be fundamental and comprehensive since they reflect basic linguistic forms and nothing else. With respect to this issue, question-answer pairs can be used to initiate a topic talk (Sukrutrit, 2010) and the informative statement can be used to initiate a topic as a news announcement (Button and Casey, 1985).

Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) classified topic initiation into two categories according to the type of participants in the conversation: topics initiated by 'acquainted parties' and topics initiated by 'unacquainted parties'. The former includes two kinds of topic initiation: 'displaying prior experience' and 'using setting talk'. Displaying prior experience refers to proffering as a topic an event that the participants have already known about before starting the conversation. 'Using setting talk' means talking about a pseudo-topic before introducing or talking on topical topics. The latter also includes two kinds of topic initiation: 'pre-topical sequences' and 'using setting talk'. 'Pre-topical sequences' are sequences of talk relating to a participant's personal affairs, such as their year at school, where they live etc, and are used to develop topics between unacquainted parties (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984). This sort of topic can be initiated by means of informational statements or enquiries. In connection with 'pre-topical sequences', the findings of Sukrutrit (2010) show that autobiographical data are used to initiate a topical talk among unacquainted participants in voice-based chat rooms.

Button and Casey (1984; 1985), on the other hand, explain how new topics are initiated which are not related to a topic-in-progress, after the topic-in-progress has been clearly terminated through the cooperation of the participants. They apply Downing's (2000) two basic strategies, discussed above, to their discussion of topic initiation, but deal with topic initiation from the viewpoint of the interactional turns organised by the participants. That is to say, the questions or statements employed to initiate new topics are categorised according to ways of initiating or eliciting new topics after a noticeable procedure which signals that a topic-in-progress is going to be terminated. Button and Casey (1984; 1985) suggest three ways of introducing a new topic that is not related to the prior topic in a conversation: a topic initial elicitor, an itemised news enquiry and a news announcement. Since these often take place at a bounded topical movement, they will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter (see p.70).

A topic initial elicitor is used to elicit a new topic from the recipient which is not related to the prior topic. Button and Casey (1984, p.170) identify three characteristics of topic initial elicitors, as follows: "(1) topic initial elicitors segment talk; (2) though making news inquiries they do not, themselves, present a newsworthy event; and (3) they provide an open, though bounded, domain from which events may be selected and offered as possible topic initials." Topic initial elicitors usually have a component of 'Else' and can appear following a closing or opening sequence or at a topic boundary (Button and Casey, 1984, p.170). Three examples of how topic initial elicitors can play a role in initiating a new topic at different places in a conversation are given below.

[HG: II: 1]

N: H'llo: ?
 (.)
 H: Hi:,
 (.)
 N: ↑ HI:..
 (.)
 H: Hwaryuhh=
 N: =Fi : ne how'r you,
 (.)
 H: Oka : [y,
 N: └┘ Goo:d,
 (0.4)
 H: mkhhh └┘ hhh
 →N: └┘ what's doin,

(Button and Casey 1984, p.172)

[HG: II: 15- 16]

N: Anywa::y, =
H: = pk! A: nywa [:y
N: [So: : : ,
(.)
H: p=
N: = You'll come about (.) eight. Right?=
H: = Yea::h, =
N: = Okay
(0.2)
→N: Anything else to report,
(0.3)
H: Uh : : : : : m: : : ,
(0.4)
H: Getting my hair cut tihmorrow, =
N: = Oh, rilly?

(Button and Casey 1984, p.168)

[JG: III: 15: 2-3]

M: ... I'll ring you back. Okay?
N: H'ri ((brusque))
M: Okay?
N: Bye ((brusque))
→M: Okay. Iz there anything else yo:u-happen
to day of any interest?

(Button and Casey 1984, p.170)

The topic initial elicitor (arrowed) in each extract above is used to elicit a new topic from the recipient by asking a question when a prior or topical talk has been exhausted. This type of topic initial elicitor uses Downing's (2000) 'asking a question' strategy mentioned above. In fact, topic initial elicitors do not contain a topical item for the interlocutor to take up, but play a role in initiating a new topic by asking the recipient to launch a topic. This characteristic differentiates topic initial elicitors from the two sorts of topic initiation suggested by Maynard and Zimmerman (1984): displaying prior experience or pre-topical questions. For example, the pre-topical question "Where do you live anyway?" (arrowed) in the extract below initiates a topic by suggesting a topical item that the recipient, B, should take up, which is different from a topic initial elicitor, which does not include any suggestion of the topic itself.

(20) 15.112

- 1. A: Where do you live anyway?
- 2. B: Ventura
- 3. A: Ventura? Ah, you're just right down the road aren't you?
- 4. B: Yeah. Where're you from?
- 5. A: Um, Forest Park eh heh which is . . .

(Maynard and Zimmerman 1984, p.307)

An itemised news enquiry is another way of initiating a new topic based on the 'asking a question' strategy of Downing (2000). According to Button and Casey (1985, p.7), itemised news enquiries contain a topical item related to the recipient that the speaker already knew something about before starting the conversation, so it is mentionable and newsworthy to the recipient. This feature differentiates itemised enquiries from topic initial elicitors, which do not include a topical item but instead ask for the recipient to introduce a topic that he or she has in mind. Accordingly, it can be said that itemised news enquiries are mainly used by acquainted people.

There are three different types of itemised news enquiry. The first of these includes mention of a third party who can connect the speaker with the recipient (Button and Casey, 1985). The enquiry "D'yih talk tih Dana this week?" (arrowed) in the extract below is an example of this type of itemised news enquiry because it connects the recipient, Geri, with the speaker, Shirley, by mentioning a third party, Dana. That is to say, Shirley knows that Geri knows Dana, so Shirley initiates a new topic which is not related to the prior topic by employing an itemised news enquiry containing a specific topical item: a third party, Dana, which induces the recipient, Geri, to take up it and respond to the question after the prior topic has been exhausted.

(1) (Frankel: TC: I: 1: 22-23)

Shirley: .hh So c'm over later

Geri : Yeh ah'll come over I wannih(g) (.) git s'm work do:ne'n
then ah'll c'm over'n ah'll help Joe [:y,en

Shirley: [Okay

(.)

Shirley: .hhhhhh [Good w'l have coffee

Geri : [°° () °°

(0.3)
 Geri : °Oka:y, °
 Shirley: Alright?
 Geri : Mm-h m:?
 → Shirley: D'yih talk tih Dana this week?

(Button and Casey 1985, p.6)

The second type of itemised news enquiry is employed to ask about an event which has not been beneficial for the recipient, or about something unfortunate which has happened to the recipient, to update the enquirer with information on this occurrence. Button and Casey (1985) call this type of enquiry a solicitous question into the recipient's trouble. For instance, Clara's question "How's yer foot?" (arrowed) in the extract below is an example of this second type of itemised news enquiry, showing Clara's concern about Agnes's foot. It also indicates that the speaker, Clara, already knows something about the condition of Agnes's foot. Therefore, the second type of itemised news enquiry asks for the recipient to respond with up to date information about the topical item; this is different from enquiries into personal state such as 'how are you?' that are produced without any previous knowledge of the recipient's trouble (Button and Casey 1985, p.9).

(5) (NB: 1: 6: 13)

Clara : I w's washin the dishes.
 Agnes: Yeah,
 Agnes: Wir jis – cleanin up here too.
 (0.4)
 Clara : How'r you –
 →Clara : How's yer foot?

(Button and Casey 1985, p.6)

The third type of itemised news enquiry is an enquiry designed specifically to introduce a new topic related to the recipient. The question includes a topical item related to the recipient's surroundings and events and is intended to introduce only a topical subject (Button and Casey, 1985). Here, the relationship between the topical item and the recipient is weaker than in the other two itemised news enquiries. For instance, Agnes' turn of "How's ev'rything et the rest'rantee?" (arrowed) in the extract below is an example of the third type of itemised news enquiry. It is employed with the sole intention of introducing a topical subject by including a topical item related to one

of the recipient's activities when the prior topic has been exhausted (Button and Casey 1985, p.9).

(8) (NB: II: 3: 8)

Portia : How come yih didn't stay?
Portia : OH ih w'zis too hot huh,
Agnes: Oh::there –
Agnes: Jus' too hot Portia, an'it was uh –
Agnes: Oh I don' know,
Agnes: Yih git kinda tahrd of – big kloojie buncha people,
Portia : Yea:h.
Portia : Uh. Huh
Agnes: ·hhhhhmhhh
→ Agnes: How's ev'rything et the rest'rantee?
(Button and Casey 1985, p.8)

Itemised news enquiries have certain similarities to the 'displaying prior experience' and 'pre-topical questions' of Maynard and Zimmerman (1984), in that they contain a topical item related to the recipient or to the recipient's surroundings and events. The first type of itemised news enquiry is similar to the 'displaying prior experience' question in that both include a third party in a topical item who is known to both the speaker and the recipient. The third type of itemised news enquiry is said to be similar to 'displaying prior experience' questions on the recipient's biography, and to 'pre-topical sequence' initiations, in that they all include a topical item related to the recipient's activities. However, whereas itemised news enquiries are employed for the speaker to initiate a new topic by updating his or her own information concerning the subject of the enquiry (Button and Casey, 1985), 'pre-topical questions' are employed to allow the speaker to fill any gap in his or her knowledge (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984), and can be used to initiate a new topic or may terminate as just a pre-topic. As shown in the extract above, Shirley employs an itemised news enquiry to update her knowledge of the relationship between Geri and Dana. Another key difference between itemised news enquiries and pre-topical questions is that the former is used to initiate a new topic which is not completely different from the prior topic (Button and Casey, 1985).

A news announcement is a way of initiating a new topic by proffering news of events or activities engaged in by the speaker. It can play the role of initiating a new

topic unrelated to the prior topic by informing the recipient of some aspect of an event related to the speaker (Button and Casey, 1985). The news announcement is said to use ‘an informative statement’, which is one of the strategies suggested by Downing (2000). News announcements have three characteristics: (1) activities reported in news announcements are related to the speaker; (2) some parts of the news announcement indicate that the speaker is oriented to the recipient by showing the speaker’s partial knowledge of it, and (3) a news announcement includes a part of the information (Button and Casey 1985, p.22). An example of how a news announcement functions to initiate a new topic is shown in the extract below.

(16) (Heritage: III: 1: 5: 3)

Joan : becu:z (0.3) () like my feet. Because I
wne:t t’get those injections (), the
() injections, en in one day my:feet
were:uh:: do:wn.

Edgerton: Yah,

Joan : (), they were do:wn.

Edgerton: Yah,

Joan : En heuh you see ()

Edgerton: Mhm,

Joan : Oh, well ()

→ Edgerton: Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note
→ in front’v my fa:ce,

(Button and Casey 1985, p.21)

“Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note in front’v my fa:ce,” (arrowed) is employed as a news announcement by Edgerton to initiate a new topic which is not related to the prior topic when the prior topic has been exhausted. It possesses the three characteristics mentioned above: the activity is related to the speaker, Edgerton; the speaker orients to the recipient by using the name Ilene, and the speaker talks about some part of the event.

News announcements are related to the ‘displaying prior experience’, proposed by Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) (see p.35). They explain topic initiation through the use of a ‘tying rule’ (Sacks, 1992a), “a device which links one utterance with an immediately, or sometimes distantly prior utterance.” For example, in the extract below Carl introduces a new topic on the basis of the tying rule. The initial word “That” in line

5 functions as a tying term to introduce a new topic of which Betty already has some prior knowledge.

(2) A. 81

1. Betty: I don't think we really need this
2. warmup period
3. Carl : heh heh
4. (5.5)
5. Carl : That snake was kind of neat work
6. the other day [cause of lot of]
7. Betty: [was it?]
8. Carl : the kid hadn't ever seen a snake

(Maynard and Zimmerman 1984, p.303)

News announcements are different from the other types of topic initiation mentioned above: topic initial elicitors, itemised news enquiries and pre-topical sequences, in that news announcements not only use the statement strategy but also include an activity which is related to the speaker. The speaker knows everything about the subject he or she wants to introduce as a new topic; however, he or she checks if the recipient has any interest in talking about the topic by announcing some part of it, that is to say, by using a news announcement.

All the above-mentioned methods of initiating subsequent topics appear to be related in some way, even if they are based on different viewpoints. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1 below. With the exception of topic initial elicitors, all these strategies include a topical item which can produce further talk, that is to say, they can nominate topics (Button and Casey, 1985). Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) identified two classifications of pre-topical question: 'categorisation' and 'category activity'. When pre-topical questions on 'categorisation' (e.g., year of schooling, academic subject) or 'category-activity' (e.g., a person's status) are used to develop a topical talk, the answers will have topicality. The answers to each question can produce categorisation or category-activity sequences. The answers to the pre-topical questions, that is, the two sequences, have features in common with the third type of itemised news enquiry and with 'displaying prior experience'. If displaying prior experience about a third person is presented as a question, it functions as the first type of itemised news enquiry. In conjunction with the topic initiation methods, 'I-don't-know' sequences

located before or after the proffered topic can help participants to initiate a topical talk (Sukrutrit 2010, p.115).

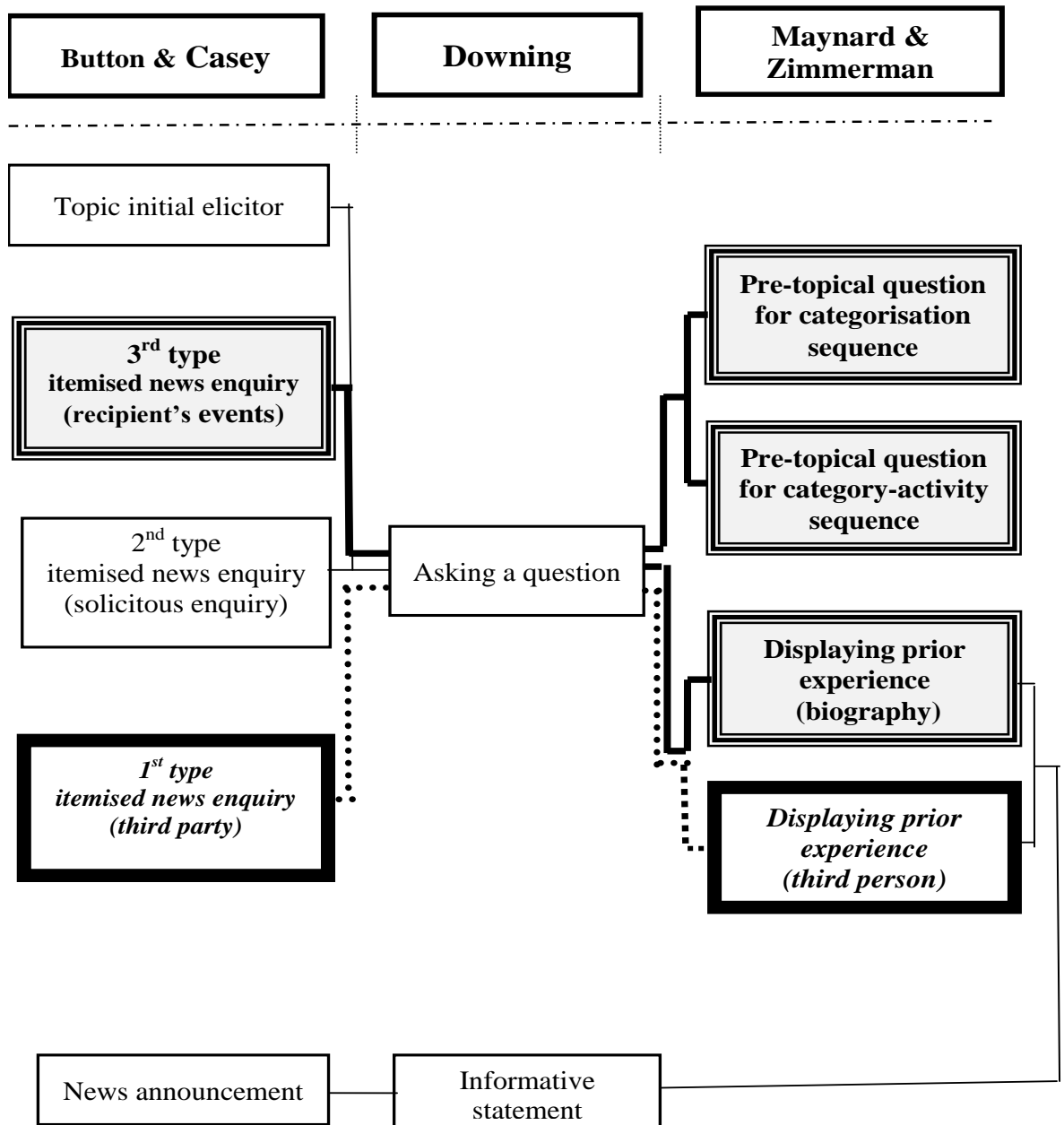


Figure 1 Relationships among types of topic initiation

2.4.3 Topic maintenance

Topic maintenance refers to the process of establishing a proffered topic as the topic of conversation through the cooperation of participants. When a participant launches a new topic, the co-participants need to accept the candidate topic as a topic they can all talk

about in order to continue the talk over a certain period of time. Since topic maintenance does not take place without the recipients' agreement, it is said to be accomplished through the interactional cooperation of the participants in the conversation. In other words, if a talk continues without any external provision of topics or speech acts, the participants have the responsibility to construct the talk using mentionables and also voluntarily participate in the mentionables (Abu-Akel 2002, p.1795). With respect to this issue, Svennevig (1999, p.173) argues that participants indicate their acceptance of the maintenance and development of the current topic by "establishing local links and producing informative, coherent contributions."

Topic maintenance that is based on the interactional cooperation of the participants in the conversation can only be clearly understood through an examination of the turn-taking system of the conversation (Sacks et al. 1974, p.728; Maynard 1980, p.263; West and Garcia 1988, p.553). This is because the transition from proffering a potential topic to the topic all participants are involved in cannot occur unless the prior turn is completely understood. Understanding a prior turn can help a recipient to make the decision as to whether or not he or she will continue to talk about a proffered topic, so the participant's understanding of the prior turn can produce certain interactional sequences. Thus, as Goffman (1983b, p.11) argues,

Obviously a topic can be volunteered or proposed in a single utterance; but it can hardly be confirmed into existence until it is taken up in a series of subsequent utterances.

Accordingly, a topic can only be maintained as the topic of conversation through the collaboration of the participants, and this collaboration can assume different forms depending on the turns exchanged by the participants.

2.4.3.1 Topicalisers

There are several ways of maintaining a newly proffered topic, depending on the way the topic is initiated. One of these is 'topicalisation', which is the process of making a proffered topic newsworthy or mentionable: for example, as a response to a topic initial elicitor (see p.36) by producing utterances indicating interest. Utterances used to show interest in the potential topic are called 'topicalisers'. According to Svennevig (1999,

p.108), topicalisers express an active and supportive attitude towards the candidate topic, which reflects the feelings of the speaker - feelings such as surprise, interest or approval of the topic. Topicalisers thus function to signal that a proffered topic is accepted as a newsworthy or mentionable item, giving the speaker the right to elaborate further on it. According to Button and Casey (1984, p.182), topicalisers make more newsworthy a candidate topic which is proffered in a prior turn and change a potential topic into the topic of conversation. Radford and Tarplee (2000) argue that “topicalisation is to provide the sequential opportunity for further talk on that topic”. Sukrutrit (2010) shows that topicalisers are also used to initiate topics in synchronous voice-based chat rooms. Expressions such as ‘Really?’ ‘Oh, yeah?’ and ‘Oh, really?’ can be used as topicalisers. The following extract contains an example of how one of these topicalisers is used.

[HG: II: 15- 16]

N: Anything else to report,
(0.3)
H: Uh : : : : m : : : ,
(0.4)
H: Getting my hair cut tihmorrow, =
→ N: = Oh, rilly?

(Button and Casey 1984, p.168)

When the recipient (H) launches the potential topic of “Getting my hair cut tomorrow” in response to the topic initial elicitor “Anything else to report?”, the first speaker produces the topicaliser “Oh, really?”, which indicates that he sees the proffered topic as newsworthy, and thus gives H the right to talk about it further.

2.4.3.2 Preferred responses

Preferred responses are another way of sustaining a proffered new topic as the topic of conversation. If a participant attempts to initiate a new topic by using questions that include a topical item or informative statements, the co-participants need to produce utterances which indicate interest in the topical item or information. These utterances can take the form either of positive answers to the speaker’s questions or of minimal responses indicating a positive attitude (Sukrutrit, 2010). According to Schegloff (2007, p.169), in an ordinary sequential environment, preferred responses do not lead to

expanding turns for the purpose of maintaining a candidate topic, since the interlocutor is satisfied with the answer. However, at a topical boundary, the situation is different. When a person asks a question at a topic boundary and receives a preferred answer from the recipient, he or she will try to talk further about it, since the preferred answer suggests that the recipient is interested in the talk. If a dispreferred answer is received, the interlocutor will then avoid talking further on the topic. In a topic proffering sequence, on the other hand, preferred responses can lead to the expansion of the sequence for a new topic, whereas dispreferred responses cannot lead to the termination of the proffered topic. In the following extract, the topic proffered by Bee is maintained as the topic through Ava's preferred response to it in line 4.

(8.09) TG, 14:01-08 (building on [8.07])

- 1 Ava: That's goo[d,
2 Bee: [Dihyuh have any-cl- You have a class with
3 Billy this te:rm?
4 Ava: Yeh he's in my abnormal class.
5 Bee: mnYeh [how-]
6 Ava: [Abnor]mal psy[ch.

(Schegloff 2007, p.173)

Minimal responses can also function to maintain a proffered new topic by demonstrating the participant's minimal understanding of the prior turn - the potential topic - even though minimal responses such as 'uh-huh, um-hmm, mm and hm' do not contain a specific critical meaning. Maynard (1980, p.267) argues that minimal responses can permit the speaker of a potential topic to continue talking about it because he or she thinks that the simple responses express understanding of or interest in the potential topic. He also maintains, however, that if there is no solicitation of the topic after these minimal responses, topic change will occur (this will be discussed in Section 2.4.3, p.61). Abu-Akel (2002, p.1795) confirms this function of minimal responses, arguing that "The listener is providing positive feedback which conveys that the listener is attentive to the speakers' talk." For example, in the extract below, the minimal responses "mhm, hmmm" and "mhm" (arrowed), which Father uses play the role of permitting Mother to talk on the candidate topic.

[Excerpt (3): In the middle of dinner the mother asks:]

4. Mother; Bev walked up? and handed me three twenty?
→ 5. Father; mhm
(0.6) ((Mother holding corn, looking at Father as she talks))
6. Mother; And I !thought! she only owed me eighty.- and she said
she didn't want a receipt- and I went in and got the:
receipt book n: she only owed me ((nodding yes)) eighty=
→ 7. Father; =hmmhm.
(0.4) ((Mother keeps nodding yes))
8. Mother; n she was real happy about that
(1.0) ((Mother starts to eat corn, then stops))
9. Mother; She says “No no no no no:: !! don't need a receipt.”
(0.8)
10. Dick; !Mom! Did Bev- (!tch!)
[
11. Mother; and just hands me three twenty
(2.0) ((sounds of everyone eating corn on the cob))
12. Mother; I- took my !book! out though- cuz she hardly !ever!-
Makes mis!ta:h:kes! [(laughing)]- I thought maybe I
wrote it wrong but I went back and got three receipts
13. Dick; (N:ah::) ((to the Cat))
[
14. Mother; and they all were
→ 15. Father; mhm=

(Abu-Akel 2002, p.1792 - 1793)

2.4.3.3 Repetition of part of prior talk

Repetition of some part of a prior turn involving a potential topic can also be a way of maintaining a new topic. The repetition can be construed to mean that the recipient has some sort of interest in the prior turn. Radford and Tarplee (2000, p.399) argue that “repeating part of the prior speaker’s turn or with appropriate deictic rearrangement” can indicate the recipient’s willingness to maintain the topic. The ‘appropriate deictic rearrangement’ can include substitute utterances such as ‘it’, ‘this’, ‘that’ and the like (Goffman, 1983b; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992a). It is recognised as a reformulation because it avoids using the same utterance. It has also been found that repetition of part of prior talk is used to maintain a topic in the voice-based chat room (Sukrutrit, 2010). How repetition and appropriate deictic rearrangement are used to sustain a potential topic is shown in the two extracts below.

(32)

David: so (.) what did you do sunday
Sheel: on sunday morning
David: yeah
Sheel: we went to the club (.) but there was no pool
table
→David: no pool table
Sheel: yeah so we er...
((continues))

(33)

David: er saturday morning what did you do
(1.0)
James: saturday morning we went to the caravan
→David: you went to the caravan
James: and I built I had lunch at the caravan...
((continues))

(Radford and Tarplee 2000, p.399)

In the first of the above extracts, David repeats “no pool table” (arrowed), which is part of the prior turn on a new topic proffered by Sheel; in the second extract, David reformulates the prior turn “we went to the caravan” (arrowed) with a deictic rearrangement, which indicates that David has some interest in the suggested topic. Thus, in each extract David gives first Sheel, then James, the right to speak.

2.4.3.4 Asking a question

Asking a question can be a way of maintaining a new topic. Maynard (1980, p.269) states that the development of a sequence of topical talk can be decomposed or broken if the recipient does not ask about the topical talk (this is also one of the six situations which lead to topic change; see p.53). Button and Casey (1985) also explain that itemised news enquiries can be used to maintain a new topic initiated by a topic initial elicitor. Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard (1997) include ‘tag response questions’ and ‘clarification questions’ in the ways of maintaining topics. Sukrutrit (2010) argues that ‘using series of questions’ can also help participants to maintain a topic. An example of how asking a question maintains a newly proffered topic is given in the extract below.

(23) (JG: 6:8:3)

Maggie : h What 'ave you been up to
 (0.5)
 Lawrence : We:ll 'uv about the same thing. One thing
 another [er. I sh'
 → Maggie : [Ya still in the real estate business
 → Lawrence?

In the extract above, Maggie initiates a new topic by using a topic initial elicitor, but Lawrence responds to it with an unclear topic. Thus, Maggie produces a question in order to maintain the topic (arrowed).

In summary, the maintenance of newly proffered topics is accomplished through the collaboration of the participants in the conversation. Although all these methods have a different type of sequence, they have in common the fact that they indicate the recipient's feelings about the candidate topic and also that the recipients express utterances relevant to the proffered topic. All the above methods may thus be said to be related to Lakoff's (1973) 'Informal Politeness (Giving Options)' and Grice's (1975) 'Maxim of Relevance'. These characteristics of relevance and informal politeness may lead to the collaboration of the participants. Among the devices described above, repetition and minimal response can also be used to terminate ongoing topics (this will be investigated in Sections 2.4.4.2.2, p.58 and 2.4.4.2.4, p.61). This means that where the utterances are employed is of crucial importance. However, any possible confusion regarding the use of these devices on the part of participants is avoided, since conversation is systematically organised.

2.4.4 Topic transition

Topic transition refers to the process by which participants in a conversation move from a topic-in-progress to a new topic at a potential point of topic closure, with or without a sequence closing the topic-in-progress. Topic transition can also be described in terms of the organisation of turns which participants construct during conversation. That is to say, topic change can be explained by the relationship between turns involving a prior topic and turns involving a new topic. Maynard (1980, p.264) argues that utterances which may not show a connection to or may not be suitable for prior talk can be recognised as topic changes; they indicate that the new topic has no connection with the

prior topic, since the new topic contains mentionables different from those in the prior turn. In brief, when an utterance is produced which does not have an obvious relationship with the prior topic, a topic change takes place (Okamoto and Smith-Lovin, 2001). Svennevig (1999, p.188) refers to the potential place where a new topic is going to be introduced as the 'topic transition relevance place'; this seems to be a development of the 'transition relevance place', which refers to the transition of participants' speakership (see p. 92).

Topic transition can take place when participants in a conversation have accomplished the purpose of prior talk or when they are attempting to avoid troubles occurring in a topic-in-progress, or when an unexpected event occurs during the conversation or in the place where the conversation is taking place. In the first case, participants can have a topic or topics in mind before the conversation begins or they can develop other topics during the conversation. When the purpose of each topic has been accomplished, the participants may wish to move to another topic or they may decide to end the conversation. When they decide to move to another topic, topic transition takes place. Sacks explains this through the metaphor of telling a story:

...the teller of the story gives, right at the beginning of the story, information as to what should be watched for as the thing that will be the completion of the story. If someone says "I heard the most wonderful thing yesterday," then you should watch for what it is that could be a wonderful thing. And when you've heard what could be a wonderful thing, then you should show that you see the story's over (Sacks 1992b, p.11).

In the second case, participants can encounter unexpected trouble during a conversation. The type of trouble can vary depending on the different types and situations of a conversation. Trouble in the ongoing topic can prevent all or one of the participants from continuing to talk about it. When this happens, they try to change the topic to get out of the trouble. Sacks (1992b) gives the following examples of encountering trouble:

when you're in a conversation which you find is dragging, uninteresting, embarrassing, lousy in varieties of ways, then you might find that one of the ways in which that's happening is that new topics need specifically be [*sic*] introduced, and they get recurrently specifically introduced (p.352).

Jefferson (1984a) agrees with Sacks that topic transition is one of the ways of getting out of troubles which arise during a conversation. Maynard (1980), on the other hand, has a different view, and argues that topic change is needed to sort out the problem of circulation of speakers resulting from troubles arising during a conversation. In other words, when participants do not take exchange turns smoothly in a conversation, the situation can be described as a problem related to the ‘circulation of speakers’.

With regard to the last case, when an expected event occurs while participants are talking about a topic, it can cause a temporary topic transition to take place; this is called a side sequence (see p.71). After the participants have talked about the new topic for a short time, they will return to their original topic. If they do not return to the original topic, however, the topic transition is then referred to as a topic leap (see p.71).

2.4.4.1 Clarification of terms related to topic transition

There are several terms related to topic transition which can lead to confusion. It is therefore necessary to clarify these terms in order to be able to explain topic transition more clearly. As mentioned above, ‘topic transition’ is a general, comprehensive term, used to indicate that a new topic, which is not related to the topic-in-progress, is being introduced, since the topic-in-progress has been exhausted. The terms ‘topic change’ and ‘topic shift’ are often used interchangeably with ‘topic transition’. Most researchers use ‘topic change’ to mean the same as ‘topic transition’.

However, there is some confusion surrounding the use of the term ‘topic shift’, since it is used differently by different researchers. According to Maynard (1980), ‘topic change’ is “an utterance directed to occasioning a new set of mentionables”, while ‘topic shift’ is the movement to another topic from an element of a topical talk. That is to say, Maynard’s (1980) ‘topic shift’ is different from ‘topic transition’ and ‘topic change’, in that the topic movement is carried on in the same topic. Maynard’s (1980) ‘topic shift’ will be illuminated further in the later discussion of types of topic transition (see p.51). By contrast, Svennevig (1999) employs ‘topic shift’ as a general term like ‘topic transition’ and ‘topic change’. Maynard’s (1980) topic shift is thus similar to ‘topic shading’ (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), in that topic shading does not involve the

termination of a topic but instead focuses on the development of another coherent talk on the same topic. Taking into account all of the above, it was decided that in this research the terms ‘topic transition’, ‘topic change’ and ‘topic shift’ would all be used as general terms to indicate that a new topic which is different from a topic-in-progress is being introduced.

2.4.4.2 Techniques of terminating a topic-in-progress for the purpose of topic transition

In order for topic transitions to take place in mundane conversations, a procedure for closing a topic-in-progress is required. When participants have been talking for a certain period of time, they will use one or more techniques in order to terminate ongoing topics. The various techniques used to close ongoing topics are seen in the different sequences participants develop. Closing a topic-in-progress is thus a preamble to topic transition, so it is important to identify where and how the topic transition takes place. With respect to the place in which topic transition takes place, Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p.305) state that when participants in a conversation pay attention to topic boundaries, they cooperate to develop ‘analysable ends’; that is, they use various mechanisms to construct topic boundaries, and these mechanisms can be interpreted as techniques designed to close the topics-in-progress. With regard to the cooperation of participants in topic closure, Myers (1998, p.93) maintains that “topic closure is usually collaborative; participants can signal their willingness for a topic to come to a close.”

It is important to mention here that the procedure for closing a topic-in-progress is invisible in a stepwise topical movement, a topic leap (the launch of a new topic before the termination of a topic-in-progress), or a side sequence (the insertion of a new topic into the ongoing topic) (see p.71). In the case of a stepwise topical movement, participants cannot identify a topic boundary since pivotal utterances (see p.69) are used so that a new topic can be introduced naturally. In the case of topic leaps and side sequences, a new topic can be initiated unilaterally by a participant before a topic-in-progress is closed through the collaboration of the participants in the conversation (this will be explained in Section 2.4.4.3.2, p.70). Thus, the ‘analysable ends’ mentioned above cannot occur.

Several researchers have studied topic organisation from the perspective of conversation analysis, and have found that there are several techniques that participants in a conversation employ to close topics-in-progress. Sacks (1992b, p.566) states that basically, “at the end of a conversation some topic comes to an end and then people will exchange “So”s or “Okay”s and go into closing”, even if these techniques do not always have the same result. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) give the examples of ‘Well’, ‘O.K’ and the like as possible techniques of pre-closing and argue that if these are used at a place which is recognisable as being the end of a topic, this place can become the starting point for a new topic; they also state that an ‘aphoristic formulation’ such as a ‘moral’ or a ‘lesson’ can lead to topic closure through the collaboration of the participants.

Maynard (1980, p.265) argues that the occurrence of a series of silences can cause topic change because it can be interpreted as meaning that the participants have some problems transferring speakership while talking about an ongoing topic; he describes six situations involving silences which can instigate topic change: “restoring topical talk after a story; detailed topical items and absent solicits; topic shifts and absent solicits; refocusing; absent solicits and refocusing in combination; and disagreement.” The common ground among each of these is that when a topic-in-progress is not followed by a coherent topical talk, a new topic can be introduced to enable the conversation to continue. In particular, he mentions that ‘minimal utterances (uh-huh, oh really, etc)’, which are used instead of producing coherent topical talk on a topic-in-progress, perform the function of terminating a topic in the case of a detailed topical item and absent solicit (which means that although a speaker has introduced topical items in detail in order to initiate a topic, the listener has not asked for it).

Jefferson (1983) identifies three techniques used to close a topic-in-progress: minimal responses, recipient assessment and recipient commentary. In line with Maynard, Jefferson explains that recipients’ minimal acknowledgement tokens as a response to prior talk, assessment utterances such as ‘that’s good’, ‘Oh good, ‘Oh lovely’ and the like which are used to assess prior talk, and a recipient’s talking simply and briefly on a topic-in-progress can all trigger a topic change. Jefferson (1984b) also maintains that a non-speech sound such as a laugh can function to initiate a new topic;

furthermore, a laugh can also be used as one of the ways of getting out of the impropriety of certain 'jokes' participants in conversation make by closing the topic-in-progress that contains the impropriety (Jefferson et al., 1987).

West and Garcia (1988) propose several techniques for closing a topic-in-progress and classify these techniques into two categories. The first of these involves approaching the closure of a topic-in-progress by making contributions, while the second involves approaching the closure through avoiding contributions. The former includes "exchange of objects such as 'We-ell', 'Okay' and 'Alright' as a general way to close a topic, summary of a topic-in-progress, formulating part of prior talk in summary fashion, summary of some prior talk through an assessment and making arrangements." The latter includes "a series of silences occurring and acknowledgment tokens ("Um-hmm," "Mm") with delays."

In line with West and Garcia, Button (1991, p.252) identifies "holding over prior activities, formulating summaries, projecting future activities, announcement of closure and arrangement reintroduction"; however, he explains the exchange of minimal responses as an example of an activity in which "the participants hold over and preserve, in subsequent turns, some prior activity." The other two examples are the repetition of some part of a prior turn and assessment of a prior turn. That is to say, Button includes three techniques in one category.

Howe (1991) identifies a series of turns which participants exchange in order to close ongoing topics; these are summary assessments, acknowledgement tokens, repetition, laughter or pauses. Acknowledgement tokens are always pronounced with falling or even intonation and minimal stress at a topic boundary. Unlike previous researchers, Howe (1991, p.9) identifies repetition of prior talk before a topic boundary as a way of closing ongoing topics and maintains that summary assessments and pauses are "the most powerful indicators of potential topic change".

Svennevig (1999) claims that there are three general principles for closing a topic-in-progress, as follows: topic closing can be completed by showing that a participant realises a proffered topic is completed, by establishing more strongly the

newsworthiness of the topic, or by producing responses that can be seen as completely suitable to the prior turn. He also lists detailed techniques such as minimal responses, repetitions, reformulations, summaries, generalisations, assessment, silence and missing speaker transfer.

Sukrutrit (2010) categorises the techniques that participants use to change the ongoing topic into two elements: explicit and implicit cues. Explicit cues such as 'let's change the subject' are used when a participant is asking directly for a topic change. On the other hand, implicit cues such as long pauses, minimal responses and brief utterances are produced to negotiate for the change of the ongoing topic. Sukrutrit (2010) also points out that implicit cues are used in stepwise topical movement.

It is possible to categorise all the above techniques suggested by previous researchers into two aspects, as West and Garcia (1988, p.559) maintain: getting to topic closure through contributions, which is called 'topic extinction', and getting to topic closure through avoidance of contributions, which is called 'topic closure'. Typical techniques of getting to topic closure through avoidance of contributions are the exchanging of minimal responses, which has been identified by most of the researchers referred to above, and the occurrence of a series of silences. The characteristic common to both these techniques is that no coherent topical talk or new topic is produced. Accordingly, minimal response and silence sequences can be described as topic boundaries.

On the other hand, there are several techniques of getting to topic closure through contributions, as explained above. These can be categorised into three aspects. The first involves the exchange of words such as 'Well', 'Okay' and 'Alright'; the second consists of the formulation of prior talk, derived from Sacks' (1973) 'proverbial and aphoristic formulation' of prior talk, which can take various forms: summary, assessment, generalisation and reformulation. The third is making arrangements. They have in common the fact that all the participants collaborate in closing the current topic. A sequence containing these techniques can also constitute a topic boundary.

In summary, there are four principal techniques that may be used to terminate a

topic-in-progress for the purpose of topic transition: exchange of minimal responses, occurrence of a series of silences, summary of prior talk and making arrangements. Unlike the techniques taking place in interaction, participants can signal their disinclination to talk about the ongoing topic by averting their gaze. This is in accordance with Kough's (1997, p.71) statement that "gaze aversion (intentionally avoiding or averting eye contact means an unwillingness to communicate."

2.4.4.2.1 Exchange of 'Well', 'Okay', 'Alright', 'So'

The exchange of utterances such as 'Well', 'Okay', 'Alright' and the like is a general way of closing a topic-in-progress (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992b). Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p.306) explain that these utterances can also be called a 'possible pre-closing' in 'monotopical' conversation. Furthermore, West and Garcia (1988, p.554) argue that the exchange of utterances guarantees the termination of a topic-in-progress and a chance of introducing a new topic. An example of how the exchange of utterances plays a role in closing a topic-in-progress is shown in the extract below.

[15] [Dyad 24:154-56]

Tina: Yeah he's not- he's in uh liddle=more=like (0.3) CHEMistry like
(ketow:sis) 'n (Chemistry) stuff like that.
(0.9)

Tina: He doesn't do anything with the
(2.0)

Tina: the hh (0.8) (Na:cima).
(1.6)

Tina: So henh-henh-henh 'eh-'eh=

Mike: = When does this thing get started.

(West and Garcia 1988, p.563)

In the extract above, Tina utters a pre-closing utterance "so" and laughs after talking about the topic. Mike then asks the question "When does this thing get started?" to initiate a new topic.

2.4.4.2.2 Summary of prior talk

Summary of a topic-in-progress is another noticeable way of closing a topic. If during the conversation one of the participants produces utterances summarising the topic-in-progress, this can be accepted as evidence that the speaker is trying to terminate the topic and is preparing for a topic transition. With respect to this issue, Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p.306) argue that a topic-in-progress involving a ‘moral’ or a ‘lesson’ can be closed and a topic transition can take place if the prior topic is summarised through ‘proverbial’ or ‘aphoristic’ utterances, then the proposal will be accepted. Button (1991, p.255) also argues that “one speaker may engage in an activity that summarises or concludes, and thus offers a possible conclusion to the topic-in-progress”, by summarising, drawing a positive conclusion, or developing an assessment. Howe (1991, p.5) also maintains that repetition (formulation or reformulation) of all or part of a prior turn can lead to the closure of an ongoing topic and to a topic change, and that the repetition of acknowledgement tokens is an easier way of closing a prior topic than the repetition of lexical items. An example of how the summary of prior talk leads to a topic transition is given in the extract below.

[3] [Dyad 19:202-08]

Andy: YEAH, they never DID come through with any presents either.
 ((5 lines deleted on lack of presents))

Andy: Well there's ALways Christmas. hh-hh-heh-heh ←
 °heh [heh heh] h

Beth: [Ye:ah] ←

(West and Garcia 1988, p.555)

In the extract above, a summary of the prior topic is provided by Andy: “Well there’s Always Christmas” (arrowed). Beth then responds with a minimal response “yeah” (arrowed), which can be interpreted as an acceptance of Andy’s summary. Accordingly, the sequence can be seen to indicate that the topic-in-progress is coming to an end and that they need a new topic.

In the extract below, an example is given of how a summary of prior talk which includes an assessment can lead to a topic closure.

[5] [Dyad 21:204-09]

Jeff: I was lucky though, I got nice people in my hall.

(0.4)
 Liz: Is that right?
 (0.2)
 Jeff: Ye:ah.
 (0.3)
 Liz: 'At MAKEs a big difference. ←
 (0.8)
 Jeff: Uh hu:h= ←

(West and Garcia 1988, p.555)

Liz summarises prior talk by producing “At MAKEs a big difference” (arrowed), which can be interpreted as an assessment. It is evident that this sort of summary can lead to a topic closure because after a 0.8-second pause, Jeff utters a minimal response “Uh hu:h”, which can be interpreted as a confirmation of the reformulation.

A summary which includes the repetition of part of a prior turn can also result in a topic closure. When a participant repeats parts of his or her prior talk while summarising the prior talk at a place where a topic-in-progress is possibly going to end, the summary can lead to topic closure and to the initiation of a new topic when the recipient confirms it. An example of this is given in the extract below.

[4] [Dyad 21:09-15]

Jeff: I wanted to do an experiment. My sister did an experiment when she wen'
 here. An: I wanted to try something. You know? I've never done
 anything like [this befo::re.]
 Liz: [I've really never] been a statistic or
 anyth [ing like that eh-huh-huh-huh-huh "h-'h]
 Jeff: [THAT's ri:ght, I wanted to be a] ←
 statistic I wanted to learn how I fit in with the (norm or) something I
 gues:s =
 Liz: = Um hmm ←

(West and Garcia 1988, p.555)

In the extract above, Jeff summarises prior talk by including a repetition of part of the prior talk: “I wanted to” (arrowed); Liz confirms this by uttering a minimal response “Um hmm” (arrowed). Accordingly, the sequence they develop results in topic closure and a new topic can be introduced.

As explained above, a summary of prior talk can take several forms: for

example, general summary, assessment, formulation and reformulation, and conclusion. Participants select one of the forms used to close a topic-in-progress and simultaneously check whether it reflects the prior talk; they then try to close the ongoing topic by contributing the summary to the talk. When it is accepted by the recipient, the ongoing topic can be closed and a new topic can be introduced. In this regard, it should be pointed out that when participants use the summary technique to close a topic-in-progress, the summary or assessment has to be accepted by the agreement, reception or second assessment of the recipients (Button, 1991). However, Pomerantz (1984, p.64) argues that although agreement is not always expected as a response to all the first assessments, it is preferred, whereas it does not work if the prior talk is self-deprecation. This notion confirms Schegloff's argument (2007, p.169) that "preferred responses are sequence-closure-relevant and dispreferred responses are sequence-expansion-relevant" because the summary sequence takes place at the end of a topic-in-progress.

2.4.4.2.3 Providing a planned future activity or event

Providing an event or activity which will take place in the future can be another technique of bringing about a topic closure. Button (1991) suggests that 'projecting future activities', 'announcement of closure' and 'arrangement reintroduction' can close a topic-in-progress. The common factor among all these techniques is that when they are used to close a topic-in-progress, they usually lead to the last topic of the conversation or to the closure of the conversation. The making of arrangements often constitutes the final topic of a conversation (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Button, 1987). In the case of 'projecting future activities', even if this device is not used at the end of a conversation, it can be used to close a topic-in-progress, and then a new topic can be introduced by a topic initial elicitor, an itemised news enquiry or a news announcement. In cases where 'announcement of closure' and 'arrangement reintroduction' are used, however, it would seem to be impossible to initiate a new topic, so these are really only useful for closing a conversation. Ways in which these techniques can lead to conversation closure are shown in the extracts below.

11.9 (MC:II:2:13-14) [Projecting future activities]

Reg: Well thank you very much [(fer watcher doing)]

Lila: → [We'll go ahead,

→ en I'm sure she'll get in touch with you.
 → about the ti:me.
 Reg: → Yah.
 Lila: [[Okay
 Reg: [[Okay, doke.
 Lila: Thank you [Reg
 Reg: [Thank you [Lila
 Lila: [Bye- bye

(Button 1991, p.256-257)

11. 10 (SBL:3:5:10) [Announcement of closure]

G: (well I'll think about that.)
 M: An' them Marcia call; me about another
 → meeting but I'll haftuh letche go.
 G: → hhh .hh! O:: [kay,
 M: [Okay *thanks* [Ginny,
 G: [Alright,
 M: By::e
 G: Bye.

(Button 1991, p.258)

11. 12 (Rahman:A:2:JA(9):5) [Arrangement reintroduction]

J: I mean there wz only Su:s'n who wz et the
 age sohrt of h .hh who'd of been left in
 the house [et (.) on'er ow:n.
 A: [Ye:s.
 (0.3)
 A: Mm:,
 (0.4)
 A: [[Yes,
 J: → [[A:nyway. .hh:
 A: → [[(Ah'll she-)
 J: → [[I'll see you inna few min[utes then.
 A: [See you inna
 few min[utes.
 J: [.hh
 J: O [kay Ann] B[uh bye,
 A: ['ka:y] [Bye:.

(Button 1991, p.259)

In conclusion, it is important to notice at what point in the conversation the participants use these techniques to construct a topic boundary. If they are used not at the end of a topic but at the end of a conversation, they can perform the function of not simply closing a topic-in-progress but of closing the entire conversation. Button (1991,

p.262) supports this notion, maintaining that “sequences that organise a juncture in a topic-in-progress provide the occasion to either: (1) initiate closings, or (2) collaboratively initiate some new topic.” That is to say, participants will be able to recognise whether the sequence is being used to close a topic-in-progress and initiate a new topic or to close the conversation, since they activate ‘indexicality’ (see p.80) when taking part in a conversation.

2.4.4.2.4 Exchange of minimal responses

Exchanging minimal responses is a way of avoiding making contributions to a topic-in-progress and can be used to close the topic. All the techniques for closing ongoing topics discussed above are performed by making contributions to the topic-in-progress, whereas an exchange of minimal responses is employed by participants in order to avoid making any contributions. Minimal responses are employed simply to fill the turn allotted to each participant, so the participants do not produce any talk related to the topic-in-progress nor do they introduce a new topic. The exchange of minimal responses is also related to paralinguistic features, so these responses “can be marked by very low pitch, even on lexical items, loss of amplitude and a lengthy pause” (Brown and Yule 1983, p.101). This is one of the reasons why a CA researcher does not overlook anything contained in audio data, however trivial it may seem.

In conclusion, minimal responses such as ‘um hum’, ‘uh huh’, ‘yeah’, which participants produce without developing any coherent topical talk related to the topic-in-progress, can be interpreted as a signal to terminate the topic-in-progress and may lead to a topic change (Zimmerman and West 1975, p.108; Jefferson 1983, p.3; Howe 1991, p.4; Svennevig 1999, p.189; Stokoe 2000, p.190). It should be pointed out here that such minimal responses are also used to maintain topics. However, it is possible for participants to recognise the difference in usage by the fact that when these minimal responses are used to change a topic, they develop a conspicuous topic boundary, as illustrated in the extract below. Even though the exchange of minimal responses does not appear to constitute active participant collaboration, topic closure through the exchange of minimal responses is said to be co-constructed by the participants. An example of how the exchange of minimal responses leads to the closing of an ongoing

topic is presented in the following extract.

11.1 (NB:III:1:15)

- 1 Fran: Ah-ee- Well that's why I said I'm
2 not making any commen [ts about anybu:ddy
3 Ted: [mkhm
4 Ted: deh Ye::a::h [hhh
5 Fran: [Y:: [a::h
6 Ted: [Yea::h

(Button 1991, p.252)

In the extract above, after Fran finishes his talk in lines 1 to 2, Ted and Fran exchange only the minimal responses “yeah” and “hm” in lines 3 to 6 without producing any topical talk, which can be interpreted as indicating that they do not want to talk about the ongoing topic any more. The sequence produced by the exchange of the minimal responses is said to form a topic boundary. It can indicate that the ongoing topic is coming to an end and that the participants now need a new topic.

2.4.4.2.5 Occurrence of a series of silences

A series of silences can be a way of closing a topic-in-progress. Like the exchanging of minimal responses, a series of silences is a way in which participants avoid turns allotted to them. The occurrence of silences between participants can also indicate that the conversationalists are not taking their turns smoothly; in other words, the norm of the turn-taking system (Sacks et al. 1974, see p.89) identified in CA is not working properly, maybe because the conversationalists are having problems transferring speakership while talking about a topic-in progress, and this can cause the topic-in-progress to close and trigger the introduction of a new topic. Maynard (1980) describes this situation as follows:

On some occasions, a series of silences occurs, indicating the failure of a prior topic to yield successful transfer of speakership. It is in these situations that topic changes regularly appear, as a solution to the problem of producing continuous talk (p.265).

An example of how silences cause a topic to close is shown in the extract below.

[6] [Dyad 24:218-25]

Tina: my boyfrien's taking (Physics) Six 'n tch so.*hh like they 'aveexperimen's,
they walk in 'n they uh 'hh say well-DO everything you wanna do with a
spring an' find out how it wo:rks 'h h- 'r some-h-thing 'h! Yuh kno:w,
NOTHingi-t 's no:t 'h like- Chemistry' r something like thAT where you- 'h
yuh know you go down 'h 'n [do] this 'n this 'n tha:t.

Mike: [Yeah]

→ (1.0)

Mike: Hm.

→ (1.8)

Tina: ° (Whew, it's) rilly we:ird. (0.6) Not so goo: d.

→ (3.9)

Mike: h-h-h-h

→ (6.0)

Tina: Hmm:

(West and Garcia 1988, p.556)

In the extract above, when Tina finishes her turn, Mike responds to it with only a minimal response “Yeah”. After a 1.0-second pause Tina still does not respond to it, so Mike utters “Hm”. Another 1.8-second pause develops and then Tina produces “° (Whew, it's) rilly we:ird. (0.6) Not so goo: d.” Although there is then a 3.9-second long pause, Mike just laughs without introducing any topical talk. Another long pause of 6.0-seconds takes place, but Tina only produces the utterance “Hmm”. Mike and Tina thus exchange pauses with each other without producing any topical talk, which suggests that they do not want to talk about the topic-in-progress any longer. Thus, the exchange of silences can create a noticeable topic boundary. In the next turn, one of them is expected to initiate a new topic.

In conclusion, a series of silences that take place on the basis of the turn-taking system can close a topic-in-progress (Maynard 1980, p.280; Howe 1991, p.6), and can then lead to the introduction of a new topic. Although a series of silences can be construed as a way for participants to avoid taking their turns, the silences are still organised on the basis of the turn-taking system. Speakership can be transferred to participants smoothly when they are discussing a newsworthy topic; however, when they no longer wish to talk about a topic, they can avoid taking the turns allotted to them by remaining silent. Thus, the turn-taking system recognised in CA makes it possible to determine the function of these silences.

The techniques used to close ongoing topics described above can be categorised in another way. As explained above, they can be categorised into the two groups of ‘topic extinction’ and ‘topic closure’, according to whether the termination of the topic-in-progress is reached through the making or avoidance of making contributions (West and Garcia, 1988). However, the techniques can be also categorised into another two groups: namely, ‘explicit negotiation for topic termination’ and ‘implicit negotiation for topic termination’, depending on the clarity with which participants express the intention to close a topic-in-progress.

This categorisation is in line with Howe’s reference to “[w]hether topic changes in conversation are explicit (e.g., “Ok, let’s talk about something else now”) or not ...” (Howe 1991, p. 2). An explicit negotiation for topic termination occurs when one of the participants in the conversation produces an utterance that is clearly designed to close the topic: for example, ‘Ok, let’s talk about something else now’ or ‘How about closing the topic?’ In fact, it is rare for an explicit negotiation for topic termination to take place in a mundane conversation, since in such conversations it is difficult to know the exact time or point at which a topic-in-progress should be closed. However, it does occur in institutional talk: for example, a conversation in which a target language is being practised which lasts for a set time. The category of implicit negotiation for topic termination, on the other hand, includes all the techniques described in Section 2.4.4.2 (see p.52), above. When participants use these techniques to close ongoing topics, they pay attention to the place where the techniques occur and to the turns which contain the techniques, since it is not easy to recognise immediately what the speaker intends to do even if the techniques are used. That is to say, through exchanging more turns, the participants can come to the conclusion that a topic-in-progress needs to be terminated.

2.4.4.3 Types of topic transition

The ways in which a new topic is introduced after a topic-in-progress has been closed are categorised into two types according to what sort of criteria are applied: stepwise topical movement (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992b) and boundaried topical movement (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984), or collaborative topic transition and unilateral topic transition (West and Garcia, 1988). Maynard (1980, p.264) confirms

that “topic changes are not random happenings: they occur in specific environments and in characterisable ways.” These characterisable ways are related to what sort of techniques participants in a conversation employ to close the topic, the extent to which they are involved in closing the topic and how a new topic is initiated.

The categorisation of stepwise topical movement and boundaried topical movement is based on the existence of a topic boundary. If the process of closing a topic-in-progress and introducing a new topic is natural and unnoticeable, it is referred to as a stepwise topical movement. That is to say, it is not easy to identify ‘analysable ends’. By contrast, if the process of terminating an ongoing topic and initiating a new topic results in the construction of a noticeable boundary between the topic-in-progress and a new topic by the participants in the conversation, this is called a boundaried topical movement.

The categorisation of collaborative topic transition and unilateral topic transition is based on the existence of interactional collaboration among participants to close a topic-in-progress. Collaborative topic transition refers to the process by which a new topic is introduced after a topic-in-progress is closed through the reciprocal cooperation of the participants in a conversation. That is to say, the participants both or all take part in closing an ongoing topic, agree to the ending and then initiate a new topic. On the other hand, unilateral topic transition means that a new topic is one-sidedly introduced by a participant without the topic-in-progress being closed through the participants’ collaborative interaction.

Although most types of topic transition can be categorised into one of the classifications described above, more attention should be paid to the common ground that exists between them. This common ground is the fact that a new topic which is introduced by any of the four types of topic change is not related to the topic-in-progress: the ongoing topic and the proffered new topic are completely different. In conclusion, therefore, it may be said that all four types of topic transition take place in a disjunctive manner.

Before describing in detail the four types of topic transition, it is necessary to

mention Maynard's (1980) 'topic shift' (see Section 2.4.4.1, p.51), since this will help us to understand the four types of transition. First, as mentioned above, Maynard's (1980) topic shift has characteristics in common with 'sub-topical talk' (Sacks 1992a, p.762; Downing 2000, p.24) and 'topic shading' (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), in that all these techniques focus not on the termination of a topic-in-progress but rather on the development of another coherent talk related to the topic-in-progress. Sacks (1992a, p.762) explains 'sub-topical talk' by giving the example of a movement from talking about a house to rent to talking about the yard of the house. Since the topic of the yard is related to the topic of the house to rent, they are categorised as one topic: renting a house. Sub-topical talk is thus different from topic transition in that the former introduces a new topical talk which is related to the prior topic, and the two topics can be categorised as a single topic. An example of sub-topical talk is provided in the extract below.

(6) (West, 11:197)

1. Jenny: It's really pressur [ing]
2. Lisa: [They] move: so fast =
3. Jenny: = Um hmm =
4. Lisa: = You jus' - you kno:w GAWhD [you jus] res'fer a DA::Y an'
5. Jenny: [Oh ye::ah]
6. Lisa: you're w- way- hunh buh hh hind [t seems like]
7. Jenny: [Oh ye::ah] An I been ←
8. Jenny: PLAY:in aroun' too much ←
9. Lisa: Ri:lly?
10. Jenny: Cuz I'm USE ta PLAY:in'

(Maynard 1980, p.271)

In the extract above, Lisa talks about resting for a day, however, Jenny responds with "An I been PLAY:in aroun' too much" (arrowed), which is related to the prior talk "rest for a day". Accordingly, it may be said that there is no topic transition in the extract because the two topics can be categorised into the single topic of having a rest.

2.4.4.3.1 Stepwise topical movement

Stepwise topical movement refers to the process by means of which a topic-in-progress flows into a new, unrelated topic. The concept of 'flow' indicates that the participants in

the conversation introduce a new topic naturally and unnoticeably without using any techniques to close the topic-in-progress. They use pivotal utterances, instead of making a noticeable topic boundary through employing the techniques for closing the ongoing topic. As a result, a new topic is naturally introduced without a noticeable step, so that there is no segmentation of the talk. Stepwise topical movement is also called 'stepwise topical transition' (Svennevig, 1999; Holt and Drew, 2005). Sacks (1992b) emphasises the importance of stepwise topical movement in topic changes of conversation as follows:

The best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but what we call a *stepwise move*. Such a move involves connecting what we've just been talking about to what we're now talking about, though they are different. And as far as anybody knows we've never had to start a new topic, though we're far from wherever we began and we haven't talked on just a single topic. (Sacks 1992b, p.566)

An example of how a stepwise topical movement takes place is given in the extract below.

Agnes: Ah: : , it's not worth it tuh be on my feet.

Nancy: [[Yeah.

Agnes: Yihknow.

Nancy: Right. Uh huh? "hhhhhhh Wul ! wz just out washing windows, uh-a:nd uh, my mother called, so I came in I thought "Well while I'm in here," I looked et the clock 'n eleven thirty en I thought "Wul, they're-" "hhhhh " they're un-" "surely they're up" yihknow, I knew it I I w'z kind of a, 11 sleep in day,

Agnes: Yeh.

Agnes: Uh huh,

Nancy: But uh I didn't get home til, "hhh two las' night I met a very, very, nice guy.

(Sacks 1992b, p.301)

In the extract above, after talking about Agnes's toe, Agnes and Nancy do not develop a noticeable procedure to terminate the topic. Nancy talks about what she has been doing, but she is not introducing another topic. Instead, this functions as a stepping-stone to introducing the new topic of 'meeting a guy.' As Nancy naturally makes pivotal utterances related to the new topic she is going to proffer, the prior topic of 'Agnes's toe' naturally flows into the new topic of 'meeting a guy' without any noticeable procedure to close the prior topic.

- 37 (0.5)
 38 E: 5→ You know we w-this par:ty and then we went to
 39 another little party a:fterwards and oh I met so
 40 many f: fa: : bulous pees- (.) people and danced with
 41 my poor old toes with no t(h)oenails and I was
 42 ʃin- ·hhh hh(h)igh (h)h(h)eels and ·hhh and oh: =
 43 L: ʃhmh hmh
 44 E: =we (.) just had a (.) beautiful time.
- (Jefferson 1984a, p.200-201)

Jefferson (1984a, p.202 - 204) explains the extract above using five steps (arrowed), as follows: 1→ refers to “summing up the heart of the trouble”; 2→ “the troubles-teller turns to matters that are ancillary”; 3→ “the troubles-recipient produces talk that topically stabilises the ancillary matters”; 4→ “the troubles-recipient produces a pivotal utterance that has independent topical potential”; and 5→”the target matter is established as a new topic by participants”.

Although Jefferson’s five steps are extremely useful, more attention needs to be paid to the pivotal utterances, since they play a key role in smoothly connecting a topic-in-progress with a new, unrelated topic. In the extract from Sacks, quoted above, the utterances that Nancy produces to talk about what she has been doing can be seen as the pivotal utterances. Holt and Drew (2005) draw attention to the use of pivotal utterance in a stepwise topical movement and argue that a figurative phrase can also be used to function as a pivotal utterance; however, unlike a pivotal utterance, the use of a figurative phrase may result in a disjunctive topic change.

In conclusion, with regard to the development of a topic boundary, a stepwise topical movement may be said to have no topic boundary. Instead, a pivotal utterance is employed in order to connect a prior topic with a new topic without segmenting the talk. Thus, if a participant in a conversation uses pivotal utterances, the other participants in the conversation will not notice any boundary between the topic-in-progress and the new topic, but will simply come to realise that they are talking about a new topic in the middle of the conversation.

In the context of this discussion of stepwise topical movement, it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of topic drift. Topic drift refers to the process whereby even

if a new topic is introduced after an ongoing topic, it is temporary in nature because another new topic is about to be introduced. Accordingly, topic drift is said to be less organised and controlled than stepwise topical movement (Hobbs, 1990; Downing, 1998). In fact, the presence of topic drift may be used to determine “whether control of topicality increases with cognitive maturity or is a result of social training and influences” (Downing, 2000). An example of topic drift is shown in the extract below.

(17)

Jeff: On Friday, Saturday and Sunday I can go out to play. That’s all.

Sam: Do you ever get a spanking?

Jeff: Uh, my mother spans me real hard.

My father, he’d do anything to keep me from...

He doesn’t care about me either.

(Downing 2000, p.27)

2.4.4.3.2 Boundaried topical movement

Boundaried topical movement refers to the process of introducing a new topic after closing a topic-in-progress through a noticeable boundary developed collaboratively by the participants. It is thus different from stepwise topical movement, which uses a pivotal utterance. That is to say, when the participants in a conversation initiate a topic change, they terminate a topic-in-progress and initiate a new topic unrelated to the prior topic by using one of the techniques of closing a topic described above. Boundaried topical movement is also referred to by various researchers as follows: ‘marked’ transitions (Sacks, 1992b); disjunctive shift (Jefferson, 1984); disjunctive topic shift (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Svennevig, 1999); disjunctive topic transition (Holt and Drew, 2005), and disjunctive topic change (Holt and Drew, 2005).

Boundaried topical movement can function as a way for participants to move out of a topic-in-progress. When conversationalists realise that it has become difficult to talk about the topic-in-progress and they feel awkward about continuing to talk on the topic, they try to terminate it and then introduce a new topic in order to keep the conversation going. With regard to this issue, Sacks (1992b, p.352) maintains that ‘marked topic introduction’ takes place when the participants in a conversation find the talk boring or unpleasant in some way, and they need to introduce new topics as a way to get out of the situation. In line with Sacks, Jefferson (1984a) argues that disjunctive

transition can take place as one of the ways of getting out of troubles-telling, although it can also take place in non-problematic talk.

There are two sorts of disjunctive topic change. The first is where a topic-in-progress is terminated by a topic closing sequence and then a new topic is introduced which is not related to the prior topic. The second occurs when, before a topic-in-progress is exhausted, a new topic is inserted, which is called ‘topic leap’ (Svennevig 1999, p.38). However, if the inserted topic does not settle down as the topic and the participants return to the prior topic, it is called a ‘side sequence’ (Jefferson, 1972). An example of a boundaried topical movement is presented in the extract below (this extract has already been used to illustrate the itemised news enquiry).

(8) (NB: II: 3: 8)

Portia : How come yih didn’t stay?
Portia : OH ih w’zis too hot huh,
Agnes: Oh::there –
Agnes: Jus’ too hot Portia, an’it was uh –
Agnes: Oh I don’ know,
Agnes: Yih git kinda tahrd of – big kloojie buncha people,
→ Portia : Yea:h.
Portia : Uh. Huh
Agnes: ·hhhhhmhhh
Agnes: How’s ev’rything et the rest’ rantee?

(Button and Casey 1985, p.8)

In the extract above, after Agnes responds, Portia utters only a minimal response “Yea:h” (arrowed) and then another minimal response “Huh” with a hesitation marker “Uh”. Agnes also responds with just a laugh. The sequence they produce by using these various techniques to close the topic indicates that they no longer wish to talk about the ongoing topic. The sequence is a noticeable boundary, which reflects the characteristic of boundaried topical movement. Finally, Agnes initiates a new topic which is not related to the prior topic by using the third type of itemised news enquiry (see p.39).

In order to make a comparison with the boundaried topical movement, an example of a side sequence is shown in the extract below.

JIM: He wants to // dance but can’t dance.

ROGER: He doesn't want pee-
 ROGER: Yea//h. An' he's-
 JIM: An' everybody's askin' 'im t'dance.
 ROGER: An' because he's scareda dancing he's gonna dance in private til
 he learns how.
 JIM: And a goodlooking girl comes up to you and asks you, y'know,
 → ROGER: Gi(hh)rl asks you to-
 → ROGER: Alright,
 → KEN: Well it's happened a lotta ti//mes,
 ROGER: Okay okay go ahead.
 (1.0)
 ROGER: So he says "no."
 (Jefferson 1972, p.337)

In the extract above, Roger initiates a new topic by uttering "Gi(hh)rl asks you to-" and "Alright" (arrowed), which are not directly related to the ongoing topic even if a 'girl' is included in the prior talk. Ken responds with "Well it's happened a lotta ti//mes?" (arrowed). However, after this sequence, they return to the prior topic. This is thus a side sequence. If they had continued talking about the new topic without returning to the prior topic, it would have been a topic leap.

2.4.4.3 Collaborative topic transition and unilateral topic transition

The categorisation of collaborative or unilateral topic transition depends on whether or not the participants collaborate at a potential point for topic change (West and Garcia, 1988; Okamoto and Smith-Lovin, 2001). Collaborative topical movement occurs when participants cooperate to terminate the topic-in-progress and then initiate a new topic. That is, the participants collaborate to terminate the topic by exchanging turns until it is closed. Collaborative actions performed by participants help to change the ongoing topic (Sukrutrit, 2010). While exchanging turns, they can employ the various techniques used to close a topic described above. The sequence of turns the participants develop together can be interpreted as their agreement on the termination of the topic-in-progress. An example of how collaborative topic transition takes place is given in the extract below.

[8] [Dyad 24:162-68, simplified version]

Tina: I was thinking of going in for social: SociOLogy 'n 'h an'

research 'n stuff but GAW:d it looks so- 'h hh so uh 'h-henh-
 henh [like rATs in] henh-henh
 Mike: [Compl'cated?]
 Tina: ma:zes henh an' stuff like th- 'hh- 'hh 'h Rill:y.
 °tch Not very PERson-h-al=huhnh-hunh-hunh 'hh ←
 Mike: 'S depersonalizing hh ←
 Tina: Uh=ye:ah, rilly. Who:'s (Y') Soc One professor this quarter ←
 (West and Garcia 1985, p.560)

In the extract above, Tina and Mike together proceed to the end of the ongoing topic through the collaborative techniques of exchanging assessment, reformulation and acknowledgement tokens (arrowed). When the ongoing topic is completely terminated through the participants' collaboration, Tina initiates a new topic by producing "Who:'s (Y') Soc One professor this quarter."

Unilateral topic transition takes place when one of the participants initiates a new topic without reaching agreement on the termination of the topic-in-progress. Compared with collaborative topic transition, unilateral topic transition has a simple organisation of turns: when one participant comes to the end of a topic-in-progress, the other participants initiate a new topic one-sidedly without any collaboration in terminating the topic-in-progress. Sukrutrit (2010, p.122) states that "unilateral topic transition occurs when a participant shifts a topic without the consent of other participants." An example of how unilateral topic transition takes place is shown in the extract below.

[16] [Dyad 19: 9-19]
 Andy: I'm in Soc. Soc On:e, but I find it's so much
 Be [e Es] that- (tch) (0.2) h [I'm]
 Beth: [Oh::] [We:ll,] this is my ma::jor
 Andy: °Oh! (0.3)
 Beth: hunh-hunh- [hunh-hunh, hunh-huh]
 Andy: [My goo:dness!] 'h-hh=
 Beth: = But I'm not gonna do it, like I wanna go to law school.
 Andy: Oh I follow.
 (1.0)
 Beth: So it's a good [major for that] ←
 Andy: [Did ju] ta ke this fer- did you ←
 sign up for this test to impress?
 (West and Garcia 1985, p.263-264)

In the extract above, Beth produces an assessment of her own prior talk: “So it’s good major for that” (arrowed). However, Andy introduces a new topic without any collaboration to close the ongoing topic by responding to Beth’s assessment. Although it is unclear whether or not Beth intended to finish the topic-in-progress, it is more important to note that Andy initiates a new topic unilaterally without there being any agreement on the termination of the ongoing topic.

Although various perspectives have been adopted to categorise the types of topic transition described above, they do appear to be related to each other. The types are categorised into two groups: bounded topical movement or stepwise topical movement, according to whether or not there is a clear ending of the prior topic, and collaborative or unilateral topic transition according to whether or not the participants in the conversation collaborate in closing the ongoing topic. However, as shown in Figure 2, bounded topical movement and collaborative topic transition share characteristics in common: both involve the clear termination of a prior topic and the cooperation of the participants in closing the ongoing topic. They also use the same techniques to close ongoing topics. Therefore, bounded topical movement can be said to be remarkably similar to collaborative topical movement. It is thus possible to categorise topic transitions into three types: collaborative topic transition (bounded topical movement), stepwise topical movement and unilateral topic transition.

	Bounded topical movement	Collaborative topic transition	Stepwise topical movement	Unilateral topic transition
Clear ending of a prior topic	O	O	X	X
Cooperation of participants in closing ongoing topics	O	O	X	X
Techniques	Techniques to close ongoing topics	Techniques to close ongoing topics	Pivotal utterances	Nothing

Figure 2 Comparison of the types of topic transition

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a review of the literature relating to computer-mediated communication and topic management. First, literature on a CA institutional discourse perspective, interactional discourse in second language classroom teaching and CMC, including the characteristics and types of CMC, was examined. An examination of previous research into text-based and voice-based chat through CMC was then presented. Finally, 'topic' was defined and the treatment of topic initiation, topic maintenance, topic termination and topic change in previous research into topic management was examined. In the following chapter the CA methodology employed in this research will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY: Theoretical Foundations

3.0 Introduction

Conversation analysis (henceforth CA) was adopted as the methodology in this research, the aim of which was to identify conversational features of topic management that appear in the spoken discourse of online one-to-one English conversation classes using a synchronous voice-based CMC. In order to explain the rationale behind the choice of this methodology, this chapter begins by introducing the basic background to CA, including definitions, epistemological background, ethnomethodological concepts, fundamental assumptions of CA and CA emic interpretation. CA methods of data collection and analysis are then described. The description of data collection methods includes the collection and transcription of audio data, while the section on analytical methodologies introduces the basic CA norms of turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference and dispreference organisation, and repair. The issues of the reliability, validity, replication and reflexivity of CA as a methodology and also the limitations of the CA perspective are then discussed. Comparisons between CA and other discourse analytic approaches: discourse analysis (DA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA), are also presented in this chapter. Finally, the advantages of employing CA in the current study are clarified.

3.1 Conversation Analysis (CA)

In order to engage in social life in modern societies, most people conduct a variety of conversations with each other everywhere they go and on a daily basis. There is such a wide range of types of conversation that it is not easy to define ordinary conversation. Markee (2000, p.57) defines ordinary conversation as “a type of talk-in-interaction in which all conversationalists have equal rights to engage in a wide range of behaviours”. In ordinary conversation, even if participants do not prepare anything in advance, they can keep the conversation going by managing topics collaboratively. During conversation, they produce utterances, some of which can contain social actions, and, by reversal, these social actions are expressed in conversational features. In this regard, Svennevig (1999, p.16) argues that conversation contains all sorts of features: for

instance, order, size or content of turn, distribution of turns and length of conversation, which are not predetermined but are locally controlled. CA identifies the sort of social actions people construct in their conversation by investigating conversational features.

3.1.1 Definition of CA

The purpose of conversation analysis is to examine the turn-taking or sequences ordinary people construct together in their talk which reflect various meaningful social actions. Different conversation analysts have defined CA in different ways. The central purpose of adopting the conversation analytic perspective is to describe and explicate the competences which enable ordinary people to take part in understandable, systematic interaction (Atkinson and Heritage 1984, p.1). Psathas (1995, p.1) explains that “the study of the talk-in-interaction represents a methodological approach to the study of mundane social action ...[and employs] rigorous [and] systematic procedures for studying social actions that also provide reproducible results.” In contrast, CA itself has been specifically defined by various researchers as “the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998, p.14), “a form of analysis of conversational data that accounts for the sequential structure of talk-in-interaction” (Markee 2000, p.25), “the study of the orders of talk-in-interaction, whatever its character or setting” (ten Have 2007, p.4), “a set of methods for working with audio and video recordings of talk and social interaction” (Sidnell 2010, p.20) and “the close examination of language in interaction” (Antaki 2011, p.1). Although conversation analysts have used different expressions to define CA, all the definitions have some terms in common: for instance, ‘study’, ‘analysis’ or ‘examination’, and ‘talk-in-interaction’. Thus, these terms should be included in any definition of CA.

It is equally as important to discuss the role played by CA as it is to provide a definition, however, since it is the role CA plays that is most important in any piece of research. CA can play a practical role in explaining how turns are organised through the interactions interlocutors engage in, in order to perform certain social actions. In line with this concept, Antaki (2011, p.2) explains the role of CA as follows:

CA ...answers these concrete questions: How do you and I bring off the business we transact with each other? How do I design my turns at talk to perform some

action, and to make your next turn and next action fit a certain range of possible shapes? How, in short, does any pair or group of people use language to conjure up the social world of which they're a part?

The above definitions and descriptions of the practical function of CA indicate that CA can be useful as a methodology in any field of research.

3.1.2 Epistemological background of CA

CA was first introduced by Harvey Sacks in the early 1960s in close association with his colleagues, including Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Heritage, 1984b; Sacks, 1992; Silverman, 1998; ten Have, 2007; Sidnell, 2010; Antaki, 2011). In fact, it can be said that CA came out of ethnomethodology, established by Harold Garfinkel (Bryman 2010, p.493), which is an ethnographic approach to social issues, a study of the basic methods people use to understand each other and to produce social actions (Silverman, 2006). Ten Have (2007, p.6) explains that ethnomethodology is “a research policy focusing on the study of common-sense reasoning and practical theorizing in everyday activities”. It is thus pertinent here to present a brief description of ethnomethodology, since this will provide a good foundation for a clear understanding of CA principles.

Ethnomethodologists have a different approach from traditional sociologists when analysing social phenomena such as actions and utterances occurring among people. Traditional sociologists use pre-existing theoretical categories or rules when analysing such social phenomena occurring in the real world. In contrast, ethnomethodologists do not observe any theoretical rules when analysing these phenomena. They think that people themselves have certain methods or observe certain rules to produce the actions and utterances which comprise the phenomena, so they attempt to identify these by observing and analysing the actions and utterances from the viewpoint of the participants. In an ethnomethodological approach, it is considered that people have rational reasons for the actions or utterances they produce, so these actions and utterances can be understood by other people who have common sense. This notion is stated indirectly in the reasons Garfinkel (1968) gave for his choice of the term ‘ethnomethodology’:

‘Ethno’ seemed to refer, somehow or other, to the availability to a member of common-sense knowledge of his society as common-sense knowledge of the ‘whatever’. If it were ‘ethnobotany’, then it had to do somehow or other with his knowledge of and his grasp of what were for members adequate methods for dealing with botanical matters. Someone from another society, like an anthropologist in this case, would recognize the matters as botanical matters. The member would employ ethnobotany as adequate grounds of inference and action in the conduct of his own affairs in the company of others like him. It was that plain, and the notion of ‘ethnomethodology’ or the term ‘ethnomethodology’ was taken in this sense. (p.16)

In ethnomethodological studies, the analysis of one’s own everyday activities can assist in revealing the reasons behind those same activities when performed by other people. Accordingly, other people’s activities are observable and can be explained according to the situation in which they occur. With regard to this notion, Garfinkel (1967) describes a specific purpose of ethnomethodology as follows:

I use the term “ethnomethodology” to refer to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organised artful practices of everyday life. (p.11)

Accordingly, ethnomethodologists observe and analyse the interactions that people develop because the interactions themselves contain particular rules.

CA employs basic ethnomethodological principles to analyse mundane conversation. Like the ethnomethodologists, CA analysts believe that the data themselves are revelatory, and thus, when conversation analysts analyse mundane talk, they do not base their analyses on preconceived theories or rules but instead examine the conversational features themselves from the viewpoint of the participants in the conversation. Thus, not only have particular research methods of collecting and managing data been developed for CA (for instance, recording and transcribing talk) but also analytical norms such as the turn-taking system and sequence organisation have been developed for the purposes of analysis.

3.1.3 Ethnomethodological principles in CA

In order to understand the fundamental aspects of CA, it is necessary to explicate the basic ethnomethodological principles that have been adopted in CA. Seedhouse (2004,

p.7) identifies five principles of CA: indexicality, the documentary method of interpretation, reciprocity of perspectives, normative accountability, and reflexivity, which are derived from ethnomethodological principles.

3.1.3.1 Indexicality

The CA principle of 'indexicality' is derived from 'context-boundedness' in ethnomethodology. CA analysts analyse mundane, everyday talk according to the principle of indexicality. Indexicality is what enables participants to maintain a conversation which is appropriate to the context in which it takes place. Wieder (1974, p.187) explains that the meanings of indexical expressions are relative to "such contextual matters as (a) who was saying it; (b) to whom it was being said; (c) where it was being said; (d) on what kind of occasion it was being said; (e) the social relationship between teller and hearer; and so forth." Gumperz (1982, p.131) maintains that 'conversational cues' help participants in a conversation to speak and understand each other in a way suitable for the situation. These conversational cues are said to include indexicality. Benson and Hughes (1983, p.101) also claim that "the meaning of their everyday talk is dependent on the context in which the talk occurs."

From a CA perspective, Seedhouse (2004, p.7) states that indexicality not only offers a fundamental basis for the analysis of data in CA but also supports the assertion that in CA, contextual elements should be included in the analysis only when the utterances which the participants themselves produce in their interactions are related to those elements. Bryman (2008, p.494) also explains indexicality as referring to the fact that "the meaning of an act, which is generally included in spoken words or utterances containing pauses and sounds in an ordinary talk, depends upon the context in which it is used". Therefore, participants can understand each other without elaborating directly on what they are talking about through indexicality, that is, by depending on the context in which they are operating and which they are cooperating to construct.

3.1.3.2 Documentary method of interpretation

The second principle, the 'documentary method of interpretation', means that any social

action is realised when it is connected with certain types of knowledge, such as background knowledge, underlying patterns, or common sense accumulated in advance. Garfinkel (1967, p.78) claimed that the documentary method of interpretation consists of treating an actual appearance as the “document of”, “as pointing to”, or as “standing on behalf of”, a presupposed underlying pattern. Seedhouse (2004, p.8) also states that “it treats any actual real-world action as a “document” or an example of a previously known pattern.” For example, when participants exchange greetings, they follow four steps. When one of them hears the word ‘hi’, he or she deals with the action as a document, connects it with all the other actions already loaded as documents, recognises it as a greeting type of document, and then decides how to respond according to the type of document selected (Seedhouse 2004, p.8). The documentary method of interpretation is said to be the basic principle behind adjacency pairs.

3.1.3.3 Reciprocity of perspectives

The ‘reciprocity of perspectives’ refers to common perspectives shared by participants in an interaction, which can help in achieving ‘intersubjectivity’. Intersubjectivity is achieved when the subjectivity of each interactant is recognised as objectivity by both or all of the interactants after or when it is shared with them. Scheff (2006, p.41) defines intersubjectivity as “the sharing of subjective states by two or more individuals.” For instance, people sometimes say, ‘If you put yourself in my shoes, you will understand my position’, which includes the situation in which the intersubjective interpretation is required. Consequently, subjective things can either remain subjective, or they can be recognised as objective after or when they are shared with other interactants.

Seedhouse (2004, p.9) asserts that to employ a reciprocity of perspectives is “to agree that we are following the same norms, to show affiliation with the other person’s perspective, and to try to achieve intersubjectivity”. He also states that the reciprocity of perspectives can affect indexicality if the interactants do not have the same perspective on particular interactions, since the two principles are inextricably linked. Therefore, indexicality is said to be activated based on the reciprocity of perspectives. In CA, preference organisation is also related to the reciprocity of perspectives. Preferred action or response improves the reciprocity of perspectives without the interactants noticing,

whereas dispreferred action usually requires additional accounts to encourage a reciprocity of perspective (Seedhouse 2004, p.9).

3.1.3.4 Normative accountability

The principle of ‘normative accountability’ means that interactants have a common reason for performing an action. Seedhouse (2004, p.10) states that this principle helps in understanding the basic ethnomethodology of CA. The principle of accountability indicates that an actor constructs the rationality of his or her action by him- or herself. According to Garfinkel (1967, p.1), “the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able’.” However, interactants do not have to follow the principle strictly as they would a law or a rule. When interactants perform an action which is not understood, that is, they do not perform a normative action, this action can be recognised and explained on the basis of the principle of normative accountability (Seedhouse 2004, p.10).

3.1.3.5 Reflexivity

The fifth principle identified by Seedhouse is that of ‘reflexivity’. Reflexivity refers to the way in which people attempt to correct themselves and adjust their actions to conform to the actual circumstances, to time-dependent developments or changes in context. When conversationalists experience changes in the meanings of utterances which reflect social actions in the real world, they respond to these changes by accepting them. Without reflexivity, conversationalists would not be able to interact with each other in the changing society. The principle of reflexivity in ethnomethodology indicates that talk does not express only the social world but that it represents more than it contains (Bryman 2008, p.494). From the perspective of CA, it indicates “that the same set of methods or procedures are responsible for both the production of actions/utterances and their interpretation” (Seedhouse 2004, p.11). In brief, the principle of reflexivity can be said to enable conversationalists not only to involve themselves normally in everyday activities but also to accommodate themselves to changes occurring in, for example, the meaning or performance of these activities.

3.1.4 Fundamental assumptions of CA

Conversation analysis is founded on the same basic assumptions as ethnomethodology. Whether the purpose of a conversation is merely social, or whether it has a particular purpose, it can still be meaningful to conversation analysts (ten Have, 2007), because the conversation takes place through interactions and contains social actions. Heritage (1984a) mentions three fundamental CA assumptions: the interaction is structurally organised, it is context-shaped and context-renewing, and the analysis is based on detailed data. In line with Heritage, Seedhouse (2004) adds two more principles: ‘bottom-up and data driven’ and ‘why that, in that way, right now?’ to those of Heritage. The explication of these five fundamental assumptions is helpful in understanding the principles of CA on which the analysis of audio data is based.

The first fundamental assumption is that a conversation is carried out based on a certain organised rule in interaction. Talk was not considered to be organised in an orderly way by linguists until the introduction of conversation analysis in the 1960s. At that time, Chomsky (1965, p.4) stated that “a record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on. ... [it] surely cannot constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics.” In other words, the organisation of mundane talk is disorderly, so it cannot be an object of linguistic research. However, conversation analysts have the opposite view. They suppose that human beings’ talk is organised in an orderly and systematic way. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) described the orderliness of mundane talk as follows:

If the materials (records of natural conversations) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations that we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation, and use of that orderliness. (p.290)

In line with Schegloff and Sacks, Heritage (1984a, p.241) argues that all aspects of social action and interaction consist of structurally organised features, which are constant and repeated. Seedhouse (2004, p.14) also maintains that “talk in interaction is systematically organised, deeply ordered, and methodic”. Consequently, various patterns of interaction that demonstrate social action can be produced during a

conversation based on that orderliness.

The second assumption is that social actions in talk-in-interaction depend on the context in which they take place. Context in CA is defined as “the context of the actions in the talk” (Gardner 2004, p.269). Heritage argues that a turn that includes a social action is connected to a particular context in two ways: it is both ‘context-shaped’ and ‘context-renewing’ (1984a, p.242). Taking into account the context of their talk, participants are able to express social actions in such a way that the conversation can continue without interruption. However, when a social action is not related to the context, it can appear meaningless to them. Furthermore, a social action which is produced and understood within the context in question can also have the effect of reshaping subsequent social actions (Gardner, 2004; Pallotti, 2007). Seedhouse (2004, p.14) maintains that this context-dependency has its origin in the principles of indexicality, reflexivity and the documentary method of interpretation, derived from Garfinkel.

Context in CA is also related to how ethnographic information is dealt with. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, p.699) argue that the two features of a conversation, of its being ‘context-free’ and ‘context-sensitive’, are aspects of conversation which define context as “the various places, times, and identities of parties to interaction.” Most importantly, conversationalists do not necessarily use ethnographic information such as socioeconomic status, gender, biographies and the like in a deductive way to explicate the organisation and understanding of the talk they produce together (Markee, 2000). On one hand, all the elements of a conversation, including the time and place, the participants and the expected outcomes, need to be considered in order to understand how a particular communicative event performs a social action from an ethnographic perspective (Wardhaugh, 2006). On the other hand, with regard to ethnographic data in CA, Seedhouse (2004, p.92) states that “CA can provide a secure warrant for the introduction of relevant ethnographic information and hence a link between the micro and macro level.” That is to say, ethnographic information will be included in contextual data only when it is recognised as being relevant by the participants (Gardner, 2004). In conclusion, ethnographic information is not indispensable in CA.

The third assumption is that in CA, in order to conduct a detailed analysis from the viewpoint of the participants, no detail, however trivial, is overlooked. With regard to this assumption, Heritage (1984b, p.241) states that “no order of detail can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant.” The application of this assumption provides the basis from which to develop the highly detailed CA transcription system, which is used to analyse the details of mundane data precisely, and which gives CA its scientific, experimental foundation (Seedhouse, 2004). Accordingly, conversation analysts do not miss anything that takes place in sound or video recordings when they transcribe the data. In other words, when conversational analysts are attempting to analyse naturally occurring conversation from the participants’ viewpoint (or from an ‘emic’ perspective – see Section 3.1.5), they need as much information as possible.

The fourth assumption (Seedhouse’s concept of ‘bottom-up and data driven’) is that conversation analysts base their analysis on the details found in the data. When analysing audio data, conversation analysts begin with the smallest turn constructional unit (e.g., minimal responses such as ‘uh-huh’), moving up to longer sequences consisting of one or two words, or complete sentences. In other words, they try to identify distinctive patterns connected to the social actions appearing in their data by moving from a narrow to a broader perspective. Seedhouse (2004) argues that the assumption that conversation analysts should adopt the participants’ viewpoint in their analysis of data is related to the ethnomethodological concept of reflexivity.

The last assumption involves Seedhouse’s question “*Why that, in that way, right now?*” which indicates that conversation analysts pay more attention to the interaction taking place in a conversation than to the language used. The question represents “the perspective of interaction as action (why that) which is expressed by means of linguistic forms (in that way) in a developing sequence (right now)” (Seedhouse 2004, p.16). The application of this assumption makes it possible for conversation analysts to discover *what lies behind* the language used in mundane conversations.

3.1.5 CA emic interpretation

The emic perspective plays an important role in the minute analysis of data in CA. The terms ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ were first coined in anthropology by Pike (1967). The emic perspective in conversation analysis refers to the participants’ point of view, and it is this perspective that CA analysts should always adopt. In other words, they should not use their own theoretical framework for analysing the data but instead try to identify the distinctive features and patterns naturally occurring in the conversation from the participants’ viewpoint (ten Have, 2007). The etic perspective, by contrast, is the theoretical framework adopted in advance by a researcher to analyse data. Pike (1967) distinguishes between the emic and etic perspectives as follows:

The etic viewpoint studies behaviour as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system... Descriptions or analyses from the etic standpoint are “alien” in view, with criteria external to the system. Emic descriptions provide an internal view, with criteria chosen from within the system. (p.37-38)

One of the five ethnomethodological principles conversation analysts adopt in analysing their data, the documentary method of interpretation (see Section 3.1.3.2 above), is based on the emic perspective. The emic perspective is crucial to conversation analysis; it means that ordinary people, since they themselves have the perspective of the participants, will be able to identify with and understand the CA researcher’s analysis more clearly than in any other research field.

3.2 CA data collection methods

CA has its own method of collecting and managing data. Conversation analysts do not have to spend unnecessary time finding ways of collecting data because CA was developed with its own research method of recording conversations occurring naturally. Conversation analysts transcribe the recordings they make of mundane conversations using CA conventions; that is, through the repeated listening to or watching of audio or video files, the researcher presents the communicative events in the form of detailed texts, in order to be able to conduct a micro-analysis of the data. The recordings are used as a primary source of data for the research (Markee, 2000; Wooffitt, 2005; Liddicoat, 2007). Pomerantz and Fehr (1997) explain why conversation analysts prefer

the recording of conversation over any other data collection method:

First, certain features of the details of actions in interaction are not recoverable in any other way. Second, a recording makes it possible to play and replay the interaction, which is important both for transcribing and for developing an analysis. Third, a recording makes it possible to check a particular analysis against the materials, in all their detail, that were used to produce the analysis. Finally, a recording makes it possible to return to an interaction with new analytic interests (p.70).

In fact, the emergence of CA as a research technique was closely related to developments in technology. One of three influential factors in this regard was the new technology of audio recording (Seedhouse, 2004), and at first, CA depended solely on audio data. As technology progressed, however, the domain of recording was extended from audio to video, which enabled conversation analysts to collect not only audio but also video data. The use of video data can result in a more detailed analysis by giving the researcher more information to transcribe than audio data alone. The recorded files can be stored in computers as MP3 or MP4 files, which can be easily played by electronic devices such as mobile phones, iPods, PDAs and many others, as well as by computers. Furthermore, conversation analysts can now record conversations taking place in virtual spaces on the Internet such as online chat rooms by using particular types of software.

The transcription of audio or video data plays an overarching role in CA. Conversation analysts will attempt to identify parts of a conversation that include many conversational features, then listen repeatedly to the recordings of these sections in order to transcribe them. Through this laborious process, the researcher becomes extremely familiar with the recordings (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998). When transcribing recorded data, researchers must try to transcribe everything they hear. In other words, the transcription should include trivial things such as pauses, laughs, exhalations, inhalations and the like, since if even the trivial things are considered important, they can provide the crucial information needed to interpret the practices in which they are included. Accordingly, when the analyst finds sections of the recording which include distinctive conversational features, he or she will transcribe them in detail in order to conduct a precise analysis. This attention to the smallest detail makes transcription a time-consuming process for conversation analysts. However,

transcribing has to be considered an important part of the analysis, since the repeated listening process involved gives the researcher the opportunity to hear and identify conversational features (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998).

The transcripts then act as supplementary materials for conversation analysts to use in analysing the recorded audio or video data. Although, as explained above, the recorded audio or video files represent the primary data source for CA researchers, it would be difficult to conduct an analysis solely on the basis of repeated listening to or watching of the recorded sound or video data, since it is not possible to pick out the particular sections that include the conversational features which are needed for the analysis in this way. Transcripts can contain details of talk-in-interaction that conversation analysts often do not notice by using the naked eye or ear, or even both (Jenks, 2011).

However, while transcribing data, conversation analysts cannot correctly represent everything in sound or video files. This is because the symbols used in the transcription convention (see Appendix A) themselves have limitations in exactly transcribing linguistic and paralinguistic elements and body language. In transcribing verbal elements, it is not easy to represent minute differences in the same sounds exactly, even if they are pronounced by the same person, nor to depict differences in the sounds produced by different people in a precise manner.

Similarly, conversation analysts also have some difficulty in accurately depicting two categories of non-verbal elements of communication. The first of these includes pitch, volume, intonation, laughter, and inhalation and exhalation. For example, the length of an inhalation or exhalation depends on the conversation analyst's arbitrary interpretation. The second category includes bodily posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements. The transcription of these thus depends on the subjective preference of the conversation analyst because there is no specific rule concerning how to describe them. Thus, the use of both a tape and a transcript is the best way of developing analyses (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997). Jenks (2011, p.5) also emphasises the fact that "transcripts and data recordings must be used simultaneously."

3.3 Conversational mechanisms in CA

Significant findings from the analysis of talk-in-interaction from a CA perspective are accumulated, and these can then be used to analyse other conversations. These are not standardised rules but are simply norms that operate as a local control system over conversation (Karkkainen, 2003). As Heritage (2006, p.1) maintains, CA is “primarily concerned with the ways in which utterances accomplish particular actions by virtue of their placement and participation within sequences of actions”. The principal conversational norms identified for the purposes of CA are turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference/dispreference organisation and repair; these are employed to investigate what sort of social actions take place during mundane conversation. Some of these conversational norms are also adopted in the current research to examine how participants manage topics when they are exchanging turns during online conversation classes. Each of these norms is examined below.

3.3.1 Turn-taking system

The first is the turn-taking system. All mundane conversation is based on a system of turn-taking. It is considered extremely important in CA (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008), since it facilitates participants’ understanding of each of the turns produced during a conversation by allocating turns in order. Each participant exchanges turns with one another to accomplish a particular goal; if there were no sort of order controlling the conversation, participants would find it difficult to make the conversation last for any length of time. The turn-taking system was explained by Sacks et al. as follows:

[It] is a systematic consequence of the turn-taking organization of conversation that it obliges its participants to display to each other, in a turn’s talk, their understanding of other turns’ talk. More generally, a turn’s talk will be heard as directed to a prior turn’s talk, unless special techniques are used to locate some other talk to which it is directed (1974, p.728).

Participants cannot produce their turns without understanding the prior turn. If a participant produces a turn without understanding the prior turn, this can prevent the other participants from understanding it clearly and then lead to no response. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) describe this facet of turn-taking as the ‘next-turn proof procedure’,

which indicates not only that the next turn is developed based on the understanding of a prior turn, but also that CA is not based on the presuppositions of the analyst but on the accomplishment of the participants. It also means that the turn-taking system attracts a high level of cooperation from participants. The close relationship between a prior turn and an ongoing turn indicates the existence of this cooperation, since the ongoing turn cannot be developed without an understanding of the prior turn. That is, “the next turn is used as an analytic resource for making sense of the prior turn, which, for its part, has provided the sequential implications that have made the next turn relevant” (Arminen 2005a, p.3).

The organisation of turn-taking provides a basic normative rule which keeps the conversation going. According to Sacks et al. (1974, p.699), the normative rule of the turn-taking system is that ‘one party talks at a time’. In other words, participants in mundane conversation exchange turns one after another regardless of other conditions such as changes in speakership, the number of participants, the size of turns and the like. Seedhouse (2004) supports the concept of this norm, maintaining that participants in conversation use overlaps in less than 5% of conversation with each other and that gaps between turns last only tenths of a second. Accordingly, the principle of ‘one party talks at a time’ is said to exert general control over mundane conversation.

An understanding of turn constructional and turn allocation components is needed in order to understand the organisation of turn-taking. Basically, the turn constructional components are the elements which make up turns. The basic elements of these components are called turn constructional units (TCUs). According to Sacks et al. (1974, p.702), “unit-types for English include sentential, clausal, phrasal and lexical constructions.” That is to say, each unit-type can make up a turn or a TCU, and these are highly context-sensitive (Liddicoat, 2007). Examples of lexical, phrasal and clausal constructions are given below.

Examples of single-word (‘lexical’) turns:

- (a)
- Desk : What is your last name [Lorraine.
→ Caller : [Dinnis.
→ Desk : What?
→ Caller : Dennis.

- (b)
- Jeanette : Oh you know, Mittie- Gordon, eh-Gordon, Mittie's husband died.
(0.3)
- Estelle : Oh whe:: n.
- Jeanette : Well it was in the paper this morning.
- Estelle : It wa::s,
- Jeanette : Yeah.

[Trio:18]
(Sacks et al. 1974, p.702)

In each of the above examples, a single word (arrowed) makes up a turn constructional unit. In Example (b), in particular, even the minimal response “Yeah”, which does not in itself have a concrete meaning (unlike the words ‘What?’ and ‘Dennis’ in the first example), constitutes a turn constructional unit and represents a social action.

Example of single-phrase (‘phrasal’) turns:

- (c)
- A: Oh I have the- I have one class in the e:vening.
- B: On Monday?
- A: Y-uh::: Wednesday. =
- B: = Uh- Wednesday, =
- A: =En it's like a Mickey Mouse course.

[TG:6]
(Sacks et al. 1974, p.702)

In Example (c), a phrase makes a turn constructional unit. The phrase “On Monday?” (arrowed) is an abbreviated question designed as a clarification request derived from the previous talk. Even though the question is abbreviated, it still forms a turn constructional unit and performs a social action.

Example of single-clause (‘clausal’) turns:

- (d)
- A: Uh you been down here before [havenche.
- B: [Yeh.
- A: Where the sidewalk is?
- B: Yeah
- A: Whur it ends,
- B: Goes [all a'way up there?
- A: [They c'm up tuh the:re,

A: Yeah

[NB:III:3]
(Sacks et al. 1974, p.703)

In Example (d), a clause (arrowed) makes a turn constructional unit. Compared to the abbreviated question in Example (c), these questions are not abbreviated but are complete sentences, and they also form turn constructional units and perform a social action.

As shown in the examples above, when a turn constructional unit is completed, the speakership is transferred to the next participant. The moment or place at which such a transfer takes place is called the ‘transition relevance place’ (Sacks et al. 1974, p.703). In Example (d), speaker B produces “Yeh” before speaker A ends his turn because speaker B thinks that the completion of the previous turn comes after the word “before”. However, speaker A’s addition of “havenche” at the end of the sentence overlaps with the “Yeh” of speaker B. This can be seen as evidence of Sacks’s claim that “transfer of speakership is coordinated by reference to such transition-relevance places” (Sacks et al. 1974, p.703).

With regard to turn allocation, conversationalists use turn allocation techniques either to take or to be given the speakership in order to produce their turns when each turn comes to a transition-relevance place. According to Sacks et al. (1974, p.704), these techniques are used in order to reduce the occurrence of gap and overlap between turns, and they classify them into two groups: a current speaker’s selecting a next speaker allocates a next turn, and self-selection allocates a next turn. In other words, the current speaker can continue talking unless a next speaker is chosen or takes a turn voluntarily, and these rules are repeatedly applied at each transition relevance place until speakership has passed to a next speaker.

3.3.2 Adjacency pairs

The second conversational norm considered in CA is that of adjacency pairs. Two interactions that form a pair in a conversation are used to express a social action. The two interactions are linked to each other. The two aspects of such a pair are called the

‘first pair part’ and the ‘second pair part’, and as it might be assumed, the first pair part should be followed by the second pair part, thus forming a basic sequence organisation. For example, when a speaker poses a question, a next speaker should answer it. Thus, pair-type interactions like a question and answer constitute an ‘adjacency pair’ (Sacks, 1992b). Question and answer adjacency pairs can include sequences such as request and granting, offer and acceptance (or rejection), greeting and greeting, complaint and remedy (or denial), complement and rejection, challenge and rejection and the like (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998). However, a first pair part does not always lead to a second pair part within the scope of the first interaction. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) also explain how adjacency pairs operate in conversation:

A basic rule of adjacency pair operation is: given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second pair part from the pair type of which the first is recognisably a member. (p.296)

An adjacency pair has its own characteristics and a norm governing its employment in a conversation. Adjacency pairs have the following characteristics: two utterances; adjacency of two pair parts; each pair part uttered by different speakers; the sequence of a first pair part (FPP) and a second pair part (SPP), and restrictive connection between two pair parts (a second pair part is selected within the scope of a first pair part; e.g., if a first pair part is a request, the second pair part can be an acceptance or a denial) (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, p.296). These characteristics of adjacency pairs can help conversation analysts to identify a ‘deviant action’ taking place in a conversation. When there appears to be little or no relationship between two parts of an adjacency pair, this can be of interest to conversation analysts, and the reason why it happened needs to be explained. This issue of relevance is also what induces conversationalists to select a second pair part that is appropriate to the first pair part of an adjacency pair. Seedhouse (2004) explains this in detail as follows:

...the adjacency pair is not only an action template with normative force, it is also a template for interpretation... the second action displays an interpretation of the first action and itself creates an action and interpretational template for subsequent actions, and so on. This can also be termed the next-turn proof procedure (Sacks et al. 1974, p.729), which is the basic tool which analysts can use to develop an emic perspective. (p.21)

Adjacency pairs can be expanded beyond a basic sequence. Although adjacency pairs are usually placed next to each other, other sequences can be placed before, between or after them. When a sequence is located before a first pair part, it is called a 'pre-expansion'; when it comes between a first pair part and a second pair part, it is referred to as an 'insert expansion' and when it falls after a second pair part, it is a 'post-expansion' sequence. The role played by each of these sequences is as follows: pre-sequences [pre-expansions] are used to prevent dispreferred answers from being given in the second pair part; insertion sequences [insert expansion] help to clarify a first pair part by sorting out such problems as mishearing, ambiguity, misunderstanding, non-comprehension and the like occurring before proceeding to the second pair part; post-expansions play the role of helping to clarify a second pair part, by clearing up problems such as ambiguity or misunderstanding of a second pair part (Gardner 2004, p.273-274).

3.3.3 Preference/dispreference organisation

The third norm or tool employed in CA is that of the 'preference/dispreference organisation'. When a conversationalist accomplishes a social action by receiving positive responses (referred to as 'preference' or 'preferred action'), the interaction is described as a preference organisation, whereas a negative response (called 'dispreferred action') forms a 'dispreference' organisation (Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). When one participant in a conversation accepts an invitation made by another, for example, the interaction becomes a preference organisation. In such a case, the respondent is usually able to answer without hesitation. In contrast, if the response to the invitation is a rejection, this is a dispreferred response, and it may thus take the participant longer to produce it, or it may be followed by a reason, an excuse or a hedging utterance. Thus, preferred responses are often selected automatically and immediately, and can often be described as 'seen-but-unnoticed', whereas dispreferred responses can be 'noticeable', 'accountable and sanctionable', or 'not sanctionable' (Seedhouse 2004, p.24). Pre-expansion sequences employed in adjacency pairs can be used to prevent dispreferred responses in the second pair part.

3.3.4 Repair

The last CA norm is repair. Repair refers to solving problems such as errors or mistakes which can interrupt talk-in-interaction. Errors or mistakes can repeatedly take place in the speaking, hearing or understanding of a talk. Before explicating repair organisation, it is necessary to distinguish between ‘repair’ and ‘correction’. Seedhouse (2004, p.34) defines *repair* as “the treatment of trouble occurring in interactive language”, pointing out that it plays the important role of sustaining the reciprocity of perspectives and intersubjectivity. On the other hand, Schegloff et al. (1977, p.363) define *correction* as “the replacement of an ‘error’ or ‘mistake’ by what is ‘correct’”, and demonstrate that occurrences related to correction are not always caused by errors and that replacement does not always take place, and thus in many instances, repair is more suitable than correction.

Repair has its own machinery for developing its own organisation in a conversation. The machinery of repair organisation consists of identifying the cause of the trouble which has resulted in the breakdown of communication, of pointing it out and then correcting it. It is necessary to recognise the difference between self-initiated repair (the speaker locates the trouble source) and other-initiated repair (other participants locate a speaker’s trouble source and initiate a repair) on the one hand, and self-repair (a speaker corrects his or her trouble source) and other-repair (other participants correct a speaker’s trouble source) on the other (Seedhouse 2004, p. 34). Schegloff et al. (1977) suggest that the machinery of organising turns for repair includes four basic types, as follows:

Self-repair can issue from self-initiation (Self-initiated self-repair):

- N: She was givin me a:ll the people that
 → were go:ne this yea:r I mean this
 → quarter y’ // know
 J: Yeah

[NJ:4]
 (Schegloff et. al. 1977, p.364)

Self-repair can issue from other-initiation (Other-initiated self-repair):

- Ken: Is Al here today?
 Dan: Yeah.
 (2.0)
 Roger: → He is? Hh eh heh
 Dan: → Well he was.

[GTS: 5:3]
(Schegloff et al. 1977, p.364)

Other-repair can issue from self-initiation (Self-initiated other-repair):

- B: → He had dis uh Mistuh W- whatever k- I can't
think of his first name, Watts on, the one thet wrote// that piece,
A: → Dan Watts.

[BC: Green: 88]
(Schegloff et al. 1977, p.364)

Other-repair can issue from other-initiation (Other-initiated other-repair):

- B: [Oh:::
A: [half the group thet we had la:s' term wz there en we jus' playing
arou:nd
B: → Uh- fooling around.
A: Eh-yeah ...

[TG: 3]
(Schegloff et al. 1977, p.365)

The organisations of repair have a tendency to take the form of adjacency pairs, with the exception of self-initiated self-repair, which is preferred over the others. When a first pair part becomes an initiation of repair, the second pair part can become the occurrence of repair. Through the extracts above, when repairs are initiated by other participants rather than being self-initiated, an utterance caused by the trouble source in the previous talk may be made before the repair occurs. Seedhouse (2004, p.35) also argues that “self-initiated self-repair is most preferred, and other-initiated other-repair least preferred.” Accordingly, other-initiated repairs can have longer organisations than self-initiated repairs, so self-initiated repairs are generally preferred over other-initiated repairs.

3.4 Justification for using CA

CA is a qualitative research methodology. Different researchers employ different criteria to assess research quality. Mason (2002) emphasises the importance of ensuring the validity, generalisability and reliability of results. Bryman (2008) employs the term ‘replication’ instead of generalisability. Matthews and Ross (2010) mention reliability, validity, credibility and ethical practice. Although the criteria can vary depending on the researcher, reliability and validity seem to be considered of crucial importance by most

researchers. Thus, in order to justify the use of CA methodology in this research, in this section the reliability and validity of CA as a research methodology will be examined. Replication and reflexivity of CA findings are also discussed to give additional weight to the selection of CA as the research methodology for the current study.

Reliability means that a measuring instrument used in a research study constantly produces the same result when it is used again afterwards in other, similar settings. Mason (2002, p.39) attaches great importance to the accuracy of measuring instruments, pointing out that reliability is concerned with “the accuracy of your research methods and techniques”, and suggests that the researcher should ask the question “How reliably and accurately do they produce data?” On the other hand, Matthews and Ross (2010, p.11) pay more attention to the consistency of measurement results by asking “Can my results be replicated by other researchers using the same method?” Bryman (2008, p.149) also argues that “reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of concept”, which can be interpreted as meaning that the measurement produces the same results in other, similar circumstances; he also introduces three important factors which are related to reliability: stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. Stability is related to the consistent accuracy of a measure without a time limit. Internal reliability refers to the coherence of respondents’ answers to questions: that is, “respondents’ scores on any indicator tend to be related to their scores on the other indicators”. Inter-observer consistency¹ refers to consistency among researchers’ decisions or judgements (Bryman 2008, p.149). On the basis of the above questions and definitions, it can be said that reliability is concerned with the extent to which the use of the same research methods in another study will result in an accurate replication of the findings. Unlike quantitative research, in qualitative studies the reliance on measuring instruments is reduced and they can be replaced with observation. Thus, Bryman (2008) clarifies that, aside from the use of measurement, the meaning of reliability in both quantitative and qualitative research is the same.

The reliability of CA is actually inherent in its own research methods. The research methods and the emic perspective adopted in CA play an important role in

¹ In quantitative research, Cronbach’s alpha is used as a test of internal reliability through SPSS software.

ensuring a high level of reliability. The research methods of CA are to video-record or tape conversation, save the recordings as audio or video files, transcribe the data and then analyse them according to the CA norms explicated above. Concerning reliability in CA, Peräkylä (1997, p.288) argues that the essential components of reliability can be ensured through paying attention to the choice of data collected, the quality of the recordings and the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the transcripts. Seedhouse (2004, p.253) supports this notion, pointing out that “the goal of developing an emic perspective on naturally occurring interaction means that CA has had to develop procedures which are sometimes rather different in many ways from those of mainstream research methodologies.” Therefore, it is said that the reliability of CA lies in the research methods it employs, and in the norms and emic perspective of CA.

The revealing of raw data such as recordings and transcripts also helps CA researchers achieve a high level of reliability. Researchers using other qualitative research methodologies do not release the raw data they have collected for their research, but conversation analysts do publish data such as sound files and transcripts. This makes it possible for other conversation analysts or researchers to see exactly how the original researcher obtained his or her results. They can also analyse the data themselves from the perspective of CA and compare the analyses. In other words, the reliability of the research can be verified by other researchers, which gives CA additional credibility as a research methodology.

Validity, on the other hand, refers to whether researchers have accurately measured what they planned to measure. This can be crucial in determining whether or not the findings obtained from the analysis of data using a conversation analytic approach are reasonable. Peräkylä (1997, p.294) points out that “a central dimension of validity involves the correspondence between a theoretical paradigm and the observations made by the researcher.” Bryman (2008, p.32) proposes four primary types of validity: internal, external, ecological and construct validity, and defines validity as “the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research.” Seedhouse (2004, p.255) also explicates the four types of validity from the perspective of CA. These four types of validity are discussed below.

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings obtained from the subjects taking part in the research conform to the reality. In quantitative research, internal validity requires the researcher to have complete control over his or her subjects in order to increase the effect of the experimental treatment, so it is related to checking whether or not a researcher has correctly measured the aspects of the subjects that are under study in the research setting. With regard to this issue, Seedhouse (2004, p.255) notes that internal validity is related to “the soundness, integrity, and credibility of findings.” Since conversation analysts collect mundane, naturally occurring conversations and observe and analyse them from the viewpoint of the participants (or the emic perspective), the findings will necessarily be sound, integral and credible.

External validity refers to the extent to which a result obtained from a specific research setting can be applied to different research settings or to other subjects. Basically, it is concerned with the generalisability of the results of a piece of research. As Seedhouse (2004, p.256) states, “external validity is concerned with generalisability, or the extent to which findings can be generalised beyond a specific research context.” However, in CA it can be difficult to ensure external validity, for two reasons. The first is that research findings in CA depend on the particular context in which the data were collected, so it is difficult to generalise them; the second is that the sample size used in CA is smaller than in studies using quantitative methodologies.

Concerning the first reason, however, Seedhouse (2004, p.256) maintains that “all CA studies in effect work on the particular and the general simultaneously”, giving the example of his research on L2 classroom interaction. In other words, the findings can be generalised. With regard to the second reason, although Peräkylä (1977, p.286) suggests using “longitudinal study designs”, and recommends the use of multiple cameras to solve the problem of insufficient data, he points out that the fundamental assumption in studies of mundane conversation is that the results are or should be generalised to all the practices of ordinary conversation (Peräkylä 1997, p.296). This can be interpreted as meaning that external validity is intrinsic to conversation analytic research. Even research findings that it appears cannot be generalised, such as the different openings of telephone conversations according to cultural differences, can be generalisable through building up findings on the variations (Peräkylä 1997, p.296).

Ecological validity means the extent to which research findings can be applied to real life. When external validity is applied to a specific setting in a real life, it is called ecological validity. Ecological validity in CA can be easily ensured, since the recorded data collected for conversation analysis include conversations that take place naturally in the real world. Thus, CA has outstanding ecological validity when compared to other methodologies (Seedhouse 2004, p.257).

In order for the research to have construct validity, the findings should contain the abstract concepts on which the research was based, since the findings have a meaningful correlation with each concept. Construct validity can generally be quantified in quantitative research. However, in CA, it is impossible to quantify the relationship between the research findings and the basic abstract concepts which lie behind them, and it is therefore difficult to ensure construct validity.

Construct validity in CA can, however, be secured if a different concept of 'construct' is employed. As Seedhouse (2004, p.257) explains, although there is a wide variety of TCUs in CA, interlocutors are able to identify the social action that each TCU represents in the interaction, so "the 'construct' of the TCU is the interactant's construct rather than the analyst's, and is therefore not 'etically specifiable'". Conversation analysts analyse each constructional unit through conversational mechanisms such as turn-taking organisation, adjacency pairs, preferred responses and repair. In other words, conversation analysts cannot quantify the relationship between a TCU and the social action it represents, but they can explicate the relationship through an analysis of conversational mechanisms and by adopting the emic perspective. Accordingly, construct validity is said to be ensured in CA.

With regard to replication, this refers to the reproduction of the findings of a previous study. It means that when researchers repeat a previous study using the same measures and data in the same or similar settings, they will obtain the same research findings. Thus, replication is closely related to reliability. Accordingly, Bryman (2008, p.32) states that "the idea of reliability is very close to another criterion of research - replication and more especially replicability", and points out that replication is highly valued by many social science researchers working within a quantitative research

tradition. CA is said to possess this quality of replicability. The CA method of data analysis through an examination of conversational mechanisms, and the adoption of the emic perspective, make it possible to reproduce the same research findings in CA studies. With regard to the issue, Sacks (1992a) argues as follows:

The difference between [ethnography] and what I'm trying to do is, I'm trying to develop a sociology where the reader has as much information as the author, and can reproduce the analysis. (p.27)

Finally, reflexivity refers to the researcher's overall influence on the research and vice versa. If a researcher adopts a reflexive approach, he or she will not focus on the research findings alone, but on the entire research process. The research process itself also influences the researcher. Accordingly, McManus (2008) defines reflexivity as "the idea of awareness of our own and other world views and their influence over the project at hand." Gilgun (2010, p.1) explains that reflexive researchers recognise that they have an effect on every stage of research and that every stage of the research also affects them. Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p.274) also point out that "reflexivity in research is not a single or universal entity but a process - an active, ongoing process that saturates every stage of the research." They explain what they mean by 'every stage' as follows: "before and during the design process; during the implementation process; while conducting the analysis; during the write-up; in the course of dissemination; and while applying findings to practice, teaching, and other research projects" (Gilgun 2010, p.2).

Different researchers, however, pay attention to reflexivity at different stages of the research. Generally speaking, more attention is paid to reflexivity at the data collection stage, since this stage is fundamental to achieving the goals of the research (Arminen 2005, p.69), and at the "data analysis and interpretation stage of research", when "the inseparability of epistemology, ontology and research practice" is illustrated (Mauthner and Doucet 2003, p.424). Attention is also paid to reflexivity in the methods of reading and writing, as well as in methods of data collection and analysis (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Geertz, 1988; Atkinson, 1992). However, although importance is attached to reflexivity at different stages by different researchers, it may be said that reflexivity influences all stages of the research, not just temporarily but consistently.

Reflexivity in conversation analytic research can be ensured naturally. Conversation analysts can identify not only their own influence but also that of their subjects on the research by using CA's own research methods of data collection and analysis, and can thus avoid any bias in the research. In other words, when recording and transcribing the data, by adopting an emic perspective, CA researchers automatically ensure that their own views do not affect the findings of the research: that is, they do not put their subjectivity into the analysis. The observing of the conversational norms of the turn-taking system, adjacency pairs, preference/dispreference organisation and repair also mean that the researcher can avoid any bias in the results. In conclusion, it may be said that CA itself has the propensity to foster reflexivity in research.

3.5 Limitations of CA methodology

Like any research methodology, CA has its limitations. First, as explicated earlier, CA is a study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, so data collection is accomplished by audio recording or videotaping mundane, everyday conversations. Thus, CA cannot be used to conduct research into conversations invented or organised by researchers in order to obtain specific research findings. Another limitation is that the recorded data used for analysis in CA generally include social actions taking place over a short period of time, so long-term studies cannot really be conducted. This might affect external validity and generalisability, although a way of overcoming this limitation was suggested in Section 3.4. Another limitation is that conversation analysts adopt an emic perspective when analysing their data, and pay attention to minute paralinguistic as well as linguistic features produced in conversation in order to assume the viewpoint of the participants. As a result, research data which need to be analysed from an etic perspective cannot be dealt with in CA. The solution to this problem was described in Section 3.1.4.

3.6 CA and other discourse analytic approaches

CA should be differentiated from other discourse analytic approaches such as discourse analysis (henceforth DA) or critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA). Levinson

(1983, p.287) compares CA with DA as follows: CA focuses on identifying certain patterns that occur repeatedly during mundane conversation and analysing the research findings inductively without any theoretical framework; the first step of DA, on the other hand, is to categorise data immediately. Conversation analysts observe and analyse what takes place naturally in recorded data, whereas discourse analysts depend on their intuition for the analysis. In contrast to DA, CA pays more attention to sequential organisation during an entire conversation than to single sentences. Levinson (1983) also describes the advantages of CA over DA in analysing conversation as follows:

It seems reasonable, then, to turn to CA as the approach that, at least, has most to offer in the way of substantial insight into the nature of conversation. It is important to see, though, that the basis for the rejection of DA is that the methods and theoretical tools advocated, namely those imported from mainstream theoretical linguistics, seem quite inappropriate to the domain of conversation. Conversation is not a structural product in the same way that a sentence is – it is rather the outcome of the interaction of two or more independent, goal-directed individuals, with often divergent interests. Moving from the study of sentence to the study of conversation is like moving from physics to biology: quite different analytical procedures and methods are appropriate even though conversations are (in part) composed of units that have some direct correspondence to sentence. (p.294)

Peräkylä (1997, p.285) also asserts that the aim of CA is “to produce descriptions of recurrent patterns of social interaction and language use” and illuminates the difference between CA and other forms of discourse analysis and social constructionism:

CA differs from those forms of discourse analysis and social constructionism which emphasise the open-endedness of the meaning of all linguistic expressions. Now we can see the reason for this: even though the meaning of any expression, if considered in isolation, is extremely open-ended, any utterance that is produced in talk-in-interaction will be locally interpreted by the participants of that interaction. (p.291)

CDA, on the other hand, unlike CA, focuses on social concerns which are extrinsic to the social actions taking place naturally between or among conversationalists. These social concerns include issues such as the abuse of social power, dominance, inequality and the like. In other words, CDA investigates how social concerns appear in discourse in social and political contexts. Thus, Hart (2010, p.13) defines CDA as “a research enterprise which critically analyses the relationship between

language and society.” However, critical discourse analysts are not interested only in the interactions, that is to say, the social actions co-constructed by participants in talk-in-interaction, but in a variety of issues depending on their aims (Schegloff 1977, p.183).

Concerning the relationship between CA and other approaches, ten Have (2007, p.9) explains the key differences between them as follows. First, since, as mentioned earlier, in their detailed observations and interpretations, conversation analysts pay attention to all the minute details related to participants’ interactions during conversation, however trivial these may seem, CA can be more effective than other approaches in obtaining useful findings from such data. Second, the objective in CA is to collect ordinary conversational data rather than artificial data; that is, CA researchers avoid collecting experimental and prepared research data in order to obtain findings specifically designed to suit the researcher’s pre-set aims. Third, CA pays more attention to social actions consisting of sequential organisations which are improvised by interlocutors than to discrete actions, and then tries to explain in detail how they are carried out. Fourth, CA is the study of natural language used in situ, so it can be said to be part of linguistics. However, CA focuses on social actions taking place naturally in talk-in-interaction, whereas linguistics focuses on language usage or rules.

3.7 The advantages of the adoption of CA as the methodology for the current study

In the current study a pure CA approach was adopted. The online English conversation classes examined in this research are designed to improve the students’ speaking and listening ability through the use of synchronous voice-based CMC outside the classroom. Topic management plays a crucial role in maintaining the conversations for a certain length of time in each lesson because it is closely related to the collaboration between the tutor and the students, the participation of the students, and the conversational competence of the students. Thus, in this research an overall observation of the online conversation classes was conducted, and then the focus was placed on how the participants managed their topics. Most importantly, the aim of the current study was not to assess language learning or acquisition but to account for language use. Thus, pure CA was chosen as the most appropriate methodology.

The reasons for choosing CA as the methodology to accomplish the purpose of the study are as follows. First, the research methods and the four types of interactional organisation employed in CA would enable the researcher to analyse the recorded data from the participants' viewpoint, even though the researcher did not participate personally in the English conversation lessons. Second, the use of CA would make it possible to analyse the complex nature of topic organisation (or construction). For example, sometimes two topics can be discussed simultaneously in mundane talk; in this case, CA can unravel the complexity by moving the viewpoint from the content of the topic to its structure, as Maynard (1980, p.263) describes: "topicality is an achievement of conversationalists, something organized and made observable in patterned ways that can be described." Third, through the use of CA, it would be possible to obtain other researchers' opinions on the data. A researcher can obtain useful feedback from other researchers by presenting extracts from the data. This feedback on the transcription and analysis of the data can give the researcher more confidence. Finally, CA would also be useful in investigating how the students interacted socially with the tutor as well as in assessing the student's English language ability. As mentioned above, the focus of CA is not on assessing the correctness of language usage but on accounting for language use. However, it might be possible to evaluate how the students used English from a pedagogical perspective.

In conclusion, CA was deemed to be the most appropriate methodology for identifying the conversational features that appear when participants initiate, maintain, change and terminate topics. The interactional organisations of turn-taking, sequence organisation, adjacency pairs and repair, and the emic perspective adopted in CA, would help the researcher to investigate the topic management which was carried out collaboratively by the participants. When topic management is examined from the perspective of CA, it is possible to go beyond linguistic elements and identify the types of turn organisation and sequences which mark topic initiation, maintenance, transition and termination.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, CA, the methodology selected for use in this research, has been

discussed in detail. First, definitions of CA were provided. Then the background to CA was discussed, including the origin of CA, ethnomethodology, the epistemological background of CA, ethnomethodological concepts in CA and fundamental assumptions of CA. The emic perspective adopted in CA research was then explained. CA research methods of collecting data and the analytical approach, including conversational mechanisms, used in CA were also described. The advantages and limitations of CA as a research methodology were discussed, including issues of validity and reliability, and comparisons were made between CA and other discourse analytic approaches. Finally, the reasons for and advantages of employing CA in the current study were described. The next chapter on research design explicates the practical application of CA methodology in the conducting of the present study.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY: Research Design

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the current study was designed and conducted on the basis of the methodology of CA in order to investigate how topics are managed by participants during online one-to-one English conversation classes. First, the aims and focus of the study are described, and the research questions are presented. Second, the online one-to-one English conversation class conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC as a new trend is explored. Details of the research settings are then provided, including participants and researcher, organisation of online English conversation classes, and technological aids for the online conversation classes. Next, the research methods, including audio data collection methods and associated problems, and the analytical approach, including the selection, transcription and analysis of the extracts, adopted for the current study are discussed. In order to justify the present study, issues of reliability, validity and reflexivity and finally, ethical considerations, are also explained.

4.1 Aims and focus of the study

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the distinctive conversational features employed when interactants in online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC initiated, maintained, terminated and changed topics. The aims were to:

- i) show how online one-to-one English conversation classes are conducted in situ as a type of English instruction carried out outside the classroom;
- ii) reveal how the participants collaborate to organise topics for their conversations in each session, and
- iii) provide some pedagogical suggestions for online teaching designers and developers in government or education departments, as well as for online teachers or tutors of English.

The focus of the study is on topic management carried out during online one-to-one conversation classes. These classes are designed for learners who want to practise speaking English with native or native-like English speakers. However, the aim of this research was not to investigate language learning or acquisition but rather to account for language use. Thus, the study focuses on how the participants use language to manage topics, rather than investigating what sort of topics they develop in the English conversation classes. It is essential for participants to be able to collaborate in managing topics in order to sustain the lessons for a reasonable period of time.

In order to achieve the above research aims, the following four research questions were developed:

RQ 1. How are topics *initiated* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 2. How are topics *maintained* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 3. How are topics *terminated* and *changed* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

RQ 4. How does trouble and repair in topic management *occur* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

For the reasons described in Chapter 3, conversation analysis was adopted as the methodology for analysing topic management in the online classes. In order to examine topic management, it was necessary to investigate how the participants designed, produced and organised their turns with each other, since topics are managed collaboratively. Thus, the interactional organisation used in CA: turn-taking, sequence organisation, adjacency pairs and repair (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3 for a discussion) helped in identifying the design, production and organisation of turns, and in determining how trouble and repair in topic management occurs. In other words, by

using these four types of interactional organisation, the researcher was able to uncover distinctive features and recurring patterns related to topic management during the online conversation classes.

4.2 Online one-to-one English conversation class conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC as a new trend

Online one-to-one L2 conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC can be seen as a new trend designed to improve speaking skills in second language learning. As Kenning (2010, p.9) points out, one of the most advantageous outcomes of the distribution of voice networks to language teaching is “to put the spotlight on oral communication and draw attention to the way in which oral interactions are affected by the context of use.” Not only does the online one-to-one L2 conversation class give L2 learners the advantage of talking with a native or native-like tutor but also it provides them with more opportunities to use the target language in a dyadic manner. That is, one-to-one conversation with a tutor of the target language is one of its strengths. By virtue of this strength, the online one-to-one conversation class is said to be suitable for helping L2 learners develop interactional competence (henceforth IC) as well as communicative competence.

Communicative competence refers to not only a person’s knowledge of language but also its use in real social situations (Hymes, 1972). IC, on the other hand, is defined as “the pragmatic relationship between participants’ employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed” (Young 2011, p.428). It can be inferred from these two definitions that while L2 learners are improving IC through interpersonal interaction, they can also develop communicative competence. Thus, Cheon (2003) explained the relationship between them as follows:

The deficiency of communicative competence in English appears to result from the lack of interpersonal interaction in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning contexts where English is not used as a means of communication (p.5).

Online one-to-one English conversation classes can be helpful for L2 learners who do not have opportunities to use the target language, English, in their setting, in which English is not used as a communication tool. That is, the online one-to-one

English instruction enables L2 learners of English to practise speaking English through interaction with a native or native-like tutor or teacher in a dyadic manner. Cheon (2003) described how the deficiency of interaction with native speakers in L2 learning affects some L2 learners as follows:

Especially, Korean secondary classrooms have suffered severely from large sizes and limited opportunities for authentic language interaction, which is said to be necessary for language acquisition. In foreign language situations, it is very difficult to have exposure to the target language outside of the classroom. With this limitation, task based activities are provided for Korean learners to generate ‘modified interaction.’ In the Korean homogenous class, however, students frequently revert to their native language, L1, rather than English to resolve miscommunications, even in face-to-face oral exchanges. Consequently, this often does not lead to meaningful negotiations in English (p.5-6).

Online one-to-one English instruction can provide L2 learners of English with a productive learning environment in which they can have one-to-one conversation with a native or native-like teacher or tutor with the aim of developing interactional as well as communicative competence. The one-to-one English conversation instruction obliges the L2 learner of English to depend solely on the target language and to pay attention to the contexts which are created during the interactions, as well as producing more interactions than the traditional face-to-face classroom. While talking, L2 learners can also pay more attention to meaning and fluency than to the form and accuracy of the target language, since they try to talk while simultaneously identifying the contexts they are constructing; thus, the interactions between the participants in online one-to-one English conversation classes fall into the “turn taking and sequence in meaning and fluency contexts” categories, which are two of the four L2 classroom contexts identified by Seedhouse (2004; see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). Young (2008, p.71, cited in Young 2011, p.429-430) identified seven IC resources which participants should include in their interactions, as follows:

- Identity resources
 - *Participation framework*: the identities of all participants in an interaction, present or not, official or unofficial, ratified or unrated, and their footing or identities in the interaction

- Linguistic resources
 - *Register*: the features of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar that typify a practice

· *Modes of meaning*: the ways in which participants construct interpersonal, experiential, and textual meanings in a practice

• Interactional resources

· *Speech acts*: the selection of acts in a practice and their sequential organization

· *Turn-taking*: how participants select the next speaker and how participants know when to end one turn and when to begin the next

· *Repair*: the ways in which participants respond to interactional trouble in a given practice

· *Boundaries*: the opening and closing acts of a practice that serve to distinguish a given practice from adjacent talk

Consequently, the dyadic conversation with a native or native-like tutor, and the use of and dependence on the target language alone can improve the learner's communicative competence, while the focus on the contexts constructed during the interactions can develop interactional competence.

The overall organisation of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC is said to be similar to that of telephone talk, since the participants can have synchronous conversation with each other in the spoken target language by using the same communication mechanism. It is in fact becoming more and more difficult to distinguish clearly between them, since the advent of smart mobile phones enables users to take these online one-to-one classes conducted through synchronous voice or video-based CMC, not to mention synchronous text-based CMC, on the telephone. The overall organisation of online one-to-one English instruction is roughly similar to the overall organisation of telephone talk, including opening, talking on topics and closing.

Although the overall organisation is similar, however, there are also some differences between them. In telephone conversations, when a caller, who has something to say to a callee, calls the callee, they start, have and finish a conversation. In online one-to-one instruction, on the other hand, any participant can call the other at the appointed time and have a conversation for a certain length of time. Even though a tutor or a teacher and a learner have a few specific main topics, they do not know in advance how many topics they will talk about, since the focus of the online one-to-one class is on improving interactional and communicative competence by practising speaking English on any topics proffered during the conversation.

Accordingly, participants in an online one-to-one English conversation class need to pay attention to topic management. This is because, in order for learners to be able to practise speaking English with the teacher or tutor for a certain length of time, it will be necessary for them to talk on a variety of topics. The fact that they need to develop several topics in order to maintain the conversation class distinguishes these classes from telephone or mundane talk. Thus, the development of several topics during the class is said to be self-conscious and contrived, unlike telephone or mundane talk. From a CA institutional discourse perspective (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1), it is natural for the participants to do so, since the goals of online one-to-one English conversation instruction (to acquire communicative and interactional competence) result in the participants producing interactions related to topic management.

Some speaking activities can be selected for the online one-to-one English conversation classes according to the interest of the learners. Researchers classify the speaking activities used in the face-to-face traditional classroom into various types (Harmer, 2001, 2007; Kayi, 2006; Richards, 2006; see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). However, since these classifications are geared towards the traditional face-to-face classroom, they needed to be adapted to online one-to-one conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. According to the classification of Kayi (2006) and Harmer (2007), discussion is mainly used in the online one-to-one English conversation class, but it needs to be adapted for online one-to-one conversation. On the other hand, according to Richards (2006), talk as interaction and talk as transaction are used in the online one-to-one English conversation class.

4.3 Research settings

The purpose of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC is to increase communicative and interactional competence by providing learners with opportunities to practise speaking English outside the traditional face-to-face classroom. The phrase ‘one-to-one’ means ‘person-to-person’, so an online class is an environment extremely conducive to language practice because participants can take part in the conversation without the risk of any interruption by other parties. The word ‘online’ indicates that they are connected via the

Internet; this is necessary because the participants are usually not in the same place geographically and may be a long distance away from each other and possibly in different time zones. Thus, in order to communicate with each other in real time they need computers and a software application called ‘Skype’ (see Section 4.4.1 for details).

The conversation class examined in this study follows the typical format of language courses offered by private English education providers in Korea. (In Korea, there are many English education providers (companies), which are large, privately owned institutions.) The class consisted of twenty sessions, with each session lasting twenty minutes. Each student had twenty sessions with the tutor between the 22nd of November and the 30th of December 2008. These sessions were held every other day: that is, three times a week. Supplementary materials such as textbooks and hand-outs are not used in these classes, since the focus is on giving students additional opportunities to speak English through talking about particular topics. In other words, the classes are not designed to *teach* English.

It was found that the participants: the tutor and each student, maintained each session by talking about one main topic and several other minor topics. The tutor developed a lesson plan, which included the main topic for each session, and delivered it to the students (Appendix B). However, it was not compulsory for the participants to follow it, and it was possible for them to choose other topics during the classes. Additional topics were improvised by the participants during the classes. The classes thus on the surface appear to possess some of the characteristics of institutional talk; however, in practice, they have more similarities to mundane conversation.

4.3.1 Participants and researcher

The participants in the present study were two Korean high school students and an Indian tutor. The two students, as learners of English as a foreign language, were attending a high school in Korea and each used a pseudonym: TK and Hiddink. Both had begun learning English in the third grade of elementary school, but they had not had previous experience of online English conversation classes. With regard to language study abroad in English-speaking foreign countries such as the United Kingdom,

Hiddink had no experience of it at all, while TK had studied in Canada for about two months during the sixth grade of elementary school. However, recently they had both been studying English not only at school but also at a private institution, focusing on English reading and listening, and including English grammar, in order to prepare for the Korean college entrance examination. The two students were randomly selected from applicants who wanted to take the online English conversation class. At first, the researcher was hesitant about choosing them because they were attending the same school, but in the end it was deemed appropriate to do so, since it would have been difficult for the researcher to control participants also operating in different places, seeing as the researcher was already in the U.K. and the tutor in Kuwait. It was also thought that even if they were attending the same school, it would not affect the study, because the online conversation is focused on one-to-one English conversation.

The tutor was a non-native speaker of English from India living in Kuwait while her husband was working for a company there temporarily. She had graduated from a university and a graduate school in India, where English had normally been the language used for teaching and learning since her childhood. Thus, she spoke English as fluently as a native speaker. She had experience not only of having worked in an American company for about two years but also of having taught English to Korean learners of English for over two years using Skype, a software application used for communication over the Internet (see Section 4.4.1), which means that she was sufficiently qualified to participate as a tutor in the current study. The researcher had previously met this tutor while taking an online conversation class; when beginning this research, he approached her about participating in the study. It was thus unnecessary to explain her role in the current research, since she already knew what an online one-to-one conversation class consisted of.

4.3.2 Organisation of online English conversation classes

The two Korean student participants come into the category of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Although, as mentioned above, they had officially been learning English since the third grade of elementary school, learning it as a foreign language in Korea had not given them many everyday opportunities to talk with native

or native-like speakers of English. They received only one or two English conversation classes a week with a native-speaker English teacher at their school, and this did not give them enough practice in speaking English because other students were also participating in the class. In fact, the average time allotted to each student can be less than one minute in each English conversation class. Outside the classroom, they had no opportunity to practise speaking English in their everyday lives even if they wanted to.

In order to give more opportunities to learners of English, therefore, some private English education providers started providing online English conversation classes to learners in Korea. In these classes, the tutor does not teach linguistic aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, but just talks freely with the learners on any topic, in order to give them as much opportunity as possible to speak English, without any pressure. The sessions were described in Section 4.2 above.

4.3.3 Technological aids for the online conversation classes

It would not have been possible for these online classes to take place without technology such as computers, an Internet connection and software for communication and recording. The participants (the tutor and the students) in this research were a long way away from each other, so they used their own computers, Internet connection and headsets. Before the class started, the researcher checked the participants' computers specs and Internet connection. There were no problems with the computers; however, the Internet connection was not good but it was beyond the scope of the researcher to do anything about this. The researcher then explained to all the participants how to install and use the Skype communication software application, and explained to the two students how to install and use the Pamela recording software application. After that, the researcher told the participants not to hesitate to contact him if they had any problems in using the software.

4.4 Data collection

The data were collected while the participants were engaging in the online conversation classes. As mentioned in Chapter 2, rapid developments in technology have now made it

possible to have and record conversation taking place via the Internet by using software applications. The Internet-based software applications that would enable the participants to communicate with each other and record their conversations were installed before the classes began. Skype (version 3.8) was chosen as the software application for communication and Pamela (version 4.0) as the application for recording the conversations. Around 13 hours of recorded data were obtained. After the audio data were collected, they were transcribed using the media software applications Nave player (version 0.6.12 limited) and Sound Forge Pro (version 10.0).

4.4.1 Audio recording

Audio recording plays a crucial role in the conversation analytic approach, as explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. Audio recordings include everything that takes place between the participants. Since conversation analysts adopt the same perspective as the participants when they listen to the audio data, the sound quality of the recordings can affect the study. To collect the audio data, two software applications were used: Skype (version 3.8) and Pamela (version 4.0).

The first software application, Skype, is utilised as a communication tool. It has been defined as software that enables people who have networked computers to call each other as on a telephone through VoIP (Voice over IP) (Godwin-Jones, 2005). Through Skype, the tutor and the students were able to have English conversation classes even though they lived in different countries: the two students in Korea and the tutor in Kuwait. Skype was employed in online conversation for language practice as well as for personal use owing to its convenience and economical nature: users can talk to each other in real time without time restrictions virtually free of charge if their computers are connected to the Internet. Furthermore, Skype also includes functions such as instant messaging, conference and video calls, so users can exchange text messages and see each other on computer screens if they are using video cameras. As network technology developed, Skype users were also able to make calls to landline and mobile phones all over the world. However, the participants in the current study used only the Skype-to-Skype voice calls, that is, they did not use any text messages or video calls at all.

The second software application, Pamela, was chosen to record the online conversation classes because it is specifically designed to record the online conversation taking place between Skype-to-Skype voice call users alone. It has a useful function in that it automatically stores recorded files as MP3 files after recording is completed. In addition to the recording function, Pamela has various functions compatible with using various Skype functions, such as video recording, chat recording and call transfer. It also seems to be very user-friendly, since it is not difficult to install and use. When a Skype-to-Skype voice call starts, in order for Pamela to start recording the conversation, the user clicks on the recording button on the pop-up window which appears automatically. In the conducting of this research, when the Internet connection was stable, the sound quality was high enough for the researcher to listen to and transcribe. Any problems with the Internet connection caused difficulties in both listening and transcribing.

The students installed Pamela 4.0 on their computers to record their classes. Most online English education companies in Korea provide their learners with a recording software application to encourage learners to record and review their conversations, so the researcher used this as a model. The students did not seem to be disturbed by recording their conversations with the tutor, since they just had to click on the recording button. After each lesson, they sent the recording file to the researcher by email. Each file was renamed to represent the record of the session and stored in the researcher's computer. For example, in a file named 'Ses 07-Hid-Sat-06-Dec-08', 'Ses' means session, '07' seventh session, 'Hid' is an abbreviation of the participant's name, '06' is the day, 'Dec' the month and '08' the year. As mentioned above, when classes were recorded with an unstable Internet connection, the sound quality of some of the files was too poor to listen to and transcribe. As a result, nineteen of TK's sessions (424.38 minutes) and seventeen of Hiddink's sessions (354.15 minutes) were used for the present study. Almost thirteen hours (778.53 minutes) of sound data recorded by Pamela 4.0 were obtained.

4.4.2 Problems associated with collecting data

These online one-to-one conversation classes depend heavily on information and

network technology, which make it possible for participants who are at a distance to have conversations with each other. However, if the technology does not work properly, this can have a negative effect on the classes. In the current study, Internet connection problems occurred more than just a few times, so the quality of some of the data was poor, and the classes were cancelled when the problems were serious. As a result, the data collection took more time than had originally been anticipated.

There were two problems typically associated with recording the classes. The first was related to finding a suitable software application for recording and the second involved the stability of the Internet connection. Skype, the communication software application used in this study, is not compatible with any software applications designed to record online conversations except Pamela. At first, the researcher had planned to use ordinary recording software applications, including a recording application installed on computers, and tried using them to record Skype-to-Skype voice calls; however, they were not able to record them. Thus, the researcher tried to find a more efficient and stable recording software application to record conversations taking place between Skype users. Finally, Pamela (version 4.0) was chosen as the recording software application, by means of which it was possible to record all the conversations needed for the current study.

The Internet connection was another serious problem that affected the collection of data. Whenever Internet connection problems arose, they affected not only the talk but also the recording of the talk. Sometimes the participants were unable to hear each other clearly. When the Internet connection was very unstable, the participants had to cut short or cancel the session because the connection problems caused the quality of the sound to deteriorate to such an extent. The unstable Internet connection also caused Pamela to make very poor quality recordings. Whenever Internet connection problems arose, the participants would stop for a moment and try to find a solution. However, this was not easy for them since much of the time these problems involved issues such as a difference in quality between the networks of Korea and Kuwait, the number of Internet users, or weather conditions during the lesson, which was beyond the scope of the participants to deal with.

The differences in time and place between the participants was another factor that caused delays in collecting the data. The tutor was in Kuwait, the students in Korea and the researcher in the U.K. When a technical problem arose, these differences in time and place meant that it took more time to fix it than expected. When the participants needed to reschedule a class as a result of changes in their personal circumstances, this also led to difficulties. It is thus important to take into account differences in location and time when planning research into CMC.

4.5 Selection, transcription and analysis of the data

The collected data were analysed through the following steps: listening to, selecting, transcribing and analysing the data. The first step was listening. The researcher listened repeatedly to the data, attempting to identify those sections which included distinctive and recurring conversational features used when the tutor and the students initiated, maintained, terminated and changed topics. After selecting the extracts, the researcher transcribed them in detail using CA conventions.

Although the transcription of the audio data was a time-consuming process, it was indispensable, since it enabled the researcher to adopt the participants' perspective. The data were transcribed in detail using CA conventions, including symbols representing the characteristics of utterances. The transcription was performed in two stages. The first consisted of transcribing the sound data selected without using CA conventions, listening to the sound clips repeatedly using a media software application called Nave player (version 0.6.12 limited), which meant that the researcher did not have to use a supplementary instrument such as a transcribing pedal to listen repeatedly to the sound clips, since the software supports various useful short-cut functions. For example, setting shift and F3 on the keyboard results in a three-second rewind: the researcher pushes the shift and F3 keys simultaneously to rewind the sound file for three seconds. Thus, the use of this piece of software saved the researcher a great deal of time in the rough transcription of the data.

The second step was to insert transcript symbols into the first rough transcripts while listening again to the sound data. In order to insert all the pauses and gaps

occurring between utterances in the data, another media player software application, Sound Forge Pro (version 10.0), was used to measure the pauses and gaps. This program displays the sound waves on the screen, so it is not difficult to measure pauses and gaps. Thus, both Nave Player (version 0.6.12 limited) and Sound Forge Pro (version 10) saved the researcher a great deal of time in transcribing the data.

The transcription symbols in Atkinson and Heritage (1984) were used as the CA conventions (Appendix A) when the data were transcribed. The CA transcription convention was used to represent in written form all the characteristic details of the utterances the participants produced during the classes. Characteristics such as latching, simultaneous and overlapping utterances, pauses and gaps, characteristics of speech delivery, transcription doubt, non-verbal communications and the like were all represented using the transcription conventions of Atkinson and Heritage (1984), although many different versions of these conventions are used by different conversation analysts: for example, Jefferson (1989), Psathas and Anderson (1990), Psathas (1995), and ten Have and Psathas (1995). Both the selected sound files and the transcripts were used for the analysis, since the transcripts provide only a visual representation of the audio data, while the audio data themselves are the primary resource and include all the social interactions occurring in the conversation (Markee, 2000; Wooffitt, 2005; Liddicoat, 2007).

When analysing the data, the researcher basically followed the five ‘tools’ of analysis: selecting a sequence, characterising the action in the sequence, and considering the packaging of the actions, the timing and taking of turns, and the ways in which the actions were accomplished (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997). In addition, as explicated in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, the four types of interactional organisation were also applied. First, taking into account the principle of ‘one party talks at a time’ (Sacks et al. 1974, p.699), and the fact that a person’s talk comprises “unit-types for English including sentential, clausal, phrasal and lexical constructions” (Sacks et al. 1974, p.702), analysing the turn-taking organisation revealed how the participants exchanged turns with each other, from initiating to changing topics. For example, the examination of turn-taking showed that the participants produced various units to make turns and sequences following the ‘one party talks at a time’ principle when managing topics.

Second, adjacency pairs play an important role in initiating and maintaining topics. In this research it was found that, for instance, the participants initiated or maintained new topics by using the ‘question and answer’ type of adjacency pair. Third, preference/dispreference organisation is also adopted in the changing and maintenance of topics. For example, in the data obtained for the current research it was found that the participants changed or maintained topics by producing preferred responses. Finally, repair is also used as a type of topic maintenance. An example found in our data is of a participant giving a clarification request to maintain a proffered topic. In addition to the five tools and four types of interactional organisation, all the extracts were analysed based on the emic perspective (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1.5). In other words, the researcher attempted to identify conversational features related to topic management from the viewpoint of the participants.

4.6 Reliability, validity and reflexivity of the study

The reliability, validity and reflexivity of the current study are derived from the use of CA methodology to analyse the data. As explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, there are several ways in which the use of CA as a research methodology is in itself sufficient to ensure the reliability, validity and reflexivity of any piece of research. How these were ensured in the current study is described below.

Reliability means that a measuring instrument used in research constantly reproduces the same result when it is used again afterwards in other, similar settings (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4). In this research the conversation classes were recorded through Pamela, a recording software application. The quality of most of the recorded sound files was good enough for the researcher to listen to and transcribe them, with the exception of sound files which were recorded when the Internet connection was seriously unstable. The recorded data chosen for analysis were transcribed using CA conventions, which means that the transcripts contained as much information as possible, including seemingly trivial details, to deliver the characteristics of the utterances. These detailed transcriptions enabled the researcher to adopt the participants’ perspective. Some of the data were presented along with the sound files at

MARG² data sessions, in order to obtain opinions and advice from other PhD students and researchers. The recording of the conversations and transcription of the sound files as a research method of data collection thus played an important role in ensuring the reliability of the current study. The use of conversation analytic procedures also assisted in this regard. In analysing the selected recorded data, the CA norms of turn-taking organisation, adjacency pairs, preference and dispreference organisation and repair and an emic perspective were employed. Thus, if other researchers analyse the same data applying CA methodologies, it is expected that the same research findings will be obtained.

The validity of the study can also be assumed to be high since it is based on conversation analysis. As explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, validity refers to the degree of accuracy with which researchers measure what they have planned to measure. The research settings, participants, data collection methods and analysis procedures used in this study were designed based on CA, so the study may be said to have a high degree of validity to support the research findings.

With regard to the different types of validity, internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings obtained from the subjects taking part in the research conform to the reality. The internal validity of the current study was established by the use of research methods such as recording and transcribing actual conversation and the adoption of the emic perspective, which means that the research findings will be applicable in any other real-life situations.

External validity means the extent to which a result obtained from a specific research setting can be applied to different research settings or to other subjects, and is related to generalisability. It is sometimes said that CA uses small sample sizes compared to quantitative research methods. However, in the current study, each student engaged in twenty sessions, making a total of 40 sessions, although four sessions were not transcribed owing to the poor sound quality. Almost thirteen hours of recorded data

² Micro-Analysis Research Group (MARG) is a cross-institutional, interdisciplinary research group, founded in 2007, and organised by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.

were obtained. Accordingly, the sample size of the current study is sufficient to make it possible to generalise the research findings even on the basis of quantitative research standards.

Ecological validity refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied to real life. The ecological validity of the current study was ensured by virtue of the fact that the sound data were recorded in real online one-to-one conversation classes, so the research findings on topic management in online conversation classes can be applied to other online English conversation classes that take place in real life.

Construct validity indicates how well research findings include the basic abstract concepts supporting the findings. As mentioned in the preceding chapter (Section 3.4), according to Seedhouse (2004, p.257) in CA a different definition of ‘construct’ from that used in quantitative research is used, with each TCU functioning as a construct. In the present study, when the participants managed topics during their conversations, each turn constructional unit they produced contained a specific meaning and helped to form sequence organisations that were used to initiate, maintain, terminate or change topics. The kinds of social action contained in the sequence organisations were observed and analysed from a CA perspective on the basis of turn-taking organisation, adjacency pairs, preference and dispreference organisation and repair, so construct validity was ensured even if it could not be quantified from the perspective of CA.

Reflexivity refers to explaining the influence of a researcher on his or her research and vice versa. The researcher tried to be reflexive in the following ways. First, the researcher did not inform the participants of the aims and focuses of the study so as not to affect the natural conversation. Second, the participants were able to be as relaxed as possible in their conversation classes because the researcher did not reveal any intention to assess or evaluate either the tutor’s English language ability or teaching skills or the students’ English language use. Thus, they were able to participate naturally in the conversation classes without any pressure. Third, the researcher influenced the analysis process and vice versa. Since the researcher was interested only in the participants’ topic management, he selected data related solely to topic management. Thus, even if the chosen data were found to contain other important distinctive,

meaningful features, these were ignored. It is possible that the data collected for the current study includes distinctive features and patterns related to issues other than topic management.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were considered at every stage of the research process. Newcastle University regulations and the research supervisor were consulted in this regard. The researcher notified the participants of their rights related to the study through documentation (see Appendix C) and their consent to participate in the research was obtained.

The specific actions taken to avoid ethical problems in accordance with the regulations were as follows. First, in the data collection process, all the participants: the tutor and the students, used pseudonyms instead of their real names to protect their privacy. Thus, if the conversational data should be revealed to the public, they will remain anonymous. Second, since the tutor had over two years' experience of conducting online conversation classes with Korean students, the researcher was confident that she would avoid talking about any contentious subjects that could give rise to ethical problems. Third, the researcher ensured that no ethical issues arose in the analysis. If any contentious issues were included in the conversations, he was able to identify these through the repeated listening carried out for the purposes of transcription and analysis. Finally, when some of the data chosen for analysis were presented at the MARG data session or revealed to other researchers or PhD students, no ethical problems arose.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explained in detail how the current study was conducted. First, the aims and the focus of the study were described, along with the research questions. Second, online one-to-one English conversation class conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC as a new trend was explored. The research settings were then presented, including the participants and the researcher, and the organisation and

technological aids used for the online conversation classes. The data collection process was described, including an account of the problems which arose during this process. An account of the selection, transcription and analysis of the data for the current study was also presented in this chapter. Finally, the justifications of the present study and ethical considerations were discussed. In the following chapter the findings obtained from the data analysis are presented in detail.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of selected extracts from the data collected for this research. These were taken from the spoken discourse data of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. The analysis is conducted from a CA perspective in order to reveal the repeated patterns and distinctive features of the interactions between the participants which were used to answer the research questions.

First, it was found that there were five ways typically used to *initiate topics*: by means of a question including a topical item, by means of a solicitous enquiry into trouble, through a question including no topical item, by the reuse of an enquiry into personal state, and through a statement including a topical item. In addition, a first topic initiation using the ‘how-are-you’ question-answer sequence is illustrated.

Second, it was found that the participants used seven methods of *maintaining proffered topics*: by completing a question-answer adjacency pair with its second pair, by giving a topicaliser, a preference or a feedback token, by asking a question, by issuing a clarification request, and by duplicating part of a prior turn.

Third, six ways of carrying out *topic termination and change* through the collaborative contributions of the participants were found: topic change begins by one participant providing an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk, by means of a summary of prior talk, through the assessment of prior talk, through the formulation or reformulation of prior talk, by means of the exchange of meaningless minimal responses or pauses, and through the use of the phrase ‘that’s all’. Unilateral topic movement, boundaried and stepwise topical movement are then illustrated with examples from the data.

Finally, it was found that there were three causes of trouble in topic management: inadequate lexical knowledge, rejection of a proffered topic, and technical

problems combined with other interference and the ways in which they were repaired.

5.1 How are topics initiated during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

Topic initiation took place when the tutor and students continued talking after the opening sequence or at a topic boundary. When the tutor or the students initiated topics, they generally utilised one of two linguistic forms: a question or a statement, as claimed by Downing (2000) (see p.35). These two broad strategies have been classified by other researchers into smaller categories: topic initial elicitors, itemised news enquiries and news announcements (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985; Radford and Tarplee, 2000) (see p.36). When the spoken discourse data of the current study were analysed, these three types of question were also adopted in order to illuminate how the participants initiated or proffered topics. However, for the purposes of data analysis in the current study, the above terms related to topic initiation were modified in order to include also the concept of the two broader categories: question and statement.

In the data obtained for the current study, it was found that when the tutor wanted to talk about a topic which the students had in mind, she would use a topic initial elicitor (Button and Casey, 1985; Radford and Tarplee, 2000). The students would introduce a prospective topic as a response to the topic initial elicitor, and if this was accepted as newsworthy by the tutor, it would become a topic. In other words, the topic initial elicitor was simply a question which did not contain any topical item, indicating that the recipient should introduce a topic. Thus, in the current study, the term ‘topic initial elicitor’ was changed to ‘a question including no topical item’.

In this research, itemised news enquiries (Button and Casey, 1985; Radford and Tarplee, 2000) are also classified further into three different types of question (see Chapter 2, p.38). The basic function of the itemised news enquiry is to ask the recipient not only to fill a knowledge gap but also to elaborate further on the topic of the question. The first type of itemised enquiry is connected to the recipient’s activities and circumstances involving a third party that the enquirer also has some relationship with or related knowledge of, so the enquirer asks for more up to date information about the third party from the recipient. Thus, the first type of itemised news enquiry is called ‘a

question including a third party related to the interlocutors’.

The second type of itemised news enquiry is called ‘a solicitous enquiry into trouble’. This type of enquiry is different from the enquiry into personal state used in an opening sequence in that the former is produced when an asker has prior knowledge of a specific trouble linked with the recipient and wants to know how it is going now.

The third type of itemised news enquiry, which was identified for the current research, is called by this researcher ‘a question including a topical item’. The main purpose of the third type of itemised news enquiry is simply to generate topical talk for the conversation. Unlike the other two types, in the third type the asker does not have any previous knowledge about the question: that is to say, he or she asks a question which is unrelated to the prior topic simply in order to move away from it. The answer depends on the knowledge of the recipient.

A news announcement (Button and Casey, 1985; Radford and Tarplee, 2000) is employed to initiate a topic related to the initiator of the announcement. The topical item is expressed like the headline of a newspaper article. For the purposes of the current research, the term ‘news announcement’ has been changed to ‘a statement including a topical item’.

All the modified terms mentioned above were developed for the purposes of the current research in order to include the two basic categories of question and statement. That is, each question and statement could either include or not include a topical item. The inclusion of a topical item in a proffered topic is said to have the potential to lead to a topic of conversation. If a participant asks a question or makes a statement that includes a topical item, this indicates that he or she intends to talk about it, whereas if a participant utilises a question or statement including no topical item, it means that he or she is attempting to elicit a topical talk from the recipient. The relationships between these new terms and the existing terms are illustrated in Figure 3, which also shows that the basic concepts remain unchanged.

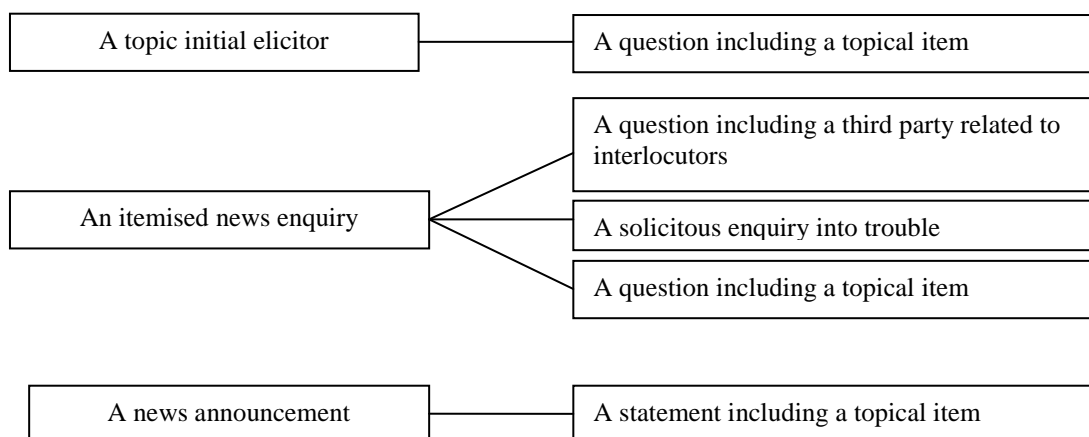


Figure 3 Revised terms used for topic initiators in the current research

5.1.1 Topic initiation by means of a question including a topical item

First topic initiation can thus take place by means of a question including a topical item. A question including a topical item may include the potential topic which the initiator intends to talk about with the other participant(s), and can lead to a topic through conversation. This type of question corresponds to the third type of itemised news enquiry (see p.39). If the tutor or the students used a question including a topical item, he or she was expressing an intention to talk about the topical item, which, depending on the recipient's response, could lead to a topic of conversation. An example of how the tutor addressed a question including a topical item to generate a topic after the opening sequence is shown in Extract 1 below.

Extract 1. Hiddink Day 07 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

- 1 ((the sound of ringing))
 2 T: ↓hel↑lo
 3 (.)
 4 S: ↓hel↑lo
 5 (0.7)
 6 S: [()
 7 T: [how are ↑you
 8 (0.5)
 9 S: () exhaust- (0.2) exhausted as usual
 10 (2.0)
 11 T: o:::h (0.6) be-cause of your exa:m[s
 12 S: [ye::ah

13 (1.7)
 14 T: o::h o↓kay (2.3) al↑right u:m
 15 (0.3) let- let's talk about something
 16 very ligh- t (.) ok[a:y?
 17 S: [(ye:ah)
 18 ➔ T: (.) .hh (.) uh **why don't you talk**
 19 **about your (0.5) favourite vacation::**
 20 **that you had been to or (.) .h**
 21 **(.) uh- your dream vacation whe-**
 22 **where would you like to go to (.) you**
 23 **can talk about that**

In line 2, the tutor responds to the summons made by the ringing of Skype with “↓hel↑lo”. After a micro pause in line 3, Hiddink also responds to it with “↓hel↑lo” in line 4, providing a sample utterance for the purpose of recognition, and then, after a 0.7-second pause in line 5, tries to utter something in line 6, but this is not heard because it overlaps with the tutor’s next turn. Since it is produced in the opening sequence, this may have been Hiddink’s greeting the tutor. Without greeting Hiddink, the tutor produces a personal state enquiry “[how are ↑you” in line 7. After a 0.5-second pause in line 8, Hiddink responds with “() exhaust- (0.2) exhausted as usual” in line 9, which can be interpreted as a negative response. A 2.0-second pause develops at line 10, which may be construed as indicating that the tutor cannot respond immediately because the student’s negative response is different from the typical responses to phatic enquiries into personal state. Thus, in line 11, the tutor utters a change-of-state token “o:::h”, which may signal that she has realised something about the prior turn and, after a 0.6-second pause, suggests a reason for the negative response by producing “be-cause of your exa:m[s” in line 11. Hiddink agrees with a minimal acknowledgement token “[ye::ah”, which overlaps the end of the previous turn. The sequence of the ‘how-are-you’ question and response does not produce any more turn-taking because the tutor knows the reason, so the sequence does not lead to a topic.

A pre-sequence for initiating a topic then takes place. After a 1.7-second pause in line 13, the tutor utters a change-of-state token “o::h”, followed by receipt tokens “o↓kay (2.3) al↑right” and a hesitation marker “u:m” in line 14, which may indicate that she realises that the opening talk has been exhausted. Thus, they now need a topic in order to keep the conversation going. Hence, the tutor suggests that they should talk about a light topic, owing to the student’s tension caused by his preparation for his

exams, eliciting agreement from Hiddink, who utters “ok[a:y?” in lines 14 -16, which does not provide a specific topic but signals that the tutor is going to proffer a topic. Hiddink agrees to this by producing a minimal agreement token “[ye:ah)” in line 17, but this is not heard clearly because it overlaps the “ok[a:y?” which is the last word of the previous turn. As soon as Hiddink has produced his response, the tutor asks him a question that includes a topical item - ‘a vacation’ - in lines 18 - 23 (arrowed) in order to initiate a topic after the opening sequence.

Thus in Extract 1, the tutor tries to initiate a topic after the opening sequence by using a question including a topical item. The topical item has the potential to become a topic through conversation: that is, it has topicality because the tutor has not talked to Hiddink about it before the lesson.

A question including a topical item employed to initiate a topic after the opening sequence as presented in Extract 1 can also be used to initiate a new topic in the boundaries between two topics. An example of how the tutor does this is shown in Extract 2 below.

Extract 2. TK Day 12 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK are talking about dress code...))
 253 S: they be[lieve what they're [doing is]
 254 T: [okay [uh-huh]
 255 S: (.) good (0.3) and u:h moral (0.5) that's
 256 why i- (.) they (0.2) are=
 257 T: =mm-[huh
 258 S: [°they° try to dress themselves(0.3)as
 259 clean as possible (0.4) to express them
 260 that (0.4) expe::ss (0.6) uh the others
 261 that (.) like (1.2) themselves a:re
 262 (0.5) doing the good things (.)and we are
 263 like (1.0) u::h (0.4) guardian or something
 264 (0.5) o↓kay
 265 (1.3)
 266 T: uh- [okay
 267 S: [so
 268 (0.5)
 269 S: i think [they're]
 270 T: [i got you]
 271 (1.2)
 272 S: okay yeah (0.4) that's what i (0.2)

273 what i (0.2) try to say
 274 (2.0)
 275 T: mm-hu::h
 276 (0.3)
 277 S: mm-huh
 278 (.)
 279 T: .h okay (0.2) thank you for letting
 280 me know your (.) opinion (.) .h=
 281 S: =ok[ay
 282 T: [u::m (.) that we were talking
 283 → about travelling (.) u::h **what is your**
 284 **idea about travelling and do you**
 285 **like travelling**

By line 281, the tutor and TK have finished talking about the topic ‘dress code’. Thus, they now need another topic, so the tutor produces “[u::m (.) that we were talking about travelling” in lines 282 - 283. The tutor’s turn seems to act as a pre-sequence to initiate a new topic, since she gives a hint as to what the next topic will be by talking about one of the topics of a previous lesson she had with Hiddink. After a micro pause, the tutor utters a hesitation marker “u::h” and then addresses a question including a topical item: “what is your idea about travelling and do you like travelling” in lines 283 - 285 (arrowed) to initiate a new topic. This is a completely new topic since it is not connected to the prior topic of ‘dress code’, so it can be called an ‘unconnected topical item’. The tutor indicates her intention to talk about the new topic, but she does not have any prior knowledge of it and has never talked to TK about it before. In summary, the tutor employs a question including an unconnected topical item in order to generate a new topic which is not related to the prior topic at the boundaries between two topics.

In Extracts 1 and 2, a question including a topical item is used to initiate a first topic and a new topic. In Extract 1, a question including a topical item plays a role in initiating a first topic because it is asked after the opening sequence. In Extract 2, the question including a topical item initiates a new topic - ‘travelling’ - which is completely different from the previous topic ‘dress code’.

Unlike the examples presented in Extracts 1 and 2, a question including a topical item can be asked in order to initiate a new topic which is partly related to the prior topic. That is, the two topics cannot be included in one single topic, but they are partially connected with each other. An example of how the tutor uses a question

including a connected topical item to initiate a new topic which is connected to the previous topic is given in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3. TK Day 07 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK are talking about commercial problems associated with the Harry Potter film...))

465 S: they will (0.2) they will (0.5) u::h
466 (.) swear at (.) jei kei (J.K.) rowling
467 about a::h you become uh (0.5) u::h
468 >you know money gate like< (.) °you ↑know°
469 (0.6)
470 T: o::h=yea:h (0.6) and true (.) and
471 they're wav- when (0.2) they are made
472 into movie is uh it still creates much
473 more complications about choosing
474 the characters
475 (.)
476 S: °yeah°
477 (.)
478 →T: and all that .hh (.) and u::h especially
479 did you read the korean version or
480 did you read the english version of
481 the harry potter books

((They continue to talk about reading the English version of Harry Potter...))

Up to line 475, the tutor and TK have been talking on the topic of problems associated with a Harry Potter film. However, after a micro pause at line 477, the tutor initiates a new topic by addressing a question including a topical item: “did you read the Korean version or did you read the English version of the Harry Potter books” in lines 478 - 481 (arrowed). The topical item comes out of the prior topic, so it is partly connected to the prior topic but it is not included in the same topic.

A question including a topical item can be used to initiate a new topic which is partly related to the prior topic. Thus, the topical item can be called a ‘connected topical item’. For example, in Extract 3, ‘Harry Potter’ provides a connection between the prior topic and the topical item, even though the subjects of the two are completely different. In conclusion, a question including a connected topical item, as shown in Extract 3, is different from a question that includes an unconnected topical item (Extract 2), in that the latter can be used to initiate a new topic which is not related to the prior topic,

whereas the former is utilised to elicit a new topic which seems to be connected with the prior topic, even if the subjects of the two topics are different. This type of topic change is explained in Section 5.3.2 of this chapter.

5.1.2 Topic initiation by means of a solicitous enquiry into trouble

Similar to questions including a topical item, the tutor and students initiated topics by asking about things they had already discussed with each other. This type of question also included a topical item and was mainly related to personal problems they were having; it therefore falls into the category of ‘a solicitous enquiry into trouble’, discussed earlier in this thesis, which corresponds to the second type of itemised news enquiry (see p.39). The solicitous enquiry into trouble is different from a question including a topical item in that the former is based on the participants’ prior knowledge of the trouble. For example, the tutor occasionally used a solicitous enquiry into trouble that she had talked about with the students during previous lessons in order to initiate a topic. That is to say, the tutor remembered the trouble, so she asked about how things were going now. An example of how a solicitous enquiry into trouble is used to initiate a topic after the opening sequence is presented in Extract 4 below.

Extract 4. TK Day 03 (4T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = TK)

- 1 ((the sound of ringing))
2 S: >kay< hello?
3 (.)
4 T: he↑llo
5 (0.5)
6 S: hi i-
7 (.)
8 T: how are (0.2) you:
9 (0.5)
10 S: i’m fine (1.3) °and ↑you°
11 (0.4)
12 ➔ T: o-↓kay so: (.) **how’s your cold right now**

In line 2, TK responds to the summons actualised by the ringing of Skype with “>kay< hello?”, in which the “okay” can be interpreted as TK expressing his feeling of relief at succeeding in connecting to the Skype communication tool. After a micro pause at line 3, the tutor sends TK a sample utterance for the purpose of recognition by

returning “he↑llo” in line 4. After a 0.5-second pause at line 5, TK greets the tutor by saying “hi” and then begins to say something, but breaks off in line 6. Thus, after a micro pause, the tutor asks a personal state question of TK without greeting him back in line 8. After a 0.5-second pause at line 9, TK responds with “i’m fine” and then, after a 1.3-second pause, returns the question by producing “◦and ↑you◦” in a low tone in line 10. After a 0.4-second pause at line 11, the tutor utters “◦-↓kay” as a receipt token, which can be construed as signalling that the opening talk is completed, produces “so” immediately, which can be interpreted as a sequential initial token to introduce a topical talk and, after a micro pause, employs a solicitous enquiry into trouble: “how’s your cold right now” in line 12 (arrowed), in order to initiate a topic.

The tutor thus initiates a topic after the opening sequence by using a solicitous enquiry into trouble. The reason she employs this device is that she already knows that TK has had some trouble with a cold because she has talked to him about it in one of the previous lessons, so she wants to know how it is going now.

A solicitous enquiry into trouble can also be employed to initiate a new topic when a prior topic has been terminated. An example of the tutor initiating a new topic by producing a solicitous enquiry into trouble is presented in Extract 5 below.

Extract 5. Hiddink Day 09 (1T) (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

((The tutor and Hiddink are talking about the film of *The Lion King*...))

- 321 T: i mean it there was lion king one and two
 322 have you seen both of them
 323 (0.6)
 324 S: i think (.) i was (0.2) just one (1.7) the
 325 [young age] is a lion king
 326 T: [↑o::h]
 327 (0.6)
 328 T: >okay okay< (2.0) there is a second part
 329 (.) too
 330 (0.7)
 331 S: yes i (0.3) i (0.8) know about that but
 332 i (0.3) have i had not (1.0) chance [to
 333 T: [you’ve not
 334 seen it (.) o:[↓kay (.) o↓kay
 335 S: [yea:h
 336 (1.2)
 337 T: that’s ↑al↓right (0.4) you’ve should probably

338 see it it's- (0.2) it's nice
 339 (0.3)
 340 S: o:h (0.2) o↓kay
 341 (5.1)
 342 S: hum
 343 (0.9)
344 →T: so how is your preparations going on
345 (0.3) for for your exam
 346 (0.7)
 347 S: i think almost- (0.4) i think i can prepare
 348 almost (.) before the final exam (0.7) if
 349 i don't sleep much

By line 342, the tutor and Hiddink have finished talking about the film of *The Lion King*. After a 0.9-second pause at line 343, the tutor utters “so”, which can be taken as heralding the introduction of a topical talk, and then initiates a new topic by making a solicitous enquiry into trouble: “how is your preparations going on (0.3) for for your exam”, in lines 344 - 345 (arrowed). The tutor already knows that Hiddink has been preparing for an exam, so she asks how it is going now, indicating that she has some previous knowledge on the subject.

In Extract 5, therefore, the tutor initiates a new topic by employing a solicitous enquiry into trouble - Hiddink's preparation for the exam - when the prior topic has been terminated. That is, she already knows that Hiddink has been struggling with his preparation because she has talked to him about it before, so she uses the solicitous enquiry to find out how it has been going lately.

5.1.3 Topic initiation by means of a question including no topical item

A question that includes no topical item can also be used to initiate a topic. Unlike a question including a topical item, a participant who initiates a topic by using a question that includes no topical item is not proffering a topical item that he or she intends to talk about, but rather is asking the recipient to produce a topic which he or she wants to talk about. This type of question can be categorised as a ‘topic initial elicitor’ (see p.36).

A question including no topical item can be positioned after the opening sequence to elicit a topic from the recipient. That is to say, when a participant needs a

topic to keep the conversation going or wishes to talk about whatever the other participant has in his or her mind now, the first participant asks a question that does not include any topical talk. In the current study, it was found that the tutor used questions including no topical talk to elicit topics from the students. Thus, when the tutor asked the question, the students would introduce what they had in their minds as a potential topic. An example of how a question including no topical item is used to elicit a topic from TK after the anchor position is shown in Extract 6 below.

Extract 6. TK Day 15 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

1 ((the sound of ringing))
 2 T: ↓hel↑lo
 3 (0.3)
 4 S: ↓hel↑lo
 5 (1.1)
 6 T: yes ch
 7 (0.8)
 8 S: °yeap° o↓kay hel↓lo
 9 (0.4)
 10 T: .h (0.7) hel↓lo:
 11 (0.4)
 12 S: >↓mm<
 13 (0.4)
 14 ➔ T: .h so u::::m >what do we talk< about now

In line 2, the tutor answers the summons made by the ringing of Skype with “↓hel↑lo.” Although TK also responds with “↓hel↑lo” after a 0.3-second pause at line 3, he seems not to be greeting the tutor but simply to be sending a sample utterance for the purpose of recognition, because not only does he utter it with a rising intonation but also he produces another “hel↓lo” in line 8 to greet the tutor. After a 1.1-second pause at line 5, the tutor responds with a response token “yes”, which signals that she has recognised TK, who also responds with the acknowledgement tokens “°yeap° o↓kay” and then greets the tutor with “hel↓lo” in line 8. The tutor greets TK back with “hel↓lo:” in line 10. It is after the tutor’s greeting in line 10 that she would normally be expected to produce an enquiry into personal state such as ‘How are you?’ as in the opening sequence in mundane telephone conversations, or else TK would be expected to do so. However, neither the tutor nor TK produces such an enquiry. This is because they had another session several hours ago on the same day owing to the tutor’s busy schedule,

making it unnecessary to enquire into personal state. Thus, when the tutor has said only the “hel↓lo:” in line 10, TK responds to it in line 12 with only a minimal response token “>↓mm<”, with a falling terminal pitch and without saying anything, which can be interpreted as indicating that the opening talk is completed and a first topic is needed to keep the conversation going. After a 0.4-second pause at line 13, the tutor utters “so”, which can be used to signal that something new is going to be introduced in the conversation, and an elongated hesitation “u:::m”. Then the tutor asks the question “>what do we talk< about now” in line 14 (arrowed) to initiate a first topic. The fact that the tutor’s question included no topical item means that its sole purpose was to elicit a subject TK had in mind.

As well as being used after an opening sequence, a question including no topical item can also be used to initiate a topic after a prior topic has been terminated. An example of the way in which the tutor uses a question including no topical item to elicit a topical item from Hiddink is shown in Extract 7 below.

Extract 7. Hiddink Day 15 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

((The tutor and Hiddink are talking about the use of mobile phones...))

173 T: .lh (.) so generally you’re not allowed
174 to (0.2) u:h carry cell phones in[side the
175 S: [yeah
176 T: classroom ↑right
177 (0.3)
178 S: yes even not to carry
179 (1.7)
180 T: o↓ka:y
181 (0.7)
182 S: °yes° (0.2) uhu-hum
183 (2.7)
184 ((The school bell starts ringing))
185 T: al↑right is our time up?
186 (0.6)
187 S: ↑no it is for our (0.4) fo- s- (0.4) s-
188 (0.3) uh our (0.3) school (0.2) ring
189 (1.0)
190 T: ↑oh o↓kay
191 (0.3)
192 S: we have just six minutes
193 (1.1)
194 T: o↓kay (.) al↓right
195 (0.4)

196 S: we have to do:: .h about °ten forty nine
 197 minutes more° hh. °m::m°=
 198 T: = ↑hu:::m (1.8) .hh alright u::m
 199 (1.3)
 200 S: °uh-°
 201 (0.2)
 202 →T: we:: **wha- wha- wha- what do you wanna talk**
 203 **about ↓now**

By line 182, the tutor and Hiddink have finished talking about the usage of mobile phones in class at his school and start talking about the tutor's misunderstanding of the ringing of the school bell in lines 185 to 198. The tutor produces a question that includes no topical item: "wha- wha- wha- what do you wanna talk about ↓now", in lines 202 - 203 (arrowed) in order to elicit a new topic from Hiddink.

In Extract 7, therefore, at the point where the tutor and Hiddink need a new topic to keep the conversation going, the tutor chooses a question including no topical item in order to encourage Hiddink to talk about a topic he has in mind.

5.1.4 Topic initiation by reusing an enquiry into personal state

Another way of asking a question including no topical item is to reuse an enquiry into personal state. If an enquiry into personal state is produced again after the opening sequence, it can perform the function of eliciting a topic from a recipient by making the recipient feel that the conversation is starting again. In Extract 8 below, the tutor tries to elicit a first topic from TK by developing an enquiry into personal state again after the opening sequence.

Extract 8. TK Day 08 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor / S= TK)

1 ((the sound of ringing))
 2 S: °hello°?=
 3 T: =↓hel↑lo
 4 (0.3)
 5 S: hi
 6 (1.0)
 7 T: >yes< (.) ↑hi:: ↑how ↓are ↑you::
 8 (0.3)
 9 S: i'm fine (0.8) fine as usual
 10 (0.2)

11 T: ↓mm-↑huh
 12 (0.2)
 13 S: °↑uh-↓huh°
 14 (.)
 15 T: .h (.) o↓kay (0.3) .h since you're late
 16 (.) today
 17 (.)
 18 S: °↑uh-↓huh° (.) °sorry°
 19 (.)
 20 T: .h (.) the f:e the fairy god- godmother
 21 is gonna curse you (0.3) today
 22 (0.2)
 23 S: oh::::: (0.8) i hope (.) n[ot
 24 T: [HAHAHHH
 25 [HHHHHHHHH]
 26 S: [°HA-HA°] [i hope-]
 27 T: [.hh] (0.2) i was just
 28 kidd[ing
 29 S: [↓uh-↑huh
 30 T: no curses on the fairy god mother she
 31 always bless you
 32 (0.5)
 33 S: ↑oh: yeah:
 34 (3.1)
 35 ➔ T: .h (0.2) ↓h::mm (.) so **what's ↑up to↓day**

In line 2, TK responds to the summons produced by the ringing of Skype with “°hello°?” in a low tone, which is immediately followed by a voice recognition sample “=↓hel↑lo” produced by the tutor in line 3. After a 0.3-second pause at line 4, TK greets the tutor with “hi” in line 5. After a one-second pause at line 6, the tutor rapidly utters a minimal response “>yes<”, greets TK back with “↑hi::” and makes an enquiry into personal state: “↑how ↓are ↑you::” in line 7. TK replies to this with “i'm fine (0.8) fine as usual” in line 9, in which a 0.8-second pause seems to take place to allow further elaboration of his response. The tutor utters just a minimal response token “↓mm-↑huh” as a continuation token in line 11, which encourages TK to continue to talk about it. However, TK also responds with only a minimal response token “°↑uh-↓huh°” in a low tone and with a terminal falling pitch in line 13, which can be interpreted as meaning that the opening sequence is completed.

Thus they now need a new topic for the conversation. The tutor seems to have realised this, since she utters “o↓kay”, then says “.h since you're late (.) today” in lines 15 - 16 as if she is going to scold TK. TK apologises by uttering an acknowledgement

token “^o↑uh-↓huh^o (.)” and then, after a micro pause, produces “^osorry^o” in a low tone in line 17. However, the tutor tells TK that it is a joke by referring to the fairy godmother in lines 20 - 21, which they have talked about in one of the previous sessions. TK responds to this with “oh::::: (0.8) i hope (.) n[ot]” in line 23, in which “oh:::::” seems to be used to indicate that he has just realised that what the tutor said in lines 15 - 16 was a joke. When TK’s response has almost finished at line 23, the tutor begins to laugh, which may confirm that what she said was a joke. While the tutor is laughing, TK also responds to the joke with a bit of laughter in a low tone and then tries to talk about something by producing “[i hope-]” in line 26, but this is interrupted by the tutor’s next turn. While the tutor is explaining to TK that she was just kidding in lines 27 - 31, TK utters only a minimal token: “[uh-huh]” in line 29. He also responds to the tutor’s explanation with only minimal response tokens: “↑oh: yeah:” in line 33, which can be construed as signalling a change-of-state in his awareness of the situation and acknowledgement of the prior turn. A 3.1- second long pause develops at line 34. The long silence seems to be caused by TK’s lack of response: that is, the tutor may have expected TK to elaborate further on the joke, but he does not. As a result, the joke has not led to a first topic because TK has not shown any inclination to elaborate on it, and has only produced minimal responses in acknowledgement of the tutor’s talk.

Thus, the tutor tries to initiate a new topic to keep the conversation going. She exhales briefly, utters a minimal response “↓h::mm” after 0.2-second pause, produces “so”, which is a token used to introduce a topical talk, and then initiates a topic and addresses the question: “what’s up today” after a micro pause in line 35 (arrowed). The question looks like an enquiry into personal state but it does not actually perform this function because the first enquiry into personal state has been used in line 7. The question therefore appears to function as a question including no topical item designed to elicit a topic from TK.

In summary, the tutor tries to initiate a topic by using an enquiry into personal state again after the opening sequence in order to elicit a topic from TK. The reused enquiry into personal state plays the role of topic initiator because it does not include any specific topical item the tutor wishes to talk to TK about.

An enquiry into personal state can also be utilised to initiate a new topic in the boundary between two topics. In particular, the reuse of an enquiry into personal state, like the one used to initiate a first topic in Extract 8, can be employed to elicit a new topic when the prior topic has been terminated. An example of the way in which the tutor reproduces an enquiry into personal state after the opening sequence in order to elicit a topic from TK is shown in Extract 9 below.

Extract 9. TK Day 03(4T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK are talking about colds and ice cream...))

- 21 T: o↓kay (0.2) .hh (.) because you (.) still
- 22 have not got me the ice cream
- 23 (0.6)
- 24 T: it's [as simple as that
- 25 S: [°a:h°
- 26 (0.6)
- 27 S: ↑yea::h (0.4) i think that's true (0.4) i
- 28 think i have to (0.5) u:h buy >little ice
- 29 cream for myself and buy< ↑you (0.4) a lot
- 30 of ice cream
- 31 (1.8)
- 32 T: HAHAHA (0.5) you bet
- 33 (0.5)
- 34 S: yea::h
- 35 (.)
- 36 ➔ T: .hh so **how is it go-** (.) **how is it going**
- 37 **for you**
- 38 (1.0)
- 39 S: u::h uh- (0.2) okay we:ll (0.9) we're having
- 40 a test (0.2) the final exa:m o::n the december
- 41 fifteenth (1.2) so::::

Up until line 34, the tutor and TK have been talking about TK's cold. The tutor jokingly explains to TK the reason why he still has a cold and he responds. After a micro pause at line 35, the tutor inhales, utters "so", which can be interpreted as signalling that something new is about to be introduced, and then tries to initiate a new topic by producing an enquiry into personal state: "how is it go- (.) how is it going for you" in lines 36 - 37 (arrowed) in order to elicit a new topic from TK.

In Extract 9, when the tutor tries to initiate a new topic, she does not suggest a specific topical item, but employs an enquiry into personal state which has no topical

item, so TK should respond by proffering any topical item. As in Extract 8, this can make the recipient feel as if the conversation has restarted as well as initiating a prospective topic. In summary, an enquiry into personal state reused in the boundaries between two topics can perform the function of eliciting a new topic, making the recipient feel as if the conversation has started again.

5.1.5 Topic initiation by means of a statement including a topical item

In the same way as questions that include or do not include a topical item discussed above, a statement can also perform the function of initiating a topic. In this case, the statement does not contain complete information but gives an abridged description of what a speaker intends to tell a listener, like the headline in a newspaper. When the listener accepts the statement including the topical item as newsworthy, it can become a topic. This statement corresponds to a news announcement (see p.40). An example of how the tutor utilises a statement including a newsworthy item to launch a topic as soon as the opening sequence has ended is presented in Extract 10 below.

Extract 10. TK Day 09 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

1 ((the sound of ringing))
2 (1.6)
3 T: he[l↑lo
4 S: [(hel)lo
5 (0.3)
6 S: hi
7 (0.2)
8 T: .h (0.3) hi how are you::
9 (0.5)
10 S: fine (0.5) and ↑you
11 (.)
12 T: okay (0.6) i'm okay
13 (0.2)
14 ➡ T: **i'm a little tired today**

In line 3, the tutor utters “he[l↑lo” to answer the summons produced by the ringing of Skype after a 1.6-second pause at line 2. The tutor’s response is delayed, so TK’s response “[(hel)lo” overlaps the tutor’s utterance and is not heard clearly. After a 0.3-second pause at line 5, TK greets the tutor with “hi” in line 6. After a 0.2-second

pause, the tutor greets him back with “hi” and then makes an enquiry into personal state at line 8. After a 0.5-second pause, TK responds with “fine” and reciprocates the greeting with “and ↑you” in line 10. After a minimal pause at line 11, the tutor responds with “okay (0.6) i’m okay” in line 12. After a 0.2-second pause in line 13, the tutor provides “i’m a little tired today” in line 14 (arrowed).

In Extract 10, the opening sequence from lines 1 to 12 seems to have been completed because all the turns from greetings to ‘how-are-you’ enquiry and response to it are organised without any missing parts. Thus, the “I’m a little tired today” in line 14 can be considered as an utterance designed to initiate a topic. However, it will fail to become a topic if TK does not respond to it because the utterance is located near the personal-status enquiry. It seems to be dependent on TK’s response. (For an example of topic maintenance, see Extract 24.)

Unlike the example in the extract above, in Extract 11, below, the tutor is quite obviously using a statement that includes a topical item to initiate a new topic at the boundary between two topics.

Extract 11. TK Day 08 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK have been talking about how to make Sushi.))

190 S: uh we make a (0.3) rice (0.7) >we just<
 191 (0.8) pile [it ()
 192 T: [↑al↓right
 193 (0.3)
 194 S: and (0.3) we just- (.) put (.) a fish on
 195 it (.) >that’s all< (0.3) like (0.4) it
 196 can be shrimp (.) it ca:n be:: u::h
 197 >anything else<
 198 (1.5)
 199 T: al↓right
 200 (0.3)
 201 S: °↑mm ↓huh°
 202 (.)
 203 T: al↑right
 204 (0.7)
 205 S: o↓kay
 206 (0.9)
 207 ➔T: .hh (0.2) u:::m (.) .h (.) **hiddink was**
 208 **surprised that i was (1.7) i was a hard-core**

The tutor and TK have finished talking about how to make Sushi, a Japanese food, by line 205. The tutor has not understood what they have been talking about very well, so TK has tried to help her understand by explaining in detail. After a 0.9-second pause at line 206, the tutor initiates a new topic by producing a statement that includes a topical item: “hiddink was surprised that i was (1.7) i was a hard-core vegetarian” in lines 207 - 209 (arrowed).

In Extract 11, the statement including a topical item made in lines 207- 209 functions as a topic initiator. The tutor launches a new topic by giving TK a piece of new information about herself, even though TK has not asked for it. The topical item in the statement is related to the speaker, the tutor, so it can be considered as an informative statement about something she may want to talk about. In conclusion, a statement including a topical item can perform the function of initiating a new topic in the boundary between two topics when the prior topic has been terminated.

Unlike the statement including a topical item presented in Extract 11, a statement including a topical item which is not related to the speaker, but is related to an aspect of the context of the conversation, can be used to initiate a new topic. An example of this is presented in Extract 12 below.

Extract 12. Hiddink Day 09 (1T) (T= Tutor / S= Hiddink)

344 T: so how is your preparations going on
 345 (0.3) for for your exam
 346 (0.7)
 ((the conversation is deleted))
 362 S: [i think (.) i can (1.2) pre↑pare
 363 (0.2) almost pre[pare
 364 T: [that's ni::ce that's really
 365 nice
 366 (0.4)
 367➔ S: °ye::s° (0.3) **hum** (1.4) **but** (0.5) **to compet-**
 368 **(0.6) the:: competition is very har::d**
 369 **(.) because (0.7) it is importan- (0.5) t-**
 370 **(0.5) the:: (1.5) the first score is not**
 371 **the important (0.9) but**
 372 (0.2)
 373 T: ↑o↓kay

374 (.)
375 S: **the com- we compet- (0.2) we compete with**
376 **other students (0.6) [so:::]**

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 5, p.135), here the tutor initiates a topic by using a solicitous enquiry into trouble in lines 344 - 345. Hiddink completes the response to the enquiry in lines 362 - 363. The tutor also seems to finish the topic by assessing Hiddink's response in lines 364 - 365. After a 0.4-second pause at line 366, Hiddink produces a statement about the highly competitive nature of the test in lines 367 - 376 (arrowed).

In this extract, therefore, Hiddink tries to initiate a new topic by providing a statement including a topical item using words such as "competition" and "score", words which had already been used in the prior topic, with the result that the new topic seems to be related to the prior topic, but it is not. In other words, Hiddink uses a statement including a topical item to initiate a new topic.

5.1.6 First topic developed from 'how-are-you' question-answer sequence

It was found that the tutor and the students exchanged enquiries into personal state at the end of the opening sequences in most of their sessions. In fact, conversationalists do not usually expect specific and detailed serious responses to that sort of question in mundane or telephone conversation, since it is considered to be merely a sort of phatic communication.

However, in the data for this research it was found that when the students responded very positively or negatively to the tutor's questions, these responses could provide the basis for initiating a first topic. When the tutor accepted such a response as newsworthy, this gave the students the right to elaborate on the reason for their highly positive or negative response, and this in turn could settle down as a first topic. An example of the way in which TK's response to an enquiry into personal state develops into a first topic through the tutor's acceptance of it as newsworthy (called 'topicalisation') is given in Extract 13 below.

Extract 13. TK Day 05 (2T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = TK)

1 ((the sound of ringing))
2 T: hel↑lo
3 (0.6)
4 S: hel↑lo:
5 (0.6)
6 T: .h hi how are you ↑doing to↓day
7 (0.8)
8 → S: **u::h not so good**
9 (1.5)
10 → T: **what ↑hap↓pened**
11 (0.6)
12 → S: **uh well (.) i'm (.) ↑right ↓now**
13 **(.) preparing for the test an:d**
14 **(0.8) u:h (.) i'm right now (.) studying**
15 **the: ancient korean stuff (0.2) and**
16 **still (it's) too hard**

In line 2, the tutor utters “hel↑lo” in response to the summons made by the ringing of Skype. After a 0.6-second pause at line 2, TK gives a voice recognition sample by uttering “hel↑lo:” in line 4. After another 0.6-second pause at line 5, the tutor greets TK with “hi” and then routinely produces “how are you ↑doing to↓day” as an enquiry into personal state in line 6. TK responds to this without greeting the tutor back in line 8 by producing “u::h not so good,” in which he utters a hesitation token “u::h” after a 0.8-second pause at line 7. The hesitation token and the pause can be interpreted as signalling that the upcoming answer to the personal-state enquiry might be a dispreferred response, because preferred or positive responses are usually produced immediately after the enquiries without any hesitation tokens being uttered. As expected, TK produces a negative response “not so good” in line 8 (arrowed). A 1.5-second pause develops at line 9, which suggests that the tutor is not responding instantly to TK’s response because it is different from routine responses such as “fine, how are you?” and the like that are the generally expected responses to such enquiries. In line 10 (arrowed), the tutor enquires “what ↑hap↓pened” to discover the reason for TK’s negative response.

The tutor’s response to TK’s negative reply with a question triggers a first topic. The question gives TK the right to continue talking about his response, which he does in lines 12 - 16. That is, TK’s negative response has caused the tutor to ask a question about it, which requires him to elaborate further on it. In summary, a negative response to an enquiry into personal state can provide the basis for initiating a first topic.

In Extract 14 below, a response to an enquiry into personal state gives rise to a first topic in a different way from that illustrated in Extract 13.

Extract 14. Hiddink Day 02 (2T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = Hiddink)

1 ((the sound of ringing))
2 T: hi are you able to hear ↑me
3 (0.7)
4 S: yea::h
5 (1.0)
6 [°fine°
7 T: [↑o↓kay ↑how are you
8 (1.0)
9 ➔ S: **i feel very good because**
10 **(0.2) u:h i said=**
11 T: =uh huh=
12 ➔ S: **=i said (.) i (0.2) have**
13 **(0.2) problem with solving math**
14 **(.) math (0.2) i said**
15 (1.4)
16 ➔ T: **yes you said you: (.) you had a**
17 **little bit a (.) problem with math=yes**

In line 2, the tutor utters “hi”, which seems to include not only a greeting but also a response to the summons produced by the ringing of Skype and immediately checks whether the Internet connection is stable or not by producing, “are you able to hear ↑me”, since they have had a great number of difficulties communicating with each other in the first session owing to Internet connection problems. After a 0.7-second pause at line 3, Hiddink responds with a minimal response token “yea::h” in line 4 and then utters “°fine°” after a pause of 1.0 second in line 5. This can be interpreted as meaning that Hiddink may not have thought that his minimal response of “yea::h” in line 4 was adequate, so he has added “°fine°” in a low tone. As soon as Hiddink starts producing “°fine°”, the tutor utters an acknowledgement “↑o↓kay”, which overlaps it, and then makes an enquiry into his personal state “↑how are you” in line 7. A 1.0-second pause develops at line 8. Generally, such a silence indicates that the forthcoming response will be negative. However, Hiddink responds very positively with “i feel very good” and then immediately explains the reason for this response by producing “because (0.2) u:h i said=” in lines 9 - 10 (arrowed) without reciprocating the “how-are-you” enquiry to the tutor as in mundane conversations. In line 11, the tutor utters a

continuation token “= uh huh =,” which performs the function of encouraging Hiddink to continue talking on the ongoing topic, so his response to the ‘how-are-you’ enquiry continues in lines 12 – 14 (arrowed), in which he emphasises the fact that he said that he had difficulty solving maths problems by repeating “i said”, which may signal that he intends to say more about this. After a 1.4-second pause at line 15, the tutor responds by agreeing with him in lines 16 - 17 (arrowed), which may indicate that she accepts the topic as newsworthy and gives Hiddink the right to elaborate further on it. Accordingly, the positive response Hiddink uttered seems to develop as a first topic.

In Extracts 13 and 14 above, therefore, the students’ negative or positive responses to an enquiry into personal state settle down as first topics through the tutor’s acceptance of them as newsworthy. Thus, the development of the first topic can be said to have been carried out by collaborative contributions by both parties.

5.1.7 Summary of the section

In this section the ways in which the participants, one tutor and two students, in this research initiated first and subsequent topics have been analysed. They used two basic strategies: questions and statements (Downing, 2000). Specifically, the linguistic forms they used are as follows: a question including a topical item, a solicitous enquiry into trouble, a question including no topical item, reuse of an enquiry into personal state and a statement including a topical item. These linguistic forms were all utilised in both first and subsequent topic initiation. Finally, the way in which a first topic was initiated from a ‘how-are-you’ question-answer sequence was analysed.

5.2 How are topics maintained during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

Topic maintenance refers to keeping a topic going. After the initiation of a topic, which refers to a participant’s utterances triggering a mentionable talk and establishing the reportability of this talk, subsequent utterances related to the relationship and development of the proffered topic can be considered as ‘topic maintenance’ (Svennevig, 1999). This can also be performed through the collaborative contributions of the participants. Topic maintenance occurs principally in order to maintain a

proffered topic or to keep a topic-in-progress going. When a new topic is initiated, in order for it to become a topic of conversation a particular response is required from the recipient (see Section 2.4.3 for a discussion). In the current study, it was found that the tutor and the students used various techniques to maintain initiated or ongoing topics during conversation.

5.2.1 Topic maintenance by giving a preferred response

A question-answer adjacency pair can be employed in order to maintain a topic. When a topic is initiated by means of a question including a topical item or through a solicitous enquiry into trouble, as described in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, a preferred response to the question can act to maintain a proffered topic by generating an expansion of the sequence on the proffered topic, as Schegloff points out (see p.45). When addressing a question to the students in order to initiate a topic, the tutor supposes that the question is related to the students and that they will be able to answer the question, and vice versa. Thus, the tutor's or the students' preferred answer to the question can help the potential topic to settle down as a topic. Examples of how a topic initiated by the tutor's asking a question that includes a topical item can be maintained by the student's preferred response are presented in Extracts 15, 16 and 17 below.

Extract 15. Hiddink Day 07 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

- 18 T: (.) .hh (.) uh why don't you talk
19 about your (0.5) favourite vacation::
20 that you had been to or (.) .h
21 (.) uh- your dream vacation whe-
22 where would you like to go to (.) you
23 can talk about that
24 (1.2)
25 ➔ S: **i would like go (.) to (.) the china:**
26 **once again (1.6) because it was**
27 **°that°**
28 (.)
29 T: >you'd like to go to chai-<
30 (0.5)
31 o↓kay o[↓kay
32 ➔ S: [because it was (.) very hot when
33 i wen- (0.6) to china (0.3) but it was
34 pretty impressive (0.2) experience

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 1, p.129), here the tutor asks Hiddink a question including a topical item in order to initiate a topic after the opening sequence in lines 18 - 23. After a 1.2-second pause at line 24, in answer to the question Hiddink produces “i would like go (.) to (.) the china: once again”, inserts a 1.6-second pause and then tries to give the reason for it: “because it was °that°” in lines 25 - 27 (arrowed); however, he breaks off in the middle of the utterance. After a micro pause at line 28, the tutor confirms Hiddink’s response by quickly repeating a part of it: “>you’d like to go to chai-<” in line 29, and then produces an acknowledgement token “o↓kay” twice in line 31 after a 0.5-second pause at line 30. Before the tutor’s second acknowledgement token, “o↓kay”, Hiddink starts elaborating further on the reason for his response in lines 32 - 35 (arrowed). Thus, the topic proffered by the tutor is maintained as a topic through Hiddink’s preferred response to the question, which serves to expand the sequence on the proffered topic.

In Extracts 16 and 17 below, examples of the way in which a topic initiated by using a solicitous enquiry into trouble is also maintained by a preferred response are presented.

Extract 16. TK Day 03 (4T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = TK)

12 T: o-↓kay so: (.) how’s your cold right now
 13 (0.7)
 14 ➔ S: **u::h cold (0.9) we::ll u::h**
 15 (0.4)
 16 T: ↓mm [↑huh
 17 ➔ S: **[i’m (0.5) i’m just (.) coughing**
 18 **(0.4) not (0.2) uh i don’t have any kind of**
 19 **fever or something but (0.5) just coughing**

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 4, p.134), the tutor initiates a topic after the opening sequence by using a solicitous enquiry into trouble in line 12. The tutor has talked with TK about his cold during the previous lessons, so she asks the question in order to find out how it is going now. After a 0.7-second pause at line 13, TK utters a hesitation token “u::h” and “cold” and then a sort of filler “we::ll” and a hesitation marker “u::h” after a 0.9-second pause at line 14

(arrowed). This appears to indicate TK's intention to tell the tutor something as a preferred answer to the enquiry. After a 0.4-second pause at line 15, the tutor utters the acknowledgement token “↓mm [↑huh” in line 16, which can be interpreted as signalling that she wants TK to elaborate further on his response. Before the tutor's acknowledgement token finishes, TK starts explaining his current condition in detail in lines 17 to 19 (arrowed).

Extract 17. Hiddink Day 09 (1T) (T= Tutor / S= Hiddink)

((The tutor and Hiddink have been talking about the film of *The Lion King*...))

344 T: so how is your preparations going on
 345 (0.3) for for your exam
 346 (0.7)
347 → S: i think almost- (0.4) i think i can prepare
348 almost (.) before the final exam (0.7) if
349 i don't sleep much
350 (0.7)
 351 T: .hh (.) wow (0.2) good (0.7) goo[d
 352 S: [°yes°
 353 (0.5)
354 → S: if i sleep at (1.2) two: and (0.2) two peeem
355 (P.M.) (0.5) two eiem (A.M.)

As in the previous use of this extract (see Extract 5, p.135), here the tutor also employs a solicitous enquiry into trouble to initiate a new topic during the conversation in lines 344 - 346. After a 0.7-second pause at line 347, Hiddink answers this enquiry by providing updated information on his preparation for his final exam in lines 347 - 349 (arrowed). That is to say, Hiddink maintains the initiated topic by giving a preferred response to the question. After a 0.7-second pause at line 350, the tutor utters minimal responses signalling interest at line 351. Hiddink then elaborates further on the topic in lines 354 to 355.

In Extracts 15 to 17, the tutor initiates a topic by using a question including a topical item or a solicitous enquiry and then the student gives a preferred response to it. The preferred response plays the role of maintaining the proffered topic by generating a sequence for the new topic. That is, a preferred response to a question at a topic boundary can maintain a proffered topic by expanding the sequence for a new topic.

5.2.2 Topic maintenance by giving a topicaliser

Topicalisers can also be used to maintain proffered topics. Topicalisers such as ‘oh, oh really’, ‘oh yeah’ indicate that the recipient finds the proffered topic newsworthy or mentionable, and then the recipient continues to talk about the new topic (see Section 2.4.3.1 for a discussion). Examples of how topicalisers were used to maintain topics by the participants in the current research are presented in Extracts 18 and 19 below.

Extract 18. TK Day 12 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

282 T: [u::m (.) that we were talking
283 about travelling (.) u::h what is your
284 idea about travelling and do you
285 like travelling
286 (.)
287 →S: o:::h (.) [i lo:ve to travel]
288 T: [>what’s your interest<]
289 (1.2)
290 ((TK’s school bell starts ringing))
291 S: i lo::ve i lo:ve travelling=
292 T: =>o↓kay<
293 (0.3)
294 S: really (0.5) u::h
295 (0.9)
296 T: um-
297 (0.3)
298 S: tra[velling] gives the person
299 T: [mm ↑huh]

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 2, p.131), in Extract 18 above, the tutor also initiates a new topic during the conversation by asking a question including a topical item in lines 282 - 285. After a micro pause at line 286, TK produces a topicaliser “o:::h” (arrowed), which may indicate that he has an interest in the topic and produces “[i l:ove to travel]” in line 287. As soon as the tutor hears the topicaliser “o:::h”, she recognises the student’s interest in the suggested topic and adds a specific question: “[what’s your interest]” in line 288, so it overlaps TK’s response. As a result, the added question does not seem to be taken in by him, so a 1.2-second pause occurs at line 289. After the pause, TK utters again “i lo::ve i lo;ve travelling=” in line 291, which can be interpreted as a signal that he has a strong interest in the proffered topic. The tutor immediately responds with an acknowledgement token

“=okay” in line 292. After a 0.3-second pause at line 293, although TK tries in turn to respond by producing “really”, he utters a hesitation marker “u::h” after a 0.5-second pause in line 294. The tutor utters a minimal, brief interjection “um-” in line 296 after a 0.9-second pause at line 295. After a 0.3-second pause at line 297, the student starts elaborating further on the topic by producing “tra[velling] gives the person” in line 298 .

In Extract 18, the topicaliser “o::h” thus acts to maintain the topic by showing the recipient’s interest in the proffered topic. The subsequent utterance “[i lo:ve to travel]” and the tutor’s overlapping question confirm this interest.

Extract 19. TK Day 07 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK have been talking about the Harry Potter film))

- 478 T: and all that .hh (.) and u::h especially
 479 did you read the korean version or
 480 did you read the english version of
 481 the harry potter books
 482 (.)
 483 S: ah- only english version (.) for the
 484 sixth and seventh
 485 (1.4)
 486 T: ↑o↓kay
 487 (0.5)
 488 T: .hh u::p and again when when you’re
 489 reading that translated version it
 490 might not be as good as the old
 491 original [version]
 492 ➔S: [↑OH ↑YEAH]
 493 (0.4)
 494 S: that’s why i read (0.2) only uh the tran-
 495 (0.3) the real version (.) the real english
 496 version because (0.6) >you know like<
 497 (0.9) u::h until the fifth (0.2) like
 498 >i alway< (.) i always read (.) the:: korean
 499 ver↑sion

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 3, p.133), the tutor initiates a new topic by addressing a question including a topical item in lines 478 - 479. After a micro pause at line 482, TK responds with “ah- only English version (.) for the sixth and seventh” in lines 483 - 484 and then does not continue to elaborate any further on the subject. It seems that the proffered topic is not going to continue. However, after a 1.4-second pause at line 485, the tutor utters an acknowledgement

token “↑o↓kay” in line 486 and, after a 0.5-second pause at line 487, offers her opinion on it in lines 488 - 491, where the word “[version]” overlaps TK’s utterance of the topicaliser “[↑OH ↑YEAH]” in line 492 (arrowed), which suggests that he agrees with her completely and has a great deal of interest in what she says. After a 0.4-second pause at line 493, TK maintains the initiated topic by elaborating further on it from line 494.

Thus, in the above extract, when the proffered topic is reformulated by the tutor, TK responds with a topicaliser “[↑OH ↑YEAH]” in line 492 with a rising pitch and loud tone, which suggests that he has a great deal of interest in the subject; this is confirmed by the fact that he then continues to talk about it.

5.2.3 Topic maintenance by giving a positive feedback token

Positive feedback tokens can also perform the function of maintaining a proffered topic. In the current study, it was found that when Hiddink and TK proffered a topical item in response to a question that included no topical item or to an enquiry into personal state made by the tutor, she would maintain the proffered topic by producing a positive feedback token. An example of the tutor giving feedback tokens to maintain a topic proffered by Hiddink in response to a question including no topical item is shown in Extract 20.

Extract 20. Hiddink Day 15 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor / S= Hiddink)

202 T: we:: wha- wha- wha- what do you wanna talk
 203 about ↓now
 204 (0.4)
 205 S: hh. yes i (0.6) i want (.) to talk about hh.
 206 (1.0) gods maybe (0.6) i just read about
 207 (0.9) read about it (0.5) on the book
 208 (.)
 209→ T: o↓kay (.) o↓[kay
 210 S: [that’s case class
 211 (0.9)
 212 T: mm ↑huh
 213 (0.7)
 214 S: in this book they (0.5) the: (0.3) three people
 215 (0.4) .h (0.4) th (0.6) three people (.) come::
 216 (.) ↑up (0.3) and they talk each other (.) about

As shown in the above extract, the tutor tries to initiate a new topic by asking a question that does not include a topical item to elicit a topic from Hiddink in lines 202 - 203; in fact the tutor directly asks Hiddink to launch a topic. After a 0.4-second pause at line 204, after exhaling, Hiddink responds with “yes i (0.6) i want (.) to talk about hh. (1.0) gods maybe (0.6) i just read about (0.9) read about it (0.5) on the book” in lines 205 - 207. His response includes not only both a topical item “gods” and his reason for selecting the topic, but also his desire to talk about it. After a micro pause at line 208, the tutor gives feedback in the form of the acknowledgement tokens “o↓kay (.) o[↓kay” in line 209 (arrowed), which can be interpreted as a signal that she accepts the topic as newsworthy, thus giving Hiddink the right to talk about it. Thus, before the tutor has finished saying the second “okay”, Hiddink starts talking about the topic again in line 210. Although there is a 0.9-second pause at line 211, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token “mm ↑huh” again in line 212, which appears to perform the function of prompting Hiddink to keep talking about the topic. Accordingly, after a 0.7-second pause at line 213, Hiddink continues to elaborate further on the topic which he himself has proffered in lines 214 - 217.

In the example presented in Extract 21 below, the tutor also gives feedback tokens to keep TK talking on the topic which he has proffered in response to an enquiry into personal state, reused by the tutor to elicit a topic from TK.

Extract 21. TK Day 03 (4T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

36 T: .hh so how is it go- (.) how is it going
 37 for you
 38 (1.0)
 39 S: u::h uh- (0.2) okay we:ll (0.9) we're having
 40 a test (0.2) the final exa:m o::n the december
 41 fifteenth (1.2) so::::
 42 (.)
 43 ➔T: ↑o↓ka:y
 44 (0.3)
 45 S: i'm trying to (.) prepare for tha:t (1.2) i-
 46 (0.3) i have just started it

As in Extract 9, presented earlier, the tutor makes another enquiry into personal

state in order to elicit a new topic from TK in lines 36 - 37. After a 1.0-second pause at line 38, TK utters a hesitation token “u::h uh-” and, after a 0.2-second pause, he starts producing “okay well (0.9) we’re having a test (0.2) the final exam o:n the december fifteenth” in lines 39 - 41. After a 1.2-second pause at line 41, he utters “so:::”, which can be interpreted as a signal that he has something else to say about it. After a micro pause at line 42, the tutor gives feedback in the form of an acknowledgement token “↑o↓ka:y” in line 43 (arrowed); this has an up and down intonation with an elongated vowel at the end, which suggests that the tutor accepts the topic as newsworthy. As a result, after a 0.3-second pause at line 44, TK begins to elaborate further on it in lines 45 - 46.

The two extracts above reveal that feedback tokens such as acknowledgement tokens can act to maintain potential topics by indicating the recipient’s interest in a topical item included in responses to questions that do not include topical items, or to repeated enquiries into personal state. When Hiddink and TK launch prospective topics, the acknowledgement tokens uttered by the tutor help them to continue talking about them, since her use of the acknowledgement tokens can be taken to mean that she thinks the proffered topics have topicality, which gives the students the right to talk about them.

5.2.4 Topic maintenance by giving an explicit acceptance notice

Giving an explicit acceptance notice to a proffered topic in response to a question including no topical item can also perform the function of maintaining a proffered topic. In the data obtained for this study it was found that when the tutor and the students responded to a question including no topical item, they would produce a response which included a topical item in order to launch a topic. When they wished to accept the response as a topic, they would signal that it had topicality by giving an explicit acceptance notice. An example of how each student maintains a topic by giving an explicit acceptance notice is shown in Extracts 22 and 23 below.

Extract 22. TK Day 15 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

14 T: .h so u:::m >what do we talk< about now
15 (0.7)

16 S: u::h (1.7) u::h (0.4) why don't we talk
 17 about the:: (1.8) u:h (1.3) influence
 18 of the::: (0.6) singers (.) the public
 19 (0.9) peoples
 20 (1.2)
 21 ➔ T: ↑o↓kay that's a very interesting topic
 22 (.) go ahead
 23 (0.5)
 24 S: o> kay < u::m (1.5) u::h go ahead okay u::m
 25 (0.6) > i think it has really < (0.4) a big
 26 influence on the teenagers (0.3) because
 27 (0.6) acsua (0.3) u::h (1.1)some

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of the above extract (see Extract 6, p.137), here the tutor initiates a topic by asking a question that includes no topical item: “>what do we talk< about now”, in line 14. The question basically asks TK to talk about whatever he has in his mind as a topic. After a 0.7-second pause at line 15, TK twice utters a hesitation marker “uh”, followed by a 0.4-second pause, which can be interpreted as being the amount of time he needs to develop a response to the question, and then launches a prospective topic by producing “why don't we talk about the :: (1.8) u:h (1.3) influence of the::: (0.6) singers (.) the public (0.9) peoples” in lines 16 - 19. The fact that his answer includes several short or long pauses, a few hesitation markers (“uh”) and a grammatical error (“peoples”) suggests that he does not have a great deal of confidence in his topic, so he uses an indirect question to obtain confirmation of it as newsworthy by the tutor. After a 1.2-second pause at line 20, the tutor gives an explicit acceptance notice of TK's response by producing “o↓kay that's a very interesting topic (.) go ahead” in lines 21- 22 (arrowed). The tutor thus signals that she accepts the topical item in TK's response as newsworthy. Thus, TK begins talking about the proffered topic again from line 24.

The tutor's giving an explicit acceptance notice provides TK with the conversational floor so that he can continue talking about the topic that he himself has proposed in response to the tutor's question that did not include a topical item. The explicit acceptance notice thus indicates that the topic has topicality, so he has the right to speak about it.

Extract 23 below shows that even an explicit acceptance utterance does not work

properly when overlapping occurs.

Extract 23. Hiddink Day 16 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

139 T: so (0.3) what- what- uh em (0.2) did you
140 have anything to talk about (0.2) .hh uh
141 did you (.) [guys discuss and [decide on
142 S: [did- ↑he [did- ↑he
143 T: a top[ic?=
144 S: [did he have (0.5) talk about (.) the::
145 (0.4) experiment [on the animals: (.) for
146 T: [mm ↑huh
147 S: hu↑man
148 (.)
149→T: ↑o:[h
150 S: [did he have
151 (.)
152→T: ↓o↑kay (0.2) [al↑right]
153 S: [also]
154 (.)
155 S: we we=
156→T: =that's [very interesting topic
157 S: [let's we just talked about pets with
158 last time
159 (0.5)
160 S: so i want to talk a[bout that
161→T: [o:↓ka:y
162 (0.9)
163 S: many people:: (.) many people said (.) it is
164 (0.5) unfair because (0.5) it is just for
165 human (0.9) and abusing them=
166→T: =↑o↓kay

The tutor asks a question including no topical item in lines 139 - 143. Thus, Hiddink launches a topic that he has talked about with TK in lines 144 – 147, putting “did” at the front of the sentence to emphasise the fact that they have talked about the topic already. After a micro pause at line 148, the tutor utters the topicaliser “↑o:[h” in line 149 (arrowed), which overlaps with the “[did” at the beginning of Hiddink’s response in line 150, so the topicaliser does not work properly. After a micro pause at line 151, the tutor again utters the positive feedback tokens “↓o↑kay (0.2) [al↑right]” in line 152 (arrowed), but Hiddink’s utterance “also” overlaps with the tutor’s “alright”. After a micro pause at line 154, when Hiddink produces “we we=”, the tutor gives an explicit acceptance notice “that’s very interesting topic” in line 156 (arrowed) to

confirm that the proffered topic has topicality; however, part of the explicit acceptance notice overlaps with Hiddink's talk in lines 157 - 158, so it seems not to work properly. After a 0.5-second pause at line 159, when Hiddink express his intention to talk about it, the tutor signals that she accepts it as a topic by uttering a positive feedback token "[o: kay]" in line 161 (arrowed). After a 0.9-second pause at line 162, Hiddink begins talking about the topic.

Thus, in the extract above, the tutor addresses a question including no topical item to initiate a new topic, so Hiddink introduces a topic in response. While he is doing so, the tutor produces a topicaliser, a positive feedback token and an explicit acceptance notice. However, all of these utterances overlap with Hiddink's response. When he finishes proffering a response, the tutor gives a positive feedback token to maintain the proffered topic.

5.2.5 Topic maintenance by asking a question

Asking a question about a potential topic can also play the role of maintaining the topic. When the recipient is wondering about a proffered topic, he or she might ask a question about it. The question can be interpreted not only to indicate interest in the topic but also functions to give the topic initiator the right to elaborate further on the topic. An example of how a question about a proffered topic functions to maintain a topic initiated by means of a statement including a newsworthy item is shown in Extract 24 below.

Extract 24. TK Day 09 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

14 T: i'm a little tired today
15 (0.6)
16 ➔ S: why
17 (1.2)
18 T: .hh (0.3) well I am not well

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 10, p.143), after the opening sequence is accomplished, the tutor produces "i'm a little tired today" in line 14, thus providing a statement that includes a newsworthy item. After a 0.6-second pause at line 15, TK asks "why" in line 16 (arrowed), indicating that he has an interest in her statement and wants to know why she is tired. Accordingly, after a 1.2-

second pause at line 17, the tutor inhales, pauses again for 0.3 seconds and then continues talking about the topic by answering TK's question, producing "well I am not well" in line 17.

In this extract, TK's question "why" in response to the tutor's statement acts to topicalise the statement. His question suggests that he has an interest in the statement, so it gives the tutor the right to elaborate further on it.

In Extract 25 below, the tutor asks a question about a topic proffered by Hiddink because she does not understand it clearly, and this performs the role of maintaining it as a topic.

Extract 25. Hiddink Day 14 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

331 T: o↓kay (.) any other specific topic li >that
 332 you< wanna discuss about now
 333 (0.4)
 334 S: i just- (0.3) i just (.) come up with
 335 (0.2) the topic (0.2) tha::t (0.3) abo::ut
 336 the school
 337 (0.6)
 338 →T: ↑o↓kay: (0.2) ↑what's ↓tha:t
 339 (0.5)
 340 S: °um° i- i want to know about the: school image
 341 of (0.2) india
 342 (0.5)
 343 T: .hh (0.5) ɔ:[h
 344 S: [Korean school [images
 345 T: [o↓kay
 346 S: are almost same with the western (.) ts
 347 (0.2) wes-
 348 (.)
 349 T: ↑um [↓huh
 350 S: [tern style

The tutor asks a question including no topical item in order to elicit a topic from Hiddink in lines 331 - 332. After a 0.4-second pause at line 333, Hiddink proffers a topic – "about the school" - in lines 334 - 336. However, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token "↑o↓kay:", pauses for 0.2 seconds, and then asks "↑what's ↓tha:t" in line 338 (arrowed). After a 0.5-second pause at line 339, Hiddink responds to the question by explaining the topic in more detail in lines 340 - 350.

In the above extract, the tutor does not clearly understand the topic Hiddink has offered, so she asks him a question to clarify the proffered topic. This indicates that the tutor has some sort of interest in the topic and thus gives Hiddink the right to talk further about it. As a result, the topic is maintained by Hiddink's explicating it in more detail to the tutor.

5.2.6 Topic maintenance by issuing a clarification request

Issuing a clarification request can also help to maintain a potential topic as a topic. When the recipient puts forward a statement or a question including a newsworthy item and regards it as unexpected news, he or she can require a clarification of it. The clarification request is said to be a demonstration of interest in the item. By giving a positive response to the request, the recipient of the request can keep talking about the proffered topic. An example of how the tutor's clarification request functions to maintain TK's proffered topic is illustrated in Extract 26.

Extract 26. TK Day 08 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor / S= TK)

35 T: .h (0.2) ↓h::mm (.) so what's ↑up to↓day
 36 (0.8)
 37 S: u::h (0.4) nothing is just normal day
 38 (0.5) well (0.4) > it's s↑nowed<
 39 (.)
 40 S: [actually (0.7) °it's° s↓nowed
 41 T: [o↓kay
 42 (2.2)
 43 ➔ T: **it's not a normal day?**
 44 (0.5)
 45 S: yeah it was a normal an::d (0.8) ↑uh- only
 46 special thing i::s:: (.) it's snowed
 47 (0.7) u:h ve[ry

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 8, p.139), the tutor cannot initiate a topic related to the joke about the fairy godmother owing to an absence of collaborative contributions by TK. Thus, she tries to elicit a topic from TK by reusing an enquiry into personal state in line 35. After a 0.8-second pause at line 36, TK utters a hesitation token “u::h” and produces “nothing is just normal day” after a 0.4-second pause at line 37, which suggests that he does not have anything to talk about.

However, after a 0.5-second pause he then utters “well”, which can be interpreted as a signal that he is going to introduce something different from the previous talk, and then produces “>it’s s↑nowed<” rapidly after a 0.4-second pause at line 38. After a micro pause at line 39, TK continues to elaborate further on this idea by producing “[actually (0.7) °it’s° s↓now” and the tutor simultaneously utters an acknowledgement token “[o↓kay”. This overlaps with TK’s “actually” and consequently seems not to succeed in topicalising the topical item contained in the response. The 2.2-second pause at line 42 is further evidence of this. Since TK has not elaborated on his response and has simply repeated “it’s snowed”, twice, the tutor makes a clarification request: “it’s not a normal day?” related to it in line 43 (arrowed). After a 0.5-second pause at line 44, TK starts elaborating further on the topic from line 45.

In the extract above, a request for clarification of the proffered topic plays the role of maintaining the topic by prompting TK to keep talking on it. After reusing an enquiry into personal state to elicit a topic from TK, the tutor recognises a topical item “it’s snowed” in his response. At first, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token but this overlaps with TK’s utterance and thus does not succeed in maintaining the topic, so she requests clarification of the proffered topic. The tutor’s request signals that she is interested in the proffered topic and gives TK the right to talk about it. As a result, the proffered topic can be maintained through TK’s response to the tutor’s request.

Another example of how a clarification request about a statement including a topical item functions to maintain a topic is shown in Extract 27 below.

Extract 27. TK Day 08 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

207 T: .hh (0.2) u:::m (.) .h (.) hiddink was
 208 surprised that i was (1.7) i was a hard-core
 209 vegetarian
 210 (1.3)
 211 → S: **you’re- (0.4) you’re- a vegetarian?**
 212 (2.1)
 213 T: ↓yea:::h
 214 (0.4)
 215 → S: **o:::h really? (1.6) oh my god=**
 216 T: =↑h::mm
 217 (0.6)
 218 S: oh that’s interesting (0.3) i mean

219 (0.8)
 220 S: i al- (0.2) i always [had (.) the
 221 T: [hahaha
 222 (0.6)
 223 S: i always had the: uh what do you call
 224 that the:: (0.9) uh- admire (.) admirish
 225 (1.2) always admired (0.2) [uh::] vegetarian
 226 T: [but]
 227 S: because (1.1) you know [how can you]
 228 T: [uh-huh]
 229 (0.3)
 230 S: how can you:: survive each day

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 11, p.144), here the tutor initiates a new topic by providing a statement including a newsworthy item related to herself: “i was a hard-core vegetarian” in lines 207 - 209. In providing this statement, the tutor also informs TK that Hiddink was surprised to find this out, which may be the reason she thinks TK will consider it newsworthy. A 1.3-second pause develops at line 210, since TK does not respond immediately to take up the topic. After the pause, TK issues a clarification request: “you’re- (0.4) you’re- a vegetarian?” in line 211 (arrowed), which suggests that he does consider the proffered topic to be unexpected news and that he is very interested in it. After a 2.1-second pause at line 212, the tutor seems to respond unwillingly to TK’s clarification request with only an acknowledgement token “↓yea::h” with an elongated sound and falling terminal pitch in line 213. After a 0.4-second pause at line 214, TK utters a topicaliser “o::h really?”, thus making the proffered topic newsworthy and then, after a 1.6-second pause, TK directly expresses his surprise by uttering “oh my god-” in line 215 (arrowed). The tutor immediately responds with a minimal response “↑h::mm” in line 216. After a 0.6-second pause at line 217, TK explains to the tutor why he is surprised to find out that she is a vegetarian in lines 220 - 225 and then asks her “how can you:: survive each day” in line 230 as a way of continuing to talk about the proffered topic.

In the above extract, the issuing of a clarification request plays the role of maintaining the proffered topic by indicating the recipient’s interest in the topic. TK makes this clarification request about a statement including a newsworthy item as a topic because it is unexpected and very interesting to him. After receiving a confirmative response from the tutor, TK produces a topicaliser and then continues talking about the proffered topic by asking a question related to it.

Unlike Extracts 26 and 27, the example in Extract 28 shows how issuing a clarification request can change the trajectory of a proffered topic.

Extract 28. TK Day 12 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor / S= TK)

580 T: u::h an:d what about what about u::m .hh
581 (1.3) the: hh. you know (0.5) u:m i heard tha:t
582 in korea (0.3) most of the men do a little bit
583 make-up () before they go out step out of the
584 house (.)[what's your opinion on that (0.4) do
585 S: [(>°oh yeah°<)
586 T: you think do you think women require make-up
587 (1.2)
588 →S: woman require make up or men (.) require
589 make-up (1.0) both of them?
590 (0.8)
591 T: oh even even uh- even men do make-up in
592 korea i didn't know about it
593 (0.8)
594 S: of ↑cou:↓rse (1.2) u::h (0.2) at least like
595 (.) uh- (0.7) at least (0.5) make up
596 (.)
597 T: mm ↑huh
598 (1.8) ((some noises occurs))
599 S: [↑yea:h
600 T: [what ↑do: ↑you ↑do: (0.5) >what do-< what
601 do you mean by that least make up what-
602 what do you ↓do
603 (0.5)
604 S: >i mean like< (0.5) you know like uh
605 (0.3) lotion and=uh skin (0.5) and (0.4) that
606 kind of stuff

The tutor initiates a new topic by using a question including a topical item in lines 580 - 586. After a 1.2-second pause at line 587, TK makes a clarification request by producing “woman require make up or (.) require make-up (1.0) both of them?” in lines 588 - 589 (arrowed). After a 0.8-second pause at line 590, the tutor utters “oh”, which can be interpreted as a change-of-state marker indicating that she has found out something new to her, and then responds with “even even uh- men do make-up in korea I didn't know about it” in lines 591 - 592. After a 0.8-second pause at line 593, TK replies with “of ↑cou:↓rse (1.2) u::h (0.2) at least like (.) uh- (0.7) at least (0.5) make up”. After a micro pause at line 596, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token “mm ↑huh” in line 597. There is a 1.8-second pause at line 598, and then the tutor and TK

start talking simultaneously. TK utters only an acknowledgement token “[↑ yeah”, while the tutor tries to change the initiated topic into a different one by asking a question about “least make up” in lines 600 - 602. After a 0.5-second pause at line 603, Hiddink starts responding to this from line 604.

In this extract, the use of a clarification request changes the proffered topic into another one. The change seems to be caused by the clarification request. The topic the tutor introduces at first is “women’s make-up”; however, TK issues a clarification request in lines 588 - 589 because the tutor has mentioned “men” in line 582. The tutor learns something new from the clarification request, so she changes the focus of the first proffered topic from “women’s make-up” to “men’s least make-up”, and this is maintained as a topic by TK’s talking about it.

5.2.7 Topic maintenance by duplicating part of a prior turn

Duplicating part of a proffered topic can topicalise proffered topics. When a participant suggests a topic, the recipient reproduces a part of the topic. The reproduction can be interpreted as meaning that the recipient is interested in the topic. Furthermore, if a topicaliser is followed by the repeated utterance, it can be indicative of concrete interest in the proffered topic. In this research it was found that when the tutor proffered a topic, the students would show interest by duplicating some part of the proffered topic with a topicaliser, which can play the role of maintaining the topic. Examples of how the students maintain a proffered topic by reproducing part of it is shown in Extracts 29 and 30.

Extract 29. Hiddink Day 04 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

97 T: why don't we:: talk abo::ut (0.7) global
 98 warming
 99 (0.9)
 100 →S: ↑**a::h** (0.4) **global warming**
 101 (1.9)
 102 T: [yes]
 103 S: [yes]
 104 T: what- what do you know about global warming
 105 an:d (1.2) and what do you- (.) what do you
 106 think sol (0.2) lution for that
 107 (1.3)

108 S: in fact we are studying abo:ut (0.2) global
 109 warming (.) an:d some (0.2) chemical things
 110 in school (for these days) (1.1) the part of

In Extract 29 above, the tutor initiates a new topic by producing “why don’t we:: talk abo::ut (0.7) global warming” in lines 97 - 98. After a 0.9-second pause at line 99, Hiddink produces a topicaliser “↑a::h”, which suggests that he understands the meaning of the topic and has some interest in it. He pauses again for 0.4 seconds and then duplicates a part of the tutor’s previous talk: “global warming”, in line 100 (arrowed). However, although Hiddink shows interest in the proffered topic, he does not elaborate further on it. After a 1.9-second pause at line 101, the tutor utters “yes”, which overlaps Hiddink’s “yes”, and then she gives a more detailed description of the topic in lines 104 - 106 since she has recognised that Hiddink has some interest in it. After a 1.3-second pause at line 107, Hiddink starts to talk about the topic in lines 108 - 110.

In Extract 30 below, TK also provides the basis for maintaining a topic by duplicating a word which appears in a topic proposed by the tutor.

Extract 30. TK Day 16 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

401 T: we also spoke about the soldiers: .hh
 402 (3.0)
 403 → S: **s- (.) soldiers=**
 404 T: =yes what do think about their life their
 405 sacrificing (0.2).hhhh their lives for
 406 our safety
 407 (1.3)
 408 → S: **↑oh sacrificing of the soldiers**
 409 (.)
 410 T: ↓mm ↑huh
 411 (0.4)
 412 S: a::h (1.4) i think it’s (0.5) u::h
 413 (0.5) unavoidable (0.2) i mean inevitable
 414 (0.7) cause (0.4) somebody should protect
 415 our country ↑right

In line 401 the tutor initiates a topic by telling TK about a topic she talked on with Hiddink in a previous session. After a 3.0-second pause at line 402, TK reproduces the word “soldiers” in line 403 (arrowed), which suggests that he has some sort of interest in the topic, but is not sure exactly what the topic is about. The tutor

immediately elucidates the topic in lines 404 - 406. After a 1.3-second pause at line 407, TK utters a topicaliser “↑oh” and then again duplicates the tutor’s more detailed description by repeating “sacrificing of the soldier” in line 408 (arrowed). This utterance by TK indicates more interest in the topic than his utterance in line 403, since he begins it with a topicaliser using a rising intonation and reproduces parts of the prior turn. After a micro pause at 409, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token “↓mm ↑huh” in line 410. After a 0.4-second pause at line 411, TK starts talking about the topic from line 412.

The recipient’s response to a proffered topic containing a duplication of a part of the proffered topic can indicate interest in it to the initiator; thus the recipients, Hiddink and TK, appear to be interested in talking about the topics put forward by the tutor in Extracts 29 and 30. The tutor can then guide Hiddink and TK into talking about the topic by noticing their duplication and then describing the proffered topic more clearly. When a topicaliser is placed in front of the repeated utterance, it seems to indicate more concrete interest.

5.2.8 Summary of the section

In this section the various ways in which topics were maintained during the online conversation classes have been analysed. When the tutor initiated topics by using a question including a topical item, the student maintained the topic by giving a preferred response to it. This is considered to be a basic way of maintaining a topic based on a question-answer adjacency pair. The other techniques of initiating topics described in this section were giving a topicaliser, giving an explicit acceptance notice or a positive feedback token, posing a question, issuing a clarification request and repeating part of prior talk.

5.3 How are topics terminated and changed during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

In the current study, two categories of topic change were identified: collaborative or unilateral topic transition and bounded or stepwise topical movement. Topic change can take place in various ways depending on how the participants terminate a topic-in-

progress and initiate a new topic.

5.3.1 Topic change by means of collaborative contributions

Topic change can take place through the collaborative contributions of the participants. In this study, the tutor and students naturally recognised at the topic boundaries that a topic-in-progress was coming to an end through their collaborative contributions and that a new topic was needed. Thus, topic changes were performed by the participants without their mentioning it explicitly. The types of topic transition carried out through collaborative contributions are illustrated below.

5.3.1.1 Topic change beginning with an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk

Expressing a clear understanding of prior talk can cause topic transition to take place. When one participant understands clearly what the other participant is saying about a topic-in-progress, he or she can produce an utterance that indicates this understanding, and this can trigger a topic transition. When the tutor or the students produced an utterance indicating that he or she understood prior talk clearly while talking on a topic-in-progress, it was found that the utterance could generate a topic transition through collaborative contributions. An example of how the tutor's utterance results in a topic transition is shown in Extract 31 below.

Extract 31. TK Day 12 (2T) (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK are talking about dress code...))
253 S: they be[lieve what they're [doing is]
254 T: [okay [uh-huh]
255 S: (.) good (0.3) and u:h moral (0.5) that's
256 why i- (.) they (0.2) are=
257 T: =mm-[huh
258 S: [°they° try to dress themselves (0.3) as
259 clean as possible (0.4) to express them
260 that (0.4) expe::ss (0.6) uh the others
261 that (.) like (1.2) themselves a:re
262 (0.5) doing the good things (.) and we are
263 like (1.0) u::h (0.4) guardian or something
264 (0.5) o↓kay
265 (1.3)

266 T: uh- [okay
 267 S: [so
 268 (0.5)
 269 S: i think [they're]
 270 →T: [i got you]
 271 (1.2)
 272 S: okay yeah (0.4) that's what i (0.2)
 273 what i (0.2) try to say
 274 (2.0)
 275 T: mm-hu::h
 276 (0.3)
 277 S: mm-huh
 278 (.)
 279 T: .h okay (0.2) thank you for letting
 280 me know your (.) opinion (.) .h=
 281 S: =ok[ay
 282 T: [u::m (.) that we were talking
 283 about travelling (.) u::h what is your
 284 idea about travelling and do you
 285 like travelling

The tutor and TK are talking about 'dress code'. In lines 253 – 264 TK is expressing his opinion that the dress code of a person can have an influence on his or her work. After a 1.3-second pause at line 265, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token "okay" after a hesitation token "uh" in line 266. At that moment, TK coincidentally utters "so" in line 267, which can be interpreted as signalling that he is about to try to elaborate further on this. After a 0.5-second pause at line 268, TK produces "i think [they're]", but breaks off in line 269 because the tutor inserts "[i got you]" in line 270 (arrowed), which overlaps the "[they're]" of TK's utterance in line 269. After a 1.2-second pause at line 271, he utters acknowledgement tokens "okay yeah", pauses for 0.4 seconds and then closes his turn by producing a sort of summary of his talk: "that's what i (0.2) what I (0.2) try to say" in lines 272 - 273. The tutor gives only a minimal response "mm-hu::h" in line 275 without any further elaboration after a 2.0-second pause at line 274. TK also responds by uttering only a minimal response "mm-huh" in line 277 after a 0.3-second pause at line 276.

The exchange of minimal responses clearly shows that they do not intend to talk about the ongoing topic anymore. The tutor realises this and produces "okay (0.2) thank you for letting me know your (.) opinion (.) .h=" in lines 279 - 280 after a micro pause at line 278, which can be construed as a signal of her intention to terminate the ongoing

topic. TK agrees with the tutor's suggestion by immediately uttering an acknowledgement token “= ok[ay]” in line 281. As a result, the ongoing topic is terminated through their collaborative contributions. In lines 270 – 281 they can thus be said to be in the process of negotiating the termination of their topic-in-progress. Overlapping TK's response “okay” in line 281, the tutor initiates a new topic by asking a question including a topical item in lines 282 - 285 (see Extract 2, p.131). The tutor uses a question including a topical item to launch a new topic - ‘travelling’ - which is not related to the topic-in-progress of ‘dress code’. The new topic depends on TK's answer because they have never talked about it before.

In Extract 31, the utterance “[i got you]” in line 270 seems to play an important role in changing the topic-in-progress into the new topic. In fact, judging by his utterance in line 269, TK seems to intend to elaborate further on the topic-in-progress. However, he stops talking on it as a result of the tutor's utterance and then summarises the prior topic. Thus, the topic transition may be said to start from the tutor's “I got you”. Furthermore, the tutor and TK's exchange of only a minimal response precipitates the topic termination. Finally, the topic-in-progress ends with the tutor's talk “okay, thank you for letting me know your opinion” in lines 279 - 280. In conclusion, the tutor's expression of her clear understanding of the prior talk causes a topic transition to take place by eliciting TK's summary and the tutor's and TK's exchange of minimal responses.

In Extract 32 below, the tutor also provides an utterance indicating her understanding of prior talk, which plays the same role as the utterance in Extract 31.

Extract 32 Hiddink Day 07(2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

64 T: o↓kay u::m (0.4) alright (0.3) talk to me
65 abo:ut (.) the: (0.7) u:m (.) uh (.) any
66 world leader that you admire the most
67 (1.6)
68 S: i admire the: (0.2) bankimoon (0.4) the most
69 (1.1)
70 T: o↓kay why is ↑tha:t
71 (0.8)
72 S: because he's the first youen:: (U.N.)
73 (0.2) office (0.5) chief officer (0.4) from
74 korea=

75 T: =↓mm ↑huh (0.7) ↑oh o↑ka:y (0.3) very goo:d
 76 (0.7) and why
 77 (1.0)
 78 S: and because (0.5) he aceived (1.6) what
 79 others can receive (0.2) aceived (1.2) easily
 80 (.) others can
 81 (1.4)
 82 T: ↑o↓kay
 83 (0.2)
 84 S: even in other nation who are (0.3) educated
 85 very well (.) but (0.4) he [wa:s] he was
 86 T: [↓mm ↑huh]
 87 S: very poor when he was young (1.3) [very studied]
 88 T: [mm ↑huh]
 89 S: very hard so he aceived that (1.1) kind of
 90 (0.3) work (0.4) so i think his (1.0) effort
 91 is very (0.7) huge (0.7) so i admired his
 92 (0.3) effort
 93 (1.4)
 94 ➔ T: **.hh okay i understand (1.4) .hh ↑al↓right**
 95 (3.5)
 96 S: °ye::s°
 97 (0.4)
 98 T: is that it? (0.2) nobody el:se?
 99 (0.6)
 100 S: °um:: [yea::h°] actually nobody else
 101 T: [°↓mm ↑huh°]
 102 (1.8)
 103 T: ↑o::h (0.5) o↓kay (2.9) ↑al↓right and uh
 104 (.)
 105 S: ((Hiddink is coughing))
 106 (2.7)
 107 T: .hh o↓kay what's your favourite drink

In Extract 32, above, the tutor asks a question including the topical item “any world leader that you admire the most” to initiate a new topic in lines 64 - 66. After a 1.6-second pause at line 67, Hiddink responds with “i admire the: (0.2) bankimoon (0.4) the most” in line 68. This question-answer adjacency pair could function to terminate the topic; however, after a 1.1-second pause at line 69, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token “o↓kay”, and then puts another question “why is ↑tha:t” to maintain the topic. Although Hiddink responds to this in lines 72 - 73, the response does not satisfy the tutor. She therefore asks “why” again after assessing Hiddink’s response in lines 75 - 76. After a 1.0-second pause at line 77, Hiddink replies to the question in lines 78 - 92. After a 1.4-second pause at line 93, the tutor produces “.hh okay i

understand (1.4) .hh ↑al↓right” in line 94 (arrowed), which may indicate that Hiddink’s answer has caused her to understand the prior talk. After a 3.5-second long pause at line 95, Hiddink utters only an acknowledgement “°ye::s°” in line 96. After a 0.4-second pause at line 97, the tutor produces “is that it? (0.2) nobody el:se?” in line 98; however, Hiddink shows that he does not want to talk about it anymore by responding with “°um:: [yea::h°] actually nobody else” in line 100. After a 1.8-second pause at line 102, the tutor utters a change-of-state token “↑o::h”, which suggests that she has recognised Hiddink’s intention, and after a 0.5-second pause she then produces “o↓kay (2.9) ↑al↓right and uh” in line 103. There is a micro pause while Hiddink is coughing, and then, after a 2.7-second pause at line 106, the tutor tries to change the topic by producing a question including a topical item: “.hh o↓kay what’s your favourite drink” in line 107.

In the extract above, after producing an utterance indicating understanding of the prior talk in line 94, the tutor tries to ask questions related to the topic. However, Hiddink’s response indicates that he has no inclination to talk about it, so the topic terminates. This is different from the sequence shown in Extract 31 in which the tutor and TK terminate the topic-in-progress through collaborative contributions. The utterance in line 94 seems to trigger topic change by generating topic termination. Even though they do not talk about the topic transition explicitly, they begin the sequence of topic termination from line 94.

An utterance indicating understanding of a prior topic can terminate a topic-in-progress directly and trigger a new topic, as in the example shown in Extract 33 below.

Extract 33. TK Day 03 (4T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK are talking about colds and ice cream...))

- 21 T: o↓kay (0.2) .hh (.) because you (.) still
 22 have not got me the ice cream
 23 (0.6)
 24 T: it’s [as simple] as that
 25 S: [°a:h°]
 26 (0.6)
 27 S: ↑yea::h (0.4) i think that’s true (0.4) i
 28 think i have to (0.5) u:h buy >little ice
 29 cream for myself and buy< ↑you (0.4) a lot
 30 of ice cream

31 (1.8)
 32 ➔ T: **HAHAHA (0.5) you bet**
 33 (0.5)
 34 S: yea::h
 35 (.)
 36 T: .hh so how is it go- (.) how is it going
 37 for you

Up until line 20, the tutor and TK have been talking about TK's cold. The tutor jokingly explains to TK the reason why he still has a cold in lines 21 - 24, where TK's utterance "[° a : h°]" in line 25 overlaps part ("[as simple]") of the tutor's utterance in line 24. This suggests that he has realised that the tutor's talk is a joke. After a 0.6-second pause at line 26, TK utters an acknowledgement token "↑yea::h" and then agrees with her by responding with a joke after a 0.4-second pause in lines 27 - 30. After a 1.8-second pause at line 31, the tutor laughs and agrees with TK by producing "you bet" in line 32 (arrowed). After a 0.5-second pause at line 33, TK utters only an acknowledgement token "yea::h" in line 34. Then, after a micro pause at line 35, the tutor inhales and then utters "so", which can be construed as signalling that something new is about to be introduced. She then reuses an enquiry into personal state: "how is it go- (.) how is it going for you" in lines 36 - 37 to elicit a new topic from TK.

Unlike Extracts 31 and 32, in this extract the utterance indicating understanding of prior talk terminates the topic-in-progress. The tutor's utterance "HAHAHA (0.5) you bet" does not develop the sequence to terminate the ongoing topic as it does in Extracts 31 and 32. After TK's acknowledgement token "yea::h" in line 34, the tutor makes another enquiry into personal state in order to elicit a new topic from TK.

5.3.1.2 Topic change beginning with a summary of prior talk

Topic change can begin with a summary of prior talk. In the online conversation classes examined in this research, it was found that the tutor would summarise the students' prior talk at the boundaries between two topics. After the tutor's summary, they would exchange turns with each other about the summary, which often generated a topic transition. The collaborative turns they produced led to a topic transition even though they did not mention the topic transition explicitly. An example of how a topic change is carried out by the tutor's summary is shown in Extract 34 below.

Extract 34. Hiddink Day 15 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor / S= Hiddink)

((The tutor and Hiddink are talking about the use of mobile phones...))

- 157 S: u:h this room is for teachers (0.2) and they
158 (0.6) get it (0.2) they:: hh. (0.4) yes
159 they get it from students
160 (1.0)
161 T: o↓kay
162 (0.4)
163 S: so h. about fifty:: or sixty hand- cell
164 phones are (0.3) here
165 (0.3)
166 T: ↓o::h my go:d (0.2) o↓kay
167 (0.3)
168 S: they (0.5) they used it (0.5) during the
169 class: (0.5) ye[ah
170 T: [o↓ka:y
171 (1.4)
172 S: °u::m°
173 →T: **.hh (.) so generally you're not allowed**
174 **to (0.2) u:h carry cell phones in[side the**
175 S: [yeah
176 T: **classroom ↑right**
177 (0.3)
178 S: yes even not to carry
179 (1.7)
180 T: o↓ka:y
181 (0.7)
182 S: °yes° (0.2) uhu-hum
183 (2.7)
184 ((The school bell starts ringing))
185 T: al↑right is our time up?
186 (0.6)
187 S: ↑no it is for our (0.4) fo- s- (0.4) s-
188 (0.3) uh our (0.3) school (0.2) ring
189 (1.0)
190 T: ↑oh o↓kay
191 (0.3)
192 S: we have just six minutes
193 (1.1)
194 T: o↓kay (.) al↓right
195 (0.4)
196 S: we have to do:: .h about °ten forty nine
197 minutes more° hh. °m::m°=
198 T: =↑hu::m (1.8) .hh alright u::m
199 (1.3)
200 S: °uh-°
201 (0.2)
202 T: we:: wha- wha- wha- what do you wanna talk
203 about ↓now

The tutor and Hiddink have been talking about the usage of mobile phones in class at Hiddink's school. Hiddink talks about his teachers' confiscation of the phones and the students' using the phones in class in lines 157 - 169. At the end of line 169, Hiddink finishes his turn by uttering "ye[ah]", which is overlapped by the tutor's acknowledgement token "[o↓ka:y". Then a 1.4-second pause occurs at line 171, which suggests that they both expect each other to take the conversational floor. As soon as Hiddink finishes uttering a hesitation marker "u::m" in line 172, the tutor summarises Hiddink's prior talk on the ongoing topic in lines 173 - 176 (arrowed). After a 0.3-second pause at line 177, Hiddink adds more information to the summary by responding with "yes even not to carry" in line 178. After a 1.7-second pause at line 179, the tutor gives only an acknowledgement token "o↓ka:y" in line 180. After a 0.7-second pause at line 181, Hiddink also utters only a response token "yes" in line 182. A 2.7-second long pause then takes place at line 183 and then Hiddink's school bell is heard ringing. When the tutor hears the bell, she produces "al↑right is our time up?" to terminate the session. This is a mistake on the part of the tutor, however, and Hiddink explains to her that she has misunderstood the bell and then reminds her of the time that is left to complete the session in lines 187 - 198. After a 1.3-second pause at line 199, Hiddink's utterance of "uh-" and a 0.2-second pause at lines 199 - 201, the tutor asks a question including no topical item in lines 202- 203 to initiate a new topic (see Extract 7, p.138).

In the above extract, the tutor and Hiddink start building up a sequence leading to a topic transition from lines 173 to 183, although without mentioning it explicitly. The sequence starts from the tutor's summary of Hiddink's talk in lines 173 - 174, goes through the student's response and an exchange of just a minimal response and ends with a long pause. From this sequence they are both able to recognise that the topic-in-progress has been exhausted. The tutor's utterance "al↑right is our time up?" in line 185 is conclusive evidence of this. It can be taken to indicate that they have implicitly prepared for the termination of the session as well as of the ongoing topic through collaborative contributions. When she realises her mistake, the tutor uses a question including no topical item to initiate a new topic.

Unlike Extract 34, above, when the tutor attempts to change the topic by summarising prior talk, she uses a pre-sequence for the topic transition and initiates a

new topic which is related to the prior topic. An example of how a summary of prior talk causes an ongoing topic to shift to another topic which is related to the prior topic is given in Extract 35 below.

Extract 35. TK Day 09 (1T) a (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

73 T: oh a↓light (0.3) very guy very good so do- do
 74 you (0.3) do you watch alien films and all that
 75 (0.4) you do you like watching ↑them
 76 (0.4)
 77 S: not actually i don't like watching them
 78 (0.5) >I mean< i don't feel like watching them
 79 (1.7)
 80 T: .hhhh ↑why
 81 (1.1)
 82 S: because it's so imaginary (0.3) u::h (0.6) of
 83 course i: (.) believe (.) those are exists
 84 (0.4) those are (0.3) exists in this (0.5) uh
 85 somewhere in the world but (1.0) i don't
 86 [like watching them because (0.3) it (0.7) u::h
 87 T: [mm-↑huh
 88 S: (0.4) what do you call that i::t shortens our
 89 (0.5) u::h (0.2) imagina[
 90 T: [imaginative
 91 (0.4)
 92 T: [yeah]
 93 S: [yeah] (0.7) because (0.3) you know the
 94 stereotype of aliens is like uh it- it has a
 95 big hea::d and (0.4) a small body and big eyes
 96 like (0.6) that's all just stereotype right so
 97 (0.6) yea:h so [i don't like thinking that=
 98 T: [o↓kay
 99 →T: **no nobody exactly knows how alien is .hh=**
 100 S: =yeah=
 101 T: **=an::d uh you don't want to stop your**
 102 **imagination just by watching those:**
 103 (0.7)
 104 S: ↓yea::[h
 105 T: **[it might be actually something different**
 106 (0.6)
 107 S: mm ↑huh=
 108 T: =that's what you mean (.) ↑right
 109 (0.4)
 110 S: that's true ↑yeah
 111 (0.5)
 112 T: you left one point
 113 (0.5)
 114 S: ↑what

115 (.)
 116 T: whatever they show in the movies >you know<
 117 (0.4)
 118 S: mm ↑huh=
 119 T: =.hh (.) all the aliens they look green in
 120 colour i don't know why they pick up the
 121 weird colour (0.6).hh

The tutor initiates a new topic by asking a question including a topical item: “do you like watching alien movies?” in lines 73 - 75. After a 0.4-second pause at line 76, in lines 77-79 TK replies that he does not like watching alien films. The tutor immediately summarises TK’s talk on the topic-in-progress in lines 99 - 105 (arrowed), during which TK utters only response tokens: “=yeah=” in line 100 and “↓yea::[h” in line 104. After a 0.6-second pause at line 106, TK utters an acknowledgement token “mm ↑huh=” in line 107. The tutor immediately produces “=that’s what you mean (.) ↑right” in line 108 to clarify whether or not her summary is appropriate. After a 0.4-second pause at line 109, TK responds positively with “that’s true ↑yeah” in line 110. After a 0.5-second pause at line 111, the tutor produces “you left one point” in line 112, which seems to signal that she still has something to talk about. TK shows an interest by responding with “↑ what” in line 114, which plays the role of giving the tutor the right to talk further about it. The tutor initiates a new topic using a statement including a topical item: “whatever they show in the movies >you know< all the aliens they look like green in colour” and then adding an indirect question: “i don’t know why they pick up the weird colour” in lines 116 to 121.

In this extract, the termination of the ongoing topic begins with the tutor’s summary in lines 101 - 105. The summary serves as an impetus to develop a turn-taking series which includes TK’s acknowledgement of the summary, the tutor’s clarification request and TK’s response to it. Through their collaborative contributions, they are able to deduce that the topic-in-progress is coming to an end and that a new topic is needed. Thus, the tutor produces “you left one point” in line 113, which can be interpreted as being a pre-sequence used to initiate a new topic “the colour of aliens”, and then launch the new topic by using a question including a topical item after the pre-sequence. The new topic comes out of the prior topic “films about aliens”, but the two topics are different from each other.

5.4.1.3 Topic change beginning with an assessment of prior talk

Assessing prior talk can be a starting point for a topic termination. In the data for this research it was found that when the tutor talked with the students about a topic-in-progress, she assessed the students' talk on the topic. Just as a summary of prior talk triggers a topic transition in the examples shown in Extracts 34 and 35, the assessment activated a topic termination, and topic change was then accomplished through the collaborative contributions of both tutor and student regarding the assessment.

Examples of how an assessment of prior talk generates a topic termination and change are presented in Extracts 36 and 37 below.

Extract 36. Hiddink Day 04 (1T) (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

- 18 T: so (0.3) tell me what's you have what
19 you have been doing (0.2) u:h and what's
20 your plan for the weekend
21 (1.2)
22 S: °i have to study for final exam as i told
23 you yesterday (0.2) (i'll) (0.3) it's very
24 ()°
25 (.)
26 T: ↑oh (1.4) o↓kay o↓kay (1.9) ↓al↑right good
27 for ↑you::
28 (1.3)
29 S: °yeah but it is not [much] happy°
30 T: [al↑right]
31 (1.1)
32 S: i want to go out and play computer game
33 (0.4) in (.) peesee (P.C.) room (1.9) do
34 you know peesee room
35 (0.4)
36 T: ↑oh (1.0) .hh (.) yes i know
37 (0.6)
38 S: yea[:h
39 T: [teekay (TK) told me about the peesee
40 rooms
41 (0.5)
42 S: i want to go there but (0.4) i don't have
43 enough money and i don't have enough time
44 (0.6) neither (0.8) so i have [(to)
45 T: [↑o↓h::
46 (2.2)
47 → T: **that's sad**
48 (0.2)
49 S: °yea[:h°

50 (3.0)
 51 T: al:↑right so u:::m did you guys decided on
 52 a specific topic to talk to me today?

In line 18, the tutor initiates a new topic by asking “what’s your plan for the weekend”, which is a question including a topical item, in lines 18 - 20. After a 1.2-second pause at line 21, Hiddink responds in lines 22 - 23. After a micro pause at line 25, and after uttering a change-of-state marker “↑oh”, which can be interpreted as a signal that the tutor has realised Hiddink’s situation, she pauses for 1.4 seconds and then produces “o↓kay o↓kay (1.9) ↓al↑right good for ↑you:::” in lines 26 - 27. After a 1.3-second pause at line 28, Hiddink starts to elaborate further on his previous talk by adding what he wants to do in line 29 and finishes it in line 44. At the end of line 44, the tutor’s utterance “oh” overlaps Hiddink’s utterance “to”, so Hiddink seems to stop talking. After a 2.2-second pause at line 46, the tutor assesses Hiddink’s previous talk by producing “that’s sad” in line 47 (arrowed). After pausing for 0.2 seconds at line 48, Hiddink utters only an acknowledgement token “°yea:h°” in line 49. A 3.0-second long pause takes place at line 50, after the tutor produces an acknowledgement token “al:↑right”, utters “so” (which can be interpreted as signalling that she intends to introduce something to tell Hiddink) and a hesitation marker “u:::m”; then she produces a question including no topical item in lines 51 - 52 in order to elicit a new topic from Hiddink.

In the above extract, the tutor’s assessment of Hiddink’s previous talk on the topic-in-progress causes a topic change to take place. The assessment elicits an acknowledgement token “yeah” from Hiddink and a long pause, and then leads to the tutor’s initiation of a new topic which is totally different from the topic-in-progress. That is to say, the assessment seems to play the role of triggering a topic transition from an ongoing topic to a new one.

In Extract 37 below, after the tutor produces an assessment, she tries to change a topic-in-progress to a new topic which is related to the ongoing topic.

Extract 37. TK Day 12 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

282 T: [u:::m (.) that we were talking about

283 travelling u:h what is your
 284 idea about travelling and do you
 285 like travelling
 286 (.)
 287 S: o:h (0.2) i lo[ve to travel]
 288 T: [>what's your interest<]
 289 (1.2)
 290 ((TK's school starts ringing))
 291 S: i lo:ve i lo:ve travelling=
 292 T: =>o↓kay<
 ((The conversation is deleted))
 358 S: yeah i'm actually thinking that (0.4) uh when
 359 i (0.2) finish the:: (0.7) the final exam
 360 (.) a:h i mean the: (0.3) when we took
 361 (0.3) in the (.) twelve (0.5) twelfth
 362 (0.9) you know the ()
 363 (0.2)
 364 T: mm ↑h[uh
 365 S: [really final exam (0.8) in america:
 366 it's [name] (0.2) (tee) right? (1.5) yeah well
 367 T: [↓o↑kay]
 368 (.)
 369 T: i'm ↑sorry
 370 (0.8)
 371 S: ah [in america]
 372 T: [in america] name what did you what
 373 did you say
 374 (0.4)
 375 S: es ei tee: (S.A.T) (1.3) es ei tee=
 376 T: =.hh o↑kay (.) o[↓kay
 377 S: [yea:h
 378 T: o↓kay [sat
 379 S: [if i take
 380 (0.4)
 381 T: [o↓kay
 382 S: [yeah if i take (0.5) the korean style
 383 es ei tee (0.6) and (.) i'll (.) i'll
 384 [be given
 385 T: [mm ↑huh
 386 (0.2)
 387 S: really really (0.2) lots of time
 388 (0.3) so: (0.7) u:h (.) i'm plan[ing to go
 389 T: [o↓kay
 390 S: to europe in that (0.2) period
 391 (2.2)
 392 T: oh wo:w (0.2) o↓k[ay
 393 S: [it would be like two years
 394 (0.6) from now (1.7) yeah (0.7) [and i have
 395 ➔T: [that's nice
 396 that's nice future (0.4) o↓k[ay

397 S: [mm ↓huh
398 (1.8)
399 →T: that's n[ice] that's nice and the what's your
400 S: [°yeah°]
401 T: idea about you know if you go to different
402 place u:m (0.7) you you will meet (0.2) new
403 people (0.2) u:[h different culture
404 S: [°yeah°
405 T: (0.5) probably in your language .h ah a:nd
406 the: (0.2) different food style .h u::m so
407 are you (0.5) are you excited about
408 (1.4) ((bad connection)) or (0.3).h generally
409 if you take me (0.2) u::m (.) .h if i go
410 somewhere (0.5) for me:: (.) since i'm a
411 (strict) vegetarian the first thing that
412 bothers me is a food
413 (0.5)
414 S: o↓:[h
415 T: [because if i don't get (0.3) vegetarian
416 food (0.3) ((noise)) (0.3) i'm i'm (0.8) i'll
417 go bunkers
418 (0.5)
419 S: o::h=
420 T: =so (.) u:::m (0.6) hahaha the other things
421 does not matter to me but (0.3) if i am not
422 gonna to get anything vegetarian .h
423 (0.2)
424 T: naturally i'll be very upset so what- what-
425 (0.6) is there anything specific that you're
426 looking for in every country that you travel
427 uh or (0.3) do you like new stuff

The tutor initiates a new topic by using a question including a topical item: “what is your idea about travelling and do you like travelling” in lines 282 - 285. After a micro pause at line 286, TK responds with “o::h (0.2) i lo[ve to travel” in line 287. Before TK’s response ends, the tutor adds another question “[>what’s your interest<]”. After a 1.2-second pause at line 289, TK starts talking about the topic from line 291 to line 394. At the end of line 394, TK seems to have something to elaborate further on, but the tutor begins making an assessment of TK’s previous talk by producing “[that’s nice that’s nice future”, pauses for 0.4 seconds and utters “o↓k[ay” in lines 395 - 396 (arrowed). The student responds with an acknowledgement token “[mm ↓huh” in line 397. After a 1.8-second pause at line 398, the tutor repeats her assessment phrase “that’s nice” twice in line 399 (arrowed) and TK’s acknowledgement token “[°yeah°” in line 400 overlaps the “nice” of the first phrase. The tutor then uses a question including a

topical item from line 399 to change the topic-in-progress to a new topic. In lines 399 – 427 she explains the question in detail by giving an example, in order to help TK to understand the question.

In Extract 37, above, the tutor's assessment triggers a topic transition in the same way as that in Extract 36. The difference between the two topic transitions is that the new topic the tutor initiates in Extract 37 is related to the prior topic. Even though the new topic comes out of the topic-in-progress, the two topics are not categorised as being the same topic.

Unlike the examples given in Extracts 36 and 37, an assessment of prior talk can work to shift a topic-in-progress to another topic through the addition of a summary of prior talk, as in Extract 38 below.

Extract 38. Hiddink Day 02 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

269 T: because when you when you take up you
 270 might have some dreams right i just wanted
 271 to know (.) .h (.) probably when i become
 272 a priest i want to do this i want to do
 273 that (.) .h (.) so what- what is your dream
 274 (1.6)
 275 S: i want to develop (0.2) u::h part (0.8) u::h
 276 music part (1.2) uh gregorian like (0.8) ho-
 277 (0.6) like (0.6) sacred ↑song (0.8) like
 278 that
 279 (1.4)
 280 T: ↑ok↓ay (0.4) o↓kay (0.4) al↑right (1.5) so
 281 you want to reach god (0.4) by means of your
 282 (0.9) uh [by means of
 283 S: [yeah i
 284 (.)
 285 T: [uh by means of music
 286 S: [yeah i want to
 287 (0.8)
 288 S: yeah i want to encourage people who:: study
 289 about (0.5) catholic (0.6) music (0.9) i want
 290 (.)
 291 T: m↑::m
 292 (1.5)
 293 S: because (1.1) because these days (0.5) people
 294 who:: study about (0.5) catho- (0.4) catholic
 295 music (0.5) learn (0.3) with (0.3) th[eir own

296 T: [o↓kay
 297 S: money
 298 (1.7)
 299 T: [o↓kay]
 300 S: [no] support from (1.5) catholic (0.2) church
 301 (1.2)
 302 S: so [i want to]
 303 T: [↑o::h]
 304 (.)
 305 T: o↓ka[y
 306 S: [(supports) them
 307 (1.6)
308 →T: o::h ↓al↑right (0.4) ↑o↓kay (0.2) h. that's
309 very nice of you: so u:m (0.6) you want to
 310 (.) improve the (0.2) music (.) part in the
 311 religion and you want to encourage people
 312 singing (0.2) right?
 313 (.)
 314 S: °ye::::s°
 315 (1.0)
316 →T: o↑kay (.) that's pretty much interesting
 317 an::d u:h (1.4) i think we have discussed
 318 enough about .hh catholics u::m would you
 319 (0.4) u::m (0.4) i know that there (.) there
 320 is much more too (.) chritianity (0.6) right?
 321 .hh (.) [there is] protestants?
 322 S: [yea::h]
 323 (0.3)
 324 T: uh- [if i'm no:t] (.) wrong
 325 S: [yea::h]
 326 (0.4)
 327 T: .hh
 328 (.)
 329 S: yea::h [you ↑right
 330 T: [so what do you know about protestants

The tutor initiates a new topic by using a question that includes a topical item: “what is your dream”, giving detailed examples to clarify her question in lines 269 - 273. After a 1.6-second pause at line 274, Hiddink responds in lines 275 - 278. After a 1.4-second pause at 279, the tutor then provides “↑ok↓ay (0.4) o↓kay (0.4) al↑right”, pauses for 1.5 seconds, utters “so” (which can be interpreted as a signal that she has something to tell) and then summarises Hiddink’s previous talk in lines 280 - 282. Hiddink starts to elaborate further on his talk in line 283 before the tutor has finished her talk in line 282. His elaboration continues until line 306. After a 1.6-second pause at line 307, and after uttering a change-of-state token “o::h”, the tutor assesses Hiddink’s previous talk with

acknowledgement tokens, responding with “↓al↑right (0.4) ↑o↓kay (0.2) h. that’s very nice of you.” (arrowed), summarises his talk again and asks if the summary is correct by producing “right?” in lines 308 - 312. After a micro pause at line 313, Hiddink utters an acknowledgement token “oye::::s”. After a 1.0-second pause at line 315, and after uttering an acknowledgement token “o↑kay” and making a micro pause, the tutor assesses the ongoing topic by producing “that’s pretty much interesting” (arrowed) and then asks a question as a pre-sequence to initiate a new topic in lines 316 - 321. After obtaining an answer to the pre-sequence question, she then asks a question including a topical item in line 330.

In the extract above, both a summary and two assessments of prior talk induce a topic transition. The assessment and the summary of the prior talk, and then the confirmation request about the summary in lines 308 – 312, followed by another assessment in line 316, all lead to topic termination and topic change. The tutor uses a question including a topical item to initiate a new topic, “protestants”, which comes out of the previous topic, although the new topic is completely different from the previous one.

5.3.1.4 Topic change beginning with a formulation or reformulation of prior talk

Describing all or some part of prior talk in a different way can cause a topic transition to take place. It was found that the tutor formulated or reformulated the students’ talk on an ongoing topic, which led to topic closure through collaborative contributions and the initiation of a new topic. An example of how the reformulation of prior talk causes the tutor and Hiddink to change a topic-in-progress to another one is presented in Extract 39 below.

Extract 39. Hiddink Day 09 (1T) a (T= Tutor / S= Hiddink)

315 T: andu::h (1.5) .h i think you you spo- you
 316 spoken about che: uh lion king it’s it’s u:m
 317 have you seen both parts: (0.2) lion ↑king
 318 (1.1)
 319 S: lion king? (0.2) both par:ts?
 320 (0.5)
 321 T: i mean it there was lion king one and two

332, which shows his intention to continue talking further about the subject.

However, he stops because the tutor simultaneously restates Hiddink's previous turn: "[you've not seen it (.)]" and then utters acknowledgement tokens "o:[↓kay (.) o↓kay" in lines 333 - 334 (arrowed). While the tutor is uttering the acknowledgement tokens in line 334, Hiddink responds with only a response token "[yea:h" in line 335. After a 1.2-second pause at line 336, the tutor produces "that's ↑al↓right", pauses for 0.4 seconds and then suggests that Hiddink should see part two of the film in lines 337 - 338. This suggestion can be taken to mean that the tutor is going to terminate the ongoing topic. After a 0.3-second pause in line 339, Hiddink responds with only "o:h (0.2) o↓kay". After that, a 6-second long silence takes place before and after Hiddink's utterance, "hum" in line 342, which suggests that he is not inclined to talk about the ongoing topic anymore. After the long silence, the tutor utters "so", which can be taken as a signal introducing a topical talk, and then initiates a new topic by using a solicitous enquiry into trouble: "how is your preparations going on (0.3) for for your exam" in lines 344 to 345.

In the above extract, the reformulating of prior talk functions as a starting point for a topic transition. The topic termination may be said to start from lines 333 - 334 with the tutor's reformulation of Hiddink's prior talk, and to end with the long pauses at lines 341 - 343, passing through the tutor's suggestion in lines 337-338. Through this sequence, the tutor and Hiddink are able to see that the topic-in-progress is exhausted and that they need a new topic. Accordingly, the tutor initiates a new topic by addressing a solicitous enquiry into trouble, which is not concerned with the prior topic "the film of *The Lion King*".

As in Extract 39, above, the example in Extract 40 shows how the formulation of prior talk can act to trigger a topic transition sequence at the boundaries between two topics. In particular, an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk that follows the formulation of prior talk helps change a topic-in-progress to another topic.

Extract 40. TK Day 12 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor / S= TK)

625 S: o::h n::::o we it- it- daily routine in
626 korea (0.9) you know like kore[ans

627 T: [o↓kay
628 (0.9)
629 S: like koreans really really think about the
630 others' point of view (1.1) that's a
631 (0.4) like=
632 T: =h::m[m
633 S: [ab↑sɔrb (0.3) absorb in our culture
634 (0.8) because (0.4) our cul[ture is
635 T: [o↓kay
636 (.)
637 T: um-
638 (0.7)
639 S: consisted of the=u::h (0.8) uh (0.3) those
640 (0.9) youkyou ((korean word)) u::h (0.7) °ho-°
641 however i don't know the:: (0.7) >english name
642 but< (0.8) whatever (0.5) our [culture is
643 T: [o↓kay
644 S: really (.) consisted of the: (0.9) really cares
645 about the others (0.4) a:nd (0.3) if other
646 (.) [if the other
647 T: [o↓kay °o↓kay°
648 (0.3)
649 S: other majority says i'm ba:d (0.3) then
650 (0.3) i (.) think (0.2) i'm bad (0.6) if-
651 (0.2) other majority thinks i'm good person
652 (0.2) i think i'm good person like that
653 (0.8) it happens (0.3) so
654 (.)
655 T: ↑o::h=
656 S: =if i don't
657 (0.3)
658 S: yeah
659 (0.2)
660 T: ok[ay
661 S: [so (0.7) if we include this point of view
662 to makeup stuff
663 (1.4)
664 S: [it
665 T: [↓mm ↑huh
666 (0.8)
667 S: it can be understood (0.4) so:: (0.4) if we
668 don't make-up (0.2) everybody will think that
669 like (0.4) ↑oh he's dirty (0.3) or (0.5) ↑oh
670 he's (.) u:h (.) ugly (0.5) then i (0.3) i am
671 being secluded from the society (1.0) a::nd
672 (1.4)
673 S: yeah and i'm getting degenerated and
674 degenerated
675 (1.0)
676 S: so

677 (0.2)
 678 T: o↓k[ay
 679 S: [every eh- yeah every person have to
 680 (0.8) u::h make-up (1.0) at lea[st
 681 →T: [uh do some kind
 682 of a makeup (.) o↓kay (0.2) i under[stand
 683 S: [°yeah°
 684 (2.2)
 685 T: al↑right
 686 (.)
 687 S: >mm ↑huh<
 688 (0.5)
 689 T: ..h so what do you think about (0.6) uh so
 690 you: you prefer uh the woman (0.4) um- using
 691 cos-metics (.) and making themselves up
 692 before they (0.8) step out of the ho:use?
 693 (1.2)
 694 S: ee: (0.8) ↑yeah
 695 (1.4)
 696 T: >o↓kay (0.4) you prefer that< (0.2) ↑good
 697 (0.5) >o↓ka[y<
 698 S: [°>↓mm ↑huh°< (1.8) ↑o↓kay
 699 (1.4)
 700 T: hahah (0.6) .hh alright in india it's not
 701 like tha:t (0.7) u:::m (0.7) .hh (.) i
 702 would say tha:::t i don't (0.8) u:::se
 703 any kind of make ↑up

As pointed out earlier in the previous use of this Extract (see Extract 28, p.165), the tutor initiates a topic by posing a question that includes a topical item about women's make-up in Korea; however, she changes this into a topic about men's make-up in Korea, and they talk about it. TK says that men in Korea use lotions as part of their daily routine and talks about why they do so from lines 625 to 680, during which he utters "[every eh- yeah every person have to (0.8) u::h make-up (1.0) at lea[st". The tutor utters a hesitation marker "uh" which overlaps with TK's talk in line 680, formulates part of the prior turn by producing "do some kind of a makeup", makes a micro pause, utters an acknowledgement token "o↓kay", pauses for 0.2 seconds and finally produces an utterance indicating understanding of the prior talk: "i under[stand" in lines 681 - 682 (arrowed). Before the tutor's turn ends, TK utters an acknowledgement token "[°yeah°" in line 683, which overlaps part of the tutor's word "understand". A 2.2-second pause takes place at line 684 and then the tutor utters "al↑right" in 685. A micro pause occurs at line 686 and then TK utters ">mm ↑huh<" in

line 687. After a 0.5-second pause at 688, the tutor asks a question related to the topic she proffered in lines 689 - 692. After a 1.2-second pause at line 693, TK responds positively with “ee: (0.8) ↑yeah” in line 694. After a 1.4-second pause at line 695, the tutor responds with “>o↓kay (0.4) you prefer that< (0.2) ↑good (0.5) >o↓ka[y<” in lines 696 - 697 and TK also utters “[>°↓mm ↑huh°< (1.8) ↑o↓kay” in line 698. After a 1.4-second pause at line 699, after laughing for a moment, the tutor inhales briefly, utters an acknowledgement token “alright” and then initiates a new topic by introducing a statement including a topical item in lines 700 - 703.

In Extract 40, the formulation of prior talk accompanied by an acknowledgement token and an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk induce a topic transition. After the tutor’s utterance of “do some kind of a makeup (.) o↓kay (0.2) i under[stand” in lines 681 to 682, the exchange of only minimal responses takes place with several pauses, including a long one from lines 683 to 688. Through their collaborative contributions, the participants are able to see that the topic-in-progress is coming to an end. Accordingly, after posing a question related to the topic she proffered and obtaining a response from TK, the tutor tries to change the ongoing topic on make-up in Korea to a new one on make-up in India by using a statement including a topical item.

5.3.1.5 Topic change beginning with exchange of minimal responses and pauses

The exchanging of only minimal responses or long pauses can trigger a topic transition. In the example shown in Extract 40, the exchanging of only minimal responses accompanied by several pauses appeared in the sequence at the topic boundary, suggesting that the participants are in the process of ending an ongoing topic and leading to finding a new topic, since they do not talk any more about the ongoing topic. Through the sequence they can implicitly recognise that a topic transition is going to take place. Examples of how minimal responses or long pauses generate a topic transition are presented in Extracts 41 and 42 below.

Extract 41. Hiddink Day 16 (1T) (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

81 T: so uh what do you think about the
 82 (0.2) people (0.2) u::h the soldiers
 83 (0.2) who uh who give their lives for
 84 (0.2) our safety (0.2) it that’s huge

85 sacrifice they're making for us .hh
86 (.) so (.) u:::m do you have anything
87 (0.2) specific (0.2) to tell about them
88 (0.8)
89 S: u::m [actually i don-
90 T: [and () their sacrifice=
91 S: =°u:::m°
92 (.)
93 S: i don't think they're very special mens i
94 think (0.4) because we: go there (0.2) the
95 mens go there when they grow enough hh.
96 so (0.5) i- i- [i just familiar with
97 T: [°mm ↑huh°
98 the soldiers because (0.2) in my family
99 (0.6) my brothers some some [brothers go
100 T: [mm ↑huh
101 S: went to the army (0.2) and they are in now
102 (0.2) in ar[my now
103 T: [↓o↑kay
104 (0.2)
105 S: so they're familiar t[o
106 T: [o↓kay
107 (0.3)
108 S: our (0.2) pi- (0.4) to people (0.3) in
109 korea (0.9) because they=
110 T: =al↑rig[ht
111 S: [when the disaster (0.4) came up
112 (0.4) they (0.4) they [come to (.) they
113 T: [mm huh
114 S: go to the (0.5) place (.) and (0.2) work
115 (0.2) for work to help (0.4) them (0.7) so
116 they're [very familiar image (0.6) for me
117 T: [o↓kay
118 (0.3)
119 S: [hum
120 T: [°mm ↑huh° (0.2) ↓mm ↑huh
121 (0.5)
122 S: an actually there was some fights between
123 north korea and south korea but (0.5) they
124 actually don't fight very much in korea
125 (1.7)
126 T: o↓kay
127 (0.2)
128 S: so i- i didn't see i didn't see them
129 (0.3) they fighting each other so they're
130 just (0.9) image of (0.5) hh. (0.2) almost
131 peace (0.8) helpful[()]
132 ➡T: [o↓kay]
133 ➡ (0.4)
134 ➡S: °ye:s°

135 → (0.5)
 136 → T: .hh ↓al↑right
 137 → (3.0)
 138 → S: UH HUM
 139 → (0.7)
 140 T: so (0.3) what- what- uh em (0.2) did you
 141 have anything to talk about (0.2) .hh uh
 142 did you (.) [guys discuss and [decide on
 143 S: [did he [did he
 144 T: a top[ic?=

The tutor has at first initiated a topic on “soldiers”. During the conversation, the tutor asks a question concerning the “relation between North and South Korea” which has appeared in Hiddink’s response. After obtaining a response from Hiddink, the tutor returns to the topic by uttering “so”, which signals that she has something to tell, a hesitation marker “uh”, and by asking another question on the topic in lines 81 - 87. After a 0.8-second pause at line 88, Hiddink responds by giving his opinions on soldiers and on the current situation between North and South Korea from lines 89 - 131. While Hiddink is talking on the topic, the tutor utters an acknowledgement token “mm huh”, “okay” and “alright”. An acknowledgement token “[o↓kay]” of the tutor in line 132 (arrowed) overlaps a word of Hiddink’s talk in line 131 but this word is not clear because of the overlapping. A 0.4-second pause takes place at line 133 (arrowed), and Hiddink utters only a minimal response “°ye:s°” in a low tone in line 134 (arrowed). A 0.5-second pause occurs at line 135 (arrowed), the tutor inhales and then utters only an “↓al↑right” in line 136 (arrowed). A 3.0-second long pause takes place at line 137 (arrowed) and Hiddink utters “UH HUM” at line 138 (arrowed). After a 0.7-second pause at line 139 (arrowed), the tutor utters “so” and then initiates a new topic by using a question including no topical item in order to elicit a new topic from Hiddink in lines 140 - 144.

In this extract, minimal responses accompanied by pauses result in a topic transition. When Hiddink’s talk on the topic-in-progress is coming to an end in line 131, the exchange of only minimal responses and pauses starts at line 132 and ends at line 139. Through exchanging minimal responses and pauses, the tutor and Hiddink can tacitly recognise that they do not have anything to talk about concerning the ongoing topic and that they need another topic. As a result, the tutor puts a question including no topical item to elicit a new topic from Hiddink, which is not related to the previous topic.

In Extract 42 below, minimal response and pauses also induce a topic transition.

Extract 42. TK Day 02 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

447 T: u::m and what about (0.3) i- i- (0.2) i've
448 heard that=u:h (0.6) did you what- what's
449 your (0.9) favourite film hat- (0.2) do you
450 (.) have so far
451 (0.8)
452 S: ↑uh (.) sorry (0.2) it was (0.2) a bit
453 disconnected so (0.5) >can you say it again?<
454 (0.7)
455 T: .hhh (1.0) sure i said what your what is your
456 a ve- favourite film that has affected you
457 or that you've seen so far
458 (0.6) ((disconnected))
459 favourite
460 (0.8)
461 S: ↑well u:::h o↓kay u:::h (1.5) minory re↑port
462 (0.2) do you that (0.5) movie
463 (2.1)
464 S: mi[nory
465 T: [minority report o↓kay
466 (0.2)
467 S: °yeah° (0.5) op-
468 (.)
469 T: o↓kay
470 (0.5)
471 S: yeah well that (0.8) well that make me
472 (0.4) very=↑u:::h (1.1) uh [very
473 T: [mm-huh
474 S: ima°ginable° (0.2) °i mean like° (0.7) that
475 (0.6) makes in my (0.8) uh feel of imagination
476 ➔ (2.0)
477 ➔ T: .hh ↑o↓kay
478 ➔ (0.5)
479 ➔ S: °hum°
480 ➔ (0.3)
481 ➔ T: ↓al↑right
482 ➔ (1.0)
483 ➔ S: yea:hee
484 ➔ (0.2)
485 T: an::d=uh (2.0) .hh and (1.2) ↓al↑right and
486 what about the:::m (1.5) uh do you prefer
487 (0.5) do you prefer online teaching or do
488 you prefer to go personally to a class and
489 (0.4) related to the teacher and (.) learn

The tutor uses a question including a topical item 'favourite film' to initiate a

new topic in lines 447 - 450. However, after a 0.8-second pause at line 451, in lines 452 - 453 TK asks her to repeat the question because of the unstable Internet connection. Thus, the tutor repeats the question in lines 455 - 459. After 0.8-second pause at line 460, even though the Internet connection is still not good, Hiddink responds with “minority re↑port (0.2) do you that (0.5) movie” in lines 461 - 462. A 2.1-second pause occurs at line 463 and the tutor does not respond. As soon as TK produces “minority” in line 464, which suggests that he thinks that the title of the film he has mentioned may be incorrect, the tutor produces the correct title “minority report” and an acknowledgement token “o↓kay” in 465. After they have exchanged acknowledgement tokens with each other in lines 467 - 469, TK talks about why the film is his favourite in lines 471 - 475. After TK’s talk ends, a 2.0-second pause occurs at line 476 (arrowed) and then the tutor inhales and utters “↑o↓kay” in line 477 (arrowed). After a 0.5-second pause at line 478 (arrowed), TK utters “°hum°” in line 479 (arrowed). After a 0.3-second pause at line 480 (arrowed), the tutor produces “↓al↑right” in line 481 (arrowed). After a 1.0-second pause at line 482 (arrowed), TK utters “yea:hee” in line 483 (arrowed). After a 0.2-second pause at line 484 (arrowed), the tutor utters “an::d=uh”, pauses for 2.0 seconds, inhales, pauses again for 1.2 seconds, produces an acknowledgement token “↓al↑right” and then asks a question including a topical item to initiate a new topic in lines 485-489.

In Extract 42, minimal responses and pauses form the sequence for a topic boundary. After a 2.0-second pause in line 476, by line 484 the tutor and TK have exchanged only minimal responses and pauses. While they are doing so, they are able to realise implicitly that the topic-in-progress is exhausted. Finally, the tutor initiates a new topic - ‘online teaching’ - which is not related to the previous topic (‘favourite movie’) by using a question including a topical item.

5.3.1.6 Topic transition beginning with ‘That’s all’

Specific phrases such as ‘That’s all’ and ‘That’s it’ can function as triggers to change an ongoing topic, either on their own or accompanied by other practices such as minimal responses and pauses. Examples of how such phrases elicit collaborative contributions for a topic transition are given in Extracts 43, 44 and 45 below.

Extract 43. Hiddink Day 02 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

43 T: .hh so how was your wee↓kend
 44 (0.8)
 45 S: u::h (1.1) i have (0.2) to (.) stay in
 46 dom (0.2) dormi (.) tory (0.3) because
 47 i have (0.2) [not
 48 T: [↑oka↓y (0.2) >mm ↑huh<
 49 (.)
 50 S: °not to go out (0.7) so it was [()] fun°
 51 T: [↑oka↓::y:
 52 (0.6)
 53 S: °i have to study° =
 54 T: = o↓kay
 55 (0.6)
 56 S: °just° (0.3) °home°
 57 (.)
 58 T: o::h (.) ↓mm ↑huh
 59 (1.2)
 60 → S: °**that's all**°
 61 (0.2)
 62 T: that's alright (1.2) oka::y (0.6) an::d
 63 u:h (0.5).hh (0.3) so u:m (0.7) you worked
 64 out your math this weekend you're happy
 65 about it (.) .hh (0.2) very goo:d
 66 (.)
 67 an::d u::h before we go ahead and we talk
 68 about religion we were ta (0.2) we were
 69 supposed to talk about religions right↑
 70 (0.2)
 71 S: ye:s
 72 (1.2)
 73 T: .hh okay before we go ahead and talk
 74 (0.2) about religions (.) u::m why don't
 75 you tell me abo:ut (0.3) .hh (0.5) u::m
 76 (0.4) probably (0.5) an incident (.) .hh
 77 (.) or a very memorable incident in your
 78 life so far

In Extract 43, the tutor employs a topical item “how was your wee↓kend” to initiate a new topic in line 43. After a 0.8-second pause at line 44, Hiddink utters a hesitation marker “u::h”, pauses for 1.1 seconds and then produces “i have to stay in dom dormitory because i have [not ° not to go out so it was [()] fun°” in lines 45 - 50. While Hiddink is responding, the tutor utters the acknowledgement tokens “[↑oka↓y (0.2) >mm ↑huh<” in line 48 and “[↑oka↓::y:” in line 51. After a 0.6-second pause at line 52, Hiddink emphasises his current situation by producing “°i have to study°=” in

line 53. The tutor immediately utters an acknowledgement token “=o↓kay” in line 54. After a 0.6-second pause at line 55, Hiddink produces “◦just◦ (0.3) ◦home◦” in line 56, which suggests that he wants to emphasise the fact that he stayed in the dormitory. After a micro pause at line 57, the tutor utters a change-of-state marker “o:::h”, then produces a micro pause and an acknowledgement token “↓mm ↑huh” in line 58. After a 1.2-second pause at line 59, Hiddink says “◦that’s all◦” in line 60 (arrowed). After a 0.2-second pause at line 61, the tutor produces acknowledgement tokens and hesitation markers with a summary of Hiddink’s talk in lines 62 - 65. After a micro pause at line 66, the tutor mentions the topic they are going to talk about and then asks if it is correct or not in lines in 67 - 69. After a 0.2-second pause at line 70, Hiddink responds with “ye:s” in line 71. After a 1.2-second pause at line 72, the tutor addresses a question including a topical item to initiate a new topic in lines 73 - 78.

In the extract above, the phrase “that’s all” functions to initiate the sequence to close the ongoing topic. After the production of the utterance, the tutor uses a series of devices to terminate the ongoing topic, including an acknowledgement token, a summary of Hiddink’s previous talk on the topic-in-progress and the initiation of a new topic unrelated to the previous one by posing a question including a topical item.

Unlike the example given above in Extract 43, in the following extract the phrase “that’s all”, accompanied by the exchanging of minimal responses and pauses, accomplishes a topic transition more definitively.

Extract 44. TK Day 08 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

((The tutor and TK have been talking about how to make Sushi.))

190 S: uh we make a (0.3) rice (0.7) >we just<
 191 (0.8) pile [it ()
 192 T [↑al↓right
 193 (0.3)
 194 S: and (0.3) we just- (.) put (.) a fish on
 195➡ it (.) >**that’s all**< (0.3) like (0.4) it
 196 can be shrimp (.) it ca:n be:: u::h
 197 >anything else<
 198 (1.5)
 199 T: al↓right
 200 (0.3)
 201 S: ◦↑mm ↓huh◦

202 (.)
 203 T: al↑right
 204 (0.7)
 205 S: o↓kay
 206 (0.9)
 207 T: .hh (0.2) u:::m (.) .h (.) hiddink was
 208 surprised that i was (1.7) i was a hard-core
 209 vegetarian

TK has been explaining to the tutor how to make Sushi, a Japanese food. Towards the end of his explanation he utters “that’s all” in line 195 (arrowed) and then finishes the explanation in line 197. While TK is explaining, the tutor utters only a minimal response token “↑al↓right” in line 192. After a 1.5-second pause at line 198, the tutor responds with an acknowledgement token “al↓right” in line 199. A 0.3-second pause occurs at line 200 and then TK utters only a minimal response token “°↑mm ↓huh°” in line 201. A micro pause occurs at line 202 and then the tutor again utters the minimal response “al↑right” in line 203. After a 0.7-second pause at line 204 TK produces only the minimal response “o↓kay” in line 205. After a 0.9-second pause at line 206, the tutor inhales, pauses for 0.2 seconds, inserts a long hesitation marker “u:::m”, makes a micro pause, a short inhalation and another micro pause, and then provides a statement including a topical item to initiate a new topic, which is not related to the prior topic (see Extract 11, lines 207 - 209).

In Extract 44, the phrase “that’s all” induces minimal responses and pauses and then leads to a topic change. As can be seen from lines 198 - 206, the tutor and TK exchange only minimal responses without elaborating further on the ongoing topic of ‘how to make Sushi’ after TK produces “that’s all” in his response in line 195. The sequence consisting of only minimal responses and pauses can be construed as indicating that they are in the process of terminating it. As a result, the tutor initiates a new topic by using a statement including a topical item about her, which is completely different from the previous topic.

In Extract 45 below, the phrase “that’s it” also functions as an initiator of topic change in the same way as “that’s all”.

Extract 45. TK Day 20 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

317 T: when you come to india (0.2) you will
 318 get definitely non vegetarian but if you
 319 (.) if you want me as a guide and if you:
 320 prefer my guidance and i i guess you'll
 321 have to adjust with a food that i provide
 322 (0.5)
 323 S: o:↑::h (1.0) ↑o↓k[ay
 324 T: [HAHAHAhahahhhh
 325 (0.8)
 326 T: [hahaha
 327 S: [o↓kay i i think i have to reconsider
 328 u:h having you as a gui guide
 329 (0.5)
 330 [whether you are ()]
 331 T: [oh my] go:d
 332 (0.2)
 333 S: i want to eat some [meat
 334 T: [HAHAHAhah[ahhhh
 335 S: [haha
 336 (0.5)
 337 S: just kidding
 338 (0.3)
 339 T: i will get you meat don't worry
 340 (0.2)
 341 S: HAHAh[ahaha
 342 T: [i just said you will not (.) get home
 343 prepared meat i will get you meat from outside
 344 → **that's [it**
 345 S: [yea::h
 346 (0.5)
 347 S: ↑uh ↓huh (0.3) o↓kay
 348 (0.4)
 349 T: um (0.4) o↓kay .hhh so (1.4) u:::m what else

The tutor and TK have been talking about TK's proposed visit to India. In lines 317 – 321, the tutor continues talking about what she plans to do if TK visits her country. After a 0.5-second pause at line 322, TK utters a change-of-state token “o:↑::h”, which suggests that he has just realised what the tutor is talking about, pauses for 1.0 seconds and utters “↑o↓k[ay” in line 323. Before the acknowledgement token finishes, the tutor starts laughing in line 324. After a 0.8-second pause at line 325, the tutor starts laughing again in line 326 and TK simultaneously starts talking about the topic-in-progress in lines 327 - 330. The tutor responds with “[oh my] go:d” in line 331, appearing to be surprised by what TK says. After a 0.2-second pause at line 332, TK produces “i want to eat some [meat” in line 333. Before TK's talk ends, the tutor starts

laughing and TK also starts laughing after her in lines 334 - 335. After a 0.5-second pause at line 336, TK produces “just kidding”. After a 0.3-second pause at line 338, the tutor responds with “i will get you meat don’t worry” in line 339. After a 0.2-second pause at line 340, while TK is laughing, the tutor replies “[i just said you will not (.) get home prepared meat i will get you meat from outside that’s [it” in lines 342 - 344 (arrowed). TK’s acknowledgement token “yea:h” overlaps part of the phrase “that’s it”, so after a 0.5-second pause at line 346, TK utters the acknowledgement tokens “↑uh ↓huh (0.3) o↓kay” in line 347. After a 0.4-second pause at line 348, the tutor utters a hesitation marker “um”, pauses for 0.4 seconds, produces an acknowledgement token “o↓kay”, inhales and produces “so”, which can be interpreted as a signal that she has something to talk about and, after a 1.4-second pause, asks a question including no topical item to elicit a new topic from TK in line 349.

In Extract 45, above, the phrase “that’s it” also results in an exchange of minimal responses from both TK and the tutor and leads to topic transition. After the tutor finishes her response with the phrase “that’s it” in line 344, she and TK exchange only minimal responses without talking about the ongoing topic, which can be construed as indicating that they think that they have nothing else to say about it and need a new topic. Thus, the tutor asks a question including no topical item to elicit a new topic from TK, which is not related to the prior topic.

5.3.2 Topic change by unilateral movement

A participant may try to change a topic-in-progress to a new topic without the sequence of terminating the topic-in-progress through the collaborative contributions of the participants. In the examples of topic changes presented above, it is evident that the participants implicitly recognise that a topic-in-progress is going to end and that a new topic is needed through the participants’ contributions. In contrast, it is possible for a participant to shift a topic-in-progress to another one without any collaborative contributions as soon as he or she recognises that the topic-in-progress is exhausted. In other words, an ongoing topic is unilaterally changed to another one by only one participant. An example of how the unilateral topic movement takes place is shown in Extract 46 below.

Extract 46. TK Day 07(2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

465 S: they will (0.2) they will (0.5) u::h
466 (.) swear at (.) jei kei (J.K.) rowling
467 about a::h you become uh (0.5) u::h
468 >you know money gate like< (.) °you ↑know°
469 (0.6)
470 T: o::h=yea:h (0.6) and true (.) and
471 they're wav- when (0.2) they are made
472 into movie is uh it still creates much
473 more complications about choosing
474 the characters
475 (.)
476 S: °yeah°
477 (.)
478 →T: and all that .hh (.) and u::h especially
479 did you read the korean version or
480 did you read the english version of
481 the harry potter books

In this extract, TK and the tutor have been talking about problems related to the Harry Potter film. TK continues talking about commercial problems to do with the film in lines 465 - 468. After a 0.6-second pause at line 468, the tutor's response starts with "oh, yeah", which can be interpreted as a signal that she has recognised the new information delivered by TK. After a 0.6-second pause, she responds by agreeing with TK, using the utterance "and true" and elaborates further on it after a micro pause in lines 470 - 474. After a micro pause at line 475, TK responds with "°yeah°". After a micro pause at line 477, the tutor addresses a question including a topical item in an attempt to initiate a new topic in lines 478 - 481 (arrowed).

In this extract, the tutor tries to change the topic-in-progress to another one without any collaborative contribution. After TK's response, the tutor does not summarise or assess it but just adds her own information about the topic in lines 470 - 474. Although TK responds to this with an acknowledgement token ("°yeah°") in a low tone, collaborative contributions that would enable the tutor and TK to recognise that the topic-in-progress is coming to an end and a new topic is needed are not made. Instead, without terminating the prior topic, the tutor initiates a new topic by putting a question including a topical item (see Extract 3, p.133).

In Extract 47 below, how the unilateral topic change takes place is shown more

clearly.

Extract 47. Hiddink Day 12 (1T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

173 S: yes (0.5) u::h .hh we are
174 (0.8) i:: actually i haven't
175 (0.6) think about it seriously
176 but (0.2) i (0.3) tau:ght (0.6) i
177 taught by that
178 (0.3)
179 T: ↓mm ↑hu:h
180 (1.2)
181 S: u:::[h
182 T: [↑hum
183 (0.4)
184 S: ah- i was thought (1.1) tee- koreans
185 (.) think that (0.6) proper dressing
186 is very important (1.3) [and]
187 T: [o↓kay]
188 (0.2)
189 S: dress (0.5) poor (0.4) us (0.3) some
191 kinds of (7.4) dressing i::s (2.1) show
192 (0.2) influen- (0.4) u:::h (.) pro- (0.2) ↑per
193 (0.2) clothes (0.5) show the person's
194 (0.9) person's personality
195 (1.0)
196 T: .hhh (0.2) ↑o↓kay
197 (0.2)
198 S: an:d (0.4) culture level (0.3) ye::s
199 (0.3)
200 T: ↓mm ↑huh
201 (0.7)
202 S: °so° (0.2) in korea (0.5) almost men-
203 (0.4) almost (0.3) it is almost (1.5) same
204 (0.6) with the same clothes like (0.5) school
205 uniforms and (0.3) such (0.2) like that
206 (1.1)
207 ➡T: **.hh what about women oh uh do you**
208 **(0.2) is there i mean (0.8) is make up a**
209 **necessary thing to go ↑out**

The tutor and Hiddink have been talking about the dress code of Korean people. Hiddink finishes talking about it by line 205. While he is elaborating on it, the tutor utters the acknowledgement token “[o↓kay]” in lines 187 and 196 and “↓mm ↑huh” in 200. After a 1.1-second pause at line 206, the tutor asks a question about women's make-up in Korea in lines 207 - 209 (arrowed) to initiate a new topic.

In this extract, therefore, the tutor changes the topic unilaterally. After Hiddink finishes his elaboration on the ongoing topic in line 205, the tutor initiates a new topic without any procedure for terminating the ongoing topic through collaborative contributions taking place. That is, the topic transition is accomplished from the tutor's side alone. In conclusion, in Extracts 46 and 47, topic transition takes place unilaterally, without the collaborative contributions of the participants which were seen in Extracts 31 to 45.

5.3.3 Boundaried and stepwise topical movement

It was also found in the data for this research that the participants constructed turns collaboratively to terminate an ongoing topic in a boundaried topical movement. Thus, a boundaried topical movement had the same sequence as a collaborative topical movement. The only difference between the two involves the researcher's perspective. In collaborative topic transition the researcher's focus is on the cooperation of the participants, whereas in a boundaried topical movement the focus is on whether or not a topic boundary is developed when topic change takes place. Accordingly, all the examples of collaborative topic transition presented in this research could also be referred to as 'boundaried topical movements'.

Stepwise topical movement takes place when an existing topic flows naturally into a new topic without a topical boundary. Sacks (1992b, p.352) claims that a new topic occurring naturally without a topic boundary is an indication of a good conversation. A unilateral topic movement does not develop a topical boundary, but one participant introduces a new topic in a one-sided way without terminating a prior topic, so it is noticeable. In contrast, in a stepwise topical movement a topic transition takes place naturally without a noticeable process being involved. In contrast to collaborative or unilateral topic transition, stepwise topical movement has no topical boundary, but a topic transition is performed collaboratively through using a pivot. Thus, the participants can move from an ongoing topic to a new topic without noticing the movement. An example of how the stepwise topical movement takes place is shown in Extract 48.

Extract 48. TK Day 07 (2T) 01 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

137 T: oh yea:h eh- and my movie will become a hit
138 like a harry potter
139 (0.2)
140 S: o::h harry potter
141 (0.2)
142 T: hahaha[hahahah
143 S: [oh great
144 (0.5)
145 S: great
146 (.)
147 T: haha
148 (0.2)
149 S: i can't wait to see that movie
150 (0.8)
151 T: hahahaha .h are you a great fan of harry ↑potter
152 (0.5)
153 S: OH yeah i- i'm- (.) i sure i am (1.0) what-
154 (0.2) [yeah
155 T: [i love harry potter
156 (0.2)
157 S: oh really?
158 (0.6)
159 T: oh yes i'm a great fa:n and i read all the books: .h[h
160 S: [>me too<=
161 T: =u::h i- i've- i've seen all the
162 T: movies [so far] that I've come an::du:h
163 S: [°uh°-huh]
164 T: (0.9) and if there was (.) something like (hail)
165 harry potter i will be saying that too
166 (0.3)
167 T: hah[aha
168 S: [hahaha .h
169 (0.4)
170 S: [uh
171 T: [i'm a great fan of that
172 (0.4)
173 S: ↓o↑h (1.2) am- (0.2) i'm too
174 (0.3) so am i
175 (0.9)
176 S: ye[a:h
177 T: [who- who is your favourite character
178 (0.5)
179 S: character i love u::h (0.3) i love snape
180 (.) several snape (1.0) be[fore
181 T: [↑o::h=
182 S: =before watching the severas like i hated him
183 (0.5) but (0.3) [af-]
184 T: [↓uh ↑huh]
185 (.)
186 S: after reading the severas like

187 (0.2) i became great fan of him
 188 (1.0)
 189 T: .hhh ɔ:↓:↑:h ↑o:↓kay ↑al:↓right and did you
 190 believe that when he killed dumbledore he was
 191 a bad guy beca:use u:h almost everybody
 192 thought he was a bad guy
 193 (.)
 194 S: no no [i- i-
 195 T: [did you believed ↑that
 196 (.)
 197 S: no no never i- i never believed that
 198 (0.4) cause
 199 (0.4)
 200 T: [okay]
 201 S: [uh uh] (0.2) [you know]
 202 T: [↓uh ↑uh]
 203 (0.2)
 204 S: u::h
 205 (0.3)
 206 T: .h (0.1) [dumbledore trusted him
 207 [dum-
 208 (0.2)
 209 S: yeah dumbledore trusted him so faithfully you
 210 know (0.3) s::o
 211 (0.3)
 212 T: yes [uh huh]
 213 S: [()](0.4) i believed him
 214 (0.6) uh in the other way
 215 (0.7) dumbled[ore asked him (0.2) yeah
 216 T: [↑o↓ka:y
 217 (0.4)
 218 →T: (0.3) .h (.) okay- **i still remember my brother**
 219 **had to go to the youes (U.S.) the [next day**
 220 S: [yeah
 221 (0.3)
 222 T: [o↑kay]
 223 S: [↑uh ↓huh]
 224 (.)
 225 T: .h (.) and the seven book were
 226 (0.3) released like today (.) and the whole
 227 night he was reading the: (.) uh seventh book
 228 (0.6)
 229 S: o::h
 230 (0.2)
 231 T: before he could board the flight he had to
 232 complete it (.) and we kind of had debate
 233 online about u:h if snape- the snape was
 234 a (.) u:h good guy or bad guy
 235 (0.4) [so: he if]
 236 S: [he thought he was a bad ↑guy]

237 (0.7)
 238 T: hahaha yea:h he thought he was a bad guy and
 239 [i kind] of won the bet
 240 S: [uh]
 241 (0.3)
 242 S: hahaha okay what did you get from the bet
 243 (0.5) nothing right?
 244 (0.2)
 245 T: nothing [he had gone to youes (U.S.) by
 246 S: [o:h
 247 T: the time the: seventh book u:h i was
 248 (.) able to read the book an:duh: now i'm
 249 asking him for something when he comes back
 250 f rom youes (U.S.) he has to give me something
 251 big (0.3) [hahahaha]
 252 S: [o::::h]
 253 (0.5)
 254 o↓kay [i'll]
 255 T: [huh]
 256 (0.8)
 257 S: why don't- why don't you ask him to give- give
 258 you ei ya:: fairy god mother
 259 (1.2)
 260 T: o::h he doesn't believe in fairies he is such a
 261 uh: (.) um i would say that uh he doesn't believe
 262 in miracles some something like that he believes
 263 in hard work (.)and uh (0.3) he is a very brainy
 264 chap
 265 (0.2)
 266 S: ↑o::h
 267 (.)
 268 T: i- i- (.) i don't go with him you know
 269 (0.3)
 270 S: haha[ha
 271 T: [he is gonna become a scientist
 272 (0.5)
 273 S: o:h sci[entist
 274 T: [i'll call him a freak i'll call him a freak in
 275 my house=
 276 S: =hahaha .uh [freak
 277 T: [hahahahaha[ha
 278 S: [wow what a wonderful nickname
 279 for your brother
 280 (0.4)
 281 T: haha[haha
 282 S: [what a wonderful
 283 (.)
 284 T: there are there are many other nicknames
 285 you just know freak i call him monkey sometimes
 286 (.)

287 S: monk? (0.5) why
 288 (.)
 289 T: monkey
 290 (0.9)
 291 S: ↑o:h monkey (0.5) oh (0.3)[i thought]
 292 T: [yeah]
 293 (0.2)
 294 S: you said a (0.2) monk
 295 (1.0)
 296 T: mo↑n:k he he can never be a mon:k
 297 (0.2)
 298 T: [he was] behind all the girls
 299 S: [haha]
 300 (0.3)
 301 S: ↑o:h (0.7) wow
 302 (0.3)
 303 T: hahahhhhhh [he used to] just make fun
 304 S: [()]
 305 T: i'm i'm not uh he ju he's not behind girls and all
 306 i just made fun
 307 (.)
 308 S: o:[h
 309 T: [he used to comment on somebody
 310 (.)
 311 S: °↓mm ↑huh°=
 312 T: an:du:h (.)you ↑know
 313 (0.4)
 314 S: o[h yea:h]
 315 T: [like of]
 316 (0.2)
 317 T: like fun- like for fun (.) >he used to do it with me
 318 not with anybody else<
 319 (.)
 320 S: ↓ha:=
 321 T: =he knows >he'll get bitten up< if he's >gonna tell
 322 the same comments out there to somebody<
 323 (1.5)
 324 S: °huh°
 325 (.)
 326 T: hahaha[haha]hah[a
 327 S: [°huh°] [i >can see the pictures<]

The tutor initiates a new topic by producing a statement including a topical item about Harry Potter in lines 137 - 138. After 0.2-second pause at line 139, TK maintains the proffered topic using a topicaliser “o::h” and duplicates “harry potter” in line 140. The tutor and TK then start talking about the Harry Potter film. In lines 218 - 219 (arrowed), the tutor introduces her brother into the conversation and explains how much

he liked Harry Potter in lines 225 - 227 and 231 - 232. She also tells TK in lines 232 – 251 that she has argued with him on a matter related to Harry Potter and that they had a bet on it. Hiddink makes a joke about her brother in lines 257 - 258. After Hiddink's joke, they start to talk about the tutor's brother from line 260.

In Extract 48, the topic of the conversation moves naturally from Harry Potter to the tutor's brother. There is neither a boundary between the two topics nor does the tutor unilaterally initiate a new topic on her brother. In lines 218 - 219, she introduces her brother, but she does so not to introduce a new topic but in order to tell Hiddink that her brother likes Harry Potter, too. The topic of her brother thus plays the role of a pivot (see Section 2.4.4.3.1). Through the exchange of further turns, they turn naturally to talking about the tutor's brother. A stepwise topical movement has thus taken place. The participants themselves do not notice the topic change in a stepwise topical movement.

5.3.4 Summary of the section

In this section the ways in which the participants terminated and changed topics during the online classes have been analysed. It was found that they changed topics either collaboratively or unilaterally. In a collaborative topic change, they used various techniques to terminate ongoing topics. Thus the topic change could begin with one party providing an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk, a summary of prior talk, an assessment of prior talk, a formulation or reformulation of prior talk, an exchange of minimal responses and pauses between both participants, and the use of a phrase such as 'that's all'. Examples of unilateral topic change and stepwise topical movement were also presented and analysed in detail.

5.4 How does trouble and repair in topic management occur during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

In this study it was found that several types of trouble occurred when the participants were managing their topics. There were both internal and external causes for the troubles. A participant's inadequate lexical knowledge and a rejection of a proffered topic can be included in the category of internal causes. In contrast, Internet connection

problems and the intrusion of noise from outside can be classified as external causes. In fact, it may be said that these types of troubles generally affected the smoothness of all the online conversation classes. However, in this section, only the ways in which troubles appeared in the turn-taking or organisation related to topic management and how they were repaired are discussed.

5.4.1 Trouble in topic management caused by inadequate lexical knowledge

Inadequate lexical knowledge can result in a trouble in developing turns related to topic management. Some words may be used incorrectly or misunderstood, which can cause the participants to put off taking or organising turns related to topic management and result in the development of a side sequence (see Section 2.4.4.3.2) to repair the trouble. An example of how the misuse of a word can result in the development of a side sequence to repair it is given in Extract 49 below.

Extract 49. Hiddink Day 19 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

14 T: okay alright u:m (.) what are all
 15 the studies that you think is valid
 16 (.) to become a good priest u:m
 17 (.)h u:h (0.3) °uh°- (0.3) what
 18 studies are important (0.2) i know
 19 there is a separate college for that
 20 (.) .hh (.) u::h but apart from that
 21 do you wanna study anything specific
 22 (0.5)
 23 → S: ye::s i think i (0.2) i think the
 24 sycology is good for the priest
 25 (1.5) because (0.3) [priest
 26 T: [i'm sorry dear?
 27 (0.3) ((There is a noise))
 28 S: sycology (0.2) ub a:h the:: (1.0)
 29 like aristoteles or some kinds of things
 30 (1.4) is it sycology?
 31 (.)
 32 T: can you (0.6) i'm i don't know (0.0)
 33 uh (.) can you repeat that?
 34 (0.9)
 35 S: sycology
 36 (1.1)
 37 T: psychology=
 38 S: =psychology (.) ye::s
 39 (0.2)

40 T: ↑o↓kay

The tutor asks a question including a topical item in lines 14 - 21. After a 0.5-second pause, Hiddink responds with “ye::s i think i (0.2) think the sycology (arrowed) is good for the priest (1.5) because (0.3) [priest” in lines 23 to 25. At end of the turn, the tutor produces “[i’m sorry dear?” in line 26, which overlaps with the “[priest” of the previous turn. After a 0.3-second pause, in which a noise is heard, Hiddink continues to elaborate on the topic using “sycology” again in lines 28 - 29. However, after a 1.4-second pause, he asks the tutor about the word “sycology” in line 30. After a minimal pause at line 31, the tutor gives a negative response and then asks him to repeat it in lines 32 - 33. After a 0.9-second pause, he repeats the word in line 35. After a 1.1-second pause at line 36, the tutor corrects the word, saying “psychology” in line 37 and Hiddink immediately produces it and then utters “ye::s” to confirm it after a minimal pause in line 38. After a 0.2-second pause, the tutor gives an acknowledgement token, which can be interpreted as signalling ‘let’s return to the topic’.

In Extract 49, Hiddink’s misuse of the word ‘sychology’ results in the development of a side sequence from lines 26 to 40. The misuse of the word causes the tutor to ask a question about Hiddink’s elaboration, so he does not elaborate further on it and instead asks whether he has used the word correctly or not. After the word has been corrected by the tutor in line 40, they return to the topic proffered by the tutor. That is, the side sequence from lines 26 to 40 has been developed by the participants to repair the trouble, and they then continue to talk about the initiated topic.

Unlike the example shown above, a word the participant does not understand can also result in the development of a side sequence, as in Extract 50 below.

Extract 50. Hiddink Day 07 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

127 ➡T: i think u::h they’re compromising
128 on quality?
129 (1.9)
130 S: pardon?
131 (1.1)
132 T: .hh they’re compromising much on quality
133 i think (.) >what do you think<
134 (3.0)

135 S: u::h (1.0) ((metal sound)) (2.0)
136 i don't know (0.6) what- (.) are
137 you talking about exactly (1.2) i
138 c[an't understand
139 T: [i said they're compromising on quality
140 (0.3)
141 S: u::h (0.8) ye::s [they
142 T: [they are not much
143 bother about quality
144 (.)
145 ((noise))
146 (.)
147 S: ye::s i don't think [they are
148 T: [they just wanna
149 make money
150 (0.4)
151 S: yes they (.) i don't (.) think they are
152 (0.4) careful about the quality of
153 (0.2).h (.) their produc (.) t
154 (.)((noise))
155 (0.3)
156 T: °um° that [that] is what i said
157 S: [it]
158 (0.3)
159 S: yea::h

Up to line 126, the participants have been talking about a product of a particular country. The tutor asks the question “i think u::h they’re compromising on quality?” in lines 127 – 128 (arrowed). After a 1.9-second pause, Hiddink utters “pardon?” After a 1.1 second pause, the tutor reformulates her question in lines 132 – 133, indicating that she realises Hiddink wants her to repeat it. After a 3.0-second pause, Hiddink tells her that he does not understand the question in lines 135 - 138. Before Hiddink’s turn, the tutor responds by repeating “they’re compromising on quality” in line 139. Hiddink utters a hesitation token “u::h” and an acknowledgement token “ye::s” after a 0.8-second pause and then tries to say something in line 141. However, the tutor reformulates the sentence in lines 142 to 143. After two minimal pauses and a noise, Hiddink starts to talk about the topic in line 147, but breaks off because the tutor provides more explanation on it in lines 148 - 149. After a 0.4-second pause, Hiddink explains the meaning of the sentence including the word ‘compromising’ in his own words in lines 151 - 153. After a 0.3-second pause, the tutor responds with positive feedback, uttering “°um° that [that] is what i said” during which Hiddink tries to utter something but fails in line 157. After a 0.3 second-pause at line 158, Hiddink utters an

117 (0.3) easy to (0.3) read newspaper
 118 (5.0)
 119 T: ↑o↓>kay<
 120 (0.5)
 121 S: °ye::[s°
 122 T: [>↓al↑right<
 123 (1.9) .hh (1.1)
 124 .h what do you think is a field that is not
 125 develop still in korea (.) like for example
 126 (0.2) .hh (.) you can sa:y (0.2) you can
 127 talk abo:ut (1.2) science or uh there are num
 128 not much engineers in korea what >do you think<
 129 (1.6) (there of) (0.4) important (0.3) field that still
 130 requi:res: >a lot of< improvement in korea

In Extract 51, the tutor launches a topic using a question including a topical item in lines 98 - 100. However, after a 1.1-second pause, Hiddink rejects the topic and gives his reasons for doing so in lines 102 - 107 (arrowed). From lines 108 to 112, acknowledgement tokens and pauses are exchanged by the participants, and the tutor also utters “al↑right” and pauses for 1.9 seconds in line 113, which suggests that she accepts Hiddink’s rejection of the topic. However, she then inhales and utters “but uh” and reformulates the question in lines 113 – 114. Hiddink agrees with what she says but still rejects the topic for the same reason in lines 116 - 117 after a 0.2-second pause at line 115. Then, from lines 118 to 123, only long or short pauses and acknowledgement tokens are exchanged by the participants, which can be interpreted as indicating that the proffered topic is coming to an end. Finally, the tutor addresses a question including a topical item to initiate another new topic in lines 124 - 130.

In Extract 52 below, TK also rejects a topic proffered by the tutor.

Extract 52. TK Day 09 (1T) (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

206 T: =so: u::m (1.3) .h (.) we were also
 207 talking abo:ut (0.2) u:m (1.5) ↑comic
 208 books::
 209 (0.6)
 210 S: comic books
 211 (1.5)
 212 T: do you like reading them?
 213 (1.1)
 214 →S: u::h (0.6) as i told you u::h (0.3) comic
 215 books (0.4) is >just a< same with animation

216 films (0.6) °i think°
 217 (0.8)
 218 T: .h it's not the same (0.3) de[finally
 219 S: [i mean
 220 T: not the same
 221 (.)
 222 S: i mean (0.3) it's not it's definitely not
 223 the same but (0.4) to me it's the same like
 224 (0.8) u:h (0.3) i[f i (were given a choice)
 225 T: [uh the concept
 226 (0.2)
 227 S: yea:h >if i were given a choice i would
 228 go outside and play basketball<
 229 (1.2)
 230 T: o↓kay (0.3) o↓kay (0.4) .hh i know you
 231 love basketball
 232 (.)
 233 S: hahaha (1.2) yeah=
 234 T: =hahah[ah
 235 S: [°haha°
 236 (0.6)
 237 T: .hhh (0.2) al::right
 238 (0.3)
 239 S: °uh-[um°
 240 T: [o↓kay
 241 (0.4)
 242 T: so why do like playing basketball

The tutor uses a statement including a topical item to initiate a new topic. This statement seems to be used as a pre-sequence to initiate the new topic. After a 0.6-second pause, TK responds by repeating “comic books” without any elaboration. After a 1.5 second pause at line 211, the tutor launches a new topic by reformulating the pre-sequence in line 212. However, after a 1.1-second pause at line 213, TK expresses a rejection of the proffered topic in lines 214 - 216 (arrowed). After a 0.8-second pause at 217, the tutor tries to persuade TK to talk about the topic from line 218, but this does not work, so she acknowledges it, producing “i know you love basketball” in lines 230 - 231. Then from lines 232 - 241, pauses, laughs and acknowledgement tokens are exchanged by the participants, suggesting that they are negotiating to terminate the proffered topic. Finally, the tutor uses a question including a topical item to initiate another new topic in line 242.

In Extracts 51 and 52 above, the proffered topics are rejected by each student.

Their rejection of the topics is a trouble in topic management, but initiation of another new topic is performed through the collaborative contributions of both parties to repair the trouble, as the sequences show.

5.4.3 Trouble in topic management caused by technical problems and other interference

It was found that Internet connection problems and the influx of outside noise could hold up topic management. As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, the fact that these classes were based on the use of synchronous voice-based CMC meant that they were prone to technical problems such as those affecting the Internet connection and computer problems, and issues associated with the participants' surroundings. This type of problem arose at some point during every class. Extract 53 is an excerpt from Extract 42, above, containing those turns in which technical problems affected topic management.

Extract 53. TK Day 02 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= TK)

447 T: u::m and what about (0.3) i- i- (0.2) i've
448 heard that=u:h (0.6) did you what- what's
449 your (0.9) favourite film hat- (0.2) do you
450 (.) have so far
451 (0.8)
452 → S: ↑uh (.) sorry (0.2) it was (0.2) a bit
453 disconnected so (0.5) >can you say it again?<
454 (0.7)
455 T: .hhh (1.0) sure i said what your what is your
456 a ve- favourite film that has affected you
457 or that you've seen so far
458 (0.6) ((disconnected))
459 favourite
460 (0.8)

In Extract 53 above, the tutor initiates a new topic in lines 447 - 450. However, TK does not respond to the topic initiation immediately because of the Internet connection problem. Thus he tries to initiate a repair by asking her to repeat it by producing “↑uh (.) sorry (0.2) it was (0.2) a bit disconnected so (0.5) >can you say it again?<” in lines 452 - 453 (arrowed). After a 0.7-second pause, the tutor resolves the trouble by reformulating the topic in lines 455 - 459. As a result of the insertion of repair, the topic initiation is said to be not followed immediately.

In Extract 54 below, which is an excerpt from Extract 34, an example of how the surroundings can affect the management of topics is shown.

Extract 54. Hiddink Day 15 (2T) 02 (T= Tutor/ S= Hiddink)

((The tutor and Hiddink are talking about the use of mobile phones...))

173 T: .hh (.) so generally you're not allowed
174 to (0.2) u:h carry cell phones in[side the
175 S: [yeah
176 T: classroom ↑right
177 (0.3)
178 S: yes even not to carry
179 (1.7)
180 T: o↓ka:y
181 (0.7)
182 S: °yes° (0.2) uhu-hum
183 (2.7)
184 → ((The school bell starts ringing))
185 T: al↑right is our time up?
186 (0.6)
187 S: ↑no it is for our (0.4) fo- s- (0.4) s-
188 (0.3) uh our (0.3) school (0.2) ring
189 (1.0)
190 T: ↑oh o↓kay
191 (0.3)
192 S: we have just six minutes
193 (1.1)
194 T: o↓kay (.) al↓right
195 (0.4)
196 S: we have to do:: .h about °ten forty nine
197 minutes more° hh. °m::m°=
198 T: =↑hu::m (1.8) .hh alright u::m
199 (1.3)
200 S: °uh-°
201 (0.2)
202 T: we:: wha- wha- wha- what do you wanna talk
203 about ↓now

In Extract 54 above, the tutor summarises Hiddink's talk in lines 173 - 176. Then, when they naturally recognise that the topic is coming to an end through the exchange of turns between lines 177 - 183 and that a new topic is needed, the ringing of Hiddink's school bell is heard at line 184 (arrowed) causing the tutor mistakenly to begin terminating the session by producing "al↑right is our time up?" in line 185, instead of initiating a new topic, since the interference of the school bell causes a

trouble in the conversation.

In Extracts 53 and 54, the technical problem and the distracting surroundings of the participants interfere with the turns related to topic management. However, in both extracts the participants put the conversation on the right track by repairing the troubles through collaborative contributions.

5.4.4 Summary of the section

In this section ways in which trouble in topic management occurred by factors either internal or external to the online conversation classes and in which they were repaired have been analysed. The internal factors were inadequate lexical knowledge or rejection of a proffered topic by the students. The side sequence that developed to repair the trouble of the student's inadequate lexical knowledge was analysed. External factors included technical problems and other interference in the participants' surroundings.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings obtained from the analysis of the discourse data of online English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC, focusing on the topic management of the participants. The findings reveal how topics were initiated, maintained, terminated and changed by the participants and how trouble and repair in topic management occurred. The data have been analysed from the perspective of CA, so each finding has been illuminated with extracts. These findings will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter the findings obtained from the analysis of the spoken discourse of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC are discussed. Comparisons are made with the findings of previous studies on topic initiation, maintenance, termination and transition. The chapter begins with a brief description of the findings in relation to each of the research questions in turn. The findings on topic management are then examined in detail. First, the findings on topic initiation are examined from two viewpoints: first and subsequent topic initiation. Second, topic maintenance is examined. Third, topic transition is examined in two categories: collaborative or unilateral topic change and boundaried or stepwise topical movement. Finally, the ways in which trouble and repair in topic management occurred and how this affected the sequence of topic management are examined.

6.1 Reconsidering the research interest

The current study analysed the spoken discourse of online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC from a CA perspective, focusing on how the participants initiated, maintained, terminated and changed topics. The use of CA made it possible to conduct a micro-analysis of paralinguistic forms as well as of the turns, turn-taking, turn organisation and sequences of the spoken discourse data. Below, the findings are presented briefly in relation to the research questions.

RQ 1. How are topics *initiated* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

When the participants initiated first or subsequent topics during the classes, they were found to use more questions than statements. For the purposes of this research the questions the participants used were categorised into four types: a question including a topical item, a solicitous enquiry into trouble, a question including no topical item, and

an enquiry into personal state. (In the case of an enquiry into personal state, when this was used at a topic boundary, it was found to play the role of changing the topic.) In the category of 'statements', it was found that a 'statement including a topical item' was used to initiate a new topic. Concerning a first topic initiation, it was found that a 'how-are-you' question in the opening sequence developed into a first topic.

RQ 2. How are topics *maintained* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

It was found that when the participants maintained initiated or proffered topics, they used several techniques, which can be categorised into seven types: giving a preferred a response, a topicaliser, a minimal response, or an explicit acceptance utterance, asking a question, issuing a clarification request and duplicating part of prior talk. The use of these techniques did not guarantee the maintenance of topics, however, but only demonstrated the recipients' interest in the initiated or proffered topics. It was the other participant's recognition of the technique and response to it that made it possible for the topics to be maintained.

RQ 3. How are topics *terminated* and *changed* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

The findings with regard to topic transition can be classified into two categories: collaborative or unilateral topic transition and boundaried or stepwise topical movement. More instances of collaborative topic change were found in the data than of unilateral topic change. Collaborative topic movement refers to topic transitions which participants perform through making collaborative contributions to terminate an ongoing topic. These collaborative contributions form a topic boundary, so this type of transition can also be referred to as a boundaried topical movement. When terminating and changing topics collaboratively, the participants developed six typical sequences: giving an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk, beginning with a summary of prior talk, an assessment of prior talk, a formulation or reformulation of prior talk, exchange of minimal responses and pauses, and using a 'that's all' type of utterance. In contrast, in the example of unilateral topical movement found in the data, it was noticed

that one participant initiated a new topic without terminating the ongoing topic with collaborative contributions from the other participant. On the other hand, in a stepwise topical movement, the participants changed a topic without developing a topic boundary and without deliberately initiating a new topic. In one instance the participant produced a pivotal utterance without any intention of initiating a new topic relating to it; however, both participants began talking about it naturally as a new topic. In other words, the pivotal utterance played the role of catalyst in initiating a new topic.

RQ 4. How does trouble and repair in topic management occur during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC?

Various causes of trouble in the participants' management of topics were found in the data, and it was also found that these troubles affected the development of turn sequences. The causes of the trouble were classified into three types: inadequate lexical knowledge, rejection of a proffered topic, and technical problems and other interference. In particular, in one case it was found that inadequate lexical knowledge resulted in the occurrence of a side sequence in the middle of the topic initiation sequence.

6.2 Topic management

Before discussing the findings of the current study related to topic management, three points should be made. First, online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC is a new trend in language teaching. The teaching of English as an L2 in this study can be categorised into Cook's (2009, p.70) classification of "teaching a supercentral language to people who want to use it for specialist cross-national uses", and the L2 users fall into his category of "pupils and teachers learning or teaching L2 in school" (2008, p.202), even if the online instruction is not a formal institutional setting like a school.

Second, the interactions can be classified into the "turn taking and sequence in meaning and fluency contexts" category, which is one of Seedhouse's (2004) four L2 classroom contexts, since the interactions occurred according to the pedagogical aim of improving communicative and interactional competence through one-to-one

conversation. This is in accordance with Seedhouse's assertion that "the aim is on maximizing the opportunities for interaction presented by the classroom pedagogical environment and the classroom speech community itself" (2004, p.111).

Finally, the speaking activity in the online one-to-one conversation classes can be seen as similar to Kayi's (2006) and Harmer's (2007) category of 'discussion'. Thus, the participants pay more attention to the maintenance of topics during these classes than in other institutional settings. Alternatively, the speaking activities identified in the current study can be classified according to Richards' (2006) categories of "talk as interaction" or "talk as transaction". The openings and closings that occur in the classes consist mainly of "talk as interaction", while the other aspect - talking about topics - can be classified as either "talk as interaction" or "talk as transaction", depending on the characteristics of the topics.

The findings of the current study suggest that topic management was closely related to maintaining the conversation classes. The data analysis revealed that each session revolved around a series of topics; these topics played the role of linking the participants together in the conversation classes. Accordingly, it may be assumed that topic management was crucial for the participants. In fact, both the tutor and the students sometimes demonstrated their difficulty in managing topics in the conversations. When such difficulties arose, the conversational flow of the session was not smooth, which suggests that the aim of topic management should be concerned more with how smoothly topics are connected with each other than with the content of what is actually being talked about. With regard to this issue, Sacks (1992b) maintained:

In a way, [the] measure of a good topic is a topic that not so much gets talked of at length, but that provides for transitions to other topics without specific markings [of] that a new topic is going to be done (p.352).

Svennevig (1999, p.163), on the other hand, had a different view of the importance of topic management. He argued that the basic rules governing topic management in any conversation are, in effect, elements of the linguistic conversational competence of the speakers. In conclusion, the fundamental theoretical principle of topic management is that topics are co-constructed by means of the collaborative contributions of the

participants in the conversation. The findings of the current study confirm the view that topic management is based on this principle.

6.2.1 Topic initiation

In the current study, it was found that when the participants initiated topics, they would employ one of two broad strategies: question or statement, as claimed by Downing (2000) (see p.35). For the purposes of data analysis in the current study, the terms topic initial elicitors, itemised news enquiries and news announcements (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985; Radford and Tarplee, 2000) (see p.36), related to topic initiation, were modified in order to include also the concept of the two broader categories: question and statement, as mentioned in Section 5.1 (see p.127) as follows: ‘topic initial elicitor’ was changed to ‘a question including no topical item’; the first type of itemised news enquiry to ‘a question including a third party related to the interlocutors’; the second type of itemised news enquiry to ‘a solicitous enquiry into trouble’; the third type of itemised news enquiry to ‘a question including a topical item’, and ‘news announcement’ to ‘a statement including a topical item’.

6.2.1.1 First topic initiation

First topic initiation generally takes place after the opening sequence. In the current study it was found that first topics were usually initiated after the anchor position, as Schegloff (1986) claims. This finding also confirms that of Gardner (1987) that the first topic is initiated after the introductory aspects of a talk: e.g., greetings, identification and the like, have been completed. However, it is different from the claim of Sacks (1992b, p.165) that “if you put something into first position, use it as ‘first topic,’ then you can achieve some sort of immortality to it or movement to it. You make it available for the later use as a ‘first thing he told me.’”

In the present study, after exchanges of greetings and ‘how-are-you’ questions, the topical talk the participants then became involved in was considered a first topic. Although Sacks (1992b, p.159) and Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p.300) attached more importance to the function of first topics than to their position, in the analysis conducted

for the current research any topical talk was recognised as a topic if it was mentioned by more than one party, since the aim of these online conversation classes was to improve communicative and interactional competence through one-to-one English conversation. In other words, the online one-to-one English instruction is not a mundane talk but an institutional talk, so it is reasonable, from a CA institutional discourse perspective (Seedhouse, 2004), for what follows after exchanges of greetings and ‘how-are-you’ questions to become a first topic.

First topic initiation took place as shown in Extracts 1, 4, 6, 8 and 10, for example, where a question including a topical item, a solicitous enquiry into trouble, a question including no topical item, an enquiry into personal state and a news announcement were used to initiate or proffer a first topic. When comparisons were made between the topic initiations appearing in different extracts, there appeared to be a difference between examples such as ‘how’s your cold right now?’ (Extract 4) and ‘I’m a little tired today’ (Extract 10) on the one hand, and those used in Extracts 1 (‘Why don’t you talk about your favourite vacation?’) and 6 (‘what do we talk about now?’) on the other.

In Extract 1, a question including a topical item (the third type of itemised news enquiry) is used by the tutor for the sole purpose of engendering a topical talk, with no consideration of whether or not the subject is newsworthy to the recipient. Nor does the tutor have any previous knowledge about the subject, but simply asks the question in order to develop a new topic to keep the conversation going. This type of question is rarely used to initiate a first topic in mundane or telephone conversations. In Extract 6, the tutor employs a question including no topical item to elicit a topical talk from TK. If this type of question were used after the opening sequence in a mundane or telephone conversation, it is likely that it would create an awkward mood in the conversation.

Even if the questions used in Extract 1 and 6 in the data of this study are rarely used in mundane or telephone talk, they may be understood from a CA institutional discourse perspective (Seedhouse, 2004), since the goals of the online one-to-one English conversation class influenced the tutor to design that sort of turn to initiate a topic. In other words, since in the current study the conversations were being conducted

for the sole purpose of giving the students practice in speaking English, these questions were developed on the spot. From the CA institutional discourse perspective, in Extracts 1 and 6 the participants initiated a first topic based on the ‘reason-for-the-call’, which in this case was to practise speaking English. Thus in this research, the examples of topic initiation given in Extracts 1 and 6 seem to confirm Button and Casey’s (1988) notion that a first topic is introduced to accomplish the ‘reason-for-the-call’.

An enquiry into personal state is usually employed in the opening sequence, but in the data analysis for this research it was found that it also acted to initiate a topic if it appeared again later, after the opening stage, as in Extract 8. In this extract, the reuse of an enquiry into personal state (“so what’s ↑up to↓day”) after the opening sequence functions as a topic initiator (that is, a question including no topical item) to elicit a topical talk from TK. This finding concerning the reuse of this type of enquiry is similar to the claim of Jefferson (1984a) that people reuse an enquiry into personal state to give them the impression that they are starting the conversation again in a different way, as well as in order to get out of some problematic talk. In Extract 8 in the data for the current study, the tutor repeats the enquiry not in order to escape from any problematic talk but in order to initiate a first topic, since her joke has not developed as a first topic.

Extracts 13 and 14 show how the answers to ‘how-are-you’ questions developed into first topics. According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973), answers to ‘how-are-you’ questions cannot be considered first topics in mundane conversation; however, as mentioned above, in the present study, if a topic gave the participants the opportunity to become involved in talking with each other, it was classified as a first topic.

Extract 13. TK Day 05 (2T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = TK)

8 ➔ S: u::h not so good
 9 (1.5)
 10 ➔ T: what ↑hap↓pened

Extract 14. Hiddink Day 02 (2T) 01 (T = Tutor/ S = Hiddink)

7 T: [↑o↓kay ↑how are you
 8 (1.0)
 9 ➔ S: i feel very good because
 10 (0.2) u:h i said=

11 T: =uh huh=
12 ➔ S: =i said (.) i (0.2) have

In Extracts 13 and 14, a ‘how-are-you’ question initiates a first topic. Normally, ‘how-are-you’ questions are considered to be routine and perform a sort of ceremonial function in a conversation. Sacks (1992b) explains why people use ceremonial sequences as follows:

we can come to see that a thing that people do in conversations to provide that they do not have a ‘first topic’ item. So that though they indeed talk about a bunch of things, they avoid giving something as a thing to be so marked. There may be things one is willing to say, wants to say, but one may be unwilling to have any of those things be seen as the reason for the call or as something distinctly important. One way that is managed is to build up the beginning of the conversation in such a way as to have nothing in it markable as ‘first topic,’ ‘reason for call,’ etc. So, for example, in the ‘how are you’ sequence we can get “How are you?” “Fine” “What’s going on?” “Nothing,” where “What’s going on?” can be an occasion for putting in the item of news which would then be treated as ‘first topic,’ ‘reason for the call,’ etc. You can say “Nothing” and then later go on to say a bunch of things that are going on - where when you say “Nothing” it does not occasion hanging up (p.165).

However, in the two extracts quoted above, when the tutor poses the ‘how-are-you’ question, TK and Hiddink do not treat it as a ceremonial sequence but instead respond to it seriously: TK very negatively and Hiddink very positively. These responses can be described as ‘adequate complete utterances’. According to Sacks (1992b), when a serious answer is given to a question in a dyadic conversation, this answer can easily develop into a topic, and thus he calls such an answer an ‘adequate complete utterance’. Thanks to the production of the ‘adequate complete utterance’, the tutor can go forward after listening to the students’ further elaboration on their serious responses. Accordingly, in the online conversation classes examined in this research, ‘how-are-you’ questions were found to initiate a first topic.

6.2.1.2 Subsequent topic initiation

In the current study, it was found that subsequent topic initiation could take place either after or during ongoing topics. In Extracts 2, 3, 5, 7 and 12, when the participants initiate subsequent topics after the previous topic has ended, they use various types of

question and statement, including three of the types identified in this research: a question including a topical item, a solicitous enquiry into trouble, a question including no topical item, and also the news announcement type of statement identified by Button and Casey (1984, 1985). In Extract 9, there is also an example of an enquiry into personal state being reused in order to initiate a subsequent topic.

As with first topic initiation, in the data analysis for this research it was found that a question including a third party related to the interlocutors (the first type of itemised news enquiry: one of Button and Casey's (1985) findings), was not used in subsequent topic initiations either. This sort of question functions as a topic initiator by displaying prior experience or knowledge of a third party which can be shared by the interlocutors, and is similar to one of Maynard and Zimmerman's (1984) findings, as explained in Chapter 2 (see p.35). This finding is similar to one of the findings of Sukrutrit (2010), that there were no questions on a third party related to the participants in the voice-based chat room; instead, autobiographical data concerning the unacquainted participants were used to initiate a new topic. For the same reason, the absence of this sort of question from the data in the current study suggests that the participants did not have any information on third parties to share, since they had met for the first time as tutor and student in these online classes. However, examples of 'I-don't-know' sequences used for topic initiation as found in Sukrutrit's (2010) study were not found in the current study, which suggests that the conversations between the tutor and the students in these synchronous voice-based online one-to-one conversation classes were conducted more intersubjectively than those taking place between unacquainted participants in synchronous voice-based chat rooms.

In summary, when the participants initiated or proffered first or subsequent topics, they were found to use the two broad strategies: question and statement. In the question category were included a question including a topical item, a solicitous enquiry into trouble, a question including no topical item, and an enquiry into personal state; the statement category included only one type of statement, which was a statement including a topical item. When these topic initiation strategies were compared to those used in mundane conversations, the only difference found was that questions involving a third party related to the interlocutors (the first type of itemised news enquiry) were

not used, since the participants in this research had not known each other for long enough to have any third parties in common. A summary of the topic initiation strategies identified in this study is presented in the form of a diagram in Figure 4, below.

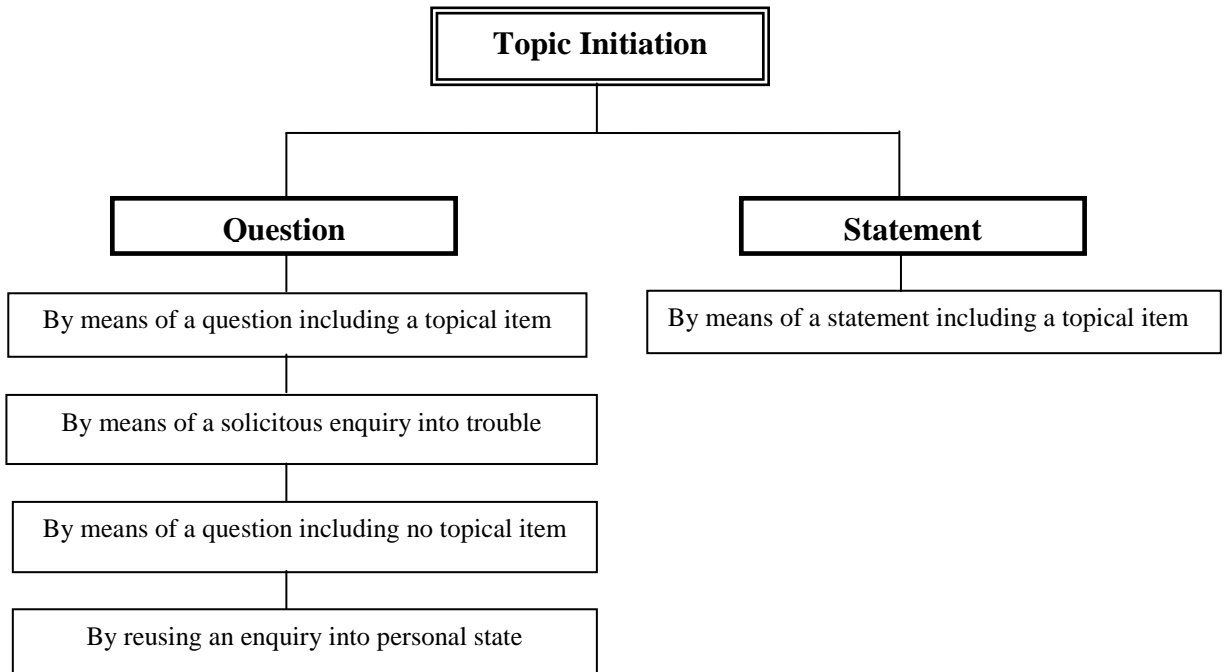


Figure 4 Topic initiation in online one-to-one conversation classes

6.2.2 Topic maintenance

The findings related to topic maintenance reveal that the participants maintained topics in several ways: by giving a preferred response, by using a topicaliser, by giving a minimal response, by producing an explicit acceptance utterance, by asking a question, by issuing a clarification request, and by duplicating part of prior talk. The techniques the participants used to maintain topics are closely related to those they used to initiate or proffer topics. These techniques are classified into two categories: preferred response and response showing interest.

6.2.2.1 Preferred response

The basic technique used to maintain a proffered or initiated topic is to give a preferred response to a question. This usually takes the form of a question-answer adjacency pair

(Sacks, 1992b). Examples of how a preferred response by the recipient to topics initiated by questions including a topical item or by solicitous enquiries into trouble resulted in maintaining the proffered items as topics were given in Extracts 15, 16 and 17. The topic initiator mentions a specific topical item in the question, to which the recipient gives a preferred response, and this functions to establish the item as a topic. The findings of the current study regarding this issue accord with those of the study on online chat conducted by Sukrutrit (2010). This finding is also in accordance with Schegloff's (2007) finding that a preferred response to a question at a topic boundary can maintain a topic through the expansion of the sequence.

6.2.2.2 A response showing interest

It was also found that, instead of giving a preferred response to questions, the participants used various techniques to show interest in proffered or initiated topics. First, topicalisers were sometimes used to maintain potential topics. By using a topicaliser the recipient demonstrated his or her interest in the initiated topic, and he or she would then take the floor to elaborate further on it. Examples of this were given in Extracts 18 and 19. This finding also confirms those of Button and Casey (1984), Svennevig (1999), Radford and Tarplee (2000) and Sukrutrit (2010).

Minimal responses also performed the function of maintaining proffered topics, as shown in Extracts 20 and 21. This finding supports the claims of Maynard (1980) and Abu-Akel (2002). It also appears to contradict the finding of Zimmerman and West (1975), Jefferson (1983) and Svennevig (1999) that minimal responses were used to terminate ongoing topics when they were exchanged several times in an unmeaningful way by the interlocutors. Furthermore, as shown in Extracts 22 and 23, the participants also used explicit acceptance utterances, such as 'that's a very interesting topic'. The acceptance utterance can be considered to be a more active response than a minimal response.

It was also found that the participants in the current study used the techniques of asking a question and of issuing a clarification request to establish proffered topics. In Extracts 24 and 25, the recipients ask a question regarding a proffered topic, while in

Extracts 26, 27 and 28, they request clarification of the proffered topics. This finding is similar to those of Maynard (1980), Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard (1997) and Sukrutrit (2010). The questions and clarification requests were interpreted as a signal that the recipient had an interest in the proffered topic. These two techniques can be included in the same category, but in the current study they are classified into two different categories, since it appears that, compared to asking a question, issuing a clarification request demonstrates more interest in and a clearer intention to respond to the initiated topic.

Lastly, repetition of part of the proffered topic also played a role in maintaining topics. As Radford and Tarplee (2000) and Sukrutrit (2010) found in their study, in the current research the participants repeated certain words: for instance, ‘global warming’ in Extract 29 and ‘soldiers’ in Extract 30, suggesting that they had some interest in the proffered topics, and so the recipient of the repetitions continued developing the topic. This finding appears to conflict with Howe’s (1991) finding that repetition can play a role in terminating a topic. However, Howe’s argument is that repetition can lead to the termination of an ongoing topic when it takes place at a topic boundary.

In summary, it was found that the participants in the current study maintained topics in two fundamental ways: by giving a preferred response and by showing interest. The sequences of topic maintenance cannot be explained by Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) IRE/IRF sequence that takes place in the traditional face-to-face L2 classroom, since topic maintenance consists of complicated, collaborative contributions. The techniques which come into the category of showing interest are giving a topicaliser, giving a minimal response, giving an explicit acceptance notice, asking a question, issuing a clarification request, and duplicating part of a prior turn. A summary of the topic maintenance techniques is presented in the form of a diagram in Figure 5, below.

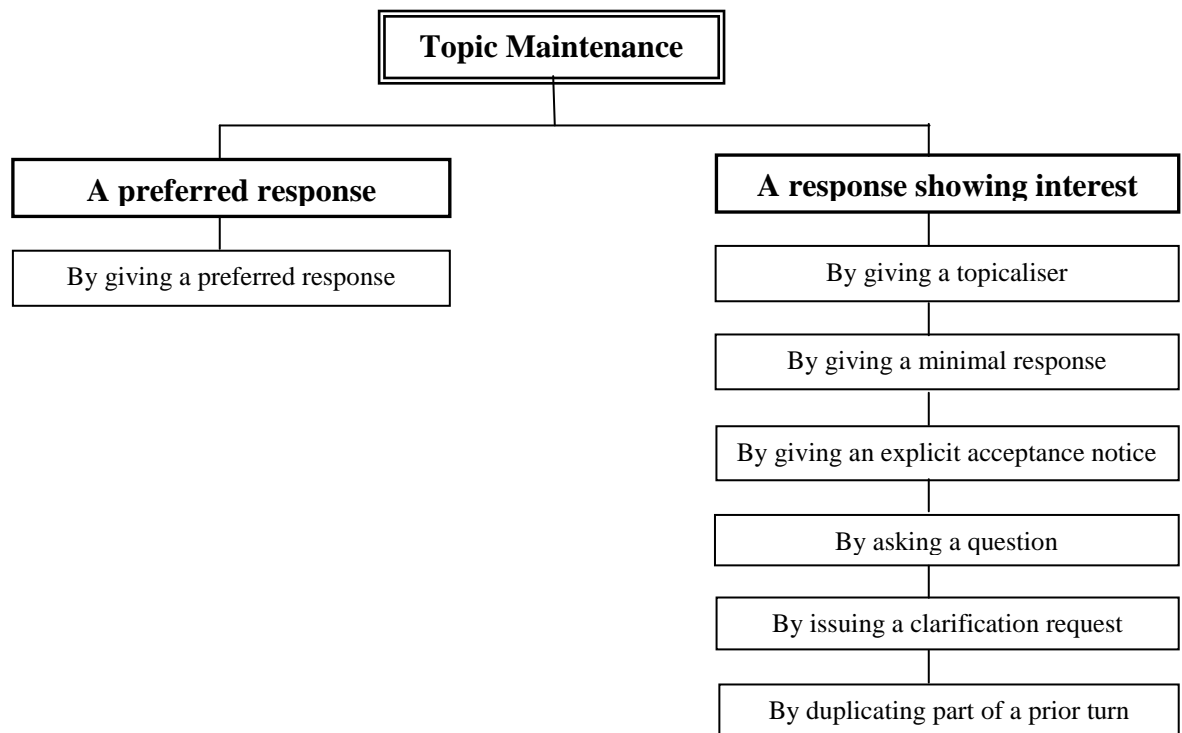


Figure 5 Topic maintenance in online one-to-one conversation classes

6.2.3 Topic transition

It was found that the participants would change topic several times in each session during the online conversation classes. This was to be expected, since each session consisted of a series of topics designed to help the students practise speaking English and the findings on topic initiation were understood from a CA institutional discourse perspective (Seedhouse, 2004). In order to examine topic change, it is first necessary to discuss how topics are terminated, since topic transition and topic termination are closely connected with each other. That is, how topics are terminated can determine how new topics are initiated. In the current study, the techniques the participants employed to change topics were categorised as collaborative or unilateral topic transition (depending on whether they terminated a prior topic through collaborative contributions or not), and bounded or stepwise topical movement (depending on whether they developed a topical boundary or not).

6.2.3.1 Collaborative and unilateral topic change

Topic transition was carried out either collaboratively or unilaterally. When the participants changed topics, they usually made collaborative contributions to terminate the topic-in-progress and then initiated a new topic. On the other hand, one example was also found where a participant moved a topic-in-progress to a new one without terminating the ongoing topic, which indicates that topic transition can also be accomplished unilaterally.

In collaborative topic transition, topic change took place through the collaborative contributions of the participants. This finding is similar to those of West and Garcia (1988) and Okamoto and Smith-Lovin (2001). The tutor and the students who took part in the current research naturally came to realise that a topic-in-progress was about to be exhausted through their collaborative contributions. The techniques they used to accomplish collaborative topic transition are categorised into six types: topic change beginning with an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk, a summary or an assessment of prior talk, a formulation or reformulation of prior talk, exchange of minimal responses and pauses, and the use of a 'that's all' utterance.

Examples of the first type - topic change beginning with an utterance indicating understanding of prior talk - were given in Extracts 31, 32 and 33. When the tutor produces utterances such as 'I got you', 'I understand alright', and 'you bet', the participants start the process of terminating the ongoing topic and then a new topic is initiated. This finding is similar to the finding of Button (1991) regarding 'drawing a positive conclusion'.

Summary, assessment and formulation or reformulation were also found to be used to terminate ongoing topics and introduce new topics. The findings relating to the use of summary and assessment are in accordance with that of Button (1991), while the finding concerning the use of reformulation is similar to Howe's (1991) finding. In Extracts 34 and 35, the tutor summarises each student's talk; after the summary they terminate the ongoing topic through the exchange of collaborative contributions and then initiate a new topic. In Extracts 36, 37 and 38, the tutor assesses each student's prior talk using utterances such as 'that's sad', 'that's nice that's nice future', 'that's

very nice of you, that's pretty much interesting'. In Extracts 39 and 40, the tutor's reformulation of a prior turn results in the termination of an ongoing topic and the introduction of a new topic.

Examples were also found in the data of topic termination beginning with the exchange of minimal responses and pauses. In Extracts 41 and 42, the tutor and each student exchange only minimal responses with pauses between them. During these exchanges, the participants recognise that the ongoing topic is going to be terminated. These findings reflect those of Zimmerman and West (1975), Jefferson (1983), Howe (1991), Svennevig (1999), Stokoe (2000) and Sukrutrit (2010), who found that minimal responses appearing at a topic boundary play the role of terminating an ongoing topic and trigger a topic initiation. As mentioned above, this use of minimal responses is different from their use in maintaining topics identified by Maynard (1980) and Abu-Akel (2002). The finding of the current study that a series of silences can also cause an ongoing topic to close is in accordance with the findings of Sacks et al. (1974), Maynard (1980) and Howe (1991).

The last technique of collaborative topic transition identified in the current research was the use of an utterance such as 'that's all' or 'that's it'. These utterances were used to prompt the other participant to become involved in terminating an ongoing topic and initiating a new topic. In Extracts 43 and 44, the students produce 'that's all' and in Extract 45, the tutor uses 'that's it'. After they have produced these utterances, the ongoing topic starts to be exhausted and then a new topic is introduced. This type of utterance can indicate that the speaker has finished what he or she wants to say, so topic termination is supposed to follow.

Some of findings of this study regarding the implicit collaborative contributions mentioned above are similar to those of Sukrutrit's (2010) study, while the topic shifts by explicit cues and by participants' interruptions found in her study were not found in this research. With regard to the former (i.e., the absence of topic shift by explicit cues), this can be construed as indicating that it is easier to achieve mutual understanding in online one-to-one conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC than in synchronous voice-based chat rooms; thus, it was not necessary for the

student and the tutor to produce cues such as ‘let’s change the subject’ explicitly to inform the recipient of topic transition. In relation to the latter, the nature of the setting of online one-to-one instruction automatically means that there were no other participants who could interrupt and thus bring about topic change during the conversations.

In addition to the above findings regarding collaborative topic transition, one example of unilateral topic movement was also found in the data obtained for this research. In this instance, a new topic was initiated unilaterally by one participant without the prior topic having been terminated. In Extracts 46 and 47, the tutor launches a new topic without terminating the prior topic in collaboration with the student. This finding regarding unilateral topic movement is similar to the findings of West and Garcia (1988), Okamoto and Smith-Lovin (2001) and Sukrutrit (2010). This type of movement does not result in the development of a topic boundary because a new topic is suddenly introduced by the other participant without the ongoing topic being terminated through collaborative contributions.

6.2.3.2 Boundaried and stepwise topical movement

Examples of both boundaried and stepwise topical movement were found in the current study. The distinctive characteristic of boundaried topical movement is to develop a noticeable boundary, so this type of topical movement can also be called a ‘marked’ transition, a disjunctive shift, a disjunctive topic shift, a disjunctive topic transition or a disjunctive topic change (see Chapter 2, p.70). Accordingly, collaborative topic transition can also be considered to be a boundaried topical movement because the collaborative contributions of the participants can result in the development of a topic boundary. Sacks (1992) maintained that a boundaried topic transition takes place when the participants want to avoid a boring or unpleasant talk, while Jefferson (1984) maintains that it occurs when the participants want to get out of troubles-telling. However, in the current study, some of the boundaried topic transitions took place simply in order to provide the students with new topics: that is, for topic circulation.

An example of the type of stepwise topical movement identified by Sacks

(1992b) was also found in the data for this study and was presented in Extract 48. This movement was called a ‘stepwise topic transition’ by Svennevig (1999) and by Holt and Drew (2005). In Extract 48, the participants naturally move the ongoing topic to a new topic, without making a topic boundary, by means of a pivotal utterance inserted by the tutor. This finding concerning the role played by a pivotal utterance is in accordance with the findings of Jefferson (1984a) and Sukrutrit (2010). In particular, Sukrutrit (2001) categorised stepwise topical movement as a ‘topic shift by implicit cues’: however, in this study it was categorised as an independent topic change. The stepwise topical movement gives the impression that the flow of topics is very smooth, which supports the claim of Sacks (1992b, p.301) that the stepwise topical movement which takes place commonly and normally is not paid any noticeable attention by the participants.

In summary, in this research it was found that topics were terminated and changed either collaboratively or unilaterally. That is, most of the time the participants terminated an ongoing topic through collaborative contributions and then initiated a new topic, but in one instance one participant initiated a new topic without terminating the ongoing topic in collaboration with the other participant. It was also pointed out that a collaborative topic transition can also be called a boundaried topical movement owing to the creation of a topic boundary. On the other hand, it was also found that the participants used a stepwise topical movement by using a pivotal utterance, so there was no topical boundary. A summary of the techniques of topic transition identified in this study is presented in the form of a diagram in Figure 6, below.

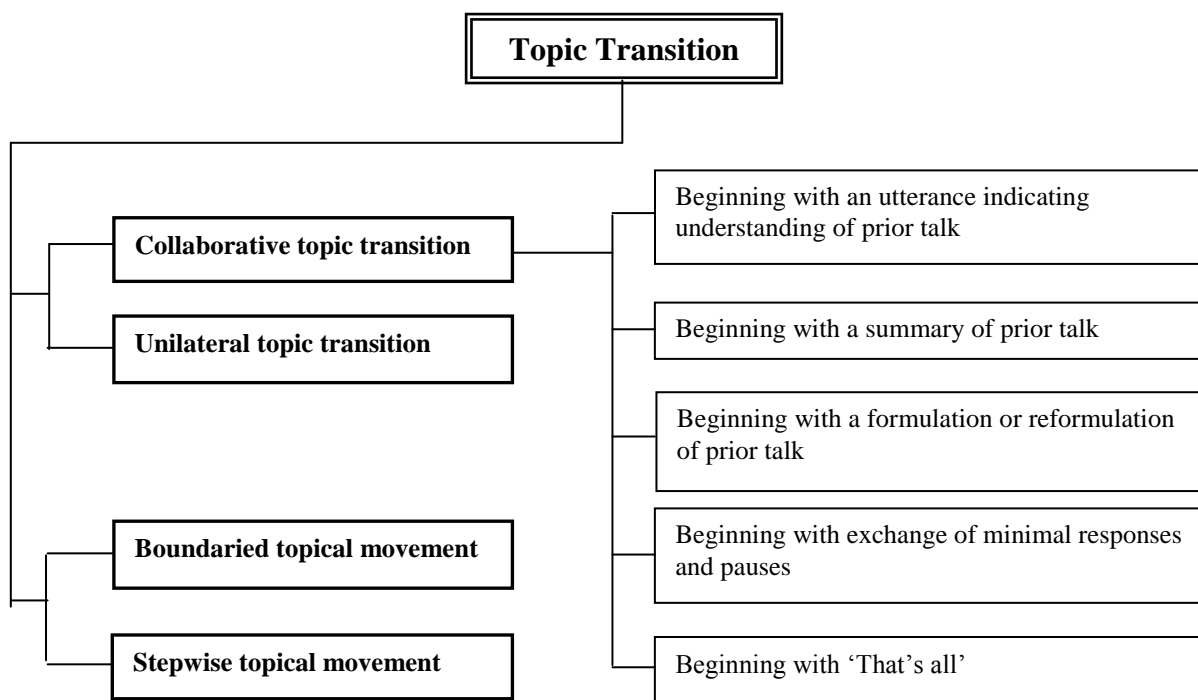


Figure 6 Topic transition in online one-to-one conversation classes

6.2.4 Trouble and repair in topic management

Instances where a trouble in topic management affected the development of the topic sequence were found in the current study. In Extracts 49 and 50, the inadequate lexical knowledge of the student causes a side sequence to occur, so topic initiation does not follow immediately. In Extracts 51 and 52, the students' rejection of the topics proffered by the tutor leads to a trouble in topic initiation. In Extract 53, a technical problem causes the student to ask for repetition and in Extract 54, the distracting surroundings of the student cause the tutor wrongly to assume that the session is closed

Of particular note is the development of side sequences resulting from the students' inadequate lexical knowledge, as shown in Extracts 49 and 50. A side sequence occurred when a student used or heard words he did not know very well; he asked about the words in the middle of the topic initiation and then returned to the ongoing topic after clarifying the words. That is, the inadequate lexical knowledge of the student causes a side sequence to occur for repair of the trouble, so topic initiation does not follow immediately. The repair can be classified into the 'repair in form-and-accuracy contexts' category, which is one of Seedhouse's (2004) three types of repair,

because the teacher's pedagogical aim is for the learners to produce "a specific string of linguistic forms" (Seedhouse 2004, p.114). After the trouble source was repaired through the side sequence, the proffered topic was managed by the participants. This finding is in accordance with those of Jefferson's (1972) study. It is also similar to one of the findings of the study of Seedhouse and Harris (2011), in that a specific lexical item generates a trouble in participants' understanding in topic sequences, but the finding that inadequate linguistic knowledge developed into a side sequence in this study is different from theirs. However, the finding is incompatible with the claim of Firth (1996) that the concept of 'let it pass' is deployed to solve or avoid obvious linguistic problems. Accordingly, the example of a side sequence caused by inadequate linguistic knowledge found in this study can be said to prove that the online English conversation class shows the characteristics of institutional talk.

The other troubles were resolved by the mechanism of repair (see p.94) in CA and then the conversation was put on the right track. In Extracts 51 and 52, the students' rejection of the topics proffered by the tutor leads to a trouble in topic initiation, so another new topic is initiated by the tutor to repair the trouble. This repair can be classified into the 'repair in meaning-and-fluency contexts' category, which is one of Seedhouse's (2004) three repair types, since the tutor's pedagogical aim is "to maximise the opportunities for interaction" (Seedhouse 2004, p.149). In Extract 53, a technical problem causes the student to ask for repetition and in Extract 54, the distracting surroundings of the student cause the tutor wrongly to assume that the session is closed. The troubles caused by the technical problem and other interference were resolved by the collaborative contributions of the participants.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the findings obtained from the data analysis presented in Chapter 5 have been discussed. The chapter began with a review of the research interest, including a presentation of the research questions and a brief introduction to the findings. Topic management was then discussed. The findings on topic initiation were then discussed in two categories: first topic initiation and subsequent topic initiation. The findings on topic maintenance and transition were then examined. In topic transition, both

collaborative and unilateral topic change and boundaried and stepwise topical movement were explained with reference to the techniques used by the participants. Finally, ways in which trouble and repair in topic management occurred and how this affected the development of the topic management sequences were also discussed. The following chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the current study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a summary of the thesis is provided. The chapter begins by reviewing the aims and research context. An overview of the findings and their relevance to the research questions is then presented. Next, the research and pedagogical implications of the study are discussed in turn. A description of the contributions and limitations of the study follows. Suggestions for further research into topic management and online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC are also put forward. The thesis concludes with a personal evaluation of the current study.

7.1 Review of the aims and the research context

The aim of the current study was to investigate how participants managed topics during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. The design of the study involved investigating how the classes were carried out in situ through observation of the participants' topic management. However, the study was oriented towards investigating how language was used to reflect social actions rather than to assessing language learning or acquisition. Thus, in order to account for language use related to managing topics during the online classes, pure conversation analysis was chosen as the methodology that would be employed in the research. The use of CA made it possible for the researcher to perform a micro-analysis of paralinguistic forms as well as of turn-taking and organisations related to topic management.

The research setting modelled the typical online one-to-one English conversation courses provided by private education companies in Korea. These classes are designed to allow students to become immersed in speaking English. Thus, the tutor does not teach English but only talks to the students in English. Accordingly, each student is supposed to use real or practical English without considering English grammar. The participants were far away from each other: the Indian tutor in Kuwait and the two Korean students in Korea, and communicated through a free Internet communication software application called Skype, which is very popular among private individuals.

Each student had twenty sessions over a period of around two months, with each session lasting twenty minutes. The classes were recorded using a recording software application called Pamela. A total of thirteen hours of recorded data were collected.

7.2 Overview of research findings

Four research questions were developed for the current study and the research findings required to answer these questions were obtained through the analysis of the spoken data from the perspective of CA. This analysis was presented in Chapter 5 and then discussed in Chapter 6. The four research questions were as follows: first, how are topics *initiated* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication? second, how are topics *maintained* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication? third, how are topics *terminated* and *changed* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication? and fourth, how does trouble and repair in topic management *occur* during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication?

The findings obtained from the analysis revealed various actions associated with topic management that were performed during the online conversation classes; these are presented in the form of a diagram in Figure 7 below. With regard to the first research question, it was found that the participants initiate or proffer topics using questions and statements including topical items. When they do not have a specific topical item in mind, they use questions including no topical items to elicit a topic from the other participant. With respect to the second research question, it was found that the participants employ two fundamental strategies: giving a preferred response or giving a response showing interest. When giving a response showing interest, the participants use one of various different ways to maintain topics. Concerning the third research question, when the participants change topics, they engage mainly in collaborative topic transitions forming a topic boundary, although occasionally one participant will change

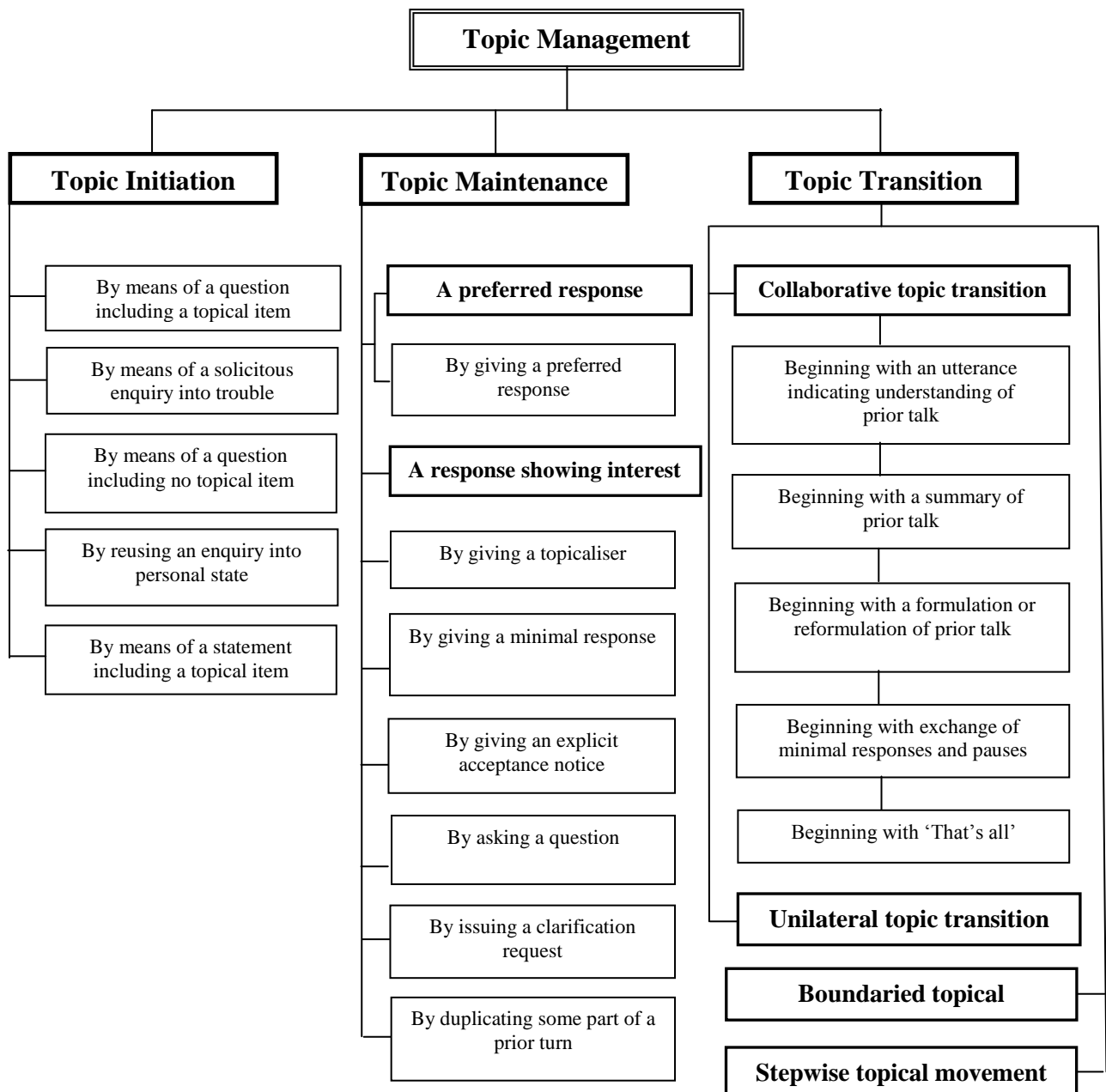


Figure 7 Topic management in online one-to-one English conversation classes

a topic unilaterally. In contrast to unilateral topic transition, a stepwise topical movement can also take place: that is, the participants smoothly change an ongoing topic to a new topic without terminating the prior topic through collaborative contributions. Finally, with regard to the fourth research question, it was found that the causes of troubles in topic management: namely, inadequate lexical knowledge, rejection of a proffered topic, and technical problems and other types of interference

also affect the sequence of topic management. In particular, inadequate linguistic knowledge results in the development of side sequences.

7.3 Research implications

Online one-to-one English conversation courses that are conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC are a new trend in teaching English to learners. These courses have the significant advantages of offering an effective and economical learning environment to learners of English. Some research has already been conducted into online conversation conducted through synchronous text-based CMC (Simpson 2005a, 2005b) and into anonymous chat taking place through synchronous voice-based CMC in a virtual community on the Internet outside the classroom (Jenks, 2009a, b; 2010; Sukrutrit, 2010; Brandt, 2011). The previous research focuses on language use or learning taking place in mundane talk among the target language users outside of the classroom, but to the best of this researcher's knowledge, no research has yet been done on online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC, in which participants have pedagogical goals. The current study therefore appears to be the first to have analysed the spoken discourse data obtained from such classes from the perspective of CA, focusing on how the participants use the target language when they manage topics during the sessions.

7.4 Pedagogical implications

The findings of the current study were obtained from institutional talk, in which the students engaged in synchronous online one-to-one conversation with the tutor through a communication tool called Skype. The focus of the study was to investigate how the students used language and what social actions they engaged in when managing topics in one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through an online communication tool; thus there were marked differences between these conversation classes and the traditional face-to-face communication that takes place in the classroom.

The online one-to-one English conversation instruction can be effective in improving interactional competence as well as communicative competence since

learners can have much more interaction through one-to-one conversation with a native or native-like tutor, they are more dependent on the target language than in the traditional classroom, and they pay more attention to meaning and fluency than to form and accuracy. As was revealed in the analysis of the data collected for the current study: for example, ‘topic change beginning with exchange of minimal responses and pauses’, one of the findings of the current study showed that the students changed topics with collaborative contributions from the tutor without any problems. The students had never previously learned that method of changing topics, since individual students rarely get the opportunity to manage several topics in the limited time available in traditional face-to-face classrooms. That is, learners in the online one-to-one English conversation classes can improve their interactional competence through the sequences occurring during the management of topics.

Participants in online one-to-one conversation classes also have more opportunities to engage in mundane conversation than students in the traditional face-to-face classroom, since the former are able to talk about a wider variety of topics. The dyadic nature of the conversation can offer the participants numerous topic options. While they are talking about these various topics, they can engage in mundane talk according to the characteristics of the topics, or else mundane talk naturally occurs between topics, since they are not always able to talk about the topics they have developed. From a pedagogical viewpoint, the more characteristics online one-to-one conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC has, the more pedagogical value it has as a teaching method.

7.5 Contributions of the study

The findings of this thesis, entitled ‘Management of Topics in Online One-to-one English Conversation Instruction: A Micro-Analytic Investigation of Computer-Mediated Communication’, will contribute to CMC research as well as to CA research. As mentioned above, there is a lack of research into topic management in the context of online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through synchronous voice-based CMC. With respect to CMC research, no studies have previously been conducted on online one-to-one English conversation instruction conducted through

synchronous voice-based CMC with the aim of investigating how participants initiate, maintain, terminate and change topics and how trouble and repair in topic management occurs from the perspective of CA. Accordingly, the findings of the current study will also naturally make a contribution to the field of CMC research.

Therefore, the present study will, first, contribute to the area of L2 learning and teaching of English by identifying the advantages obtained from a new method of synchronous voice-based CMC applied to L2 learning and teaching. These advantages are as follows: first, the online one-to-one conversation class can help learners to acquire interactional as well as communicative competence. Second, online one-to-one teaching through synchronous voice-based CMC has the potential to become an effective and efficient method, as a popular new trend in the field of learning and teaching English as a foreign language in countries such as Korea. This is because there is neither a sufficient number of native speakers with whom language learners can practise speaking, nor do they have many opportunities to talk to each other in English in the EFL environment. Third, online one-to-one conversation courses can thus be a very economical as well as an effective and efficient way for language learners to practise their spoken English.

Secondly, the present study will also be helpful to language teachers, English education providers and administrators, and CA researchers, since it has investigated what sort of interactions take place and how they are used in situ. First, the findings will help English teachers or tutors who have to prepare English tuition for the online courses to understand what sort of interactions take place, what sort of speaking activities are used, and how the conversations are organised in situ, and also help them to work out how to organise their topics with their learners when developing lesson plans. The findings can also be used by language teachers to show their students the types of interaction that are created during online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted outside the traditional face-to-face classroom. Thus, the distinctive features of the interactions that result in learners paying more attention to meaning and fluency than to form and accuracy can be a good example for L2 learners of English to follow. Second, the findings will also help to acquaint English education providers and administrators with the nature of online one-to-one English conversation classes and

with how they are carried out in situ. Third, the patterns of social interaction identified in the findings will be useful to CA researchers or other researchers in the field of classroom interaction, when they are compared with the findings of other research into English learning and teaching related to classroom interaction.

7.6 Limitations of the study

There are two factors which imposed limitations on the current study. The first is the limited number of hours covered by the online conversation classes. In this research, each student had twenty sessions and each session lasted twenty minutes. Some researchers would claim that this number of hours is insufficient to make it possible to generalise the findings of the current study on topic management. However, in comparison with practical English conversation classes given in school classrooms, an online conversation class allows each participant much more time to speak in English. There are usually between fifteen and thirty students taking part in a general school conversation class, which means that each student will have no more than five minutes to talk individually to the English teacher. Although it is true that if more hours of online classes had been recorded for this study, the findings would have had more generalisability, the number of hours actually obtained was quite sufficient, particularly if one takes into account the aim of the current research, which was to investigate how the participants managed topics during their classes, and not to assess their language learning or acquisition.

The second limitation of this study results from the fact that audio-recorded data do not include body language such as gestures, eye movements and the like. Thus, although a thorough micro-analysis of paralinguistic as well as linguistic forms was conducted for this research, it was impossible to include body language in the analysis. Although CA is based on the examination of sound data, other details such as body language can help conversation analysts to analyse spoken data. If the current research had been based on the analysis of data obtained from synchronous video-based CMC, the participants' use of body language could have been recorded and used to assist in the analysis of certain parts of the conversation where their use of body language was significant.

7.7 Suggestions for further research on topic management

First, further research on topic management is needed in order to investigate the relationship between participants' participation and topic management, since this relationship was beyond the focus of the current study. While conducting the research for this study, it was found that the participants were able to engage in long interactions with each other through managing topics properly. In an online one-to-one conversation class, although the students are obviously involved in topic management, it is up to the teacher or tutor to talk to the student for a certain amount of time: that is, to control the class, mainly by initiating or proffering topics or by creating an atmosphere conducive to getting the students themselves to proffer or initiate topics voluntarily. Thus, it would be very useful for both online and classroom pedagogy if future research were conducted to investigate the relationship between participation and topic management.

There is also a need for research to be conducted into topic management in online classes conducted through mixed CMC: that is, synchronous text- and video-based CMC or text- and voice-based CMC. The current study was based solely on the use of synchronous voice-based CMC, so the participants did not use any text messages during the classes. That is, the data obtained for the present study were only sound data. As a result, not only was it not possible to determine the influence of body language on the participants' management of topics, but also it was not possible to investigate any possible influence of text messaging. Online one-to-one English conversation courses conducted through synchronous text- and video-based CMC are another type of CMC learning offered to language learners, and thus what actual difference text messaging and body language make in managing topics would be an interesting topic for future research.

7.8 Suggestions for further research on interactions in online one-to-one English conversation classes conducted through SMC

It would also be useful for research to be conducted into the conversational interactions that take place in group English conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice- or video-based CMC. In online group English conversation classes, one tutor talks to two or three students simultaneously by using a communication tool such as

Skype. In some ways this is similar to Skypecasts, in which several anonymous people talked to each other at once, although Skypecasts was a virtual chat room designed for mundane conversation taking place outside the classroom (Jenks, 2009a, b), while online group English conversation classes possess more characteristics of the traditional face-to-face classroom than online one-to-one English conversation classes. Thus, research into online group conversation classes conducted through synchronous CMC could investigate the sort of interactions that take place among the participants during the classes. The results could then be compared with those obtained for online one-to-one classes or for school classroom interaction.

It is also necessary to study online one-to-one or group conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice- or video-based CMC from the perspective of second language learning or acquisition over a longer period. The number of class hours recorded for the current study was sufficient for an examination of topic management, but, as explained above, it would not be adequate to investigate how the students' speaking ability improved from the viewpoint of second language learning or acquisition. English language courses conducted through synchronous voice- or video-based CMC are provided for learners of English as a foreign language. Accordingly, if they were observed over a longer period of time, it would be possible to investigate how these online conversation classes affect learners' language learning or acquisition. In addition, it is also necessary to investigate how classroom interactional competence (CIC) (Walsh, 2006) is relevant to online one-to-one conversation classes conducted through synchronous voice- or video-based CMC.

7.9 Personal evaluation

The current study was designed to reveal how online one-to-one English conversation classes are conducted practically in situ. These classes, which give learners the opportunity to speak English with native or native-like speakers, have recently become a popular trend in countries like Korea, where there are minimal opportunities to practise the language in daily life. However, so far little research has been conducted into these classes. One of the reasons for this is the difficulty in collecting the data. Not only do technical problems arise: for instance, the stability of the Internet connection

and problems associated with recording the sessions, but also Koreans have a tendency to be reluctant to disclose their conversational data. The data collection for the current study was accomplished by overcoming this sort of difficulty. The findings show how the participants use language including social actions in situ, in order to manage topics while participating in conversation classes, and also show how trouble and repair in topic management sometimes occurs. Accordingly, it is expected that the current study will provide a starting point for conducting research into online one-to-one English conversation instruction, by helping language teachers or instructors, education administrators or providers who are considering introducing online one-to-one English conversation classes through synchronous CMC.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Transcription convention (Atkinson and Heritage 1984)

- [[]] Simultaneous utterances – (beginning [[) and (end]])
- [] Overlapping utterances – (beginning [) and (end])
- = Contiguous utterances
- (0.5) Represents the tenths of a second between utterances
- (.) Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)
- : Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches)
- . Falling tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
- , Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses)
- An abrupt stop in articulation
- ? Rising inflection (not necessarily a question)
- Underlined words indicate emphasis
- ↑↓ Rising or falling intonation (after an utterance)
- ° ° Surrounds talk that is quieter
- hhh Audible aspirations
- hhh Inhalations
- .hh. Laughter within a word
- >> Surrounds talk that is faster
- << Surrounds talk that is slower
- () Transcriptionist doubt
- (()) Analyst's notes

Appendix B

Lesson Plan

	Conversation Topics
1	Talking about yourself and your family members
2	Talking about your friends, teachers and your school
3	Describing your house and your room
4	Talking about the most precious thing in your possession
5	Talking about a holiday that you will never forget
6	Talking about your elementary or middle school days
7	Talking about important things that have happened in your life
8	Talking about similarities and differences between you and your closest friend
9	Talking about similarities and differences between your country and another country
10	Talking about your plans and ambitions
11	What would you do if you were president of your country?
12	Talking about changes in the future society
13	What would you want to do if you were an invisible man?
14	Talking about the good experiences you have had in learning English
15	Talking about what you did on Christmas Day
16	Talking about pride in Korean history
17	Talking about the influence of music on animals
18	Talking about E.T.
19	Talking about your favourite movies or books
20	Talking about problems teenagers face today

Appendix C

Consent

Newcastle University

School of Education, Communication and Social Sciences

PhD in Education and Applied Linguistics

I express my wish to participate freely and autonomously in the research study: 'Management of Topics in OnLine One-to-one English Conversation Instruction: Micro-Analytic Investigation of Computer-Mediated Communication'. I also accept that I have been informed by the researcher about the purposes and aims of the study, and that it is also my right to withdraw from the process at any time and for whatever reason that in my opinion might justify it. The information gathered must be used exclusively for academic and research purposes. I also authorise the researcher to audio record, transcribe and translate data, and to use the analysis and findings for publication, both as a final research report and/or in academic journals if needed. My identity must be protected and a pseudonym used instead, and any other direct reference to me as a research participant must be withheld.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____