Self-representations and power relations in peer review interactions:
A case study of two international students in a composition class

by

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This is to certify that the master’s thesis of

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has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
To the one who saw me crying...
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ABSTRACT

Peer review is a commonly used activity in cross-cultural composition classes; however, little research has investigated how NNSEs' (non-native speakers of English) self-perceptions and power relations reflect and are reflected in their peer discourse, more exactly in the use of social-interactional strategies and personal stance. In this microethnographic study, I followed two NNSEs working in dyads with two different peers (a native and a non-native speaker of English) for a rhetorical analysis assignment in a cross-cultural composition class.

First I distributed a survey to the six participants in order to determine their perceptions of previous and hypothetical peer interactions, and their familiarity with the peer review activity. Then, I videotaped four dyadic peer review sessions in which the two NNSEs participated. Finally, I interviewed the two NNSEs to elicit their perceptions of the interactions with their peers. After the data collection, I transcribed the videotaped interactions and the audiotaped interviews. An analysis of the dyadic interactions revealed emerging categories of social-interactional strategies (e.g. positive evaluation, advice request, etc.) and personal stance (labeled as "the decision maker", "the uncertain", "the self-relegator", etc.), identified and classified in two operational taxonomies which I applied to the transcribed peer interactions. Through the triangulation of the information obtained from the NNSEs’ survey and interview answers as well as from their peer discourse, I investigated how the students’ use of social-interactional strategies and personal stance matched their self-perceptions and power relations with their peers.
The analysis suggests that the two NNSEs perceived their power relations differently depending on their interlocutors, feeling more equal and acting as more powerful with the NNSE partners, and feeling more distant and acting as less powerful toward the NSE peers. Consequently, these perceptions seemed to be supported by the use of different strategies and personal stance that shaped the development of the peer review interactions. Overall, the results appear to indicate that students’ self-perceptions and power relations mold their interactions with different peers.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

You see them talking. They exchange papers, words, looks, silence... but you never know what they actually say to each other. You believe in their power as writers and you hope that what they are doing is improving their writing. I always watched them from the outside. I always wanted to be one of them, but they tend to change every time I try to enter their talk. Now I hope I did it, and these are two of their stories...

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Critical thinking and teaching writing as a process are two overarching approaches that tend to come together in composition classes. Many instructors have on their agenda goals such as empowering students, writing collaboratively, and building communities of common knowledge based on liberal debates. Within the framework of critical thinking, the concept of liberal debate does not include a prescribed ideological orientation. In contrast, according to scholars such as Berlin (2003), Lee (2000) and Freire (2002), it refers to the concept of liberating students of any fixed, dominant, and oppressive discourses. In this sense, both instructors and researchers believe that the continuous debate promoted in the composition classes has a powerful social function which should regulate the dialogue not only between teachers and students, but also among students themselves. This may be one of the main reasons why peer review has become such a widespread practice.

According to the writing-as-a-process approach, peer review is deeply ingrained in theory and constitutes an important link in a series of steps (pre-writing – drafting – writing – reviewing – editing) that lead to the same objective, helping students understand the dynamic
nature of writing and their transformational power of working the words toward a cohesive and successful message to a real audience.

Upon closer investigation, peer review in itself becomes a phenomenon that determines and is determined by so many factors that one cannot merely prescribe a set of rules to ensure the success of such a practice in the writing courses. On the surface, it means that, in class, students share their drafts while trying to improve and revise their writing. However, from experience, instructors know that there is no single and successful pattern since age, gender, ethnicity, background, and culture, to name a few, play a crucial role in the development of these exchanges.

Peer review is not merely a simple pedagogical tool; it is also a social activity. Researchers such as Ede (1988), Bizzell (1986), Bruffee (1984), and Bloome et al. (2005) believe that talking about writing is a social act that implies the activation of students’ identities, roles, background, and knowledge. In other words, peer review reproduces at a smaller scale social and cultural behaviors and beliefs, within the context of the classroom setting. More specifically, peer review includes the idea of social conversation, which, according to Bruffee (1984), reflects to a certain extent the internal processes of thinking. Therefore, talking about writing directly reflects the nature of internal thoughts and contributes to their development at the same time. In other words, peer review does not only lead to just building solidarity and networking skills among writers (Elbow, 1999), but also to enforcing a “sense of selfhood” (Foster, 1995), and uniqueness (Elbow, 1999).

Researchers and instructors often approach peer review as a beneficial classroom activity with a wealth of questions and doubts. Studies in the fields of composition, second language acquisition, and social pedagogy and psychology seem to reach a common ground
of inquiry. Since peer review facilitates real connections among writers who share their struggles, worries, and successes through social talk, how does this activity really take place in real-life situations? Are students aware of its benefits and do they really take advantage of it? If not, what are the barriers that impede their collaboration? What do they actually gain from the peer review sessions and what are the factors that play a crucial role in their interactions?

Many studies have addressed these questions regarding students who are native-speakers of English (NSE). Although somewhat controversial, the results have led to a common agreement that peer review works well if students receive appropriate training, although differences determined by students’ age, grade, motivation, etc., may facilitate or impede the success of these sessions (Fox, 1980; Gere and Abbot, 1985; Nystrand, 1986; Beach, 1989; Freedman, 1992). When it comes to second language (L2) research, some scholars have become more skeptical (Carson and Nelson, 1994, 1996; Nelson and Carson, 1998; Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Villamil and de Guerrero, 1996; Storch, 2002) since, according to their research, these factors may lead to broken communication and misunderstanding. Cultural differences seem to entail a multitude of other important reasons for which peer review might not always work. Among these are mentioned different worldviews, social roles and identities, distinctive approaches to student interaction, diverse language backgrounds and levels of proficiency, etc.

Some of the above-mentioned L2 studies regarding peer review have suggested that:

a. peer review is a problematic classroom activity;

b. peer review is a social activity because it implies students’ participation as social agents;
c. peer review may be potentially blocked by more factors in the case of NSEs – NNSEs (non-native speakers of English) interaction;

d. peer review interaction is highly influenced by socio-political and cultural rules, beliefs and expectations.

These aspects are mainly determined by the fact that students bring to the classroom what they are made of: cultural norms, social behaviors, thinking frameworks, etc., and they do not act in a constant way with every person they talk to. The dynamics of their behavior (be it verbal or non-verbal) is conditioned by their background, the context of the situation, and the partners they communicate with.

However, what the literature on peer review has insufficiently addressed is the idea that some of these problematic aspects may derive from an imbalance of power at various levels. At any point when a problem occurs between conversational partners, there is something that one of the peers possesses and might use and the other one does not have, is not aware of, or does not want to recognize. Take, for example, the case in which an international student cannot express herself coherently in English. The peer may not understand what her colleague says; therefore, a communication block occurs. In this case, the person with the linguistic deficiency may be in a powerless position of not being able to connect with her peer.

Although we might be tempted to believe that the status of NNSE implies a linguistic deficiency or disadvantage that may account for the difficulty in peer-to-peer interaction, we must acknowledge the fact that power relations may derive from other types of imbalances as well, such as membership in a certain minority group (e.g. the Asian community), content knowledge (e.g. the NNSE may know more than his NSE peer in terms of writing
techniques), classroom behavior (a NSE may act as shy and uninterested in the class, projecting a less powerful image of herself as knowledgeable student), etc. Moreover, power and power relations do not occur only at the level of cross-cultural interaction, but also between peers from the same cultural background. However, given the multicultural population of many of the writing classes and the multiple challenges launched by the cross-cultural interactions during peer review, how power emerges in NSE-NNSE and NNSE-NNSE dyads will be the focus of the present research.

From previous studies and personal observation, peer review sessions viewed as social activities seem to depend directly on students’ identities (a term to be understood in its broad meaning). More exactly, students respond to each other by the way they see themselves and their interlocutors as members of certain communities or as individuals shaped by their social status and personal characteristics (appearance, age, gender, and ethnicity, etc.). From this perspective, the way students perceive and project themselves during interactions with their peers entails a certain verbal and non-verbal behavior, and the content of this behavior may shape and be shaped by the power that the students possess or think to have during peer review.

From my personal observations as instructor of cross-cultural composition classes, there are some significant differences between NSE-NNSE and NNSE-NNSE dyads which may derive from the different representations that students envision for themselves and their

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1 Although Scollon & Scollon (2001) make a fundamental distinction between cross-cultural communication and intercultural communication, this thesis does not differentiate between the two. The use of the term cross-cultural seems more useful in the case of the terminology employed at the institution where the study took place. Moreover, the term seems to better serve the purposes of this research because it emphasizes the connection across cultures with peers. In this sense, cross-cultural communication implies the idea of stepping into a middle ground or into a different culture to reach the voice of others. Thus, intercultural communication seems a more neutral expression, but the two terms must be considered interchangeably.
partners, and from the interaction itself. In the case of NSE-NNSE and NNSE-NNSE dyads, the main differences may come from the fact that a NNSE tends to interact in a different way with a NSE than with another NNSE by virtue of some traits that make her belong to a certain group or community (in this case the international community) or due to shared characteristics with the other NNSE. In this sense, in the present study, I investigate whether NNSEs really talk and behave differently depending on (1) who their partners are, NSEs or NNSEs, and (2) what power relations they share with their interlocutors.

In spite of abundant research on peer interaction, NSE-NNSE vs. NNSE-NNSE dyads have received inadequate attention, although such pairs are often met with in multicultural writing courses. In the present thesis I address this gap by closely analyzing a peer review session in the context of a cross-cultural writing class that I taught at Iowa State University in the fall of 2005. The participants, two NNSEs, interacted with two different peer partners each (a NSE and a NNSE) for the same writing assignment.

1.1. Purpose of the study

In this exploratory study, I examine how the discourse used by NNSEs reflects and projects certain power relations among the peers depending on whether these peers are NSEs or NNSEs. I also intend to reveal how perceptions of power match, shape, and are shaped by the peer discourse. Without providing an exhaustive discourse analysis (Schiffrin, 1994) of

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2 Multicultural writing courses vs. cross-cultural writing courses. The two terms are used interchangeably in this thesis and they do not necessarily imply that the curriculum used in these classes addresses issues of multiculturalism and cultural diversity although most of the time this may be the case.

3 Although this thesis focuses on the concepts of power and power relations as reflected in and shaped by the classroom discourse in peer dyads, it must be acknowledged that power is not to be found everywhere in the discourse; therefore, it may be a part of, but not a constitutive, omnipresent element of the discourse.
dyadic interaction, my precise focus is the analysis of peers’ self-perceptions and social-interactional patterns that relate to power relations at the level of peer interactions.

Central to this qualitative analysis is the classroom discourse in peer dyads, which reunites at a smaller scale language, culture, and society as situated and interdependent variables (Schiffrin, 1994). Since peer review is believed to be a type of social talk, in this study I investigate the peer discourse as a source of both verbal exchanges (what the students talk about), and socio-cultural relationships (how they connect to each other when talking about their papers). To encompass such a complex analysis, this microethnographic study is informed by the two branches of discourse analysis: ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972) and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), which approach language as context- and culture-dependent. In an attempt to analyze the discourse of power relations, I consider the most relevant and recurrent verbal and non-verbal patterns in conjunction with students’ socio-cultural contexts in order to reveal their discourse as controlled and controlling NNSEs’ power relations and self-perceptions.

Without directly focusing on an analysis of the students’ identities, I also explore the power relations between NNSEs and their different interlocutors by looking into how their identities are activated in the form of certain powerful or powerless self-perceptions and projections of selfhood in the discourse.

1.2. Research Questions

In order to achieve the goals of the present study, I focus on three research questions:

*Research Question 1. Do NNSEs perceive their power relations with their peers differently depending whether their interlocutor is a NSE or a NNSE?*

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4 For a more detailed analysis on identities, see Bloome et al., 2005.
Research Question 1 is formulated to examine the aspect of NNSEs’ perceptions of power as measured by a survey administered to the participants before the peer review session, and by an interview between the researcher and the two NNSEs after their interactions with the peers. This research question, triangulated with the next two, is designed to investigate the nature of discourse and thought, i.e. how NNSEs’ internal perceptions of power are reflected and reflect a certain type of powerful or powerless type of discourse.

Research Question 2. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of social-interactional strategies reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)?

As Bloome et al. (2005) have suggested, one way to investigate NNSEs’ discourse and power relations during their interactions is to proceed to a discourse analysis of different social-interactional strategies that peers employ. The connections between these strategies and power relations are indicated by the interactional patterns derived from the qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis, the details of which are described in Chapter 3.

Research Question 3. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of personal stance reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)?

As suggested by previous research (Ivanič, 1998; Hyland, 2001), the concept of power has been directly related to the authorial “I” and its use in the discourse. For this reason, Research Question 3 suggests an analysis of the patterns and frequency of the first person pronoun stance markers with the purpose of determining the connection between NNSEs’ personal stance and power relations in peer encounters with different conversational partners.
Although these are not the only possible venues for consolidating a dynamic and complete analysis of the discourse of power relations among peers, the literature on peer review presented in Chapter 2 has suggested that these three research questions address some of the most significant ways of capturing flexible and dynamic concepts such as power and classroom discourse as social practices.

In the context of these objectives, I believe that such an analysis of the interaction during peer review with a focus on power relations can provide insight into the students’ classroom discourse in peer dyads and their perceptions of power. Thus, one objective is that the study will reveal characteristics of the peer review activity that may contribute to a better understanding of students’ sharing experiences with their classmates. This may in turn inform instructors about the complex nature of peer review and about possible explanations for the problems that may occur among peer partners. Ultimately, I consider that this thesis will contribute to our being able to enhance student-to-student interaction during peer review.

1.3. Overview

In Chapter 2, I introduce general concepts referring to the nature of peer review and its advantages and disadvantages in order to set a solid framework for contextualizing the present research. At the same time, I review L2 studies on peer interaction to identify directions of inquiry as well as the theoretical framework used during this project, and I offer a detailed analysis of the concept of power through various definitions proposed by various schools of thought. I conclude the chapter by advancing a new definition of power to serve the purposes of the present research.

In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed presentation of the methods employed in this thesis. After introducing the context of the study and the participants’ profiles, I revisit the relevant
concepts of the two theoretical approaches which determined the data collection and analysis; i.e. ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics, and I elaborate on the concurrent qualitative and quantitative instruments and procedures that led to the final results.

In Chapter 4, I report on the findings of the study, incorporating the results as determined by the survey and the interview analyses, providing at the same time detailed descriptions of the analyzed peer interactions, as well as an analysis of the students’ social-interactional strategies and use of personal stance as related to the concept of power. In this section, I also make connections between the observed non-verbal behaviors and the power relations established among peers, concluding with a summary of the results that the present analysis revealed.

In Chapter 5, I summarize and discuss the results that I discovered through the process of data analysis. In this chapter, I also present the limitations of this study and I conclude with possible implications for teachers of cross-cultural composition classes, along with suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

In this chapter, I present general characteristics of the peer review activity, identifying advantages and disadvantages that determine the areas of inquiry of the present study. I also include a review of the most important L2 studies which investigated the phenomenon of peer review in conjunction with students' self-perceptions and discourse use. Moreover, I address various problematic aspects that have been associated with peer review, such as students' identities, different cultural and classroom backgrounds, dyad type, tactical moves and stance, in order to identify the sources that informed the research questions and the theoretical framework used in this study. After making an overview of possible definitions of the concept of power and power relations, I advance a new definition of power to serve the purposes of this investigation. I conclude Chapter 2 with a presentation of the two theoretical approaches underlying this thesis, i.e. interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982) and ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972), that provide the analytical framework of peer review as manifestation of power.

2.2. Peer review - general considerations

From the perspective of pedagogical theory, peer review as a classroom activity supports a student-centered approach to teaching and learning, which involves students' contribution to their own development as writers (Bruffee, 1984; Elbow and Belanoff, 2000). Peer review also implies collaboration, an essential characteristic for building networks and relationships among students. It even encompasses the idea that peers come to the debate table as equal partners, putting together their efforts and knowledge to learn from each other.
Despite such solid theoretical foundations, when it comes to real-life situations, peer review becomes an intricate and difficult territory to manage. According to Brooks and Donato (1994), “when learners interact verbally during a task, they do more than simply encode and decode messages about the topic at hand” (p. 271). Peer review connects the learning and teaching processes with social behaviors, out-of-classroom relationships, and students’ socio-cultural roles and beliefs (de Guerrero and Villamil, 1994; Nelson and Murphy, 1992).

To show the complex nature of peer review and the necessity of analyzing this phenomenon from a multitude of theoretical perspectives, Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) identified the social-cognitive activities, the mediating strategies, and the aspects of social behavior in the case of 54 ESL (English as a Second Language) Spanish-speaking students in Puerto Rico. The authors discovered various patterns of interaction that were related not only to what the students said (advising, eliciting, reacting, justifying, etc.), but also to how they talked to each other by adopting different behavioral patterns of management of authorial control (e.g. relinquishing authorship, appropriating, respect for authorship).

Due to the complex nature of peer review, other researchers (Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger, 1992; Villamil and de Guerrero, 1996; Carson and Nelson, 1994, 1996; Nelson and Carson, 1998) have investigated this learning environment to get a better grasp of its advantages, disadvantages, and reasons for which students may welcome or deny their full participation in this type of activity.
2.2.1. Peer review – advantages and disadvantages

As a response to the theoretical pedagogical principles associated with peer review, various empirical L2 studies have demonstrated that peer review can provide a multitude of advantages\(^5\) that may lead to NNSEs' improved learning process in a positive social environment.

Through the \textit{learning functions} of peer review, students develop essential writing skills (e.g. analyzing writing, revising, etc.); they learn how to convey meaning, develop and clarify the content of their papers, improve their writing by eliminating erroneous information, reinforce their knowledge, provide new information when they identify a gap in their knowledge, and restructure their ideas, arguments, and opinions by talking. Through the \textit{socio-cultural functions} of peer review, students become more aware of their roles as readers and writers, have the opportunity to see how their peers struggle or build their own ideas, and consolidate their oral skills (Mittan, 1989). Through the \textit{affective functions} of peer review, students increase their motivation (Mittan, 1989) and feel less anxious when they share their problems with their peers.

To all these positive effects Lockhart and Ng (1999) have added important concerns, which come from observed classroom practices and students' perceptions and complaints. At the level of the \textit{learning functions} of peer review, students do not always identify mistakes or problems in the peers' papers, do not include enough and specific comments (Debýe, 1994, p. 85), do not always offer clear or better feedback than their instructors do (Chaudron, 1984); they address surface problems in the peers' papers (Leki, 1990), and make comments

\(^5\) Most of these advantages appear in Topping and Eshly (1998) and Lockhart and Ng (1999), who investigated students' perceptions of the benefits of peer review, although other researchers (Burnett and Ewald, 1994; Debýe, 1994; Leki, 1990; Mangeldorf, 1992; Nelson and Carson, 1998; Nelson et al., 2002; Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Zhang, 1995; Zhu, 2001) have mentioned these advantages as well.
based on their L1 notions of good writing (Nelson and Murphy, 1992). The socio-cultural functions of peer review indicate that students fear possible disagreements with their peers, question the validity of their peers’ comments due to cultural differences, and structure comments based on politeness strategies (Allaei and Connor, 1990). At the level of the affective functions of peer review, students are not very motivated to share their writing because they lack confidence in their own capacity of providing feedback and in their peer’s abilities to help (Mangelsdorf, 1992), and they fear that they will be ridiculed by their peers due to their limited language proficiency (Linden-Martin, 1997).

However, if we look closer at the advantages and disadvantages of this activity, students also seem to practice, adjust and re-adjust their socio-cultural roles and positions in the classroom by the way they interact with their peer partners. At the same time, what students say to their peers during their interactions is directly influenced by how they feel and think of themselves. The social dimension, although not overtly discussed among peers, seems to play an important role in shaping students’ interaction, which leads us to the next point: to what extent does the social dimension of peer review affect students’ interaction and/or their perceptions? What are the social elements that determine the evolution and nature of students’ interactions, the conflicts and disadvantages related to this practice? Could a social theory provide the necessary answers for what happens during the peer review sessions?

2.2.2. Zone of proximal development

Lev Vygotsky (1978), the Russian sociologist central to the social development theory, advanced the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is defined as: “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem
solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). In other words, Vygotsky claims that learning occurs through social interaction with more knowledgeable individuals and that the cognitive development of an individual is possible when the knowledge shared with a more expert peer becomes internalized.

From the definition of ZPD, peer review seems to create the perfect environment for learning because it relates to one of its premises, i.e. students engaged in peer review have something to teach and learn from their peers. Social in its nature, this theoretical framework does not address cultural differences among L2 peers, which, as we have seen in the previous section, may put non-native speakers at significant disadvantages vis-à-vis their native conversational partners. Also, this theory does not consider other factors such as identity conflicts, which may lead to some of the above-mentioned disadvantages of peer review (e.g. fear of being ridiculed).

What this theoretical framework offers, although it does not state so overtly, is an understanding of the concept of power. The relationship with a more knowledgeable peer is implicitly a relation based on the power of the expert over the novice partner. This power is determined by the knowledge that the expert possesses, and it must not be considered necessarily positive or negative. In fact, if one considers this concept in the light of the Vygotskyan theory, this type of power has beneficial effects on the novice because its use leads to cognitive development. In fact, Ohta (1995) investigated peer review interaction from the perspective of this theory and concluded that the expert role is fluid because both the expert and the novice can learn from each other, depending on how they complement their knowledge through sharing their writing.
2.2.3. Discourse and power in peer review

Besides the advantages and disadvantages of peer review, a rich body of L2 studies aimed at finding out the reasons for which students have problems with advancing their knowledge during their collaboration with their conversational partners. To do this, on the one hand, researchers set out to investigate students’ discourse and roles assumed through the use of language, and, on the other hand, they looked into the way students themselves evaluated and perceived their engagement with their peers. Many studies included in this section have agreed that the dynamics of peer review sessions may be determined by asymmetries or imbalances of power in the way students talk, act, and think about themselves or their peers.

2.2.3.1. A problem of identity

Peer review seems to be strongly related to and determined by students’ socio-cultural identities. Therefore, several comments are necessary to clarify the extent to which students’ identities impact and are related to the issue of power relations.

As defined by Bloome et al. (2005), identity includes “the social positions that people take up or are maneuvered into by actions of others” (p. xx). The authors also suggest that, “Stated simply, we are interested in how participation in classroom language and literacy events affects “who you are” and how “who you are” affects your participation in classroom language and literacy events” (Bloome et al., 2005, p.101).

Bloome et al. (2005) see profound connections between classroom interaction and the socio-cultural identities that students bring to class. Their analysis of classroom discourse, although not focused on peer talk, has cast a new light on understanding the students’ discourse as reflected and reflecting students’ social identities, cultural beliefs, and power relations. According to their view, the learning processes are strongly regulated by the way
students let their identities resonate through their verbal or non-verbal discourse. This approach is foundational to the present study.

Nelson and Murphy (1992) demonstrated empirically the connections between students’ identities and peer discourse. Following four ESL students (two males and two females from Chile, Taiwan, Colombia, and Peru) in a one-semester writing class, the researchers investigated this group’s peer talk in 6 different sessions. During their interaction, the participants assumed different roles within their group (e.g. the attacker, the weakest writer, the best writer, and the mediator and facilitator), based on the identities that the students perceived and/or attributed to their partners. This study demonstrates that peer roles are negotiated socially in response to the others’ assumed or attributed roles, and that the social dimension of the group may affect the nature and success of students’ comments. In terms of power relations, Nelson and Murphy (1992) found that the metaphor that would best characterize the group they investigated was “the duel”, i.e. the struggle for authority or power within the group. Their findings reinforce the importance of considering students’ roles and power relations within the context of peer review discourse, and the present research comes as a more detailed extension of their investigation into students’ power relations within peer dyads.

2.2.3.2. A problem of different cultural backgrounds

Although the issue of cultural backgrounds and traditions may be inscribed within the identity dimension, studies on L2 learners show that this aspect may be considered under the overarching principle of cultural differences. In this sense, the recurrent themes associated with conflicts during peer review sessions are power distance, individualism vs. collectivism,
and cultural expectations, which have the potential to make students distort, channel, or re-interpret the peer discourse.

Hofstede (2001), as well as Nelson and Carson (1998), have considered in their research the variable of power distance as perceived in various cultures. According to Hofstede (2001), the concept of power distance must be understood in terms of accepted hierarchies based on power relations that some people validate within their own cultures. More specifically, Hofstede (2001) makes a distinction between low-power distance cultures (e.g. democratic societies such as USA and Australia) and high-power distance cultures (e.g. Malaysia and India), i.e. between cultures that value egalitarian roles vs. cultures that emphasize hierarchies of power.

At a micro-level, power distance may regulate the way students perceive their peers vs. their instructors or other authority figures who may offer comments on their papers. If, for example, a NNSE student from a high-power distance culture comes to share a paper with her peer, due to the cultural background, she may not take advantage of the peer’s comments because the only person entitled to help and instruct the student is the one higher on the power scale, i.e. the instructor. According to Nelson and Carson (1998): “ESL students from countries with a large power distance are perhaps less likely to value their peers’ views than are students from countries with a lower power distance.” (p. 129). From these considerations, it becomes clear why students mention certain negative disadvantages of peer review, and why an analysis of their projected power relations becomes essential in revealing the extent to which these representations actually influence the way students interact with various peers.
Another theme associated with peer review among L2 students is the dichotomy between individualist (e.g. USA) and collectivist cultures (e.g. People's Republic of China). As Gudykunst (2004) suggests, individualistic societies place an emphasis on the individual’s goals and the “I” identity, whereas collectivist cultures are more concerned with the group’s goals and the “we” identity (p. 60). In other words, if an individual is seen as easily adapting to in-group and out-group communication in an individualistic society, in the case of a collective mentality, the individual is primarily concerned with group harmony, and the relationships to the group members may determine a differential behavior depending on whether these members are part of the in- or out-group.

Carson and Nelson (1994, 1996) have addressed this theme in two different studies. The researchers focused on peers’ discourse and perceptions of their interaction with their partners, and they found that the students who came from an individualistic society tended to “subordinate the goals of the collective to personal goals,” in the light of their “personal choice, convenience, and specialization” (p.20). For example, for the two Spanish-speakers who participated in these studies, peer review functioned as a tool for individual development. However, students coming from a collective culture tended to define their own identity through the lens of the group values, and they saw peer review as an activity for group harmony preservation. The three Chinese ESL participants altered their discourse to build consensus, by offering positive comments to their peers. They were also reluctant to disagree and they never claimed authority. At the level of language use, they avoided direct comments and negative statements, using many polite forms. If we examine the way the Chinese students thought of themselves with the way they talked, these studies suggest that
the cultural heritage and the power distance shared within the students' collective community influences the peer discourse.

From a more theoretical perspective, Ramanthan & Atkinson (1999) have strongly suggested that certain peer review sessions with members of various cultures may end up in complete failure due to the students' impossibility of understanding concepts such as voice, ownership, and individuality. These researchers almost condemned the fact that some instructors try to make students with collective traditions benefit successfully from practices such as peer review, since the idea of empowerment and individuality through discourse does not have a similar correspondent in their societies.

The same beliefs are shared by Gudykunst et al. (1987) who investigated the in-group vs. out-group membership dynamics. The authors of the study found out that, "for members of collectivist cultures, interactions with ingroup members were more intimate, deep, smooth, effortless, and well coordinated than for those in individualist cultures" (p. 24). At the same time, "students from the US perceived the least difficulty of any of the subjects in communicating with outgroup members" (p. 25).

It is worth mentioning that all the above-mentioned researchers focused their attention on ESL interaction, without addressing the challenges that an analysis of NSE-NNSE vs. NNSE-NNSE dyads might entail at the level of differences among peers in terms of their power relations and discourse choices. Overall, what these researchers suggest is that cultural differences lead to a certain type of discourse relative to the students' cultural traditions and backgrounds. Given that the above-mentioned studies offer significant explanations for why certain NNSEs may behave differently with NSE or NNSE peers because of their cultural traditions and membership to certain in- and out-groups, this body of
research constitutes an important resource for directing the analysis as well as the interpretation of the results in the present study.

2.2.3.3. A problem of dyad type

In one of the few studies focused on dyadic interaction and second language acquisition, Storch (2002) took into consideration two variables for his data analysis: mutuality and equality. In a longitudinal study in an Australian university, the researcher recorded the interactions among 20 students in 10 different pairs who had been asked to solve three grammar-based tasks. After identifying 4 types of dyads (collaborative, dominant/dominant, dominant-passive, expert/novice) based on who acts as the dominant peer, Storch (2002) found out that certain dyads (i.e. expert/novice and collaborative) are more conducive to language learning than others. If, on the one hand, this study has succeeded in identifying certain patterns of power relations between peers, on the other hand, it does not offer a complete map of the dynamics of peer relations.

2.2.3.4. A problem of strategies

If the literature presented so far has indicated the necessity of analyzing the relations between peer interactions and students’ perceptions of power relations, which the present study also proposes to investigate, few researchers have actually used systematic analyses of peer discourse to illustrate these relations.

In a study that examined mixed peer response groups and the strategies used during conversations with peers, Zhu (2001) discovered that “the non-native speakers as a group took fewer turns and produced fewer language functions during oral discussions of writing, particularly when they were performing the writer role” (p. 271). In his study, the L2 students proved to be “less in control of the discussions of their own writing” (p. 271), and this could
be observed in the frequency of their conversational turns. However, an important limitation of this research is that the author had under investigation only NSE-NNSE groups, and a complete look at the students' interaction at the representational and discourse levels should be expanded with a contrastive analysis of the NSE-NNSE and NNSE-NNSE dyads as well.

Although other researchers (Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Carson and Nelson, 1996; Villamil and de Guerrero, 1996; Storch, 2002) also analyzed the strategies that students used in their discourse and suggested their potential to reveal power relations, few connections have been made between these strategies and students' projected power, which is the main reason why in this thesis I try to clarify the relations between these strategies and students' perceptions of their relationships with their peers.

2.2.3.5. A problem of personal stance

As defined by Candlin and Hyland (1999), “Stance refers to the ways that writers project themselves into their texts to communicate their integrity, credibility, involvement, and a relationship to their subject matter and their readers” (p. 101). Extending this definition, stance refers to how individuals project their “I” in the discourse they use. Although most of the studies on personal stance have looked into the writers’ use of the first person pronoun in academic writing from the perspective of a functional grammar approach (Hyland, 2001; Kuo, 1998; Tang and John, 1999), some important investigations on L2 writing (Ivanič and Camps, 2001) and ESL peer talk (Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger, 19926; Lockhart and Ng,

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6 Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger (1992) asked 60 ESL freshman composition students to respond in writing to an essay composed by another ESL student during the previous semester. After defining a taxonomy of stance (prescriptive, collaborative, and interpretive), the authors concluded that most of the students assumed a prescriptive style (authority-based), and that the learners with an Asian background found peer review more difficult because they considered themselves as less competent to engage in this type of activity. As this study shows, peer review may function as an empowering tool, but it may also be controlled by students’ various cultural backgrounds.
have shown that the power the speakers or writers project for themselves and the others relates to the type of stance employed in their discourses.

From this corpus of research, the study of personal stance becomes an important venue for understanding the way students project their power relations with their peers into the discourse; therefore, in the case of the present study, I added the investigation of personal stance as reflecting peers’ projected selves to the main two areas of inquiry (i.e. students’ perceptions of power relations and their use of strategies).

2.2.4. Challenges of peer review

From the literature review on peer interaction, any researcher is faced with two major challenges:

- peer review must be analyzed as a complex social phenomenon that includes the talk among peers and the students’ identities and socio-cultural heritage;

- peer review is a territory of asymmetries and imbalances that I will refer to as power relations, which may reflect students’ perceptions of themselves and others in connection with their language choices.

In this context, Lockhart and Ng (1999) best capture the aspects that the research on peer review needs to investigate by stating:

While the beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of students are important, they are not necessarily a reliable indication of what actually occurs during peer response sessions. Additional insights could therefore be obtained from further research which analyses the conversations of peer response sessions. Such an analysis could focus on

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7 Lockhart and Ng (1995) used a similar taxonomy which included the collaborative, probing and authoritarian stance. Their findings prove that the probing stance may be more conducive to engaging students into understanding the writing process, while the authoritarian power-based style is more product-oriented, putting the students in the position of using their power for identifying and evaluating problems instead of leading to constructive comments.
negotiation strategies students use, roles students assume, and a content analysis of the language used during peer response sessions. (p. 26)

These are also the elements that I try to examine in this thesis.

To pursue such a complex investigation, probably the biggest challenge resides in the lack of a compact and operational understanding of power and power relations at the level of classroom discourse. All the studies mentioned so far have alluded to terms such as “authority”, “control”, “asymmetry”, etc., but no study, besides Bloome et al.’s (2005) investigations of classroom dynamics, tried to examine the nature of these power relations as reflected at the discourse level. In the next two sections I review various definitions of power and provide an operational one to serve the purposes of this project in order to help the reader understand possible ways of examining students’ power relations during peer sessions.

2.3. Power – looking for the right definition

In a review of the various schools of thought, Barrett (2002) has presented the concept of power from the perspective of its many definitions: as inherent in an individual (Nietzschean view), as a capacity of ego to impose her or his will on alter (Weberian view), or as control over the contexts in which people interact (tactical or organizational power). While Ng and Bradac (1993) investigated the power to impress or to influence, the power to depoliticize, and the dichotomy between power to vs. power over, Maier (2001) also listed several types of power: power by exercise of physical force, power as sanction, power as status, power as authority or prestige, power as charisma, and argumentative power. However, these definitions cannot serve the present microethnographic study since, as already suggested by the above-mentioned literature on peer review, the peer discourse is more subtle and complex, eluding any simple definition of power relations.
Attempting to understand what power implies in dialogic interaction, Mininni (2001) stated that: “no interlocutor is ‘powerful’ or ‘weak’ in a predefinite way, even if his/her institutional (or local) rank or authority may simplify the need for Self-image ratification” (p. 114). This vision goes hand in hand with Maier’s (2001) view that: “the individual as social actor can redefine him/herself, but this identification will always take place within categorizations imposed by various more or less powerful actors and the group and the community to which the individual belongs” (p. 227). In this sense, power is a dynamic and transferable social asset, conditioned by the existence of other social agents who validate or recognize it.

In the context of the classroom discourse, Bloome et al. (2005) offer a comprehensive view of three venues of analyzing power and power relations at the individual level. First, power as a product is understood “as a commodity, an object; a measurable thing that one person has over another or more of than another” (p. 160), and it can be given, transferred, traded, and taken away. Since being powerless or powerful matches what the authors call the deficit model, by necessity, the powerless individual must be instructed and given the skills to become powerful in a unidirectional way, from the less to the more powerful person. In this sense, the product model seems to remain outside of a dynamic view of the socio-cultural relationships among students.

Second, from a feminist approach, Bloome et al. (2005) state that power may be perceived as caring relations, i.e. the energy that brings people together. This optimistic view on the positive nature of the power with model implies that action is determined by peoples’ relationships and their use of emotional ties at the basis of any communication and learning experience. However, this idealistic view on power relations does not seem to answer the
problem of conflicts among students, which are an intrinsic characteristic of the peer interaction.

The third approach to understanding power is the process-based perspective. Power represents “a set of relations among people and among social institutions that may shift from one situation to another” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 162). In other words, power does not only belong to one individual, group or institution, but it also resides in the processes that build the relationships among individuals.

control comes in the form of information and knowledge, not as a quantity but as an interpretative framework – what is sometimes called a discourse or paradigm – for defining and acting in the world that pushes out other ways of interpreting and acting, thinking, feeling, believing, and knowing. (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 162)

Although the several definitions provided in this section offer sometimes opposing directions in interpreting and understanding the concept of power, they contribute toward an operationalization of what seems to define our actions as social agents.

2.4. Toward a new definition of power

For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of power should be understood from a composite point of view, which includes the product and process-based perspectives (Bloome et al., 2005). Although at first examination they may seem contradictory, the two approaches complement each other and may become functional through the following definition that I propose: power is the advantage the one individual has, uses, or thinks to have over another in a socio-cultural context.

8 The concept of context must be considered in the light of Duranti and Goodwin's (1992) theory, including four dimensions: the primary situational context, the behavioral environment (use of body language), language as context, and the extra-situational context.
Although the definition of power may seem to promote a static and unidirectional model, the reader must understand this concept as an advantage that one individual has, uses, or thinks to have at a certain moment during the interaction. At any subsequent moment the other interlocutor may be in the position of power because of a change in the social-interactional context or in the relationships between the two partners. These shifts of power (the product-based approach) may be directly influenced by the processes that occur between conversational participants (the process-based approach), and they are not only dependent on what the individuals have as part of their identity.

Thus, power may reside in the way students talk to their peers, not only in the assets they have/use/think to have (e.g. powerful personality, powerful ethnicity, rich knowledge, etc.). For these reasons, power must be considered as multidirectional, and as Barrett (2002) stated, “both positive and negative, intentional or unintentional” (p. 36). Due to the social nature of peer review, power may be part of students’ identities (e.g. Caucasian NSEs), but also constituent of their interactions, emerging from the students’ use of the peer discourse. Given the dynamic and always changing nature of social talk, students’ roles also become fluid and transforming as well as their identities, molded onto the way the interaction with conversational partners develops. As a final remark, this interpretation of power does not entail the existence of certain pre-established hierarchies because it implies that students challenge, exchange, transfer, and negotiate their power continuously through their peer discourse.
2.5. Theoretical approaches

Given the objectives of the present study (i.e. to understand in detail the power relations between peers and how these relations reflect their discourse), and taking into account the approaches that previous scholars (Carson and Nelson, 1996; Nelson and Carson, 1998; Nelson and Murphy, 1992) adopted in order to investigate the same areas of inquiry, in this research I adopt a case-study microethnographic analytical approach, informed by two branches of discourse analysis: interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982) and ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972).

Interactional sociolinguistics focuses on the language use within a specific socio-cultural context that situates and is situated in certain verbal choices (Schiffrin, 1994). Utterances are integral parts of interactions, having a multitude of functions within one and the same verbal exchange (Duranti and Goodwin, 1992). This perspective on language use offers the possibility to investigate language as creating and being created by the interlocutors’ identities, roles, and relationships within a specific interaction (Schiffrin, 1994). Therefore, language is not only a vehicle for conveying a certain message, but also it “stands in a mutually constitutive relationship with the self, the other, the self/other relationship, and the contextualized meanings that are continually negotiated during interaction” (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 352).

If we consider the precepts of the interactional sociolinguistics approach at the level of classroom discourse, the peer review talk may be interpreted by investigating the interlocutors’ multiple social identities and relationships; therefore, an analysis based on this perspective may reveal the connections between peer discourse and the students’ projected power relations within the context of doing school (Bloome et al., 2005).
However, peer review in the cross-cultural classes also implies interactions of students from different cultural backgrounds, which suggests that what students bring to class are not only their situated social selves within the context of their classroom interaction, but also their cultural heritage. In this sense, ethnography of communication tends to focus in its larger scope on the communicative function of language within a broader socio-cultural perspective. As Schiffrin (1994) states, “What we say and do has meaning only within a framework of cultural knowledge – not linguistic, but communicative, competence” (p. 371).

Thus, from the perspective of the interactional sociolinguistics approach, language mirrors who you are and what you want to say in a certain context. According to the ethnography of communication theory, language is incorporated and organized by culture. As I previously suggested, the underlying principle of this study is the bidirectional and interdependent relationship between language and socio-cultural values. As illustrated in Figure 2.1. below, there is a strong connection between language and the socio-cultural identities and contexts that individuals engage in, but I do not consider that either the language use or the culture have the potential to override each other in a particular context. In other words, for a comprehensive understanding of the peer review phenomenon, I propose that the students’ talk should be considered at the intersection between the two theories since the conversational partners share not only certain socio-cultural identities within the context of doing school and as reflected in their language use, but also various cultural traditions which inform and influence their language choices.
As Bloome et al. (2005) claim, language is "an act of constructing social relationships among people and of bringing a cultural ideology to bear on an event, group, or other phenomenon" (p. 46). Therefore, the object of a microethnographic study is the discourse understood as the sum of the linguistic and non-linguistic messages determining and as determined by the students’ identities and socio-cultural context of their interaction.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the most important problems associated with peer review sessions in the cross-cultural writing classes. Starting with the many advantages and disadvantages that peers may gain from commenting on their papers, I have identified some of the possible venues for understating the driving forces that set up the dynamics of peer review. Considering aspects such as students’ identities, cultural differences, and their use of strategies and stance, the literature in the field has suggested the importance of investigating the issue of power relations as reflected in the peers’ discourse. I have also analyzed some of the most important definitions of power in the search for an operational definition to serve
the present study, and I proposed a new and more flexible definition to encompass the multiple types of power that may occur in the classroom space.

In the remaining chapters I intend to examine three areas of inquiry: (1) students’ perceptions of their power relations, (2) the connections between power relations and strategies, and (3) the links between perceived power relations and the use of personal stance, in order to reveal how students’ perceptions are actually reflected and established through the use of certain peer discourses. To do this, I utilize methods informed by two theoretical approaches, interactional sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication that I explicated in this chapter.
CHAPTER 3. METHODS

3.1. Overview

This chapter is organized in four sections. In the first section, I provide an overview of the cross-cultural composition classes and the peer review process at Iowa State University. In the second section, I describe in detail the design of the study, the participants' profiles and their involvement in the targeted peer review session. The instruments, methods and procedures used in the data collection are the focus of the third section. In the final section, I present the phases of the data analysis, as well as the methods, qualitative and quantitative, employed in each phase.

3.2. Cross-cultural composition classes at Iowa State University

The cross-cultural first-year composition classes at Iowa State University (English 104 and 105) have been created in 1994 in an effort to accommodate a diverse student population and a multicultural approach to teaching writing. On the one hand, at the basis of this decision were the international students themselves who expressed their wish to gain writing skills in a friendly environment, which took into consideration the diversity factor of the first-year composition population. On the other hand, the American students welcomed this initiative because it opened up a new perspective on learning about the writing process through the interaction with students from different cultures.

The internationalization of the writing classes encouraged the NNSEs to get more involved in writing communities with peers who shared similar problems (e.g. difficulty in writing in a second language). Administrators and instructors hoped that these classes would also promote critical thinking in that they included representatives from various cultures who
could model their worldviews and writing experiences based on their interaction with American or other international students. Therefore, as stipulated in the instructional packet offered by the English Department at Iowa State University to instructors of cross-cultural sections, the mission of these cross-cultural classes is to: increase tolerance and understating among students, encourage critical thinking and inclusion of multiple perspectives in student writing, encourage cross-cultural collaboration, encourage retention of international students in the first-year composition program, and promote intercultural friendships.

In their design, the cross-cultural first-year composition classes (6 sections of 26 students each per semester: 3 of English 104 and 3 of English 105) include half international and half American students, although this distribution may slightly vary depending on the population dynamics for each academic year. These classes are generally taught by Teaching Assistants, graduate students enrolled in the English Department in MA or PhD programs.

3.3. Peer review in composition classes at Iowa State University

The peer review process is an important component of the teaching pedagogy in the first-year composition classes at Iowa State University. For each assignment, instructors are highly encouraged to utilize various peer review strategies in their classroom whenever students have already written a first or second draft of their papers. In order to do this, many of them take a two-step approach to making students benefit from the peer review activity.

First, instructors generally model or discuss the benefits and procedural steps of the peer review technique. Before every peer session, students either bring their drafts in class to practice comments on their papers and increase their awareness and confidence of their own skills, or they just prefer to share impressions and suggestions about how peer review may best function. Optionally, instructors may assign peers in groups or pairs before the actual
peer sessions, asking them to exchange drafts via e-mail in order to prepare their comments for the actual peer review meeting. This allows students to have more in-class time for peer discussion.

Second, the students come to the peer review meeting and work as assigned in groups or dyads to improve their papers. The instructor's role is to closely monitor the students' activity and offer help when needed to the peers who encounter difficulties in their discussion groups. Optionally, and strongly recommended by the literature, during the class session following the peer review, the instructors may ask the students to reflect on their peer interactions in order to identify and explore the benefits and problems that they encountered. This debate is expected to consolidate students' skills and confidence, and to lead to better future peer review experiences.

3.4. Context of the study

The present study was carried out at Iowa State University, in the context of a cross-cultural composition class⁹ (English 105), that I taught in the fall of 2005. In this research project, I focused on the interaction of two NNSEs with two conversational partners each (i.e. a total of 4 dyads) during a peer review session held in the middle of the semester for the rhetorical analysis assignment, which asked students to choose any type of text and write a 1,000-word rhetorical analysis of that text.

⁹ The syllabus for this class focused primarily on teaching types and functions of various arguments through a multimodal approach (i.e. WOVE – writing – oral – visual – electronic). This approach primarily emphasizes the importance of helping students create, recognize and analyze various types of arguments, depending on their medium or channel, whether it is a written argument, a visual text, an electronic or oral presentation of certain information. This multimodal experience aims at preparing students for a diversity of analytical tasks, which vary according to the medium used for the creation of certain messages or arguments.
After the Human Subject Research Compliance Office approved the study, and the students interested in the project agreed to participate by signing the Informed Consent Document (Appendix 1), I developed the design of this research.

3.5. Design of the study

In this research, I conducted a microethnographic case study of two NNSEs interacting with their peers (a NSE and a NNSE) in order to provide a thorough description of how students perceive and project their power relations in their peer discourse. To do this, I employed what Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) define as concurrent mixed methods. Concurrent mixed methodology (presented later on in this chapter) presupposes a primarily interpretative analysis supported by an analytical investigation. The study was composed of three major phases: participants’ selection, data collection and instrument design, and data analysis.

3.6. Participants

The six students who participated in this study were 4 male (2 NNSEs and 2 NSEs) and 2 female peers (a NSE and a NNSE), and they interacted in pairs as follows: Dave (NNSE) formed dyads with Betty (NSE) and Erin (NNSE), and Jordan (NNSE) worked with Ryan (NSE) and Shahbaz (NNSE)\(^{10}\) (see Table 3.1. below). The selection of participants was a complex process given that the previous literature (Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Carson and Nelson, 1996; Nelson and Carson, 1998) has suggested that factors such as age, ethnic background, expertise in the field, and gender, to name a few, may be determinant in the way students perceive themselves or project their power relations during peer interactions. Thus, I attempted to form dyads including NNSEs who interacted with peer partners of similar

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\(^{10}\) At the onset of the study, the participants were asked to propose pseudonyms for identification during the data analysis.
academic profiles and proficiency in English, but different nationality, and linguistic backgrounds. In organizing the dyads, I also took into consideration the gender of the peers that interacted with the 2 NNSEs (i.e. the NSE and NNSE partners were of the same gender). At the time when this study took place, all participants were B-average students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NNSE Name and country of origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>NNSE peer Name and country of origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>NSE peer Name and country of origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dave (Malaysia)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Erin (South Korea/USA)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Betty (USA)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan (South Korea)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Shahbaz (Pakistan)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ryan (USA)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1. Assignment in peer dyads

Dave (NNSE) was a 22-year old male student from Malaysia. As a junior interested in Economics and Political Science at Iowa State University, Dave enrolled in the cross-cultural composition class after having already taken other writing and ESL classes. His rich background in writing had prepared him for English 105. An introvert writer and classmate, Dave took several opportunities to voice out his comments during class sessions; however, most of the time, he would just listen to the instructor and his classmates’ discussions.

Betty (Dave’s NSE female partner) was an 18-year old freshman student in Business. She also had a shy personality and did not like to talk very often during classes, although she sometimes showed her interest in writing and her strong abilities during various conferences with the instructor. When assigned to various groups on different projects, Betty seemed to be more outspoken and felt more comfortable talking to her classmates.
Erin’s (Dave’s NNSE female partner) case is particularly interesting and the reason for taking her into account as a peer was the fact that, although she had lived for 8 years in the US, having an American citizenship, Erin saw herself as an international student with strong ties to her mother country, South Korea. Not only did she side with the other international students, but her peers also perceived her as international. At 19 years of age, Erin was a sophomore in Mathematics, very outspoken and eager to learn more about writing. Although she worked hard, Erin had little confidence in her abilities to write in English, but her papers always proved the contrary.

Jordan (NNSE) came from South Korea. At 25, he was a senior male student enrolled in Computer Science, very interested in the writing course. Jordan was a strong writer, who worked very hard to achieve a high level of proficiency in English, and his abilities in writing also became prominent during the many in-class discussions that he engaged in. Very friendly and sociable, from my initial observations of his participation in class, he seemed to have no problem in working with both NSEs and NNSEs. Before enrolling as senior at Iowa State University, Jordan spent one year in Wisconsin, where he reported having more friends than he had since coming to Ames. In the city-like atmosphere of Ames, Jordan felt more pressured to keep up with classes, and his group of friends narrowed down in time to only a few fellow Koreans.

Ryan (Jordan’s NSE peer) pursued a career in Pre-Journalism and Mass Communication. An US citizen, this 19-year old male freshman showed an open and communicative personality, and he contributed to the class discussions on a regular basis, as well as within group debates.
Shahbaz (Jordan’s NNSE peer) was a 36-year old male from Pakistan. As a sophomore, he pursued a career in Computer Science as Jordan did. Shahbaz was very outspoken during the writing course in both class discussions and group projects, and he always showed a particular interest in the African-American variant of English, similar to the dialect of Punjabi, that he spoke in Pakistan. For him, this seemed to be a way of affiliating his identity and position to a self-standing status, distinguishing himself from the rest of his classmates, be they NSEs or NNSEs.

3.7. Data collection

Given that microethnographic studies require “systematic data collection” from multiple sources (Nelson and Carson, 1998, p. 116), the data collection for this research included three parts: a written survey, the videotaping of the peer interactions, and a semi-structured interview.

3.7.1. The survey

Before the peer review session, I prepared and distributed a take-home survey to the participants of this study (Appendix 2). The survey included two sections: the first asked about students’ personal information, and the second targeted students’ roles as peers. In the second part of the survey, students were asked about their perceptions of other international students and NSEs, about their background information related to peer review experiences, and about their expectations for the peer review sessions.

The second part of the survey contained a total of 29 questions, out of which 13 were Likert-type, with answers ranging from “1 – I totally agree” to “5 – I totally disagree”, while the rest of the 16 questions contained multiple-choice answers, asking the students to opt only for one answer that best applied to their experiences and knowledge.
Overall, two purposes were behind the design of this survey. On the one hand, I intended to record the students’ perceptions of their previous and hypothetical interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs) before exposing them to the actual peer review session investigated in this study. On the other hand, I was also interested in finding out the extent to which students were familiar with this type of activity and whether their expectations for the peer review differed depending on who their interlocutor might be (NSE vs. NNSE).

3.7.2. The videotaping of the peer interactions

Before the targeted peer review session, the students practiced peer review techniques in class, under my guidance, by working on a sample of a rhetorical analysis paper. Then, I asked the participants to exchange drafts by email to prepare in advance their comments and suggestions. For the next class (i.e. the peer review session), I assigned the selected participants in peer dyads, and I asked them to come on the same day of their regular class but in a different location (a smaller conference room). The participants interacted at two different time intervals, one for each NNSE and his two peer partners. The dyads had 30 minutes to exchange their comments and review their papers.

Various pilot tests of sound quality in the regular classroom during previous group work led me to the identification of two major factors (low classroom acoustics and surrounding noise produced by the other peer groups), which prevented me from recording

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11 Although initially I intended to record two peer review sessions for two different assignments, after the interview with the two NNSEs I realized that a new round of recordings would provide altered data because the two participants would have reacted differently and probably in a more controlled way to a new set of peers. Given the information that they learnt through the process of self-analysis that the interview facilitated, the students would have been more aware of their own discourse, distorting the naturalness of their peer behaviors.
12 In preparing their comments, the students had guidelines that they were asked to follow and identify in their peers’ papers, which were designed to help them organize and focus their suggestions on certain aspects specific to the rhetorical analysis assignment (see Appendix 3).
the targeted peer review sessions of the four dyads at the same time and place in the regular classroom. These pilot tests also appeared to lower students’ anxiety level in the presence of the video camera, which led to a comfortable familiarity with the equipment used for the targeted peer review session.

To record the students’ peer interactions, I used a digital video camera (Canon GL2 DV), a tripod (Bolgen), a flat microphone (PZM), and an audio recorder (Marantz); however, due to technical problems during the peer sessions, only audio and video data from the video recording was used in the data analysis.

3.7.3. The interview

Within a week after the peer review session, I met separately with the two NNSEs and interviewed them about the interactions with their peers. The interviewing process was based on an adapted method of stimulated recall used in a similar project by Carson and Nelson (1996). The semi-structured interview (Appendix 4) contained four types of questions asking about: (1) the participants’ background with writing classes, previous peer review experiences, and opinions about NSEs’ vs. NNSEs’ attitudes (e.g. “Did you take any writing classes before?”); (2) students’ affective states (e.g. “How did you feel when you made this comment?”); (3) students’ thinking process (e.g. “What were you thinking at this point?”); and (4) students’ intentions (e.g. “Why did you make this comment?”) (Carson and Nelson, 1996, p. 5).

During the interview, I used a computer to project the clip of the recorded peer review sessions, as well as a flat microphone (PZM) and an audio recorder (Marantz) to capture the interview with the two NNSEs. I started by asking the participants general questions about their background in writing and peer review experiences, then I played on the computer their
peer interaction, stopping the clip after each peer-to-peer exchange and at any other time when I was interested in a particular comment that one of the peers made. Because of the repetitive nature of some questions and to avoid redundancy and a possible negative attitude from the two participants, I sometimes alternated the questions asking for information (e.g. “What were you thinking at this point?”) with questions asking for clarification and/or confirmation (e.g. “Why do you think they are better?” or “So you think he wasn’t right?”). As Carson and Nelson (1996) suggested, “Although this technique might give the impression that the interviewer was asking leading questions, in fact, this strategy seemed necessary to preserve the interviewer’s role of interested listener” (p. 5).

After the interviews, I simply transcribed the conversation with the two participants, and no coding scheme was applied to the interview answers. Then, I utilized this data to analyze students’ perceptions of what happened during their interaction with their peers at the level of their own cognitive processes as well as at the level of perceived attitudes of their peers’ behavior and thoughts.

3.8. Data analysis

The data analysis was organized in four parts: (1) the data transcription; (2) the qualitative analysis of the two NNSEs’ survey and interview answers; (3) the qualitative data analysis of the peers’ interactions which led to the identification of the two taxonomies of the social-interactional strategies and personal stance categories as related to power relations; and (4) the quantitative analysis of the peers’ interactions to determine the frequencies of the social-interactional strategies and personal stance categories.
3.8.1. **Data transcription**

Being the only coder of the four recorded peer review sessions, I transcribed the two NNSEs' interactions with their peers by using an adapted version of Jefferson’s (1978) transcription coding scheme (Appendix 5). The final transcribed data incorporated not only the verbal messages that the students employed during their interactions, but also more subtle features such as shifts in tone and speech rate, non-verbal behaviors, such as laughs, adjustments of voice, pauses, etc., most of which function as contextualization cues for the data analysis (Gumperz, 1982). Although Jefferson (1978) has suggested that pauses should be recorded in tenths of seconds, in this data analysis pauses under 1.0 second were marked as (.), while pauses longer than 1.0 second were marked in tenths of seconds (e.g. 3.5).

3.8.2. **Qualitative analysis of the survey and the interview**

In order to answer the first research question of this study (Research Question 1. Do NNSEs perceive their power relations with their peers differently depending whether their interlocutor is a NSE or a NNSE?), I relied on Carson and Nelson (1996 and 1998), who have indicated that a qualitative analysis of the students' interview and survey answers could lead to the identification of behavioral and attitudinal patterns reflecting different self-positionings within the peer review sessions.

The interpretative analysis of the answers provided by the NNSEs to the questions of the survey and the interview issued topical themes, which served to demonstrate how NNSEs projected themselves in the interaction with their peers and how they viewed their power relations vis-à-vis their conversational partners. For example, when on various occasions during the interview, Jordan (NNSE) repeatedly mentioned that American people do not take
into account what happens around the world, this opinion became an important theme that was used in understanding his reluctance and negative view toward his NSE peer partner.

3.8.3. Qualitative analysis of the peers’ interactions

Following the discourse analysis traditions of interactional sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication (Schiffrin, 1994), the peers’ discourse was holistically analyzed, in an attempt to identify certain patterns of verbal social-interactional behavior (i.e. social-interactional strategies and personal stance categories). These patterns emerged from the recurrent process of reading and re-reading the data, as well as from following the transcripts in parallel with the videotaped interactions (Storch, 2002; Lockhart and Ng, 1995). The non-verbal behavior was also taken into account since it became apparent during the analysis process that it strongly supported the emergence of certain interpretations of the data based on the recurrent use of certain body movements or other non-linguistic cues, such as spatial distance between conversational partners.

To facilitate a systematic analysis, I segmented the data into message units. Based on Gumperz (1986), and Green and Wallat’s (1981) theories, a message unit must be understood as, “the smallest unit of conversational meaning”, identified through the participants’ use of “contextualization cues, including the use of pausing, stress patterns, intonation patterns, changes in volume and speed of delivery, stylistic changes”, etc. (Bloome et al, 2005, p. 19). Message units do not correspond to complete sentences and they are defined from a perlocutionary perspective, i.e. from the perspective of the impact that the participant’s behavior has on the listener (Green and Wallat, 1981; Bloome et al, 2005). For example, the utterance “That’s it” could be identified as a message unit by the pauses that the speaker made before and after saying this statement and based on its conveyed meaning.
After identifying the message units, I grouped them into interactional units, i.e. "series of conversationally tied message units, signaled by prosodic features and nonverbal means more so than the syntax of a message unit" (Bloome et al, 2005, p. 22). Interactional units represent the phases of an event and guide toward a more global look at interaction, at a higher level than the message units.\(^\text{13}\)

In order to answer the second research question (Research Question 2. To what extent does NNSEs' use of social-interactional strategies reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)?), one of the four peer interactions was used as a sample to determine a taxonomy of social-interactional strategies that the participants employed during their conversational exchanges. The inductive approach that I used in determining the social-interactional strategies led to the development of certain categories, emergent from the peers' interaction and informed by previous research (Bloome et al., 2005; Bloome, 1989; Storch, 2002; Villamil and de Guerrero, 1996).

The categories included in this taxonomy were determined based on the content analysis of the message units and the participants' social-interactional intentions as expressed in their interview answers. The accuracy of the qualitative interpretation of a message unit as a certain type of social-interactional strategy was also confirmed by the previous and subsequent message units that the same participant or his/her interlocutor used. For example, the message "I'm really not good at English." uttered by Dave (NNSE) in his interaction with Betty (NSE) was categorized as a "status assignment" strategy because the NNSE's intention, as confirmed by his interview answers, was to suggest that his status was less powerful.

\(^{13}\) For an example of the parsed peer interactions see Appendix 6.
During the analysis of the sample interaction, categories were defined, validated, added, deleted or re-labeled through a process of constant comparison and revision to better illustrate peers’ intentions, leading to the identification of an operational taxonomy presented in Table 3.2. below. Then, I analyzed the other three peer interactions according to this taxonomy.

**Table 3.2. Taxonomy of social-interactional strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social-interactional strategy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples from the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opening</td>
<td>beginning the peer interaction</td>
<td>“Okay.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ending</td>
<td>ending or wrapping up the peer interaction or the interactional unit</td>
<td>“That’s it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactional unit initiation</td>
<td>beginning an interactional unit</td>
<td>“and”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return to a previous unit</td>
<td>going back to the topical content of the previous unit</td>
<td>“how it is.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn yielding</td>
<td>assigning the turn to the interlocutor</td>
<td>“Keep going.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn taking</td>
<td>signaling that the speaker takes the next turn</td>
<td>“yeah.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn bid</td>
<td>attempting to get the conversational turn</td>
<td>“but”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn holder</td>
<td>holding the conversational turn</td>
<td>“uh”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partial start</td>
<td>initiating an unfinished message unit</td>
<td>“also your”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flow</td>
<td>ensuring the interlocutor that he/she may continue his/her turn</td>
<td>“m-hm.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attention orientation</td>
<td>getting the interlocutor’s attention and using deixis to guide his/her attention</td>
<td>“ya like this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>text indication</td>
<td>showing the interlocutor portions of the text that the speaker intends to or has already started talking about</td>
<td>“&lt;&lt;at best it’s an endurance event&gt;&gt;”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building rapport</td>
<td>using formulae for establishing a friendly atmosphere with the interlocutor</td>
<td>“how are ya?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>status assignment</td>
<td>attributing a certain social-interactional status or indicating a hierarchy between the interlocutors</td>
<td>“I’m really not good at English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive evaluation</td>
<td>making positive comments about the interlocutor’s paper or writing achievements</td>
<td>“your transition is really well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative evaluation</td>
<td>making negative comments about the interlocutor’s paper or writing achievements</td>
<td>“I can’t recognize your writing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invalidation</td>
<td>refuting the proposed meaning</td>
<td>“but children suffering is not correct.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advice request</td>
<td>asking for guidance or suggestions with writing</td>
<td>“should I just write it as my thesis statement as to describe how he sent the people there?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advice offer</td>
<td>making suggestions for improving the writing quality</td>
<td>“you can say he’s poor at describing.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social-interactional strategy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples from the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>self-advice</td>
<td>verbalizing a self-addressed advice</td>
<td>“I should try to explain that more.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correction</td>
<td>correcting what the interlocutor said in the previous turn</td>
<td>“East. East Asia.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-correction</td>
<td>Redressing what the speaker said during his/her turn or during the previous turn</td>
<td>“suffers?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem identification</td>
<td>indicating problems or mistakes in the interlocutor’s writing</td>
<td>“you didn’t mention about the tropes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help offer</td>
<td>offering to help the interlocutor with his writing process</td>
<td>“if you have troubles finding some you can email me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledgement</td>
<td>indicating what the interlocutor did in his/her paper without making any evaluative remarks</td>
<td>“so you mentioned the topic of the paper and also your stance in the your text.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justification</td>
<td>explaining and defending personal choices</td>
<td>“I didn’t spent too much time for the grammar and”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarification</td>
<td>explaining in more details aspects of the written text</td>
<td>“this paper.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarification request</td>
<td>asking for a more detailed explanation regarding the interlocutor’s writing</td>
<td>“wh what?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmation</td>
<td>validating meaning of the interlocutor’s message</td>
<td>“yeah.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmation request</td>
<td>asking for validation of meaning of the speaker’s message</td>
<td>“this sentence is your topic of the paper.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>framing</td>
<td>providing information about the writing process in general</td>
<td>“free writing in the last minute doesn’t help me much either so”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background information</td>
<td>providing supplemental information about the background of the texts used for the rhetorical analysis</td>
<td>“this guy is just walking up on steps that are made for ‘im.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side-comment</td>
<td>making comments unrelated to the analysis of the papers, the background of the texts or the writing process</td>
<td>“was it recording right now?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eliciting</td>
<td>asking for information</td>
<td>“anything else?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commanding</td>
<td>giving directions</td>
<td>“don’t touch it.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that each and the same message unit may have had more than one social-interactional function due to the ambiguity of the context or because of the multiple functions that the same message may have had. In the case of ambiguous messages, the functions were clarified through the triangulation of the data analysis with the information provided by the participants during the interviews. For example, the message unit “what kind
of paper you find it?” uttered by Shahbaz (NNSE) may be interpreted as a clarification request, but a global analysis of the peer interaction and the interview answers indicated that this message unit functioned as a status assignment strategy because Shahbaz challenged the authority and peer status of his interlocutor. In cases where the same message seemed to have more than one function, I categorized the message according to its most predominant function determined by the context of the peers’ interaction.

In order to show the extent to which certain strategies from the taxonomy reflected peers’ power, I investigated the relations between recurrent strategies that the NNSEs used in their discourse and their self-perceptions and power relations that they reported in the interview and survey answers. This triangulation of the data led to the identification of certain strategies that could be associated with a more powerful status (i.e. the status of knowledgeable peer), while others indicated a less powerful way of self-positioning within the dyad.

Taking into consideration the definition of power as advantage presented in Chapter 2, strategies such as negative evaluation, invalidation, advice offer, and correction appeared to function as assigning power to the peer who employed them because they placed the speaker at an advantage, i.e. in the position of the expert partner (Vygotsky, 1978). Strategies such as positive evaluation, advice requests and confirmation requests seemed to undermine the power of the speaker because they placed him/her in the position of the less knowledgeable colleague, i.e. the less powerful partner. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that values of powerful or powerless could not be prescribed to certain social-interactional strategies unless the context of the peer interaction was taken into account. This is the reason why I did not label or categorize any of the social-interactions strategies as
powerful or powerless prior to or outside the social-interactional context of the peer sessions in which the two NNSEs engaged.

The same qualitative methods and data analysis procedures used to answer Research Question 2 were also employed in addressing Research Question 3 (Research Question 3. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of personal stance reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs) ?). Previous literature (Ivanič, 1998; Candlin and Hyland, 1999; Ivanič and Camps, 2001) has demonstrated that one way of investigating stance and authorial power is to examine the use of the first person pronoun as related to the authorial identity, i.e. the writers’ way of positioning themselves within the discourse.

To investigate the relation between the use of “I” and power relations in peer review sessions, one of the four dyadic interactions was used as a sample in order to determine a taxonomy of personal stance categories. This taxonomy emerged from the qualitative analysis of the peer’s use of the first person pronoun singular “I”, “me”, and plural “we”, “us”, as well as their respective possessive forms “my”, “our”, in the peer interactions. After identifying the instances when the two NNSEs used various forms of “I” in their discourse, I analyzed how the students employed personal stance in order to establish certain power relations with their peers; i.e. I looked at the social-interactional functions of these occurrences. The students’ power projections in their use of personal stance were determined based on the content analysis of the peer discourse where the first person pronoun was used, and the students’ answers to the survey and interview questions. For example, when Dave said during his interaction with Betty (NSE) “but I’m not sure >whether I’m right I’m I’m< correct”, he mentioned during the interview that his expressed intention was to indicate to his
partner that he was uncertain about his decisions as writer and peer. Therefore, in this case the social-interactional function of “I” was to mark authorial uncertainty.

By analyzing the instances when the peers used “I” and their social-interactional functions within the peer talk, I set up a typology of five personal stance-marking categories. I labeled these categories “the decision maker”, “the uncertain”, “the procedural”, etc. in order to ensure uniformity and ease of reference.

The taxonomy included the following categories:

1. “the self-relegator”

This category indicates that the use of “I” reflects the status of powerless writers. These writers either reject their status or simply recognize a lower-power position in the peer interaction vis-à-vis their conversational peers due to the disadvantage(s) that they attribute to their status as writers and peer partners. Students who use this category have the tendency to relegate their own status to a lower position than their peers’ in order to suggest that they are not competent enough to assume the role of knowledgeable interlocutors.

For example, when during his interaction with Erin (NNSE), Dave (NNSE) said “I really can’t write it [the rhetorical analysis] out.”, he assumed an inferior position by recognizing a disadvantage associated with his status, i.e. that he could not be a good writer. Notice that in the context of the present research, as defined in Chapter 2, a disadvantage is interpreted as lack of power.

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14 Powerless stance should be understood as the writers and peers’ use of “I” to show lack of control over their authorial decisions and peer comments.
2. “the uncertain”

By using this type of personal stance, the peers assume an undecided position that may reside either in the students’ uncertain authorial status or in their intentionally projected uncertain self. Because of the undecided nature of their identity that the peers project by using this stance at the discourse level, “the uncertain” peer has an undefined control or command over his/her decisions.

For example, when Dave (NNSE) said to Betty (NSE), “I’m not sure whether I’m correct”, the speaker projected an undecided position, which placed him between exercising power as writer and assuming a less powerful control over his authorial decisions. This uncertain position was confirmed by Dave in his interview answers.

3. “the decision maker”

In this case, the usage of “I” indicates that the interlocutors who interact during peer review with their partners assume a powerful status that resides in their decisions as writers and thinkers. The decision makers are the ultimate knowledgeable partners, the powerful interlocutors who are capable of defending their choices, as well as providing support to their colleagues.

Utterances such as “I would put audience after purpose.” and “I want to say the use of the words from the author.” in the Dave – Betty interaction indicate that the former peer seemed to be in control of his decisions, as well as assured of the validity of his comments. These instances showed that Dave could be a powerful and reliable peer partner.

4. “the instrumental”

This use of personal stance as identified in utterances, such as “I mean”, “I see”, does not have any specific social-interactional function in establishing power relations between
peers because most of the times it is used as a filler during peer interaction. For this reason, this category is not attributed any powerful or powerless value. Since the use of "I" functions most of the time as a turn holder strategy, it does not imply per se any powerful or powerless value attributive to its user.

5. "the procedural"

This last category suggests that "I" is used in contexts that describe the involvement of the peers in various procedures, unrelated to the writing process. Therefore, when saying, "I have a few papers due next week" or "I could just send you the sentence", Dave did not necessarily establish any power relations with his NNSE partner, and he did not envisage any power status in the discourse; he just announced certain procedures that he was involved in.

Considering this taxonomy of personal stance, several comments need to be taken into account. According to the descriptions of the various stance types, the ones related to the idea of authorial control are: "the self-relegator" (the least powerful), "the uncertain" (indicating an undecided status), and "the decision maker" (the most powerful). Therefore, the instances where the peers used "the instrumental" and "the procedural" stances were eliminated from the data analysis since they do not bear any power-related value. Also, because the peers used various types of stances in the course of the same interaction, I attempted to identify the most recurrent types of personal stance to determine the authorial voice and its power in defining a certain peer partner at the discourse level.

3.8.4. Quantitative analysis of the peers’ interactions

With the belief that a quantitative analysis of the peer interactions would support and reinforce the results determined by the qualitative investigations (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998), I added a frequency count of the social-interactional strategies and the various types
of personal stance employed in the peer interactions. I consider that the numerical transformation of the qualitative data provided a new perspective on the same aspects under investigation.

Table 3.3. below presents an overview of the procedures carried out for the purpose of the present study.

Table 3.3. Research questions and data analysis procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Method of analysis</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Do NNSEs perceive their power relations with their peers differently depending whether their interlocutor is a NSE or a NNSE? | Identification of NNSEs’ self-perceptions and perceived power relations vis-à-vis NSE or NNSE peers | Qualitative                         | 1. Analysis of the two NNSEs’ survey and interview answers  
2. Examination of self-perceptions and power relations toward different peers (NSEs or NNSE) |
| 2. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of social-interactional strategies reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)? | Identification of the NNSEs’ social-interactional strategies which reflect self-perceptions and power relations vis-à-vis NSE or NNSE peers | Qualitative and Quantitative       | 1. Analysis of the four peer interactions  
2. Identification of the taxonomy of social-interactional strategies based on the students’ discourse and power projections reflected in their interview answers  
3. Examination of the relations between patterns of social-interactional strategies and power relations  
4. Frequency count of the social-interactional strategies used by the two NNSEs |
| 3. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of personal stance reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)? | Identification of the NNSEs’ personal stance categories which reflect self-perceptions and power relations vis-à-vis NSE or NNSE peers | Qualitative and Quantitative       | 1. Analysis of the four peer interactions  
2. Identification of the taxonomy of personal stance based on the students’ discourse and power projections reflected in their interview answers  
3. Examination of the relation between recurrent uses of certain personal stance categories and NNSEs’ perceived power relations  
4. Frequency count of the personal stance categories used by the two NNSEs |
3.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the context of this research, as well as the methodology that guided the interpretative and analytical processes. After introducing the participants’ profile, I have described the instruments designed for this study, the data collection procedures, as well as the mixed methodology employed in the data analysis. Then, in order to answer the three research questions, I have explained the concurrent qualitative and quantitative methods and procedures adopted in this thesis in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of multiple perspectives on the same data that might offer a complex and more accurate view on peer sessions as dynamic social phenomena.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1. Overview

I organize this chapter in three sections. In sections 4.2. and 4.3., I include thorough descriptions of the two NNSEs' interactions with their peers. In order to answer the research questions that I proposed to investigate, for each of the two NNSEs (Dave and Jordan) I present the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses at four levels: (1) NNSEs' self-perceptions of power relations with their peers, (2) NNSE's use of social-interactional strategies in the peer discourse, (3) NNSEs' use of personal stance, and (4) NNSEs' body language. In section 4.4., I summarize the results in an attempt to emphasize the connections between the 2 NNSEs' self-perceptions, power relations, and their peer discourse.

Overall, the results indicate that both Dave and Jordan perceived themselves differently during the peer sessions with their partners. At the discourse level, the two NNSEs engaged in different types of interactions that I refer to as interactional models. Dave engaged in a commercial transaction model with the NSE and a sharing model with the NNSE, while Jordan followed the same commercial transaction model with the NSE, and responded to an attack game in his interaction with the NNSE partner. The findings of this study also suggest that Dave used personal stance and body language to reflect different power relations with his two peers, whereas Jordan seemed to constantly use the first person pronoun to establish similar power relations with his partners, although his body language appeared to indicate different power relations towards his two interlocutors.
4.2. Dave – the weak peer

The answers provided by Dave (NNSE from Malaysia) to the survey and interview questions as well as his two peer interactions suggest that he had the tendency to perceive himself as a less-powerful writer and peer. However, subtle differences between his perceptions toward the NSE vs. the NNSE partner seemed to emerge at the discourse level in both his use of specific social-interactional strategies, personal stance, and body language. In the next three sections I present how Dave projected different attitudes and used various social-interactional strategies and first person pronouns to portray himself differently depending on who his interlocutor was, NSE or NNSE.

4.2.1. Dave’s self-perceptions and power relations with his peers

The analyses of the survey and the interview with Dave (NNSE) provided answers to the first research question (Research Question 1. Do NNSEs perceive their power relations with their peers differently depending whether their interlocutor is a NSE or a NNSE?). On the one hand, the survey answers indicated the way Dave perceived himself as a peer in general, based on his previous experiences. On the other hand, the interview revealed how Dave thought of himself and his power relations with his two peers, Betty (NSE) and Erin (NNSE).

As a student, Dave acknowledged having many international friends, most of whom came from Malaysia and Taiwan; however, he could count only 1 or 2 American close colleagues with whom he never met outside school. Therefore, at the onset of the study, Dave saw himself as part of the Asian community, and less of a member of the NSEs’ group.

As a peer partner, Dave showed openness in working with others and expressed his willingness to have his papers reviewed by both NSEs and NNSEs mainly because he lacked perfect control of the English grammar. As reflected in his interview answers, Dave also
believed that he had given useful comments on various occasions to NSEs and NNSEs, and
that probably both groups of peers took his comments into account, even though NNSEs may
have found his remarks a little more useful than NSEs did. However, when asked if he
preferred NNSEs’ comments to those made by NSEs, Dave stated: “I prefer Americans. […]
‘cause they know what’s my problem, I mean grammatically”(T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 3\textsuperscript{15}).

During the interview, Dave talked about his 2 dyadic interactions, and, overall, he
tended to place himself in a less powerful position toward his two peers. In front of Erin (the
NNSE partner), he felt inferior because he saw her as more intelligent and talkative than he
was. In front of Betty, he felt at a disadvantage because she was a NSE. Also, both female
peers had chosen very difficult texts for their papers, and the venture to write a rhetorical
analysis of a song or a poem turned out to be a sign of authorial power.

Dave: I feel bad, how to say, they are brave enough, not brave enough, but they
are, yeah, brave enough to choose poem and songs, which for me is really
tough to analyze ‘cause there are so few words that you can… You must
really interpret and know the meaning behind that. I couldn’t do that, so I told
her [Erin] that you guys are good. (T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 4)

Dave stated that this weak self-image may have sprung from the fact that students are
not entitled to powerful positions in order to make good and useful comments on their
colleagues’ papers. This statement justified his self-imposed low-power status, but also his
membership in a low-power group of students with similar problems:

Dave: Ah, another problem is ‘cause we always think that we are students and we
are not good enough to judge people’s paper. (T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 4)

However, if Dave generally seemed not to trust his power as peer and writer, he also
mentioned some differences between his two peer sessions, which seemed to betray different

\textsuperscript{15} T.I.Dave – Betty, p. 3. is the identification code of the quote that should be read as: Transcript (T.) of the
interview (I.) with Dave about his interaction with Betty on page (p.) 3.
representations of power relations with the NSE and NNSE peers. During the interview, Dave reported that he felt more comfortable when he interacted with Erin (NNSE). He also recognized that she helped him more than Betty (NSE) did. As the following extract from the interview indicates, these attitudes were mainly determined by his NNSE peer to whom he felt more closely related, i.e. more equal:

Researcher: Did you feel more comfortable talking to Erin (NNSE) or to Betty (NSE)?
Dave: Probably more comfortable with Erin 'cause Betty seems like she’s in rush, she wanted to get over it. [...] she gave me that kind of feeling. [...] 'cause she [Erin] really is friendly, yeah, she talks a lot. (T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 7)

In contrast to his comfort with Erin (NNSE), Dave saw Betty (NSE) as distant because of her “rushed” attitude. Dave associated this attitude with his status of international student, which he regarded as a significant disadvantage.

Dave: Yeah, I think at some point they will treat us as international students. [...]maybe if she was in peer review with Americans, she would talk more. (T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 8)

Overall, the results of the survey and interview analyses indicated that in both peer review sessions, Dave tended to perceive himself as less powerful because of two main factors: he saw his status of NNSE in a lower power position, and he attributed his weak writer persona to a lack of grammar command. However, Dave also projected differential relations of power depending on whether his interlocutor was NSE or NNSE. With Erin (NNSE), he confessed that he felt more comfortable, closer, and more equal; whereas with Betty (NSE), he tended to feel more distant and less powerful because, as the majority of all other NSEs peers that he had, she seemed rushed to finish the peer review session.
4.2.2. Dave’s use of social-interactional strategies

As explicated in Chapter 3, I used qualitative and quantitative analyses to answer Research Question 2 (Research Question 2. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of social-interactional strategies reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)?). The quantitative analysis was based on a simple frequency count of the social-interactional strategies as presented in Appendix 7. The frequency count of the strategies that Dave used in the peer sessions with the two partners suggests that there were numerical differences between the two dyads in which he participated. Overall, the Dave – Erin dyad (NNSE-to-NNSE) included more strategies than the Dave – Betty dyad (NNSE-to-NSE) in a longer period of time (34’06” vs. 10’48”). Dave alone contributed with more strategies when talking to Erin (533 message units) than when talking to Betty (242 message units).

However, this quantitative analysis offers a detailed presentation of what the peers did during their interactions only at the surface level. Through the qualitative analysis I could determine the strategies that reflected Dave’s self-perceptions and power relations. Thus, I identified certain patterns of recurrent strategies that appeared as representative for the two interactional models that Dave engaged in, the commercial transaction model with the NSE peer and the sharing model with the NNSE partner. I present each model below by analyzing Dave’s use of the social-interactional strategies to illustrate his different power relations toward his NSE and NNSE peer.

4.2.2.1. Peer review – the commercial transaction model

The dyad of Dave (NNSE) and Betty (NSE) could be described as a commercial transaction. Their overall interaction consisted of two main parts: Betty’s comments on Dave’s paper and Dave’s remarks about Betty’s rhetorical analysis. In each part, the peer who was supposed to
make comments assumed a neutral and distant position, offering few explanations and recommendations. Both Dave and Betty exchanged general remarks about the content of their papers, but they did not address problems of mechanics in writing. Although Betty did some grammar corrections on Dave’s draft, she did not explain them during their interaction. As for Dave, he claimed that he was not good at grammar; therefore, most of his comments were content-based.

Both peers entered the frame of doing peer review, and understood their interaction as a trade; i.e. I give comments, you take them as you wish; you give comments, I take them as I wish. This is suggested by the clearly set roles that the peers seemed to adopt, the giver and the taker. The giver commented on his peer’s paper by using the following pattern: 1. acknowledge the peer’s work or make a positive comment, 2. make a suggestion / an advice offer or identify a problem, 3. justify your advice by reporting it to yourself, and 5. remedy the advice or problem so as to sound less aggressive or offensive. The taker tended to confirm the remarks of his peer partner.

Although this interactional model may seem to engage equal peer partners, the roles of giver and taker are less powerful because this interactional model assumes the distant and non-engaging contribution of peers who are not fully assuming their roles of knowledgeable partners. If we consider the idea that a powerful peer is the one who helps and contributes to his partner’s development as a writer, we may understand how the two roles translate equal but powerless positions, since neither the giver nor the taker seem to genuinely help their peers.

Thus, in her part, Betty acknowledged several times what Dave included in his paper without making any evaluation whether the elements that he included were right or wrong,
sufficient or lacking, e.g. "the controlling idea and supporting evidence is present in each body paragraph="; line 52.\textsuperscript{16}

She also made many succinct positive comments on Dave's achievements in writing, e.g. "your conclusion was clear and it contained good points (1.0)"; line 76. These comments placed Dave in an advantageous, i.e. in a powerful situation, if we consider the definition of power as advantage proposed in Chapter 2, because they recognized Dave as a knowledgeable writer. However, during the interview, Dave admitted that Betty (NSE) was in fact the powerful peer, and he tended to reject the status that Betty implicitly assigned to him through these evaluations.

In the second part of her intervention, Betty briefly identified several problems, making some content-related comments along the above-mentioned pattern: identification of a problem — justification — remedy. When suggesting to Dave that he did not sufficiently address the aspect of fallacies and tropes in his rhetorical analysis, Betty commented:

\begin{quote}
Betty: 64 were there any fallacies or tropes? (identification of a problem)
  65 was the only thing I didn't know (justification of the previous comment)
  66 there might not have been (remedy of the previous comment)
\end{quote}

This example also demonstrates that Betty seemed to implicitly adopt non face-threatening strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1978) that resulted in her distancing from her peer. She did not assume the powerful role of knowledgeable peer since most of the time her suggestions and clarifications were accompanied by message units, such as "[I'm] guessing

\textsuperscript{16} The examples are taken from the transcribed interactions of the peers. For the coding scheme used in the transcription of the interactions, see Appendix 5. The line numbers indicate a message unit and provide information about how far in the interaction a particular message unit was uttered. For example, a message unit indicated by the line number 56 suggests that this message was uttered early in the interaction. To get a better idea of the positioning of these messages, the Dave – Betty dyad had 422 message units, Dave – Erin – 1371, Jordan – Ryan – 958, and Jordan – Shahbaz – 615.
(.); line 43, or “I don’t (. “know””; line 50, reflecting her uncertainties as peer. During the interview, Dave mentioned that he interpreted these comments as his partner’s way of rushing toward the end of the interaction, but not as a lack of power.

During Betty’s intervention, Dave asked for advice only once, and he made only an attempt at justifying his choices. Besides these two instances, Dave assumed the role of taker while listening and confirming Betty’s suggestions, repeatedly saying “m-hm”.

In his turn, Dave had a hard time assuming the status of giver. He hesitated, took longer pauses, and struggled to formulate his suggestions appropriately. After analyzing his interview answers, I could identify three possible factors that may have pressured Dave in assuming his role with such a great difficulty: (1) Dave did not seem to trust his power of making good comments as a peer; (2) he was not very confident in his correct usage of the English language, and (3) the power given by the position of giver had the potential to become face-threatening because Dave mentioned during the interview that, “when I tell people you are wrong is weird. I think it’s rude” (T.I. Dave-Erin, p. 2). When he started providing his comments to Betty (NSE), Dave struggled to utter complete and coherent messages:

Dave: 105 yeah reference
106 uh
107 I mean
108 yeah
109 overall
110 and then (1.5)
111 hm:: (2.0)
112 <when I read it through>=

In the beginning of his intervention, Dave started by making more suggestions and comments than Betty did, but as in her case, he did not go into details. For example, when
suggesting to Betty that she should elaborate more on the author’s rationale in writing the text that she chose to analyze, Dave simply said “I mean >why why< did he or she ((referring to the author of the text that Betty analyzed)) wrote it?”; line 128.

Dave also used similar tactics as Betty. He adopted the same pattern of advice or suggestion – remedy or self-justification, by placing himself and his comments in the light of uncertainty and powerlessness. This is the case when he positively evaluated Betty’s work, e.g. “I really can’t think of any better conclusion than this one”; line 275. Dave also used the neutral tactic of acknowledging the aspects that his partner wrote about in her paper without adding any positive or negative evaluation.

Dave: 266 267 268
you have the context
you have the purpose
you have the audience ()

However, Dave clearly admitted his status as less powerful in his interaction with Betty (NSE) when his peer made appeal to the authority of the instructor to justify her choices in writing. After Dave made the remark that a rhetorical analysis of a song should not include a discussion of the music, Betty defended her writing decision by saying that the instructor had suggested that she should do so, a reason powerful enough to make Dave say “so just ignore (1.0) this one”; line 409, referring to his earlier advice.

Unlike Betty, Dave was a more helpful peer in terms of using certain social-interactional strategies. He provided more suggestions than Betty did (see Appendix 7), although he didn’t recognize his powerful contribution during the interview. He also tried to connect with Betty and break the commercial transaction model on several occasions when he balanced and equalized their positions. For example, to build solidarity with his peer
(Brown and Levinson, 1987), Dave commented that they both shared the same difficulties in using transitions:

Dave: 282 same >same thing as transitions<  
283 ‘cause (.) seems like (.) you start everything from (.) the  
Betty: 284 the first  
Dave: 283 yeah  
Betty: 284 m-hm  
Dave: 285 the transitions between paragraph need to be (.) work on  
Betty: 286 m-hm  
Dave: 287 more  
288 but- it’s quite tough  
289 ‘cause (.)  
290 as you see  
291 [I] also can’t do it (.) =

Although Betty mentioned in the first part of the interaction that Dave had good transitions in his paper, he dismissed this acknowledgement and tried to connect to his peer partner by assigning to themselves the same equal roles of writers, both struggling with the same problems. However, this was one of the few moments when Dave shared an equal status with his peer, a stance of which he indicated he was unaware.

Overall, Dave employed social-interactional strategies to reflect his less powerful status because he did not assume the role of knowledgeable peer. This less powerful status was mainly determined by his perception that the NSE peer will not value his comments as helpful. During the interview, when reviewing his interaction with the NSE peer, Dave’s remarks indicated that his perception of his less powerful role in the interaction with Betty seemed to depend on his status as international student.

Researcher: Do you think that she will make the changes that you suggested?  
Dave: Maybe. I’m really not sure.  
Researcher: why do you say maybe?  
Dave: ‘Cause I think she (Betty) would change it, yeah, depends on the person, maybe she will feel that he’s (Dave) international student, he don’t know that much. (T.I. Dave – Betty, p. 5)
4.2.2.2. Peer review – the sharing model

The Dave – Erin dyad (NNSE-to-NNSE) could be described as the sharing model. This interaction differed not only in format, i.e. who is speaking when to whom and how, but also in terms of the projected power relations within the peer discourse. Although overall we could talk about two parts of this session (one in which Erin discussed Dave’s paper, and the other in which Dave commented on Erin’s writing), this dyad was more dynamic in format and diversity of students’ roles. In terms of the topics discussed, both Dave and Erin commented about the content and organization of their drafts, as well as about the mechanics of certain paragraphs, although many times they were not sure about the validity of their grammar corrections, given their background as non-native speakers.

The interaction between Dave and Erin revealed that both peer partners had the potential to utilize their powers (i.e. their advantages) in a positive way to help and teach each other something useful. Their peer review session also indicated that the partners’ roles were not pre-determined, but flexible and changing. This was also the reason why at any moment during their interaction the peers jumped in and gave suggestions, going back and forth to various parts of their writing, making connections with their experiences or other writing moments, sharing and putting together their knowledge. This interaction presented Dave and Erin as both experts and novices depending on who was acting as the knowledgeable peer at a certain point during their conversational exchanges. Modeling such an interaction, Dave (NNSE) and Erin (NNSE) used a multitude of strategies that revealed different power relations than the ones reflected in the Dave – Betty dyad.

From the beginning, Erin set up the framework of the interaction as a friend-to-friend conversation, which created the perfect environment for Dave to intervene more often and
ask for help during Erin’s presentation of her comments. Erin used a multitude of strategies in commenting on Dave’s paper: she made recommendations (e.g. “I’m not sure if you capitalize time”; line 275), offered advice (e.g. “you have to incorporate your feeling into (.) it (.)”; line 173), marked corrections (e.g. “a comma here”; line 129), acknowledged Dave’s achievements (e.g. “I like <that fact> that you started your introduction with a question =”; line 206), and explained her comments (e.g. “you know that’s a trigger=; line 209). She also encouraged Dave (e.g. “> but so just like< keep on work keep on working on it; line 74), and showed compassion (e.g. “oh! = summary (.) yeah (.) that was hard”; line 108). During Erin’s intervention, Dave perceived her as a trustworthy powerful peer, and, at the same time, her strategies seemed to empower Dave in assuming a more authoritative peer style when making his recommendations on her paper.

In his turn, Dave felt more comfortable talking about his writing and demonstrated that he may be capable of assuming a strong writer position. In his interaction with Erin, Dave acknowledged more easily his struggles and problems as writer (see Appendix 7), but he also advised Erin more than he did with Betty, joked about his low-status position, and even reached the conclusion, more mockingly than seriously, that he should have tried writing about a poem as well. This remark came only toward the end of his interaction with Erin, when he had already proven to himself that he could be helpful to his peer. The following series of examples show Dave as progressing from a less-powerful attitude to a more assertive stance, commenting not only on the content of the papers but also on the procedural steps that writing may imply:
• Dave acknowledged his struggles in writing a simple main idea for one of his paragraphs:

Dave: 223 it took me 15 minutes to write it down
    224 just a sentence
Erin: 225 a-ha (1.0)

• Dave acknowledged the more powerful status of his interlocutors:

Dave: 939 you guys are (.) good (.) ‘cause (.)
Erin: 940 oh no
Dave: 941 I don’t that tried a poem.
    942 I have troubles analyzing an article not to mention a poem

• Dave jokingly assumed a more powerful status when presenting his overall comments on Erin’s paper:

Dave: 1081 I think (.) it would be really [good (.)] essay
Erin: 1082 [‘that’s right’]
    1083 alright
Dave: 1084 ‘>it would be really good<
Erin: 1085 okay
Dave: 1086 ‘cause
    1087 yeah
    1088 “maybe I should choose a poem ((Erin bursts into laughter))

• Dave placed himself on a similar position with his NNSE peer, explaining that they shared the same struggles in using the right transitions:

Dave: 1227 we couldn’t say “more than that” the use of tropes
    1228 use “more than that” is quite is connected with
Erin: 1229 something else.
    1230 right
    1231 so
    1232 yeah
    1232 it’s tough to (.) write

• Dave gained confidence in his own power as a writer toward the end of the interaction with Erin and even offered help to his peer, e.g. “you could send me (.) your essay”; line 1363.
From the above examples, we may notice the changes in Dave’s attitudes of his own position and power relations as the interaction unfolded. Dave grew toward the end of the interaction into a stronger writer, able to make recommendations, explain the function of transitions, and even offer help, taking the writing process as a difficult endeavor not only for him but for his NNSE peer also.

This evolution seemed mainly determined by the fact that Dave adopted the same social-interactional strategies of sharing the good and the bad about his paper as Erin did, providing at the same time longer explanations and justifications for his choices. The following excerpt shows Dave explaining to Erin how she should work more on interpreting the word choices in the text that she chose to analyze for her rhetorical analysis:

Dave: 1003  be more specific
Erin:  1004 m-hm
Dave:  1005 you say about (.) she uses words
Erin:  1006 oh!
     1007 yeah!
     1008 sure ((bursts into laughter))
Dave:  1009 what kind of words does she use?
Erin:  1010 okay
Dave:  1011 maybe
     1012 um
     1013 love and loss in China

After analyzing the message units that Dave uttered during his interactions with the two peers, I concluded that he seemed to use different social-interactional strategies with Betty (NSE) and Erin (NNSE) which reflected different self-perceptions and power relations. When I pointed out to Dave, during the interview, that he asked for Hannah’s assistance but not for Shawna’s help, Dave responded: “yeah, ‘cause Shawna is American.” (T.I. Dave – Hannah, p. 4). His confession reinforced the fact that these differences at the discourse level
may have come primarily from the different power relations that he projected toward his NSE vs. NNSE peer.

On the one hand, Dave confessed feeling more comfortable with Erin (NNSE), i.e. more equal, and at the discourse level this was reflected in the diverse strategies that he used more flexibly to share his experiences, i.e. explanations, clarifications, justifications, positive and negative evaluations. On the other hand, Dave perceived Betty (NSE) as more distant and “cold”, and, when he assisted her with suggestions, he tended to use a constant pattern (acknowledgement – advice – remedy / justification) of commenting on her paper. Moreover, during the interview, Dave confessed feeling intimidated by his peer’s status, which seemed to have contributed to his non-engaging interactional style:

Dave: ‘Cause yeah, maybe although I didn’t feel it but, how to say, and, yeah, I didn’t realize that I feel intimidated in front of Americans. (T.I. Dave – Hannah, p. 6)

From his comment, I could infer that Dave placed himself in a less powerful position toward Betty because of her NSE status, although on several occasions during their interaction he acted as the more knowledgeable peer, i.e. as more powerful than his partner.

4.2.3. Dave’s use of personal stance

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I used qualitative and quantitative methods to answer research question 3 (Research Question 3. To what extent does NNSEs’ use of personal stance reflect power relations in their interactions with different peers (NSEs vs. NNSEs)?). In Dave’s case, I investigated how he used the personal stance in his peer discourse to reflect power relations by examining: (1) how often Dave used certain types of personal stance (as defined in the taxonomy in the Methods Chapter), and (2) what power relations these personal stances reflected at the discourse level.
The results of the frequency count of the instances when Dave used the first personal pronoun, singular or plural, are presented in the table below.

**TABLE 4.1. Frequency of personal stance in Dave’s interactions with his two peer partners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer dyad</th>
<th>The self-relegator</th>
<th>The uncertain</th>
<th>The decision maker</th>
<th>Total number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dave – Betty</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>20 (67%)</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave – Erin</td>
<td>16 (21.33%)</td>
<td>28 (37.34%)</td>
<td>31 (41.33%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.1. suggests, out of a total of 30 instances when Dave used the first person pronoun in his interaction with Betty (NSE), I identified 20 under the category of “the uncertain” personal stance. These occurrences represent 67% of the total number of instances when Dave employed various forms of “I”. Only in 4 instances (13%) he denied his status as writer and peer assuming the stance of “the self-relegator”, and other 6 occurrences (20%) placed Dave in the position of “the decision maker”.

Dave’s use of the first person pronoun became more prominent in his interaction with Erin (NNSE), during which he used a total of 75 instances; i.e. twice the number of instances he used in his conversation with Betty (NSE). In 31 instances (41.33%) he demonstrated that he was a “decision maker”, although he still placed himself in an uncertain position in 28 cases (37.34%) or he rejected his writing abilities in 16 (i.e.21.33 %) of all the instances.

After investigating the quantitative results, I also examined qualitatively the instances when Dave used the first person pronoun in order to grasp the connections between the numerical results and the power relations that Dave reflected in his interview answers. From this analysis, I observed that when Dave used “I”, he referred to himself as less powerful and uncertain of his authorial position in both interactions. However, I also remarked differences
between the two interactions which seemed to connect to Dave’s different attitudes toward his two peers, Betty (NSE) and Erin (NNSE).

In the case of his interaction with Betty, Dave used the first person pronoun to designate his uncertain position as writer. For example, after providing general comments on Betty’s (NSE) paper, Dave used this stance to suggest that his comments should not be taken as valid because he wasn’t sure whether he was right or wrong:

Dave: 157 about the second last paragraph
Betty: 158 m-hm
Dave: 159 you mentioned about the (1.5) >the mu the music<
Betty: 160 m-hm
Dave: 161 but (1.0)
162 seems like (.) this is a rhetorical analysis
Betty: 163 m-hm =
164 = to me (.)
165 but I’m not sure >whether I’m right I’m I’m< correct

On a few occasions he even negated his role of efficient writer or he just placed himself in an inferior position by recognizing the merits of his interlocutor, e.g. “I really can’t think of (.) any better (.) conclusion than this one”; line 275. Still, Dave also assumed the powerful role of the “decision maker” in a few instances, indicating that he had the potential to aspire to a more powerful status, despite being a NNSE. The following example shows Dave giving specific suggestions on how Betty could improve the organization of her main ideas by changing the order of the paragraphs:

Dave: 334 if you could move audience (.)
335 up- the organization
336 and you could sw switch (.) more this
Betty: 337 okay
Dave: 338 yeah.
339 after the purpose (.) ((S writes down))
340 li- like me (.)
341 >I wou
342 I would do<
I would put audience after purpose."

In the case of Dave’s interaction with Erin (NNSE), he also used “I” in order to suggest that he assumed the role of “decision maker”. From the more tentative and uncertain peer when talking to Betty, Dave became more assertive about his intentions as a writer; he proved more confident and projected a more powerful stance, although many times he still hesitated and doubted his authorial control. For example, as a decision maker, Dave shared with Erin his intentions to clarify his sentence about word choice, e.g. “I want to say the use of the words from the author”; line 633. As an “undecided” writer, he seemed to look for help to expand his rhetorical analysis. Such is the case when Dave explained to Erin that he did not explore enough the concept of pathos in his analysis, saying that, “cause I’m not quite sure about pathos”; line 580. On a few occasions he even acknowledged a lower power status because he was not able to write a good paper, e.g. “and I really can’t write it out”; line 55.

Overall, Dave perceived himself as less powerful toward his NSE and NNSE peers, and projected his authorial presence in the peer discourse under the image of an “uncertain” writer. However, there were also some differences between the ways Dave referred to himself when talking to Betty (NSE) vs. when talking to Erin (NNSE). Dave assumed more often his role of “uncertain” writer vis-à-vis his NSE peer, as opposed to his stronger authorial position when he interacted with the NNSE partner.

4.2.4. Dave’s body language and power relations

Although at the beginning of this study I did not target an analysis of the peers’ body language, during the process of data analysis it became apparent that the body positions adopted by the interlocutors and the ways the two NNSEs made use of the physical space
seemed to reflect and reinforce their power relations and self-perceptions as well as their peer discourse. As Tannen (1994) has suggested, different body postures are likely to reveal different degrees of conversational involvement and self-projections.

While investigating Dave’s interaction with his peers, I observed that during the two peer sessions Dave sat next to his partners; however, the way he oriented his body toward them and physically responded to their comments revealed a strong connection between his perceptions, verbal messages, and non-verbal cues. In his interaction with Betty (NSE), Dave started at a distance of approximately one and a half feet from his partner, both looking at their papers. As the interaction progressed, the two peers approached one another almost touching their elbows. However, the reduction of the space distance and their body positions (with arms resting on the desk) were primarily determined by their need to follow their comments on the printed draft. Their fixed body orientation, i.e. elbow-to-elbow facing the table, did not permit them to move around and look at each other very easily.

That Betty (NSE) tended to be a more powerful peer in the physical space and Dave accepted his status as less powerful was suggested by the differences in body statures and eye contact. When Betty provided her comments, she had a vertical position, looking taller than Dave who bent over his paper and avoided eye contact except for the moments when she looked at him for confirmation. As suggested in Figure 4.1. below, there were also significant differences between the phase when Betty offered her comments and the stage when Dave talked, differences directly related to the peers’ assumed power relations.
As Figure 4.1 indicates, Dave tended to equalize Betty in posture as well as frequency of eye contact when he offered his comments to his peer partner. As the interaction continued and Dave gained more confidence talking, he also grew more comfortable with physically getting engaged with his partner. However, even during his turn, Dave also had moments when he regained the first posture when Betty talked to him. This indicates that his status might have been a progressive struggle between gaining control or giving in the space between him and his partner.

As for his interaction with Erin, Dave had a similar behavior. For the most part of the peer session, he did not keep a steady eye contact with his peer unless she insistently looked at him to get some sign of validation for her comments. Whenever Dave explained or justified his decisions, he tended to look at his paper rather than confronting his peer. Given their physical characteristics, i.e. both peers were of equal height, they kept their body postures at the same level, and the two conversational partners left more room between them, which allowed for more ample gestures. The atmosphere between the two NNSEs was also less formal and tense. This determined Dave to smile more often showing that, as he declared in the interview, he seemed more comfortable talking about the papers and offering comments.
Comparing the two interactions, I concluded that Dave showed a more submissive attitude by not consistently looking at his two peers when providing information. His stiffer position in the interaction with Betty (NSE) as opposed to the more flexible body posture toward Erin (NNSE) also indicated that Dave felt differently toward his two peers, i.e. closer and more comfortable with Erin and more distant to Betty.

4.3. Jordan – the strong peer

The answers that Jordan (NNSE from South Korea) provided to the survey and interview questions offered answers on how this NNSE perceived his power relations and projected them at the discourse level. As I will demonstrate in the next four sections, Jordan seemed to perceive himself as a strong peer and writer, and these self-perceptions seemed to emerge from his use of certain social-interactional strategies, personal stance, and body language as well. However, as in Dave’s case, subtle differences seemed to influence the way he projected his authorial power toward different peers, Ryan (NSE) and Shahbaz (NNSE).

4.3.1 Jordan’s self-perceptions and power relations with his peers

In general, Jordan placed himself in the position of a strong writer and this perception seemed to be determined by two main factors: (1) Jordan’s academic status of senior student, and (2) his strengths in writing. During the interview, Jordan declared that he always had to prove himself strong because he understood school as a competition:

Jordan: Even though I’m not native-speaker, so that’s why I’m here – to compete.
(T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 18)

As a Korean student, Jordan socialized most of the time with other co-nationals, but he also met once a month with various American friends, showing no preference for either of the groups.
Jordan: [...] you know, American is like - just same friends like international and Korean. And I have some good relationships with American also, but in here, I also did not spend too much time to hang out with American, even international student, because here a lot of Koreans I spend a lot of time to my, to study my major. (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 7)

However, during the interview Jordan talked about himself as belonging to a distinct community than the Americans’. From his previous writing classes, he had created almost a stereotypical profile for his American peers. When describing them, Jordan commented that they were “[…] like kind of lazy people – lazy students, like freshmen.” (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 4) Moreover, Jordan thought that his American peers tended to be ignorant vis-à-vis various problems that happened outside the US. Despite these negative perceptions, Jordan also positively evaluated the Americans in the sense that in general he expected them to be better peers than NNSEs in providing appropriate peer feedback:

Jordan: but I’m not saying in general, um, American is gonna be better for the peer review. In general. […] you know, it’s native speaker. […] It’s, they’re gonna be more comfortable with English. (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 4)

Although Jordan mentioned that the quality of his previous peer review sessions was directly related to the person that he interacted with, no matter their nationality or ethnicity, he described his previous American peers as being less helpful than his international colleagues:

Jordan: it depends on the person […] some American didn’t really work during the class. […] they didn’t concentrate really […] but some international students really did their job and they comment here like organization, clear expression […] better than American. (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 6) […] I think American is not really good at about common sense, common knowledge. […] they’re not just interested about the news all over the world, even care only about their country. (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 8)

Therefore, at the beginning of this study, Jordan had very clear-cut expectations from his peers.
When specifically asked about his two peers (Ryan and Shahbaz), Jordan acknowledged that his attitudes toward them were different. During the interactions, he seemed to have envisaged his role differently depending on who his conversational partner was, NSE or NNSE. In the case of the Jordan-Ryan dyad (NSE-to-NSE), Jordan thought of himself as a not-so-useful peer because he could not offer many good (i.e. negative) comments for Ryan's paper. On the one hand, he did not understand Ryan's paper very well, and he did not want to argue with him on any of the aspects of the paper due to his lack of interest and Ryan's young age. On the other hand, Jordan acknowledged that Ryan's paper was well-organized, and this was the reason why he did not have many comments. When watching his interaction with Ryan on the computer, Jordan commented:

Jordan: I was not helpful really for him. […] I’m kind of lazy, so I don’t want. We are gonna argue so much to me, blah blah blah. If I say you are wrong, so he gonna ask my argument is right even though I think it’s not really so or something. (T.I. Jordan - Ryan, p. 11) […] I’m just tired with just young, young students. If I say you’re wrong, he’s gonna argue very much. (T.I. Jordan - Ryan, p. 13)

Although Jordan recognized that Ryan gave some useful comments, for him these were only “grammar stuff” (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 10) that he could have corrected himself, had he had more time. Jordan also started his interaction with Ryan with the assumption that he was right, and nothing from what Ryan could have commented would actually help him. However, when he compared his two peers, Ryan (NSE) and Shahbaz (NNSE), Jordan tended to give more credibility to Ryan’s comments saying that the NSE focused more on his paper, although from the analysis of the two interactions the two peers seemed almost equal in the amount of help that they offered to their NNSE partner.
In the Jordan-Shahbaz dyad, Jordan did not want to respond back to his peer’s challenges because his power relations with his partner had already been established on previous occasions, outside the writing class. Jordan knew Shahbaz from the Computer Science (Comp Sci) class that they had taken the previous semester. At the beginning, the social image that Shahbaz projected for himself emanated power because, in Jordan’s eyes, his peer looked like “a programmer”, asked questions to the instructor during classes, and looked older. At the end of the same course, Jordan found out that Shahbaz failed the class; therefore, his peer had no power.

Jordan: actually first time I thought he’s really good. [...] I think, oh! He has some experience outside of the society. [...] I won him during the class Comp Sci class. [...] now we are fighting because we are like friends. (T.I. Jordan – Shahbaz, p. 8)

The reason why Jordan refused to fully use his authorial power when helping Shahbaz appears to be the latter’s reactions to his comments. Knowing that his peer was normally a very talkative person, Jordan noticed that during the interaction Shahbaz changed, and this made him avoid any positive or negative comments, providing instead what he called “partitive comments” (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 14), i.e. acknowledgements.

Jordan: [...] he’s like quiet and just like this. [...] maybe he’s like thinking I knew, I knew. [...] like he didn’t say anything. Like just nod his head. [...] I didn’t wanna say anything more. [...] look at his face – like scared. (T.I. Jordan – Shahbaz, p. 5)

Thus, in answering the first research question asking whether Jordan perceived himself differently depending on his peers, the NSE or the NNSE, I concluded from the analyses of his answers to the survey and interview questions that in both interactions he thought of himself as stronger than his two interlocutors. Still, in the case of his interaction with Ryan (NSE) he felt a little less powerful because he did not give enough helpful
comments. In Shahbaz’s (NNSE) case, Jordan intentionally did not want to prove himself more powerful because peer review was “not like real competition” (T.I. Jordan – Shahbaz, p. 10). At the discourse level, as we will see in the next sections, his projected power relations matched his self-perceptions of powerful writer and peer, and differences between the two peer discourses varied depending on his partner, NSE or NNSE.

4.3.2. Jordan’s use of social-interactional strategies

To answer the second research question, which inquired about the extent to which perceived power relations are reflected in the social-interactional strategies that a NNSE, in this case Jordan, uses, I conducted similar analyses as in the case of Dave’s interactions with his two peers. The quantitative analysis of the two interactions with Ryan (NSE) and Shahbaz (NNSE) issued differential results which are incorporated in Appendix 8.

The frequency count of the message units per total in the case of Jordan’s interaction with Ryan (NSE) suggests that the two peers used more social-interactional strategies than Jordan and Shahbaz during their peer review session. However, the time Jordan took to interact with both partners does not suggest significant differences between the two dyads in which he participated (22’14” vs. 17’00”). Moreover, I observed that Jordan tended to use approximately as many strategies in both peer interactions (343 message units with Ryan and 320 message units with Shahbaz).

In order to show how certain social-interactional strategies actually related to Jordan’s power relations, I conducted the qualitative analysis which revealed recurrent social-interactional strategies in two distinctive types of interaction, the commercial transaction model and the attack game. Each interactional model included recurrent patterns which seemed to reflect the same idea, i.e. Jordan appeared to adopt a powerful discourse
within his dyads, but his use of certain social-interactional strategies suggested different representational power relations that he mentioned when answering the interview and survey questions. I present the two models and Jordan’s social-interactional strategies in the two next sections.

4.3.2.1. Peer review – the commercial transaction model

The Jordan – Ryan dyad (NNSE-to-NSE) shared similar traits to Betty and Dave’s interaction. The model of the give-and-take trade had similar pre-set roles; it projected a distant and non-engaging atmosphere between the two conversational partners and relied on the exchanges of neutral social-interactional strategies, such as acknowledgments, advice offers/problem identifications – remedial strategies. In terms of the subjects of discussion addressed by the two peers, Ryan pointed out some grammar mistakes on few occasions without explaining why he suggested certain changes, but Jordan stated that he did not focus on grammar and avoided any suggestion regarding writing mechanics. In fact, most of their comments were general considerations about the content of their drafts (i.e. ideas, examples, and organization of the paper).

Jordan and Ryan’s interaction consisted of five parts: Ryan’s comments on Jordan’s paper, Jordan’s intervention about Ryan’s rhetorical analysis, Ryan and Jordan’s comments about the background of their texts, and Ryan’s explanation of his beliefs about natural disasters (topic unrelated to the peers’ papers). The first two parts of their interaction fit with the commercial transaction model, while the last three sections are just ways of filling up the time left of the peer encounter, although during these free discussions both Ryan and Jordan took some opportunities to make helpful suggestions for their papers.
In his part, Ryan (NSE) followed a linear pattern of commenting on Jordan’s paper, without many explanations or details. His comments functioned as brief suggestions about expanding the rhetorical analysis (e.g. “talking about the style a little bit (.) [more]”; line 13), acknowledgements (e.g. “you talked about the author”; line 49), justifications and status-related comments, in which Ryan remedied the power of his advice by adding lower-power comments, as suggested in the following example:

Ryan: 156 you used the word “appeals” a lot (problem identification)  
157 and I wasn’t sure exactly what context were you using it in (1.0) (justification)  
158 I don’t know (status assignment)  

During his peer contribution, Jordan interrupted Ryan several times to justify the problems with his paper (see Appendix 8). Jordan’s excuses were that he did not have time enough to prepare for the peer session and that Ryan did not read his original text. Note that these excuses were not oriented toward his status as writer.

If Ryan (NSE) took his role of giver by balancing brief suggestions with acknowledgements and self-justifications, when he gave positive comments, Jordan discredited them, suggesting that Ryan’s comments may have been understood as polite and remedial strategies instead of actual appreciations of Jordan’s achievements. This is the case of Ryan’s comment about Jordan’s use of transitions:

Ryan: 131 your transition is really well  
132 = I think *I found one where I thought*  
133 um (2.5)  
134 that I really liked *how you [put the transition]*  
Jordan: 135 [actually] I didn’t spent (.) ((laughs)) much time for the transition  
Ryan: 136 m::  
Jordan: 137 yeah  
Ryan: 138 well I just thought that your paragraph is linked up
When reviewing this segment, Jordan mentioned during the interview that he knew his transitions needed work, but he did not share this thought with Ryan because he did not want to argue with him.

In his turn, Jordan used for the most part similar strategies to comment on Ryan’s paper. He acknowledged many times what his partner included in his rhetorical analysis without making evaluations, e.g. “you mentioned about the topic of the paper and (. ) also your stance”; line 201. When signaling problems with the content of Ryan’s paper, Jordan made vague comments and remediated them in two ways: (1) he explained that he might not have understood Ryan’s paper because he hadn’t read his original text, and (2) he stated that their papers were similar; therefore, lacking at the same points. For example, when providing his general comments on Ryan’s paper, Jordan said:

Jordan: 293 good organization. (1.0)  
294 each body paragraph (. )  
295 and also same thing (1.0)  
296 but some of them I didn’t understand (. )  
297 because I didn’t read your original text

Jordan seemed to use this tactic of equalizing roles not only as a way of saying that the two peers were equal partners, but also to suggest that Jordan adopted the same strategies as Ryan in this trade-like interaction. Their verbal exchanges seemed to form a partnership in which both peers shared the same tacit roles of giver and taker.

Breaking the pattern of the give-and-take trade, Jordan also took the opportunity to challenge Ryan and confirm his stereotypical belief about the Americans’ profile; i.e. that they are ignorant about issues that are not related to their country. Since Jordan had finished his comments on Ryan’s paper, in the remaining time he decided to put his peer’s power to
the test by asking him whether he knew about the speech that Jordan analyzed in his rhetorical analysis:

Jordan: 376 have you ever read the speech
Ryan: 377 um
378 no I haven’t
379 I (. ) I haven’t read the- the speech
380 [and I]
Jordan: 381 [it’s]
Ryan: 382 I’ve never even (. ) heard of this person
383 [°I think≥]
Jordan: 384 [it’s like]
385 kind of famous
Ryan: 386 oh
Jordan: 387 all over the world

and Ryan’s comments gave Jordan the opportunity to validate his belief about American peers once again. In fact, during the interview, Jordan expressed his negative perceptions of his American peers and his feeling of being considered an outsider, by saying “Actually USA is number one in the world. It’s true, but they [the American people] have to focus on the other international” (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 17). This view seemed to justify his test and proved Jordan’s more powerful status given by the vast knowledge that he possessed in comparison with his NSE peer.

During the last three parts of their interaction, the two peers discussed about the background of the texts they chose for their rhetorical papers just to use the 30-minute interval allocated to their interaction. That the peers tacitly played the trade game is demonstrated by Jordan and Ryan’s comments toward the end of their peer review session:

Jordan: 746 should we keep going? ((Ryan laughs))
747 we’re almost (. ) done.
748 right?
Ryan: 749 yeah.
750 I (. )
751 I’m done
When reviewing his interaction with Ryan, Jordan commented: “we are playing together […] yeah. It’s time consuming I mean” (T.I. Jordan – Ryan, p. 19), recognizing that his conversation with his NSE peer was a game of roles in which they accomplished their duties of peers, without actually assuming powerful roles of helpful colleagues.

4.3.2.2. Peer review – the attack game

The Jordan – Shahbaz (NNSE-to-NNSE) dyad could be described as an attack game. As opposed to the commercial transaction model, this type of interaction seemed to be based on the fact that the NNSE peer (Shahbaz) attacked the other NNSE partner (Jordan). To fully understand the social-interactional strategies that Jordan (NNSE) used in this type of interaction, three factors may be taken into account. First, when challenged during the interaction by his NNSE peer, Jordan did use more powerful strategies and fought back although during the interview Jordan confessed that he was the “lazy peer” who did not want to respond to his partner’s challenges. Second, Jordan knew from his reading of Shahbaz’s paper, that his partner’s rhetorical analysis had major problems so he was supposed to show his peer these problems without hurting the other’s feelings. Third, Jordan mentioned during the interview that his power relations with Shahbaz had been already established on previous encounters, especially on the occasion of their common Computer Science class, when Jordan passed the final exam and Shahbaz failed it. Therefore, both peers came to the review meeting as friends as well as competitors.

At the beginning of their interaction, Jordan started his comments by adopting some of the neutral strategies of the give-and-take trade model: advice/problem identification –
self-justification — remedy, providing general comments about the content of Shahbaz’s paper.

Jordan: 10 I didn’t understand that much [your paper] ((S laughs))
11 you know
12 because (.) also (.) I didn’t read your original text (.)
13 but (1.0)
14 it’s not quite sure

However, Shahbaz changed this trade-like pattern, challenging Jordan’s status of knowledgeable peer, while asking him if his paper was indeed a rhetorical analysis:

Shahbaz: 70 what kind of paper you find it? (.)
71 it’s a really rhetorical paper?
72 a rhetorical analysis?

During the interview, Jordan reported that he was perfectly aware of the attack, but did not say anything overtly and entered this game of power, referring to the text and justifying his authorial decisions. When asked what he was thinking at this point in their interaction, Jordan commented as if addressing to Shahbaz:

Jordan: Are you stupid? How can you? […] what is wrong with you? […] why are you asking me like rhetorical questions to me? […] but I didn’t express like anything. […] like tired. Tired of argue. (T.I. Jordan - Shahbaz, p. 3)

During the peer review, after Jordan clarified why he believed Shahbaz’s paper was a rhetorical analysis, he regained control over his turn of giver, and made a series of brief suggestions about his peer’s undeveloped analysis without explaining or justifying his remarks.

Jordan: 108 what about word choice? (.)
109 if you put some body (.) paragraph (.)
110 <you need more (.) word> (.)
111 maybe (.)
112 ( )
113 so you should mention about the tropes and scheme
Shahbaz: 114 okay =
Jordan: 115 = about language style

After identifying his partner’s weaknesses (wrong identification of his type of paper), Shahbaz started his comments on Jordan’s rhetorical analysis by changing his tone and style. His recommendations, uttered with a preacher-like voice, were set within a framework of general rules regarding good writing that Shahbaz knew:

Shahbaz: 238 here’s a rule (.)
239 whenever you give the papers the teachers or the TAs or whatever I mean (1.0)
240 the language is important.

However, Jordan’s powerful character as peer and writer emerged when he started interrupting his peer to justify and explain his choices, defending his paper as well as his evaluations. In the example below, Jordan advocated the importance of developing good content for a rhetorical analysis, whereas Shahbaz emphasized the importance of writing correct sentences.

Shahbaz: 283 they ((the instructors)) give priority to the- mistakes
grammatically structurally and whatever =
Jordan: 285 = yeah yeah
even though
287 even though
288 [my] opinion is like this.
even though you write like perfect grammar =
Shahbaz: 290 [okay]
291 = yeah
Jordan: 292 if you don’t have like the correct contents =

Whenever Shabaz tried to make a correction or give advice, Jordan jumped in to invalidate his comments and justify his decisions. The only powerful strategy that Shahbaz used to his advantage was to remind his colleague that roles in the peer review sessions are set (note the commercial transaction model), and Jordan’s turn had passed.
Shahbaz: 336 it’s done.
337 now I’m talking about [your paper.]
Jordan: 338 [okay okay]
Shahbaz: 339 leave it (.) ((Jordan and Shahbaz start laughing))
340 you are done. (1.0)

Shahbaz controlled the rest of the interaction by trying to equalize his role as a peer with Jordan’s powerful status. Given the good content of Jordan’s paper, Shahbaz acknowledged his peer’s power as writer, but he also placed himself at the same level with his partner, stating that his paper had no “grammatically mistakes”; line 173. In the meantime, Jordan still maintained his powerful persona, interrupting to give explanations and invalidating Shahbaz’s suggestions while his partner gave in, since he had no other powerful tool to control or counter-attack Jordan’s comments. For example, when suggesting a correction of the forms “suffer” vs. “suffering”, Shahbaz had to accept Jordan’s version since he had no sound explanation for the form that he proposed.

Shahbaz: 526 = *suffers?* (1.5)
Jordan: 527 you-
528 you said children suffering?
Shahbaz: 529 yeah
530 I think so (2.0)
Jordan: 531 I mean
532 children suffering is right
533 but *children suffering is not correct* (1.0)
Shahbaz: 534 okay (1.0)

As demonstrated so far, I observed that, although Jordan declared during the interview that he perceived himself as a powerful and self-sufficient writer but at the same time “lazy” and not very helpful; at the discourse level, he used different strategies when he interacted with his two peers. When he shared comments with Ryan (NSE), he used brief remarks, and a neutral pattern consisting of positive evaluations/acknowledgements – justifications and/or remedial comments. In the case of his interaction with Shahbaz, Jordan
seemed more engaged and used more justifications, clarifications, and invalidations which reflected both a more powerful but also a more friendly relationship to his NNSE peer. The differences in his use of social-interactional strategies seemed to be directly related to the fact that Ryan was a NSE and Shahbaz was a NNSE. While describing and evaluating his interaction with Shahbaz, Jordan stated during the interview that:

Jordan: now we are fighting because we are like friends. If he [Shahbaz] was like Ryan or something not really hang out American I don’t do that like this. (T. I. Jordan – Shahbaz, p. 10)

This comment confirmed again Jordan’s belief that the American peers formed a separate group than his own circle of international friends. While he adopted a distant attitude toward NSE partners, Jordan seemed to feel equal and consider as friend any international person that he had met and talked to at least once on a previous occasion. As I indicated in this section, these perceptions were also the ones revealed by his use of social-interactional strategies.

4.3.3. Jordan’s use of personal stance

To determine whether Jordan’s use of personal stance reflected different power relations with his two peers (NNSE and NSE), first, I identified the instances where he used various forms of “I” in the peer discourse. Then, I interpreted these instances in the context of Jordan’s interaction with the two peers, and I validated them based on his answers to the interview questions which reflected his self-perceptions and power relations toward his two peers.

The quantitative analysis of Jordan’s use of personal stance issued similar results for both interactions, suggesting that Jordan used consistently the same type of stance (“the decision maker”) in most of the cases when he used “I” to refer to himself as writer or peer. These results are summarized in Table 4.2. below.
As indicated in Table 4.2., Jordan used the first person pronoun in 17 instances in his interaction with Ryan (NSE), instances that I identified under the category of “the decision maker”. These occurrences accounted for 81% of the total number of “I” forms that he employed. Jordan also used few instances that fell under the categories of “the self-relegator” stance (1 instance) and “the uncertain” stance (3 occurrences).

In his interaction with Shahbaz, Jordan employed the first person pronoun more often than in his interaction with Ryan (34 vs. 21 occurrences), and in 29 of these instances (85.3% of the total), he seemed to be the “decision maker”, in explaining and defending his remarks and comments toward his NNSE peer. Jordan also seemed to use the “I” in order to signal his uncertainties (3 instances) and to reject his role of powerful peer and writer in only two situations.

If the quantitative analysis indicated that in both interactions, Jordan used the first person pronoun to designate himself as a “decision maker”, i.e. a knowledgeable peer, the qualitative analysis also indicated that he assumed a more powerful stance toward both of his peers, and this discoursal use of “I” seemed to match Jordan’s self-perceptions that he mentioned during the interview.

In both interactions, Jordan tended to refer to himself as the opinion-holder, the peer who was certain of his writing decisions, the writer who made valid comments. For example,
when he commented on Ryan’s paper, Jordan tried to indicate that his NSE peer did not have a clear stance in his thesis statement:

Jordan: 224 actually the writer mentioned about (.) it’s not really climbing
Ryan: 225 yeah
Jordan: 226 it’s not really climbing
227 but (.) sh- she’s saying (.)
228 it is (1.5) like really climbing
Ryan: 229 huh?
Jordan: 230 actually I don’t understand your (.) stance
Ryan: 231 okay. =

In the example above, the use of “I” did not seem to indicate that Jordan was less powerful; on the contrary, as Jordan pointed out during the interview, he tried to let Ryan know that his peer had a problem with the thesis statement. In this case, Jordan’s comment reflected the decision of a knowledgeable peer.

In his interaction with Shahbaz, Jordan was even more assertive about his decisions as writer and peer because of the adversarial talk in which Shahbaz (NNSE) seemed to have engaged him. For example, when asked whether Shahbaz’s paper was indeed a rhetorical analysis, Jordan firmly justified that his peer’s draft was a rhetorical paper judging by its introduction.

Jordan: 325 [>you you< were] supposed to write a rhetorical not your opinion.
326 you know?
327 actually you mentioned in your introduction your rhetorical.
328 I don’t care about your body.
329 actually it’s not- enough.
Shahbaz: 330 it’s not =
Jordan: 331 = so
332 I
Shahbaz: 333 yeah
Jordan: 334 I said

As the example above seems to demonstrate, when Jordan felt attacked by his NNSE peer, he answered back with more open remarks, such as “I don’t care about your body
Thus, in answering the third research question, from both the qualitative and the quantitative analyses, I observed that Jordan (NNSE) did not use personal stance to place himself differently vis-à-vis Ryan (NSE) and Shahbaz (NNSE). In both interactions he seemed to project a powerful “I” at the discourse level, and this discoursal self seemed to match the perceptions that Jordan reflected in his interview answers, i.e. his self-image as a strong writer. Although Jordan also thought of himself as a less powerful peer for Ryan (NSE), and an intentionally more reserved partner in his interaction with Shahbaz (NNSE), in both peer sessions he seemed to unconsciously project one powerful voice emerging from his use of “I”.

4.3.4. Jordan’s body language and power relations

As in Dave’s case, the way in which Jordan made use of the physical space between himself and the two peers seemed to reinforce his self-perceptions and peer discourse. Although for most of the time Jordan adopted a higher body posture than his two peers, I was able to identify slight changes in his body behavior that translated different power relations toward his two peers. Despite the fact that his partners were shorter than him, Jordan lowered his body stature in his interaction with Ryan (NSE), and Shahbaz (NNSE) reached the same body height as Jordan when the former started presenting his comments.

In his interaction with Ryan (NSE), the changes in the physical space seemed to be determined by Jordan’s movements. Starting at a higher level than his peer, Jordan progressively lowered his body at the same level of his peer as the latter conversed about
various topics. Taking into account Jordan’s comments during the interview, this body position appeared to translate a relaxed, distant and uninterested posture.

When commenting on each other’s papers, the two peers also seemed aware of their own spaces and whenever they referred to their drafts, they kept their papers in front of themselves without sharing them in the middle space. However, whereas Ryan detached himself from the table in order to use gestures during his explanations, Jordan tended to maintain contact with the desk, arms resting in front of him, and looking to the side, in the direction of his peer (see Figure 4.2.).

Figure 4.2. Jordan’s body language while listening to Ryan

In the case of his interaction with Shahbaz (NNSE), Jordan seemed to feel more comfortable with moving in the space that separated him from the NNSE peer. Although at the beginning he seemed taller than Shahbaz, as the interaction unfolded, Shahbaz reduced the difference, equalizing Jordan. During the attack game, Shahbaz also seemed to delineate a wider space within his arms’ reach. However, Jordan also appeared to regain his part of the physical space by crossing his arms with his peer’s, as shown in Figure 4.3.
Another significant characteristic specific to their interaction seemed to be the use of smile. If verbally Shahbaz and Jordan tried to demonstrate who was right and knew more, both peers mitigated their conflict by smiling. As Jordan declared during the interview, their fight was non-threatening and functioned as a game primarily because they felt close to each other. When reviewing his interaction with Shahbaz, Jordan commented that: “now we are like enjoying the fighting. [...] you see in my smile” (T.I. Jordan – Shahbaz, p. 10).

Overall, although Jordan projected his image as more powerful in the way he positioned his body during the two interactions, finer details in his behavior and in his peers’ reactions seemed to indicate that Jordan did not present himself similarly in both sessions. He looked and behaved as more distant toward Ryan (NSE), and he continuously negotiated and defended his more powerful status with Shahbaz (NNSE). These differences appear to have been mainly determined by Jordan’s self-perceptions, the discussion with his peers, and the power relations he seemed to negotiate through his words and body movements with the two conversational partners.
4.4. Overview of the results

In this section I summarize the results presented in this chapter, emphasizing the connections between the two NNSEs' self-perceptions and their use of power and peer discourse vis-à-vis their interlocutors. In table 4.3. and 4.4., I make an overview of the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analyses in the case of Dave, Jordan and their peers, looking at their self-perceptions, social-interactional strategies, personal stance, and body language.
### Table 4.3. Dave’s self-perceptions, power relations, and peer discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer partner</th>
<th>Self-perceptions and perceived power relations (source: interview and survey)</th>
<th>Social-interactional strategies (source: peer interaction and interview)</th>
<th>Personal stance (source: peer interaction and interview)</th>
<th>Body language (source: peer interaction)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Betty (NSE)  | - considered himself a less powerful peer and writer  
- viewed the status of his NSE peer as intimidating  
- felt more distant and less comfortable with Betty | **Dave’s less powerful status:**  
- pre-set roles, neutral partnership  
- set patterns of strategies:  
  - acknowledgement  
  - advice/problem identification  
  - justification/remedy  
- few explanations or details  
**Dave’s more powerful status:**  
- more advice offers  
- justifications in an attempt to equalize roles | “The uncertain” writer and peer | - adopted lower body posture  
- had less eye contact with his NSE peer  
- had a stiffer body position  
- tended to equalize Betty’s stature |
| Erin (NNSE) | - considered himself a less powerful peer and writer  
- perceived Erin as more intelligent, i.e. more powerful  
- felt more comfortable toward Erin, i.e. more equal | **Dave’s more powerful status:**  
- no pre-set roles, flexibility in sharing comments  
- more advice offers, clarifications, justifications, longer explanations  
- sharing struggles and problems more openly  
**Dave’s less powerful status:**  
- Dave used less powerful strategies than Erin; however, he used more strategies than in his interaction with Betty | “The decision maker” and “The uncertain” writer and peer | - moved more flexibly  
- had an equal body posture with Erin  
- adopted more relaxed positions  
- maintained less eye contact with his NNSE peer |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer partner</th>
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<th>Personal stance (source: peer interaction and interview)</th>
<th>Body language (source: peer interaction)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryan (NSE)</td>
<td>considered himself a strong writer - thought of himself as less powerful because he was less helpful for Ryan - viewed his peer as ignorant because Ryan didn’t have a rich general knowledge</td>
<td>Jordan’s less powerful status: - pre-set roles, neutral partnership - set patterns of strategies: acknowledgement - advice/problem identification - justification/remedy - few explanations or details - no advice offers or advice requests</td>
<td>“The decision maker”</td>
<td>looked taller than Ryan, but lowered his body posture during the interaction - adopted a relaxed and distant position toward his peer - maintained contact with the table, delimiting his space from Ryan’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahbaz (NNSE)</td>
<td>considered himself a more-powerful peer and writer - thought that he intentionally adopted a less powerful discourse because of Shahbaz’s negative reactions to his comments</td>
<td>Jordan’s more powerful status: - turn bids - invalidations and negative evaluations - no advice requests - used more explanations, defended his choices, and justified his comments more often - offered advice</td>
<td>“The decision maker”</td>
<td>looked taller, but he was equalized in body posture by Shahbaz - responded to his peer’s smile to suggest that their fight was a tacit game - The middle space between Jordan and Shahbaz was a common territory that they shared and fought for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. Jordan’s self-perceptions, power relations, and peer discourse
The results summarized in the two tables above indicate that the interlocutors (NSEs or NNSEs) in the peer review sessions may influence the way NNSEs project their power relations within their dyads, and the way they perceive their roles and adopt a certain discourse. In both cases, Dave and Jordan seemed to project themselves differently in their peer pairs, depending on the person with whom they interacted. These differences appeared to be influenced by the status of their interlocutor, NSE or NNSE. That this is the case is demonstrated by the consistent attitudes and behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) that the two NNSEs displayed in their interview answers as well as in their peer discourse.

Overall, what these results suggest is that power, as defined in Chapter 2, may place one and the same peer partner at an advantage (i.e. in a more powerful position) when interacting with a NNSE peer, and at a disadvantage (i.e. a less powerful position) when talking to a NSE. In other words, the same peer may act as a novice with the NSEs, and as an expert with the NNSEs. These results seem to be consistent with Ohta’s (1995) findings that the roles of expert and novice are fluid. Moreover, as we have seen in the case of the two NNSEs, even within the same interaction the peers may act as novices and experts, depending on the powerful or powerless positions that they envisage for themselves and their partners.

Also, this study seems to address in part Lockhart and Ng’s (1999) questions regarding the extent to which the peer discourse actually reflects students’ self-perceptions. The findings presented in this chapter indicate that there is strong connection between differential self-perceptions and the peer talk that the NNSEs engage in. This study suggests that both students’ self-perceptions and their peer discourse may provide valuable information about students’ different contributions to their peer discussions.
4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented in detail the two NNSEs and the interactions with their peers. I have also provided answers to the three research questions that I investigated by presenting the results for each NNSE into three sections, including: (1) NNSE’s perceptions of power relations within the two dyads, (2) NNSE’s use of social-interactional strategies to reflect power relations, and (3) NNSE’s use of personal stance to reflect self-perceptions. In each of the two cases, I also added a fourth section, analyzing the two peers’ body language to show how the use of physical space and body movements were also indicative of the power relations that the NNSEs established with their peers. Finally, I have summarized and discussed the results, emphasizing the relations between students’ self-representations of powerful or powerless roles as peers and writers and their use of peer discourse.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview

In this study I examined the self-perceptions, power relations, and discourse of two NNSEs as they interacted with a NSE and a NNSE during a peer review session. I specifically investigated the way the two NNSEs projected their power relations toward their peers and used certain social-interactional strategies and personal stance. In this context, I discovered that the interactions with their fellow NNSE peers were more beneficial because they appeared to place the conversational partners in powerful positions and helped them benefit more from the peer sessions. In contrast, their interactions with the NSEs seemed more rigid, distant, and un-engaging. Overall, the results of this research suggest that the discourse in NNSE – NNSE dyads differed from that of the NSE - NNSE pairs, and I argue that these discourses reflected and were reflected by the students’ differential power relations with their partners. In this chapter, I discuss the findings of this study in light of their contribution to the literature on peer review. I also present the limitations of this thesis and I offer pedagogical implications for teachers along with suggestions for future research.

5.2. Discussion

This study offers important details on the nature, benefits, and problems that may occur during peer review sessions that involve NNSEs. At the discourse level, peer review talk seems to be constructed differently depending on the interlocutors. While Zhu (2001) found out that NNSEs tend to use fewer turns and less language functions during group work with NSEs, in this study I concluded that different power relations and self-perceptions are not necessarily reflected in the overall number of strategies used, but in their specific social-
interactional functions. I also pointed out that certain strategies may be associated with different types of peer sessions. The interactions in which only NNSEs were engaged, such as the *sharing model* and the *attack game*, seemed more beneficial during the development of NNSE - NNSE peer sessions; whereas the *commercial transaction* model that involved both NSE and NNSE partners was associated with more negative outcomes in improving students’ writing.

In terms of the topics addressed in peer interactions, students appear to approach these sessions differently depending on who their partners are. In this study, I observed that, while NNSEs’ discussion generally tended to be centered on the content of writing, and less on the mechanics, grammar corrections appeared more frequently when NNSEs talked to other NNSEs. The results also seem to indicate that in the case of peer sessions with NNSE peers, the content-based remarks were better developed, which differs from Leki’s (1990) findings; i.e. that NNSEs tend to address surface problems.

At the social level, peer review primarily seems to function as a territory of identity dynamics. The present research confirms the findings of Bloome et al. (2005) about classroom interaction, showing that students’ identities may affect the success and type of interaction in which peers engage. In this sense, as Nelson and Murphy (1992) have indicated, NNSEs’ selves are socially negotiated constructs that determine the emergence of certain types of interaction depending on students’ self-perceptions and power relations.

At the cultural level, peer review is a problematic manifestation of students’ backgrounds. The results presented in this study call into question earlier research which has shown that students who come from collectivist cultures, i.e. cultures focused on group cohesion and harmony, tend to be reluctant to criticize their peers’ papers and to claim
authority (Carson and Nelson, 1994, 1996; Gudykunst, 2004). While it is true that the two Asian students (Jordan and Dave) did not use many face-threatening comments, they often provided negative evaluations on their NNSEs’ drafts, but not on their NSEs’ papers. These differences may have sprung from the fact that the two NNSEs perceived their NSE peers as out-group members and the NNSEs as in-group partners. Gudykunst et al. (1987) seem to support these claims in saying that students may feel more comfortable and interact more smoothly with individuals perceived as part of the same in-group.

At the same time, the findings presented in Chapter 4 seem to contradict the idea that NNSEs from collectivist cultures are not capable of taking ownership of their work (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999). In fact, the present study confirms the findings of Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger (1992), Lockhart and Ng (1995), indicating that certain categories of personal stance have the potential to reflect NNSEs’ development as writers and peers. In the context of this project, NNSEs’ use of the “decision maker” stance seemed to be the most powerful way of creating and projecting an authorial voice.

Furthermore, this study indicates that students’ power distance (i.e. accepted hierarchies based on power relations among individuals) and cultural background may negatively affect how NNSEs position themselves and validate their peers’ comments. As Hofstede (2001) and Nelson and Carson (1998) have stated, in high-power distance cultures students may not fully value their peers’ contributions because they are not entitled to powerful positions. In this study, both Asian participants tended to reject the efficiency of peer review as a class activity, giving credibility to more powerful authorities, such as the instructor and the Writing Center in the English Department at Iowa State University. This may have prevented them from participating more in their peer exchanges.
Besides revealing significant details about the nature of peer review, this study contributes to the present body of research on peer discourse (Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Villamil and de Guerrero) by using methodological procedures in an innovative way. Both qualitative and quantitative methods as well as the two taxonomies that I used in interpreting the data offer new venues for exploring peer review sessions as both pedagogical and social activities. In this sense, the present study points to the value of intensive microanalysis of individual discourse.

5.3. Limitations

The results of this microethnographic project must be considered in light of several limitations that I would like to acknowledge. In this research, I focused on the nature of peer review interaction in the case of two NNSEs exchanging comments during one peer review session. Moreover, each of the two NNSEs interacted with only two peer partners. While the investigation of these four dyads may be relevant in showing how the two NNSEs interacted differently with their partners, additional insights could be obtained from NNSEs’ multiple encounters with different peers in longitudinal studies. Also, in this study I focused the data analysis on the connections between students’ power relations and peer discourse as determined by the students’ status as NSEs or NNSEs. However, I also recognize that students’ age and personality may have contributed to the students’ type of interaction and power relations, and I consider that more detailed investigations in this direction could complement the results obtained in this thesis.
5.4. Pedagogical implications

NNSEs’ peer review sessions could be enhanced by taking into consideration several theoretical and practical recommendations that I would like to advance based on the results of this study. At the theoretical level, in the same vein with the ideas promoted by Ede (1988), Bizzell (1986), and Bruffee (1984), this study shows that peer review is a very complex activity in which students share not only their knowledge, but also their identities and classroom roles. For this reason, instructors should be aware that students interact based on their relations with their colleagues within and outside the classroom space, and these relations may affect how students work to improve their papers. Although instructors may tend to believe that NNSEs think of themselves as less powerful because of their linguistic deficiency, as the results of this study have demonstrated, NNSEs’ self-perceptions and power relations may emerge from other sources as well, such as cultural biases, previous encounters with the interlocutors, command of general knowledge, etc.

From the perspective of the Vygotskyan (1978) theory, this study also revealed that the roles of expert and novice may be problematic in the sense that peers do not consistently use the same self-positioning toward their peers. On the contrary, as I presented in this thesis, NNSEs may act differently according to the power relations that they perceive toward their different conversational partners. Therefore, instructors should try to increase students’ awareness of their changing roles, emphasizing that within pairs or groups, no student is the expert or the novice in a pre-established way. Instructors should work toward implementing the peer review activity as a win/win encounter, as a sharing territory of strengths and weaknesses although this territory does not genuinely imply equal positions among peers.
At a more practical level, I would like to propose the following recommendations for instructors in evaluating and guiding NNSE as well as NSE students during peer review sessions to ensure successful interactions. Instructors should:

- provide many opportunities of interactions in different dyads and groups, with both NSE and NNSE peers of different cultural background, proficiency level, age, personality, etc.;
- explain the functions of peer review and students’ roles during peer exchanges (Stanley, 1992);
- explain the advantages of using the first person pronoun in sharing personal struggles and successes in the writing process;
- present the benefits of constructive criticism (Nelson & Murphy, 1992) in the form of positive and negative evaluations;
- identify and openly address possible cultural conflicts, biases and stereotypes that might impede students’ full engagement in peer sessions with different peers;
- emphasize and consolidate a strong community of writers in which both NSEs and NNSEs are viewed as members of the same in-group;
- investigate and evaluate students’ involvement in the peer sessions by analyzing their body language (Tannen, 1994; Knapp & Hall, 2002).

In using these suggestions, instructors should adopt the role of ethnographers. In the context of this study, as an instructor I went through the process of re-discovering my students and I realized the importance of listening to students’ voices beyond the comments that they generally made during the class sessions. In the same way, teachers should closely examine students’ verbal and non-verbal in-class behaviors in order to better grasp students’
power relations toward their peers. Based on these observations, instructors could further validate their findings during one-on-one conferences with the students, and these investigations could better serve their decisions in setting up dyads and peer groups.

In addition, recording the peer sessions and showing them to the students seemed to have positive effects. After reviewing their interactions, both NNSEs seemed to be more aware of how they reacted and talked to different peers, and this made them reflect on their roles within the classroom (Lockhart and Ng, 1999). The example below represents Dave’s teachable moment while reviewing his interaction with the NSE peer:

Dave: For me... I think they [American peers] don’t really like to talk to Asians. Not that friendly. Yeah, that’s my problem, maybe I should talk more, then other people would talk more too. Yeah, it’s actually a two-way interaction. (T. I. Dave – Erin, p. 6)

Recording peer sessions and sharing them with the students could help them evaluate their own contributions and ultimately improve their peer experiences. These opportunities could function as self-analysis moments based on which students could make conscious changes in their perceptions and discourse choices.

5.5. Suggestions for future research

Future research on peer review or NNSEs’ self-perceptions and discourse may take several forms. Given the limited time frame and context of the present study, a further goal would be to conduct longitudinal studies examining NNSEs in multiple interactions with various peers (NSEs and NNSEs). Such investigations may examine one and the same NNSE or a few NNSEs sharing their comments for multiple assignments and within different dyads or groups. The results of these analyses may confirm whether the NNSE status and perceived
power relations that students reflect in the peer discourse influence the nature and success of peer review sessions.

As I have already mentioned in Chapter 3, the present research was in part built around the two taxonomies of the social-interactional strategies and personal stance that I proposed as valuable tools for a more systematic investigation of power relations and peer discourse. Researchers interested in the same area might apply them to other dyadic or group interactions in an attempt to validate and refine certain categories that I included in these two classifications.

Finally, another possible venue for developing future research would be the investigation of stance and power relations by looking at other discourse markers, such as nouns, adverbs, verbs, etc. (Biber et al. 2002), besides the first person pronoun. These analyses may provide new insightful findings into how stance may reveal power relations at the discourse level in peer review sessions.

***

I listened to their comments and I was amazed how little I had known as their instructor.

They seemed aware of their status, they formed opinions about who was entitled to speak and no matter how many times I specified in class that they were equals, they always knew that in their words there was power...to control, to silence, to deny, to advice, and to say “I”.
APPENDIX 1. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Self-representations and power relations in peer review interactions: A case study of two international students in a composition class

Investigators: Lavinia Hirsu, MA Student, English Department, Principal Investigator (responsible for the project, the informed consent, and the direct contact with the participants) Roberta Vann, English Department, Major Professor (contact person) Adrian Florea, MA Student, English Department, Assistant (helping with the video equipment)

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION
You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a student enrolled in a composition class at ISU.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how students comment and edit one another’s papers in composition classes. The research will also help us learn about strategies that students use to talk about themselves, about their peers, and about their papers.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for 2 hours, and it will involve 2 meetings with your peers for 1 hour each. You will be informed when and where you have to come for these meetings. During the study you will be expected to complete a survey about your ideas on peer review, and you will be asked to interact with your peers and give feedback on their papers in the way you usually do in the composition class. If you are a non-native speaker of English, after each meeting with your peers, you may also be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher, Lavinia Hirsu, and answer some questions about your conversation with your peers. This means that you will have to attend 2 more meetings (1 hour and a half each).

The 2 meetings with your peers will be recorded on video cassette and the 2 interview meetings will be audiotaped. The video and audio cassettes will not be erased, but they will be kept in a safe, locked place.

RISKS
While participating in this study you may experience the emotional risk of feeling embarrassed to answer some of the interview questions because these questions may ask you to say how you feel about certain comments that you make or receive from your peers. In this case you may simply refuse to answer the questions.
BENEFITS
If you decide to participate in this study you will have the benefit of learning more about your communication skills, and you will also get some tips to develop them. The information gained in this study will provide useful information about student editing that we hope will improve the teaching of composition.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION
You will not be compensated and you will not have any costs from participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study or leave the study early, this will not result in any penalty or affect your grade for the course in any way.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken; you will be given a pseudonym that will be used in the study instead of your name. These pseudonyms will be kept with the rest of the data in a safe place, in a locked filing cabinet, and the researcher, Lavinia Hirsu, will be the only person to have access to the data. However, the data will not be destroyed in view of future publication. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Roberta Vann, Major Professor, phone: 515-294-3577, office address: Ross Hall, 335, email: rvann@iastate.edu.

- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact Ginny Austin Eason, IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, austingr@iastate.edu, or Diane Ament, Research Compliance Officer (515) 294-3115, dament@iastate.edu.

***************************************************************************
SUBJECT SIGNATURE
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Subject’s Name (printed) ____________________________________________

(Subject’s Signature) (Date)

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent) (Date)
APPENDIX 2. THE SURVEY

This survey contains two sections: Section 1 - Personal Information and Section 2 - Information about your role as a peer. Although some statements may sound repetitive, please take some time and answer truthfully. Thank you for your cooperation.

Section 1 - Personal Information
Last (Family) Name: ____________________________
First (Given) Name: ____________________________
Country of origin: ____________________________
Age: ________
Sex: □ Male  □ Female
Native language: ____________________________
Other language(s): ____________________________
TOEFL (most recent score): ________________
Major: ____________________________
Academic Status:
□ Freshman  □ Sophomore  □ Junior  □ Senior
Time spent in the US: ____________________________

Section 2 - Information about your role as a peer
Read the next series of statements. Whenever you have multiple answers, choose the best answer that applies to your case. The numbers under some of the statements below correspond to:

1  2  3  4  5

Circle the number that indicates to what extent you agree with the statements.

1. Whenever I am in the presence of international students, I feel comfortable.
   1  2  3  4  5

2. I think that I have many things in common with other international students.
   1  2  3  4  5

3. I don’t have any problems interacting in English with international people.
   1  2  3  4  5

4. I feel closer to the international people than to the native-speakers of English.
   1  2  3  4  5
5. I have international friends:
   a. no international friend (go to Question 9)
   b. 1 or 2 friends
   c. 3 or 4 friends
   d. 5 or 6 friends
   e. more than 6 friends

6. I like to go out with my international friends.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. My international friends are from the same country with me:
   a. no friend
   b. 1 or 2 friends
   c. 3 or 4 friends
   d. 5 or 6 friends
   e. more than 6 friends

8. When I meet my international friends, others than people from my own country, I speak:
   a. English
   b. my native language
   c. both English and my native language
   d. other language(s)

9. I have many friends who are native-speakers of English:
   a. no friend (go to Question 11)
   b. 1 or 2 friends
   c. 3 or 4 friends
   d. 5 or 6 friends
   e. more than 6 friends

10. I go out with my friends who are native-speakers of English:
    a. never
    b. one time/month
    c. 2-3 times/month
    d. every week
    e. more than 2 times/week

    1 2 3 4 5

12. When I interact with native-speakers of English people, they treat me like a member of their community.
    1 2 3 4 5
13. I like to meet new native-speakers of English.
   1  2  3  4  5

14. I think that I have many things in common with native-speakers of English.
   1  2  3  4  5

15. Back in my country, I used to work in groups:
   a. with another peer
   b. with 2 peers
   c. with 3 or 4 peers
   d. a, b, and c
   e. We didn’t work in groups. (go to Question 17)

16. In my country, during English classes, the teacher asked us to work with our peers
to improve different skills:
   a. always
   b. most of the time
   c. sometimes
   d. rarely
   e. never

17. Since I came to the U.S., I worked in groups:
   a. always
   b. most of the time
   c. sometimes
   d. rarely
   e. never

18. I think that the peer review sessions will help me improve my writing skills.
   1  2  3  4  5

19. I like it when my classmates correct my mistakes.
   1  2  3  4  5

20. I like to show my papers to other people.
   1  2  3  4  5

21. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.
   1  2  3  4  5

22. For my peer review sessions, I would like to show my paper to:
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two
23. I think that I usually give useful comments to:
   a. native-speakers of English
   b. international students
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

24. I think that ............ will give me useful suggestions for my paper.
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

25. I am sure that ............ will include my comments in their paper.
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

26. I think that ............ will find my suggestions useful.
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

27. For my final paper, I will probably take into account the comments given by:
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

28. I think that ............ will take into account my comments for their final paper.
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two

29. I feel confident when I can make useful comments on papers written by:
   a. a native-speaker of English
   b. an international student
   c. both
   d. neither of the two
APPENDIX 3. GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW

Peer Review
Paper belong to ______________________
Reviewer’s Name: ______________________

Try to help your peer with his/her paper by looking at the following aspects:

1. The paper has a clear thesis statement (it presents the topic of the paper and it includes the writer’s stance). (Underline it.)
2. The writer specifies the author and the name and type of text that are analyzed in this paper.
3. The body paragraphs have each one controlling idea and evidence to support it.
4. The body paragraphs explore the following rhetorical concepts: types of arguments, audience, context, appeals, tropes, fallacies.
5. The conclusion is clear and points out the most important/interesting aspects that the writer wants his/her readers to remember.
6. The paper makes use of transitional phrases and is very well organized.
7. The paper does not contain many correctness errors.

Make comments about these aspects at the end of the writer’s paper.
APPENDIX 4. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I am going to ask you some general questions, and after this we will watch the peer session and I will ask you some more questions at different points during your interaction with your peer.

Q: How did you decide to enroll in a cross-cultural class?
Q: Did you take any writing classes before? Which ones? Where?
Q: Do you have any prior experience with peer review?
Q: Do you prefer negative or positive feedback on your papers?
Q: According to your opinion, who is an international student for you here in the US? Is it anyone speaking English with an accent? What about people coming from the same country as you do? Are they international people too?
Q: According to your opinion, what does it mean to be a native-speaker of English? Someone who tells you that was born here in the US? Someone who speaks perfect English? Could an Australian student who speaks English be considered a native-speaker of English or an international student?
Q: How do you feel when you interact with someone who speaks very good English but you do not know where s/he is coming from?
Q: What do you believe that native-speakers of English think about you when you interact with them?
Q: What do you believe that international students think about you when you interact with them?
Q: Do you generally think that a native-speaker of English can give you better feedback on your papers than an international student? Why?

Now, let's watch the peer review session.
Q: Of the two peers you had, who do you think is the most powerful critic? What makes you say that?
Q: Were there any differences in interacting between your two peers?
Q: Why did you make this comment? What were you thinking when you made this comment? How did you feel when you made this comment?
Q: In your opinion, what does your peer think about your comment? How do you think that s/he feels about it?
Q: Do you think your peer will take your comment into account? Why?
Q: What were you thinking at this point? Do you think your peer is right? Is your peer's comment useful to you? Why?
Q: How did you feel about this comment? Did it bother you? Why do you think your peer said it this way? Is it because he is a native-speaker of English/non-native speaker of English?
Q: Do you plan to include the suggestions that your peer made in your final paper? Why?

17 Note: During the interview, the interviewer will ask questions marked with * multiple times after pausing the videotape.
# APPENDIX 5. TRANSCRIPTION CODING SCHEME
(adapted from Jefferson, 1978)

Table A.5. Coding scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>the point of overlap onset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>the point at which two overlapping utterances end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>no break between the two lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>elapsed time under 1 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.0)</td>
<td>elapsed time by tenths of seconds for intervals longer than 1 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::</td>
<td>prolongation of the immediately prior sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑↓</td>
<td>especially high or low pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORD</td>
<td>loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>word</em></td>
<td>words softer than the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>unvoiced production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>untimed pause within an utterance (less than 1.0 second)/abrupt cut-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;</td>
<td>the bracketed material is speeded up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;&gt;</td>
<td>the bracketed material is slowed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'hhh</td>
<td>an inbreath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wohrd</td>
<td>breathiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>the transcriber was unable to get what was said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(word)</td>
<td>parenthesized words are especially dubious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( ))</td>
<td>transcriber’s description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>a stopping fall intonation, not necessarily the end of a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rising inflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>animated tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>emphasis added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;&lt;word&gt;&gt;</td>
<td>text read or quoted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.6. Sample of transcribed data from the Jordan – Shahbaz peer interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional Unit</th>
<th>Message Unit No.</th>
<th>Message Unit</th>
<th>Social-interactional Strategy</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The end of Jordan's intervention on Shahbaz’s paper</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>Shahbaz: so (.) that's all?</td>
<td>interactional unit initiation turn bid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>Jordan: yeah.</td>
<td>turn yielding building rapport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>199</td>
<td>Shahbaz: thank you very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahbaz takes his turn</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>now I will give you (.) ((Jordan bursts into laughter)) your paper and tell you what’s going on ((Shahbaz starts laughing too)) (3.0) ((S looking for T’s paper))</td>
<td>turn taking status assignment</td>
<td>Shahbaz indirectly announces his attack. He is now in charge of the peer review session; i.e. in a powerful position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan showing compassion toward Shahbaz</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>Jordan: actually (.) maybe I guess (.) you don’t have too much time to spend (.) on (.) this paper so it's kind of short yeah (.) I understand (2.5) ((both laughing))</td>
<td>interactional unit initiation justification clarification turn holder negative evaluation turn holder status assignment</td>
<td>Jordan senses Shahbaz’s negative reactions and tries to balance his criticism with a comment reflecting his compassion toward his peer’s efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shahbaz shares his views on writing</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Shahbaz: I believe on (.) quality instead of quantity (2.0)</td>
<td>interactional unit initiation clarification request clarification request clarification framing</td>
<td>Shahbaz changes tone and style. He sounds like preaching. He talks as if he were an expert who knows the principles of good writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>211</td>
<td>Jordan: &gt;wha- what?&lt; (1.0) tell me.</td>
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<td>212</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213</td>
<td>Shahbaz: I mean I believe on quality instead of quantity (1.0) &gt;I&lt; try to give the (.) quality of work instead of (.) making it kind of (.)</td>
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APPENDIX 7. DAVE’S USE OF SOCIAL-INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES

TABLE A.7. Frequency of strategies in number of message units used in Dave’s interactions with his two peers

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<th>Social-interactional strategy</th>
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<th>Dave (NNSE)</th>
<th>Erin (NNSE)</th>
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APPENDIX 8. JORDAN’S USE OF SOCIAL-INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES

TABLE A.8. Frequency of strategies in number of message units used in Jordan’s interactions with his two peers

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REFERENCES


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