Discovering “Invisible” Logic Threads in ESL Writing

David M. Mosher

Abstract

This article reports on a pilot investigation into the efficacy of negotiated rhetorical-level revision in two writing center tutor-student conferences at a major North American university: one conference with Ayumi, a Japanese graduate ESL student, and one conference with Janice, an American undergraduate L1 student. Multiple data sources, including audio transcriptions, written texts, text revisions and interviews are examined in detail. The data were investigated to identify types of negotiation and negotiation related talk, the success or failure of negotiated revisions and the logical structure of the ESL text. Four types of talk were identified and coded. Transcript and text analysis reveals that rhetorical-level negotiation resulted in successful revision for Janice and failure for Ayumi and also suggests that achieving critical depth of negotiation may be an important factor in determining success or failure. Additionally, logical analysis of Ayumi’s text indicates that resistance to linear organization and tutor, professor and researcher blindness to the presence of an alternative non-linear logic may have contributed Ayumi’s lack of success. This study suggests that tutors and writing instructors need to be more alert to subtle hints of resistance and to alternative logical structures in order to facilitate successful revision.

Introduction

In research on the instruction of both English as a first language (L1) and English as a second language (ESL) writing in North America, the role of talk about writing has received increasing emphasis. Talk about writing takes many forms ranging from one-on-one teacher-student conferences and one-on-one peer conferences to small group peer conferences and writing workshops in which a whole class provides feedback on one student’s writing. In addition to the traditional writing classroom, writing centers have become an increasingly common site for student writers to talk with others about their writing (c.f., Harris, 1995).

Underlying and abetting this phenomenon is a growing belief in the centrality of conversation in education and in the construction of knowledge (Bruffee, 1999). Indeed, the fact that writing centers’ very existence is based on a belief in the efficacy of collaborative talk can be seen in statements by writing center experts like Murphy and Sherwood (1995, p. 2), who assert that conversation is the essence of tutoring writing. However, as North states, little is known about the dynamics of writing center conference talk other than in “a practitioner’s anecdotal way (1984/1995 : 33).” As North argues there is a clear need for better characterizations of writing conference talk and the effects that it has on writing.

Researchers in applied linguistics also point to the importance of talk in second language learning.
These researchers have focused their attention more specifically on the role that negotiation of meaning, involving comprehension checks, confirmations checks, and clarification requests, plays in facilitating language learning (e.g., Gass, 1997; Long, 1983, 1996; Nunn, 2001). Few researchers, however, have directly explored the influence of the negotiation of meaning in writing conferences on the revision process, and hence the acquisition of written language.

Goldstein and Conrad's (1990) case study of three ESL writers is a notable exception. In this study, they found that when the teacher and student negotiated rhetorical-level writing revision strategies, revisions were almost always successful (i.e., the solving of a rhetorical problem, such as the need for more detail in a description); whereas, few non-negotiated revisions were successful. In a study of the negotiation of revision in the peer review sessions of twelve ESL writers, Mendonca & Johnson (1994) found that 53% of revisions incorporated peer comments. However, other studies of ESL teacher-student and peer response groups, although not investigating the impact of the negotiation of revisions on the success of subsequent revisions, have indicated that the benefits of writing conferences are not automatic (DiPardo 1995; Carson & Nelson 1996; Connor & Asenavage 1994).

One reason that talk about writing including the negotiation of meaning may not always facilitate learning is that surface level discourse interaction may be misleading. In general research in second language acquisition, Hawkins (1985) and Aston (1986) show that surface level displays of understanding in NS-NNS dialogue do not guarantee that understanding has been achieved. As Taylor (1993) argues, perhaps linguistics has been influenced too much by implicit behavioralistic assumptions that if people act like they understand, they do.

Goldstein and Conrad (1990) speculate that perhaps the reason that the negotiation of revision appears to facilitate successful revision is that such negotiation clarifies the need for revision and the strategies necessary for implementing the revision; that is, negotiation of meaning facilitates a more in-depth understanding not only of the revision that has been suggested, but the rationale which underlies it and perhaps the means for implementing it. While not denying the validity of this claim, in this paper, I will look at a dramatic case of failed negotiation of revision between a writing center tutor and a Japanese ESL writer, in order to begin to gain a better, more fine-grained understanding of the differences between successful and unsuccessful negotiation and the achievement of understanding. For purposes of comparison, I will contrast this data with an example of negotiated revision between one L1 writer and a writing center tutor. In particular, I address the following questions:

1. What types of revision related talk and negotiations do the students engage in?
2. Are negotiated revision suggestions used successfully in subsequent revisions?
3. Can differing notions of logic help to explain the failed negotiation?

Participants

Two participants are the main focus of this study: Ayumi a graduate student ESL writer and Janice a fourth year undergraduate L1 writer. Ayumi is a Japanese art history master's student at a large U.S. mid-western university in the second and final year of her program. Before coming to the United States, she received a master's degree in museum management at a university in Great Britain. Janice is an American telecommunications senior at the same university. Both students came to the writing
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center to get help from trained undergraduate student tutors on papers for courses in their majors. Both tutoring sessions lasted approximately 50-minutes. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Procedure

This study is part of a larger study that involves multiple data sources: transcriptions of writing conferences, written texts, video playback sessions and interviews, written tutor and professor feedback. The general data collection procedure may be summarized as follows: (1) The writing conferences were audio and video taped, and photocopies were made of the papers the students brought to the writing center. (2) At this time, copies were also made of the tutor reports and student reports that were routinely completed by all writing center students and consultants. (3) In addition, I requested copies of all final drafts of papers brought to the writing center as well as the grades received on those papers and/or in the course. (4) Video playback sessions and interviews were also conducted with the Japanese participants and some of the undergraduate tutors. In all playback sessions, participants were allowed to stop the tape and provide any comments about the session that they wished to make, in addition to answering the researcher’s questions. These sessions were recorded on audio tape and field notes taken.

Data Analysis

The two writing conference tutoring sessions in this study were transcribed and the transcriptions were analyzed for instances of the negotiation of rhetorical-level revision, following Gass's (1997) and Nakahama, Tyler and Van Lier’s (2001) general definitions of the negotiation of meaning, and Goldstein and Conrad’s (1990) definition of the negotiation of rhetorical-level revision strategies. Gass defines the negotiation of meaning as the interactive discussion of some lack of understanding. Minimally, a negotiation must include a noticing of a communication problem and at least one clarification request. Nakahama et al. helpfully broaden this definition to include utterances that “at least one interlocutor experiences as problematic” (p. 379). Goldstein and Conrad define the negotiation of rhetorical-level revision strategies as the clarification and confirmation of suggested revision strategies by either teacher or student. Participants may negotiate their general understanding of a strategy, how to implement the strategy as well as the rationale for the strategy. More specifically, rhetorical-level revision refers to revisions that are intended to improve the communicative effectiveness of the text above the sentence level, such as overall text or paragraph organization revisions, or improvements in text coherence or logical development; however, rhetorical level revisions may also include grammatical or lexical revisions in one sentence that have a global or text-level impact.

In the process of transcription and analysis, categories were generated to describe each instance of negotiation and revision related talk. Once each audio transcript was analyzed for instances of negotiation and revision related talk, the students’ first, second or third drafts were examined for the incorporation of tutor or student rhetorical-level revision suggestions in the post-writing conference text revisions. Finally, a holistic, non-linear analysis of the logical structure of the ESL student’s
Results

The results of my preliminary analyses are presented in three stages. In Phase I, I describe the types of negotiations and revision related talk that students and tutors engaged in during the two writing conferences and develop descriptive categories that account for differences in patterns of negotiation. Each type of negotiation and revision related talk is illustrated with excerpts from the transcripts. Phase II investigates the impact of negotiated rhetorical revision on the students written drafts with particular attention paid to a logical contradiction that was identified in Ayumi's paper by her professor, this researcher and her tutor. Phase III analyzes the logical flow of Ayumi's paper from a more holistic perspective, arguing that the professor, researcher and tutor all failed to discover the intended logical threads of the paper.

Phase I: Types of Revision and Revision Related Talk

Four types of negotiation and revision related talk were identified and coded for in the two student-tutor transcripts. (1) Negotiation of meaning (NM) involves the negotiation of general meaning regarding the text or some aspect of the writing conference itself (e.g., procedural issues) that contain no identifiable revision hints by either tutor or student. (2) Non-negotiated rhetorical-level revision suggestions (RS) involve suggestions for rhetorical revision made by either the tutor or the student that are not accompanied by any clarification or confirmation moves. (3) Non-negotiated implicit rhetorical suggestions (IRS) by the tutor or student are similar to RS moves except that the identification of the suggestion requires a relatively high level of inferencing. (4) Rhetorical-level revision negotiation (RN) refers to explicit rhetorical-level suggestions that are negotiated. RN talk is also analyzed for depth of negotiation by identifying whether the what, why and how aspects of revision are negotiated or not. Finally, although it seems theoretically possible, no implicit rhetorical-level negotiations have been discovered in the data so far.

In excerpts 1 to 3, Ayumi, a Japanese second-year art history master's student and Ellen an undergraduate writing center tutor talk about a paper that explores Claude Monet's motivation for collecting Japanese woodblock prints, the first of two papers to be discussed in the writing conference. The first excerpt illustrates negotiation of meaning (NM) involving a discussion of the general meaning of the text, but containing no identifiable revision suggestions by either the tutor or the student. (See Appendix B for an explanation of transcribing conventions.)

1. Um OK
   E : Ellen, the writing center tutor.
   A : Ayumi, the Japanese 2nd year art history master's student.

1 . E : Um ok.
2. A : It's just I I explained but the work is wrong, ah.
3. E : You're just explaining what it was//
4. A : Yes
5. E: What it consisted of, ok. (?)  
6. A: (laughs)  
7. E: Do you feel uncomfortable with how you have it set up?  
8. A: No no no.  
10. A: I haven’t finished from this point to the end so pardon me about this ok?

Ayumi’s utterance in line 2 precipitates two clarification questions by Ellen in lines 3, 5 and 7; however, no revision suggestions are made. Here Ellen and Ayumi are engaged in a procedural negotiation over what parts of the Monet text to discuss, a negotiation that revolves around the clarification of the meaning of line 2.

Excerpt 2 is an example of a rhetorical suggestion (RS) made by the tutor, Ellen. In lines 1 and 3 Ellen asks a series of clarification questions before making a suggestion in line 5 which is elaborated on in lines 7, 9 and 11. In her suggestion, Ellen explains what Ayumi should do (i.e., make it clearer who gives the quotes) as well as why (i.e., I’m not sure who is talking), but she does not give Ayumi any specific suggestion for how to improve clarity, such as adding a signaling phrase before the quotation that clearly identifies the authors. Ayumi only makes minimal affirmative and back channel responses to Ellen’s suggestion. There is no negotiation.

2. Pretty clear... except these quotes.  
   E: Ellen, the writing center tutor.  
   A: Ayumi, the Japanese 2nd year art history master’s student.

1. E: It is pretty clear except for where you mention these quotes. Are these quotes from spectators or from collectors?  
2. A: Oh ok.  
3. E: In the first paragraph?  
4. A: Um.  
5. E: Well you say it’s from the collectors but um maybe a little bit more clearly state that these are the collectors.  
7. E: Who are giving these quotes.  
9. E: Cause you have the foot note.  
10. A: Un huh.  
11. E: Down here but I’m not really sure who’s talking.  

Excerpt 3 is the final excerpt of talk about the Monet paper. It is an example of a non-negotiated implicit rhetorical suggestion (IRS) made by the tutor. The discourse through line 16 centers around a clarification of what Ayumi means by the term “the other” in her paper. In line 18, Ayumi apologizes for not being finished with the section of her paper being discussed. Ellen’s comment in line 19 implies
that Ayumi should add something to her paper that makes the connection between “the other” and nature more explicit and that explains how the collection “spoke for itself in terms of talking about (Monet)”. Lines 21 and 23 generalize this implicit suggestion to any other questions that Ellen has asked so far. It is left up to Ayumi to remember what those questions were. As in excerpt 2 above there is no suggestion for how to make the suggested revisions.

3. Self-Identity ((The Other – Nature Connection))

E: Ellen, the writing center tutor.
A: Ayumi, the Japanese 2nd year art history master’s student.

1. E: Um this part, the self identity.
3. E: What exactly did you mean? How were you connecting that with “the Other”. Like you talk about the nature.
5. E: You know where you was he looking for nature in that art cause he was a nature person/
6. A: Un huh
7. E: in his art but his self identity in terms of this, what, I don’t understand the connection too clearly.
8. A: Oh. ((Slight pause))
9. E: Or were you even trying to make that connection?
10. A: Um to understand himself he tried to reflect his himself on that collection, Japanese collection.
    So by collecting these Japanese print which means that he by doing so he also tried to make his own identity or he tried to see what he want or what he is, something like that. Um.
11. E: Like he tried to make his collection reflect himself?
13. E: Like make the collection speak for itself in terms of talking about him?
15. E: Is that what you’re/
16. A: Yes
17. E: Ok ok ok. ((pause)) What’s wrong?
18. A: ((laughs)) It’s it’s so II was going to finish right today but this is so, I’m sorry I just couldn’t (?).
19. E: Well I think by not having it done it shows you exactly what else you’d want to put in it.
21. E: Like any questions that I may have had you know in terms of this part and not having done it it shows/
22. A: Ok
23. E: What else you can put in there for people like me. I going, I’m not going to reading your finished product and grading it but //
25. E: any questions that I have others might have also then you can put that information in there.
27. E: No problem. Is there any other are there any other questions you have?

In excerpt 4, Ayumi and Helen talk about a second paper, an eight paragraph essay about African American art entitled “Final Question” (See Appendix A for a complete copy of the essay). This excerpt is an example of a rhetorical-level revision suggestion that is explicitly negotiated (RN). To conserve space, some parts of the transcript have been omitted. Each omission break is indicated by large ellipsis marks immediately after the point of omission and by skips in the line numbers. In lines 1 and 3, Ayumi attempts to get the tutor to discover a logical contradiction on her own that was first indicated by her professor. In line 1, “he”, however, refers to the researcher who had previously discussed this paper with Ayumi. Ellen, however, who does not have a copy of this paper in front of her which is the usual writing center procedure and which was the case for the first paper, does not notice anything “strange” at first. In line 9, Ayumi summarizes the point she is trying to make. Interestingly, her summary, unlike each draft of her paper, does not contain a logical contradiction. In line 9, Ayumi avoids the contradiction by the using an if clause (i.e., “But if there are no discrimination or biases... they are part of the norm”). Although there is an error in verb tense, it seems likely that the if clause was intended to signal an unreal condition. The “Contradicts?” episode, lines 1-25, involves negotiation of meaning, but not negotiation of revision.

4. Contradicts?
   E: Ellen, the writing center tutor.
   A: Ayumi, the Japanese 2nd year art history master’s student.

Contradicts?
1. A: And what he say why he said it’s contradicts.
2. E: Un huh.
3. A: Did did you feel something strange on that page.
4. E: What are you talking about//
5. A: ((laughs))
6. E: Where, what what were you going to focus on?
7. A: Um (...) I um tried to say something um about the what’s going on in the art history world.
9. A: Since the uh in the twentieth century after 1950 sometimes. And but artists always they are out of mainstream of art history but these ah the history is made by only some people and they are actually excluded from the art history. But if there are no discrimination or biases of the people who makes the art history they are part of the norm. I mean their artistic achievements always contribute to the development of art//
10. E: Un huh
11. A: in America. Then L... oh yeah people are not marginal//
12. E: Un huh
13. A: and ah.. oh yes, and I said this
14. E: Un huh
15. A: Do you think these two are (.)
16. E: Contradictions?
17. A: Uh huh
18. E: Hum. What do you mean by this sentence right here?
19. A: Means means means the um the artistical achievement always very important/
20. E: OK
22. E: Also right here you say that their contributions have been very important.
23. A: Very important.
24. E: And here your saying that they’ve been excluded.

In this phase of excerpt 4, Ellen concurs with both Ayumi’s professor and with the researcher that there is indeed a logical contradiction in paragraph three of her paper (c.f., Appendix A). In discussing the contributions of African American artists to American art in paragraph three, Ayumi writes these two contradictory sentences: “They have been in fact part of the norm. Nevertheless, they have been and continue to be marginalized by ‘main streams of art history’.” In lines 38 and 40, Ellen explains that to say something is part of the norm entails that it is part of the mainstream. Ayumi’s agreement tokens suggest that she accepts this explanation. Without further comment, she precedes to read paragraphs four through seven of her paper. There is more negotiation of meaning in this portion of the excerpt, but still no explicit negotiation of rhetorical-level revision.

These Two Contradict
28. E: Well right here, this is where I think the contradiction may come in. You said “they have been part of the norm”.
29. A: ((Laughs))
30. E: Ok and then you say “they’ve been excluded from mainstreams of our/
31. A: Yeah
32. E: history”. Um that is like that’s kind of a contradiction like saying they’re very important but they have been excluded. They have been part of the norm/
33. A: Ok
34. E: but they have been excluded. Now being very important and being excluded. Those are not contradictions.
35. A: Ok.
36. E: Because you can be important and excluded that’s//
37. A: Un huh
38. E: you know pretty much basic in multicultural society//
39. A: Ok
40. E: Or they’re excluded. However, being that it’s part of the norm//
41. A: ((Laughs))
42. E: and excluded from mainstream, these two contradict.
43. A: Oh that's (?) .
44. E: Does that make sense?
45. A: Yes.
46. E: Ok.

The last phase of excerpt 4 is separated into two parts each revolving around a different clarification question by Ayumi who has just finished reading paragraphs four to seven of her essay aloud to the tutor who does not have a copy of it. “These two” that Ellen refers to in line 56 are the two sentences in paragraph three referred to above that state that African American artists are part of the norm, yet marginalized. Ellen reiterates that these two sentences are contradictory by stating that the ideas are “mutually exclusive” in lines 60 and 62. In part I (lines 47–62), Ayumi actually negotiates non-revision of the contradiction by asking if she can still say that “they” (i.e., African American Artists) have been part of the norm in line 49, but the tutor rejects this strategy.

I . Part of the norm, right?
47. A: But can I come back the.. um, after I say this//
48. E: Un huh
49. A: I can say “they have been in first part of the norm, right? I mean you say the sentence could be problem?
50. E: Um huh. Right. That's where I see your contradiction. Because //
51. A: (laughs)
52. E: like like if you have this statement//
53. A: Un huh
54. E: this statement, and this statement//
55. A: Yes
56. E: These are the only, this is the only statement that contradicts one of them. Like these two you can have even though if they are saying the same thing//
57. A: Un huh
58. E: They can both happen.
59. A: Ok.
60. E: But these two are mutually exclusive.
61. A: (laughs).
62. E: You can't have one with the other.

In part II (lines 72–77), Ayumi continues to negotiate a revision of the problem paragraph, but it is clear that she does not fully grasp the mutually exclusive and incompatible nature of her two sentences when she suggests (line 72) that the problem can be solved by “more explanation” that does not revise the contradictory statements themselves. In parts I and II, Ayumi initiates negotiations of how to revise her paper to solve for the contradiction problem. However, Ellen rejects the first suggestion of no change in part I, and in part II Ellen gives only lukewarm, conditional ratification of the idea of
further explanation. In line 75, her agreement is downgraded by the words, "you can try", followed immediately by inferring only on condition you eliminate the contradiction. The negotiation of revision of the paragraph three contradiction ends here. The tutor has pointed out a rhetorical-level problem. She has explained what the problem is and why it is a problem, but the negotiation of revision lacks critical depth since there is no negotiation of exactly how to rewrite the paragraph so as to solve the problem. This contrasts sharply with the negotiation of revision between Janice and her tutor in excerpt 5 to which we will turn our attention now.

II. More explanation?
72. A: How about if I put more explanation what try to say could be work or it's better to:
73. E: Well if if you want to explain it more and bring the bring this statement with these two/
74. A: Ok
75. E: You can try. But as it stands right now it contradicts this one.
76. A: (laughs) Ok.
77. E: Ok.

Excerpt 5 provides a second contrastive example of a rhetorical-level negotiation. In this excerpt, Janice, an American telecommunications senior and L1 writer of American English discusses an untitled paper comparing French and US Television standards with Debra, an undergraduate writing center tutor. In lines 1-5, Debra asks Janice about where she does her analysis and jokingly suggests in line 5 that by doing her analysis in the body of her paper the student has stolen her next suggestion. In line 6, Janice asks Debra whether her 'one sentence' conclusion, which contains one time clause fragment that Janice discovers as she reads the paper aloud, and one complex sentence, is too long. In line 7, Debra says that the sentence does have too many ideas "all together at once". She agrees with Janice (line 8) that the ideas should be separated and explains that a summary should have all of the main points of what you have found.

From line 10, Janice begins to list the main points that she has made. First, she says that technical systems between the US and France are very similar, but that France has more liberal program content standards. She continues to explain that video and screen technical standard differences make French and US video tapes incompatible. She concludes in line 21 that the only real similarity is the first one mentioned (line 10) and that everything else is different.

5. The Summary
D: Debra, the writing center tutor.
J: Janice, the senior telecommunications student.
Analysis Location Question & Sentence Length
1. D: Um, do you make like the conclusions about what you found in the paper or is that what you're summary's for? Do you know what I mean? Like, do you present the data that you found in the paper and then your summary is for like making conclusions about that data or do you analyze it within the paper?
2. J: I kind of, you know, I think I analyze it within the paper.
3. D: Ok.
4. J: Like I just tell them about the standards and the difference between the standards and why they're different, why they don't compare.
5. D: Ok, yeah that sounds (?). Ok then there goes that idea ((laugh)), um, (when looking at the different aspects of television in the U.S. and France and comparing them it is difficult to say that one country is better than the other one in terms of program content, regulation, new technologies and standards. Ok.
6. J: Is that too long of a sentence?
7. D: It's a long sentence, um like grammatically it is correct, you know, and you can say it but there's sort of a lot of ideas altogether at once and it's sort of a lot to/
8. J: Maybe I can separate them
9. D: take in, yeah. Because what are you basically trying to say in your summary, like what's the, the main point of everything you found?

Main Points List
10. J: The main point is that um, some of the different parts of the television systems between France and the United States are very similar, like the new technologies, um, they're both experimenting with digital television right now.
11. D: Ok.
12. J: And so that's similar but then like regulation they're really liberal in terms of program content/
13. D: Yeah
14. J: like
15. D: like anything can be ((laughs)) (?) TV and we can't and/
16. D: Right and we just have that new rating system too
17. J: Yeah and with standards, um, we can't, they're totally different standards, like you couldn't take a tape from here and watch it over there because the screens are different like the
18. D: Oh, ok
19. J: You know you'd have to get it converted.
20. D: Ok so/ (?) Ok.
21. J: So that's totally different and um I guess the only real similarity is that they're both experimenting with new technology, oh and importing and exporting. I talked in the paper about how American television is being imported into France but the number one watched show is still a French made show.
22. D: Oh, ok.

In lines 32-35, the tutor confirms that the student is employing a comparison and contrast approach to her paper, she then gives the student advice on how to write the paragraph in lines 38 and 40. She advises Janice to clearly state that it is difficult to compare the two countries systems, but then she advises her to summarize the main points "just like when you talk" because if you go back and read your paper you want to include too much detail. In lines 41-42, Janice confirms her understanding. The negotiation of rhetorical-level revision between Janice and Debra reaches much greater depth
than the negotiation in excerpt 4. Also, the student's suggestions are quickly ratified by the tutor, and the negotiation of revision includes a discussion of not only what should be revised, namely the one sentence conclusion, but an extensive negotiation of how to revise it. This contrasts sharply with Ellen's rejections of Ayumi's advice and with the absence of any explicit tutor "how to" advice.

32. D: So do you basically stick to similarities and differences then?
33. J: Yeah, yeah, I compare em, I mean I say
34. D: So that's the basis of the whole paper, right?
35. J: Right.

How I'd Write the Summary
36. D: Ok. So for your conclusion, um you could start out with this idea of how difficult it is to compare them but yet your, still your whole paper is about comparing them.
38. D: So you can't really say you can't compare them, you know. So that's that's how I'd start it out is that it just coming straight out and saying, you know, there are so many different factors to think that it makes it really difficult to compare the systems of these two countries you know, but then you go into, then, I, just like, just like when you talk about it you know how you sort of like summarize what it's about. That's how I'd go about writing the summary is because, just like, when you think about it you're thinking your thinking about just what the main points are/
39. J: Un huh
40. D: you know, and even though you have all the detail in here, if you go back and read through it then all the detail keeps jumping out at you and you think it's important and you want to include it and it makes it really long.
41. J: So don't read back and just write similar except in better format to what I just said to you.
42. D: Right.

Next, we turn our attention to an investigation of the influence of the negotiated revisions in excerpts 4 and 5 on the subsequent text revisions of both students.

Phase II: Text Revisions

In phase two, a limited investigation of the impact of negotiated rhetorical revision on Ayumi's and Janice's post-writing conference revisions is conducted. The analysis is limited in the sense that excerpt 4 represents the only RN instance in Ayumi's data; whereas, excerpt 5 is just one of four RNs identified in Janice's writing conference. The analysis of revision in this section involves three steps. First, each revised text is carefully compared to the original version to identify every change that has been made. Next, each textual change is checked for the incorporation of tutor or student revision suggestions. Finally, a judgement is made regarding the successfulness of the revision following Goldstein and Conrad's definition of success:
We defined successful revisions as those we judged had solved or improved upon a rhetorical problem discussed in the conference while being consistent with the writer’s purpose, main point, and audience. This allowed us to credit as successful those revisions that solved the rhetorical problem under discussion even if, when a strategy had been discussed in a conference, the student chose to use a different one (1990, p. 449).

Of the three steps outlined above, Mendonca and Johnson’s (1994) analysis of negotiated revisions only employs steps one and two. In step two they investigate for the incorporation of peer suggestions or the non-incorporation of peer suggestions. Goldstein and Conrad’s (1990) analysis skips step two and focuses on making three judgments for each instance of negotiation: successful revision, unsuccessful revision, or no revision. My analysis incorporates and extends these two approaches. In step two, I include any of the student’s own revision suggestions as well as the tutor’s suggestions. In step three, in addition to identifying successful, unsuccessful and lack of revision outcomes, I identify whether the success was influenced by tutor or student suggestions, by both, or by other factors. Following Goldstein and Conrad, a revision may be determined successful if it solves a rhetorical-level problem discussed in the writing conference regardless of whether the actual solution employed was discussed or not.

Below is the “original version” of paragraph three of Ayumi’s Final Question paper, the version that was handed into her professor for a grade. Ayumi received a 3.5 grade for this paper, a middle grade between a 3.0 which is a passing grade in graduate school and a 4.0 which is the highest grade possible. In paragraph three, her professor underlined the words “are not marginal” and “continue to be marginalized” which have been italicized below, and wrote “? contradiction” over the latter phrase. Previous to the conference with Ellen reported on here, the researcher agreed with the professor that this was indeed a logical contradiction. After conferencing with the researcher, Ayumi wrote the “first revision” of paragraph three also included below. The changes between the original and first versions will not be discussed in depth because the first version was the only version discussed in Ayumi and Ellen’s writing conference. Still, for sake of clarity, the changes between the original and the first revisions of paragraph three will be briefly highlighted before preceding to looking at the changes between the first and second revisions.

**Original Version of Paragraph 3 Ayumi’s “Final Question”**

In the art world, after the 1950s the gradual collision of Modernism myth, which asserted “universal value Judgment,” was observed, and people started to doubt who was excluded from the “judgment”. The truth of the matter is that the US has always been multicultural and multiracial society. People of color were not, and are not marginal in America and the art world. They have been in fact part of the norm. They have been and continue to be marginalized, because of the reminiscence of the colonialist era which claimed Western value judgment established by white male. Art history which once served as an ideological presentation of Western civilization had to face the appearance of “post”-modernism, which uncovered that value judgments are subject to the influence of forces, as these are shaped by various factors such as race, gender, age, occupation, and that the reality of quality changes from culture to culture, as it does from age to age. One who takes a “post-modernism” or “multiculturalism” position suggests that value judgment reflects, not eternal verities, but merely the image of the viewer who sees not the outside world, but himself in a mirror. This is the equivalent of saying that there is no such thing as “objective reality”; meaning is socially constructed. All this, in its different ways, views
race as ideology, as political action. 'Ideology' tends to be an omnibus word. Very roughly, it looks not at black itself, but at the relationships between black and other ethnicities, and black and the society. (253 words)

The underlined words in the first revision of paragraph three below indicate additions that Ayumi made to the original version of paragraph three. Italics identify the contradictory terms pointed out by the professor. Italics and underlines indicate a substitution. Double strike through lines indicate deletions. Note that the first revision is 76 words longer than the original and it includes several additions, a substitution and a deletion. Ayumi's additions make some improvements to the paragraph. The first addition makes it clear earlier in the paragraph that a post-modern analysis is being employed. The second addition explains why African American art is not marginal; i.e., it has had a “significant impact on American art”. The addition of the transition word “nevertheless” helps to improve cohesiveness. Ayumi then substitutes “marginalized” with “excluded” and explains that the exclusion is unfair. The next addition explains further how the artists and their art have been excluded by being “classified in unofficial hierarchies”. The deletion eliminates a sentence that the professor's written feedback indicated was confusing. However, as Ellen explains in excerpt 4, the terms “excluded” and “norm” are mutually exclusive. Ayumi has not succeeded in eliminating the logical contradiction.

First Revision of Paragraph 3

In the art world, after the 1950s the gradual collision of Modernism myth, which asserted “universal value judgment,” was observed, and the people started to question who was excluded from the “judgment”. Then, the emergence of "Post-Modernism" have uncovered the structure of art world and academia which has been established only by “white” elitists. The truth of the matter is that the US has always been multicultural and multiracial society. People of color were not, and are not marginal in America and the art world. Their artistic achievements in art history has been remarkable and significant impact on American art. They have been in fact part of the norm. Nevertheless, they have been and continue to be unfairly excluded from "main streams of art history", which have been shaped by the reminiscence of the colonialist era which claimed Western value judgment established by white male. Art and the artists have been classified in unofficial hierarchies according to definitions constructed by “white” scholars, and artists of color and their works are deemed insignificance. Art history which once served as an ideological presentation of Western civilization had to face the appearance of “post”-modernism, which uncovered that value judgments are subject to the influence of forces, as these are shaped by various factors such as race, gender, age, occupation, and that the reality of quality changes from culture to culture, as it does from age to age. One who takes a “post-modernism” or “multiculturalism” position suggests that value judgment reflects, not eternal verities, but merely the image of the viewer who see not the outside world, but himself in a mirror. This is the equivalent of saying that there is no such things as “objective reality”; meaning is socially constructed. All this, in its different ways, views race as ideology, as political action. Very roughly, it looks not at black itself which is merely determined by biological characteristics, but at the relationships between black and other ethnicities, and black and the society. (329 words)

In the second and final revision of paragraph three, Ayumi makes one deletion and one addition. The addition appears to come from the professor’s written feedback on the original version and not
from the writing conference. The deletion eliminates one problem sentence that Ellen points out in excerpt 4, but it leaves the mutually exclusive terms in italics in tact. Post-conference playbacks and interviews with Ayumi indicate that she was still not convinced that there was a contradiction in paragraph three. Clearly, Ayumi does not succeed in solving the rhetorical problem negotiated with Ellen either in her first or in her second revision.

Second Revision of Paragraph 3

In the art world, after the 1950s the gradual collision of Modernism myth, which asserted "universal value Judgment," was observed, and the people started to question who was excluded from the "judgment". Then, the emergence of "Post-Modernism" have uncovered the structure of art world and academia which has been established only by 'white' elitists. The truth of the matter is that the US has always been multicultural and multiracial society. People of color were not, and are not marginal in America and the art world. Their artistic achievements in art history has been remarkable and significant impact on American art. They have been in fact part of the structure. Nevertheless, they have been and continue to be unfairly excluded from "main streams of art history", which have been shaped by the reminisce of the colonialist era which claimed Western value judgment established by white male. Thus Art and the artists have been classified in unofficial hierarchies according to definitions constructed by "white" scholars and artists of color and their works are deemed insignificance. Art history which once served as an ideological presentation of Western civilization had to face the appearance of "post"-modernism, which uncovered that value judgments are subject to the influence of forces, as these are shaped by various factors such as race, gender, age, occupation, and that the reality of quality changes from culture to culture, as it does from age to age. One who takes a "post- -modernism" or "multiculturalism" position suggests that value judgment reflects not eternal verities, but merely the image of the viewer who see not the outside world, but himself in a mirror. This is the equivalent of saying that there is no such things as "objective reality"; meaning is socially constructed. All this, in its different ways, views race as ideology, as political action. Very roughly, it looks not at black itself which is merely determined by biological characteristics, but at the relationships between black and other ethnicities, and black and the society. (321 words)

Next, we will investigate the impact of Ellen and Janice's rhetorical-level negotiation. Below is the "original version" of Janice’s “one sentence” summary that was discussed in excerpt 5 above. The summary consists of a section subtitle and number, a time clause fragment and one complex sentence. Simple substitutions are indicated in bold face and italic font. Notice that Janice has substituted the lowercase letters in her subtitle with uppercase letters. Also, as indicated in bold and italics, the period has been replaced by a comma and the uppercase "it" has been changed to a lower case "i" effectively solving the grammatical error that Janice had noticed and correctly edited on her copy of her paper while reading the summary aloud. None of these changes where negotiated during the writing conference. All of the other changes, however, are additions that are related to points negotiated during the writing conference. These additions will be discussed one by one below.

Original Version of Janice’s Summary

VIII Summary

When looking at the different aspects of television in the US and France and comparing them. It is difficult to say that one country is "better" than the other in terms of program content, regulation and standards. (37 words)
VIII SUMMARY

1 When looking at the different aspects of television in the US and France and comparing them, it is difficult to say that one country is "better" than the other in terms of program content, regulation, new technologies and standards. The United States is stricter when it comes to program content, like nudity. It is difficult to say whether that is "better" or "worse" than the more liberal ideas in France that nudity should be seen on television. The reason is because the US and France involve two separate cultures that have their own identities.

2 People in France do not feel demoralized by nudity on TV because they have learned to identify it with the French culture and are used to it. Americans have learned to adapt to a different culture that is uncomfortable with the idea of nudity on television. It is not right to invade on a culture's identity and try to change it. That is why Americans accept the nudity on French television and the French accept the non-nudity on American television.

3 Television systems from different countries sometimes are similar when it comes to new technologies. If an invention is discovered and announced around the world, all of the countries that are capable will try to take advantage of the new technology in the best, most profitable way. The technology succeeds or fails depending on the culture of the country. No matter how a country uses that technology one cannot consider it "better" or "worse" than another country because there are different cultures and identities involved with each country.

4 Although many times countries attempt to invade other cultures and impose their ideas on them, it is impossible to force an idea, culture, or identity onto someone that, in the case of television systems, has already established their own successful way of operating. (304 words)

Janice's additions to her revised summary expand it by a total of 267 words. In line 5 of excerpt 5, Debra echoes the original summary version when she says, "it is difficult to say that one country is better than the other one in terms of program content, regulation, new technologies and standards. OK.", but adds the term "new technologies", an addition that appears in the revision. In line 36, Debra suggests that Janice state "how difficult it is to compare them", and in line 38, she suggests "coming straight out and saying... there are so many different factors". Janice does not directly incorporate these ideas, but the repeated expression of "It is difficult to say" in the third sentence of paragraph one provides added emphasis that is consistent with the tenor of these suggestions.

The specific example of more liberal French nudity standards and the rationale for the liberal French content restrictions that follows in the final sentence of paragraph one were not discussed in the writing conference. Likewise, none of the content of paragraph two was specifically discussed in the writing conference either, but it elaborates on repeated themes such as "program content" in line 5, "liberal in terms of program content" in line 12, and "ratings in the US" line 16 as well as follows the tutor's advice in line 9 to state the main point of everything that is found in the summary.

Paragraph three adds information about the similarities between the US and France in adapting new technologies, a topic Janice talks about in lines 10 and 21 of excerpt 5, and repeats the theme that you can not say one system is better than the other with the phrase "one cannot consider it 'better' or 'worse' than another country. Paragraph four builds on this theme with the cautionary note that it is not wise to "invade other cultures and impose... ideas on them".

Several points listed in the writing conference by Janice were not incorporated into the revised summary. She does not include any mention of differences in video tape and screen standards that
necessitate conversions when going between countries. Also, not mentioned are difficulties in importing American shows to France. Nevertheless, this revision should be judged a success according to Goldstein and Conrad’s criteria, since Janice’s summary revision clearly improves upon rhetorical problems pointed out by the tutor and is consistent with the writer’s stated purpose. To recap, Debra points out two related problems in lines 7 and 9 of excerpt 5: (1) the solitary sentence in the conclusion is too long and too packed with many ideas; (2) a summary needs to state the main point of everything that is found. Janice’s new four paragraph summary alleviates the packing of too many ideas into one sentence by providing a more detailed summary of each of four items of comparison listed in the first sentence of paragraph one: program content, regulation, new technologies and standards. Additionally, the revised summary is clearly more effective in restating the author’s main points.

**Phase III: Discovering “Invisible” Logic Threads**

Despite repeated professor, researcher, and tutor involvement, Ayumi could not “see” the contradiction in her Final Question paper. In the final interview with Ayumi months after the writing conference session reported on here, she confessed that she could still not understand why we said there was a contradiction. Although it is true that paragraph three contains numerous grammatical errors and that it is highly likely that Ayumi did not completely understand the full semantic breadth of the contradictory words, such as “marginal” and “norm”, or “main stream” and “excluded” that created the problematic contradictions in her paper, I believe that the major reason for the lack of successful revision was due to Ayumi’s resistance to the more linear topic development expected by her readers (Clyne, 1994; Fox, 1994; Gee, 1996; Mosher, 2000).

As Leki (1992) states, native English speakers expect academic English writing to be hierarchically organized such that “generalizations are supported by subtopics and specific explanations that are directly related to the main point under discussion (p. 94).” Bennett (1998), similarly, describes both American written and spoken communication style as linear:

> European Americans, particularly males, tend to use a linear style that marches through point a, point b, and point c, establishing links from point to point, and finally states an explicit conclusion. When some veers from this line, he or she is likely hear a statement such as “I’m not quite following you,”… or “What’s the bottom line?” In many school systems, this style has been established as the only one indicative of critical thinking. It is, however, a culturally rare form of discourse (p. 20).

Hinds (1990) argues that American readers’ default expectation for expository prose is for a deductive linear organization. In deductive discourse, thesis statements are stated in the introduction and then discussed and developed point by point through out the paper in tight linear fashion. Similarly, the main ideas of paragraphs are stated early and then developed. Failing to find deductive topic development, American readers expect an equally linear inductive organization. In sharp contrast to this, according to Hinds, “quasi-inductive” topic organization is acceptable to Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai readers. In such discourse, ideas are developed slowly and are not linked together as explicitly as in linear discourse. The term “quasi” refers to this relative scarcity of explicit logical links, transitions and advance organizers that American readers of academic writing expect as well as
to implicitly stated conclusions. In East Asian quasi-inductive prose, the main ideas of text do not become fully clear to readers until towards the end of paragraphs and texts, and even then may be phrased too indirectly and suggestively for readers with linear expectations to comprehend.

As Gee (1996, pp. 186 & 190) argues, for most of us the discourse structures that we employ to organize written text operate at an unconscious and unreflective level. Without reflection, our ways of reading, writing, talking, thinking or acting merely seem natural, obvious and intelligent to us. In the development of Western culture and science, a standard underlying assumption has been that all of life can be arranged on one linear and hierarchically organized development chain. Although modern biology recognizes that all living creatures do not fit a single linear developmental hierarchy, and can actually be more accurately described as forming constantly ramifying, bush-like branching patterns, the existence of such a hierarchy is still the “master assumption” that dominates much non-scientific and scientific discourse.

Fox (1994) argues that many international students resist adapting the direct, linear and critical writing style of US academic writing because it sharply contrasts with what they have learned in their own cultures and clashes with their primary cultural identities. Moreover, she states that if students try to “correct” their writing “problems” without understanding the cultural assumptions behind them, they may struggle for a very long time, even years without success. Below, I will argue that Ayumi’s Final Question paper is tied together by a subtle non-linear pattern of logical threads that went undetected by those of us who tried to assist in the revision process because we were operating on a different “master assumption” that blinded us to the overall logic of her paper. Ayumi, in turn, could not “see” the contradiction in paragraph three because she failed to grasp the cultural assumptions behind mainstream US academic prose.

The stimulus for conducting a logical analysis of Ayumi’s paper is survey research conducted by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1999) who surveyed 389 Japanese high school students, 336 Japanese university students, 50 American high school students and 40 American university students regarding their perceptions of academic writing. These researchers found that although both Japanese and American students perceived organization in academic writing as very important, their concept of ‘coherence’ differed. The Japanese students emphasized overall structure (i.e., “logical path” from introduction to conclusion); while the American students placed considerably more emphasis on structural components and inter-relationships (i.e., good introduction, good conclusion, tight connections, support for assertions). As will be shown in the analysis below, Ayumi’s paper does not have a very strong introduction or conclusion, and the explicit logical connections between ideas are often weak or non-existent; however, a more holistic reading and renewed attention to subtle cues in the writing conference reveal traces of an implicit non-linear logical path. (See Appendix A for a complete copy of Ayumi’s paper.)

In paragraph one, the author seems to state two broad goals for the paper. First, the author suggests that she wants to identify the common traits in African American art. Secondly, she implies that she wants to determine the meaning of race by asking the question, “What does ‘race’ mean?” Presumably, race refers to the black race, and presumably the answer to this question will help us to identify a common set of traits in African American art; however, this is not explicitly stated. There are no explicit logical ties linking these implicit goals; that is, there is no link that indicates how an answer to the meaning of race question can help us to identify a common set of African American art
characteristics. In fact, the interpretation that the first paragraph states two goals itself is dependent on reader assumptions that paragraph one is the introduction and that introductions layout the direction a paper will take. This paragraph does not contain a thesis-like statement that gives the author’s conclusions or opinions about her topic, nor is there a preview statement indicating the specific topics to be discussed and the exact order of the topics as we would expect in a more linear, deductively organized essay (Fox, 1994; Hinds, 1990; Connor, 1996; Mosher, 1996).

The first sentence of paragraph two supports the assumption that the paper will pursue the second implicit goal (i.e., defining race) when it states that the definition of race has not been constant in US political and social history. As the professor commented on the original draft, the middle of the paragraph is rather hard to follow, but the main point seems to be that politically and legally African Americans achieved power in the 60s & 70s, so they are no longer politically marginal. The author says that race consciousness (i.e., that black and white are not a “single race”) was heightened during the “Civil Rights Movement”, thereby implying that the definition of race changed. The citation of Judith Wilson in the last sentence introduces the totally new race related subtopics of “physical appearance” and “genealogy” that they are not developed or explicitly linked to any propositions in the rest of the paragraph.

Paragraph three begins with a transition sentence that indicates that we are going back to the 1950s—the same time frame as the last paragraph, but that this time the topic is the art world instead of the political and social world; that is, the author suggests that she will now pursue her first goal, but in the reverse order as listed in paragraph one, another non-linear feature of her text. Next, Ayumi seems to say that in the art world after the 1950s, postmodernist scholarship shows that African American artists’ contributions have been and are significant in the American art world; that is, African American artists are not marginal and inferior, but part of the norm, part of the main stream of quality art because the US is a multicultural and multiracial society (i.e., the conclusion of paragraph 2), and because their art has had a significant impact on American art. Yet, their contributions have been unfairly marginalized by white male elite historians’ accounts of art, until the appearance of postmodernism revealed that these historians’ biases had led them to incorrectly judge African American art as inferior. As mentioned earlier, the use of the (unreal) conditional in lines 9 and 11 of excerpt 4 reinforces this interpretation when Ayumi says, “...if there are no discrimination or biases of the people who makes the art history they are part of the norm. I mean their artistic achievements always contribute to the development of art in America.” Interestingly, in line 11, Ayumi states that “people are not marginal” suggesting that she distinguishes between people being marginalized and the people’s art being marginalized. One may infer that she wants to say that although African American art has been marginalized in the past, African Americans themselves at least are not longer marginal, a point made in the next to the last sentence of paragraph two.

In the next to the last sentence of paragraph three, Ayumi states that race is ideology and political action. In the last sentence, she adds that it is not determined by biological characteristics, but by the relationships between black and other ethnicities and society, i.e., by politics. Now, one can begin to see why Ayumi cited Judith Wilson at the end of paragraph two, but making this connection requires a holistic, non-linear reading. At this point in the essay, Ayumi seems to be saying that African Americans have not been politically marginal since the civil rights movement (paragraph 2), nor has their art been marginal since the appearance of post-modernist accounts of American art history
(paragraph 3). It seems that the reader is expected to infer that if African Americans are no longer politically marginal (paragraph 2), and that race is politically determined (paragraph 3), then African American art cannot be marginal. This logically consistent conclusion, of course, requires a highly interpretive non-linear reading, but it is consistent with what Hinds (1980; Robinson, 1993) identifies as a “return to the baseline pattern” in Japanese editorials, a pattern in which a topic keeps reoccurring in different parts of the text, but from a different perspective. Clyne (1994) claims that when the emphasis is more on content than on form, and when advance organizers are not tolerated as is the case in Japanese and German written discourse, a return to the base line pattern is “obligatory”.

In paragraph four, Ayumi’s main point seems to be that definitions of race like society itself are constantly changing because they are political and psychological constructs that are continually being created, a point that is logically consistent with the civil rights and postmodernist arguments of paragraphs two and three. The main point of paragraph five is harder to grasp since there are a series of vague referential phrases in the first half of the paragraph; i.e., “in this condition”, “under the circumstances”, “the political condition” and “issue raised around multiculturalism”. Still Ayumi’s point is that, in the context (i.e., “this condition”) of constantly changing definitions of blackness and conflict over the meaning of identities and ethnicities, the different social conditions surrounding each African American artist are inevitably different, creating a different meaning of blackness for each individual artist; consequently, each artist’s unique autobiography conflicts with broader societal definitions of race. Like many of her paragraphs the main point is not clear early in the paragraph, but emerges slowly and inductively.

Paragraph six, however, seems to begin more deductively. The first sentence suggests that this paragraph will provide a specific example of how the conflict surrounding black identity can be seen in the work of one African American artist. Although Ayumi does not support her assertion that Wilson’s work reproaches his own identity with any detailed discussion, making this paragraph difficult for readers unfamiliar with his work, the point of the paragraph as stated in sentence ten seems to be that Fred Wilson’s work is an example of the tension between the political (i.e., “identity as African-Americans”), the personal (i.e., “their own aesthetic”) and the Americaness of his aesthetic, a tension that is faced by all African American artists.

Despite the more deductive flavor of the first sentence, however, the main point of paragraph six, as noted above, is not clear until the final sentence of the paragraph; moreover, the paragraph has a rather digressive feel to it. Part of this digressive tone is due to the brief treatment of Wilson’s work (sentences two and three) that violate reader expectations set up in the first sentence. Sentences four to six shift to a more generalized societal level discussion of who decides what is important. Then, sentence seven returns to the “what is race” question raised in paragraph one. Sentence eight, a paraphrase of and elaboration of the “what is race” question, and sentence nine serve to delay an answer to the question until sentence ten which states the main point of the paragraph.

Yet, another non-linear aspect of paragraph six is that sentence ten is not phrased as an answer to the “what is race” question. To illustrate with an interpretative paraphrase of sentence ten, an example of a direct answer would be: “Race for African Americans is an illusive, in-flux political and psychological construct that is in tension with each individual artist’s identity.” Specifically, it is the lack of old discourse information like the word “race” in the subject position of sentence ten that makes it difficult for the linear reader to identify it as the answer to the “what is race” question (Smith &
Bernardt, 1997).

The first sentence of paragraph seven indicates that a "major problem" concerning "the political consideration of art" will be discussed next. Ayumi's point seems to be that postmodern political views of art eliminate objective (i.e., "absolutely observable and collectable") historical art evidence. Therefore, when considering African American art we must consider historical evidence and not just engage in political speculations. The reason for this claim is a vague, undeveloped and unsupported hint that many political, i.e., postmodern art arguments, are groundless because they are not grounded in history (i.e., in a "grand narrative"). Paragraph seven seems somewhat disconnected from the paper as a whole because the limitations to postmodern art analyses mentioned here are not mentioned in either paragraph one or eight. This paragraph's weak integration into the entire essay make it strikingly reminiscent of the ten or "turning away" part of the ki-sho-ten-ketsu: the artfully digressive third part of the classic four-part essay style borrowed from China (Hinds, 1990; Connor, 1996; Mosher, 1996).

The point of paragraph eight, the final paragraph of the essay, seems to be that black aesthetics are part of the norm because the black aesthetic is inseparable from the American aesthetic. Step by step the author builds a logical argument which seems to say that African American aesthetics have significantly contributed to American art and that elements of black art are so integrated into American art that they are inseparable from it, logically entailing that black art is part of the norm (although unfairly marginalized by elite white authorities in official versions of art history). In paragraph eight, this overriding logic seems to be reinforced by the statement "black culture is American culture". Supportive of this overriding logic interpretation, Clyne (1994) states that a characteristic feature of non-linear texts is the dependency of some propositions on overarching macropropositions. Finally, it seems likely that since this theme of inseparableness of black from American culture and of black art from American art has been repeated so often, albeit in non-linear baseline fashion, Ayumi finds it difficult to see why the professor, researcher and tutor continued to see a contradiction and failed see the dominant, logical threads of her essay.

Missed Hints and Miscommunication

On the surface, it seems that Ayumi understood why what she had written in paragraph three was contradictory. In lines 44-46 of excerpt 4, for example, Ellen asks if her explanation of the contradiction makes sense to Ayumi. Ayumi says "yes" and Ellen says OK signaling apparent understanding and agreement. However, in an e-mail message to this researcher, she wrote that she sometimes just pretended to understand. Also, in a post-writing conference interview several months later, she stated that she still did not understand why the tutor, professor and researcher all said it was a contradiction. In hindsight, it seems that we missed multiple hints of this non-understanding.

Vasseur, Broeder, & Roberts, (1996) state that lack of uptake and minimal responses are common implicit symptoms of non-understanding. Indeed, the credibility of Ayumi's surface level displays of understanding is undermined by six instances of embarrassed laughter and lack of verbal uptake in excerpt 4 alone (lines 5, 29, 41, 51, 61 and 76), all of which occur near some mention or suggestion of the existence of the contradiction. Significantly, these symptoms of non-understanding occur right up to the end of the excerpt; for example, immediately following Ellen's statement that "these two are
mutually exclusive” in line 60 and immediately following her statement that “as it stands right now it contradicts this one” in line 75.

An additional hint that Ayumi could not see the contradiction was the manner in which she read paragraphs 4-7 of her essay. Immediately after signaling understanding of the contradiction (line 45) Ayumi begins to read without further comment. As soon as she finishes though, she asks in line 49 if she can keep the problem sentence (“they have been in first part of the norm, right? I mean you say that sentence could be a problem?”). Interestingly, although Ayumi hedges with “could”, Ellen has already flatly stated that “these two contradict” (line 42). Moreover, the timing of this question seems to imply, that something about paragraphs four to seven is related to the contradiction and somehow cancels it out. At the end of the excerpt in line 75, Ayumi suggests that she thinks that the solution to the contradiction is not in the wording of the problem sentences in paragraph three, but in a lack of explanation, an explanation that she likely intended to have sufficiently provided in paragraphs four to seven as well as in the sentences that she added to the first revision of paragraph three.

In conclusion, Ayumi’s writing conference highlights the dangers of being lulled by surface level displays of agreement. It illustrates the need for writing tutors and teachers to be attuned to subtle symptoms of non-understanding as well as to the possibility of different logics. As Dipardo (1995) urges we need to learn to "listen more" and “talk less” so that we can catch clues and subtexts “rich in untapped meaning” (pp. 62 & 68). To listen well, however, we need to know what to listen for and to be better aware of our own particular biases that may be plugging our ears and our eyes to alternative, more implicit logics and rules of linguistic communication (Yamada, 1997). Finally, this study also helps to shed light on why the negotiation of revision does not always lead to successful revision. Ayumi’s conference suggests that successful revision must be predicated on a full understanding, and critical depth of negotiation that encompasses a mutually comprehensible discussion of not only what should be revised and why, but of how to revise it.

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Discovering "Invisible" Logic Threads in ESL Writing

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Appendix A

1 To delineate a common set of formal elements and/or concepts in the visual culture of peoples of African descent living in the United States means to find a common set of artistic traits in the works of Al Loving, L. M. Jones, Horace Pippin, Ben Patterson, Oscar Micheaux, H.O. Tanner, Carles White, Elizabeth Catlett, Martin Puyer, A Quilt Maker, Fred Wilson (the list is never finished). All the artists are black. This means that all of them fall into a single category in terms of “race”. Then a question arises: what does “race” mean?

2 Political and social in US history which affect a definition of “race” are not unchanging. In order to explore the fact, let us examine social history’s last fifty years. The 1950’s provided a keynote for the social and political movement in the United States. This was started with a black population that was one-tenth of America’s total. Thousands of blacks attended the National Emergency Civil Rights Conference in Washington. Most of their actions were law abiding, and the racial struggles in the United States gave forces to encourage black awareness of America as part of political driving force although blacks knew that a contradictory, double sides of America as yet unveiled, presenting an authenticity with the great possibility of the democratic nation as well as America inequity itself. As they gained the political power, the existence of inequality grew more serious. Through the 60’s and 70’s, the transition of the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power Era shaped significant changes of American consciousness for black and white, since both of races had to be faced with the reality America as the nation which cannot be acted if there is a single race. People of color were not marginal any more in the social and political structure which was shaped by the transition of US social sequence. The fact Judith Wilson says, “while physical appearance is frequently the sole criterion for determining race in daily practice, US law and custom define race as the product of genealogy.”

3 In the art world, after the 1950’s the gradual collision of Modernism myth, which asserted “universal value Judgment,” was observed, and the people started to question who was excluded
from the "judgment". Then, the emergence of "Post-Modernism" have uncovered the structure of art world and academia which has been established only by 'white' elitists. The truth of the matter is that the US has always been multicultural and multiracial society. People of color were not, and are not marginal in America and the art world. Their artistic achievements in art history has been remarkable and significant impact on American art. They have been in fact part of the norm. Nevertheless, they have been and continue to be unfairly excluded from "main streams of art history", which have been shaped by the reminiscence of the colonialist era which claimed Western value judgment established by white male. This art and the artists have been classified in unofficial hierarchy according to definitions constructed by "white" scholars, and artists of color and their works are deemed insignificance. Art history which once served as an ideological presentation of Western civilization had to face the appearance of "post"-modernism, which uncovered the value judgment are subject to the influence of forces, as these are shaped by various factors such as race, gender, age, occupation, and that the reality of quality change from culture to culture, as it does from age to age. One who takes a "post-modernism" or "multiculturalism" position suggests that value judgment reflects, not eternal verities, but merely the image of the viewer who see not the outside world, but himself in a mirror. This is the equivalent of saying that there is no such things as "objective reality"; meaning is socially constructed. All this, in its different ways, views race as ideology, as political action. Very roughly, it looks not at black itself which is merely determined by biological characteristics, but at the relationships between black and other ethnicities, and black and the society.

4 Then, one truth stands out. Race, which is relation to particular cultural positions are always changing since societies are in a constant state of change. Identities and ethnicities "must described as at times shifting, and, like culture, must be conceived of as always being in a state of process or conflict." Field argues:

If race lives today, it does not live on because we have inherited it from our forbearers of the seventeenth century or the eighteenth century or nineteenth because we continue to create it today. (...) If race lives today, it can do so only because we continue to create and re-create it in our social life, continued to verify it, and thus continue to need a social vocabulary that will allow us to make sense, not of what our ancestors did then, but what we ourselves choose to do now.

5 In this condition, "political" is an inescapable situation with the visual arts which are in engagement with the issue raised around multiculturalism and identity, consisting of various elements including race and gender. However, under the circumstances race is not a definitive character of for the visual cultures. When aesthetics and race are considered in relation to the political condition, it is impossible to focus on a single point such as "black aesthetic." In the visual culture of African-American artists, for example, the artists created particular works partly because they are black, but it was also partly because of many factors which are practiced outside ethnic issues. Meaning of black as race, moreover, can be different by social
condition surrounding the artist. There is always conflict between the political and autobiographical in identity within the visual culture.

6 (1) The confrontation surrounding identity is conceivable in Fred Wilson’s work, for instance. (2) His use narrative in “Primitivism: High and Low” such as question “who decides what is important?”, is not only question. (3) It is also challenge, confrontation, reproach toward his own identity as an artist who was born as a black rather than white. (4) Once the answer was clear: the white male. (5) Today the answer is more complicated. (6) It has to be discussed in terms of the political position of “who” and “what” in society. (7) Then we have to go back to the first question: what is race in American today? (8) What is black, and what is white...? (9) Ethnicities and identities, as stated above, are always in a state of process or conflict. (10) What the black artists has challenged is in conflict with their identity as African-Americans, their own aesthetic, and the ever-changing definition of Americaness.

7 Nevertheless, the major problem with the political consideration of art is, as Buchloh argues, that speculation of political aspects of artistic practice causes radical elimination of the historical dimension of art - the historical recollection, commemoration, or reflection. As Thompson and Vlach observed, historical traits in the visual culture are absolutely observable and collectable evidence. (Although problems always come along with this kind of observation). Another problem is how “political” is defined. As stated above, “politics” or ideology” tends to be an omnibus word. Now we surely know that the grounds are launched from nowhere in order to observe the cultures and aesthetics since we have lost “grand narrative”, and black aesthetic cannot be discussed only by politics.

8 Black aesthetic(s) has been constructed and deconstructed throughout the American history in the society which is in a constant state of change. It is all American’s task to tackle with continual struggle of the construction. This is because black culture is American culture. Search for a black aesthetic is search for an American aesthetic.

Appendix B

Transcribing Conventions:

// Double slashes indicate the point of overlapped or latched talk.
(( )) Double parentheses are used to provide non-verbal or contextual information.
(?) Question marks indicate the location of inaudible speech.
(.) One period indicates a very brief, but noticeable pause of one beat.
(....) Three periods indicate a pause of three beats.