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The Learning Space in Tutoring

How learning happens and/or does not happen

Abstract: Following the relational turn that has been observed in the areas of therapy and medical care (cf. Dinis 2010), a similar trend is beginning to develop in education. One didactic manifestation is in academic tutoring, and can be considered as a prototype of personalized education, which is founded on interactivity, dialogicality, and languaging. In our text, we focus on the phenomenon of interactivity and, predominantly, languaging as the substrate for the emergence of a special domain. Here, the learning space is defined as "a cognitive situation where a learner attunes in his/her own epistemic change." We observe that a learning space occurs as a teacher/tutor engages with aspects of the student's/tutee's epistemic frame by questioning, commenting on, or perspectivizing the utterances of the student. It follows that a learning space can be necessary but not sufficient for effective learning. As we show, some research into tutoring excessively idealizes it as an effective teaching tool. In the course of our brief scrutiny we find that success of the learning process also draws on factors like:

- being prepared

- being good at hearing and using hints

- being willing to improvise a learning trajectory

- allowing some degree of interdependence with the tutor

- using many kinds of first-order activity

Keywords: dialogicality; interactivity; languaging; tutoring

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1 Introduction

As research has shown (e.g. in Palfreyman 2008) participation in tutoring can be effective in helping students develop valuable transferable skills that include independent thinking, confidence, and self-reliance. In a survey carried out by Karpińska-Musiał (2016), nearly all students claim improvements in the formation of critical judgement and the logical and consistent presentation of ideas. This made them feel better equipped for the situations where they have to defend their own understanding. Relying on dialogical methods allows the student to engage effectively to as great an extent as circumstances permit. In a study by Rose et al. (2000), the Socratic style of tutoring is shown to yield more satisfactory educational results than the monological approaches of traditional didactics. The authors find a major reason for this in the autonomy students receive from making their own discoveries and arriving at their own solutions. This also increases understanding of the content under study (Brown and Kane 1988; Lovett 1992; Pressley et al. 1992). Collins and Stevens (1982) report that tutors who use a Socratic conversational style (which is the dominant paradigm of tutorial dialogue) see better educational results than those who use directive and monological (teacher-to-student) methods.

Further investigations show the importance of the tutee's self-explanations in raising the quality of his/her learning (Chi et al. 1989; Chi et al. 1994). They pinpoint benefits that are obtained as a result of tutoring. What they indicate, above all, is that learners show a noticeable increase in competencies and self-esteem. In our view, it is the jointness of the tutor's and tutee's activity that drives effects. As activity in which wordings play a part, it is *languaging* (see below) which actually prompts collective thinking and learning. Below we will present evidence in support of the claim. We will also show how overreliance on face-work in conversation can adversely affect a student's epistemic trajectory. In this paper we are particularly interested in how a tutor's dialogical practices affect the occurrences observed in the learning space. Our main focus is thus on how interactivity and languaging manifest themselves in tutoring talk which, given its institutional character, is infused with and driven by power and class relations.

We will pursue this goal by investigating a fragment of a tutoring session at Jesus College, Oxford University. It demonstrates that learning does not always happen within a tutorial domain that is designed to promote epistemic change. We therefore ask: When is learning enabled and when is it constrained or arrested? The following investigation shows that a great deal depends on the stance of a learner. In the example described, the two learners adopt contrasting

strategies. Whereas the one is primarily oriented to the social (maintaining face), the other draws on experience and discovery (learning). By placing our observations against both a macro-domain of the tertiary education organization and the micro-domain of students' private worlds, we open up a meso-domain of educational practice. As in other areas of complex social organizing (see Secchi and Cowley 2016), students draw on the meso-domain in co-acting with the tutor as they "come up with something to say." "Something" is, in this context, not merely a valuable contribution to the social interaction but, above all, an opportunity to act in ways that bring forth (signs of) students' epistemic change. Far from having to tell (and think) retrospectively, success depends on being able to think from what has previously struck them and, as they do so, to be aided in re-elaborating what they understand (while, in at least some cases, allowing for interdependency with a tutor).

2 Tutoring as a dialogical educational practice

Tutoring is classical – and built on reading the classics. Studies on students' ways of knowing (specifically connected knowing and separate knowing) and epistemological beliefs (specifically beliefs about knowledge structure, knowledge stability, learning speed, and learning ability) conclusively show that once offered adequate learning conditions, students can use tutoring to go beyond standard academic educational objectives and register more significant cognitive change than peers who lack such opportunities. Interestingly, one study (Schommer-Aikins and Hutter 2002) shows that the more the participants believed in complex and tentative knowledge, the more likely they were to take on multiple perspectives, be willing to modify their thinking and withhold ultimate decisions until all information was available, and acknowledge the complex, tentative nature of everyday issues. This is hypothetically bound up with how tutoring brings effects in the levels of student's confidence, independence and self-belief (as well as a knowledge of one's strengths).

Learning based on reflective practice (e.g. Tobin et al. 2009; Hart and Montague 2015; Horton-Deutsch and Sherwood 2017; Johansson et al. 2017) has long played an important role in teaching. The approach is embodied in tutoring as a practice that is educational and dialogical. The student-learner and tutor-instructor enter into a specific mode of conversation where they form judgements and evaluations by negotiating assessments and (subsequently) reaching agreement (Shotter 1993: 40). In educational dialogue, the participants arrive at moments where concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract

conceptualization, and active experimentation turn a full cycle (cf. Stice 1987; Kolb 2015). As is made clear, the practice contributes immensely to instructional process and, above all, performance by students who participate. What we expect of an educational process is thus a noticeable change in a student's competence. We find some explanation of how this arises in Shotter's comment: "Dialogically structured activities involve the creating and bringing into existence of what is uniquely new, what has never existed before" (Shotter 2015: 9). As a pedagogical method, tutoring links Buber's and Bakhtin's philosophy by placing dialogue at the center of human existence and communication. For Bakhtin (1986: 68), "the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward [...] an actively responsive understanding. [A]ny speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. [...] Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances." Within this framework being human becomes a matter of possessing the ability and the skill to establish dialogical relationships with one another as parties co-create a "speech chain" (Bakhtin 1986).

What we show in what follows is that some ways of being "actively responsive" are more epistemic than others. It is variety in ways of responding that makes tutoring dialogical in ways that do NOT apply to many classroom methods. Tutoring thus encourages another way of becoming or being human — one that highlights the epistemic. To pursue how this is possible, I turn to how people draw on constraints as they happen/do things together and, above all, as they gain self-esteem, confidence, and come to know. In so doing, appeal to a third person or "member's" perspective is replaced by a second-person view, where unfolding is part-of-social organizing. In our case, this organizing happens in the domain of tutoring and thus links Buber's thou-ness with Wittgensteinian and Bakhtinian themes. By focusing on an epistemic element, what follows brings out general observations about how people language (together) as they coordinate their bodily activity.

3 Learning space in the tutoring domain

A learning space can be defined as a "dialogically derived cognitive situation that emerges between a teacher/tutor and a learner." It allows for the construction of a "cognitive dimension" between the tutor and the students. It also allows the learner to experience and exhibit epistemic change by drawing on constraints such as physical wordings, bodily activity, and socio-cultural aspects of the setting. This change occurs not within a person but as "one

engages with the various resources of [...] a learning space" (Cowley, personal communication). A learning space is therefore grounded in use of interactivity or sense-saturated coordination (see Steffensen 2015) in order to draw on multiscalar dynamics. It arises as observers orient to events and construct understanding while involved in languaging in the broad sense of "activity in which physical wordings play a part" (see Cowley, this vol.). In this sense, one can speak of a *learning space* in cases as diverse as football training, writing an essay, planning a marketing survey, or playing a computer game. What all these domains share is that success within the space requires more than mere role rehearsing and role-performing. Above all, it requires that individuals make an effort to draw on interactivity to find their own ways and means. Individual learning comes to be seen as cognitive/epistemic change that can be measured by results that are sustained over time. As such, they can lead to ways of framing explicit knowledge or various competencies which an individual has developed. If change is something that happens as a result of working in the learning space, then a learning space is microgenetic by its very nature.

The learning space differs from Newell and Simon's (1972) problem space or, more specifically, a gap lying between the initial state where a problem emerges and a goal state where a cognizing agent reaches a solution. By applying a selection of means (operators) of transforming one state into another state, agents design a strategy which should take them to the desired outcome. The search through the problem space can be a more systematic procedure (algorithm) or a "rule of thumb" which a problem-solver applies to guide search. However, as Steffensen (2013) contends, "human problem-solving is far less linear and planned than assumed in much work on the topic. Rather than problem-solving, it appears as solution-probing in real-time. The cognitive trajectory to a viable solution is thus self-organized, unplanned, and on the edge of chaos (Steffensen 2013: 195)." While we can observe moments of solution-probing in the examples below, they all draw on interactivity, dialogicality, and languaging. In so doing, the students exhibit the learning process that has been described as "coming to conceive" (cf. Cowley and Fester, in press).

The learning space is designed around how parties language (or engage) with each other as they draw on dialogicality within a larger project. Just as in, say, playing a computer game, languaging is subordinate to what they do. Human agents cooperate in a physical space which may be manipulated by a lead party (or a team) that mediate and enable action, talk, and interactivity during innumerable projects and activity types. It also occurs within a particular institutional and infrastructural surround which, in the case of tutoring, includes objects such as the sofa where the students sit, the tutor's

armchair, the pens, the documents required, and the tutor herself. Indeed, even the seating arrangements contribute to affording specific kinds of interactive relations that arise between the agents and the physical environment where the educational event takes place.

Ideally (as emphasized in research on the Socratic method), tutoring should offer the students an opportunity to reflect, construct solutions, and then probe them as guided by an expert tutor. In Thibault and King's (2016: 7) terms, this exemplifies exploratory action, or the kind of guidance ("scaffolding") which involves "dialogically coordinated processes whereby one agent provides heuristic guidance to another agent's learning activity." Heuristic guidance in tutoring allows students to learn by seeking, discovery, and experience rather than from ready-made answers, solutions, or methods. Instead of this somewhat idealized picture, what follows explores a rather different case. By asking questions and commenting upon student's essays and utterances, the tutor offers hints and leads learners to a well-defined area where they should find a suitable answer. What we aim to show is that the idealized picture of the tutoring method often masks something that is rather more complex and heterogeneous.

4 Interactivity and languaging in tutoring

It is increasingly recognized that human minds are mutually connected and interdependent. The naturalness of this interdependency promotes many characteristically human abilities and forms of intelligence: these include thinking, knowing, believing, remembering, imagining, feeling, and acting. It follows that interactions between self and others generate thought and knowledge in that, "all real and integral understanding is actively responsive" (Bakhtin 1986: 69). Indeed, the insight is foundational to views that build on the concept of languaging and the closely related play of interactivity. The interpersonal world of the tutor and the tutee is, in these terms, a meso-domain or a social world of "I" and "the other." A learning space is an interpersonal world and as such it is enacted and re-enacted. The relationship that they build, develop, and maintain as dialogue unfolds is both mutually inclusive and embodies thinking as they language together. Thus, in social happenings between people or dialogue, parties actively make sense as they coordinate. In Linell's terms, "a conversation is a kind of social cognition" (Linell 2019) that, we can add, is saturated with sense and occurs in time and place. For Steffensen (2015), the focus falls on interactivity, while Cowley (e.g. 2011, 2013) prefers to

focus on languaging. The difference thus lies attention to pico-dynamics, on the one hand, and, on the other, how persons integrate actions and experiences with wordings. Gahrn-Andersen (this volume) distinguishes this as "narrow" interactivity from its "wide" counterpart – a world of pre-reflective meaning.

As people language they use elements of their environment to construct meaning. As they connect the past, the present and the future, the different time scales enable their bodies to talk to each other, to listen to talking others (and selves), and to read and write texts. Apart from such obviously "linguistic" activities, human beings also become engaged in language-based activities such as task solving, thinking aloud, doing self-talk, giving and interpreting signs, etc. In short, they "do" language. This also accords with the view that the most important things in human lives happen between persons, rather than within or without them (cf. Sidorkin 1999: 11). If so, it follows that the effectiveness of learning in tutoring is contingent upon how a tutor and learner create an interactional dialogical space.

In turning to the dialogical domain, we explore trajectories in a learning space. Tutoring is essentially based in and on dialogue and, for this reason, an exemplary case of languaging, or "activity in which wordings play a part." Cowley (this volume) refers to Mulcaster's 500-year-old insight that "languaging enables us to understand" and, in so doing, enables humans to engage actively with each other. Languaging includes all activities that involve language or, indeed, wordings. On this view, we find that the epistemic results the student/tutee enjoys are not brought by the "use" and "processing" of symbolic forms. Indeed, language is activity: as such, it is not "a rational item of knowledge that the mind deploys to express inner rationality" (Evans 2018: 10) but, rather, embodied (non-abstract), dynamical, (partly) nonlocal (Love 2004; Thibault 2011b; Cowley 2007), and multiscalar (existing on different timescales) (Steffensen and Cowley 2010).

On this view, language is characterized by the interactivity and responsivity that afford processes of appropriation, construction, and reconstruction of personal knowledge. Such a view of language and languaging allows us to understand tutoring not only as a mode of action, but also as a way of enacting thinking by resorting to how wordings can be integrated with concurrent moving and perceiving ("activity"). This happens as the students and the tutor co-engage in problem-solving and other cognitive tasks by coupling with each other and external resources.

It must be stressed at this point that this tutor–student co-agency is asymmetrical both interactionally and communicatively. As illustrated below, the institutional context (cf. Goffman 1983; Linell et al. 1988; Thornborrow 2016) of tutoring and talk-in-tutoring determines the nature of communication

between the two students and their tutor. The kind of interaction which the participants of a tutoring conversation develop is marked by role-distribution and behavioral patterns inherited from daily institutional practice. In many respects, therefore, they correspond to those observed in other educational situations (e.g. in exams, classes, or teacher's office hours). It is our conviction that the institutional character of tutoring favors learning and epistemic change –and that this is particularly so in situations when one or both parties are able to develop.

5 The analysis

We now build on Thibault and King's (2016) Multimodal Event Analysis (MMEA) to pursue how a tutor creates moments when learning is expected to happen. We exemplify with a five-minute fragment of a tutoring session on 18th century travel writing at Jesus College. The recording was made in order to present a sample of an Oxford University tutorial to the public on YouTube. The two participating students, Louise and Ankita, are in their second year of studies and are discussing a question based on a quotation from the chapter "Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift" in Terry Eagleton's *The English novel: An introduction*. It reads:

> Eighteenth-century travel writing is supposed to be in some ways a 'progressive' form, eager to investigate, exploit new technologies, acquire fresh knowledge and experience, and seize new opportunities for wealth. It centers on enterprise, optimism and self-sufficiency – all Whig-like, middle-class, commercialist values. It allows you to draw some satisfying contrasts between your own civilized condition and the benighted state of the peoples you come across in your wanderings. *Gulliver's Travels*, by contrast, is an 'anti-progressive' work in which the amnesiac protagonist learns little or nothing, since he seems to start out on each of his travels as a blank slate. The book, significantly, is not one seamless narrative like Defoe's novels, but a series of disconnected episodes. And Gulliver's memory seems to disappear down the cracks between them. In a parody of the travel book's customary optimism, he ends up out of his mind. (Eagleton 2005: 41)

In helping the students with the essay, the tutor, Professor Paulina Kewes supplied them with a bibliography and the following general advice (original punctuation and spelling):

> Please ensure the question/problem the essay will address is clearly formulated, that you engage with recent criticism in framing your argument, and that you offer close reading of the texts in developing it. Examiners repeatedly emphasize that the best answers are those which are the most analytical – so please avoid summary, description, surveys etc. You

are not expect to cover everything – the more specific the question/argument and the more closely you engage with the texts, the better the essay!

The tutorial took place after the essays had been marked and can be tracked to three major discussion phases: (1) the task given by the tutor; (2) the theme of the tutorial; and (3) the content of students' essays. The episode we investigate here features a number of moments which illustrate claims about learning space and, above all, how by entering this space (or not) the learner is likely to benefit in terms of epistemic change.

In the transcript, which in its full form appears in the Appendix, we use the following abbreviations: L=Louise (a student), A=Ankita (a student), P=Pauline (the tutor). We observe five phases:

1) Louise languages about her essay.
2) The tutor sets the task to Louise and Louise responds.
3) The tutor delegates the task to Ankita, and Louise takes over the dialogical space.
4) The tutor challenges Louise and provides her with a clue.
5) The tutor deepens the problem space.

We focus, first, on how the students manage these moments and, second, to what extent their dialogical strategies carry them on a learning trajectory. We show how the tutor uses the unfolding dynamics of the dialogue to open up a learning space where, in spite of good intentions, what happens, at first, fails to aid learning and, later, is effectively used by only one of the students.

At the beginning, Paulina's questions and remarks are aimed at bringing the students into the learning space and, indeed, encouraging them to explore. The tutor tries to get Louise back to the genre ("And when we think of travel genre"), nudging her towards an answer to the question ("Do we mean actual accounts of travel or fictional ones?"). Interestingly, Louise repeats what was in her essay and thus makes no epistemic gain. Rather, the question seems to make her aware of her subordinate role in tutor–students dynamics. Thus, on the trajectory of emotional expression, she embodies a set of expressions (see Figure 1) that include a downward tilt of the head, gaze into space, and fiddling with her hair – modes of expression that might be embarrassment, disappointment, resentment, or frustration. Louise makes a hurried reaction ("Erm, I think…") before the tutor manages to finish speaking. This is followed by a tentative answer to which the tutor offers no response ("I think fictional ones, yeah?"). It seems likely that this unexpected silence (one at odds with the norms of turn-taking in face-to-face interaction) generates a feeling of embarrassment or a feeling of being flustered. Strikingly, from this point

onwards, a conversation that could have taken an epistemic trajectory becomes a struggle as Louise tries to come up with a suitable response that sustains her image of self.

Figure 1: Louise after "Erm, I think fictional ones, yeah?"

In uttering the wordings, "I think fictional ones?" we can hear Louise's hesitation and uncertainty in the slow tempo of speech, lower volume, and final rising intonation on an affirmative clause. She seems to be realizing that, despite her best intentions, she cannot engage with the opportunity provided. In this manifest loss of confidence, she recognizes that Robinson Crusoe is a fictional character and, yet, continues to treat the tutor's question as concerning, not the character's attitudes, but the genre of travel writing. In spite of her failings, Louise manifestly hears her own lack of coherence. In trying to come to terms with failing to come up with an adequate reply, Louise misses a learning opportunity. Rather, she treats the moment as a problem space by coming up with a face-saving strategy. By realizing that she is unable to engage with what Paulina proposes, Louise is compelled to pay emotional costs that are displayed in her bodily work shown in Figure 2. While seeking to save face, she tilts her head, fiddles wither hair, and gazes in the distance.

Pauline offers Louise another opportunity. By seeking to refocus on the issue of genre she links the quotation that sparked the essay to what Louise has said. She says, "So you were taking issue with Terry Eagleton's assertion." She reinforces her invitation to refocus her thinking on considering the fictional character as exemplifying travel writing. As shown in Figure 3, she does so by making use of expressive bodywork: finger pointing, a smile, chin moving upwards, head going forward.

Figure 2: Louise on realizing that she is unable to relate to tutor's "invitation" to the learning space.

Still 1

Still 2

Still 3

Still 4

Figure 3: The tutor uses a repertoire of gestures
to reinforce the learning space she is opening for Louise as she says,
"So you were taking issue with Terry Eagleton's assertion."

In her follow up, Paulina continues, "Eagleton as you probably know is a very famous acclaimed critic and theorist of literature and it seems that he's a bit of a straw man for you, isn't he?" (Fig. 4). The many implications of such a claim seem to display that she would like Louise to offer a more in-depth interpretation. This appears in the pause before "famous acclaimed critic" and, strikingly, placing prominence on "famous" and "critic" while raising her eyebrows and giving a meaningful look or an educational cue built on irony.

Still 1

Still 2

Figure 4: The tutor puts the student's words in perspective,
"Eagleton, as you probably know, is a very famous acclaimed critic
and theorist of literature (Still 1) and it seems that
he's a bit of a straw man for you, isn't he?" (Still 2).

She marks the open nature of the learning space by saying "How is it possible that he so completely misunderstood what travel writing is about or is there something more to the quote?" (Fig. 4). In so doing, she uses a falling intonation (asserting rather than asking a question) which is reinforced with an "uncovering" gesture that turns into a prompt and a gentle suggestion to Louise. In trying to change her direction, Paulina invites Louise to consider her own analytical approach and, by implication, to use it to move toward more adequate solutions. The tutor enacts her role as a knowledgeable guide and mentor through a multitude of fine-grained gestures that contribute the interactivity of the triad. Once again, her gesturing becomes a form of the elicitation of specific content. At the same time, the tutor's cue satisfies all

Still 1

Still 2

Figure 5: The tutor elicits student's more insightful comments,
"How is it possible that he so completely misunderstood what travel writing is about (Still 1)
or is there something more to the quote?" (Still 2).

conditions of a provocative comment and, by this token, becomes an "ill-defined problem" for the student. It is notable that the tutor continuously avoids being direct by stating that Louise has mistakenly failed to distinguish between "travel writing" and the character of "Robinson Crusoe."[1] For Louise, it seems, this indirectness is part of the problem. Indeed, instead of *saying* that Louise is not focused on travel writing, Pauline makes explicit that Louise's essay is strikingly at odds with Eagleton's view. In so doing, she invites the student to become intellectually engaged and, sensing this, Louise seizes the occasion. Once again, the tutor helps by offering Louise a term she has failed to

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1 "Indirectness" and "irony" may be part of the genre; while the tutor is not English, she seems to have adopted this style of engaging.

pick up ("is there something more to the quote?"). The tutor's words seem aimed to tighten up the learning space and yet, for Louise, they are heard as setting another challenge.

When Louise picks up the turn immediately after Paulina has finished speaking, she merely reiterates her previous argument. In fact, by speaking of *Robinson Crusoe* and not Swift's travel writing she again fails to address the tutor's concerns or, seen in terms of power relations, offers an unsuitable answer:

> I don't think he's like completely misunderstood, I think it's just erm the contrast between an uncivilised land and England and a middle-class home and a middle-class environment. That's what along with that voyage will enable someone in the middle class to appreciate their environment because it it, you know, being in contrast with the uncivilized.

Instead of addressing the genre issue, Louise tries to save face by allowing that Eagleton has not "completely misunderstood." In her languaging, one is struck by how her vocalization changes. The rate of speech slows, there are more pauses and more cases of vowel lengthening. There is also a decrease in the level of her bodily activity with hand gestures becoming predominantly inwards directed. Finally, it seems, she hears herself speaking of Robinson Crusoe as a real person with a middle-class home. As she presents him as a representative of capitalism, she displays lack of confidence, considerable hesitation as, seemingly, she begins to realize that her approach is inappropriate. While she starts in an animated way (see Figure 6, Still 1), she loses confidence and ends up rubbing her hands together (see Figure 6, Still 4). The gestures seem to serve as a face-saving strategy that co-merge with feeling that she is unable to hinge on tutor's hints.

Still 1

Still 2

Still 3

Still 4

Figure 6: Louise's facial expression and gestures signal her loss of confidence while she is employing a face-saving strategy: from confident (Still 1) through less sure (Stills 2 and 3) to hesitation and loss for arguments (Still 4).

Still 1

Still 2

Still 3

Figure 7: Louise displays a face-saving strategy
as she prepares her turn at talk.

Later, Louise uses a face-saving strategy. She does so toward the end of Ankita's utterance in line 13 ("I think that's what fascinated me, it's kind of a more internal question"). On this occasion, before she utters any words, she

prepares herself for taking a turn by looking up, nodding at Ankita's arguments and casting a knowing glance at the tutor. This "knowing" glance is illustrated in Fig. 7, Still 2 in contrast to the upward glance before and after this moment (Stills 1 and 3)

She then begins with a dynamic verbal intrusion: "And I think that came up as the classes that …" As she does so, she invokes her past educational activity "[…] and you see, it's something like the unfortunate traveller like last time I did that." However, losing track of what she was trying to say, she continues, "there was inside tension between the how far you can take something as fact and Thomas Nash kind of played around with uhm erm, you know, fiction." At one point of this long utterance she mentions her past experience by saying "like last time I did that" (Fig. 8). For some ears, this may sound like a way of legitimizing the present through revoking the feats of the past and as such may be considered a likely attempt to make up for the "loss of face."

Figure 8: Louise does face-saving work
by bargaining "like last time I did that."

These (most probably) unwitting "face-saving" maneuvers seem to be a replacement strategy that appears as she realizes that her languaging is not meeting the tutor's expectations. It seems that in academic talk – and tutoring – normal "face" requirements are suspended. Indeed, to embark on an epistemic trajectory it may be necessary to focus elsewhere. Louise, however, is still deeply concerned with face and, in part at least, this may explain her failure to work effectively in the learning space. In contrast, what Ankita does while coordinating with the tutor (see below), she depends on prompting and recall of epistemic experience which seems appropriate to the tutor-constructed space. By observing what Louise does, one is bound to conclude that the tutor's questions or comments are only prompts. However, dialogical – or Socratic –

they may be, they are not sufficient in themselves to guarantee success for the learner.

Having looked at a case of a student's struggle to do epistemic work in the learning space, let us now consider an epistemically rewarding moment where the other student makes effective use of the tutor's opening. Ankita becomes active the moment Paulina asks her about her opinion after Louise's wild guess ("What do you think Ankita?"). She immediately refers to her own experience of reading Hariot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. She uses this argument.

> Um so last time I did an essay on account of Harriot and it was Harriot's True Report on Virginia and I was I was kind of struck by all that context when I was writing this essay because I would see those were those weren't fictionalised they were real reports that were written but in some ways they share a lot of the same narrative qualities as Robinson Crusoe does.

Ankita discretely corrects Louise by focusing on non-fictionalized cases that nonetheless share narrative qualities with Robinson Crusoe. Further, in so doing, rather than "rehearse" a previous argument, she elaborates on a learning experience of being "struck" by something. She deals with an "unfinalized" moment in retrospect and, by so doing, develops her thinking. By languaging about Hariot's report, Ankita makes an epistemically laden response to Paulina's question. Although she does so very indirectly, her narrative exemplifies thinking aloud by making up arguments as she languages about the issue in question.

The tutor's confirmatory comment on what Ankita is saying ("Which is itself based on some true accounts") and her approving facial expression (Fig. 9) encourages her to continue in the same self-assured and reasonably knowledgeable vein.

Still 1

Still 2

Figure 9: Paulina's bodily action as she affirms Ankita's answer
and shows contentment: "Which is itself based on (Still 1) some true accounts" (Still 2).

With her interjection and bodily work Paulina nudges Ankita to continue her work in the learning space and, thus, rewards entry into a reflective mode ("I was kind of just struck by what-what is fact and fiction in the travel genre and now Defoe does explore that in some ways [...]."). She then uses this observation for constructing a new solution ("[...] because his text his text although is set in this kind of exotic country and all that it ultimately it talks about the truth of England"). We can hear her connect the argument with the epistemic process (e.g. in the pause she makes between the repeated phrase "his text" and then in the repetition of "it" and "the" when she says "it ultimately it talks about the truth of England more than it talks about the truth of the the foreign place"). In this passage, not only does she reflect on what she had previously read but she also strives to use her recall of the text in drawing a novel conclusion. Toward the end of this turn, she displays some hesitation and uncertainty as her speech slows, and she lowers her intonation while glancing away from the tutor, fiddling with her pencil and eventually clinging to it with both hands (Fig 10). Then she pauses before summarizing ("It's kind of more internalized (in here)"). Of course, we cannot be sure what specifically "it" is taken to refer to: perhaps it is that, in the genre of Robinson Crusoe, England is more "internalized"? In coming to an "unfinalized" point such as this, she establishes new cognitive anchoring.

Still 1

Still 2

Still 3

Still 4

Still 5

Still 6

Figure 10: Change in Ankita's dynamics from "I was I was kind of struck by all that context when I was writing this essay" (Still 1–3) to "more than it talks about the truth of the foreign place" (Stills 4–6).

Toward the end of Ankita's turn, the tutor asks for an explanation of Eagleton's words ("So is he trying to get at something?"). Louise (who has so far given excessive focus to her essay) moves to continue (another case of a face-saving and role-playing strategy) with a hesitant "I mean [...]" However, as she realizes that she has nothing to say, she covers her mouth with her hand (see Figure 11). By withdrawing, she leaves open the learning space for Ankita. At this point the two students seem to attune in their uncertainty (or/and perhaps their embarrassment). In Figure 11, Ankita's and Louise's bodily actions align as they both slightly shift from forward-leaning positions that signal engagement and interest to a more "laid back" posture that suggests withdrawal:

Figure 11: The two students attune in uncertainty of what to say, each of them at a different stage of their learning trajectory.

After a moment of silence, Ankita finds the bodily resources needed to re-enter the learning space. Before so doing (see Figure 12), she makes sure that Louise will remain passive by glancing at her and, then, once she starts speaking, she becomes engaged with the argument that unfolds as described below.

Still 1

Still 2

Figure 12: Ankita prepares for entering the learning space (Still 1)
and begins her learning as she answers the tutor's hint (Still 2).

Ankita once again ranges in time by referring to her experience of reading Asham's text ("And I'm with Robert Ascham's The Schoolmaster he'd kind of talked about like the Englishman Italianated"). Her bodily work now becomes more relaxed and, for the first time, she makes gentle hand gestures together with the delicate smile that appears toward the end of her utterance (see Fig. 13).

Figure 13: Ankita unfolds her argument and her body goes along.

In making her case, she speaks smoothly, without pausing or hesitating, and, for the first time in the tutorial, manages to conclude a full thought (marked by the smile). There is, however, deliberation in her tone (e.g. "when a traveller goes abroad, he changes himself because of this because of this kind of meeting with with other people"). In this phasing, she presents herself as a dialogical partner whose claims remain open to correction and feedback ("And maybe he was getting at that aspect"). She thus exemplifies a much closer attunement to play the "game" that the tutor expects. Her intonation is steady,

and she speaks with self-assurance. Her position in the interplay of institutional roles is now higher and, it seems, above that of her fellow student. She demonstrates this stance in the final words of her turn ("I don't completely agree with the quote," Fig. 14), an intense stare at the tutor and a slightly self-assured smile as she rests her chin on her hand.

Figure 14: Ankita concludes, "I don't completely agree with that quote."

Having finished her turn, she appears well prepared to handle another task from the tutor who, once again, tightens the learning space (building on Ankita's progress). In so doing, she comments, "No I'm just interested because all of you seem to have bashed poor Terry Eagleton" and, in her irony, seeming to invite response. Ankita now boldly displays her stance: "I'm kind of bit more cynical about the purpose." While it is not possible to pursue what this implies, the remark suggests comfort with both her expertise and the game that they are playing (obviously, from her perspective). She continues with strong claims that elaborate her view "so in some ways his text itself was like an emblem of commercialism." This "cynical" construal is reinforced with bodily work (see Fig. 15) showing Ankita's confident progress as she moves along an epistemic trajectory.

The student displays are highly contrastive: whereas Louise remains in a "self-explanatory and face-saving" mode, Ankita manages to use her tutor's incentives. She scaffolds herself with the help of her notebook as she takes notes, turns its pages, searches for relevant material, and reads intently. Importantly, unlike Louise, she successfully uses previous learning experiences in thinking about current events. Accordingly, we can conclude that the students are in different places on their learning trajectories. While Louise shows difficulty in finding suitable ways of using the learning space and ultimately withdraws, for Ankita her silence leads to a take-off that uses Paulina's hints. Although one cannot say whether she gains understanding of

the tutor's concerns – the genre of *Gulliver's Travels* and Eagleton's view of its significance in the history of literature – this is not the main point. Rather, as appears from the unfolding of the conversation, this serves as little more than a learning springboard. Adopting this perspective, we find that Ankita uses the opportunities –and the learning space – more effectively than Louise.

Figure 15: Ankita's growing self-assurance in the learning zone
highlighted by the dynamics of her gestures.

Louise is rubbing her nose with the outer part of her hand as if "wiping" it which is considered socially unrefined and contrasts greatly with the more cultured bodily behavior displayed by Ankita. Equally odd in this instance is her hand waving accompanied with a heavy inbreath (Still 3). All these gestures (together with the closed posture in Still 2) may signal Louise's inability to find a conversational strategy for herself in this fragment of the tutoring.

6 Discussion

The events in tutoring talk are tools which promote learning. Indeed, as we have shown, the tutor uses them to create a learning space wherein students can attune within their own epistemic range. The tutor's style and mastery of the genre is such that her background, knowledge, and beliefs can all serve as resources. Indeed, this supports the view that constructing a learning space is a matter of how one plays the "game" and is not culture-bound. Further, the responsibility each participant takes for this process and the results they obtain result from an ability to set off learning that uses various microgenetic timescales (cf. Thibault and King 2016). In the examples analyzed above, an expert tutor creates what could metaphorically described as a "cat's cradle game." The degree to which her students/tutees benefit depends on and contributes to their feelings of confidence and learning to play various intellectual games, and (contrary to what the above-mentioned research on Socratic dialogue demonstrates), enables them to move (at least minimally) along their own epistemic trajectory. We can also observe the students' attempts at constructing something to say while acting with others (i.e. the tutor and each other) via wordings, intonation patterns, and bodily work. They do so while integrating what they wrote in their essays and what other authors wrote. This involves skills in acting with people and resources. As they apply these skills, they display moments of "concentrated creativity" but do not necessarily move towards a "desired solution" or "a suitable answer." This testifies to our claim that they are in is a learning space rather than a problem space (although Louise seems to treat it largely as involving problems of face).

Languaging in tutoring exemplifies what Swain (2006) describes as "coming-to-know-while-speaking." In so doing, she stresses that languaging is distinct from communicating in that it adds to the meaning of communicative practice. Its mediating enables languaging to focus, re-evoke, and recall ideas by connecting with attention, memory, and knowledge construction. Indeed, this is why tutoring matters. However, on the evidence presented, this seems to depend less on its nature as a method or genre than on how it opens up a learning space within which languaging is central. The "coming-to-know"

arises in a meso-domain as a talking person gains awareness of herself-in-language. As she acts epistemically, she makes sense of the world and, at best, changes her identity through acts of co-construction. On this view, actual learning happens when the tutor and the student-learner engage in "real-time behavioral events that are co-constructed by co-acting agents" (Thibault 2011a: 3). Drawing on Vygotsky, Swain emphasizes that languaging is activity that enables talking agents to constitute themselves. For her, languaging is a meaning-making activity (a "process" rather than a "product") occurring on different timescales. She claims that people learn by saying things to others rather than to themselves. The significance of language in the process of learning is threefold:

1. Through language we "engage in a variety of new cognitive operations and manipulations".
2. We remember things through language (it stabilizes abstract ideas in our memory).
3. We can recall events, ideas and ways of thinking and reflect upon them by re-verbing and re-wording.

Adopting a new stance when Louise realizes she has little to say coincides with a shift in her bodily actions. For Goffman (1967) such signals in context (here that of educational talk) may reveal "embarrassment," "discomfiture," and "uneasiness." This happens because "language grounds both observing and skills based on the impersonal: together with technology and media, people use language in evolving, recursive and regulated activity. [...] [P]eople use minute cues in attributing emotions, attitudes and thoughts as they enact selves. They attend to face (Goffman 1959) while orienting to social norms and both giving and give off information" (Cowley and Fester in press). As Maturana and Varela (1980) assert, as communicating beings, humans happen in language.

By enacting dialogical coordination, the learner is able to co-enact and re-enact the parts of experience which can contribute to the construction of new knowledge. Learning is not about what people as autonomous living creatures do but, rather, about how they engage – and engage together – with events occurring in and over time. In the tutoring domain, this particularly involves asking questions, coming up with hints, prompting arguments, experiencing between-turn silences, etc. Learning in tutoring happens as a result of an individual's dialogical coordination (which becomes learning dynamics) with other individual(s) and numerous artifacts in their immediate and less immediate environment in a social situation. It goes far beyond how wordings are articulated and conventionally understood. What connects learning space

and learning dynamics is the experience of the actual as constrained, of course, by the conventional.

This could be an instance of what Brown (1970) calls "interpersonal bargaining" and a need not to appear incompetent, incapable, or foolish. "Operationally, face-saving in Bargaining involves attempts by A to block actions by B which would cause him to appear foolish, weak and incapable to significant others" (Brown 1970: 109). In Goffman's terms, this is a face-saving strategy, or "the process by which the person sustains an impression for others that he has not lost face" (Goffman 1967: 9). Louise watches how the flow of events pass before her. She now must make sure that she sustains the expressive order that regulates the dialogical space in this situation so that anything she says again will be consistent with the face she intends to show.

Another point is that learning in tutoring results from social organizing which draws on macro-social contexts that affect how people language together. Louise shows apparent understanding which is contingent on her own way of eliciting and orienting to the tutor's message. As a result, she continues her previous reasoning and soon finds herself in a defensive position, starts "walking in circles" in her argumentation, and ends up with no new insights or new knowledge. From here onwards, rather than learning and moving along an epistemic trajectory, she undertakes a face-saving strategy and what we may call "conversational power-posing." What we mean by the latter is the type of linguistic behavior (choosing grand vocabulary, adopting a more confident tone) which is intentionally aimed at presenting the speaker as more knowledgeable than he/she is at the time. Since power is conflated with control, domination, directiveness, and monologicality can also serve as a hindrance to establishing effective educational dialogue. Not surprisingly, it often gives rise to defensive or resistant behaviors. As in the instance described, while the tutor assumes the not-knowing stance by withholding her opinion, Louise does not use the rules of this game and, as a result, fails to seize her learning opportunity. Thibault and King (2016: 176) define learning as a "context-sensitive and adaptive process in which the learner must solve problems that are often ill-defined or unspecified. The learner must therefore engage in an ongoing process of interactivity with the learning environment that provides the learner with information which it can use to modify its own future interactions."

What we also see in the Paulina–Louise interaction is how participants' role behaviors (as social roles) are enacted in activity in which wordings play a part. In the moment of social behavioral and linguistic co-activity, it is the institutionalized context that promotes an opportunity for role realization. As Morand (2000: 246) asserts "[t]he course of every work day encompasses interruptions, criticisms, requests, disagreements, etc. Face threatening,

conflictual occasions are unavoidable. Speakers necessarily engage in remedial, linguistic work to deflect and to mitigate ensuing social friction." As in the academic institutional context, "face-work" can be damaging, and one needs to remain alert to the (discreet) cues and prompts and adequately respond to them if learning is to happen. Some of the skills which academic tutoring talk promotes is improvisation and creativity in drawing on what one has experienced and learned. However, as we see it, prior to that is the ability to recognize a genre that demands both indirectness and interdependence.

Summing up, in tutoring, the participants work in a learning space. In our example, we can observe how the tutor "tightens" up the space to encourage interdependence that goes beyond genre or culture. The degree of student engagement differs (as demonstrated above) and here is determined by the coincidence between class and power. Our case study demonstrates both how one can use a learning space and, indeed, how, in spite of good intentions, it can fail to aid learning. Therefore, it seems that a learning space is needed – but to accrue epistemic benefits, students need to accept a degree of "interdependence." The main point which emerges from the analysis is that the learning space can be created by an expert tutor and is, among other things, a domain where tutees can "manage an epistemic trajectory." We have just illustrated how this is done and how the tutor can "tighten" it, (similarly to a cat's cradle game) and how it can be used by the students in different ways. As illustrated by our example, Ankita finds herself more at home in the learning space that is constructed by the tutor. Whereas it is debatable whether she maximizes the potential of this space, she definitely proves to be the better listener (and, to the tutor's ears, the better reader too). She also demonstrates that she knows how to "play the game." We also show how by failing to reflect and draw on the tutor's hints Louise fails to engage in the learning process. Instead she attributes a lot of importance to expression and focuses on willingness to self-defend, which makes her excessively rely on face work and struggle with positions of power. This leads to the conclusion that the learning space may be necessary but is not sufficient for good tutoring. Even consideration of a single example shows the importance of factors such as:

- being prepared
- being good at listening and using hints
- being willing to improvise a learning trajectory
- building a degree of interdependence with the tutor

By implication, tutoring primarily depends on the use of many kinds of activity as the substrate for making use of wordings. To repeat what is noted

above, tutoring matters not as method or genre but, rather, as a domain of languaging.

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Bionote

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Appendix

Full transcript of the analyzed material divided into phases from the perspective of the events in the learning space.

Phase 1 – Louise languages about her essay (00:15.264–01:28.887)

1   L: ((looks at her notes)) He kind of said tha:t (0.9) ((looks at tutor)) travel writing in this period (0.5) was ((looks at notes)) a transfe::r >it was kind of< a partially desi::gned t'te::k (0.3) a middle class person out of that kind of (2.2) predetermined like economic situation↑ and put them in this kind of farawa:: place (1.0) e::m what which >was like you know essentially uncivil<lised e::m (1.5) and the:n ((smiles and looks up)) that would (.) make them appreciate that economic situation (0.2) and (0.5) realise that home is actually like (0.5)((glimpses at Ankita)) you know (0.8) the best (1.0) ((glimpses at Ankita)) option rather than the voyage and travel (0.2) ((glimpses at her notes)) um:: however (1.5) ((clears throat)) I argue that in::: Robinson Cru:soe it's kind of the opposite↑ it's the voyage enables him to break free from his (0.8) kind of economic situation↑ his like comfortable middle class existence e:m and ((smiles at tutor)) and (0.2) in doing so he can kind of (1.5) ((glimpses at Ankita)) you know (0.5) get in this social mobility and economic mobility and (.) almost everything that he does if for some sort of profit↑ and this was kind of appear >just like< (1.9)((looks light and glimpses at Ankita)) at the b >very ((frowns)) beg<innings of like industrial capitalism and this was starting to eme:rge ((rests hands on her laps)) (0.2) so:: we see (0.1) a lot of those values like persisten::ce self-sufficiency::

Phase 2 – The tutor sets the task to Louise, and Louise replies (01:29.573–01:37.091)

2   P: And when we think of travel genre (.) ((takes off her glasses looks down)) do we mea::n (0.5) actual (0.8)((sways hands to right)) accounts of travel

3   L: E::rm I [think

4   P: [or f::ictional ones (0.2) ((seals lips, puts chin slightly upwards))

5   L: .hhh e:::m I think (0.3) fictional ones↑ (2.1) yeah↑

Phase 3 – The tutor delegates the task to Ankita, and Louise takes over the dialogical space (01:41.590–02:38.961)

6   P: What do you think Ankita

7   A: Um: so last time I did an essay >on account of< Harriot a:nd it was
         Harriot's True Report on Virginia and >I was I was kind of< struck by
         all (0.8) that context when I was ºwriting this essay >because
         obviously< those were (0.2) those weren't fictionalised they were real
         reports that were written but in some ways they share a lot of the
         same (0.3) .hh narrative qualitie:s as Robinson Crusoe does. U::m
         and

8   P: (0.9) which is itself based on some ((sways hands to her right, makes
         rabbit ears gesture))

9   A: (0.5) yeah um on[um on um

10 P: [true accounts

11 A: [on a tru:: account as well. (0.4) But also: I was kind of just struck
         by:: what what is fact and fiction ºin the travel genre and how Defoe
         does explore tha:t↑ in some ways because (0.9) hi:s TEXT his text
         altho::ugh is set ((smiles at tutor and makes a wave away gesture to
         her left)) in ((gazes left, moves hand up in a semi-circle)) this kind of
         exotic country and (.) and all that it ultimately: it >talks about the<
         truth of England more than it talks about the truth of (0.2) the the
         ºforeign place ººI think that's what fascinated me it's #kind of more
         (0.3) ºinte[rnalised (in here)

12 L: [ºuhm ((left forearm goes up with index finger extended)) And I
         think that came up as [...] the classes that rise in the novel:↑ by that
         (middle and index finger of left hand pointing towards tutor))
         tension between::n (0.2) nonfiction and fiction: ((left forearm goes
         up)) and you see >it's something< li:ke (.) >the unfortunate
         tra<velle:r like (0.2) last time ((left forearm circles in the air at head
         level)) I did tha::t and there was inside tension ((puts nose to upper
         side of left hand resting on it)) between the (0.8) how far you can
         take something as fact and (0.5) Thomas Nash kind of played around
         ºwith

13 P: ºuhm

14 L: er::m you know (0.2) fiction:↑

Phase 4 – The tutor challenges Louise and provides her with a clue (02:58.790–
03:52.660)

15 P: ((points her finger at Louise and smiles moving chin up)) So you were
         taking issue with Terry Eagleton's ((head goes forward chin goes

down)) (1.2)

16 L: (1.2)um yeah↓

17 P: ((clenched teeth)) assertion now Eagleton as you (0.2) probably know
         is a very (0.3) ((eyebrows go up)) famous acclaimed cr:itic and theorist
         of literature (0.4) >and it< (0.2) seems that (1.2) ((makes rabbit's ears
         gesture in the air)) he's >a bit of a< (.) straw man for you isn't he:↓

18 L: Yeah hhh

19 P: So (0.6) how >how ((moves forearms outwards in front of her))is it
         possible that< he so completely <misunderstood what travel writing is
         about> or or is there something more to the quot:

20 L: ((speaks with fist clenched and thumb toughing chin)) Yeah (0.2) I
         don't think he's like ((twists hand outwards with thumb and index
         finger extended)) completely misunderstood I think it's just () er::m
         (0.2) the contrast between:::n: an uncivilised lan:d and ((hand goes
         downwards)) England and a ((frowns, hand goes downwards)) a
         middle class home and ((hand goes downwards)) a middle class
         environment (0.4) That's wha- ((turns hands around in front of
         her)) >along with tha- voyage< <will enabl::> (0.3) ((puts one hand
         into another)) someone in the middle class to (0.2)((puts one hand
         into another)) er::m <appreciate their environment- (0.2) because::
         it >it you know being in contrast< with the uncivilized ((rubs hands
         together))

21 P: =benighted [I think is the term that he uses

22 L: [peoples yeah yeah yeah

Phase 5 – The tutor deepens problem space (03:52.652–04:57.950)

23 P: But surely ((extends forearms slightly towards students))(1.8)((makes
         repetitive downward forearm movement)) Eagleton is aware that that
         (0.5) that that (0.5) is a fake contrast <isn't he:↑> (1.2) So is he trying
         to get at something

24 L: (3.4) Em:: (2.8) ((covers mouth with hand and looks right upwards
         then at Ankita))

25 A: (1.8) and () Robert Ascham's The Schoolmaster he'd kind of talked
         about like the Englishman Italianated↑ and the fact that (0.5) ((waves
         with right hand towards Louise and looks at her)) when a traveller
         goes abro:ad er:: he changes himself (0.5) #because of this (1.5)
         because ((moves her forearms in front of her with fingers
         outstretched)) of this kind of meeting ºwith with other people and
         stuff >and the fact that< the traveller's own #body and manners and
         language (0.6) itself evo:lves and >mainly he was< getting ºat that

aspect. ((glances at Louise)) In fact I don't completely agree °with the quote

26 P: No I'm just interested because all of you seem to have (1.0) BASHED poor Terry Eagleton ((laughs))

27 A: I don't know if it was didacticism because I'm kind of (1.5) bit more cynical about the <purpose of> >he was obviously writing< at particular time and that's what people wanted to re:ad and so (0.3) in some ways his text itself was (0.3) ((looks at Louise)) like an emblem of commercialism