

FOCUS GROUP INTERACTION IN A KOREAN EFL
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION

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By

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To my husband

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ABSTRACT

Focus groups are underused method of knowledge production in applied linguistics. When focus groups are chosen, the standard reason for doing so is that participants interact with other experts on the focal topic. Yet, so far the analyses of focus group data have typically summarized topical content rather than examining how the ‘content’ is produced through interaction (Puchta & Potter, 2004). Using Conversation Analysis (CA), this dissertation aims to (a) re-specify focus group interaction as locus for participants’ locally and jointly accomplished actions, stances, and identities, and (b) better inform the evaluation questions framing the research. The focus groups were conducted within a program evaluation context with seven groups of Korean EFL teachers participating in a study-abroad teacher development program in the United States. All groups, conducted in Korean, addressed (a) recruitment process, (b) teachers’ needs, goals, and expectations for the program, (c) how these were met, and (d) teachers’ suggestions for change. The first analysis chapter examines sequential features of focus groups particularly outlining the openings and turn allocations distributed among participants. The second chapter focuses on the ways topics are constructed and distributed by participants, specifically focusing on how participants formulate responses to the focus group protocol by constructing collaborated talk, constructing the response together as a group, and through disagreement sequences. The final analysis chapter informs participants’ orientation to focus groups as a social activity, first by examining how participants explicitly display their understanding of the ongoing institutional interaction, and second, by highlighting participants’ talk construction as *experts*, through epistemic primacy claims and story construction. The findings contribute to an understanding of the focus group interaction, as well as participants’ perspectives of the teacher development workshop. These contributions lend important

implications: (a) methodological in re-specifying focus groups as a research method; and (b) language policy-related on the program and national level concerning teaching and learning English in South Korea. It is hoped that this study provides further evidence of the exigency for detailed and comprehensive analyses of focus group interactions, which enables a more nuanced, complex, and grounded view of the research concerns that animate them in the first place.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives

In diverse areas of applied social research (spanning across social sciences, medical, nursing, marketing, business research and more), focus groups have been a popular option as a tool, technique, or method to explore knowledge, attitudes, or opinions and perspectives (Barbour, 2007; Morgan, 1998; Pierce, 2015; Puchta & Potter, 2004). In applied linguistics research, however, focus groups have been rather underused, and other modes of inquiry (e.g., dyadic interviews, surveys) have been the more popular choice in examining various phenomena in language learning, teaching and application. Defined to be a method containing “a trained moderator who set the stage with prepared questions or an interview guide,” with “the goal of eliciting participants’ feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about a selected topic” (Puchta & Potter, 2004, p. 6), focus groups can be an important method of knowledge production that holds the potential of informing areas of applied linguistics research specifically focused on participants’ perspectives and opinions.

The limited amount of research that have examined or used focus groups in applied linguistics research have mostly focused on the prescriptive design of conducting focus groups (i.e., reporting on the best practices; how to design and conduct focus groups), rather than rely on empirical investigations, more specifically the interaction that constitutes focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Pierce, 2015; Puchta & Potter, 2004). There have been some brief or partial examinations of participants’ contribution (Li & Barnard, 2009), arguments discussing the necessity of interactional analyses of focus groups (Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Morgan, 2010), and even fewer studies that incorporated empirical data as part of their analyses of focus groups

(Furukawa, 2008; Puchta & Potter, 2004; Wilkinson, 2011). But aside from these few, focus group research has not advanced very far in the two decades since Wilkinson's initial argument positing the need for more rigorous analyses of the interaction in focus groups (1998):

[F]ocus group data is most commonly presented as if it were one-to-one interview data, with interactions between group participants rarely reported, let alone analyzed. Where interactions between participants are quoted they are typically used simply to illustrate the advantages of focus groups over other methods, and analyzed solely at the level of *content* (rather than in terms of their *interactional* features). (p. 112)

As Wilkinson (1998) pointed out, focus groups have been easily mistaken to be an expanded version of dyadic interviews (i.e., group interviews), and while studies have identified focus groups to be useful methods to clarify ambiguity in survey findings, or as a method of locating majority views, alignment, and areas of discrepancy within and between focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2009), there is yet to be a dedicated study on *how* and through *what interactional resources* these findings come about. In this dissertation, I aim to fill this gap by exploring the interactional details and resources while also achieving substantive findings to better inform the program evaluation context within which the focus groups in this study are grounded.

In sum, the objectives of this study are twofold. The first objective is to implement conversation analysis (CA) to closely examine the interactional shape and construction of focus groups, attending to how talk is constructed as well as managed, understood, and oriented to by the participants. The second objective is to identify and highlight the substantive evaluative findings, with the aim to better inform evaluative practices as well as provide important and relevant implications for language teacher development programs and related policies there within.

1.2. Significance and Potential Contributions

In fulfilling these objectives, this study contributes to three areas in the field of applied linguistics second language studies: respecification of focus group as a research method, applying CA to program evaluation research (interventionist CA), and improvement of language teacher development programs.

First, by intensively examining and describing the interactional shape of focus groups and thus providing a detailed overview of the interaction that constitutes focus groups, this study uses CA findings to re-specify focus groups as an informative research method to be utilized within applied linguistics. Also with solid empirical evidence of how focus group interactions differ from other methods, this study contributes to filling the gap between the proclaimed needs for interactional research of focus groups (Bezile & Öberg, 2012; Morgan, 2010) and the lack thereof in actual research practices.

Second, this study approaches the program evaluation context from participants' perspectives, aiming to provide the closest examination and representation of participants' needs, goals and expectations for the teacher development program. The analyses strive to interpret participants' perspectives as accurately as possible, paying special attention to how such opinions are constructed within the interaction. This allows for a more comprehensive as well as accurate representation and understanding of topics and issues that arise in the discussion that consequently informs the evaluation questions. Such rigorous analyses contributes to bridging the gap that is instilled by summarized content analyses—the most frequently used analytic method in describing qualitative data in program evaluation research—providing empirical suggestions for interpretation and analyses of qualitative data in program evaluation.

Finally, by conducting multiple focus groups with different collections of participants, this study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the perceived effectiveness and areas for improvement in the teacher development program being evaluated. Along with the interactional examination, the analyses lend substantive findings that make a contribution in informing recommendations for decision-making procedures concerning (a) identifying positive aspects of the workshop program, and (b) suggesting areas for improvement and change, which hold important implications for Korean EFL teacher development on the program level as well as the national language-policy level.

1.3. Overview of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized follows. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature that provides the background for this study: (a) language teacher development, (b) program evaluation and focus group as a research method, and (c) applied conversation analysis. This chapter concludes with the research questions pursued in this study.

Chapter 3 describes the data context, research participants, and the data collection method, followed by the details of the CA transcription procedures as well as the process of Romanization, glossing, and translation of the original Korean data. The descriptions provide the contextual background for the analyses developed in following chapters.

Chapters 4 through 6 constitute the core data analysis of this dissertation. Chapter 4 begins with the examination of opening and uptake sequences, leading to the discussion of turn allocation and talk management, thus outlining the interactional shape of focus group interactions. Chapter 5 provides the details on how participants construct the discussion topics and display their own opinions and perspectives by accessing diverse interactional resources

such as agreement, disagreement and collaborated talk. The analyses in this chapter illuminate the importance of group dynamics and rapport, suggesting implications for treating focus groups as a unique type of research method. Chapter 6 presents analyses focused on participants' orientation to the focus groups as a social activity, building on the uniqueness of focus group interactions. The analyses in this chapter investigate how participants orient to focus groups as an institutional social activity and construct their talk accordingly, while also demonstrating their orientation to their status within the discussion as *experts* regarding the topics being discussed. The analyses in this chapter also highlight core substantial findings concerning the evaluation questions, lending important implications for the teacher development workshop as well as the English language education policy in South Korea.

Finally, in Chapter 7, the main findings are summarized, followed by the implications drawn from the findings of this study. Finally, this dissertation concludes with acknowledgement of limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will outline the contextual and methodological background that frames this study. First, I will briefly outline recent research in language teacher development including a description of the research context—English language teacher development in South Korea. Second, I will provide an overview of the literature on focus groups, contextualizing it within the framework of qualitative program evaluation. Third, I will sketch out the key analytical principles of conversation analysis (CA), specifically focusing on recent development and strands of *applied CA*, in which studies have utilized CA findings to inform other practices within applied linguistics research (Antaki, 2011b, Richards & Seedhouse, 2005). Finally, I will present the research questions, which address the sequential construction and interactional accomplishment of focus groups, participants' talk formulation and orientation to focus groups as a specific activity, and finally the contributions of applying CA findings to inform evaluation practices within applied linguistics research.

2.2. Second Language Teacher Development

Teacher development, teacher education, and teacher training are concepts that are used interchangeably to refer to any of the following stages: *initial teacher training* (pre-service education), *induction* (the process of providing training and support during new teachers' initial years), or *teacher development/continuing professional development*¹. Each of these notions indexes different types of curriculum and education, yet they have been and are still all

¹ While there is still ongoing debate on the actual terms for each of these various stages of training, the terms used here are cited from their definitions from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/teacher_education

collectively understood within the general notion of ‘teacher development.’ This brings on ambiguity when it comes to defining what teacher development exactly refers to, and such ambiguity in terminology is further intensified when it comes to second language teacher education (SLTE). ‘Language teaching’ carries with it multiple categories (e.g., language as a curriculum [teaching the language as a subject, foreign, second, native, non-native, ESL, TEFL, etc.]), and diverse possible organizations (e.g., pre-service, elementary, secondary, tertiary, adult, teachers and so forth) that encompass different “landscapes” of language learning and teaching (Kleinsasser, 2013). This contributes further to the complexities of describing what exactly would be incorporated within language teacher education and professional development. For the sake of clarification, in this study, I will use the term *teacher development*. But first, I will provide an overview of research concerning—and currently labeled as—second language teacher education (SLTE) and then briefly describe the background of language teacher development in South Korea.

2.2.1. Studies in Second Language Teacher Education and Development

Second language teacher education (SLTE), stemming out of linguistics and applied linguistics, has strived to achieve goals of preparing teachers both with training in language content as well as teaching methodology (Graves, 2009). In an earlier study, Freeman argued that with the rise of interest in wider aspects encompassed within the scope of applied linguistics, language teacher development had become “increasingly fragmented and unfocused” (Freeman, 1989, p. 27), which led to his later argument that *learning to teach* should be the main component of SLTE (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). He noted that such developments had taken away the focus from the core of the pedagogical discipline, which he believed to be the *teaching* component (Freeman, 1989). He made an “operational distinction” between *education* and

preparation to be more aligned with preparing pre-service teachers, versus *training* and *development* conceptualized to describe the *strategies* by which in-service teachers are further educated (Freeman, 1989, p. 37). Since then, many researchers, including Freeman, have turned to various methods, both quantitative and qualitative, to examine the needs, processes, and issues of *teacher development* aligned with the definition clarified by Freeman (Freeman, 1995, 2009; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Xu & Connelly, 2009). Contrastively, there have been studies that countered Freeman's argument, claiming that the study of language and second language acquisition (SLA) should remain central to SLTE and that putting more focus on *learning to teach* only marginalized language in SLTE (Muckisky & Yates, 2004; Yates & Muckisky, 2003). Studies by Graves (2009) and Wright (2010) encompassed the opposing camps of thoughts by stressing the importance of both content and skills in teaching language. Graves (2009) noted that the notion of *pedagogical content knowledge* has "blurred the boundaries between 'content' and 'skills,'" (p. 118) and that the link between the *subject matter* and *how to teach it* could not be easily broken (Graves, 2009). Wright (2010) supported Graves' argument by concluding that SLTE is an "enterprise in transition" (p. 288), identifying shifts in SLTE pedagogy, which included newly situated emphasis on learning to teach, reflective practice, and learning through experience.

Meanwhile, focused more towards the pedagogic notions of language teacher, language education, and language teaching and learning, Kleinsasser (2013) reviewed 12 articles², categorizing them under three sections divided into "narrative inquiry and identity," "teacher education topics," and language teaching "contexts" (Kleinsasser, 2013, p. 86). The articles he reviewed included a variety of studies that examined teacher identity through narrative inquiry

² As comprehensive as it was, this review was limited to the studies published in the journal of *Teaching and Teacher Education*.

(e.g., Abednia, 2012; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2010; Johnson, 2003; Lim, 2011; Xu & Connelly, 2009); studies that took different approaches (i.e., mixed-methods, qualitative) to teacher education topics such as need for integration of practical knowledge and curriculum knowledge of teachers (Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999), or teacher and learner autonomy (Nakata, 2011); and studies of teacher education within naturally multilingual contexts (e.g., teaching Math to multilingual students in South Africa [Adler, 1995]).

Studies such as Xu (2013) and Lim (2011) focused in on the identity of foreign language teachers, which contributed to the question of how foreign language teachers (Chinese in the case of Xu [2013] and Korean in Lim [2011]) in an EFL teaching context reflected on themselves as language teachers. Much of the analytic focus was on the language proficiency aspect, revolving around the teachers' self-reflection of their own non-nativeness, which shed light on the teachers' individual identities as a non-native English teacher. But in the larger realm of things, not many studies have examined the more widely conceived issue of the complexities in the dual identities of EFL teachers with their needs for development on being a more language-proficient "ESL/EFL teacher" while having professional experience as certified "curriculum teachers" (Freeman, 1989, p. 37). Taking the scope beyond the *teachers*, other studies have responded to the question of "how participants—teachers, students, parents, and others involved in schools and classrooms—construe their worlds, the actions they take, and the ways in which they explain those actions to themselves and to others" (Shulman, 1986, p. 5), by examining diverse aspects of the language classrooms and teacher-student correlations (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, 1993; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Also, there are corresponding research to the earlier mentioned area of SLTE, in which studies have more closely explored the diverse topics and trends in SLTE (e.g., chapters in Burns & Richards, 2009). Yet, there is still

room for a more comprehensive and detailed examination of how participants, particularly the teachers of a foreign language education context “construe their worlds, the actions they take, and the ways in which they explain those actions to themselves and to others” (Shulman, 1986, p. #) within a teacher development program, within which their orientation to themselves as professional experienced teachers as well as their need for further development as a more proficient language teacher come into play.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining in detail the participating English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) teachers’ perspectives as *teacher-learner* participants in a professional teacher development program. In the next subsection, I will describe the background that has brought on the impetus for the expansion and implementation of the teacher development programs that contextualize this study.

2.2.2. English Language Teacher Development in South Korea

Before the education policy revolution in 1998, foreign language education in South Korea consisted mainly of grammar-translation curriculum³. Although the policy revolution itself was not a success, it was around this time that students, parents, private and public companies, and the general public started focusing in on the importance of communication in English education. In 1998, English became a core subject within the Ministry of Education mandated curriculum for grade 3 and up (i.e., before 1998, English was only taught to middle and high school students; see Song, 2011 for details). With this change started the “English Fever” in Korea (Lee, 2009; Park, 2009; Song, 2011). English was not only a subject now, but rather became a skill absolutely necessary for all things in life starting from getting good grades in school to college entrance and getting good jobs (Park, 2009). Consequently, private academic institutes also

³ Information obtained from Korean website of Ministry of Education and Human resources, <http://english.moe.go.kr>

started recruiting English native-speaker teachers from foreign countries, which naturally led to a tremendous increase in the private education budget (Lee, 2009; Park, 2009). Studying-abroad in an English speaking country became almost mandatory for most college students in Korea—not limited to those who wanted careers related to English education. Many mothers started taking their children to live in English speaking countries such as USA, Canada, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Singapore to ensure that their children were educated in an English-language environment. Fathers were left behind in Korea to make money for their children’s education. This resulted in new family formats and new social phenomena, and the term *girogi* mother (i.e., *girogi* is the Korean word for “seagull,” used to indicate married couples who are separated from each other location-wise for the sole purpose of their children’s education) became prevalent amongst young mothers (see H. Lee [2010] for more on *girogi* mothers).

In 2008, the new president at the time (M.-B. Lee, president of South Korea 2008-2013) and his presidential transition committee implemented a new English immersion/bilingual policy for English language education. The initial impetus behind such policy change was to reduce spending on private English education, to increase national competitiveness, and to promote educational equality across the nation (Lee, 2009). This policy was not met very well by the public, and not many educators or parents were convinced that immersion would be a solution. Nonetheless, a few private schools took on this lead and started administering immersion/bilingual (Korean-English) curriculum as their regular education curriculum (see Lee, 2009, 2015), and recently, more ‘international’ schools have been newly established recruiting students interested in being educated the ‘western way’ (i.e., the curriculum of these international schools implement textbooks used in public schools in the U.S. and U.K. and the majority of graduates from these schools enter universities outside of Korea).

Furthermore, learners' needs within an EFL context are constantly evolving, and in a context such as that of South Korea, where expectations and needs of English learners are evolving faster and higher than anywhere else, in-service English teachers (K-12 and higher education) are under constant pressure to re-educate and constantly further develop themselves to become 'better' language teachers—especially regarding the language proficiency aspect. This, especially for non-native English teachers, not only involves learning new technologies and teaching methods, but also includes continuous learning and practice of the target language. For this purpose, K-12 English teachers in Korea are given the option of taking a semester off of teaching and administrative duties to apply for a competitive 6-month teacher training course offered by higher education institutes (e.g., top-tier universities in Korea). These programs consist of a 5-month training program at the institution in Korea, followed by a 4-6 week training workshop program in an affiliated institution in the U.S. These teacher development workshop programs, offered by various organizations—and funded by the Korean government—in select states in the U.S. (i.e., Hawaii, Montana, California and others) accept selective groups from different regions of Korea each winter and summer. Each group is comprised of 15 to 28 teacher-learners, all from different schools around the region, who are then grouped together as a living, studying, working community for the 4-6 weeks they spend in the U.S.

Despite the history and the growing number of participants in these programs each year, there has yet to be a close examination of what and how these programs are administered and conducted. Moreover, while the teacher development programs are aimed to increase and develop the language proficiency and teaching skills of participants, as well as further enhance their knowledge on English education theory and practice, no research has been done to find out whether such goals are being met. As a result, the same curriculum is offered year after year

despite the vast changes in the participant group (e.g., the steep increase in the participants' English proficiency level perceived and reported by long-standing instructors of the program). This in itself serves as an impetus for this study, which by accurately examining and evaluating the current status and perceptions of the participants, will provide important implications for the current teacher development program as well as the English education situation in Korea. Focusing on answering the questions set by the impetus, this study was framed within a program evaluation context, which will be further elaborated in the following section.

2.3. Program Evaluation and Focus Groups as Method for Evaluation Research

Program evaluation is defined as the systematic collection of information for the primary purpose of making value-based judgments, improvements, or informed decisions about a program (Norris, 2006; Patton, 2008). This rather wide definition encompasses a continuum of research practices that have been adopted as evaluation studies of language education (Pierce, 2012). Compared to earlier evaluations that were more concerned with numerical value and theory testing (e.g., Berretta, 1992), recent evaluation studies—incorporating diverse quantitative and qualitative methods—have played an important role in further developing the areas of language program evaluation and development (Harklau & Norwood, 2005; Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005, 2009; Norris, Davis, Sinicrope & Watanabe, 2009). Adopting such evaluation practices to inform different levels of program development, assessment, and improvement was first initiated in Brown's (1995) model of curriculum development. He described evaluation as a continual process throughout all stages of an education program and noted several decisions to be made when conducting evaluation of a language program: Is the evaluation to (a) be summative or formative; (b) use outside experts or adopt a participatory model; (c) do field research or laboratory research; (d) evaluate during or after; (e) use quantitative or qualitative

data; and finally, (f) does it focus on the process or the product (Brown, 1995, p. 228)? Many evaluation studies have since taken up these questions, made their decisions, and carried out different types of evaluation projects and research according to the decision they have made. Moreover, more studies have come to value the incorporation of qualitative approaches and mixed-methods towards evaluation research and practices (Patton, 2002, 2008; Peacock, 2005; Pierce, 2012).

The core contribution of the current study is to focus on one particular method often used in program evaluation—focus groups—a method that offers more than it has been recognized for in informing evaluative research and practices. In the upcoming subsections, I will first briefly outline the qualitative approaches and methods recently incorporated in program evaluation as means to contextualize the following subsection that will further zoom in on studies specifically dealing with focus groups as a method.

2.3.1. Qualitative Language Program Evaluation

Qualitative methods are often used in evaluations because they tell the *program story* by capturing and communicating the *participants' stories*. Evaluation case studies have all the elements of a good story. They tell what happened, when, to whom, and with what consequences. (Patton, 2002, p. 10)

While not all evaluation studies employing qualitative methods have quite succeeded in ‘telling the story,’ many recent studies in language program evaluation have made efforts to implement different types of qualitative methods in their evaluation (Birckbichler, 2006; Harklau & Norwood, 2005; Horwitz, 1985; Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005, 2009; Llosa & Slayton, 2009; Lynch, 1992, 1996; Norris et al., 2009; Pawan & Thomalla, 2005). One well-known evaluation study that implemented qualitative methods in their data was Lynch’s study (1990, 1992, 1996), based on his research at a university-level ESL program in the 1980s. Combining both

quantitative and qualitative methods in conducting the evaluation, he found middle ground by introducing the “context-adaptive model (CAM)” (Lynch, 1990). He argued the need for more of “a flexible adaptable heuristic—a starting point for inquiry into language education programs that will constantly reshape and redefine itself, depending on the context of program evaluation,” as opposed to a “rigid model that would be tested for validity using experimental design and statistical techniques” (Lynch, 1996, p. 3). Noting on the tendency of qualitative research to “rely on people as the instruments of inquiry” (Lynch, 1992, p. 69), he incorporated qualitative methods by including as data to be analyzed: interview notes⁴, observations, journal entries (administrative files), and correspondence (Lynch, 1992). Data analysis and presentation of results were also divided into quantitative and qualitative sections respectively. Despite some limitations, combining the two data types into a single study was a major contribution of Lynch’s study (1996), and by implementing a qualitative approach, he was able to suggest findings (i.e., the fact that students’ expectations of the course were different from the intentions of the program developers) that would not have been otherwise unearthed.

In an earlier study, Horwitz (1985) paved the way of formative evaluations in a foreign language education context in which summative evaluation (i.e., assessment of student achievement after completion of the course or semester) was more prevalent at the time. Defining formative evaluation to be a way of assessing “ongoing education programs for the purpose of improving instruction” (p. 83), she described the evaluation of a foreign language class with the intention to “demonstrate usefulness of and procedures for implementing a formative evaluation in a foreign language classroom” (p. 83). In collecting her data, she used structured interviews and classroom observation, the two most used qualitative methods in

⁴ The interview was not recorded due to concerns of the administrators. Extensive interview notes that were taken were the source of data for this particular study.

existing evaluation studies. By using interview and observations, Horwitz (1985) was also able to locate three issues (i.e., students' interest in specific conversation topics; need to be prepared for grammar exams; and students' habitual off-topic comments, pp. 88-89) which brought on relevant changes in correspondence to the evaluation findings.

More recently, Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1998) presented diverse studies on evaluation and language teaching that identified changes that had occurred in evaluation practice within language education contexts. In their discussion of paradigm shift to that of which included greater participation of stakeholders, they also recognized the extended range of functions for evaluation, and the multiple methods of data collection (Rea-Dickens & Germaine, 1998). Accordingly, their edited volume included studies that reflected these changes. From the methodology perspective, Roberts (1998) examined the case for using ethnographic methods in the evaluation of a UK student study abroad program. In identifying compatibilities and distinction between ethnography and evaluation, Roberts (1998) warned against qualitative evaluation that is simply 'non-quantitative' (p. 75). In another chapter, Kiely (1998) presented a case study of a participatory evaluation in a British university EAP (English for Academic Purposes) program in which the evaluation was conducted by the teachers, implementing various qualitative methods (i.e., interviews, classroom observations, field notes, questionnaires, structured discussions, and program documents). By presenting transcriptions of classroom observations and utilizing other qualitative data, Kiely (1998) sought to carry out an evaluation that could not be appropriately executed within the traditional evaluation paradigm, for example, describing evaluation processes or developing teachers' skills for evaluative elements of language education curriculum (Kiely, 1998).

Kiely and Rea-Dickens (2005) examined the history and scope of evaluation research on language programs. In presenting different cases and issues (e.g., evaluating language through science programs, evaluating foreign language teaching in primary schools, evaluating program quality in higher education, and so forth) in evaluating language contexts, they brought up multiple suggestions for gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data for evaluation. Kiely (2009) rearticulated evaluation of language programs to be a “set of strategies to document and understand the program” (p. 114). Drawing on three features of learning contexts—*innovation*, *teachers at work*, and *quality of student learning experience*—Kiely argued for the need to draw on developments outside of language program contexts to enhance understanding of how programs are shaped. He implemented these notions into an evaluation and ethnographic study of an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) program in a British university. Taking a qualitative approach to his findings, Kiely (2009) found that while past research has judged effectiveness of learning on inputs and measurements of outcomes (i.e., test results, language learning theory, a particular syllabus; p. 99), his research of the teachers and their interaction process with students in the classroom displayed the need to “examine the interactions and factors” (p. 114) that shape the input and outcome, which will consequently enable program evaluations to become a “socially-situated cycle of enquiry, dialogue, and action” (Kiely, 2009, p. 99).

Norris, Davis, Sinicrope and Watanabe (2009) included in their edited volume articles aimed to “illuminate the program evaluation needs of college foreign language (FL) educators in the U.S.” (Norris et al, 2009, p. 1) and also to respond to the need for resources and strategies in the area as part of a larger evaluation project with the purpose of examining foreign language programs at college level in the U.S. Following the conceptual shift of program evaluation towards a more pragmatic orientation (i.e., Patton’s [1978, 2008] *utilization-focused evaluation*),

articles in this volume examined various evaluation studies carried out in diverse FL contexts. These studies not only contributed to the less-researched area of foreign language programs in the U.S. education context, but by adopting multiple methods to each of their evaluations, they strengthened the possibility of implementing qualitative methods to better portray the process of evaluation (e.g., Millerret & Silveria, 2009; Pfeiffer & Byrnes, 2009; Watanabe, Norris, Gonzalez-Lloret, 2009).

Llosa and Slayton (2008) provided an example of how qualitative methods can be implemented to not only support their findings but also provide better context and understanding for the decision-making and recommendation process of the evaluation. Having conducted an evaluation that implemented a quasi-experimental (i.e., with control and treatment groups) data collection method, they recognized the need for: (a) consideration of the actual context of use; and (b) better understanding of quality of teacher pedagogy, both of which they found were only feasible by implementing a multi-method (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) strategy (Llosa & Slayton, 2008, pp. 508-509). By supporting their experimental findings with qualitative data collected via classroom observations and teacher interviews, they were able to recommend effective conditions for “conducting an evaluation that yields useful information about a program’s implementation and effectiveness” (Llosa & Slayton, 2008, p. 497).

In another study, Peacock (2005) implemented both quantitative and qualitative methods in an evaluation of a foreign-language teacher (FLT) education program in Hong Kong, with the purpose of determining the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Suggesting a need for implementation of internal evaluation procedures in teacher training programs, Peacock (2005) created an evaluation procedure (p. 262) and tested the procedure on an existing FLT education program. He implemented six different methods of data collection: (a) student interviews, (b)

teacher interviews, (c) student questionnaires; (d) student essays on program philosophy; (e) evaluation of course materials; and (f) alumni questions (pp. 264-265). Of the six, the student and teacher interviews and the alumni questionnaire⁵ were treated as qualitative data, for which he used the method of quoting a few excerpts (from about hundred responses) to analyze and code into two strands: mentions of strengths and weaknesses. These results were then discussed with the statistical results to render the result of: (a) recommending improvements to the evaluated program, and (b) supporting Peacock's (2005) initial argument for a need of an internal evaluation procedure. As these studies show, more evaluative research has incorporated qualitative research methods into their studies, and zooming in further on the one specific method that is relevant to this study (i.e., focus groups), I will first briefly introduce the context of qualitative approaches to program evaluation.

Qualitative approaches to program evaluation started from the concept of "naturalistic inquiry" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) defined qualitative designs to be "naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest (e.g., group, event, program, community, relationship, or interaction)" (p. 39). Interest in "naturalistic inquiry" stemmed from an effort to strive away from the consequences of experimental design of evaluation.

Many of the recent evaluation research studies have followed the paradigm of Patton's 'utilization-focused' evaluation defined as:

the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness; inform decisions about future programming and/or increase understanding. (Patton, 2008, p. 39).

⁵ The alumni questionnaire consisted of scaled-answers and open questions for suggestions but response rate was below 20% and therefore did not prove to be much help (Peacock, 2005, p. 270).

This new paradigm brought along a shift in evaluation goals that were accompanied by a shift and flexibility in methodology, which made it more conducive to utilize different approaches (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods) within the evaluation process, focusing not on judgment of the evaluation object (e.g., curriculum, teachers, learning contexts, and more in the case of language program evaluation), but on the *process* of “determining the merit, worth, and value” (Scriven, 1991). Patton’s (2008) approach focused on the “systematic collection of information” (p. 39) to enforce evaluation findings to be utilized by the primary intended users, which aligned with the implementation of qualitative methods with the purpose of achieving better understanding of the evaluation context and participants, which Patton (2002) himself embraced fully.

Despite the contrasting framework or theory behind each of the different approaches, qualitative approaches to program evaluation are distinguished as *qualitative* research by first, their form of initial inquiry and second, their preference or orientations toward qualitative methods that they implement in their evaluation design (Greene, 1998). On the other hand, particular choices of methodology in an evaluation do not necessarily direct an evaluation towards a specific approach. In other words, method choices in evaluation studies may sometimes be influenced by philosophical assumptions or frameworks behind the chosen approach (Greene, 1998), but as the examination of evaluation methods show, recent choice trends of methodology in evaluation research rather aim for the ability to represent the best match to the intended evaluation user’s information needs (Patton, 2002). Recent evaluation trends expect the design of evaluation methods—especially in the case of language program evaluations—to be executed with “maximal articulation and ‘situatedness’ vis-à-vis the actual

language educational milieu, and the specific programs and stakeholders within it” (Watanabe, Norris, & Gonzalez-Lloret, 2009, p. 9).

In most of the cases that were examined in previous sections, a qualitative methodology was adopted to complement quantitative methods, striving away from previous evaluations in which experimental research designs were preferred and considered mandatory. Contributions of implementation of qualitative methods were that they enabled a wider scope of knowledge and information to be gathered (Lynch, 1990, 1992; Kiely, 2009; Norris et al., 2009) and that they allowed evaluation practices to align better with the more recent approach, and more recently the trend has turned towards the use of mixed-methods research (Brown, 2014), used to inform not only evaluation but diverse aspects of applied linguistics research. However, despite recent trends of incorporating qualitative methods, there still have been limitations in the interpretation and use of the collected data. Most times interview data were only used to supplement or provide preliminary information for bigger surveys or questionnaires, and information gathered via interviews or focus groups were either extracted and decontextualized, or left out all together.

While keeping in mind the issue of feasibility (i.e., time constraints, extra work that goes into detailed transcriptions, and in-depth analysis), it would be worthwhile to examine possible advantages that would be gained by further incorporating qualitative methods into evaluation. First of all, when not confined by ethical, confidential issues, different stages of evaluation might be better described and better understood when actual interaction data are exhibited. Readers and students of program evaluation would benefit from gaining access to actual interaction instead of the evaluator’s reiterated or summarized version. As Kiely and Rea-Dickens (2009) also mentioned, diversified interest and impetus for evaluation has resulted in “ever increasing complexities” (p. 679) of evaluation, especially of language programs. Along with engaging with

diverse stakeholders' interests and viewing evaluation effectiveness in diverse ways, their third argument was a need for “new approaches to data collection and analysis” (p. 679). Kiely and Rea-Dickens suggested that this was required to properly inform the “complex web of interactions which make up language programs” (p. 679). Bringing in new approaches necessitates new ways of analysis as well, which implies the dissatisfaction of simply finding options to supplement tests or questionnaires, or implementing qualitative methods only to analyze the data from a quantitative perspective. A comprehensive account of the program needs to be established efficiently by adopting an effective way of using and analyzing qualitative data collection methods.

The purpose of this study is to implement a rigorous analytic method, conversation analysis (CA), to analyze focus groups—a qualitative data collection method often used in program evaluation. Recent development of research in CA has expanded towards applying the findings of a CA analysis to larger macro-social frameworks. Implementing applied CA as an approach of examining qualitative data in evaluation would not only support better-informed descriptions of interview (per se) findings (c.f., institutional CA; see Antaki, 2011; Drew, 2005), but also be applied in a way to examine the process of interviews or protocols which could lend information as to how qualitative methods could be better implemented in program evaluation and how to train future evaluators (c.f., interventionist CA; see next section). Adjustments may need to be made to make the approach feasible and applicable to large evaluation projects as well as smaller ones (i.e., concerns on transcription conventions, time consumption of detailed micro-analysis), but implementing a more detailed approach to the evaluation data will allow more insight into evaluation findings and process. Qualitative methods used in program evaluation do more than simply provide supplementary findings to support quantitative results. They tell a

story (Patton, 2002). The stories “illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics...to deepen understanding” (Patton, 2002, p. 10). In order to understand, deliver, and use the stories as needed, methods that are able to capture and communicate (Patton, 2002) the stories are mandatory. While ensuring the reliability, accuracy, feasibility and propriety (Patton, 2008; Norris, 2006) of the evaluation, diverse aspects of qualitative research methods should be positively considered for further informing of evaluation practices and processes. This study aims to take a detailed examination of one aspect of qualitative methods in evaluation, focus groups. I will first outline the little literature there is on studies that implement focus groups as a research method, and then describe CA in further detail before going into the data and analysis.

2.3.2. Focus Groups

Morgan (1997) divided the history of focus groups into three periods: 1) early work done by academic and applied social scientists; 2) market research conducted between the end of the second World War and the 1980s; and 3) recent research in both academic, market research and political settings. Since their inception as a research method (Merton, 1987; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), focus groups have stood out as an important method for “qualitative and mixed methods research for the ability to explore complex ideas, motivation, and behavior by accessing individual perspectives while leveraging conflict and consensus that emerges naturally during participant interaction” (Pierce, 2015, p. 225). They are distinguished from individual interviews in that there are two or more participants who are allowed and encouraged to interact with one another and not only with the moderator. Focus groups are also distinguished from group interviews in that discussion is facilitated rather than questions asked in turn to each participant. They are also distinguished from other forms of group discussions (e.g., support groups, meetings, and open discussion) in that the topics discussed are more focused and smaller

in scope. The unique contributions offered by the complex and interactive dynamics in focus groups have made it a popular method of inquiry in various disciplines of research, and yet not many applied linguistics researchers have implemented this method of investigation.

Many methodological books have introduced the concept and advantages of achieving substantive findings through focus groups as well as provided guidelines for the design and method of setting up and conducting focus group research (Barbour, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 1997, 2002; Puchta & Potter, 2004). Some individual studies have discussed general methodological concerns of conducting and analyzing focus groups in applied linguistics research (Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Li & Barnard, 2009; Morgan, 2002, 2010; Pierce, 2012, 2015), while fewer studies have taken up the job of examining the interaction produced within the focus groups (Furukawa, 2008; Puchta & Potter, 2004; Wilkinson, 2006, 2011). Puchta and Potter (2004) recognized the crucial difference of focus groups (i.e., from that of questionnaires or surveys) in that the findings could not be “neatly summarized in a numerical or even a propositional form” (p. 8). Understanding that focus group findings relied a lot more on the way in which the participants described or evaluated things, they chose to take a more interaction-oriented approach (e.g., conversation analysis) to examine the focus group (Puchta & Potter, 2004). Taking a similar approach, Wilkinson (2011) examined the same portion of a focus group interaction between breast cancer patients in two different ways: a content analysis and an ethnographic analysis using ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. By doing so, she attempted to “redress the imbalance” (Wilkinson 2011, p. 169) between the bountiful resources on methodological instructions on conducting focus groups versus the little amount of work done on the “theoretical and epistemological choices entailed in analyzing and interpreting focus group data” (p. 169).

As Galloway (2011) well advocated, “focus groups are beneficial in that they enhance disclosure, facilitate openness, validate common experiences, provide access to unique concepts and language not available through quantitative methods, and allow participants freedom to follow their own agenda with some moderation from the researcher” (p. 47). Therefore, when used appropriately, focus groups will allow insight into the thoughts and comments from participants as an interactive group, which will provide resource for the content of research as well as give clues as to what happens in the focus group interactions (Puchta & Potter, 2004).

On the other hand, there are studies that advocate the importance of substantive content findings over giving attention to interaction (Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Morgan, 2010). While these studies recognize the importance in making the connection between “the substantive content of ‘what’ participants say and the interactive dynamics of ‘how’ participants say those things” (Morgan, 2010, p. 718), they further posited that interaction only becomes relevant when it serves to make a “conspicuous contribution to the reporting” of focus group findings (p. 721). Belzile & Öberg (2012) further suggested that the analytic approach towards interaction in focus groups reflect not a difference in the analytic view, but rather a tacit division in researchers’ philosophical position between: (a) researchers who view participants primarily as individuals sharing held truths, and (b) those who view participants as social beings co-constructing meaning through the interaction (Belzile & Öberg, 2012). In this light, Belzile and Öberg (2012) stressed that the analyses on interaction should not be forced and thus proposed a continuum of options for when and when not to analyze interactions as part of the findings.

The argument of this division in itself is outside the scope of the current study, but in relevance to what I strive to achieve through the analyses in the following chapters, I believe there is a need for a more accurate understanding of what *interaction* is and its role within a

method such as focus groups. In interaction-based method such as focus groups, where all—not selective, research-related only—findings and discussion are produced through interaction, it does not suffice to say that the relevance of incorporating interactional analyses should be determined only by the research goals. Before seeking ways to “generate the kinds of interaction that match specific research designs” (Morgan, 2010, p. 721), we first need to investigate and identify what constitutes focus group interactions. This is not to say each and every sequential aspect of the interactions be examined—which would be neither feasible nor appropriate. However, findings that are borne from participant interaction should be more accurately represented with consideration of the context (e.g., the moderator’s question that brought up the topic being discussed), rather than be “chopped” (Belzile & Öberg, 2012, p. 470) into quotes, taken out of context and presented as representative findings.

In other words, this study advocates that focus groups should be acknowledged and thus analyzed as orderly social activities, in which the interactions achieve a form of locally accomplished social action. Investigating the interaction will illuminate that participants’ talk accomplishes a range of social actions, stances, and identities (Kasper, 2013) that consequently inform findings more accurately and comprehensively. Taking this perspective, instead of producing summarized content analysis or picked out quotations (e.g., “deletion of the interviewer” Potter & Hepburn, 2005), in the upcoming analyses I will conduct a more detailed examination of the contextualized interaction data which will provide comprehensive illustration of how focus groups are constructed as well as how important topics and findings—that consequently inform evaluative questions—surface through participants interaction. In doing so, I adopt conversation analysis (CA) as the method of investigation, which I outline in the next section of this chapter.

2.4. Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a method of examining ‘talk-in-interaction’ that has developed over the last five decades. While ‘conversation analysis’ can be used in a wider sense to reference any kind of study of people talking together, in a more restricted sense it points to the particular tradition of analytic work that was started by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson back in the 1970s (Sacks, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 2007). Despite general impression of ordinary conversation as chaotic and disorderly (ten Have, 2007), using audio and video recording devices, conversation analysts have taken a very close look at diverse aspects of “talk at work” (Drew & Heritage, 1992) to portray sequential orderliness of talk in interaction.

CA is a procedural study of talk-in-interaction with its focus on the “local practices of turn-taking, sequential organization” (ten Have, 2007, p. 199). Having its roots in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), earlier studies in CA (Jefferson, 1984, 1987; Sacks, 1992; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1992, 2007) focused their interest mostly on ordinary conversation, whereas other later researchers implemented CA to analyze institutional interactions⁶ (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Maynard, 1992, 2003). Staying within the boundaries of talk and interactional order within the talk, the core of research in basic CA studies remains within the “systematic organization” (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) of talk, focusing in on human interaction as organizational and procedural. In the recent years, this line of analytic framework examining various sequences and order in talk has further developed from being a micro-analytic tool, uniquely utilized to verify and analyze sequences

⁶ Although, it should also be noted that Sacks’ earliest CA studies examined suicide call center recordings which may be categorized within institutional talk.

(Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Schegloff, 2007; ten Have, 2007), to be applied to a larger framework, to examine talk in different macro-social contexts. This will be further elaborated in the following subsections.

2.4.1. Applied CA

Applied CA is the framework of ‘applying’ CA as a method of using sequential findings to look at other phenomena in institutions and society (Antaki, 2011a). In other words, while ‘basic’ CA is more “analytically motivated” (Richards, 2010), ‘applied’ CA “is done in the hope that it can deliver some news about the organization of valued activities” (ten Have, 2007, p. 196). This may in some cases be used to better inform the social organization in which it is situated or in some cases (e.g., interventionist strand of applied CA) “may help to generate ideas as to how things may be done differently” (ten Have, 2007, p. 196). At some point, the divide between ordinary conversation and institutional talk seemed to represent the distinction between basic and applied CA, but as ten Have (2007) argued, CA can be used to study “*any* kind of talk-in-interaction, whatever its context or purpose” (p. 174). And for the particular purpose of distinguishing applied from basic CA, I would agree with ten Have (2007) that the division proposed here is not in the context of the data (i.e., ordinary conversation versus institutional interaction) but on the approach towards the use of the data and the analysis of it.

In applied CA, the focus of research is less on the micro-analytic findings of the interaction sequences, but more towards applying such findings to support or answer questions situated within larger social contexts. It would, however, be a fallacy to understand research in this area to be cases in which CA findings are merely used as jumping boards to derive generalizable solutions. Studies applying CA make use of the same detailed transcription

conventions and analytic methods to examine their data. The difference lies in the use of the findings and not in the method of analysis.

As Richards (2005) mentions, “one of the strengths of CA as a research discipline is its capacity to direct researchers’ attention to apparently tiny features of interaction and explode their dimensions beyond all expectations, revealing delicacies of design and management that resist the assaults of clumsier instruments” (Richards, 2005, p. 1). It could perhaps be the need of this very strength, striving for delicacy, and “unwillingness to settle” for easy solutions (Richards, 2005, p. 1) that has led researchers from other disciplines to decide to stay away from this intricate and time-consuming methodology. However, starting from earlier works of Heritage and others on institutional discourse (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Maynard, 2003; Schegloff, 1992) researchers in various disciplines—ranging from medicine, education, broadcasting to larger social issues such as gender and sexuality—have come to recognize “the value of research that respects their peculiar achievements” (Richards, 2005, p.1) and potential outcomes of applying CA to their research.

There are largely three proposals (Antaki, 2011b; Drew, 2005; ten Have, 2007) for applied CA. Both ten Have’s (2007) and Drew’s (2005) propositions stemmed from the earlier divide between CA’s approach to ordinary conversation and institutional discourse. Ten Have (2007) briefly explicated the development of applied CA, in his case making an argument between what he labeled “pure CA” (p. 174) and applied CA. A possible connotation that comes with such labeling (e.g., argument by Richards [2005] that the division between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ implies a hierarchy implicit theory-practice model) has been up for discussion, but as Richards (2005) also made inherent, applied CA is expected to “meet(s) the analytically rigorous demands” (p. 3) of all CA practice which may solve the possible tension.

Drew (2005) listed the diverse contexts (second language acquisition in classroom, speech disorders, TV and radio news interviews, AIDS counseling, interactions in medical settings, and so forth) that have been under scrutiny of CA and posited that, “this has been a direct consequence of the ways in which the application of CA methods in such fields reveals aspects of ‘professional practice’ which seem to have implications for practice and for training” (Drew, 2005, p. xv). Drew’s (2005) proposal focused mainly on how CA could be applied to ‘applied linguistics,’ and of the advantages and possible tensions that may arise in bringing ‘applied linguistics’ and CA together. He clarified the difference between applied linguistics as a ‘discipline’ and CA as an ‘analytic perspective’ and accordingly advised against full convergence of two different platforms of theory but instead viewed CA to be applied and exploited in various projects of applied linguistics (Drew, 2005).

Antaki (2011b), coming from a sociology background, included in his proposal a broader aspect of different disciplines that could and have applied CA as an approach to their research. He categorized the different kinds of “applied CA” into six strands: (1) foundational, (2) social-problem, (3) communicational, (4) diagnostic, (5) institutional, and (6) interventionist (Antaki, 2011b). The notion of *foundational CA*, was used to refer to the use of CA to respecify neighboring fields of study in a way that CA was applied to examine concepts already known through areas such a social sciences, psychology, linguistics and so forth. Examples of this strand would be the use of CA by discursive psychologists (cf., Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2006; Potter, 2011) and others who took in CA to “chalk off old problems as meaningless, and identify new and more interesting ones, with a CA solution” (Antaki, 2011b, p. 3). Another strand Antaki (2011b) labeled *communicational CA*, referring to a “complementary or alternative analysis of ‘disordered’ talk” (Antaki, 2011b, p. 5), and yet another strand,

diagnostic CA, was used to refer to the correlation of sequential features of talk or organization of a person's speech with clinical disorders (p. 6). *Critical CA* is another largely researched area within applied CA (aside from the two—institutional and interventionist—which are the more researched and will be discussed separately, in more detail in the next two subsections). This particular strand, which Antaki (2011b) labeled “social-problem applied CA,” is the one in which many of the macro-social formations are discussed from a micro-analytic standpoint. Issues such as feminism (Kitzinger, 2008, 2000; Speer, 2012; Wowk, 2007), gender (Speer, 2005, 2013; Speer & Stokoe, 2011), and race (Wallace, 2004; Whitehead & Lerner, 2009) are those that would fall under this strand and as the label rightly suggests, issues within this area have been under much debate and discussion over the last decade or so.

2.4.2. Applying CA to Applied Linguistics Research

The remaining two strands posited by Antaki and his colleagues (Antaki, 2011a) outline the two largest areas in applied CA—the *institutional* and *interventionist* strand. I will first discuss studies in the *institutional* strand, which has a longer history and go on to briefly examine studies within the *interventionist* strand.

Research in institutional CA denotes studies that apply CA as a method to learn more about how institutions work (e.g., media discourse, classroom discourse, doctor-patient discourse, journalism, and so forth). Studies within this strand are usually more descriptive. When it all started, the distinction was more between ‘ordinary’ talk and ‘institutional’ talk, which meant, at the onset of inquiry, the interest lay in *what* and *how* institutional talk was done. A large portion of research in the area of second language and multilingual interactions that have utilized applied CA as an approach belongs within this strand. Research in this strand focuses on finding out

about the institutional practices (e.g., how developments have happened, looking at some of the stances taken in this line of discourse).

Educational settings—especially language learning contexts (i.e., classroom discourse, tutorials, language learning development, second/foreign language and multilingual talk and etc.)—take up a large portion of institutional CA. In fact, research in this particular area has become so vast that it is unimaginable to provide a comprehensive overview in a paragraph or two. Research in this area not only includes earlier CA studies that examined various aspects of classroom discourse and language learning (e.g., teacher-student interaction [Wong & Waring, 2010] grammar [Ford, 1993]; student learning development [Kim, 2009; Mori & Hasegawa, 2009]; and many more) but also the discussion on the issue of “CA for SLA” (Firth & Wagner, 2007; Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee, 2007; Mori, 2007). Firth and Wagner (1997), a study that “triggered strong interest in the potential of CA for analyzing L2 talk” (Mori, 2007, p. 852), proposed the reconceptualization of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) as: “(a) a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use, (b) an increased emic (i.e., participant-relevant) sensitivity towards fundamental concepts, and (c) the broadening of the traditional SLA database” (p. 286). Although they were not particularly well received by the SLA community at the time (c.f., Firth & Wagner (1997), “*SLA Property: No Trespassing!*”), a large number of researchers picked up on their argument to view language and language use as a resource for “accomplishment and interpretation of social actions, which can be constantly negotiated and renegotiated through interaction” (Mori, 2007, p. 850), and explored different contexts, activities and learners (Mori, 2007). Moreover, Kasper and Wagner (2011) stressed that the focus of ‘CA for SLA’ should be on “the social aspects of language acquisition and not the more ‘systemic’ aspects” (p. 117).

Another area of institutional talk in which CA research has made its mark is in medical discourse (i.e., ‘doctor-patient’ talk; Heritage, 2005; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Maynard, 1992, 2003; Maynard & Heritage, 2005). One example is a monograph based on exploration of “natural breaches” (Maynard, 2003, p. 6) in the routine order of interaction in everyday life, in which Maynard (2003) included ‘doctor-patient’ interactions, focusing on the interactional sequences of news delivery, receipt of the news and the sociopolitical implications that stem off from the findings. An interesting observation he made was what he labeled the “benign order” of clinic news delivery (Maynard, 2003, p. 198). He observed that everyday social world has “an accomplished benign structure” (p. 183) in that “disclosure that transform the world for participants exhibit strong asymmetries between bad and good news” (p. 183). In other words, in their practices of talk and social interaction, participants “shroud bad news while exposing good news” (p. 183); they delay or withhold the telling of bad news while being more forthcoming with good news. On the contrary, he found the data in clinical discourse to render deviant cases. Examining data collected from an HIV-antibody testing clinic, Maynard observed that clinicians were often “direct and forthright in their conveyance of bad news as they were with good news” (p. 187). Maynard (2003) found the exposure of test results—whether positive (bad news) or negative (good news)—to bear the same structure. He discovered practices for delivering bad news in HIV clinics departed from “strong tendencies elsewhere to envelop such news by a variety of delaying and withholding tactics” (p. 198), and suggested that such “benign order of the clinic” (p. 198) was operative in variety of clinics. Maynard argued that such interactive methods held “potentially large consequences” (p. 198) and implications to procedures of “delivering bad or good news” (p. 248), which extended beyond medical talk to interaction in everyday life.

Other major studies in this area includes Heritage's examination of 'doctor-patient' interaction (Heritage, 2005; Heritage & Clayman, 2010) where they also took a close look at 'doctor-patient' interaction in various clinic settings. If Maynard's book (2003) showed how doing a CA analysis could help describe and understand medical interactions, Heritage (2009) argued for a more interventionist approach that could be utilized from a CA analysis. He argued that the examination of "real data using CA is found by many to be a potent experience capable of triggering changes in attitudes and clinic practices that are beneficial for patient care" (Heritage, 2009). One example would be his earlier work with Sefi (Heritage & Sefi, 1992), where they examined interaction data of UK health visitor service, where health visitors—as a mandate of the government—dropped in on new mothers and gave advice. The analysis of the interaction between health visitors and mothers, in which their focus was on how advice was given and received by the participants, gave off various implications. One of the major implications was on the considerations needed on the "nebulous character" (Heritage & Sefi, 1992, p. 412) of the health visitor's role in these 'externally forced' interactions, which contributed to a better understanding of the interlocutors' actions and their interactions.

Another constituent of institutional CA is research on media talk, which started off with analysis of 'news interview' interactions and has developed recently to include the study of interaction in diverse types of media discourse (i.e., talk shows, unscripted comedy or reality shows, and so forth). Earlier studies in this area were by Clayman (1992), who examined 'footing' (Goffman, 1981) of interviewees in news interviews and another by Greatbach (1992), who also examined news interviewers, but in his case looked at disagreements between interviewees in British television panel discussions. Other examples or research in this realm include work by various researchers who examined interaction sequences (e.g., e.g., turn taking

in news interviews, questions design, answers and ways of evading or resisting answers and etc.) in news, juridical interaction and political communications (Heritage, 1985, 2002; Heritage & Clayman, 2010; Heritage & Greatbach, 1986).

Research in the final *interventionist* strand strives to apply CA to collaboratively solve pre-existing problems (Antaki, 2011a, p. 8). Along with pre-existing interactional problems, research in this strand holds a strong implication from the very beginning of research “that a solution [will] be identified via the analysis of the sequential organization of talk; and is undertaken collaboratively, achieved with people in the local scene” (p. 8). The data providing context in this realm of research does not necessarily have a connection to CA from the start, but findings offered from a CA analysis is accepted and applied to make needed changes and developments in the given context. This strand of CA is largely applied for the purpose of training (e.g., interviewer training [Richards, 2010]; simulated communications interaction training [Stokoe, 2011b]; staff training [Finlay, Walton, & Antaki, 2011]) or social interventions, such as intervention for aphasics [R. Wilkinson, 2011]; or improving telephone helpline monitoring [S. Wilkinson, 2011b; Kitzinger, 2011]) as a result of the CA analysis. In other words, the intention of this particular analytic strand is not to stop at a description but to go on to do an evaluation (e.g., interventionist) or provide methodical materials for training purposes (e.g., instructivist).

Admittedly, there are various challenges in using CA-based analytic results to bring about intervention or change in the context under scrutiny. As Drew (2005) pointed out, despite aims of applied linguistics to design intervention which is to inform and improve practice in a given field of interaction, CA has focused more on “investigating and identifying the practices” (p. xviii) that underlie participants’ competence as users of a language and to document, rather

than evaluate them, which well explains Drew's (2005) stated concern over the difficulty of resolving the issue of whether CA could indeed be applied or "exploited" (p. xx) to pursue intervention in a language context. Antaki (2011a), however, suggested that as long as the analysis is focused on practices that are realized in talk, not only will such challenges seem less daunting (Antaki, 2011a), but it will eventually allow the application of CA to not only help describe but also benefit various disciplines.

As is well displayed by various studies in each of the different strands, applied CA can be utilized for diverse areas of second language research. So far, more work has been done in the area of institutional CA, where many studies have utilized CA to examine and describe certain phenomena in second language learning, teaching and development and recently have started describing non-linguistic and multimodal resources (e.g., gesture, gaze shift, and so forth) as well. Less work has been done in the case of interventionist CA, but more and more studies are utilizing CA to develop this area of research within applied linguistics (e.g., Richards, 2011; Stokoe, 2011), suggesting promising contributions to the area of second language studies and multilingual talk.

2.4.3. Research Gaps in Applied CA

Despite the comprehensive overview presented by studies on applied CA (Antaki, 2011; Drew, 2005; Richards & Seedhouse, 2006), there are gaps in applied CA research concerning: (a) application of CA for the purpose of re-defining and re-specifying interactional methods (i.e., interviews, focus groups, surveys and more) in applied linguistics research, and (b) multilingual (i.e., non-English) data. Despite the fact that much of the current research on learning, development, teaching, and all such important topics within applied linguistics and second language research implement research methods in which interaction is core to understanding the

results and findings (e.g., interviews, think aloud protocols, surveys and so forth), not much attention have been given to the actual interaction, and until recently (see Kasper & Ross, 2015), even CA analysts overlooked the possibilities of applying CA to respecify and examine these research methods. Also, as Seedhouse (2005) also noted, applied CA has the potential to “grow organically to accommodate new dimensions” (p. 264), and in order to do so, it needs to expand further from being biased as a study “exclusively on English native-speaker interaction” (p. 264). Since this argument, there have been many studies using CA to explore interaction in diverse languages (to its current state that includes studies of interaction in diverse languages and cultures (e.g., Nguyen & Kasper’s edited book [2009] including studies of interaction in Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese, Hindi, Spanish, and Korean; Pallotti & Wagner’s edited book [2011] including studies on Icelandic, Danish, German, Italian, Mexican-Spanish). Also, more recently, researchers examining Korean data have also started to implement CA as a methodological tool, (e.g., E. Kim, 2013; K. Kim, 2004, 2010; M. Kim, 2005, 2013, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2014; Park, 1998, 1999). Yet these studies are still mainly focused on using CA to identify linguistic aspects and usage, thus remaining at the level of identifying and describing language patterns in interaction, pertaining to the techniques of basic CA.

Using CA to examine an extensive amount of interaction in Korean and English (used by participants as a foreign language) to inform evaluation questions, this study proposes to make a novel contribution in diversifying applied CA research which until now has been more tilted towards monolingual English data. Also, this study aims to fill gap of respecification of research methods by investigating the interactional constitution of focus groups framed by the research questions outlines in the next section.

2.5. Research Questions

Guided by the methodological framework of CA, this study will investigate a specific method used in program evaluation, focus groups, attempting to re-specify the method using CA findings as well as inform evaluation questions by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the interactional features that constitute focus groups as a research method?
2. How do the participants construct their opinions and perspectives, collaboratively and as an individual *expert* of the topic being discussed?
3. How can CA findings contribute to a better understanding of focus groups as an informative and useful research method in program evaluation?

CHAPTER 3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I first describe the research setting and the participants. Then I will briefly outline the data collection procedures. Finally, I will explain how the data was transcribed, glossed and translated according to conversation analysis conventions (Jefferson, 2004).

3.2. Setting and Participants

In the last few decades, learning and teaching English in Korea has become one of the most prominent aspects of K-12 education. As mentioned in the previous chapter, students of English are now exposed to the English language much earlier than before, and accordingly English teachers in K-12 schools in Korea have had to make large adjustments to the curriculum and to their roles as second/foreign language educators. In a monolingual country, responding to newly established ‘bilingual education’ policy creates a heavy task for current in-service teachers. Thus, in accordance to such changes in the political current, the Korean government has enacted a policy in which current in-service teachers are offered teacher development programs provided by various higher education departments after a minimum of four years experience as regularly employed teachers (i.e., contract teachers, substitute teacher experiences are not included in years of experience). With the approval of the school principal, and after passing a brief test and interview,⁷ participating teachers are allowed to take time off—one semester and the directly following vacation period—from their teaching and school administrative duties to take classes offered by the allocated institutions for five months before they are sent to various locations in the U.S. for 4-6 weeks of training within the ESL context.

⁷ Information obtained from the pilot study focus group conducted in February 2013.

3.2.1. Setting

The context of the current study is one of such Korean-government accredited teacher training workshop programs based in Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. This teacher-training program has been providing the current training curriculum for the last three decades, and more than 300 teachers, annually, are funded by the Korean government to participate in this program. While the financial funding comes from the Korean government, each program is owned and operated by an individual—assisted by an Advisory Council and Board of Directors in the case of the current location. While the focus and goal of each of the programs may differ, the main goal of the entire 6-month program is a single administratively driven goal: to make and acknowledge Korean-native English teachers as native or near-native English teachers.⁸ Accordingly, both the training context in Korea and that in the U.S. have an English-only policy, and the curriculum is also geared toward preparing the teachers to teach English using English back in their classrooms in Korea.

3.2.2. Participants

The participants of this study are in-service Korean EFL teachers who participated in the 2013 winter and summer workshop programs. One group from the 2013 winter program was selected as participants for the pilot study—data from which has been included in this dissertation—and then six out of seven groups from the 2013 summer program were recruited for participation⁹. Each of the groups came from different districts of South Korea, and although the final destination of their 6-month workshop was to be in Honolulu, for all groups, the location and method of training in each of their location in Korea varied. Table 1 is a brief illustration of each group's background.

⁸ Information obtained from the pilot study focus group conducted in February 2013.

⁹ One group was left out as their stay in Hawaii was shorter than the other groups, and there was not enough time for them to participate.

Table 1. *Workshop participants' background*

Group*	Number of participants	Originating Region	Previous Training Context	Program length in U.S.
A	16	Southern Province	Provincial university based teacher training program	4 weeks
B	26	Southern Province	Provincial university based teacher training program	6 weeks
C	18	Seoul/Metropolitan	District government based training program (8wks) + Private University based program (12wks)	6 weeks
D**	16	Seoul/Metropolitan	District government based training program (8wks) + Private University based program (12wks)	5 weeks
E	25	Seoul/Metropolitan	Private university based program	5 weeks
F	30	Southern Province	National university based program	4 weeks
G	17	Seoul/Metropolitan	District government based program (8wks) + private university based program (12wks)	4 weeks

Note. *The groups have been anonymized and listed alphabetically in the order of arrival date in Honolulu. ** Group D was the only group of elementary school teachers.

From each of these seven groups, four to six people were recruited to participate in a focus group—detailed procedure of the recruiting process will follow in the next subsection—and then each small group of volunteers were gathered separately, with each discussion spanning between 64 to 114 minutes. Table 2 is an ethnographic description of each of the focus group participants.

Table 2. *Focus group participants information*

Group	Participants	Name*	Age	Context	Workshop Experience
A	4	Seoho (M)	30s	HS**	1 st
		Churi (M)	40s	HS	1 st
		Najin (F)	30s	HS/MS	2 nd
		Min (F)	20s	HS	1 st
B	6	Jinsu (M)	50s	HS	1 st
		Minsu (M)	40s	HS/MS	1 st
		Aeju (F)	50s	HS/MS	5 th
		Heri (F)	50s	HS	2 nd
		Yuri (F)	50s	HS	5 th
		Sumi (F)	40s	HS	1 st
		Nani (F)	30s	HS	1 st
C	6	Suni (F)	20s	HS	1 st
		Soha (F)	30s	HS	1 st
		Kay (F)	30s	HS	1 st
		Ema (F)	20s	HS	1 st
		Jay (F)	30s	HS/MS	
		Jena (F)	40s	E	1 st
D-1	4	Jinu (M)	50s	E	1 st
		Kate (F)	30s	E	2 nd
		Rumi (F)	20s	E	1 st
		Yuni (F)	40s	E	3 rd
D-2	4	Rami (F)	20s	E	1 st
		Young (F)	30s	E	1 st
		Joni (F)	30s	E	2 nd
E	5	Woni (F)	30s	HS	2 nd
		Sina (F)	30s	HS/MS	2 nd (same program)
		Sara (F)	50s	HS	4 th
		Lynn (F)	20s	HS	1 st
		Jini (F)	30s	HS/MS	1 st
F	1	Hyun (F)	30s	HS/MS	1 st
G	3	Jun (F)	50s	HS	2 nd
		Sue (F)	20s	HS	1 st
		Boni (F)	20s	HS	1 st

Note. *These are all pseudonyms. **HS- High school (GR10-12), MS- Middle School (GR7-9), E- Elementary School (Gr 1-6). Public school teachers in Korea are employed by the government, and the regulation is for them to change schools (within the same education district) every 3-4 years. While most teachers stay within the same grade levels, English teachers can move between middle and high schools.

The focus groups were all recruited and conducted by the researcher. The researcher, who acted as the moderator, provided the general questions based on the focus group protocol. Some of the participants knew the researcher from one or two courses she had taught in the process, but participants were made aware that the focus groups were conducted on a separate level from the researcher's role as the instructor in the program. Within the context of the current study where

the focus is on interaction, the researcher is also one of the participants, taking the role of the moderator.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The main focus of this dissertation is on the findings from the focus groups; however, these focus groups were collected under a larger study initially structured and planned within a program evaluation context. First, a needs analysis was conducted with all participants of the Winter and Summer 2013 program (N=152). Then I followed with classroom observations and instructor interviews. In the final weeks of the program, I revisited each classroom to recruit focus group participants. In the time permitted by the instructor, I explained the purpose and basic outline of what the focus groups would constitute, and then passed the sign up sheet around the class. Interestingly enough, there were between three to eight participants in each group that showed interest in participating in the focus groups, and thus each group was separately contacted and dates set up according to participants' schedules. In this process, there was a misunderstanding in the scheduling for Group F, and only one participant showed up, resulting in omission of that group from the analytic process.

Focus groups were conducted with all eight groups (Groups A to G, two groups for Group D; see Table 3).

Table 3. *Focus groups*

Group	Number of participants	Date of focus group	Length of Data
A	4	Feb. 2013	73 minutes
B	6	Jul. 2013	114 minutes
C	6	Aug. 2013	72 minutes
D-1*	4	Aug. 2013	87 minutes
D-2*	4	Aug. 2013	74 minutes
E	5	Aug. 2013	91 minutes
F	1	Aug. 2013	76 minutes
G	3	Aug. 2013	64 minutes

Note. *There were 8 volunteers from group D, which was too large for a single meeting, so they divided themselves into two groups of four.

The focus group protocol, informed by the needs analysis results and instructor interview, was formulated and used with all eight groups (Appendix A). The major questions consisted of: (a) the recruitment process for participation in the 6-month program, (b) participants' needs, goals, and expectations for the development program, (c) whether those needs, goals, and expectations were met, and (d) the participants' suggestions for change or improvement of the program.

3.4. Transcription

The collected focus group data were transcribed according to standard CA conventions (Jefferson, 2004; see Appendix C and D). First, each of the entire recordings was roughly transcribed from the audio data in the original language, Korean. Once the focal sequences were located and identified, detailed transcripts were made in reference to the two separate audio recordings and video-recording.

After first transcribing the vocal conduct, specific attention was given to participant gaze direction and gestures, as this was deemed a particularly important aspect that gave hints to the direction of talk with a multi-party interaction such as these focus groups. The detailed

transcripts were then Romanized, glossed, and translated into idiomatic English, thus resulting in a four-tier transcript. All analyses were done on the original language, Korean.

Transcripts are best representations of actual talk and other conduct, and we try to depict as much detail as possible, but they can never substitute for the original interaction (Cheng, 2013). In this regard, transcripts are always selective, unavoidably partial, and can be analytically biased (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). However, transcripts are an important analytic tool in CA research as they are able to “highlight specific phenomena and create a ‘shared focus’ among audience and analyst” (ten Have, 2007, p. 32). The transcripts in this study are therefore treated as “a way of giving readers independent and comparable access to the phenomenon discussed in the analysis.” In the next chapter, I start the analysis, with my observations of the interactional shape of multi-participant focus groups, focusing especially on how the interactions are constructed with diverse participation formation between the moderator and the participants.

CHAPTER 4. TALK ORGANIZATION IN FOCUS GROUPS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine how talk is organized in the multi-party focus group interactions and is organized in four subsections. First I begin with the openings, noticing how participants make a shift from casual conversation to the intended¹⁰ interactional activity through (a) the moderator's initiation, and (b) orientation to the activity by the participants. Second, I take a look at how participants move the interaction forward—from the initiation—through diverse ways of uptake and turn negotiation. Third, I examine turn allocations—an important aspect specifically to multi-party interactions—and examine how the moderator and participants distribute and allocate turns through interaction and the actions these different types of turn distribution takes.

4.2. Openings

Openings in any institutional interactions are significant in that they signal the shift from casual conversation to the interaction pertaining to the institutional activity at hand (Ford, 2008). Opposed to more tightly structured institutional interaction, such as dyadic interviews or news interviews which may conform to the institutionality from the very beginning, research has indicated that this is less so in loosely formed institutional interaction such as meetings (Ford, 2008; Murayama, 2012). While there are often times a “structuring of participation” (Ford, 2008, p. 53), established by the leader or the chair of the meeting, interactional analyses of meetings have displayed contingencies that may occur in such practices (Boden, 1994; Ford, 2008;

¹⁰ I use the term *intended* here not as a cognitive term, but to refer to the fact that all participants were explicitly recruited to participate in a group discussion about their evaluation of the program and therefore were all aware of the purpose of the gathering.

Murayama, 2012). In the case of the current focus group data, similar contingencies were noted.

All seven focus groups were conducted at a social venue (i.e., coffee shops or restaurants), and thus the very initial starts of conversation were all casual talk such as basic greetings and then drinks or food to be ordered. During this process, the moderator also briefly explained the consent forms and asked for signatures. While this particular action may be the signal of the start of focus groups, in all seven cases—as the participants had already been informed of the contents within the consent forms during the recruiting process—this activity was carried out casually amidst the ongoing social interaction of food ordering and casual conversation. Although most of the participants had seen the moderator at least once (i.e., in the recruitment process or as an instructor in their classes), this was the first time for all of them to actually closely interact, and thus in all seven cases, there was an amountable time of building rapport before actually getting into the activity of asking questions and generating discussion. Consequently, for the purpose of analyzing openings, I chose to focus on the actual moment when the shift was made—either by the moderator or one of the participants—from mundane conversation to any orientation to the activity at hand. Upon inspection, these *shifts* were observed at approximately 1 to 4 minutes into the recorded conversation. Of the seven groups, four of the openings were initiated by the moderator while the other three were initiated by orientation to the activity by the participants.

Table 4 outlines the opening sequences of the seven focus groups.

Group	Pre-Focus Group Activity	Initiator
Group A	Coffee Order, seating adjustments	Participant
Group B	Food Order, small talk	Moderator
Group C	Coffee Order, small talk	Participant
Group D-1	Coffee Order, comment about location	Moderator
Group D-2	Coffee order, small talk	Moderator
Group E	Food order, device set up	Participant
Group G	Silence, nervous gaze	Moderator

In the following subsections I will provide detailed analyses of these instances particularly focusing on how the participants changed their orientation to the interaction *in situ*.

4.2.1. Pre-Protocol Questions: Setting the scene

As seen in Table 4, the moderator initiated four opening sequences of the seven individual focus groups. The first excerpt is from group B. The six participants had been talking about the restaurant atmosphere (see Fig. 1) while the moderator set up the video camera and the two audio recorders. In this case, the activity is first initiated by a mutual gaze between the moderator and one of the participants, Jinsu. As many researchers have mentioned, oftentimes a mutual gaze, or looking at each other marks the start of a social encounter (Goffman, 1963, Goodwin, 1981, Cheng, 2013). Line 1 of this excerpt is a minute into the recording and as the moderator holds up the protocol paper, Jinsu looks up from the conversation and his gaze locks with the moderator.

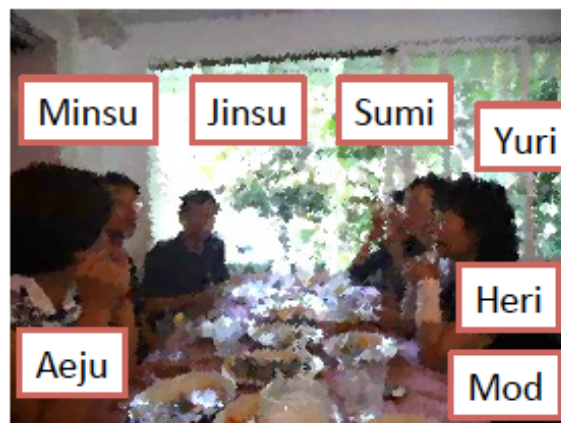


Figure 1. Group B seating arrangement

Ex. 4.1. Group B: Since when?

- 01 → Mod: ((gaze to Jinsu)) 언제부터 연수를 받으신거예요?
02 All: ((all participants turn their gaze to moderator))
03 Jinsu: 이:: 연수는 원래-
04 Aeju: 3 월 부터
05 Jinsu: 원래 5 개월 간 하는 거라서요

06 Mod: 네

07 Jinsu: 3 월 2 일날 시작하면서 계속 하고 6 월 말 정도에

08 이제 29 일날 이리 옮겨와서 그때부터 한달 간입니다

09 Mod: 그리고 돌아가서 끝인가요? 보고서 이런거 없으시지요?

10 Heri: 아 이제 그건

01 → Mod: ((gaze to Jinsu)) enceypwuthe yenswulul patusinkeeyyo?
since when workshop-ACC receive-did you-POL
When did this workshop start?

02 All: ((all participants turn their gaze to moderator))

03 Jinsu: i:: yenswunun wenlay-
this workshop-TP originally
This workshop was originally-

04 Aeju: samwel pwuthe
March from then
(It) started in March.

05 Jinsu: wenlay okaywel kan hanun kelaseyo
originally 5 months during do-TP it is, you see-POL
The original (whole) program is 5 months long, you see.

06 Mod: ney
yes-POL

07 Jinsu: samwel i-ilnal sicakhamyense kyeyso hako 6wel mal cengtoey
March 2nd-day start-COND continuously do-and June end of around about

08 icey 29ilnal ili olmkyewase kuttaypwuthe hantal kan-ipnita
now 29th here move-come-then from then onwards one month for-it is-POL-IE
**This all started on March 2nd and continued on until the end of June, which is
around about the 29th, which is when we came here, and then that continues on
for one month.**

09 Mod: kuliko tolakase kkuthinkayo? pokose ilenke epsusikoyo?
and then when you return is that the end-POL report something like that don't have-POL
**And then is that the end when you return after all this is over? You don't have a
report or something like that afterwards?**

10 Heri: a icey kuken
oh now that-TOP
Oh, well now about that,
((Heri continues about post-workshop requirements))

In line 1, while shifting her papers in her hands, the moderator's gaze meets with Jinsu and at that point she launches her initial question, *when did this workshop start?* (line 1), shifting

the interactional atmosphere from that of ordinary conversation—about the ambience of the restaurant—to another institutional activity. While the moderator’s prior actions (i.e., setting the camera and audio recorders, not participating in the ongoing conversation, shuffling papers) may have indicated a certain shift in the interaction, it is not until her gaze meets with one of the participants, that she initiates the question asking. In response, the participants stop their previous discussion and shift their attention to the moderator, by all turning their gaze to the moderator (line 2). As Jinsu is the first one to have met the moderator’s gaze as well as having being the direct recipient of the question, he starts answering the question with an elongated *i:::* (*this:::*, line 3), possibly addressing the ambiguity of the word *yenswu* (*workshop*), which at this initial point could be indexing the study abroad component in the U.S. or the entire 5 month workshop (including the time in Korea)¹¹. Before he has a chance to finish his sentence, however, Aeju interrupts with her answer, *from March onwards* (line 4). Although it is unclear whether Jinsu had meant to refer back to the very first date of the workshop in his initial response, in the subsequent line, he elaborates on Aeju’s short response by outlining the schedule of the entire workshop, concluding with the time they have spent (i.e., one month) in the U.S.

Aside from a short continuer *ney* (yes, line 6) to Jinsu’s tag question ending in line 5, the moderator offers neither a receipt nor an acknowledgment token (Heritage, 2002; Schegloff, 2007) to the information provided by the respondents. Rather, upon Jinsu’s turn completion, she directly goes on with another question in connection to the initial question (i.e., about the program-related schedule or assignments after they return to Korea). Although the subsequent

¹¹ In Korean, the one word, *yenswu* (workshop) is the only word used to reference any type of teacher development program or workshop provided to in-service teachers. Therefore, in the case of these focus groups, when the moderator uses the word *yenswu* participants have responded in ways that indicate that they perceive it to reference either: (a) the entire 5-6 month workshop including their time in Korea; or (b) just the 4-6 weeks study-abroad component taken in the U.S. This ambiguity later causes the moderator to change the formulation of her first question as can be seen in the next excerpt.

lines are omitted here in the interest of space, for the next few turns, the interaction displays a similar turn sequence of short information seeking questions from the moderator, each followed by short answers from each of the participants. This continues until the moderator asks the first question on the focus group protocol *How did you come to participate in this program?* (Appendix B), at which point the line of information seeking questions shift into discussion between the participants. Considering the fact that the moderator had prior access to the information that she sought out through her first few questions (e.g., information about their starting date and the length of time they have been in the U.S. was previously obtained through the documents provided by the administrator as well as the needs analysis), along with the lack of the interactional devices that orient to the participants' responses as new information (Heritage, 2002, Heritage & Raymond, 2005), the analysis illuminates that the opening sequence is used by the moderator to ease the participants into the discussion. In other words, the moderator is using simple questions to which she already has the answers to as a way of opening the focus group interaction. By doing this, she is able to get responses from participants without long, awkward pauses, naturally leading into abundant discussion among participants without deliberate allocations of response providers—although this is done in some cases for the sake of diversity as will be discussed further down in this chapter.

The following excerpt, another opening sequence from group D-1, with four participants, shows a similar pattern.

Ex.4.2. Group D-1: Did you know you were coming to Hawaii?

- 01 → Mod: ((gaze down on paper)) 오신지 얼마나 되셨죠? (.) 딱 한달 되셨나요?
- 02 Kate: ((nods, then gaze at other participants)) 딱 한달?
- 03 Rumi: 네 4 주 ((gaze at Mod))
- 04 Jinu: 응 4 주 ((gaze at Rumi))
- 05 Mod: ((picks up protocol paper)) 그럼 프로그램 이거, (0.3) 오시기 전에
- 06 프로그램 막판에 하와이 오는 거를 알고 지원하신거예요?
- 07 Jinu: 네
- 08 Kim: 네, 그것 때문에 지원한거예요 ㅎㅎㅎ

09 Mod: 아 그래요?
10 Jinu: 으흐흐흠 ((웃음))
11 Kate: 선택권이 두 가지라서- 호주를 갈거나, 하와이를 갈거나
12 Jinu: 실제로 하와이 프로그램이 경쟁이 굉장히 심했대요
13 Rumi: 응 (nods) 신청한 사람 중에 못 온 분들 많았대요.
14 Mod: 아:::

01 → Mod: ((gaze down on paper))
osinci elmana tosyesscyo?(.)ttakhantal tosyessnayo?
arrive-POL-NML how long has it been-POL exactly one month has it been-Q-POL
How long has it been since you arrived here? Has it been exactly a month?

02 Kate: ((gaze at other participants)) ttak hantal?
exactly one month?

03 Rumi: ney sa-cwu ((gaze at Mod))
yes-POL 4 weeks
that's right 4 weeks

04 Jinu: ung sa-cwu ((gaze at Rumi))
yes 4 weeks
yup 4 weeks

05 Mod: ((picks up protocol paper)) kurum *program* ike (.) osiki ceney
then program this one come-POL-NML before
06 *program* makpan-ey *Hawaii* onun-kelul alko ciwunhasinkeeyyo?
program last part-at *Hawaii* coming-schedule know-and apply-did you-Q-POL?
**Then about this program, did you apply to this program already knowing that at
the end of it, you would come to Hawaii?**

07 Jinu: ney
yes-POL

08 Kate: ney, kuket ttaymwun-ey ciwen hanke-eyyo hhh
yes-POL that reason-for apply we did-POL
Yes, that's actually the reason I applied for this program. haha

09 Mod: a kulayyo?
oh really?

10 Jinu: uhuhuhum ((continues laughter))
hahahaha

11 Kate: senthaykkweni twu kacilase- hocwulul kalkenya, hawailul kalkenya
choice-is two options-you see Australia-ACC go-Q Hawaii-ACC go-Q
There were two options you see- to go to Australia? Or to go to Hawaii

12 Jinu: silceylo *Hawaii program*-i kyengcayngi koyngcanghi simhaysstayyo
actually *Hawaii program*-NM competition-NM extremely intense-HEARSAY-POL
**Actually, I heard that the competition to participate in this Hawaii program was
extremely intense.**

13 Rumi: ung ((nods)) sinchenghansalam cwungey mos on pwuntul manhasstayyo.
right those who applied amongst NEG come people many-HEARSAY-POL
That's right. I heard that there were many people who applied who weren't

accepted.

14 Mod: Ah:::

In this excerpt, the transition is comparatively subtler than the previous excerpt (4.1). Line 1 starts about 2 minutes into the recording, and just prior to the start of this excerpt, the participants had been discussing the weather (because they were sitting at an outdoor café). Following a short pause after the participants' collaborated praise of the breezy weather, the moderator starts in line 1 with her first question, *how long has it been since you arrived here?* with her gaze on down the protocol paper she was holding. Directly after the question, she proffers a response to her own question, changing the question format from an open question to a polarity question (Koshik, 2002), seeking confirmation rather than unknown information. Three of the four participants each confirm the moderator's suggested answer (lines 2-4), at which point the moderator picks up the sheet with the protocol on it and continues with her question (line 5). Although she starts her second question with a conjunction, *kurum (then)*, seemingly connecting her first and second question, there is actually no real connection between the two. Rather the first question takes on the action of shifting the focus from the rather freely-distributed talk about the weather onto a discussion initiated by the moderator, and then in the following question, *did you know you would be coming to Hawaii?* (lines 5-6), the moderator makes a move towards a protocol-relevant question (Appendix A) that generates open discussion from line 7 and down. Moreover, Kate's response, *that is actually the reason I applied for this program* (line 8), not only answers the moderator's yes/no question but also provides an account as to why she applied for the program, generating a change of state (Heritage, 2002) response from the moderator, *oh is that so?* (line 9) indicating that Kate's account is news to her (Heritage,

2012a). This change of state response from the moderator generates a collaborated response from three of the participants leading into their discussion on the recruitment process of the workshop.

In the next excerpt, the moderator makes use of information obtained from a previous focus group with another group to start the activity.

Ex.4.3. Group D-2: You are also from.. right?¹²

01 → Mod: ((audio recorder set down, Yuni and Rami looks at Mod)) 선생님들도 경기도 교육청에서 이 연수하고
 02 ((Joni and Young stops talking and shift gaze to Mod))
 03 XX 에서 하고 오신거지요?
 04 All: 네
 05 → Mod: 세 군데 중에서 어디가 제일 유익하셨던 거 같으신가요?
 ((Mod starts setting up video equipment))
 06 Joni: 저는 XX 가 많이 tight 했어요. 가르치는 것도
 07 숙제도 많고 그랬는데 그게 제가 원하는 스타일이에요.
 08 tight 했지만 배우는게 많고. 저는 연수 끝나면
 09 다 버리고 가거든요 그런데 거기서는 쟁겨울
 10 만한 게 있었어요.
 11 Mod: 아.. 다른 분들은요?
 12 Yuni: 저도 XX가 좋았어요.
 ((extended discussion about the differences in the three programs for 2:12 minutes as Rami and
 13 Young also add their answers to this question, video recording starts here))
 14 Mod: 그러면:: ((sits down)) 연수 시작할때부터 마지막에 Hawaii
 15 오는 거 알고 [신청하신거예요?
 16 All: [네 ((Rami and Young nodding))
 01 → Mod: ((audio recorder set down, Yuni and Rami looks at Mod))
 sensayngnimtulto kyengkito kyoyukchengeyse i yenswuhako
 you teachers-also Gyonggi province office of education-at this workshop-do-and
**You (teachers) also were part of the program provided by the office of education
 in the Gyonggi province,**
 02 ((Joni and Young stop talking and shift gaze to Mod))
 03 XX-eyse hako osinkeciyo?
 XX-at do- and came here-right
then at the XX institute, and then you came here, right?
 04 All: ney
yes
 05 → Mod: sey-kwuntey cwungeyse etika ceyil yuikhasyessten ke kathusinkayo?
 three-places among them where-NM the most useful-did you think it was-Q
Of the three institutions, which one did you think was the most useful for you?
 ((Mod starts setting up video equipment))

¹² Although there is no recorded video data of this specific excerpt, the movements and gaze description come from the researcher's observation and field notes that were noted onto the transcription directly following the focus group.

- 06 Joni: cenun XXka manhi *tighthaysseyo*. kaluchinun kesto
 For me XX-NM a lot tight-it was-POL teaching-TP subjects-also
 07 swukceyto manhko kulayssnuntey kukey ceyka wenhanun suthailieyyo.
 assignments-also there was a lot but that was I-NM what I wanted style-IE-POL
 08 *tight* hayssciman paywununkey manhko. cenun yenswu kkuthnamyen
 tight it was but learn-amount a lot-and I-TP workshop finish-then
 09 ta peliko kaketunyo. kulentey kekisenun chayngkyeol
 all throw away and go-you see but there keep and bring
 10 manhan key issesseyo.
 useful there were-POL
**For me, the program at XX institution was really tight. Both in the teaching and in
 the amount of assignments we had to do. But still, that was the type of workshop I
 like. It was tight, but there was a lot to learn. Usually, when I participate in a
 workshop, I usually throw away the resources after the workshop is over, but
 there I found a lot of things that I wanted to keep and bring home.**
- 11 Mod: Ah.. talun pwun-tul-un-yo?
 oh other people-HON-TP-POL
Oh.. How about others?
- 12 Yuni: ceto XX-ka cohasseyo.
 I-also XX-TP good-was-POL
I also liked the program at XX.
- 13 ((extended discussion about the differences in the three programs for 2:12 minutes as Rami and
 Young also add their answers to this question, video recording starts here))
- 14 Mod: kulemyen:: ((sits down)) yenswu sicak-halhttaypwuthe macimak-ey *Hawaii*
 well then workshop start-since then at the end-at Hawaii
 15 onunke alko [sinchenghasinkeeyyo?
 coming-TP know-and applied for-Q-POL
**Well then, from the start of the workshop, did you apply for the
 program knowing that you would be coming to Hawaii at the end?**
- 16 All: [ney ((Rami and Young nodding))
yes

In the case of this group (D-2), line 1 starts at 00:01 point of the audio recording. Of the seven groups, this particular group had the best group rapport. All four of them had been roommates throughout their stay in the U.S. and had signed up together as a group to participate in this focus group as well (hence the two different groups from Group D). Upon arrival at the focus group site, the four of them had constantly been engaged in conversation—sometimes in pairs and sometimes as a group of four—while the moderator ordered the drinks and set up the gear for recording. As the moderator set down the second audio recorder on the table, two of the

participants (Yuni and Rami) diverted their gaze from the group discussion to the moderator, while the other two (Joni and Young) continued talking softly. Catching Yuni and Rami's gaze (line 1) the moderator initiates the activity by asking a question based on the information she obtained from the other participants (Group D-1) the previous day. In her question, *sensayngnimitul-to* (*you teachers also*), by using the particle *-to* (*also*), the moderator references her knowledge of where these participants were trained prior to coming to the U.S. By formulating her first question in such a way that references her access to the information, she is also projecting a preferred response (Schegloff, 2007a) of positive affirmation, looking for confirmation rather than a new response-type. In the middle of her question formulation, the other two participants who had been conversing on the side stop their discussion and turn their attention and gaze to the moderator, and as the moderator completes her question turn, all four participants reply together *ney* (yes) in agreement (line 4). Having used the confirmation question to catch the attention of all participants, in the subsequent line, the moderator goes on to formulate the first question that initiates an opinion response from the participant, *Of the three institutions, which one did you think was the most useful for you?* Now, this question was not part of the focus group protocol, nor was it among the evaluative goals to have the participants rank the different institutions they had partaken in the course of the 5 months. The moderator, however, uses this question—linked to the first confirmation question—as a connecting question to keep: (a) the attention of the participants, as (b) the discussion going as she set up the rest of the equipment. In line 6, we see that as Joni goes on to elaborate her opinion, the moderator goes about setting up the final equipment—the video recorder—all the while allocating the same question among participants (line 11, 13). As all four participants complete their responses, the moderator also completes setting up the video equipment, and as she sits back down in her chair

(line 14), she connects on to the question that leads to the protocol question on recruitment, *did you know from the beginning that the last part of the program would be in Hawaii?* (lines 14-15). All four participants reply positively to this question, which leads to the discussion of the recruitment process and their initial reasons for applying to the workshop.

In all three excerpts, the moderator's initial orientation to the activity constitutes the action of *asking questions*. What the analyses indicate, however, is that these initial questions have less the goal of inducing new information from the participants but rather takes on the role of confirming what the moderator already knows. As was briefly mentioned in the analyses of Ex. 4.1, all of these focus groups were conducted within the final few days of the program. As part of the program evaluation of which these focus groups were components, the moderator had conducted a needs analysis survey with each of the groups at the beginning of the program, as well as obtained the documents containing the full schedule and curriculum of each of the groups from the administrator beforehand. Therefore, before any questions were asked, the moderator already had full knowledge of when and where these programs started and also how long each group have been in the U.S. at the time of the focus group. The excerpts above, however, display that the moderator makes use of these questions—indexing answers to which she has access—as a method of shifting the focus of the discussion from casual conversation into the activity of obtaining “experts’ opinions or perspectives” on the matters at hand (Puchta & Potter, 2004). In the next subsection, I examine the excerpts in which the opening sequences were initiated by the participants.

4.2.2. Orientation to Activity by Participants

As displayed in Table 4b, in three of the seven groups, orientation to the focus group activity was initiated by one of the participants.

Table 4b. Opening Sequences in Focus Groups

Group	Pre-Focus Group Activity	Initiator	Action
Group A	Coffee order, seating adjustments	Participant	Attention to recording device
Group B	Food order, small talk	Moderator	
Group C	Coffee order, small talk	Participant	Attention to activity
Group D-1	Coffee order, comment about location	Moderator	
Group D-2	Coffee order, small talk, device set up	Moderator	
Group E	Food order, device set up	Participant	Self-introduction
Group G	Silence, nervous gaze	Moderator	

In the case of Group E, one of the five participants, Woni, suggested that everyone do a self-introduction so that the moderator will know who is who when she later uses the data, and the interaction flows naturally from the self-introductions to the first question about the recruitment process that gets the discussion started. The two excerpts to be analyzed in this subsection display a slightly different way in which the focus group activity is initiated by one of the participants. The first excerpt is from Group A.

Ex.4.4. Group A: Is this a recorder?

- 01 → Min: ((points to MP3)) 아 이거 녹음기예요?
 02 Mod: 애는 녹음기고요, 애는 핸드폰인데=
 03 Churi: 이제 두개 갖고 [혹시 모르니까=
 04 Seoho: [아하
 05 Min: =네에↓
 06 (1.0)
 07 Mod: 원래 계획은 영어로 하는 거였는데, (.)
 08 편하신 대로 맡길예요. hh
 09 Min: 편h하게 할게요. hhh
 10 All: ((laughter))
- 01 → Min: ((points to MP3)) a ike nokumkieyyo?
 58 oh this recorder-Q
Oh is this a recorder?
- 02 Mod: yaynun nokumkikoyo, yaynun hayntuphonintey=
 this one-TP recorder-and-POL this one-TP cell phone-it is but
This one is a recorder and, this one is a cell phone but
- 03 Churi: =icey twukay kacko [hoksi molunikka=
 now two with just in case=

she did so, one participant, Nani, commented on Jay's sunglasses, asking whether she was going to wear them during the focus group as well. This comment initiated a discussion concerning the cultural connotation of wearing sunglasses during formal meetings, followed by Jay's account on her need to keep her shades on due to a recent eye surgery. This led to teasing by other participants of Jay, noting that her eye surgery was many months ago already, which is the point where this excerpt starts. Following a short pause after the teasing and laughter, in overlap with the moderator's hesitating starter (line 3), another participant, Ema proposes a shift in the activity, *Can we start?* (line 4) with her gaze on the moderator, after which she directly shifts to the coffee in front of her. The other participants orient to this with a smile and exchange glances (lines 5 and 6), while Jay—who was in the main speaker in the previous sequence—accepts Ema's proposal with °oka:y° (line 7), indicating that she is giving over the turn to Ema. In overlap with Jay's final syllable, Ema—with her gaze still down on her coffee—produces a barely audible account for her previous turn stating, °because (we're) only talking about other things hh° (line 8). By *other things* she is referring to the casual conversation they have been carrying out as a group, which she presumes to be topics outside of what the moderator has recruited the group for. Although neither the moderator nor the other participants orient to her proposal as problematic, her continued averted gaze and her account giving (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990), indicates that she understands it is not her role in this particular group to suggest such changes in the interactional route. Yet, aside from short laughter from her co-participants and the moderator, there are no challenges or disagreements to her suggestion, and the moderator takes this chance to start the activity by first thanking the participants, which then leads on to explanation of the activity. In other words, despite Ema's post-production hesitation of her actions, it is her orientation to the projected activity that initiates the focus group activity.

As the selected five excerpts in this section have displayed, there are contingencies in the ways in which the shift into the initiation of *doing* focus group is achieved. The analyses show that it is not only the moderator but also the participants who orient to the pre-announced (i.e., at recruitment and through the reading and signing of consent forms) goal of the activity at hand. They also all strive to achieve the shift from casual conversation to the interaction concerning the activity through the action of asking questions, shifting gaze, and explicitly orienting to the activity depicted within the opening sequences (Ford, 2008). Furthermore, while participants may have an idea of the institutional roles and responsibilities pertaining to the activity, it is not always the case that the participants conform to such given roles, displaying an aspect of “naturalistic” (Wilkinson, 1999) inclination of focus group interaction, which will be further explored in the analyses to follow. In the next section, I will go on to examine how the participants actively sought to organize the initiated activity by dutifully and effectively carrying out the discussion through uptake and turn organization.

4.3. Moving Forward: Uptake and Turn Organization

Pertinent to multiparty interactions, once a question has been asked, there comes the issue of how and by whom the sequence is to continue. Unless the next speaker is specifically nominated by the producer of the first pair part (i.e., the moderator of the participant who asked the question), the second pair part (Schegloff, 2007a) and the turns to follow are open for uptake by any of the participants in the interaction. In this section, I will first examine a few cases directly following the opening sequences and describe how participants go about doing voluntary uptake (ten Have, 2007) and taking up the activity of organizing the turn-takings. Then in the

next section, I will go on to examine the different episodes of turns that are specifically allocated by the moderator or by the participants.

4.3.1. Uptake

The excerpts in this subsection present four cases—across four different groups—in which one of the participants self-selects themselves to provide a second pair part response (Schegloff, 2007a) to the first pair part question formulated by the moderator. In the case of these four excerpts, participants' uptake was self-selected without being induced by explicit turn allocations or bodily embodiments (e.g., gaze, hand gesture—instances of such will be introduced in the following section). These instances are exemplary interactions, defining particular aspects of the sequential organization of how uptakes are done in multi-party focus groups. The first excerpt is from Group D-2 and this is the second question posed by the moderator following the opening sequence (Ex. 4.3).

Ex. 4.6. Group D-2: In my case

- 01 Mod: 하와이 오시면서 어떤? 어떤 목적이나 °기대를
 02 >갖고 오셨어요<°? 예를 들어 영어를 이만큼 더
 03 향상시키겠다. 아니면 더 배워가겠다? ((gaze down at paper))
 04 Young: 저 같은 경우는? 이제 이게 5개월 1개월 이잖아요::↑
 05 Mod: 네
 06 Young: 3개월 3개월 코스도 있었는데 5 개월 1개월 선택한
 07 이유는? (1.0) 뭔가 1개월을 위해서 뭔가 5개월 동안
 08 영어 연수를 hhh 정말 열심히 잘 들어서 언어 향상을-
- 01 Mod: *Hawaii* osimyense etten? etten mokcekina °kitaylul
 Hawaii come-COND what what goal or expectation-ACC
 02 >kacko osyesseyo<°? yeylul tule yengelul imankhum te
 with come-POL For example English-ACC this much more
 03 hyangsangsikhikeyssta. animyen te paywekakeyssta?
 improve-I will or more learn-must-IMPER
**As you came to Hawaii, what goals, what expectations did you bring? For example,
 “I will improve my English this much,” or “I will learn more”?**
- 04 Young: ce kathun kyengwunun? icey ikey okaywel ilkaywel icanhayo::↑
 In my case? now this 5 months 1 month it is-Q-POL
In my case? Now, this program is 5 months (in Korea) and 1 month (abroad), right?
- 05 Mod: Ney
 Yes

06 Young: samkaywel samkaywel khosuto issessnuntey okaywel ilkaywel senthaykhan
 3 months 3 months course-also there was, but 5 months 1 month choose
 07 iyunun? (1.0) mwenka ilkaywelul wihayse mwenka okaywel tongan
 reason something like 1 month-ACC for somewhat 5 months during
 08 yenge yenswulul hhh cengmal yelsimhi cal tulese ene hyangsangul-
 English workshop-ACC really very hard well take-CONN language improve-ACC
**There was also the 3 months (in Korea) and 3 months (abroad) course as well? But
 the reason I chose this 5 months 1 month program was that I thought, somehow, I
 would really work hard during the 5 months in Korea to improve my language skills
 for the one month of study abroad.**

This excerpt starts with the moderator’s question based on the protocol (Appendix A), asking about the participants’ goals or expectations in coming to Hawaii. This excerpt continues from the previous opening sequence (Ex.4.3), where it has been established that the participants came to Hawaii following a five month course at two different institutions in Korea, and that they had applied to the program knowing they would come to spend one month in Hawaii at the end. The moderator’s question in line 1 directly follows this. First, she starts by formulating her question as an open-ended question, *As you came to Hawaii, what goals, what expectations >did you bring<?* (line 1-2), which she then, without a pause, reformulates into a choice question, providing examples, *For example, “I will improve my English this much,” or “I will learn more”?* (lines 2-3). In this case, the direct reformulation, as well as the faster speech towards the end of her first question (*>did you bring<*) indicates that it was not the lack of uptake to her first question. Nonetheless, by reformulating question into smaller, specific choice questions, the moderator’s reformulation works to increase the likelihood of uptake from one of the participants. But at the same time, instead of taking her gaze specifically to one of the participants—which would further increase possibility of direct uptake—she gazes down at the paper in her hands towards the end of her question, thus opening up the floor to self-selection by the participants (while also risking the possibility of no uptake). Without a pause, Young proffers the first response by self-selecting herself, *ce kathun kyengwunun? (in my case?,* line 4). After she self-

selects, she does not directly provide a choice-type answer, but rather goes back to first give an account of what she will later project as an answer (i.e., *improve my language skills*, line 8), *Now, this program is 5 months (in Korea) and 1 month (abroad), right?* (line 4). Upon the moderator's receipt token *ney* (line 5), Young goes on to further elaborate her reasons behind her later professed goals in choosing to participate in this program. By prefacing her turn with a self-selecting phrase, *in my case* (line 4), she is invoking the trajectory of a story (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006) she is about to tell, which also takes the action of holding her place to talk, as well as provide indication of responsive uptake to the moderator's question formulation.

A similar form of uptake appears in the following excerpt as well, but in a slightly different form.

Ex. 4.7. Group G: Well, for me

- 01 Mod: 그러면, 오시면서, 그니까, 하와이에 대해서 어떤
 02 기대를 갖고 오셨어요? 그니까=
 03 Sue: 음:
 04 Mod: =어떤 수업을 하면 좋겠다, 아니면 어떤:: 것을
 05 하면 좋겠다, 기대나 혹시 목표? ((gaze shifts back and forth))
 06 All: (1.2) ((the three participants look at each other back and forth))
 07 → Sue: 저는 그냥, 전에 교환학생으로 올 기회가 있었거든요?
 08 Mod: 네에::
 ((Sue's continued description of how at that time she chose another location, but having heard of the well-known scholars in this area who are at this institution, applied to this program with the hopes of taking courses from these scholars))
- 01 Mod: kulemyen, osimyense, kunikka, hawaiey tayhayse etten
 then as you came-POL-CON I mean *Hawaii*-at about what
 02 kitaylul kacko osyesseyo? kunikka=
 expectation-ACC bring did you come-POL I mean
Then, as you came, I mean, what expectations did you bring of Hawaii? In other words
- 03 → Sue: um:
 mm
- 04 Mod: =etten swuepul hamyen cohkeyssta, animyen etten::: kesul
 some course-ACC do-COND it would be nice-IE or some thing-ACC
 05 hamyen cohkeyssta, kitayna hoksi mokphyo? ((gaze shifts back and forth))
 if I would it would be nice-iE expectation perhaps goal-POL
“it would be nice to take such and such courses,” or “some things I would like to do,” expectation or perhaps your goals?

06 All: (1.2) ((three participants look at each other back and forth))
 07 → Sue: cenun kunyang, ceney kyohwanhaksayngulo ol kihoyka issessketunyo?
 I-SH-TP just before exchange student-as come opportunity-NM there-was you see
**For me, just um, in college, I had a chance to come here as an exchange student,
 you see?**

08 Mod: neyey::
yes yes
 ((Sue's continued description of how at that time she chose another location, but having heard of the well-known scholars in this area who are at this institution, applied to this program with the hopes of taking courses from these scholars))

Similar to the previous excerpt, in line 1 of this excerpt, the moderator starts with her first protocol-based question. Just prior to this sequence, this group had also informed the moderator that they knew of the final month in Hawaii, which they also stated to be the reason they chose to apply to the program. She again first formulates it as an open-ended question, *what expectations did you bring of Hawaii?* (lines 1-2), which she directly links to her reformulation of giving the participants examples of possible responses. In the midst of the moderator's turn, Sue provides a small response token *mm*: (line 3). Following the completion of the moderator's question, there is brief silence as the three participants shift gaze to one another. At the end of this short gaze-shifting pause, Sue, who had provided the response token in line 3, self-selects with the first person pronoun, *cenun* (*for me*) followed by a generalized downgrade *kunyang* (*just um*, line 7). In this case, while she is doing an uptake by offering a subjective first person pronoun (K. Kim, 2004) that projects an upcoming predicate, by following that with *kunyang*, a word in Korean that can be interpreted as "just," "simply," or "nothing more than," she is also downgrading her account that is about to follow. In other words, although she uptakes the response turn without deliberate allocation or prodding from the moderator or her co-participants, it does follow a 1.2 second pause where the gaze shifts among the three participants (line 6) indicate some form of turn-taking negotiation. Thus, although Sue has self-selected to be the first responder, through her downgrade, she is orienting to the possibility that her response does not link to the preferred

response projected by the moderator (i.e., while the moderator's question requests information about their *expectation* or *goal* for the program, Sue's response invokes her personal *motivation*). Following this uptake, she starts the account of the reasons behind her choice to participate in this program, ending it with a tag question form, "you see?" With this tag question, she is also checking the relevance of her talk so far. Confirming with the moderator's repeated positive response token *neyney::* (yes yes::, line 8), Sue continues with her account.

In the following excerpt, one of the participants, Nani, self-selects the next turn by first providing a response to the moderator's question.

Ex. 4.8. Group C: Yes, for me...

- 01 Mod: 하와이에서 한 것 중에 당 장 가서 적용 할 수
 02 있겠다. 아니면 할만 하겠다 싶은 것은 어떤 것이
 03 있던가요? [아니면?
 04 → Nani: [네- 저는 가장 인상 깊었던게 XX 수업
 05 그분 수업에서, listening 과 speaking을 잘 활용해서
 06 하는 수업이 제가 당장 가서 잘 활용 할 수 있는
 07 수업인거 같아요.
 08 Mod: 네::
 09 Nani: 예를 들어- ((continues description of actual example activities she learned that she will use))
- 01 Mod: *Hawaii-eyse han kes cwungey tangcang kase cekyong hal swu*
 Hawaii-at did thing amongst immediately go and apply able to
 02 *isskeyssta. animyen halman hakeyssta siphun kesun etten kesi*
 EXIST-IE or doable it is something like that-TP what thing-NM
 03 *isstenkayo? [animyen?*
 there-POL-Q or
Among the things you did here in Hawaii, was there anything that you thought you could immediately go and use in your classes? Or something that was doable? Were there any? Or
- 04 → Nani: [ney- cenun kacang insang kiphesstenkey XX swuep
 yes I-SH-TP foremost impression deep was XX's class
 05 *kupwun swuepeyse, listening kwa speaking-ul cal hwalyonghayse*
 his-POL class-at listening and speaking-ACC well use-and
 06 *hanun swuepi ceyka tangcang kase cal hwalyong hal swu issnun*
 do-TP class-NM I-SH-NM immediately go and well use able EXIST-TP
 07 *swuepinke kathayo.*
 class I think it is-POL
Yes- The most impressive aspect for me was XX's class, where he taught us how to teach using listening and speaking activities, which I think I can go and use immediately in my classes.
- 08 Mod: *ney::*

I see

09 Nani: yeylul tule- ((continues description of actual example activities she learned that she will use))
for example-

In many instances, the moderator formulates her questions in a complex—many times repeated—construction that projects multiple answer types. In this excerpt as well, the moderator starts with a question that is formulated in a *yes/no* interrogative, *Among the things you did here in Hawaii, was there anything that you thought you could immediately go and use in your class?* (lines 1-2). Then, without a pause, she goes right on to project another response-type with a contrastive trail-off ending (Stokoe, 2010) *animyen (or)*. In this case, however, before the moderator has a chance to reformulate her question, Nani produces a turn in overlap with the moderator's *animyen (or)*, in which she provides a response to the moderator's initial *yes/no* interrogative, with a positive response token, *ney (yes, line 4)*. And immediately, Nani goes on to describe the aspects (i.e., the activities she found useful from XX's class) that prompted her to give such an immediate positive response.

In the following excerpt, Najin takes a slightly different way of uptake by referring to an earlier situated choice by the moderator: to speak in Korean or English.

Excerpt 4.9. Group A: Korean for me, thanks

01 Mod: And I was won↑dering, (.) um, how did you come to
02 uh- participate in this program? >So how did you<
03 come to Hawaii? Was it, if you- participated (.) at the
04 program in XXX, then you automatically come here?
05 Seoho: °mm mm°
06 Mod: Or was there like a choice process? What happened?
07 → Najin: >저는 그냥< 끝까지 한국말로 하겠습니다. 헤헤
(lines 8-11 omitted: negotiation on which language to use)
12 Najin: 전대:에서 하는 program이 6개월 짜리로
13 연:초에 공지가 나가요,
14 Mod: mhm
15 Najin: ((continues her response about the recruiting system))

01 Mod: And I was won↑dering, (.) um, how did you come to
02 uh- participate in this program? >So how did you<
03 come to Hawaii? Was it, if you- participated (.) at the

04 program in XXX, then you automatically come here?
05 Seoho: °mm mm°
06 Mod: Or was there like a choice process? What happened?
07 → Najin: >cenun kunyang< kkuthkkaci hankwukmallo hakeyssupnita. heyhey
 I-TP just until the end Korean-with do-POL-DC ((laughter))
 I will just keep speaking in Korean. Haha
 (lines 8-11 omitted: negotiation on which language to use)

12 Najin: centay;eyse hanun program-i yuk-kaywel ccalilo
 Korean institute-at do-TOP program-NM six months worth

13 ye:ncho-ey kongcika nakayo, (.)
 beginning of the year -at notice-NM comes up-POL
 **At the Korean institution, they send out the recruitment notice for the 6-month
 program at the beginning of the school year,**

14 Mod: mhm
15 Najin: ((continues her response about the recruiting system))

As the very first group of volunteers, this group had been given the choice to discuss in English or in Korean¹³. Two of the four participants displayed their eagerness to converse in English—the other two had not commented—and thus in line 1, the moderator starts in English with the first question on the protocol (Appendix A), *how did you come to participate in this program?*¹⁴ (line 1). Again, without waiting for a response, she quickly leads on to an unpacking sequence. First, she clarifies the possible ambiguity of the word *program* (i.e., this word had been used in the interaction so far to refer to both the whole 6-month teacher development program as well as to refer to the 6-week study abroad component in Hawaii) by rephrasing her question into *>So how did you< come to Hawaii?* (lines 2-3), narrowing the scope of possible

¹³ When the plans for these focus groups were initially drafted, the plan (in line with the administrator’s suggestion) had been to conduct the focus groups in English (i.e., the requirements from the ministry of education in Korea was that the participants would be submersed in an “English-only” environment during their stay in the U.S.). During the course of this very first focus group (Group A), however, it was noted that for many participants, it was impossible for them to accurately describe their opinions and perspectives in English—which would reverse the purpose of these focus groups—and thus each group was given the choice between English and Korean. All eight groups chose Korean as the medium of conversation for the focus groups.

¹⁴ Each group was asked in the beginning of the focus group session whether they would like the focus group to be in English or in Korean. This group (Group A) was the only group that had chosen English, but as can be seen in from line 5 and down, this decision was not unanimous and Najin chooses to speak in Korean. The focus group continues in Korean hereforth.

responses. Then, she goes on to further unpack the ambiguity in the question itself by proffering two possible response choices: (a) *if you participated at the XX program, you automatically come here?* and (b) *Or was there like a choice process?* (lines 3-6). By providing the two possible choices, the moderator is further narrowing down the scope of possible responses that could be taken up by the participants. In other words, while the initial question *how did you come to participate in this program?* (line 1) allows a wide spectrum of possible responses, ranging from institutionally enforced requirements (i.e., government mandate that all English teachers participate in intensive teacher training programs) to personal reasons, the specification narrows the scope of possible response to the actual administrative recruitment process that is entailed in participating in this program. But then, by ending her question with a reformulation of the initial open-ended question, *what happened?* (line 6), the moderator is again opening up the floor for freely structured responses, but this time constrained within the scope that has been posited by her two choice offers.

Najin, one of the two participants who had not commented on the Korean or English choice, directly follows the moderator's question ending with a fast paced self-selection *>cenun kunyang<* (line 7). Before providing a response to the moderator's question, she first produces a placeholder (Hayashi & Yoon, 2010) in uptake of the first response turn place, and then provides her opinion on the issue of the medium of communication in this activity, *I will just keep speaking in Korean* (line 7). This brings about a short insert sequence (Schegloff, 2007) concerning the negotiation between participants, but shortly in line 12, Najin follows with her response—in Korean—to the moderator's protocol-based question (lines 1-6). Topically, she chooses the first option proffered by the moderator (*if you participated in the XX institution, do you automatically come here?*), but sequentially, she responds to the open-ended nature of the

final part of the moderator's question by framing her response into a chronological narrative of the entire recruitment process (line 12 and down).

In all four excerpts, uptakes by participants were done in overlap or immediately followed the completion of the moderator's question turn. This goes to portray a particular aspect of focus groups, that within the multi-participant group format, with the explicitly situated objective of collecting the participants' opinions and perspectives (i.e., as opposed to interrogated or being asked to explain certain facts), participants are less hesitant to attempt a response to the question posed. Furthermore, they made use of placeholders (ten Have, 2007; Hayashi & Yoon, 2010) to secure the place for first turn response, an indirect indication of the competition for the first turn to speak. Such active and positive participation on the part of the recruited participants foreshadow the abundance and diversity of data to be collected through the method of focus groups. In the following subsection, I will further expand my argument for the focus group specific active participation drawing on the ways that participants orient to the turn-taking organization pertaining to the on-going activity of providing opinions in response to the moderator's prompts.

4.3.2. Organizing Turns

Turn-taking is one of the most basic forms of organization in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). And in ordinary, dyadic conversations, applying the basic systematic rules of turn-taking is done unconsciously (i.e., there is no need to explicitly distribute or allocate turns). In multi-party conversations, however, the issue of turn-taking becomes more complex. Research on meeting interactions (Ford, 2008; Murayama, 2012; Boden, 1994) have shown that turn-taking in these multi-party interactions clearly take on a different form in that oftentimes the chair or leader of the group take charge in assigning and allocating the turn-taking

practices (Murayama, 2012). In the current focus group data, the moderator takes the form similar to the *chair* figure, but data shows that she does not take on the role of being the sole *leader* of the interaction. Rather, the two excerpts in this subsection highlight the participants' orientation to the need for turn-taking organization and the actions they take as a way of arranging the turn-taking system within the situated group discussion. The data displays how the participants orient to the focus group activity as a locus for *multiple responses to one question* activity, and thus go on to construct the turn-taking organization.

The first excerpt is from Group C and follows directly after Ex. 4.5, where one of the participants, Ema has suggested that they start the focus group activity.

Ex. 4.10. Group C: Take turns? (1)

- 01 Mod: program 에 대한 기대? 어떤 expectation 을
 02 갖고 오셨는지:?
 03 (0.5)
- 04 → Suni: ((pointing to Jay, sitting to the right of the moderator)) take turns? haha
 05 All: ((laughter))
- 06 → Ema: one by one 다 해야되요?
 07 Mod: 아, 아니예요 아니예요. 편하신 대로 하시면 돼요. hh
 08 Suni: ((nods)) [ah↑↓:]:
 09 Soha: [ah:: ((gaze down at coffee then at Mod))
 10 Soha: 하와이 여기 대학이 second language teaching이 유명하다고
 11 해서 그런 부분에 대해 기대는 했던거 같아요
 12 Mod: 네::
- 01 Mod: *program-ey tayhan kitay? etten expectation-ul*
program-about expectation? what expectation-ACC
 02 *kacko osyessnunci::?*
did you bring-IE?
What expectations about the program did you bring?
 03 (0.5)
- 04 → Suni: ((points to Jay, sitting to the right of Mod)) take turns? haha
 05 All: ((laughter))
- 06 → Ema: *one by one ta hayyatoyyo?*
one by one all do we have to?
Do we all have to go, one by one?
- 07 Mod: a, anieyyo anieyyo. *phyenhasin taylo hasimyen twayyo. hh*
oh, no-POL no-POL comfortable-POL as you are do-POL-COND possible-POL
Oh, no no. You can speak as you are comfortable. hh.

08 Suni: ((nods)) [ah↑↓::
 09 Soha: [ah:: ((gaze down at coffee then at Mod))
 10 Soha: *Hawaii* yeki tayhaki *second language teaching-i* yumyenghatako
 Hawaii here university-NM *second language teaching-TP* famous-hearysay
 11 hayse kulen pwupwuney tayhay kitaynun haysstenke kathayo
 and so such area about expectation-TP have-PST-thing I think-POL
**I had heard that the second language teaching program here at University of
 Hawaii is famous, and so I think I had expectations in that area.**

12 Mod: ney::
I see

Upon Ema's suggestion that they start the focus group activity (Ex. 4.5), the moderator briefly explains the purpose of the focus group and asks her first protocol-based question here in line 1, *what expectations about the program did you bring::?* After a short pause, Suni, a participant sitting to the left of the moderator, points to Jay, the first participant sitting to the right of the moderator and suggests, *take turns?* (line 4, Fig. 2), followed by laughter. Other participants all respond with laughter, reacting to the insinuation made by Suni's suggestion: (a) that everyone should takes turns answering the questions, and (b) her direct allocation of a participant sitting furthest away from her, thus delaying her own turn.



Figure 2. Suni gesturing to Jay to go first

In response to Suni, Ema interrupts the laughter and asks the moderator, *one by one should we all do* (line 6), checking to confirm Suni's insinuation that all six participants should take turns providing a response to the moderator's question. The moderator responds in the negative, that they do not all have to take turns, reaffirming by repeating the response, *anieyyo annieyyo (no, no)*, followed by an explanation, *you can speak as you are comfortable* (line 7). The laughter dies down at this point as Suni nods and produces an overlapped recipient token *ah ↑↓::* (line 8) along with Soha (line 9). After producing the overlapped acknowledgement token, Soha, who is sitting exactly in the middle of the group, shifts her gaze briefly down to her coffee and then at the moderator, at which point she uptakes the first turn to respond (lines 10 and down). Both Suni's orientation to her understanding of the interactional procedures (line 4) and Ema's posed challenge to Suni's insinuation (line 6) is clear evidence of the participants' understanding of what constitutes the focus group activity, which in this case is to take the responsibility of providing a response to the moderator's question.

The following excerpt is similar in that it is again one of the participants who orients to the turn-taking organization. This excerpt is from Group D-2, and they are also in the process of responding to the moderator's first protocol-based question about the expectations for the program.

Ex. 4.11. Group D-2: Take turns? (2)

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 01 | Young: | 기대를 안했는데↓(.) 여기는 아주 흐뭇하게 |
| 02 | Mod: | 음:: |
| 03 | Young: | 느끼고 가는거 같아요 |
| 04 | Mod: | 네::↓ [((looks down and writes)) |
| 05 | | [(Young, Rami and Joni all turn their gaze to Yuni)] |
| 06 | → Yuni: | ((smiling, gaze at Joni)) 다들 돌려서 하는거? |
| 07 | → Joni: | hhh 응 한 마디씩 하기 |
| 08 | Yuni: | [저는 |
| 09 | Rami: | [응 한마디씩 |
| 10 | Yuni: | 다른 분들보다 경험이 없고, 얘기가 있거든요 |
| 11 | Mod: | 네네 |
| 12 | | ((Yuni continues her story)) |

01 Young: kitaylul anhayssnuntey↓(.) yekinun acwu humushakey
 expectation-ACC NEG-did-but here-TP very much pleasant

02 Mod: um::
 mm::

03 Young: nukkiko kanunke kathayo
 feel-and go-RL-fact feels like-POL
I didn't have high expectations, but here I think I am leaving rather satisfied.

04 Mod: ney: :↓ [((looks down and writes))
 mm

05 [((Young, Rami and Joni all turn their gaze to Yuni))

06 → Yuni: ((smiling, gaze at Joni)) tatul tolyese hanunke?
 everyone go around do-RL-thing?
Everyone taking turns?

07 → Joni: hhh ung han matissik haki
 yes one thing-each say-NML
hhh yes everyone to say one thing each

08 Yuni: [cenun
 I-TP
For me

09 → Rami: [ung hanmatissik
 yes one thing each

10 Yuni: talun pwuntulpota kyenghemi epsko, aykika issketunyo
 other participants-compared to experience-TP NEG-exist-and, baby-TP have-you see-POL
Compared to other participants here, I have little experience, and also I have a child, you see.

11 Mod: neyney
 yes yes

12 ((Yuni continues her story))

In this group there are four participants: Young, Yuni, Joni, and Rami. As was seen in Ex. 4.6, Young had been the one to uptake the first response turn after the moderator's question formulation. Following Young's response completion, Joni and Rami had taken turns in each giving their own account of their expectations and goals for the program. All three responses had been all on the positive side, and starting in line 1 of this excerpt, Young recaps the gist of their response with *I didn't have high expectations, but here, I think I am leaving rather satisfied*

(lines 1 & 3). In response the moderator produces a receipt token, *mm::* and looks down to write on her note (line 4). While she is doing that, the three participants who have taken turns already, all turn their gaze to Yuni, the only participant who have not spoken up so far. In line 6, Yuni meets their gaze, specifically Joni's, who is sitting directly across from her, and formulates in words what she perceives to be the meaning of the gaze from her co-participants, *everyone taking turns?* Prefaced with a short laughter *hhh*, Joni affirms Yuni's question with a positive response token, *ung* (informal *yes*), followed by a clarification, *everyone to say one thing each* (line 7). And in overlap with Yuni's obedient start of her turn, Rami reaffirms by repeating Joni, *yes one thing each* (line 9).

The data highlights the fact that the participants are able to organize and construct the turn-taking organization they deem to be necessary of the activity at hand (i.e., each participant taking turns to respond to the protocol-based question asked by the moderator). In other words, the participants display their orientation to what they understand to be constitutive of the ongoing activity of *doing focus groups* without the need for the moderator's intervention or prompt. These two excerpts are clear examples of participants' orientation to the institutional activity at hand—which they understand to have the purpose of collecting diverse opinions from each of the participants—that frames the interaction in a specific shape uniquely pertaining to evaluative focus groups. This will be further discussed in chapter 6.

4.4. Turn Allocation

As suggested in the previous subsection, the turn-taking organization within focus groups takes a different shape from that of dyadic conversations or even that of meeting interactions (Ford, 2008; Murayama, 2012). Although in many cases the moderator took on the role of

initiating the interaction by formulating a question, rarely were the question sequences followed with next turn speaker allocation (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). This section examines the specific turn allocation patterns observed across the multiple focus groups. First, I describe the two rare instances in which the moderator specifically allocated the next turn to another participant. Then, I examine the diverse instances in which the participants took it on themselves to distribute the next speaker turn through: (a) multi-modal resources (gaze and gesture); (b) explicit other allocation; and (c) self-selection. I first turn to the moderator's turn allocation.

4.4.1. Moderator's Turn Allocation: Seeking Diverse Responses

In meeting, it is usually the role of the meeting chairs or leaders who take it on themselves to organize the interaction or take the lead in arranging the topics (Ford, 2008). In the case of focus groups, the moderator's role was more passive and minimal. Overall analyses of the moderator's turns indicated that she produced little more than a few general questions—at the very beginning of the focus groups, a couple of times in between when the interaction came to a full stop (which was rare); countless recipient and acknowledgement tokens (e.g., *mm*, *yes*, *I see*); and then the final words of appreciation at the end of the focus groups. In very rare instances, such as the two excerpts that are to be analyzed in this subsection, the moderator inserted a turn between participants' responses to allocate the next turn to another speaker. With the analysis below, I aim to unravel the different actions projected by the moderator's turn allocation in each of these two very different group settings.

The first excerpt is the one with Group G—the quiet group. About 10 minutes prior to this excerpt, the moderator had asked the question *what were your expectations coming to this program, and were those expectations met?* Jun had again been the first one to provide a response by articulating that she was satisfied with the standard of the courses that had been

offered and that she had been pleasantly surprised to see famous scholars in the area teaching the courses. Stemming from that, all three participants launched into a discussion of relevant education for English teachers in Korea flowing into an entirely different topic of whether a bachelor's degree in education is enough to teach English in Korea. After a few minutes of debate among the three participants, there is a pause, at which point the moderator starts with her question reformulation in line 1 of the following excerpt.

Ex. 4.12. Group G: Jun said this, how about you?

- 01 → Mod: 아까 Jun 선생님은 와서 좀 많이 만족스럽다고 ((smiley voice))
 02 하셨는데:: (0.5) 다른 °두 분은° 어떠셨는지 hhh?=
 03 Boni: =이 XX 프로그램이요?
 04 Mod: **네네네:::** 하와이 오신거에 대해서
 05 Jun: 강의는 만족스럽지요. 나머지 program에 대해서는
 06 또 약간 별개의 문제고
 07 Mod: 아 hh °그래요°? ((gaze at Boni))
 08 (2.0)
 09 Boni: 음: XXX program (3.0) 개인적인 거라서 이게 제가 좀 걱-
 10 쪼끔 우려 사항이↑ 개인적인 건데 전체적인 의견으로
 11 비칠까[봐::
 12 Mod: [네 아니아니예요. 그거는 °아니예요°
 13 Boni: 아 °그럼° (2.0) 저는 그니까- 강의들 중에서도
- 01 → Mod: akka Jun sensayngnimun wase com manhi mancoksuleptako
 earlier Jun teacher-HON-TP come a bit a lot satisfied-is
 02 hasyessnuntey:: (0.5) talun °twu pwunun° ettesyessnunci hhh?=
 said-POL-CIRCUM the other two people-POL-HON how was it-COMM
**Earlier Jun mentioned that she was rather satisfied of her time here, how was it for
 the two of you?**
- 03 Boni: =i XX program-iyo?
 this XX program you mean
You mean this program?
- 04 Mod: ((gaze to Boni))neyneyney::: Hawaii osinkeey tayhayse
 yes yes yes Hawaii come-POL-about
Yes. how you feel about coming to this program in Hawaii
- 05 Jun: kanguynun mancoksulepciyo. nameci program-ey tayhaysenun
 lecture-TP satisfied-COMM-POL the rest program about-NM
 06 tto yakkan pyelkayuy mwunceyko
 well a little different story-is
**The lectures were satisfactory. About the rest of the program, well, that's another
 story.**
- 07 Mod: a hh °kulayyo°? ((gaze at Boni))
oh hh really?

08 (2.0)
09 Boni: um: XX *program* (3.0) kayincekin kelase ikey ceyka com kek-
mm *name* program personal opinion this I-SH a little worried-
10 ccokkum wulye sahangⁱ kayincekin kentey cencheycekin uykyenulo
a little worrisome-is personal thing-is general-like perspective-with
11 pichwilkka [pwa::
enlighted as
**Mmm, the XX program. Well, I'm just a little worried that my personal opinion will
be represented as the opinion of everyone who has taken part in the program?**

12 Mod: [ney anianieyyo. kukenun °anieyyo°
ah no no-POL that is not-POL
Oh, no no. That won't be the case.

13 Boni: a °kulwum° (2.0) cenun kunikka- kanguytul cwungeyseto
oh well, okay then I-TP DM lecture-PL amongst them
**Oh, well okay then, I found among the lectures (*continues about lectures she
liked*).**

In line 1, the moderator reformulates her initial question from ten minutes before, making a reference to the first response that Jun had provided, *Earlier Jun mentioned that she was rather satisfied of her time here::*, following with a question construction explicitly directed at the two participants other than Jun, *how was it for the two of you?* (lines 1-2). The moderator's question is constructed in two parts: (a) an indirect quote of Jun's previous response to the moderator's question, and (b) reformulation of the question, specifically designed to elicit answers from the other two participants. The reference to Jun's previous response is used here to bring the relevant topic back into the discussion as well as provide a guideline to the preferred response type to the question. Then the moderator's reformulation of the questions is designed to elicit responses from the other two participants (i.e., direct designation of *other two teachers*), by explicitly allocating the next speaker turn to either of the two participants, while also reconstructing the question so that the other participants can provide a response more easily—by either agreeing or disagreeing to the other participant's previous response.

Boni, self-selecting to response, asks for respecification, *you mean this program?* (line 3), to which the moderator repeatedly agrees and further elaborates, *yes yes yes, how you feel about*

coming to this program in Hawaii (line 4). The turn design here is constructed so that the next turn speaker is projected to be Boni again as her understanding check in line 3 and the moderator's response in line 4 provides the sequential space for Boni's response. However, in that space, Jun jumps in again, unexpectedly rejecting the moderator's indirect quote of her own response from earlier, *The lectures were satisfactory. About the rest of the program, well, that's another story* (lines 5-6). By quoting Jun in her question formulation, the moderator had crossed into Jun's epistemic boundary (Heritage, 2013), implying a shared stance between herself and Jun based on Jun's earlier opinion provision. And although such boundary crossing could be legitimized by the fact that the problematized information is already shared knowledge between all participants—as Jun had just a few minutes ago provided this information herself—Jun resists the moderator's displayed understanding of her earlier response. Rather, she claims epistemic primacy (Raymond & Heritage, 2006) to the information referenced by the moderator, by refuting the moderator's reformulation, applying the word "satisfied" to a smaller scope of target ("just the courses, not the program as a whole"). She completes her claim here with a continuer – *ko* (line 6, ~*and*) suggesting further projection of the sequence to be an elaboration of her rejection and disagreement to the moderator's formulation. But line 7 shows that whilst the moderator provides a change-of-state token (line 7, *oh hh really?*) in displaying her acknowledgement of Jun's rejection, she keeps her gaze on Boni, who proceeds to provide her response. Boni starts her response in a mitigated way suggesting that her opinion is her own and not to be understood to represent the group as a whole (lines 9-11), to which the moderator responds quickly in overlap (line 12), ensuring Boni that what she has to say will not be expanded to represent the entire population of Group G. Accordingly, Boni follows with her opinion, but aligning to Jun's rebuttal from a few lines earlier about Jun's positive opinion only

applying to the lectures. Consequently, rather than construct her overall opinion of the program—as she confirmed with the moderator in line 3—she also focuses her own turn on pointing out the course lectures she found interesting or helpful (line 13 and down). Despite the moderator’s deliberate efforts in reformulating her initial question to be geared towards obtaining different responses from other participants, another participant’s (Jun’s) previous response influences the current responder’s response. In other words, the moderator’s efforts to induce different opinions through deliberate turn distribution projects a rather different pathway, which is another indication of unexpected interactional contingencies enriched within multi-party focus groups.

The second excerpt is from Group B, where again the moderator formulates her question as a way of distributing the turn to other speakers.

Ex. 4.13. Group B: Not all of you for sure?

- 01 → Mod: 이 연수는 어떻게 참여하게 되신거예요? (1.5) 그냥↑
 02 Yuri: 이 심화연수가 오래 전에 시작됐어요.
 03 Mod: 네네
 04 Yuri: 근데 이제 이게 심화인지라::=
 05 Aeju: =심화인지라
 06 Mod: 어::
 07 Aeju: 모든 과정 중에 이게 마지막이거든
 08 Mod: 네
 09 Yuri: 그래서 연수를 많이 받았는데 심화 연수를 이제
 10 받아야지↑ 완결판 이라고 할까?
 11 Aeju: 응hh
 12 Mod: 아::
 13 Yuri: 그런 생각이 들어서 저는 해외 연수를 많이 했는데
 14 심화 연수가 마지막 남았었어요. 그래서
 ((Omitted 32 lines: Yuri’s long story of how she got to participate in this program by changing schools))
 46 Mod: 아:: 그러면서 학교를 옮기시면서 중간에::
 47 Yuri: 네:: 새롭게 시작하면서 별로 이렇게 부담이 없으니까
 48 새학교로 가는거예요
 49 Mod: 네::
 50 ((drinks arrive and distribution of drinks occur for about a minute))
 51 → Mod: 다른 분들은 다 그렇지는 않으실건데요?
 52 Yuri: [그런건 아니예요
 53 Jinsu: [그렇지요. 다 비슷하기는 한데요
 54 Aeju: 다 [거기서 °거기°
 55 Jinsu: [제 경우에는 ((gestures to Aeju to speak first))

56 Aeju: ((gestures to Jinsu)) 먼저 하세요.
57 Jinsu: 네, 마찬가지로 사정이라 인문계 고등학교 있으면서는 교장
58 선생님들이 허락을 잘 안해주세요.

01 → Mod: i yenswunun ettehkey chamyehakey toysinkeeyyo? (1.5) kunyang↑
this workshop-TP how participate possible-Q-PL just
How did you come to participate in this workshop? Just-

02 Yuri: i simhwayenswuka olay ceney sicaktwaysseyo.
this intensive workshop-NM long before was started-POL
This intensive workshop started a long time ago.

03 Mod: ney ney
yes yes

04 Yuri: kuntey icey ikey simhwaincila::=
but now this intensive-because
But, now because this is an intensive course,

05 Aeju: =simhwaincila
because it's an intensive course

06 Mod: e::
mm

07 Aeju: motun kwaceng cwungey ikey macimakiketun
all process amongst this is the last, you see
Of all the process (of workshops), this one is the final one, you see?

08 Mod: ney
yes

09 Yuri: kulayse yenswulul manhi patassnuntey simhwa yenswulul icey
so workshop-ACC a lot participated-but intensive workshop-ACC now
10 patayaci↑ wankyelphan ilako halkka?
participate-COMM conclusive-HEARSAY should I say?
**So, although I've participated in many workshops, I can only say that I've done it all
only once I've participated in this final intensive one?**

11 Aeju: wung hh
mm yes hh

12 Mod: ah::
oh

13 Yuri: kulen sayngkaki tulese cenun hayoy yenswulul manhi hayssnuntey
such thought-NM I had so I-SH-TP international workshop-ACC a lot did-but
14 simhwa yenswuka macimak namassesseyo. kulayse
intensive workshop-NM last remained-POL so
**Because I had such thoughts, I had applied to and participated in many international
workshops, but this one (in Hawaii) was the last one remaining, which is why I
decided to come this time.**

((omitted 32 lines: Yuri's long story of how she got to participate in this program by changing schools))

- 46 Mod: a:: kulemyense hakkyolul olmkisimyense cwungkaney::
oh doing that then school-ACC change-COND in the middle
Oh, then (you are here) while you are in the transition period between schools?
- 47 Yuri: ney:: saylopkey sicakhamyense pyello ilehkey pwutami epsunikka
yes newly start-while not really DM pressure-NM NEG-exist-reason
48 say hakkyolo kanunkeeyyo
new school-to go, you see-POL
**Yes, because there's no real pressure as such when you will be starting at another
new school after the workshop anyway, that's how I do it.**
- 49 Mod: ney::
I see
50 ((drinks arrive and distribution of drinks occur for about a minute))
51 → Mod: talun pwuntulun ta kulehcinun anhusilkenteyyo?
other people-POL-TP all like that cannot be surely-POL?
I'm sure this cannot be the same case for the rest of you here as well?
- 52 Yuri: [kulenken anieyyo
No, that's not the case for everyone.
- 53 Jinsu: [kulehciyo. ta pisushakinun hanteyyo
right-POL all similar-TP but-POL
That's right. But well, the situations are all sort of similar, but-
- 54 Aeju: ta [kekise °keki°
all from there to there
it's all the same from there to there
- 55 Jinsu: [cey kyengwueynun ((gestures to Aeju to speak first))
in my case,
- 56 Aeju: ((gestures to Jinsu)) mence haseyyo
go ahead-POL
- 57 Jinsu: ney, machankaci sacengila inmwunkeyey kotunghakkyo issumyensenun
ok similar situation academic high school while you are there
58 kyocang sensayngnintuli helakul cal anhaycwuseyyo.
principals-PL permission well NEG-allow-POL
**OK. Well, it's the similar case. In academic highschools, the principals don't like to
give permission for such long workshops.**

In this rather long excerpt, the moderator initiates the discussion with her question, *how did you come to participate in this workshop?* (line 1). Following a 1.5 second pause where no one takes the next turn, she starts to reformulate her question into a more informal format with the adverb *kunyang* ↑ (just-), an attitudinal stance marker (Kim & Kim, 2010), when Yuri takes the turn. Instead of providing a direct response to the moderator's question, however, Yuri starts

a story-telling sequence (Kaper & Prior, 2014), starting with the historical background of the program¹⁵. With assisting remarks for a co-participant, Aeju (lines 5, 7, 11), Yuri launches into her account of why she decided to participate in this program: That despite all the other teacher development workshops she has already partaken in (lines 9-10, 13-14), this last intensive¹⁶ workshop in Hawaii was the last one remaining. She then launches into another long story about how she managed to gain permission to participate in another long workshop—despite the fact she has already participated in quite a few—by scheduling this one in while she is between schools¹⁶. As she completes her story, the moderator provides a change-of-state token *a::* (*oh::*) followed by her reaffirmation of the new information obtained from Yuri’s talk, *then (you are here) while you are in the transition period between schools?* (line 46). After a confirmation from Yuri, the interaction is interrupted for a minute while drinks are distributed (line 50).

Then in line 51, the moderator resumes the interaction by posing the same question again to the group. This time, however, she does not reformulate her original question, *how did you come to participate in this program?* (line 1), but instead, uses Yuri’s response as a stepping stone. Topicalizing Yuri’s previous response, the moderator formulates her question in a way that constructs Yuri’s example as an exceptional case, a case that would not necessarily be constitutive the normal paths to be taken by the participants, *I’m sure this cannot be the same case for the rest of you here as well?* (line 51). In constructing her question as such, the moderator is not only indexing the perceived extraordinariness of Yuri’s case but also

¹⁵ According to the information obtained from the participants, there are many different types of short-term and long-term teacher development programs offered to in-service English teachers in South Korea. The current program is one of the long-term programs categorized as an “intensive workshop.” This term brought up by the participants to categorize these long-terms workshops apart from short-term workshops that they can partake in without having to take time off from teaching. Also, although it depends on the institution they received their initial training from (i.e., the different regional education sectors), teachers were allowed to participate in only one of these longer extensive workshops.

¹⁶ Public school teachers in Korea rotate around different schools within their designated area every 3-5 years.

referencing what might be the more ordinary trajectory of participation for other participants. Contextual evidence also provides that by posing this question, the moderator is not only indexing the unusualness of Yuri's case but is also distributing the next turn to another participant—despite the fact she does not explicitly call on or focus her gaze on a particular participant—by formulating her question in a negative form that projects disaffiliation as the preferred response (Pomerantz, 1984).

Despite her efforts, however, Yuri again is one of the first to respond. She agrees to with the moderator's stipulation (line 52) in overlap with Jinsu, who initially produces an aligned agreement to the moderator, *kulehciyo* (that's right), but then reformulates his response to be affiliative to Yuri, *but well, the situations are all sort of similar, but-* (line 53). Ending his turn with a form of clause-connector, *hanteyyo* (it is, but), Jinsu projects further expansion of his response. Used to set up *accountability relevance points* (Park, 1998, 1999), different forms of the Korean connector *nuntey* (used as *hantey* in this case) are used to “frame interactionally delicate actions just as requests, disagreements or denials” (Park, 1999, p. 191). While partially affiliating with Yuri's story, by phasing out his sentence with *hantey* (but), Jinsu is projecting a disaligned response, delicately framing his upcoming disaffiliative opinion. At this point, Aeju, who had been the one to assist in the formulation of Yuri's long story-telling turn, interrupts with her refutation to the moderator's question as well as Jinsu's projected disagreement by her assessment of the situation, *ta kekise keki* (it's all the same from there to there¹⁷, line 54). In overlap, Jinsu starts to formulate his previously projected opinion by topicalizing his own situation, *cey kwyengueynun* (in my case, line 55), but stops when he realizes he has competition

¹⁷ This is a popular phrase in Korean to reference two things or people that claim to be different from each other that are in fact very similar to each other. It is used mostly in the negative sense, for example, when referencing politicians, people use this phrase to reference that despite the politicians' arguments that they are better than their opponents, they are all “there to there,” all the same.

for the turn (i.e., overlap with Aeju), and gestures to the other speaker (Aeju) to continue. Aeju mirrors Jinsu's gesture, yielding the turn to Jinsu who accepts (*ney*, OK, line 57) and continues with his opinion. He starts by aligning with Yuri in acknowledging that it is rather difficult to apply to participate in these long programs, especially if you are a teacher in an academic high school.¹⁸ But then he goes on to shift his talk to his own experience—that he did not use the opportunity between schools as Yuri did, but rather kept convincing his principal to give him permission—aligning with his initial positive response to the moderator's quest for a different opinion through her indirect turn allocation (line 51).

The two excerpts in this section illustrate that the moderator intercepts in the otherwise natural flow of turn-taking organization among participants when there is a perceived inequality in the distribution of speakership. As illustrated in these excerpts, despite the comparative freedom implied by the loose structure of a multi-party focus group, the moderator makes use of her entitlement as the situated leader (Ford, 2008) to distribute the question amongst the different participants in pursuit of the institutional goal while keeping relevancy within the discussion topics. The next subsection will examine turn allocation that are distributed by the participants.

4.4.2. Participants' Turn Allocation: Distributing Turns

“Choices of when to take a turn, of how to speak, and of how to orient one's body (while speaking or listening) display understandings of relevant configurations of participants and of the unfolding activity itself” (Ford, 2008, p. 60). The choices may be self-selected or allocated by others, but the fact is, participants display various verbal and non-verbal methods as a way to demonstrate their understanding of the current talk-in-action (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). In

¹⁸ In Korea, there are two different high schools: academic high schools and technical high schools. Depending on overall grades for the three years in middle school, students choose between the two high schools. As can be expected, academic high schools prepare students for college, while technical high schools are similar to vocational colleges, where students are prepared to find a job straight out of high school.

focus groups, where there are multiple participants with the situated goal of providing and obtaining diverse perspectives and opinions of the participants, the act of distributing turns among the multiple participants is one of the most important aspects of achieving the interactional goal. Unlike more formal settings, the focus group data demonstrates that the action of distributing turns and allocating the next turn speaker is not limited to the category of *being the moderator* (Sacks, 1992). Rather, the data provides empirical evidence that turn allocations are more often organized by participants. Accordingly, this subsection strives to examine the practices in which participants take charge of *doing* turn allocation and speakership distribution in the data. In earlier sections, I have examined cases of uptake that participants produced in immediate response to the moderator's questions. This section, on the other hand, will be focused on how participants go about distributing the turn—in selecting themselves as the next-turn speaker, or allocating someone else—mid-discussion, through diverse actions of self-selection, gaze, question formulation and explicit other allocation.

Self-Selection

The three excerpts in this section demonstrate the cases in which participants self-select as the next-turn speaker by taking different actions. The first excerpt is from Group E. They are about 40 minutes into the discussion, and Jini, the participant sitting across from the moderator (Fig. 3) has been the least active participant thus far. Sara, Sina and Woni have been the most active participants, and just prior to this excerpt, they had been discussing the issues they had with school visits and some of the courses that they were less satisfied with (excerpts to be analyzed in chapter 5). Following a short pause after the completion of their complaints and suggestions, the moderator comes in with line 1 of this excerpt.

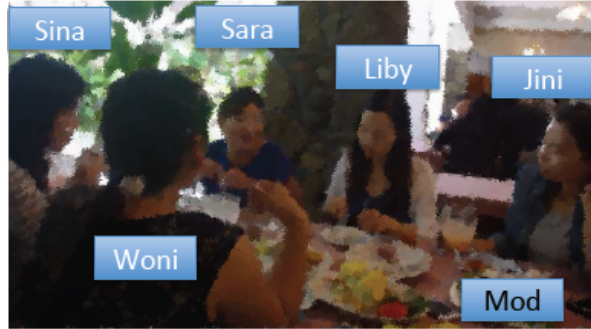


Figure 3. Group E seating arrangement

Ex. 4.14. Group E: I like it

- 01 Mod: 더 드세요
 02 → Jini: ((gaze to Mod)) 말을 해야하는데 하하
 03 Mod: 하하
 04 Jini: 그런데↑ 저는, 처음 참가하는거라서
 05 [[°이분들 말씀하신거하고 좀° 뭐:: 전
 [[(gestures towards the other participants))
 06 되게 만족해요. 아주 만족스러워요
 07 Mod: 네
 08 Jini: 물론, 이게 뭐, 안좋은 점들이, 부족한 점들이
 09 당연히 다 있죠::
 10 Mod: 네
 11 Jini: 근데:: 그냥 저는요,
 12 ((Jini continues talk about how she felt tired of working at her job for 6-7 years with no break and how refreshing it is to take the time off for this practicum, despite the several complaints her co-participants have brought up))
- 01 Mod: te tuseyyo
 more eat-HON-please-POL
Please have some more to eat.
- 02 → Jini: ((gaze to Mod)) malul hayyahanuntey haha
 talk-ACC must do-but
Oh but I must talk (answer your questions). haha
- 03 Mod: haha
- 04 Jini: kulenteŋ↑ cenun, cheum chamkahanunkelase
 Well but, for me-TP first time participating-and so
 05 [°ipwuntul malssumhasinkehako com° mwe:: cen
 these teachers what they have to say-compared a little well I-TP
 [[(gestures towards the other participants))
 06 toykey mancokhayyo. acwu mancoksuleweyo
 quite a bit satisfied-POL very satisfied-POL.
Well, for me, because this is the first time for me to participate in programs like this. so compared to some of the complaints my co-participants have voiced so far a little, well, I personally have been quite satisfied. Very satisfied.
- 07 Mod: ney

08 Jini: I see
 mwullon, ikey mwe, ancohun cemtuli, pwucokhan cemtuli
 Of course this well not good aspects-TP less satisfactory aspects-NM
 09 tangyenhi ta isscoyo::
 naturally all EXIST-POL
**Of course, this is well, naturally there will always be a negative, a little less satisfying
 aspects to programs like these.**

10 Mod: ney
 yes

11 Jini: kuntey:: kunyang cenunyo,
 but just for me-TP-POL
But still for me, well just,
 ((Jini continues talk about how she felt tired of working at her job for 6-7 years with no break
 12 and how refreshing it is to take the time off for this practicum, despite the several complaints her
 co-participants have brought up))

The moderator offers more food to the participants in line 1. In response, Jini, the participant sitting across from the moderator (Fig. 3), who has been eating, stops eating and takes her gaze to meet the moderator and gives a reason as to why she is reacting the exact opposite (i.e., stop eating) of what the moderator has just suggested (i.e., have more to eat), *oh, but I must talk*, (line 2) making light of the situation by following it with laughter. The moderator responds briefly with laughter, but despite having produced the previous line in a joking manner, Jini uses this chance to self-select herself as the next-turn speaker in providing a response to a question that was asked by the moderator many minutes ago, *did the program meet your expectations?* Jini starts with a contrastive connector, *kulentey* ↑ (but, line 4), the raising the last syllable to indicate ongoing talk, then topicalizes herself, *cenun* (for me), and first follows with an account for the disaffiliative—to her co-participants’—response she is about to give, *because this is the first time for me to participate in a program like this* (line 4). She then, in a softer tone, makes a reference to the previously achieved consensus (i.e., the dissatisfaction voiced by the majority of her co-participants) by gesturing to them with her hand and saying, *compared to some of the complaints my co-participants have voice so far* (line 5), before providing her own assessment of the program, *I personally have been quite satisfied. Very satisfied.* (line 6). In other words, Jini,

took a “resting” turn, and self-allocated the turn to voice her own contrastive opinion to that of her co-participants.

The data in the next excerpt demonstrates a mixture of self- and other-allocation of turn.

This excerpt is from the focus group with Group D-1.

Ex. 4.15. Group D-1: Go on

- 01 Mod: 한국에서 트레이닝을 받으시고 하와이에 오시면서
 02 나름 또 여기에서 받는 것에 대한
 03 어떤 기대나 목적 같은게 있으셨을 거자나요?
 04 All: ((all four participants nodding))
 05 Mod: 그런게↑ 어떤 부분에 대해서, 얼마나
 06 충족이 되었는데? 아님, 혹시
 07 실망한 부분은:?:
 08 → Rumi: 음::
 09 ((everyone turns their gaze to Rumi))
 10 Jena: °응° ((gaze and Rumi, nods indicating Rumi should go ahead))
 11 Rumi: 처음에는 그냥 영어 배우러 온다::
 12 현지에서 현지 영어 배우러 오는구나↓
 13 Mod: 네네::
 14 Rumi: 라고 생각을 하고 왔는데요, 와서 사람들을 보니
 15 ((Rumi’s extended response on how she learned of different cultures, and different types of English))
 16 Rumi: 도움이 많이 되었어요.
 17 Mod: 아, 그래요?
 18 (3.0) ((Moderator writes on note then looks up, takes a drink))
 19 Kate: 저::는, 여기 와서 기대, 기대했던 것은
 20 학급 참관이에요,
 21 Mod: 아, 네::
 22 ((Kim continues with her response on her expectations of local school visits))
- 01 Mod: hankwukeyse *training-ul* patusiko *Hawaii-ey* osimyense
 Korea-at training-ACC receive-then Hawaii-to as you came
 02 nalum tto yekieyse patnun kesey tayhan
 on your own again here-at receive classes about
 03 etten kitayna mokcek kathunkey issusyessul kecanayo?
 some expectations-or goals something like you must have had-CANH-POL?
After you finished your training, and as you came here to Hawaii to take another set of classes, you must have had some expectations of goals, right?
 04 All: ((all four participants nodding))
 05 Mod: kulenkey↑ etten pwupwuney tayhayse, elmana
 well about that what areas about how much
 06 chwungcoki toyessnunci? anim, hoksi
 satisfied have you been-IE NEG (or) perhaps
 07 silmanghan pwupwunun::?
 disappointed areas-TP
Well about that, which areas did you find that you were well satisfied with? Or, perhaps were there any areas that disappointed you?

08 → Rumi: mmm:::
09 ((everyone turns their gaze to Rumi))
10 Jena: °ung° ((gaze and Rumi, nods indicating Rumi should go ahead))
Go on

11 Rumi: cheumeynun kunyang yenge paywule onta:::
at first-TP just English learn-to come-IE
12 hyencieyse hyenci yenge paywule onunkwuna↓
local-at local English learn-to come-KWUNA
At first I just thought “I am going to go to learn English. I am going to the locale of English speakers to learn local English,” I thought,

13 Mod: neyney:::
yes yes

14 Rumi: lako sayngkakul hako wassnunteyyo, wase salamtulul poni
like so think-ACC did-and came-but-POL come and people-ACC see
That’s what I thought at first, but now that I have come and seen the local people here-

15 ((Rumi’s extended response on how she learned of different cultures, and different types of English))

16 Rumi: towumi manhi toyesseyo.
help-NM a lot it was-POL
(learning the culture first-hand) was a lot of help.

17 Mod: a, kulayyo?
oh, is that so?

18 (3.0) ((Moderator writes on note then looks up, then takes a drink))
19 Kate: ce::nun, yeki wase kitay, kitayhayssten kesun
I-SH-TP here come expectation, what I expected was
20 hakkup chamkwaniyyo,
classroom observation-iE-POL
In my case, what I looked forward to the most was the local school visits.

21 Mod: a, ney:::
Oh, I see

22 ((Kim continues with her response on her expectations of local school visits))

This excerpt starts with the moderator’s question concerning the participants’ expectations. She initially formulates the question as a yes/no interrogative followed with the tag form, *cahnayo* (right?, line 3). All four participants confirm this initial question with a nod, and the moderator continues to elaborate, expanding the scope of possible responses (i.e., their expectations and goals, as well as whether those expectations have been met or not). Directly

following the completion of the moderator’s question formulation, Rumi—the youngest of the four participants as well as the one sitting right next to the moderator—produces an elongated acknowledgement token *mmm:::* (line 8). She does not immediately continue with her talk, but by producing this continuer, she has caught the attention of the moderator as well as all of the participants, thus claiming the next-speaker turn to herself. With everyone’s gaze turned on Rumi (Fig. 4), Jena—sitting directly across from Rumi—supports Rumi’s self-selection of the turn with another nod and a “go-ahead” prod, *ung* (yes, line 10).



Figure 4. Gaze on Rumi (Ex. 4.15, line 9)

The other two participants and the moderator keep their gaze on Rumi, thus providing a non-verbal turn allocation to Rumi. Accordingly, Rumi provides her response concerning her initial expectations (i.e., to converse in English with locals) and how those expectations changed during her stay (i.e., discovery of different types of English, and learning of the local culture). After she completes her turn, the moderator provides a change of state recipient token and takes a few seconds to write (lines 17-18). As soon as she looks up, Kate—sitting next to Rumi—volunteers herself to be the next speaker, thus constructing an implicit turn-taking system without explicit allocation or distribution of turns.

The next excerpt also depicts an example of turn-allocation by self-selection, but in this case, the participant takes a slightly different route of taking charge of a turn. This excerpt is

from Group C, and prior to this section, the participants had been discussing their experiences of visiting and conducting teaching demonstrations—referred to as *practicum* by participants—at the local schools. Although the current discussion had been going on for quite some time at this point, the initial question that had sparked this discussion was the moderator asking the six participants about their expectations for the program, and this question is made relevant by Ema, who references this question to acquire the next turn.

Ex. 4.16. Group C: Back to the topic?

01 (continued talk on regrettable aspects on the limitations of the practicum)

02 Soha: 그분들 입장도 좀 어떻게 보면 부담이

03 되실 수도 있을거 같아요

04 Suni: 학기 초에는 누가 우리 교실 들어와도?

05 Soha: 응::

06 Suni: 우리도 싫을거야.

07 Soha: 그럼 부분은 충분히 이해하고-

08 → Ema: 다시 back to the topic 할까요?

09 Mod: °ehaha;°

10 Soha: ((hand gesture towards Ema)) 음::

11 Ema: ((looks at Mod, in smiley voice)) practicum 에 너무 집중한거 같아서

12 Mod: 하하 괜찮아요

13 → Ema: ((takes a sip of drink)) 저의 expectation 을 말하면?=-

14 Mod: 네

01 ((continued talk on regrettable aspects on the limitations of the practicum))

02 Soha: kupwuntul ipcangto com ettehkey pomyen pwutami
those teachers-HON position a little somehow see stressful-NM
03 toysil swuto issulke kathayo

it must be also possible I think-POL

I can understand how it must be rather stressful for those (local school) teachers as well.

04 Suni: hakki choeynun nwuka wuli kyosil tulewato?

semester start-at someone our class-ACC come in-then for us also?

For example, if we were to have someone come observe our class in the beginning of the semester?

05 Soha: ung::

yes

06 Suni: wulito silhulkeya

we-also not like it-probably-IE

We probably also wouldn't like it at all.

07 Soha: kulen pwupwunun chwungpwunhi ihayhako-

such areas-TP wholeheartedly understand-and-

We fully understand such difficulties and-

- 08 → Ema: tashi back to the topic halkkayo?
again do-Q-POL
Should we get back to the topic again?
- 09 Mod: °ehaha;°
- 10 Soha: ((hand gesture towards Ema)) mm: :
- 11 Ema: ((looks at Mod)) practicum-ey nemwu cipcwunghanke kathase
practicum-about too much focus-thing like
I just think we have focused too much just on the practicum?
- 12 Mod: haha kwyngchanha-yo
it's ok-POL
- 13 → Ema: ((takes a sip of drink)) ceuy expectation-ul malhamyen?=
my-POL expection-ACC tell-COND
To express my expectations for this program?
- 14 Mod: ney
yes

Up until line 7, Soha and Suni are still quite deeply in discussion about their assessment of the practicum. They have moved on from providing evaluation about the unwelcoming atmosphere of the local schools (i.e., attributed to that it was the very beginning of the semester and teachers all seemed busy to get classes in order), to their own opinions as to why local teachers were not so enthusiastic about having them in class. In line 7, Soha is in the process of recapping their discussion of understanding the local school situation, when she is cut off by Ema in line 8. Ema, who had not been participating so actively until then, interrupts with, *should we get back to the topic again?* (line 8), making a reference back to the moderator's earlier posited question. This is reciprocated with quiet laughter from the moderator °ehaha° (line 9), followed by a hand gesture and minimal acknowledgment token *mm* from Soha—the previous speaker—by which she gives the floor over to Ema, justifying the self-allocated turn Ema has take up. Ema then first goes on to provide a rationale for interrupting the talk by displaying her

understanding of the moderator’s needs as well as her own understanding of what the current activity (i.e., focus group recruited by the moderator with a specific purpose) should entail, *I just think we have focused too much on just the practicum?* (line 4). With this formulation, she takes the epistemic stance (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b, 2013) of being in the know of what it is that is required in this focus group—aligning herself on the side of the moderator, while situating herself in a different stance from that of the other participants, who have been discussing an issue that is ‘off-topic.’ Despite the moderator’s light laughter and a disaligned response token *haha, it’s ok* (line 12) suggesting that the current flow of the discussion was not problematic, Ema takes the next turn to start formulating her response to the moderator’s question, repeating the exact word used by the moderator in her initial question, *expectation*. This excerpt demonstrates a case of a participant’s (Ema’s) self-allocation of an not-yet existing next turn by taking the stance of the focus group organizer, rather than of a participant, once again highlighting an interactional contingency of multi-party focus groups.

Other-Allocation

The two excerpts in this subsection demonstrate the interactions in which the next turn speaker is explicitly allocated by another participant by: (a) explicit other allocation (Ex. 4.17), and (b) question distribution (Ex. 4.18). The first excerpt is from group G, and this excerpt is a continuation from the earlier excerpt (Ex. 4.12); here in line 1, Boni continues to express her opinion on a specific course that they took.

Ex. 4.17. Group G: You had something to say?

- | | | | |
|----|---|-------|---------------------------------|
| 01 | → | Boni: | 그렇게 만족스러운 수업도 있었고:: |
| 02 | | | 수업들은 뭐, 전반적으로 좋았고, (0.5) |
| 03 | | | 저희가 teaching technique 이라는 수업이= |
| 04 | | Mod: | =네네 |
| 05 | | Boni: | 매일 있었거든요 hh |
| 06 | | Mod: | ((smiling voice)) 네 hhh |
| 07 | | Boni: | 그게 약간, 조금 (.) 저희::가 하기? |
| 08 | | | 듣기에는 약간 어::: (1.0) 구성같은 것들이? |

09 Mod: 네↑

10 Boni: 음:: (2.0) 잘 모르겠어요. 진행이::
11 조직화되지 않았던거 같아요.

12 Mod: 아 네::=

13 Boni: =그니까↑ 그게 저희 프로그램만 ((gaze to Sue))
14 그랬던건지 알 수가 없고, 또 매일 있는 수업이니까?

15 Mod: 음음

16 Boni: 오히려 저희한테 더 뭔가 도움이 될거라고 생각했는데

17 Mod: 네네

18 Boni: 조금 아쉬운 점이 많았고.

19 Mod: 네네

20 → Boni: ((suddenly turns gaze to Jun)) 선생님도 하실 말씀이?
21 Jun: 아:: 구체적인건 선생님이 얘기::

22 Mod: 네네

23 Jun: 아:: 사실, *teaching technique*을 원래 하셨던 분이 못하셔서
24 막판에 강사가 교체된거라고 하더라고요

25 Mod: 아, 네::

26 Jun: 그리고:: (0.3)
27 ((Jun continues talk about issues they had about that particular class))

01 Boni: kulehkey mancoksulewun swuepto issessko::
like such satisfying-TP class-also there was-and
02 swueptulun mwe, cenpancekulo cohassko, (0.5)
classes-TP well, overall it was good-and,
03 cehuy-ka *teaching technique* lanun swuep-i=
We-SH-TP *teaching technique*-called class-NM
**There were satisfying classes like such and:: well, the classes were overall all good
and, (0.5), and then we had a class called *teaching techniques*=**

04 Mod: =neyney
yes yes

05 Boni: mayil issessketunyo hh
everyday there was-KETUN-POL
We had that class everyday, you see. hh

06 Mod: ((smiling voice)) ney hhh
yes hhh

07 Boni: kukey yakkan, ccokkum (.) cehuy::ka haki?
that was a little, a little bit for us to do?
08 tutkieynun yakkan e::: (1.0) kwusengkathun kestuli?
to take-TP a little mm the structure thing-PL-NM
**Well, that course was a little, well a little bit for us to do? For us to have to take a
little um, the structure of the course itself?**

09 Mod: ney↑
yes?

10 Boni: um:: (2.0) cal molukeysseyo. cinhayngi::
mm:: well I'm not sure the procedure-NM

11 cocikhwatoyci anhasstenke kathayo.
 well systematized NEG-was I think-POL
Mmm, well, I'm not sure. But I think the procedure was not very well organized.

12 Mod: a ney::=
oh I see

13 Boni: =kunikka ↑ kukey cehuy phulokulaymman ((gaze to Sue))
 in other words that-TP we-HON program-only

14 kulaysstenkenci al swuka epsko, tto mayil issnun swuepinikka?
 was like that-IE know cannot-and, also everyday EXIST-TP class-because
**In other words, well, I cannot know if that was the case just for our specific
 program, and also because that class was scheduled for everyday?**

15 Mod: Umum
mm yes

16 Boni: ohilye cehuyhanthey te mwenka towumi toylkelako sayngkakhayssnunthey
 rather for us the morea somewhat helpful would be I had thought-but

17 Mod: Neyney
 yes yes

18 Boni: cokum aswiwun cemi manhassko.
 a little dissatisfactory parts a lot-there was and.
**Rather, because that particular class was scheduled for every day, I thought
 somehow that thoses classes would be a lot more helpful, but in the end it was a
 little more dissatisfying, and.**

19 Mod: Neyney
 yes yes

20 → Boni: ((suddenly turns gaze to Jun)) sensayngnimto hasil malssumi?
 teacher-HON-also say-HON something-NM?
You also had something to say?

21 Jun: a:: kwucheycekinken sensayngnimi yayki::
 oh specificities-TP teacher (boni)-NM said:
Oh, well you (Boni) have already explained the specifics,

22 Mod: neyney
 yes yes

23 Jun: a: sasil, *teaching technique*-ul wenlay hasyessten pwuni moshasyese
 well actually teaching technique-ACC actually had done teacher could not make it

24 makphaney kangsaka kyocheytoynkelako hatelakoyo
 last minute lecturer-NM changed-HEARSAY
**Well actually, I heard that the original lecturer of the *teaching technique* class
 could not make it this time, so they had to change lecturers last minute, I hear.**

25 Mod: a, ney::

Oh, I see

26 Jun: kuliko:: (0.3)

And also

27 ((Jun continues talk about issues they had about that particular class))

Prior to this excerpt, in continuation from Ex. 4.13, Boni had been specifying particular courses from the program that she found exceptionally satisfying. In line 1, she is wrapping up that aspect of talk, *there were satisfying classes like such and:::* (lines 1-2), and then connects onto another class—referred to as the *teaching technique* classes—that was less satisfying. She takes multiple turns of formulating and reformulating her turns, various hedging and mitigations, but the bottom line is that in her opinion, the course was not well organized (line 11), and that because that certain class was scheduled for everyday (unlike some of the more satisfying classes that were only scheduled once or twice during the entire program), they had higher expectations which were not met (lines 13-18). Then, suddenly in the next line, Boni turns her gaze to another participant, Jun, and explicitly allocates the next turn to her, *You also had something to say?* (line 20). Despite this sudden turn-allocation, Jun does not hesitate and reciprocates by responding to Boni, *well, you have already explained the specificities* (line 21), indicating that although the turn allocation itself happened very suddenly the implicit support-seeking aspect of Boni's turn allocation was not unexpected. In other words, Jun's response indicates that the content Boni has been explaining so far and what she is about to say is an already shared understanding they have with each other. With her turn allocation, Boni is not merely specifying the next person to talk, but is accessing the epistemic community (Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Heritage, 2012a) shared by her and her co-participants—that excludes the moderator at this point—in seeking support for the elaborated, hedged, negative assessment she has made of a specific course. Jun also starts her response with mitigation, commenting that the core aspects

have already been mentioned by Boni, but then in the following line, goes on to disclose the reasons behind their speculations prefacing it with, *actually* (line 23).

Demonstrated as such, explicit turn allocations between participants in multi-party focus groups not only take the role of assigning the next-turn speaker but also carry out different actions in providing well-informed, collaborative responses as a group as well as seek support when providing sensitive responses that may negatively affect the object of evaluation. Furthermore, through interactions as such, the epistemic community formed by the participants as experienced insiders is invoked and made accessible for the sake of providing informing the moderator—an outsider to the established community with shared understanding.

The last excerpt of this chapter is from Group E (Fig. 3). This excerpt occurred about 20 minutes into the focus group, and just prior to this data, a few of the participants had been actively describing the different schools they had just completed visiting. Of the five participants, three (Jini, Sara, Liby) had been assigned to the same school, and Woni and Sina had each been assigned to different schools respectively. Woni had been the first one to talk about her school, and just prior to this excerpt, the other three just completed evaluations of their school visits. Line 1 starts with the moderator using the brief pause from the conversation to request straws from the server.

Ex. 4.18. Group E: How about Williamson?

- 01 → Mod: ((to server)) Also two more straws please.
 02 (2.0)
 03 Woni: ((gaze shift from server to Sina)) How about Williamson?
 04 Sina: 아, 저::는↑ 전반적으로 좀 (1.0) 크게 느낀 게
 05 XX 가 중간에서 이제 (.) 학교를 arrange 하자나요.
 06 Mod: 네
 07 Sina: ((continues talk on her impression of the school and program))
- 01 → Mod: ((to server)) Also two more straws please.
 02 (2.0)
 03 Woni: ((gaze shift from server to Sina)) How about Williamson¹¹?
 04 Sina: a, ce::nun↑ cenpancekulo com (1.0) khukey nukkin-key

05 Oh I-SH-TP overall a little that what I feel is
 XX-ka cwungkaneyse icey (.) hakkyolul arrange hacanayo.
 XX-NM in the middle now school-ACC arrange do-POL-right?
**Oh, for me, well what I felt overall is, now, XX (name of program) is in charge of
 arranging the school visits, right?**

06 Mod: ney
right

07 Sina: ((continues talk on her impression of the school and program))

Following the 2 second pause after the moderator’s interaction with the server, Woni, sitting between the moderator and Sina, suddenly turns her gaze to Sina, and asks in English, *How about Williamson*¹⁹? (line 3). This question from Woni is peculiar in many ways: (a) it is a protocol-based question formulated to seek the participant’s perspective or opinion, which so far has been observed to be within the role of the moderator; (b) the questioner (Woni) already has access to the projected response (i.e., it was earlier disclosed that Woni and Sina were roommates, and most of Sina’s complaints so far had been shared with Woni), and thus the information is within the territory of shared knowledge (Hayano, 2013; Heritage, 2012a) between the questioner and the respondent; and (c) it is produced in English when the discussion so far has been conducted solely in Korean. Nonetheless, neither Sina nor any of the other participants (or moderator) orient to Woni’s question as problematic. Rather, Sina takes the turn allocated to her, and immediately starts providing a response. Contrary to the prescribed conceptualizations of what constitutes an institutional interaction such as interviews or focus groups (i.e., moderator asks the questions and recruited participants provide adequate responses), the empirical data shows that as long as the situated goal of “collecting participants’ expert opinion and perspective” (Puchta & Potter, 2004) is being achieved, the ways in which this is done are not restricted to any certain form—ascertained by participants’ lack of orientation to the “problematic” turn from Woni. The natural flow of sequence between Woni’s question and

¹⁹ Williamson is a pseudonym for the middle school that Sina visited and observed.

Sina's response indicates that the moderator and participants acknowledge Woni's turn as a legitimate, information-seeking question—despite the fact that everyone knows that Woni is asking for information which she already has the epistemic status of K+1 (i.e., “being in the know,” Heritage, 2012a, p. 6). By taking the epistemic stance of K-1 (i.e., not knowing), she is using the incongruence between her epistemic status and her epistemic stance (Heritage, 2012a; Hayano, 2012, 2013) to facilitate knowledge and discussion she understands to be the institutional goal of the focus group. In other words, she is distributing the next turn to Sina through her question, for the benefit of participants who are yet in the status of “unknowing,” thus contributing to the diversity in the discussion. Consequently, an action that could be challenged as interactionally problematic in ordinary conversation becomes a method of providing diverse opinions in these focus groups. Detailed analyses of these interactional contingencies—that would otherwise be buried within the larger bags of content analysis—contribute to the respecification of multi-party focus groups as a valuable locus for collection of diverse opinions and responses that inform the larger research questions.

The examples in this section have illuminated that participants do not orient to the task of organizing the turns or asking questions—protocol-based or otherwise—to be an action uniquely attached to the role description of the moderator. Within the description of focus groups as a “collection of experts’ opinions and perspectives” (Puchta & Potter, 2004), the data shows that participants legitimately take the role of asking questions and distributing turns to their co-participants, and shown by the analysis, should those actions be included within the description of achieving the collection of expert opinions and perspectives of the participants, such role reversals are neither problematized nor oriented to²⁰.

²⁰ There were a few instances where participants make explicit orientations to role reversals, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the openings and turn allocations of a multi-party focus group interaction, focusing particularly on characteristics specific to focus groups. The analyses in this chapter described the diverse ways and directions in which questions were cast—either by the moderator or participants. I also examined the interactional complexity in doing uptake and constructing turn organizations in which participants displayed their orientation to achievement of the institutional goal (i.e., collecting participants’ diverse and distributed perspectives and opinions on the program that is being evaluated). The last section analyzed the different ways in which turns were allocated among the multi-participants, lending better understanding of participants’ orientation to the turn-taking procedures in the focus group setting. In the next chapter, I will examine the ways in which participants co-construct and negotiate opinions in constructing topics and responses in their discussion facilitated by the moderator.

CHAPTER 5. TOPIC CONSTRUCTION IN FOCUS GROUPS

5.1. Introduction

In any type of discourse—ordinary or institutional—topics are oriented to and accomplished locally by the participants. Institutional discourse, such as meetings or focus groups, differs from ordinary conversation in that it usually has pre-established agenda that specifies the topics to be addressed (Svennevig, 2012). In the case of meeting interactions, the meeting chair or leader introduces the topics pertaining to the agenda—which sometimes is made known to the participants in advance as well (Svennevig, 2012)—opening the discussion to flow within the scope of announced agenda (Ford, 2008; Murayama, 2012; Svennevig, 2012; Svennevig & Djordjilovic, 2015). Participants in meetings orient to the specific institutional boundaries, thus restricting the boundary of their contributions within the situated scope of topics (Ford, 2008; Svennevig, 2012).

Topic introduction and construction in focus groups are similar in that the initial agenda stems from the semi-constructed protocol (Appendix A) based on the questions that the moderator seeks responses and response thereof. And as briefly introduced in the previous chapter, the opening of the interaction is initiated by the moderator's question that introduces the first topic of discussion. The difference, however, is that in focus groups, while the overall institutional goal is present (i.e., evaluation of the teacher development program in this case), there are fewer restrictions concerning the scope of topics to be discussed. Rather, participants—recognized as *experts* of the topics to be discussed—are given more liberty to display and provide their expertise without the restriction of adhering to one specific agenda (Puchta & Potter, 2004). Thus, although the protocol is there as an overall guideline for the moderator to

index certain core aspects that they are seeking through the focus group interaction, the discussion itself freely follows the interactional route constructed by the participants.

With this perspective, the aim of this chapter is to examine how the participants produce and display their perspectives and opinions pertaining to the arising discussion topics within the social context *in situ*. In the analyses within this chapter, I maintain the core assumption of conversation analysis that it is “fundamentally *through interaction* that participants build social context” (Wilkinson, 2011, p. 175). Thus, by examining *how* participants construct the topics—via agreement, building on co-participant’s talk, collaboration, and disagreement—this chapter will show how participants display themselves as competent interactors, with the ability to build the context of their talk *in* and *through* the talk on a moment-by-moment basis.

I will first examine the selected cases in which participants formulate their talk—as their contribution to the interaction—relevant to the ongoing topic by making positive references to previously produced responses by their co-participants. Then I will examine representative excerpts in which the participants collaborate as a group in constructing an opinion, thus offering a detailed response together as a group. Finally, I will examine the different interactional shapes of participants’ *doing disagreements* (Pomerantz, 1984; Mori, 1999; Sharma, 2012), where participants provide a different opinion to the ones that have already been proffered, thus producing more diversified perspectives on the topic.

5.2. Agreement Sequences

Focus groups are particular in that they provide the locus for an in-depth and diversified discussion on the given topic initiated by the moderator’s question based on the protocol. Furthermore, although the discussions are usually initiated by the moderator’s (or sometimes one

of the participants') questions, what happens thereafter cannot be quite aptly expressed into the succinct expression of being *the answer* for the question that has been posited. In other words, the data show that the interactions within focus groups are not composed of clear-cut question (as the first pair part) and answer (as the second pair part; Schegloff, 2007a) sequences, but rather constitutive of diverse comments, responses, noticings, or opinions made relevant by the question or by another participant's comments. These then expand into a topicalized discussion, consequently lending a well-rounded and collaborated response to the focus group protocol. Moreover, there were many instances in which the interaction within the ongoing sequences brought to surface other relevant topics that were launched once they were taken up by participants.

This section examines the cases in which participants provide their opinions and responses by (a) building it on previous contributions from their co-participants through direct agreement, and building their opinion on to other talk, and then (b) how they seek confirmation of the information they are providing by accessing the "epistemic community stance" (Heritage & Raymond, 2012) they share as the same experienced participants of the program being evaluated.

5.2.1. Direct Agreement through Positive Assessment of Other Talk

Krueger and Casey (2009) noted that achieving a consensus on the matter being discussed should not be a goal for focus groups. The data indicate, however, that participants use various interactional resources that strive to achieve consensus on certain matters as a way of constructing their discussion and talk as relevant to the topics being formulated. Pertinent to multi-party discussions, participants draw on other participants' talk as a way of formulating their own opinions. One of the most prevalent methods of doing so was by prefacing their

upcoming talk with direct agreement to another participant. Table 5 displays the frequency in which direct agreements and building on other talk occurred across the seven focus groups.

Table 5. *Count of agreement sequences*

Sequence type	Groups						
	A	B	C	D-1	D-2	E	G
Direct Agreement	15	7	12	21	23	18	0
Building on Other Talk	10	7	6	14	5	13	3

As can be seen in Table 5, direct agreement with former speaker is a method frequently adopted by the participants in formulating their opinions. These excerpts illustrate cases in which the new speaker produces an agreement with the previous speaker in seconding the opinion with further elaboration. While each of the uses was diverse in their interactional structure, the two excerpts in this subsection illustrate the two exemplary methods adopted by participants.

The first excerpt is from Group B. As described in the previous chapter, this group is composed of six participants. The two male participants (both in their 40s) were the least talkative of the group, and until now most of the discussion had been monopolized by two of the most talkative female participants, Aeju and Yuri. Just prior to this excerpt, Jinsu had finally cut in with a question that he asked to each of his co-participants (see Ex. 5.11). The data show that he was not able to hold on to his turn very long, and the discussion had returned back to the ladies. This excerpt starts at this point, where Jinsu attempts another interception.

Ex. 5.1. Group B: I agree with him

- 01 → Jinsu: 내가 지금 그 얘기를 하려고 하는거예요
- 02 Aeju: 한번도 안빼먹었다니까
- 03 Jinsu: 연수를
- 04 Aeju: 한번:도 안빼놓고-
- 05 Jinsu: 그래서 우리가 연수를 주기적으로 ((gaze at Mod))
- 06 받아야 하는데↑-
- 07 Sumi: 최소 5 회 이상은 받아야::
- 08 Yuri: [연수가 정말 필요해요
- 09 Jinsu: [근데 이제-
- 10 Aeju: [왜냐면 정말 연수는 전국에 내놓으라는
- 11 현직 교사들이 강사로 다 와요.

12 Yuri: 어:: 맞어↑
 13 Aeju: ((continues a long speech about her ongoing efforts to attend as many teacher training programs as possible)
 (27.0)
 14 [결론은::
 15 → Minsu: 저:는 아↑까:: ((gaze at Moderator, moderator returns gaze))
 16 Heri: 응: 결론은 ()? 하하 ((gaze at Aeju))
 17 → Minsu: *Jinsu* 선생님이 말씀하신 것과 같은데요?
 18 Mod: 네 ((in overlap with conversation between Heri, Yuri and Aeju))
 19 Minsu: 그 XX 선생님 시간에 했던 것이 새로운 것은 아닌데
 20 결국 4개월 동안 한 것을 리뷰 할 수
 21 있는 기회여서:: ((continues about his own experience))

01 → Jinsu: nayka cikum ku aykilul halyeko hanunkeeyyo
 I-NM now that comment-ACC to say trying to-POL
Now, that's what my questions were about.

02 Aeju: ((to Mod)) hanpento anppaymekesstanikka
 not event once NEG-participant-I tell you
I'm telling you, I didn't miss out on one workshop.

03 Jinsu: yenswulul
 workshop-ACC

04 Aeju: hanpen:to anppaynohko-
 not even once not-participate
Not once have I neglected to participate

05 Jinsu: kulayse wulika yenswulul cwukicekulo ((gaze at Mod))
 and so we-TP workshop-ACC periodically
 06 pataya hanuntey↑-
 receive should-but
And so I think we should all participate in these workshops more regularly, but-

07 Sumi: choyso ohoy isangun pataya::
 at least 5 times more than should receive
We should participate at least 5 times.

08 Yuri: [yenswuka cengmal philyohayyo
 workshop-TP really needed-POL
These workshops are really important.

09 Jinsu: [kuntey icey- ((gaze at Mod))
 but now-
But now-

10 Aeju: [waynyamyen cengmal yenswunun cenkwukey naynohulanun ((gaze at Mod))
 the reason is really workshop-NM nation-wide spectacular-NM
 11 hyencik kyosatuli kangsallo ta wayo.
 in-service teachers-TP as lecturers all come-POL
**The reason being, really all these nation-wide famous in-service teachers come to
 these workshops as lecturers.**

12 Yuri: e:: mace↑

yes that's right
Yes that's true.

13 Aeju: ((continues a monologue about her efforts to attend as many training programs as possible))
(27.0)

14 [kyellonun::
all in all
In conclusion?

15 → Minsu: ce:nun a↑kka:: ((gaze at Moderator, and Moderator returns gaze))
I-SH-TP earlier
For me, to refer to something said earlier on

16 Heri: ung: kyellonun ()? haha ((gaze at Aeju))
yes in conclusion () haha
yes, in conclusion (*indecipherable*) haha

17 → Minsu: Jinsu sensayngnimi malssumhasin: keskwa kathunteyyo?
Jinsu teacher-TP said-POL with the same is-POL?
I actually agree with what Jinsu said earlier?

18 Mod: ney ((in overlap with conversation between Heri, Yuri and Aeju))
yes

19 Minsu: ku XX sensayngnim sikaney hayssten kesi saylowun kesun anintey
that *instructor name*-teacher's class-at did work-NM new work was not but
20 kyelkwuk 4kaywel tongan han kesul review hal swu
in the end 4 months during what we did review could do
21 issnun kihoyyese:: ((continues about his own experience))
possible opportunity it was
What we did in instructor XX's class, it wasn't something new, but in the end, I believe it was an opportunity for us to review what we had learned for the four months prior to these classes here.

In line 1, Jinsu attempts to reclaim the floor by initiating an elaboration on why he prefaced his upcoming talk with the same question (i.e., *how many times have you participated in workshops like this*, Ex. 5.11) to each of his co-participants. He is cut off by Aeju's ongoing talk from her previous turn (line 2). Undeterred, Jinsu continues with his turn in line 3 by objectifying the term *yenswu* (workshop), but also undeterred, Aeju keeps going with her talk as well (line 4), and after several lines of fighting for the turn—no less than three people attempting to talk at the same time (lines 8-11)—Jinsu gives up mid-talk (line 9), and the turn is claimed by Aeju (line 13). As it seems Aeju is finishing off (line 14), Minsu suddenly catches the gaze of the

moderator and starts his turn in line 15. He starts slowly, elongating his vowels *ce:nun a ↑kka::* (for me: ear↑lier::), and prefaces his upcoming opinion—that resultatively counters what Aeju has been talking about so far—with a direct agreement to Jinsu’s previous turn, *I actually agree with what Jinsu said: earlier on?* (line 17). Minsu’s turn does not immediately catch all participants’ attention (i.e., Aeju and Haeri continue talk of their own, line 16, 18), but it does catch the attention of the moderator (line 18), who provides an acknowledgement and continuer token *ney* (yes) encouraging Minsu to continue with his opinion that resonates with Jinsu’s earlier articulated opinion—that although some of the classes are repetitive, such repetition gives them a chance to review what they have learned previously, thus engraving the teaching methods further into their memories.

What Minsu is doing in this excerpt is demonstrating a more complex way of producing a disaffiliative next-turn to the previous speaker by aligning his opinion to another speaker with direct agreement. Instead of directly disagreeing (which he actually also does in one of the later excerpts), he chooses to align his response in affiliation with another speaker (Jinsu). By doing so, he is not only able to draw the discussion in a different direction without being rudely interruptive, and is also able to formulate his response within an already established small group that he building around Jinsu and himself rather than offer the opposing opinion as an individual. This type of aligning with a second party to disaffiliate with the immediately prior speaker can only be seen in multi-party discussions such as these focus groups.

The next excerpt is similar in that the speaker chooses to align with a previous speaker, but in this case, she does it as a way of responding to the moderator’s question. This excerpt is from Group D-1. This excerpt is towards the end of the focus group and line 1 starts with the moderator asking the last question from the focus group protocol.

Ex. 5.2. Group D-1: What Kim said earlier

- 01 Mod: 거의 마지막 질문인데요↑ 이 프로그램- 이 xx 프로그램에
 02 대해서, 이제 30 년 넘게 해왔는데: (.)
 03 이제 조금 이런 부분은 개선이 되면 좋겠다↑
 04 달라졌으면 좋겠다↑:: 하는 부분이, >anim<
 05 이거는 좋으니까 계속 하면 좋겠다라던지:::
 06 (0.3) 그런 부분이 있으면, 자유롭게:: hh
- 07 Jena: 음::: 아까 Kim 쌤이 말한거↓↑ 굉장히
 08 좋은 아이디어 인거 같아요.
 09 제2외국어를 공부하는 사람들↑
- 10 Mod: [네
 11 Rumi: [응::
- 12 → Jena: 우리만 덜렁 수업 받는거 보다는? ((gaze at Kim))
 13 Mod: 음: 네::
- 01 Mod: keuy macimak cilmwuninteyyo↑ i phulokulaym-i xx phulokulaymey
 almost last question-but um this program-NM *name of program*
 02 tayhayse, icyey 30-nyen nemkey haywassnuntey: (.)
 about now 30 years more than been in progress
 03 icyey cokum ilen pwupwunun kayseni toymyen cohkyessta↑
 now a little such areas-NM improve-TP was-COND it would be good
 04 tallacyessumyen cohkeyssta↑:: hanun pwupwuni, >anim<
 different-COND it would be good such thoughts area-TP or if not
 05 ikenun cohunikka kyey sok hamyen cohkeysstalatenci:::
 such areas are good and so continuously do-COND it would be good-IE
 06 (0.3) kulen pwupwuni issumyen, cayulopkey:: hh
 such areas-TP if there are-COND freely
This is almost the last question but um, about this program, this XX program. At this point, it's been in progress for more than 30 years, and at this point, if there are any areas that you think "it would be nice to improve these areas" or "it would be nice if they could change these things," or on the other hand, if there were areas you thought, "oh, this is nice, they should continue like this." If there's anything like that, if you'd like to just freely talk about it? hh
- 07 → Jena: um::: akka Kim saymi malhanke↓↑ koyngcanghi
 Well earlier Kim teacher-NM what she said very much
 08 cohun *idea* inke kathayo.
 good idea it is I think-POL
 09 cey 2 oykwukelul kongpwuhanun salamtul↑
 second foreign language-ACC those who study↑
Well, what Kim mentioned earlier. I think that was a very good idea. To put together all the people who study English as a second language?
- 10 Mod: [ney
yes
- 11 Rumi: [ung::
yes I agree
- 12 Jena: wuliman telleng swuep patnunke pota-nun? ((gaze at Kim))
 we-only on or own class take than-TP?
Rather than just us (the Korean teachers) taking the classes by ourselves?
- 13 Mod: um: ney::

mhm: I see.

The moderator starts the sequence with the last question on the focus group protocol, asking participants about their opinions of possible improvements or developments to be made to the program (lines 1-6). Towards the end of her question formulation, the moderator opens up the next turn, implicitly requesting that one of the four participants self-volunteer the next turn with their opinion. Directly following the question, Jena comes in with a brief turn-holding token *um:::* (mm, well), followed by a direct agreement and positive assessment of an idea suggested earlier by another participant, *what Kate mentioned earlier ↓ ↑ I think that was a very good idea* (lines 7-8). Previously during the discussion, while talking about each of their opinions about the courses offered by the workshop, Kate had mentioned that it would be more interesting if the classes were composed of a mixture of students (i.e., English teachers from other Asian countries), or if they were to take classes with current students at the local university. Jena makes a reference back to this topic, reformulating the same idea as a suggestion for development of the program. With the moderator's receipt token *ney* (yes, line 10) as well as an explicit agreement *ung* (yes, I agree::, line 11) from a co-participant, Rumi, Jena further elaborates her choice, (*it would be better*) *than just us (Korean teachers) taking the classes by ourselves?* (line 12). Similarly to the previous excerpt, Jena provides a direct agreement to an idea previously proffered by another participant. This action, combined with earlier discussion, as well as another co-participant's (Rumi) agreement, helps form a consensus between the participants which goes on to provide a concrete response to the focus group questions.

The excerpts in this subsection illustrated the cases in which participants made use of direct agreements with positive assessments to create a consensual idea in formulating their response to the focus group protocol. The next subsection will illustrate instances in which

participants make a reference to previous talk as a way of building their response onto the previously produced turn by another participant.

5.2.2. Building on Other Talk

Ford (2008) mentions “transitional beginnings” (p. 80), by which she references the instances where new speakers take their turn by crediting a previous speaker. This was done especially when the action to be taken was affiliative (i.e., agreeing with or adding to). In the focus group data, similar actions were taken by the participants, as a way of building on previous turns to further elaborate or provide a new opinion or insight into the matter. The excerpts introduced in this subsection are different from the previous *direct agreements* in that while the previous excerpts illustrated cases in which the opinion of the agreeing turn-taker included a repetition or positive assessment of the previous speaker’s opinion, in these cases, the current speaker uses the previous speaker’s turn as a jumping block to provide a *different* opinion from that of the first speaker. In other words, the current speaker is further building on the previous turn to elaborate on their own opinion on the current topic (Ford, 2008). The two excerpts that I have selected demonstrate two different ways: (a) referencing other talk as segue into providing own experience, and (b) building on other talk to provide further elaboration on the issue being discussed.

The first excerpt is from Group E. This is continued excerpt of Ex. 4.5 from the previous chapter where Jini self-selected herself as the next opinion-provider. Ever since, she has been elaborating on the impressions she got from the teacher development program. Just previous to this excerpt, while talking about her school visit, she mentions the school principal—by his full name—in commenting on how impressed she was by his expertise on school administration as well as his concerns for the teachers and students. As it turns out, he was also one of the speakers

for their courses, and thus all other teachers reveal their recognition at his name. Line 1 starts with Woni—who went to another school for school visits—who mentions she asked for his business card as she was so impressed by his lecture in their course.

Ex. 5.3. Group E: Since you mention it

- 01 Woni: 저도 그분한테 명함 받았어요.
 02 그분 마인드가::
 03 Jini: 아, 그쵸그쵸? 그:: 정말,
 04 → Sara: ((gaze and pointing at Jini)) 선생님이 말씀하시니까↑
 05 그분에게 impress 되었던 요인중 하나가
 06 교사로서 굉장히 자기 직업에 대한
 07 자부심이 크셨어요
 08 Mod: 네::
 09 Sara: 여기 연수를 와서 꼭 여기 것을 배우는 것을 떠나서?
 10 같은 직종에 종사하는 사람인데?
 11 그냥 잡이 아니라 그런 그런:: 사명감? 으로
 12 Jini: 음::
 13 Sara: 느끼고 즐기면서 하는 그런 것들이?
 14 Woni: ((nods vigorously))
 15 Sara: 어필했어요=
 16 Woni: ((nodding))=정말 그런 강의가 많으면 좋겠어요
 17 Jini: 응 그럼 정말 좋을거 같아요. 교육 시스템
 18 교육 정책에 관한것
 19 Woni: 어영 정말
- 01 Woni: ceto kupwunhanthey myengham patasseyo
 I-SH-also to that person-HON name card received-POL
 02 kupwun maintuka:::
 that person-HON mind is
I also asked for that teacher's name card. I thought his mindset was very um,
- 03 Jini: a, kuchyo kuchyo? ku:: cengmal,
 Ah right-Q right-Q that really
Ah, right? right? That mindset, really,
- 04 → Sara: ((gaze and pointing at Jini)) sensayngnimi malssumhasinikka↑
 teacher (you)-NM mention it
 05 kupwuneykey impress toyessten yoincwung hanaka
 that person-HON-to impress was reason-among one is
 06 kyosalose koyngcanghi caki cikepey tayhan
 as a teacher very much his own job about
 07 capwusimi khusyesseyo
 pride-NM large-it was-POL
Now that you (Jini) mention it, one of the things that really impressed me about that teacher, is that as a teacher, about his job as a teacher, he had pride- he seemed very proud to be a teacher.
- 08 Mod: ney:::

I see.

- 09 Sara: yeki yenswulul wase kkok yeki kesul paywunun kesul ttenase?
here workshop-ACC come surely local things learn-RL thngs apart from that
- 10 kathun cikcongey congsohanun salamintey?
the same job-at work-do-RL person-but
- 11 kunyang job-i anila kulen kulen:: samyengkam? ulo
just job-TP NEG-but such such sense of duty-with
So, stepping a little aside from feeling the pressure to learn something new in this program, that we don't have access to in Korea? You know, from this person who is someone working the same job as we are, we felt from him that he considered being a teacher was not just a job, but that he had a stronger sense of duty?
- 12 Jini: mm::
- 13 Sara: nukkiko culkimyense hanun kulen kestuli?
feel and enjoy-while do-NM such things-NM
- 14 Woni: ((nods vigorously))
- 15 Sara: appeal hass-eyo=
appeal it did-POL
That he showed his joy and passion in working as a teacher? Such expression were quite appealing to us
- 16 Woni: ((nodding))=cengmal kulen kanguyka manhumyen cohkeysseyo
really such lectures-TP a lot-COND it would be nice-POL
Really, it would be nice if there were a lot more lectures like the ones we took from him.
- 17 Jini: ung kulem cengmal cohulke kathayo. kyoyuk sisutheyem
yes in that case really good-think I think it would be education system
- 18 kyoyuk cengchaykey kwanhankes
education policy about-things
Yes I think that would be really good. To hear more about the actual education system and education policies here.
- 19 Woni: e e cengmal
yes yes really

In line 1, Woni agrees with Jini and elaborates by saying she asked for the principal's business card, and further gives her own opinion on why she was so impressed by him, *I thought his mindset was very:::* (lines 1-2). Although Woni does not fully complete her sentence, her previous account (i.e., asking for his card), and the positive way in which Jini responds to Woni's complete sentence (*Ah, right? right?*, line 3) indicates Woni's turn projected positive assessment despite her incomplete sentence. Following Jini's agreement to Woni, Sara takes the next turn by taking her gaze to Jini—the first one to bring up the principal—pointing to her and

making an explicit reference to her prior talk, *now that you mention him* (line 4), directly followed by a rising intonation ↑ indicating more talk to come. Accordingly, she follows directly with her own assessment of the principal, linking it once again to the topic of what they have achieved through this teacher development program (i.e., being impressed by someone in the same job category who is so proud and happy doing his job). In doing so, she makes an explicit comparison between (a) what they thought they would like to achieve—learning something new or local, and (b) what they had not expected—to be impressed by the professionalism of a local teacher. Woni picks up on this and provides an evaluative suggestion for the program, *it would be nice to have more courses like these* (line 16), further supported by Jini, *yes that would be really nice* (line 17).

By building on Jini's perceived positive opinion of the program (i.e., the impressive principal), Sara and the other participants are collaboratively constructing a response which results in not only their evaluation of the one aspect of the program, but also expands to provide a suggestion for further development of the program. The close analysis that reveals such sequential work provides evidence for the effectiveness of conducting focus groups and suggests implications for achieving enriched discussion, which will be further discussed later.

The next excerpt is similar, but in this case, one participant builds on previous talk proffered by another participant as a way of providing new information. This excerpt is from Group D-1. As described in chapter three, two groups (D-1 and D-2) of the eight focus groups collected were discussions with elementary school teachers. At the time of the focus groups, some of them were already English-subject teachers, while some of them were to be assigned as English-subject teachers for the first time once they finished the program and went back to their respective schools. Just prior to this excerpt, the participants had been discussing how the 6-

months program is not enough to prepare them as English subject teachers, and that is when Jena comes in with line 1.

Ex. 5.4. Group D-1: Like Kate mentioned earlier

- 01 → Jena: 근데 아까 Kate 선생님이 말했지만 규정이 있으니까
 02 3년 동안 영어 전담을 해야 한다는::
 03 Mod: 네네
 04 Jena: 국가에서 돈을 들여서 보내준거잖아요.
 05 Mod: 네네
 06 Jena: 5년 안에 3년을 해야해요.
 07 Mod: 아::
- 01 → Jena: kuntey akka Kate sensayngnimi malhayssciman kyucengi issunikka
 but earlier Kate teacher-NM mentioned-but regulation-TP exist-and so
 02 3-nyen tongan yenge centamul hayya hantanun::
 3 years during English exclusively in charge must do
But as Kate also mentioned earlier, there is an existing regulation, that (after the intensive workshop) we need to be exclusively in charge of teaching English for three years.
- 03 Mod: ney ney
yes I see
- 04 Jena: kwukkaeyse tonul tulyese ponaycwunkecanhayo.
 country-from money-ACC use-and sendus here-CANH-POL
Because you know, our country (Korea) used national money to send us here, right?
- 05 Mod: ney ney
yes yes
- 06 Jena: onyen aney sam-nyenul hayyahayyo.
 5 years within 3 years-ACC must do-POL
Within 5 years, we must be English teacher exclusively for 3 years.
- 07 Mod: Ah::

In line 1, Jena brings up the regulation that teachers who have participated in this program are required to be English-subject teachers for at least three years within five years of completing the workshop. In doing so, she makes a reference to Kate, who was the first one to bring up this regulation in earlier talk. By referencing Kate, Jena is starting her turn with a *transitional beginning* (Ford, 2008), giving credit to Kate as the first mentioner of the regulation, while at the same time, making a smooth transition into her further elaboration of the regulation. Although the earlier excerpt is not included here, Kate's earlier mention of this regulation had

been closer to a speculation, as she mentioned she had *heard* somewhere that non-English subject teachers would be required to teach English as subject teachers for a certain amount of time after their return. Of the four participants in this group, Kate and Rumi are the younger, newer teachers who had been specifically trained as “English subject teachers” for elementary schools, while Jena and Jinu were the two older participants who until now had taught all subjects (i.e., as is the case for most elementary school teachers in Korea), and would be newly assigned as English-subject teachers upon their completion on the 6-month workshop. Thus, the actual effect of the 5-year regulation (mentioned by Kate earlier and here again by Jena) would only be influential to Jena and Jinu. By referring back to Kate, Jena is giving her credit for the information, but as the actual beneficiary of the regulation, she is not only giving weight to what was earlier proposed in a more speculative manner, but is also further providing detailed factual information (i.e., *Within 5 years, we must be English-subject teachers for 3 years*, line 6), which the moderator responds to as news (Heritage, 1985, 1998, 2002b) with change-of-state token, *ah::* (line 7). In other words, Jena makes use of prior information provided by a co-participant as a building block to further strengthen the information she is to provide within the evaluative focus group.

The two excerpts in this subsection examined participants’ use of reference to their co-participants’ previously provided talk. The next subsection will examine the cases in which participants explicitly seek confirmation or support for their talk from their co-participants.

5.2.3. Seeking confirmation/support

Specifically pertaining to multi-party conversations, participants make use of diverse resources—including their co-participants—in constructing their opinions and arguments in discussion (Ford, 2008; Jenks & Brandt, 2013). This action is also evident in focus group settings,

where participants are recruited based on their collective status as *experts* (Puchta & Potter, 2004) on the topics to be discussed. Thus, in constructing their discussion pertaining to the topic, participants regard each other as reliable references to support and confirm their talk or arguments to come. Hayano (2011, 2013) found in her study of epistemics in Japanese ordinary conversation that quite often interlocutors indexed the source of knowledge as a way of providing evidence and validity to their position. Incidentally, participants in these focus groups index their group stance as a community within the same epistemic boundary (Hayano, 2011, 2013; Heritage, 2012a, 2013) as a way of providing evidence and further support for their individual contributions to the discussions. The previous two subsections demonstrated participants doing so by making positive references to their co-participants' talk, thus indirectly indexing their joint stance as a group. In the two excerpts below, participants directly index this community stance, by directing an explicit question—seeking confirmation or endorsement—of their currently individual stance.

The first excerpt is again from Group D-1. Prior to this excerpt, Jinu has been talking about the recent policy changes in the education system in Korea, giving specific details of the situation in the English education curriculum for elementary school students. Together with his co-participants, he has been informing the moderator about how teachers who have not been trained to teach English—like himself and Jena in this particular group—are now required to take intensive training programs (like the one they are currently participating in), after which they become qualified—and mandatorily required—to teach English as a subject to elementary school students in Korea. He mentions that while the government is trying to find and employ elementary school teachers who are trained specifically to teach English.

Ex. 5.5. Group D-1: From first grade now, right?

01 Jinu: 그래서 당분간은, 왜냐면::: (.) 이제
02 영어를 3 학년부터 영어를 도입하기 시작해서

03 1 학년으로 늘리는 추세자나요?
04 Mod: [네?
05 Jinu: [늘리기 시작했고? 그러다 보면 더 많은
06 영어 교사가 필요한데::
07 Mod: 아, 1 학년으로 바뀌었어요?
08 → Jinu: 1학년으로-? ((gaze shifts from Mod to Rumi))
09 Rumi: ((nods)) 네 강남은 1학년부터-
10 Jinu: [((nods)) 실제로 하고 있고
11 Rumi: [강남만 ((nodding with gaze at Mod))
12 Jinu: 네, 그러니 3학년 영어 수업 하던 것이
13 1학년으로 확대가 되요. 그러다 보니까
14 많은 자원이 필요해요. 영어를 가르칠 자원.
15 Mod: 음::
16 Jinu: 그래서, 이런 사업도 보면 시도교육청 단위가
17 아니라 교육부 차원에서
18 Mod: 네
19 Jinu: 정부 차원에서 추진되고 있는 것으로
20 그렇게 생각해요
21 Mod: 음:: ((nodding))
22 Jinu: 그래서 당분간은 이런 연수가 강조가:: 강화
23 될 거다. 그런 생각이 들어요.

01 Jinu: kulayse tangpwunkanun, waynyamyen::: (.) icye
 And so for a while now because you know now
02 yengelul 3haknyenpwuthe yengelul toiphaki sicak-hayse
 English-ACC third grade-onwards English-ACC include start-do and now
03 lhaknyenulo nullinun chwuseycahnayo?
 first grade-to extend-RL current status-you know-POL
 **And so for now, at least for a while, because you know, now, while they had
 originally included English as a subject from 3rd grade onwards, but now, the
 current status is to slowly expand it to start including English as a subject from 1st
 grade onwards, right?**

04 Mod: [ney?
 excuse me?

05 Jinu: [nulliki sicakhayssko? kuleta pomyen te manhun
 expand started-and? and thus continuing like that more many
06 yenge kyosaka philyohantey::
 English teacher-NM need-but
 **so they have started to expand like that already? And then naturally they need
 more English teachers-**

07 Mod: a, lhaknyenulo pakkwiesseyo?
 oh 1st grade-to change-did it-Q?
 Oh, they changed it to start with the first graders now?

08 → Jinu: lhaknyenulo-? ((gaze shifts from Mod to Rumi))
 1st grade to-
 To start from 1st grade-?

09 Rumi: ((nods)) ney kangnamun ilhaknyenpwuthe-

yes *Seoul area name*-TP 1st grade-onwards

Yes. In Kangnam (name of rich area in Seoul), they've started with 1st graders

- 10 Jinu: [((nods)) silceylo hako issko
presently in session it is-and
Yes, so it's already currently in session
- 11 Rumi: [kangnamman ((nodding with gaze at Mod))
Only in Kangnam so far though,
- 12 Jinu: ney, kuleni samhaknyen yenge swuep haten kesi
yes, and so 3rd grade English class did is now
13 ilhaknyenulo hwaktayka toyyo. kuleta ponikka
1st grade-to expand-NM does-POL and so therefore
14 manhun caweni philyohayyo. yengelul kaluchil cawen.
a lot of resource-is needed-POL English-ACC to teach resource
**Yes, and so what it used to be from 3rd grade onwards is being expanded to from
1st grade onwards. And so therefore, there is a need for a lot of resources.
Resources to teach English.**
- 15 Mod: mm::
- 16 Jinu: kulayse, ilen saepto pomyen sitokyoyukcheng tanwika
and so such projects if you take a look city-provincial education administrators
17 anila kyoyukpwu chaweneyse
NEG-but rather Ministry of Education dimension
**And therefore, programs like these workshops not simply taken up within the
smaller boundary of the education departments of the city of provincial area, but
rather taken up on the national level by the Ministry of Education.**
- 18 Mod: ney
I see
- 19 Jinu: cengpwu chaweneyse chwucintoyko issnun kesulo
government dimension-from is in progress currently
20 kulehkey sayngkakhayyo
as like I believe
**I believe that workshops like these are currently in progress with the government
behind it all.**
- 21 Mod: um:: ((nodding))
mm:::
- 22 Jinu: kulayse tangpwunkanun ilen yenswuka kangcoka:: kanghwa
and so for a while-NM such workshop-NM emphasize-NM further stressed
23 toyl keta. kulen sayngkaki tuleyo.
to be will be such thoughts-NM come to mind-POL
**And so in my opinion, I think for a while, workshops like these will be
emphasized, further stressed in the near future.**

In line 1, Jinu is continuing his argument on why it has all of a sudden become so important to train elementary school teachers to work as expert English-subject teachers. He starts to explain, *now, they had originally included English as a subject from 3rd grade onwards,*

but now, the current status is to slowly to expand it to start including English as a subject from 1st grade onwards (lines 2-3), which he completes in a question form with a tag-question ending *cahn-a-yo* (that is so, right?, line 3). His use of sentence-final question form, *cahn-a-yo* (E. Kim, 2013) and his directly continued talk in line 5 indicate that his ostensible question was not seeking an answer, but rather seeking alignment based on the assumption that the recipient had the same epistemic status (Heritage, 2012a) on this issue. In other words, Jinu's short question form is an agreement-projecting confirmation-seeking question (Heritage, 1988). Instead of an aligning response, however, the moderator initiates a repair, *ney?* (excuse me? line 4) in overlap with Jinu's continued talk in line 5, eliciting further elaboration from Jinu. Jinu does not immediately respond to this repair initiation from the moderator, but continues with his elaboration based on his earlier reasoning (i.e., *because they are expanding the English subject to 1st graders, naturally more English teachers are needed*, lines 5-6). He elongates the last syllable of this turn *philyohantey::* (need more but::, line 6), holding his turn indicating continued talk to come, but at this point, the moderator interrupts with a question prefaced by the change of state token, *oh, they changed it to start with the first graders now?* (line 7). This question indexes the moderator's epistemic status as in the "not-knowing" (Hayano, 2013) despite the assumption of intersubjectivity projected in Jinu's earlier question. In response, Jinu does not provide direct confirmation but rather repeats a section of the question while shifting his gaze from the moderator to a co-participant, Rumi (line 8). Rather than affirming the information he provided earlier, he seeks confirmation from his co-participant whose affirmative response in the following turn (line 9) acts as further evidence for Jinu's ongoing argument. In her response, however, Rumi limits the scope of this new policy to a certain area within Seoul, thus indicating that the policy is still very new and is still in planning and piloting phase. Jinu does not pick up

on this limitation and tries to continue with his argument based on Rumi's initial affirmation (line 10), but in overlap, Rumi repeats, *kangnam-man* (only in Kangnam so far), emphasizing that the policy has yet to become a general policy in Korea. Although, Jinu does not elaborate on the reduced scope of his earlier mentioned policy, Rumi's confirmation and further specified response provides support that Jinu was seeking through his confirmation-seeking reformulation (line 5).

This excerpt provides a good example of not only how one participant can rely on another participant to support or confirm their talk, but also assist in providing more accurate information in collaborative efforts to provide their expertise as insiders of the program being evaluated through the focus group sessions. The next excerpt is from Group E, a group of secondary school teachers, and Sara is commenting on the issue of whether the program goals were met.

Ex. 5.6. Group E: English proficiency... right?

01 Sara: 지금 하와이 여기가 마지막 단계니까
 02 Mod: 네네
 03 Sara: 전에 했던거 중복이 많이 되었고? 음::
 04 생각보다는 이 프로그램이 원래 토퍽 자체가
 05 개인적인 (.) 영어::: 영어 능력- ((gaze shift from Mod to other participants)
 06 → 능력 함양형이었지요?
 07 Jini: 음:: 맞아
 08 Sara: ((gaze back at Mod)) 개인적인 영어함양형이었는데?
 09 Mod: 네
 10 Sara: [그거하고는 맞지 않았어요.
 11 Sina: [(shakes head)) 그것은 아니었던거 같아
 12 Mod: 네:↓
 13 Sara: 프로그램의 그 목표가↓
 14 Mod: 네네

01 Sara: cikum *Hawaii* yekika macimak tankyeynikka
 now *Hawaii* here-TP the last step-and so
Now, this program here in Hawaii is the final step of the entire workshop, and so
 02 Mod: neyney
yes yes
 03 Sara: ceney haysstenke cwungpoki manhi toyessko? um::
 before things we did overlap-NM a lot there was-and? mm
 04 sayngkakpotanun i phulokulaymi wenlay *topic* cacheyka

05 more than I thought this program-NM originally topic itself-NM
 kayincekin (.) yenge::: yenge nunglyek-
 → individual English English proficiency-
There were quite a lot of overlap in the curriculum between the course we took before and the ones we took here in Hawaii? And mm, well more than I thought, well the original topic of this workshop itself is the individual English, um English proficiency-
 ((gaze shift from Mod to other participants))

06 nunglyek hamyanghyengiessciyo?
 proficiency development-was it not
development of individual English proficiency, now wasn't it?

07 Jini: um::: maca
yes, that's right

08 Sara: ((gaze back at Mod)) kayincekin yenge hamyanghyengiessnuntey?
 individual English development it was, but?
(The goal) was actually development of individual English proficiency?

09 Mod: ney
mhm

10 Sara: [kukehakonun macci anhasseyo.
 with that-NM match NEG-was-POL
But well, what we did here didn't quite match with that.

11 Sina: [[shakes head]] kukenun aniesstenke katha
 that-TP NEG-was I think
No, I don't think it did.

12 Mod: ney:↓
I see.

13 Sara: phulokulaymuy ku mokphyoka↓-
 program-DAT that goal-NM
The goal of the program-

14 Mod: neyney
yes yes

Prior to this excerpt, Sara had been commenting on the various sections of the 6-month program (i.e., the first two institutions they were trained at before coming to the U.S). In line 1, Sara moves on the last portion of the three compartmentalized program and starts by first mentioning the overlap in the curriculum between the three institutions (i.e., two in Korea and the last one in the U.S.). Aiming to provide evidence as to why she thought the curriculum in Korea and the curriculum in U.S. should be different, she starts to formulate her understanding of the program goals for the U.S. component, *well the original topic of this workshop itself is the individual (.) English::: English proficiency-* (line 5), at which point she cuts herself off and shifts

her gaze from the moderator to her co-participants. Then she goes on to rephrase the last part of her turn into a question form that she directs to her co-participants, (*the stated goal was development of individual English proficiency, now wasn't it?* (line 6), eliciting support or confirmation from them. One of her co-participants, Jini, provides an affirmative response, *yes::: that's right* (line 7), straight after which Sara shifts her gaze back to the moderator and repeats once again, this time as a statement with a contrastive ending –*nuntey* (it was, but well?), *the goal was development of individual English proficiency, but?*—which acts as a place holder rather than an actual tag question (Y. Kim, 2009). Upon the moderator's receipt token, Sara goes ahead to finish her negative assessment, *well, what we did here didn't quite match with that* (line 10), which another co-participant, Sina, confirms with the shake of her head and repetition of Sara's assessment, *no, I don't think it did* (line 11). As the moderator acknowledges their assessment, *I see: ↓* (line 12), Sara continues her talk on the discrepancy between the explicit goal (i.e., improving participants' English proficiency) and the actual curriculum they were provided with, of which focus was less on improving language skills, but rather concentrated on teaching techniques and methods. In other words, Sara is reformulating her statement into a question (line 5), not only to obtain confirmation for the information, but also as an interactional path towards solidifying her upcoming opinion.

The excerpts in this section demonstrated how participants convey their opinions by taking the interactional path of: (a) directly agreeing to previously produced opinion, (b) building on co-participants' talk, and (c) relying on their co-participants for support or confirmation. In the next section, I will display how participants work together to construct a collaborative group response as experts in the topic being constructed.

5.3. Constructing a Response as a Group

The excerpts in this section illustrate a specific characteristic pertaining to multi-party focus groups. While the excerpts in the earlier section outlined participants' reliance on their co-participants in constructing their talk, the data in this section displays participants collaborating together to co-construct their opinion as one group. The first subsection illustrates two cases in which all participants join in to produce a single response, while the second subsection demonstrates two unique cases—both from Group A—in which one participant offers specific information pertaining to their co-participant's individual territory of knowledge (Kamio, 1995), incidentally leading to collaborated sequencing by the participants.

5.3.1. Collaborative Responding as a Group

The first excerpt is from Group A, and this section is about seven minutes into the 75-minute data. Just prior to this excerpt, the moderator had asked the question of how they had come to participate in this particular workshop, and Najin had given a long explanation on the administrative process of being picked to participate in the workshop. Line 1 starts with Churi, whose turn initiates a collaborative turn construction.

Ex.5.7 Group A: They all want to come

- 01 Churi: 이: 프로그램에 거의 모든 선생님들이
02 참여하고 °싫어°하실↑ 거예요 아마
03 Min: 네에에
04 Churi: 근데? 재밌는거는? >올해 같은 경우에는
05 경쟁력이 낮았던 말이죠, 그 이유가
06 뭐냐면::< 학::교가 사정이 어때:냐에 따라
07 Seoho: ((nodding vigorously)) 사정이.
08 Churi: 너무 좌우가 많이 되버리고, 또:
09 [여기 오고싶어해도?
10 Min: [인문계면↑, 되게 싫어해요.
11 사실, 이런데 오는걸
12 Seoho: ((nodding with gaze at Mod)) 고등학교 인문계
- 01 Churi: i:: program-ey keuy motun sensayngnim-tul-i
this program-at nearly all teacher-PL-NM

- 02 chamye hako °siph-e° hasil↑ ke-eyyo ama
attend do want do-SH will-POL probably
Most of the teachers will probably want to participate in this program
- 03 Min: ney ey ey::
Yes, yea yea.
- 04 Churi: kuntey? caymiss-nun ke-nun? >olhay kath-un kyengwu-ey-nun
but? funny-RL thing-TP this year like-RL situation-at-TOP
05 kyengcaynglyek-i nacasstan mali-cyo, ku iyu-ka
 competition-NM lower-PST-OAS say-COMM-POL that reason-NM
06 mwe-nna-myen::< hakkyo-ka saceng-i ette-nya-ey ttala
 what-Q -COND school-NM situation-NM how-Q according
But? The funny thing is? This year, the competition (for this spot) was lower than before. The reason for that was that depending on the current situation of the school?
- 07 Seoho: ((nodding vigorously)) saceng-i
 the situation-NM
the situation
- 08 Churi: nemwu cwawu-ka manhi toy-peli-ko tto
too much right-left-NM/decide a lot become-PAS-CON also
09 [[yeki oko siphe-haedo?
here come want-do-even so?
(the situation of the school) effects the decision too much, so even if they want to come?
- 10 Min: [inmwunkey-myen↑ toykey silhe-hayyo
academic high school-COND very dislike-do-POL
11 sasil ilentey onun-kel
 in reality here-p come-thing-ACC
Especially, if you're a teacher at an academic high school, in reality, they dislike it when teachers want to go away to a workshop.
- 12 Seoho: ((nodding with gaze at Mod)) kotunghakkyo imnwumkyey
 high school academic high school
yeah, high school, (especially) academic high school

Churi, in lines 1-6, brings in a new aspect of the recruitment process. He offers an account based on his own understanding as to why such a good opportunity (i.e., taking time off from regular teaching duties to participate in the government funded workshops) is not taken up by more teachers. The gist of Churi's story is that despite the full funding from the government and that the participating teachers will be trained to consequently benefit their schools in the end, the principals and administrators—of academic high school especially—do not like their teachers to

apply to such programs (line 10). In formulating this account, both Min and Seoho confirm Churi's account with agreement tokens (line 3), and by repeating the important concept (line 7), and further elaboration (lines 10-12).

After Najin completes formulating the basic procedures of applying and being selected as a participant—which answers the moderator's initial question—Churi, in line 1, self-selects to further elaborate, *most teachers will probably want to participant in this:: program*. Another participant, Min, supports Churi's statement with emphasized and repeated positive tokens (line 3). In the next line, Churi resumes his turn with a contrastive connector, *kuntey?* (but?) with a rising intonation, followed by a story preface, *the funny thing is?* (line 4), foreshadowing what he is about to say contradicts his previous turn. Then he goes on to formulate the story, stating that the competition for a spot this year was a lot lower than before due to the current situation of the schools in Korea, which is visibly supported by Seoho's vigorous nodding and repetition of Churi's use of the word *saceng-i* (the situation, line 7). Until this point, it is not made quite clear what Churi and Seoho are referring to, when Min enters in overlap with Churi's continued turn (line 10) with an elaborative reformulation of what Churi and Seoho mean by the 'school situation,' *especially, if you're teacher at an academic high school ↑, in reality, they dislike it when teachers want to come here* (lines 10-11). At this point, Seoho shifts his gaze to the moderator, while nodding and repeating, *academic highschool* (line 12), emphasizing the core aspect of Min's prior turn. In other words, participants show orientation to their own understanding of the ongoing topic construction—and the recipient's (moderator's) lack thereof—and participate in co-constructing the topic striving to achieve intersubjectivity (Seedhouse, 2004; ten Have, 2007; Seedhouse, 2004) with the moderator as a group. Without the need for a prompt or request for clarification by the moderator, the participants as a group are

able to collaborate in co-constructing a response to fit the current epistemic status of the recipient (Heritage, 2013).

In the following excerpt, five out of six participants join in on constructing an opinion initiated by one of the co-participants, Ema.

Ex.5.8. Group C: Our thoughts are...

- 01 → Ema: 테크닉시간이 ((gaze at Jay)) 쯤 [줄었으면 좋겠어요
 02 Jay: [줄었으면 좋겠어 응::
 03 Nani: 매[일
 04 Kay: [매일 응
 05 Ema: [매일 있는 거가::
 06 Suni: 이틀에 한번 정도?
 07 Ema: 음:: 우리는 이미 많이 했으니까.
 08 Jay: 그리고 여기서 하는 practicum은, 그 teaching technique
 09 시간에 하는 practicum은 솔직히 큰 의미가 없는거 같아요.
 10 Suni: 음::
 11 Jay: 인원이 많기 때문에, 인원이 많은데 다 시켜봐야 하니까
 12 한 사람 당 돌아오는 시간도 너무 작고,
 13 사실, 그건 한국에서 많이 하고 왔거든요
 14 Mod: 아, 미니 그거-
 15 Ema: Micro teaching ((nods along with everyone else))
 16 Jay: 그것까지는 구지=
 17 Suni: =안해도 우리가 이미 전에 두세번 [했으니까
 18 Jay: [맞아
- 01 → Ema: *technique sikani ((gaze at Jay)) ccom [cwulessumyen cohkeysseyo*
technique class time-is a little reduced-COND it would be nice-POL
I think it would be nice if the *technique* classes were reduced
 02 Jay: [cwulessumyen cohkeysse ung::
reduced-COND it would be nice yes
it would be nice if they were reduced yes.
- 03 Nani: may[il
everyday
everyday
- 04 Kay: [mayil ung
everyday yes
everyday yes
- 05 Ema: [mayil issnun keka::
every day exist-RL itself is::
the fact there there's a class every day it well,
- 06 Suni: ithuley hanpen cengto?
two days-at once maybe about
Maybe about one every two days?
- 07 Ema: ung:: wulinun imi manhi hayssunikka.

yes we-TP already a lot took-because
Yes, because we have already taken so many classes like that.

08 Jay: kuliko yekise hanun *practicum-un*, ku *teaching technique*
and here do-RL practicum is that
09 sikaney hanun *practicumun solcikhi khun uymika epsnunke kathayo*.
class-at do-RL practicum is honestly big meaning-TP NEG-exist I think
**Also, the practicums, the ones we do in those *teaching technique* classes, well
honestly, I don't think that activity is very meaningful.**

10 Suni: mm::

11 Jay: inweni manki ttaymwuney, inweni manhunzey ta sikhyepwaya hanikka
because there are so many participants, many number of participants all make do must do
12 han salam tang tolaonun sikanto nemwu cakko,
one person each delegate time-also too short and
13 sasil, kuken hankwukeyse manhi hako wassketunyo
honestly that in Korea a lot do-and came here you see
**Because there are so many participants in a group, and they need to make sure all
of those many participants take an equal turn, the time given to each person is
too small to really to do anything, and also, honestly, we did a lot of that in
Korea, you see?**

14 Mod: a, mini kuke-
oh mini that
Oh, you mean that *mini-*

15 Ema: Micro teaching ((nods along with everyone else))

16 Jay: kukeskkacinun kwuci=
yes, we don't necessarily need to do that again

17 Suni: =anhayto wulika imi ceney twuseypen [hayssunikka
even if we don't do that we-NM already before two three times did already and so
**Even if we don't do that here, since we've already done it two or three times
before**

18 Jay: [maca
That's right

Just prior to this talk, Ema had been taking an extended turn talking about her expectations for the program with her gaze constantly on the moderator. The other five participants had been listening without interruption while their gazes shifted between Ema and the moderator. In line 1, as Ema suddenly shifts to a different topic, *I think it would be nice if the technique classes were reduced* (line 1), and while doing so shifts her gaze to meet Jay's gaze, a participant sitting next to her. Whether the gaze shift indicates Ema's seeking for support or is indication that this

opinion has previously been discussed, one cannot tell from just this excerpt, but before Ema is able to finish the core part of her sentence, Jay interrupts in overlap with the same opinion as Ema's, *it would be nice if they were reduced*, completed with a sentence-final agreement token, *ung::* (yes::, line 2). Immediately, another participant, Nani, who is sitting across from Ema and Jay, takes the next turn, providing a single word *mayil* (everyday), directly repeated in overlap by yet another participant, Kay who repeats the same word, *mayil* (everyday) followed directly again with a positive response token *ung* (yes) as she realizes another co-participant, Nani, has just offered the same word. This provides evidence that Kay's turn was not a mere repetition of Nani, but rather that the two participants produced the same word at almost the same time. Also, in exact overlap with Kay's turn, Ema takes the turn again using the same word, *mayil issnun keka::* (the fact that there's a class every day, well::, line 5). The three participants are all at the same time providing the reason for Ema and Jay's earlier turns suggesting reduction of the technique courses, that they have that certain course every day. With that established, Suni takes the next turn and provides an alternative suggestion, *maybe about one every two days?* (line 6). Agreeing to Suni's suggestion with a positive response token, *ung::* (yes::, line 7), Ema continues to provide the rationale behind her complaint, *we have already taken so many classes like that* (line 7). Jay takes the baton from Ema and continues to elaborate, with specific examples, *also the practicums, the ones we do in those teaching technique classes, well honestly, I don't think that activity is very meaningful* (lines 8-9). Suni aligns to Jay's statement with a subtle acknowledgment token, and Jay gives two reasons for her rather negative assessment: (a) there are too many people in one group and for everyone to take a turn the time assigned is too little to do anything meaningful, and (b) they already have done a lot of the same activity in the previous portions of the workshop in Korea (lines 11-13). The moderator, who until this point

has not responded or reacted in any way, orients to the shift in the topic from participants' evaluation of the *teaching technique* course to *micro* (or *mini*) *teaching*, an activity within this course, marking her change in epistemic status (Heritage, 2013) while also seeking clarification, *oh, you mean the mini-* (line 14) to which Ema provides confirmation with a nod and completion of the moderator's turn by providing the correct name of the activity, *micro-teaching* (line 15). After this confirmation, Suni joins in as well, reformulating Jay's earlier assessment even more specifically, providing yet another rationale to why as a group, they all support this suggestion, *even if we don't do that here, since we've already done it two or three times before* (line 17).

As illustrated by the analysis, the single opinion initiated by Ema is co-constructed collaboratively with the majority of the co-participants, adding further validity and strength to her argument and suggestion. Furthermore, neither Ema nor any of the other participants problematize the constant overlap and repetition of turns and work rather collaboratively around the turn collisions to produce a collaborated opinion on the topic.

5.3.2. Other-construction of Individual Agenda

The two excerpts in this subsection embody a unique characteristic of focus groups, in which participants take it on themselves to freely enter a co-participant's epistemic territory (Kamio, 1995) within the interactional path of supplying information to the moderator. Although, not all participants join in these specific interactions, I have categorized them within collaborated response constructions as two or more participants are constructing the response together as a group as a result of the one participant's action of "speaking on behalf" of their co-participants. While this action occurred quite frequently across the seven groups, I have chosen two excerpts from the same group, Group A, as these two excerpts carry more tangible analytic bearings

04 Min: yeki wase-
here came-after
after I came here-

05 Mod: [a:: ney::,
Ah I see,

06 → Seoho: [em::cheng! (0.5) koyngcanghi yelcengcek-ulo hasinun
Massively enormously passionate-DAT do-POL-RL
07 pwunieyyo >yekika < ((pointing to Min))
person-HON-POL this here
Immensely! (She is) enormously passionate in her studies. This person here

08 Min: kuntey ceney XX-eyse swuep patul ttaynun,
but before at XX institute class receive that time-TP
09 ne:::mwu paywulkey manhasseyo
so much to learn a lot-EXIST-POL
But at the XX institute (in Korea) before, there was so much to learn.

10 Mod: ney::
I see

11 Min: silyongcekiko, kulayse::: [waynmanhayse ohwu swuep anikose
practical-and so unless it's critical afternoon class not
(It was) practical and more, so well unless it was an afternoon class

12 → Seoho: [(ung keki swuep nemwu cohassci)
yes, there classes was very good-IE
Yeah, classes there were really good.

13 Min: ancassketunyo?
NEG-sleep-PST-KETUN-POL
I didn't fall asleep?

14 Mod: ney? ey::
oh? yes::

Despite his co-participants' laughter and mocking—or perhaps nudged by their actions, Seoho provides a factual account for the allegations made towards him of being a “good student.” In line 1, he claims the reason for his active participation is to be attributed to his seat position in the classroom rather belonging to the alleged categorization of “doing being good student.” Following directly in line 2, Min, the one participant who had not joined in the laughter towards Seoho, takes a serious stance in making a self-assessment admitting that her participation during the course of the program in the U.S. has been very low. Simultaneously with the moderator's receipt token, *ah, I see* (line 4), Seoho jumps in with an emphasized, highly upgraded words like

em::cheng (massively), *koyngcanghi yelcengcek-ulo* (with enormous amount of passion) to describe Min's passion for studying, *this teacher (Min) is very passionate and she has been an intensive and passionate student in previous classes* (lines 6-7). He is providing his assessment of Min, his co-participant for the last six months, and by doing so without hesitation, he is claiming to have epistemic primacy over Min's previous action compared to that of the recipient, the moderator. In other words, supported by the fact that the participants have spent a greater amount of time together, and based on the grounds that they have a stronger relationship and rapport between one another, Seoho foregrounds his assessment on the epistemic community that has been formed between him and other participants versus the moderator. By confidently providing his assessment of a fellow-participant, he is accessing the underlying community that has been formed, and displaying that he is better qualified to assess the actions of Min, compared to the single observation made by the moderator. Furthermore, instead of rejecting Seoho's claim, Min indirectly approves his claims by aligning to Seoho by providing an account for what he has just said, that the reason she is not participating as well as before is that there was a lot more to learn in previous classes compared to the ones she has been taking in the U.S. (lines 8, 11). By affiliating with Seoho's other-assessment of herself, Min is joining in the epistemic community formed by Seoho and thus granting his previous assessment more weight and evidence than that of the moderator's (i.e., not included in the newly formed epistemic community) initial assessment.

Furthermore, the data highlight the contrastive ways in which Seoho produces the account for his own actions invoked by the moderator's one-time observation and his account for a co-participant's action. While he sticks with a single line of factual account—that his seat was situated in front of the class, thus resulting in him having to pay attention—in providing his

other-assessment of Min, he uses multiple production of *extreme case formulations* (Pomerantz, 1986; Edwards, 2000) along with exclamations (line 6), and supporting Min's talk by means of agreeing repetition (line 12). By doing so, he shifts the attention away from himself to his co-participant's self-initiated self-assessment (line 2, 4), putting more weight on the participants' combined assessments as insiders of the epistemic community (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). In other words, the way in which he produces his talk is indexing the epistemic community he is forming with his co-participants, while also situating the moderator and her observation as an outsider as a subjective observation that can be easily accounted for (line 1). The result is that he is co-constructing the talk which is actually solely within Min's epistemic scope, by asserting his position as an inside member of the community indexed by the moderator's initial observation-based remark, which at the same time also marks his implicit alignment to Min in co-constructing a negative assessment of the workshop courses.

The next excerpt is also from Group A. In this case, the co-participant whose territory has been breached (Kamio, 1995) rejects the projected assumption. Nonetheless, the other participants collaboratively build on the rejected assumption to further construct a topic of discussion to inform the recipient (i.e., moderator) on issues in the recruitment process.

Ex. 5.10. Group A: Not really

- 01 Najin: 고등학교 있을 때에도, 두번이나 (.) 오고 싶다고 해서::
- 02 근데 계속 리젝 당하고, 중학교 옳기고 나서 이제-
- 03 → Min: 그니까 이거를 위해서 옳겼죠
- 04 Najin: 그니까, 이거를 위해서 옳긴건 아닌데
- 05 Seoho: ((to moderator)) reject from principal
- 06 Najin: 왜냐면 사립이라서, 가라고 해야 하는데,
- 07 고등학교 있을 때는, 두번 연달아 가고 싶다고
- 08 했는데? 교장 선생님이 안된다
- 09 Churi: 맞아 한국의 교장 선생님은
- 10 Najin: 응
- 11 Churi: 왕이니까 hh
- 12 Seoho: hh 학교왕
- 13 Min: 여기랑 많이 다른거 같어.

- 01 → Najin: kotunghakkyo issul ttayeyto, twupenina (.) oko siphtako hayse::

- 02 highschool when I was there-also twice-already come want-to I said
 kuntey kyeyso^k *licey*^k tanghako, cwunghakkyo olmkiko nase icey
 but continuously *reject* was-and middle school move after now
When I was teaching at the high school I had appealed twice already that I wanted to participate in the intensive workshop, but I was continuously rejected, now after I have moved to the middle school,
- 03 Min: kunikka ikelul wihayse olmkyyesscyo
 and so this-ACC for moved-COMM-POL
So, you can say she moved schools for this workshop (to participate in this workshop)
- 04 Najin: kunikka, ikelul wihayse olmkinken anintey↑↓
 well this-ACC for move-reason-TP NEG-but
Well, it's not that I moved schools just for this, but
- 05 Seoho: ((to moderator)) reject from principal
- 06 Najin: waynyamyen salipilase, kalako hayya hanuntey,
 because private school-COND go they must say, but
 07 kotunghakkyo issul ttaynun, twupen yentala kako siphtako
 high school when I was there-TP twice one after the other go want to
 08 hayssnun^{tey}? kyocang sensayngnimi antoynta
 I said, but principal teacher-NM NEG-do-IE
Because, I am a teacher at a private school, I can only go when they say I can go, but when I was at the high school, I sought permission twice in a row? But the principal kept saying no.
- 09 Churi: maca hankwukuy kyocang sensayngnimun
 right Korea-DAT principal teacher-TP
That's right, the principals in Korea are
- 10 Najin: ung
 yes
- 11 Churi: wanginikka hh
 king-PT
because they are king hh
- 12 Seoho: hh hakkyowang
 hh school king
- 13 Min: yekilang manhi talunke kathe.
 here-with a lot different I think
I think it's a lot different from the situation here (in the U.S).

Prior to this excerpt, the moderator had asked the question on the recruitment process, and after Churi and Min outlined the basic application details, Najin had started her complaint about her delayed participation. She complained, that unlike the other participants who were

fairly new teachers (i.e., teaching experience spanning between 4-7 years), she herself had been teaching for 10 years at this point. Yet, this was her first time to participate in an intensive workshop like the current one, as the schools she had worked at had not given her the permission to do so. In line 1, she continues by constructing her story in a contrastive formulation, stating first that when she taught at the (former) high school, she had been denied participation twice already (line 1), then moving her narration towards her current status of having moved to a middle school position (line 2). The last portion of her turn is incomplete as she adds a connective *nase* (after-and) followed an adverb *icey* (now), foreshadowing a contrastive turn of events (i.e., permission to participate) to follow. Before she is able to complete her turn, however, Min interrupts by taking over the next turn with her assessing upshot of Najin's talk thus far, *So, you can say she (Najin) moved schools to participate in this workshop* (line 3). Connecting her turn with Najin's previous turn with a causal continuer, *kunikka* (and so), she produces an affirmative statement ending constructing her assessment as an all-known fact. By doing so, however, Min is also breaching the knowledge territory (Kamio, 1995) that belongs within Najin's scope of personal information. Consequently, Najin immediately follows in the next turn, where she uses the same continuer as Min, *kunikka*, but in this case to be interpreted closer to *well* more than act as a causal continuer. In other words, she is rather using this continuer to take back her turn place to talk, rather than as a way of providing a causal action following Min's turn. And initially, she rejects Min's assessment, but does so by rephrasing Min's exact wording, ending it with a negative adverb which rejects Min's assessment but structuring her sentence in a way that it projects partial agreement to Min's assessment while also projecting further elaboration that only herself has epistemic access to (Hayano, 2013; Heritage, 2013). In other words, although there are no words Najin has used that can be directly translated into English as

such, an idiomatic translation indicates that there is a *but* trailing at the end of her turn embedded within the sentence construction (line 4). Another participant, Seoho, takes the next turn, and reformulates in English, the jist of Najin’s complaint so far, *reject from principal* (line 5). Although Najin has avoided pointing out the specific agent of the rejections (i.e., alluding the *school* as a collective entity to be the agent rather than pinpointing to a single person, e.g., the principal), Seoho—as did Min—takes the liberty of interpreting Najin’s abstract form of talk and reformulates it into a concrete entity (the principal) in an effort to enlighten the moderator, the only “not-knowing” participant in the current talk. Najin retakes her turn in line 6 and goes on to elaborate why her “school” has the authority to allow or reject her participation in long-term workshop (i.e., private school principals have more power on teachers’ whereabouts compared to public schools), and this time reformulates her talk to specifically point out the principal as the agent behind the “rejections” (line 7). Churi, the one participant who had not been participating so far, enters the discussion at this point, picking up on Najin’s final sentence orienting to the authoritative principal, and further generalizes it to depict most principals in Korea (line 9).

As the two excerpts in this section have shown, participants produce opinions or offer information that is outside their own scope of information, which acts as a way of involving more than the current speaker within the discussion, thus contributing to an enriched multi-participant discussion. As noted earlier, Krueger and Casey (2009) argued that of the different goals that could be achieved by conducting focus groups, achieving consensus was one that could be not achieved or strived for with focus groups. This study, however, illuminates various cases in which, although achieving consensus may not be the explicit goal of the interaction, participants use various interactional resources—specifically their co-participants in these cases—to strive towards constructing a collaborated response to the moderator’s initial question,

in which they orient towards achieving consensus on the topics being discussed. The analyses indicate that such collaboration in talk mainly occurred when the topic being discussed was based on factual information (i.e., recruitment process, logistics of the program organization) or opinions that were previously shared among the participants and consensus arrived at through their own discussion (i.e., opinions already prevalent among participants and only news to the moderator).

The next section will examine cases that were exactly the opposite, in which participants explicitly display their disagreements to their co-participants as a way of response. As the excerpts will indicate, most of such disagreement sequences occurred when constructing personal opinions or perspectives as opposed to the more factual based collaborative responses as seen in this section.

5.4. Disagreement Sequences

Research on disagreement sequences in conversation are varied and diverse depending on how the researcher defines the concept of *disagreement* (Sharma, 2012). Conversation analysts tend to focus more on the sequential aspect of disagreements, examining how disagreements are projected by participants' conversation within diverse settings (e.g., Mori, 1999, 2003; Pomerantz, 1984; Sharma, 2012), while some of the more sociolinguistic based studies turn their attention to the agenda in the disagreement, dispute, or conflict talk that occurs (Georgakopoulou, 2001; Kangasharju, 2002 and more).

Focus groups, with the explicit goal of obtaining diverse and varied opinions and perspectives of the multiple participants, could be deemed the perfect locus for examining diverse shapes of disagreements that occur within multi-party discussion. Interestingly enough,

however, compared to the number of direct agreements and affiliations seen in Table 5, the number of disagreement sequences was smaller than expected (Table 6).

Table 6. *Count of disagreement sequences*

Sequence type	Groups						
	A	B	C	D-1	D-2	E	G
Disagreement Preface	0	1	0	0	1	4	1
Disagreement	7	11	2	1	5	6	2

Presumably, the small number could be attributed to the fact that the discussion topics were neither controversial, argumentative, nor contextualized enough to set up a debate (Kangasharju, 2002; Mori, 2003; Sharma, 2012). In other words, unlike other discussion settings where voicing different opinions is rationalized by the context (i.e., classroom discussion on debatable topics [Mori, 1999; Sharma, 2012], meeting interactions where decisions need to be made [Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009; Ford, 2008; Svennevig, 2012]), focus groups are more constitutive of inducing and appreciating diverse opinions from the participants. In this sense, Krueger and Casey (2009) hold a point that the ultimate goal of focus groups is not in achieving consensus. However, as Table 6 and the data below display, there were instances in which speakers participated in the discussion by *doing disagreements* (Pomerantz, 1984), thus contributing towards a diverse topic construction. As displayed in Table 6, there were more disagreement sequences in some groups (i.e., Group B) than in others. Drawing on these few excerpts, I aim to illuminate the role of disagreements in focus group interactions and how they contribute to the diversity of opinions and perspectives within the ongoing discussion. The section is divided into three sections: (a) prefacing disagreement with questions; (b) indirect disagreement (opinion negotiation, mitigation using *kuntey*); and (c) direct disagreement (no mitigation, no preface, no hedging).

5.4.1. Disagreement Preface

In her study of disagreements in opinion-negotiation sequences in Japanese classroom contexts, Mori (1999) noted that speakers elaborate, justify, or qualify prior assertions as a way of negotiating their opinions and mitigating their dispreferred response. Jinsu, in the following excerpt, is using a similar interactional method to arrive at his opinion that is in complete mismatch with the current speaker (Aeju's) opinion.

Ex. 5.11. Group B: The reason I ask...

- 00 Aeju: [그래야 좋은 대학을 간다
 01 Jinsu: [이런↑ 연수를:: 이런 연수를↑ 몇 번째 받으세요? ((to Sumi))
 02 Sumi: 두번째=
 03 Jinsu: =두번째, ((to Yuri)) 몇번째세요?
 04 Yuri: 심화 연수 빼고?
 05 Jinsu: 심화 연수- 아니 이런 연수[까지 몇- 한달 이상인 것,
 06 Sumi: [지금까지 합해서 몇번째?
 07 Yuri: 한달 이상? 한달- 한달씩↑
 08 Jinsu: 네
 09 Yuri: 연수는 다섯번- 아, 네번째 이런 연수만
 10 Jinsu: ((to Haeri)) 선생님은요?
 11 Haeri: 두번째
 12 Jinsu: ((to Aejung)) 선생님은요?
 13 Aeju: ((counts on fingers, mumbles something that's indecipherable))
 14 Yuri: 아 다섯번이다 나도, TESOL까지
 15 Jinsu: ((to Minsu)) 선생님은 첫번째시라 하셨죠?
 16 Minsu: ((nods))
 17 → Jinsu: 저는 두 번째 거든요 ((gaze at Mod))
 18 Mod: ((nods))
 19 Jinsu: 왜 이런 얘기를 하나면 (.)
 20 Mod: 네
 21 Jinsu: 처음 왔을 때 아니면은 국내에서 배울 때도 이런 여러
 22 가지 것을 내가 자주 많이 못해도- 하나씩만 풀어내서
 23 해보자 라는 생각을 하는데, 그럼에도 불구하고 마치
 24 물에 희석되듯이 조금씩 연수가 끝나고 현장에
 25 갔을때는 현장에 치이면서 이렇게 얇게 되거든요.
 26 왜 그런 이야기를 하나면
 27 ((continues to talk about how he finds these workshops helpful))
- 00 Aeju: [kulayya cojun tayhakul kanta
 you have do so good university-ACC go-IE
You have do so, and then you can enter a good university
- 01 Jinsu: [ilen↑ yenswulul:: ilen yenswulul↑ myech penccay patuseyyo? ((to Sumi))
 such workshop-ACC such workshop-ACC how many times received-Q-POL
Such workshop:: How many times have you participated in workshops like this one?

- 02 Sumi: twupencgay=
this is my second time
- 03 Jinsu: =twupencgay, ((to Yuri)) myechpencgayseyyo?
second time how many times for you?
Second time for you. (to Yuri)How many times for you?
- 04 Yuri: simhwa yenswu ppyayko?
intensive workshop excluding-Q
You mean, excluding the intensive workshops?
- 05 Jinsu: simhwa yenswu- ani ilen yenswu[kkaci myech- hantal isangin kes,
intensive workshop no well such workshop-like how many one month longer program
Intensive? No, well any workshops like this one, how many? Ones that were longer than one month?
- 06 Sumi: [cikumkkaci haphayse myechpencgay?
until now all added how many-Q
So, including all the ones you've participated until now, how many?
- 07 Yuri: hantal isang? hantal- hantalssik↑
longer than one month one month one month long
Longer than one month? One month... at a time.
- 08 Jinsu: ney
yes
- 09 Yuri: yenswunun tasespen- a, neypencgay ilen yenswuman
workshop-TP five times oh, four times such workshop-only
Well, this is my fifth-, oh fourth one for workshops like this one.
- 10 Jinsu: ((to Heri)) sensayngnimunyo?
how about you?
- 11 Haeri: twupencgay
Second time
- 12 Jinsu: ((to Aeju)) sensayngnimunyo?
And you?
- 13 Aeju: ((counts on fingers, mumbles something indecipherable))
- 14 Yuri: a tasespenita nato, TESOL-kkaci
oh fifth time me too TESOL-including
Oh, if I include TESOL as well, this is my fifth time.
- 15 Jinsu: ((to Minsu)) sensayngnimun chespencgayasila hasyesscyo?
teacher-NM first-you said
And you said, this was your first time?
- 16 Minsu: ((nods))
- 17 → Jinsu: cenun twu pencyay **ketunyo** ((gaze at Mod))
I-TP second time
For me this is the second time, you see.

18 Mod: ((nods))

19 Jinsu: way ilen yaykilul hanyamyen (.)
the reason such talk-ACC do-COND
The reason why I am bringing this up is because (.)

20 Mod: ney
yes

21 Jinsu: cheum wassul ttay animyenun kwuknayeyse paywul ttayto ilen yele
at first came-ACC that time or even domestic-at learn that time as well such
22 kaci kesul nayka cacwu manhi moshayto- hanassikman phwulenayse
many different things I-TP often lots not able to do one at a time interpret and
23 haypoca lanun sayngkakul hanuntey, kulemeyto pwulkuwuhako machi
let's try it sort of thoughts-ACC have-and, in despite of that almost like
24 mwuley huysektoytusi cokumssik yenswuka kkuthnako hyencangey
in water mixed up a little by little workshop-NM finish-then teaching site-at
25 kassulttaynun hyencangey chiimyense ilehkey anhkey toyketunyo
went- then teaching site-of busily involved like this NEG-do do-you see?
26 way kulen iyakilul hanyamyen
why such talk do-COND
**When we first started this type of workshop, whether abroad or in Korea, when we
learn the different things, we try to hold onto at least one aspect that we can
interpret our own way and use in our actual teaching sites. But once the workshop
is over and we go back to our teaching sites, we get so involved in the busy
everyday life of teaching that it's really difficult to use at least one, you see? The
reason I am saying all this is -.**

27 ((continues to talk about how he finds these workshops helpful))

Just prior to this excerpt, Aejung and Yuri had been complaining about the lack of diversity in the program curriculum in response to the moderator's earlier protocol-based question of whether they found the program to be effective (Appendix A). Jinsu had been trying to cut-in between their talk but had been unsuccessful, and being the farthest away from the moderator (see Fig. 5) he had been overlapped and interrupted many times by the louder voices of those who were nearer to the moderator and the primary recording device (there was a secondary audio-recorder between Jinsu and Sumi which allowed the researcher to pick up lines 1 and 3 of this excerpt). After several attempts to cut in, he finally chooses to direct his speech to the closest co-participant, rather than the moderator, and consequently in line 1, overlapped with

Aejung's continued turn (line 00²¹), he poses a question to Sumi, sitting just across the table from him.

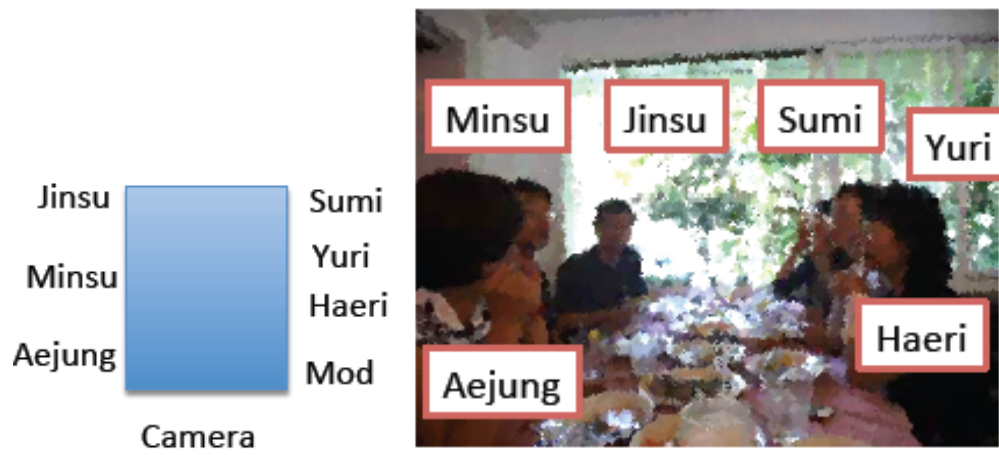


Figure 5. Group B seating arrangement 2

This finally gets the attention of the other participants as well as the moderator, and Jinsu is able to continue his questioning to the rest of the participants. He shifts his gaze along each of the participants as he projects the same question repeatedly to each of the other five participants. His gaze only comes back to the moderator when he provides his own answer to the same question he has asked each of the other participants (line 17), and only after the moderator provides a non-verbal acknowledging response (line 18), he continues with his story. What Jinsu is doing here is to ask the same question to other participants to reformulate an opinion that has been given as the supposed consensus (i.e., Aejung's earlier talk that is not provided here) of the group. Jinsu is using this opportunity to suggest that they have different ideas, and he is using this repair initiating question sequence to strengthen his upcoming argument.

²¹ I specifically started the numbering of the excerpt lines from line 00 for this particular excerpt, in order to separate the previous and current interaction.

Through lines 1 to 16, he asks the same question, *how many times have you participated in a program like this?*, to all of the other five participants. Unlike other information-seeking question situations, however, he does not provide receipt tokens for any of the responses, but rather follows with his response to his own question formulating it in a way that indicates that the reason for his questions directed at his co-participants were other than seeking unknown information. In formulating his own answer, *for me, this is the second time, you see* (line 17), he uses the Korean ending *-ketunyo* (this is the second time, you see?). Many studies on the diverse use of sentence ending *-ketun*, have reported it to have been used to provide an account by conveying information while claiming epistemic primacy (see E.Kim, 2013; K. Kim, 2010, Park, 1998). K. Kim (2010) specifically noted that *-ketun* in the middle of a multi-unit turn as such as Jinsu's turn in this excerpt, is used to provide background account to boost the recipients' understanding of the import of the speaker's main argument, which in this case is to disalign himself from the previous accounts given by his co-participants. By stating that this workshop is also his second (not first) experience of participating in an intensive workshop using *-ketun*, he is setting grounds to provide empirical and evidential support for his argument to follow.

In other words, Jinsu's action of asking questions in this sequence is less the process of shifting his knowledge from K- to K+, but rather more for the benefit of gaining evidential support for his argument to follow, which consequently is to provide another category of response to the moderator's question. The questions that he directs to the other participants in lines 1, 10, 12, 15 do in fact address knowledge that he has no access to (i.e., how many times each of the other participants have taken part in the workshops), marking his epistemic stance of 'being in the unknown.' This stance aligns with his epistemic status of *not knowing* as he is in fact asking a question that is quite obviously within the epistemic boundary of the recipient

(Heritage, 2012a). Moreover, the morphosyntactic question format is further evidence that Jinsu might indeed be seeking new information (Heritage, 2013). However, the sequential consequence of his questioning is not a display of shift in his knowledge realm (e.g., providing change of state response tokens such as “oh I see” or “oh, ok”) but rather takes a different action formation of (a) providing an answer to his own question, *this is the second time for me, you see* (line 17), (b) providing an account for asking such a question, *the reason I brought this up* (line 19), which consequently leads to (c) storytelling (line 21 and down) which later leads to his own answer that is disaffiliative to the one previously provided by his co-participant: That the workshop program is in fact effective depending on how you decide to make use of what you learned, which is opposite to what Aejung and Yuri had been arguing thus far. Moreover, the issue of how many times each of the participants had taken part in an international workshop as the current one had actually been discussed before, thus confirming that this information, in fact, was not new information for Jinsu and that there was a divergence in the relation between his epistemic status (of knowing the answer to his question already) and his epistemic stance (question format seeking new information). Using this *divergence* between his epistemic status and the epistemic stance (Heritage & Raymond, 2012, Heritage, 2013)—along with the linguistic action of questioning—Jinsu is following a different trajectory of interactional action (i.e., laying the foundational evidence for his story and argument to follow). The K-1 questions he directed to his fellow participants were in fact used as a preface and evidential support for his disaffiliative story to come. And by claiming epistemic primacy over his response (line 17) and his account (line 19), he is able to (a) maintain his space to talk—a task specific to the institutionality of a multi-party focus group, (b) provide grounds for coming up with such counter-argumentative

opinion, as well as (c) catch and keep the attention of his co-participants without being interrupted for a significant amount of time.

On a side note, to bring in some contextual information, the two participants, Aejung and Yuri—who had been complaining the most--were the only ones who had participated in study-abroad workshops more than twice (Yuri: five times [line14]), Aejung: numerous times that she has to count on her fingers [line 13]). They were also the ones sitting closer to the moderator and therefore more accessible to maintain the moderator’s first attention once an protocol-based question had been asked, and therefore had dominated much of the conversation before Jinsu’s line 1. For others, this program was either their first or their second time, and interestingly enough, they had more positive opinions about the same experiences they had all been exposed to together during the course of this workshop, but had less opportunity to voice. The divide in perspective had been made clear throughout the discussion, becoming shared knowledge between the participants and the moderator. Therefore, while the individual responses to Jinsu’s question may not have been surprising or news to participants, Jinsu seized a good opportunity to utilize a seemingly K-1 question by taking a different epistemic stance which proved to be a good tactic on Jinsu’s part to not only gain the floor for himself but also to represent the other story then of which had been told so far.

5.4.2. Disagreements

The next excerpt is similar in that a participant poses a question along the way of voicing a disaffiliative stance. But in this case, the question is more generally directed, which has an unexpected consequence of revealing the diverged opinions of each of the participants.

Ex. 5.12. Group C: Doesn’t make sense

- | | | |
|----|-------|----------------|
| 01 | Suni: | 그런 분들이 경력이 높아도 |
| 02 | Ema: | ((nods)) |
| 03 | Suni: | 이 접수가 너::무 낮으면 |
| 04 | Ema: | ((nods)) |

05 Suni: 결론적으로 (0.3) 점수가 안되서
06 [못오신 분들도 있긴 한거 같더라고요=
07 Kay: [으으응
08 Jay: =응응
09 Mod: 아, 지원을 해서 **다::** 오는 건 아니군요
10 [(everyone nods))
11 Ema: [네::
12 Soha: [네::
13 Suni: 지원은 지원인데?
14 Jay: [지원은 해요
15 Ema 근데, 그[계::
16 Nani: [°그때° 떨어졌다 했었자나,
17 → Ema: it doesn't make sense, ((face towards Jay))
18 Nani: GIFL에서 ((face and talk directed towards Suni and Kay))
19 Soha: [응 ((nods))
20 Kay: [응 ((nods))
21 → Ema: 영어를 못해서 연수를 받는게 맞는거 아니야?
22 Mod: °hh 정말°
23 Jay: 아 근데, 여기 [어느 정도
24 Suni: [외국까지 나와서 [못하면 안되니까::
25 Nani: [그렇지 그렇지
26 Soha: 너무 못하면 안된다::
27 Nani: 그러게 [purpose가 다르지
28 Jay: [수업도 영어로 들어야 되니까
29 Kay: 그래도 경력 점수가 더 높기는 해요
30 Nani: 음:: ((nods))
31 Mod: 아::
32 Nani: 그 전::에는 경력이 10프로 었어요. 텡스가 90이고
33 Mod: 아::

01 Suni: kulen pwuntulun kyenglyeki nophato
so such people-HON-NM experiences-NM high-even so
So, for some teachers, even if they have a lot of experience as teachers,

03 Suni: i cemsuka nemwu nacumyen
this score-NM too much low-then
If their English scores are too low, then

04 Ema: ((nods))

05 Suni: kyelloncekulo (0.3) cemsuka antoyse
conclusively scores-NM NEG-adequate

06 [mososin pwuntulto isskin hanke kathtelakoyo=
NEG-come people-HON-also exist do seems like-QT-POL
**In the end, (0.3) it seemed that they were not accepted to participate in the
program because of their low English scores**

07 Kay: [uuung
yes

08 Jay: =ungung
yes yes

09 Mod: a, ciwenul hayse ta:: onun ken anikwunyo
oh then apply-ACC do-then all come-TP thing NEG-Q-POL
Oh, then, so there are people who don't make it through the cut?

11 Ema: [ney::
yes

12 Soha: [ney::
yes

13 Suni: ci[wenen ciwintey?
apply-TP apply-but
Well, the system is that we have put in an application to be considered

14 Jay: [ciwenen hayyo.
apply-TP do-POL
Well, we do have to apply.

15 Ema kuntey, ku[ke::
but that is

16 Nani: [°kuttay° nwukwu ttelecyessta hayssesscana
That time someone was rejected they said-HEARSAY-TAG
that time, we heard someone was rejected, didn't we?

17 → Ema: [it doesn't make sense, ((face towards Jay))

18 Nani: [GIFL-eyse ((face and talk directed towards Suni and Kay))
GIFL-at
from GIFL?

19 Soha: [ung ((nods))
yes

20 Kay: [ung ((nods))
yes

21 → Ema: yenge-lul moshayse yenswulul patnunkey macnunke aniya?
English-ACC not able to workshop-ACC receive-COND right-thing NEG-Q
It should be right that we participate in this program exactly because we don't have the high proficiency level in English, shouldn't it be?

22 Mod: °hh cengmal°
hh right

23 Jay: a kuntey, yeki [enu cengto
oh but here somewhat
But then, to study here, our English should be somewhat-

24 Suni: [oykwukkkaci nawase [moshamyen antoynikka::
foreign country-all the way come NEG-able NEG-can-REASON

Well, because you know we can't come all the way here and not be able to speak the language

- 25 Nani: [kulechi kulechi
right right
Right, right.
- 26 Soha: nemwu moshamyen antoynta::
too much NEG-able not good-IMPER
They say: "it's not good if participants' English proficiencies are too low"
- 27 Nani: kulekye [purpose-ka taruci
yeah purpose-is different-IE
Yeah I agree, I guess the purpose is different.
- 28 Jay: [swuepto yengelo tuleya toynikka
class-also English-in take must-REASON
Because you know we also need to be able to understand these classes being taught in English.
- 29 Kay: kulayto kyenglyekcemswuka te nophkinun hayyo
Still experience based scores-NM more higher-NM is-POL
But still, when they pick us, the percentage they give to experience as teachers is higher than English scores.
- 30 Nani: mm:: ((nods))
yeah
- 31 Mod: Ah::
Oh
- 32 Nani: ku ce::ney-nun kyenglyek-i 10 pro-eyss-eyo. TEPS-ka 90 iko
before:-TP experience-TP 10 percent-was-POL. TEPS-NM 90-be-CONT
Before, the percentage was 10 percent experience, and 90 percent English scores.
- 33 Mod: Ah::
Oh

In this excerpt, the participants are providing a response to the moderator's question about the recruitment system. After mentioning various criteria needed in order to apply to participate in this program, they launch into a description of which criteria seem to be the most effective in determining the final participants, and just prior to this section, one of the participants (Suni) had told the story of an older colleague who had been rejected each time because of their low proficiency English speaking skills. This excerpt begins towards the end of

the story, as Suni concludes that those with lower English scores are usually rejected even if they have many years of experience (lines 1-6). Ema indicates agreement with her nod (line 4) and Kay and Jay support Suni's talk with extended and repeated positive response tokens *ye::s* (line 7) *yes yes* (line 8). The moderator acknowledges this fact as news with a change of state token *oh* (Heritage, 1992) and displays disarray in her prior understanding of the situation where she had known it to be that anyone who applied would get accepted *oh, then it's not the case you just apply and then automatically get in?* (line 9), to which Ema and Soha provide the affirmative response, *yes::* (line 11 and 12), while Suni and Jay start to reformulate a response using the same word *ciwen* (*to apply*) that the moderator used, Suni: *well the system is that we are picked by **applying**, but...* (line 13); Jay: *well, we do **apply*** (line 14). Suni and Jay, however, are unable to finish their response as Nani and Ema each start with another line of response: Nani with her story of another candidate who was rejected and Ema with her question directed towards her co-participants. Ema starts by prefacing her question with *kuntey* (*but, that, you know::*, line 15), almost concurrently with Nani's account of another candidate who had been rejected from the first portion (GIFL) of their program (line 16).

For this brief moment, the talk is divided into two tiers: (a) Nani directing her account to Soha and Kay and (b) Ema directing her question to Jay with Suni's attention and gaze directed at them as well (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Group C participants' gaze direction

In the first tier of interaction including Nani, Soha and Kay, Nani seeks confirmation of the information she is suggesting, *That time, we heard that someone was rejected from GIFL, didn't we?* (line 16 &18), which receives an affirmative response *yes* with nods from both Soha (line 19) and Kay (line 20). On the other hand, in the other tier—the relevant tier to the current discussion—Ema states her assessment of the situation in a question preface form, *it doesn't make sense* (line 17), which she continues to formulate in question form, *It should be right that we participate in this program exactly because we don't have the high proficiency level in English, shouldn't it be?* (line 21). Initiating her stance with *kuntey* “but” (line 15), marking her soon-to-be made position to be oppositional to the current flow of talk (Park, 1997, 1998), Ema is posing a question—initially to the two participants who have their gaze directed to her, but which later expands into whole-group discussion—that ultimately acts as a catalyst to the disagreement sequence, the result of which consequently lends the final collaborated response to the moderator's protocol.

Despite the displayed morphosyntactic form of a question format indicating the questioner to be taking an epistemic stance of not knowing (Heritage, 2013), the negative assessment that precedes her question as well as the small laughter directly following the question imply that a different action is being taken with this question. From a grammatical

aspect, Ema's question is formulated as a polar tag question, requiring a yes or no response. Furthermore, she ends her question in a casual format *-aniya?* (as opposed to the honorific form *aniyeyo?*) indicating the direction of her question to be more toward her fellow participants, displaying her indication of an epistemic community formed by herself and the other participants versus the moderator as an outsider. Moreover, Ema is constructing her question as her assessment of the topicalized situation, projecting affiliation from her co-participants as the preferred response (Pomerantz, 1984). The ending of her question *macnun-ke aniya* "that is the right way, isn't it" projects *agreement* to her opinion as the affiliating response. None of her fellow participants, however, provide an affiliative response. Furthermore, they do not only disalign from her suggested "community-stance," but rather take on the opposite stance. Before they do so, however, the moderator is the first to respond, aligning to Ema's question with light laughter *hh* and an aligning token *right*. Despite the moderator's initial affiliative reaction, the other participants display a different stance. They orient to Ema's question as an actual opinion-seeking question. While no one has actually answered Ema's question except for the moderator who offered the mitigated form of alignment (line 22, *hh right*), both Jay and Suni start their response with an account-giving action which indicate they understand the paradox within Ema's question but at the same time understand the reason behind such a paradoxical policy that is implemented in the process of participant selection—preventing them from being able to fully align with Ema, despite her projected alignment to herself and others as a specific epistemic community (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). Jay starts by providing a recipient token *oh* directly followed by a contradicting connector, *kuntey* "but" (line 23), followed by *to study here, our English should be somewhat-* (line 23), displaying her disalignment from Ema's proposed community stance. In her study of disagreements in Japanese, Mori (1999) focused on

participants' use of *demo* and *kedo* as the interactional tokens used by Japanese native speakers as a way of "self-qualifications" that they use to mitigate dispreferred response or negotiation opinion. The Korean counterpart, *kuntey*, is also used by participants as "self-qualifications" (Mori, 1999) to mitigate the initiation of a dispreferred response, as shown in this data. Ema's *kuntey* is overlapped and interrupted by Suni who takes over in completing Jay's turn in an upgraded version *well, because you know we can't come all the way here and not be able to speak the language* (line 24), to which Nani affiliates to with repetitive tokens of agreement *yes, I agree, I agree* (line 25). Soha takes the baton from Suni and continues to further animate the stance of the selection committee, *they say: "it's not good if participants' English proficiencies are too low:."* (line 26) aligning to the recruitment procedures projected by the selection committee. Again, Nani provides an agreement token, affiliating her opinion to Suni and Soha, further elaborating, *Yeah, I agree. The purpose is different* (line 27). With this turn, Nani not only affiliates with Suni and Soha, but in a way, she is also indirectly rejecting Ema's projected stance, by suggesting that the perceived purpose of the program is in fact not to increase their English proficiency level (c.f., Ema's question in line 21: *Shouldn't it be that we take part in this program exactly because we don't have high proficiency in speaking English?*) but to learn by being able to understand the classes taught in English, detailed by Jay, *because you know, we need to be able to understand these classes taught in English* (line 28). As such, all of the other participants produce affiliated, collaborated response by disaligning with Ema's question.

At this point, Kay, who had not been participating thus far, interjects with a different perspective. Without getting involved in the debate of what the purpose of the program might be, she refers back to the moderator's original question of what the recruitment process involved, *but still, when they pick us, the percentage they give to experience as teachers is higher than English*

scores (line 29). This response from Kay not only provides the information the moderator was seeking through her protocol question, but also provides an aligning response to Ema's originally projected query, that in fact, the recruitment requirement puts more weight on the participants' length of experience as teachers rather than their English test scores. Although she doesn't affiliate with Ema's projected reasoning (i.e., that they should participate in this program for the very purpose of improving their English), she does align with the fact suggested by Ema's question that in reality, experience factors in more than English scores. Thus, despite other participants' efforts to dissuade Ema's suggestion of the paradox between program purpose and recruitment processes, Kay's single response seems to conclude the debate in a rather futile manner. However, at this point, Nani comes in again with information about previous recruitment procedures where English scores took up a larger percentage in the decision making process (i.e., 10 percent came from experience scores and 90 percent depended on English scores) and thus further appeals her earlier argument that English speaking skills are pre-mandatory rather than a objective goal to be obtained through the teacher development program.

Unlike the planned sequencing of Jinsu's questions to other participants (Ex. 5.10), Ema's abrupt questioning unfolds different reactions from her participants consequently leading to an entirely different action formation. Ema's question, that she projected to be seeking affiliation from her fellow participants, takes a different turn as her co-participants not only provide disaffiliative response to question, but also go on to collaboratively construct the reason as to why it actually *does make sense* for higher level of English proficiency to be considered a more important requirement. Situated between the moderator's initial protocol-based question about the recruitment procedure and Kay's final response of what currently constitutes the decision making process in the recruitment procedure, Ema's question formulates an unexpected

insert (Schegloff, 2007) sequence that uncovers each of the participants' different understandings and perceptions of the program objectives and goals.

The next excerpt is another example of indirect disagreement, where the participant is using the disagreement sequence to move the topic onto another aspect of the program of which she has an opinion she want to convey. This excerpt is from Group E and directly follows Ex. 5.6, where Sara explained that their goal in participating in this workshop was mainly for *improvement of English language proficiency*. This excerpt starts with Sina's disagreement to Sara's such previous statement.

Ex.5.13. Group E: I don't think it's really that, but?

- 01 → Sina: 영어, 영어::, 영어, 어떤 개인적인 영어 실력 향상?
 02 이거를 하와이 오면서 기대한 사람은 없을거 같아요
 03 (.) 다들 좀 쉬고 싶고, 놀고 싶고
 04 Mod: 네
 05 Sina: 그럴거 같고, 그래도 Sara 말씀하셨듯이, 영어로
 06 의사소통이 될 수 있는 환경이 조성 되면 더
 07 좋을거 같고? 그리고 (.) 그 정도의 영어 능력
 08 향상은 그전에 한국에 있을 때
 09 Mod: 어::
 10 Sina: 기대를 좀 했는데, 좀 실망했구요 사람이 적어서
 11 레벨도 안나눠져 있고
- 01 → Sina: yenge, yenge::, yenge, etten kayincekin yenge sillyyek hyangsang?
 English English English some individual English proficiency development
 02 ikelul Hawaii omyense kitayhan salamun epsulke kathayo
 this-ACC Hawaii come-COND expect-TP people-TP not-exist I think-POL
 03 (.) tatul com swiko siphko, nolko siphko
 everyone a little rest want to play want to
English, English, English, well, as development of individual English proficiency? I don't really think there's anyone who really had that certain goal for our time here in Hawaii. Everyone just wanted to rest a little, vacation a little.
- 04 Mod: ney
 I see
- 05 Sina: kulelke kathko, kulayto Sara malssumhasyesstusi, yengelo
 that's what I think nevertheless Sara said-HON-as she said English-with
 06 uysasothongi toyl swu issnun hwankyengi coseng toymyen te
 communication-NM possible exist-RL environment-NM made COND more
 07 cohulke kathko? kuliko (.)ku cengtouy yenge nunglyek
 good-thing I think and that amount-DAT English proficiency
 08 hyangsangun kuceney hankwukey issul ttay

development-TP before Korea-at exist-RL then

That's my opinion, nevertheless, as Sara mentioned, I do think it would have been better if an environment had been made where we could speak more English? And well, that amount of English proficiency development, I think should have already happened when we were taking classes in Korea.

09 Mod: e::

mm

10 Sina: kitaylul com hayssnuntey, com silmanghaysskoyo salami cekese
expect-ACC a little I had-but a little disappointed-and people-NM too little
11 level-to annanwecye issko

level-also NEG-divided it was-and

Well, at least that's what I had expected, but I was rather disappointed, because as the number of participants were so small, we weren't even divided into different levels and-

As noted in Ex. 5.6, Sara—after confirming improvement of English proficiency to be the goal of the program—had further elaborated on the mismatch between the goal and the actual training they received during the period of the workshop in Hawaii. Sina, who had initially agreed with Sara that there indeed was a mismatch, takes a slightly different stance here in this excerpt. In line 1, after Sara has finished her elaboration of the curriculum, which she evaluated as not quite fulfilling her situated goal of improving her language skills, Sina carefully initiates her turn with a disagreeing stance. But the way in which she constructs her statement (i.e., hedging, repeated start *yenge, yenge::, yenge, etten* [English, English::, English, somewhat, line 1], mitigated indirect proposition, *epsulke kathayo* [I don't think there would be any, line 2]) indicates that she is being rather careful about positing a disaffiliating stance from that of her co-participant's just previously stated opinion. In other words, instead of posing a direct disagreeing statement (Mori, 1999) situating her own argument in full force, she rather chooses to mitigate her opinion by indirectly disagreeing in a suggestive stance first. She counters that unlike what Sara has elaborated in such detail previously, it is more likely that participants' goals for the program—to which she claims access (*tatul, everyone, line 3*)--is actually to rest a little and vacation a little. Thus, although she does not directly disagree with Sara (and in fact, did provide

an agreement turn in Ex 5.6), by suggesting another possibility of *participants' goals*—which is to “rest a little and vacation a little”—she is providing an opinion that is disaffiliative to her co-participant's. Sina's careful stance taking in formulating her disagreement can be attributed to two reasons. First, of the five participants in this group, Sara is the most senior, being in her 50s with 20 years of experience as a teacher behind her, while the other four are all in their early to mid-30s with 5-8 years of being teachers. Although this group showed to have a good rapport as a group, such situational and cultural aspects factored in construction of the discussion.

Compared to the previous excerpt from Group C, where all participants were within a similar age range, the disagreement sequences from this group were a lot more mitigated and hedged as this current excerpt shows. This is not to say that participants were less active in providing their honest opinions (i.e., Table 5.2 indicates Group E to have a higher number of disagreement sequences among the groups), but as this excerpt shows, the formulation of disagreements were more indirect and in mitigated form. Second, the alternative goal suggested by Sina (i.e., *to rest, to vacation*, line 3) carries the possibility of misrepresenting the group's opinion, which could consequently affect the future of the program negatively. In other words, Sina is orienting to the program evaluative aspect of the ongoing focus group, cautioning against positioning a possibly problematic aspect—be it true or false—as a solid representation of the group's perspectives.

Furthermore, instead of dwelling on this sensitive issue, Sina uses her indirect disagreeing sequence as segue to move onto another aspect of the program. In her next turn, instead of further elaborating on her carefully constructed opinion, she goes back to Sara's previous turn (*Sara malssumhasyesstusi*, as Sara mentioned, line 5), and again aligns to Sara's opinion saying that it would in fact be better if an environment in which they could indeed improve their language skills could be created. And here again, she shifts her footing (Goffman,

1981) once again from aligning to Sara to an entirely different stance, taking the core of her opinion to apply to an entirely different scope: the program component *before* they came to Hawaii. In other words, she makes use of her indirect disagreement sequence as a bridge into another topic, where she shifts the weight of the complaint away from the program being evaluated (i.e., the workshop component in the U.S.) to the Korean portion of the 6-month workshop.

The next excerpt is again from Group B. Prior to this sequence, Heri, Yuri, and Aeju have been discussing the various courses offered along with the complaint that the courses were: (a) irrelevant to the current Korean English education situation; and (b) too theoretical and difficult for them to take anything out of it to go and directly use in their classrooms. Line 6 starts with Heri's continued assessment of the courses that were too theoretical.

Ex.5.14. Group B: I disagree

- 06 Heri: 어찌보면 대학원생이나 박사과정에 있는 사람들이
 07 들으면 좋은 팁을 얻을 수 있는데::
 08 우리 같은 경우는 돌아갔을때 아이들에게
 09 적용할 수 있는 구체적인 사례를?
 10 Aeju: ((nods)) 응::
 11 ((omitted: insert sequence between Aeju and Heri about a particular class which they found especially helpful as it consisted of actual techniques they could adapt right away to their class)) (7.0)
 12 Aeju: 너무 좋아서 그 수업은 기억을 해 ((gaze back to Mod))
 13 → Minsu: 저같은 경우는 생각이 조금 다른데요:
 14 Mod: ((gaze shift quickly back to Minsu)) 네!
 15 → Minsu: 사실 구체적인 팁을 얻기로 하자면 실제로 method 나
 16 이런 것들은 인터넷을 통해서 충분히
 17 접 할 수 있다고 생각하고요.
 18 Mod: 네
 19 Minsu: 결국에는 수업 현장에서 적용 하고 못하고는 본인의
 20 문제라고 봐요.
 21 Mod: 네
 22 Minsu: ((continues his opinion of how it's up to the teacher to find a way of taking the theoretical approaches and adapting it to their class, and goes on to point out a few classes (that Heri and Aeju have claimed to be too theoretical) from which he found useful resources that he will use back in his classroom in Korea))
 23 Minsu: 그런 면에서 이론 수업도 긍정적인
 24 면이 있다고 생각합니다-
- 06 Heri: eccipomyen tayhakwensayngina paksakwacengey issnun salamtuli
 if you think about it graduate students-or doctoral-program exist-RL people-NM
 07 tulumyen cohun thipul etul swu issnunthey::
 take-COND good tip-ACC gain possible it is-but

08 wuli kathun kyenwu-nun tolakassulttay aituleykey
us like case-TP when we return to our students

09 cekyonghal swu issnun kwucheycekin salyeylul?
apply possible specific examples-ACC
If you think about it, the current curriculum would be really helpful and provide good tips for graduate students or people in the doctoral program, but in our case, we use better use more specific teaching examples, if we are to use it back in our classrooms with our students?

10 Aeju: ((nods)) ung::
yes::
((omitted: insert sequence between Aeju and Heri about a particular class which they found especially helpful as it consisted of actual techniques they could adapt right away to their class))
(7.0)

12 Aeju: nemwu cohase ku swuepun kiekul hay ((gaze back to Mod))
so much good-so that class-TP remember I do
That class was so good that I remember it still

13 → Minsu: cekathun kyengwunun sayngkaki cokum talunteyyo:
For me in my case thoughts-NM a little different-CIRCUM-POL
In my case, I actually have a different opinion?

14 Mod: ((gaze shift quickly back to Minsu)) ney!
yes!

15 → Minsu: sasil kwucheycekin thipul etkilo hacamyen silceylo *method* na
honestly specific tip-ACC to receive if we wanted in reality method or
16 ilen kestulun intheneysul thonghayse chwungpwunhi
such things-TP internet-ACC through more than enough
17 cep hal swu isstako sayngkakhakoyo
come across possible it is I think -and-POL
Honestly, if we were looking to gain tips for things like teaching methods or such, in my opinion, I think we can come across more than enough of those through the internet and-

18 Mod: ney
mhm

19 Minsu: kyelkwukeynun swuep hyencangeyse cekyong hako moshakonun
in the end-TP class site-at apply and not able to apply-TP
20 poninuy mwunceylako pwayo.
individual-DAT problem-QT I see it as-POL
So in the end, being able to apply or not apply what you have learned is really up to each individual, I believe.

21 Mod: ney
I see
((continues his opinion of how it's up to the teacher to find a way of taking the theoretical approaches and adapting it to their class, and goes on to point out a few classes (that Heri and Aeju have claimed to be too theoretical) from which he found useful resources that he will use back in his classroom in Korea))

22 Minsu: kulen myeneyse ilon swuepto kungcengcekin
from such perspective these classes-also positive
23 myeni isstako sayngkakhapnita-
aspects there is I think-POL-IT-

24

From such a perspective, I believe all these classes also all have positive aspects to them, I think.

This excerpt starts with Heri's continued assessment of the workshop courses as too theoretical and thus more apt for graduate students or scholars (lines 6-9). Aeju, a co-participant who has been actively involved in this discussion produces an agreement token *ung::* (yes::, line 10) with a nod, and this initiates yet another prolonged sequence between Aeju and Heri as they bring up the classes (i.e., less *theoretical*) which they found helpful. Towards the end of the insert sequence, Aeju, shifting her gaze to the moderator, provides a positive assessment with extreme case formulation (Edwards, 2006) *nemwu* (too much—correct usage is to use in the negative form, but Koreans often use it as an extreme case formulation to stress how much they like something as well), making a very contrastive assessment as opposed to the other *theoretical* courses they she had previously assessed as *useless to us* (not included in this excerpt due to space). At this moment, Minsu, who had contributed the least amount of talk up to this point, takes the next turn with an explicit disagreement statement, *In my case, I actually have a different opinion:?* (line 13). At this unexpected turn (i.e., as the preceding turns had been constantly dominated by the three participants, Heri, Yuri & Aeju), the moderator immediately turns her gaze to Minsu and provides an exclamated acknowledgement token, *ney!* (yes!, line 14), encouraging him to continue. With the exclusively allocated turn, Minsu elaborates on his proffered disagreement, the gist of his talk being that the *tips* and *practical materials* that other participants claim to have obtained from the less theoretical classes are something that could be obtained easily through the internet or other resources (lines 15-17). He further constructs his turn to directly counter the consensus that has been reached by Heri, Yuri, and Aeju by providing his own perspective, *So in the end, being able to apply or not apply what you have learned is really up to each individual, I believe* (lines 19-20). Even as he is stating a very contradictory

opinion to the opinions stated earlier by the other participants, he does not position his disagreement against them, but rather formulates his talk as an opinion in response to the moderator, which dissuades actual conflict among participants. Minsu's talk is rather constructed as another "opinion" that contributes to the diversity in discussion. He goes further on to point out individual *theoretical* courses that he found helpful and was able to extract tips for this own class, which mirrors Aeju and Heri's earlier assessment of the more practical courses that *they* found helpful. He then concludes his turn with an all-around positive evaluation of the courses in general—including both theoretical and practical courses—wrapping up the discussion not in one specific way, but towards a more collaborated response of the discussion that has surfaced on this topic so far, *From such a perspective, I believe all these classes also all have positive aspects to them, I think* (lines 23-24). In other words, even in the case of direct disagreements as such, the action that disagreement sequences take on in these focus groups are still collaborative in that participants' responses—whether aligned to another or disaffiliative—orients towards the institutional goal of providing diverse opinions and perspectives to the moderator. This orientation dissuades any unnecessary conflict or argument among participants, which I believe is the reason disagreement sequences were such a rarity in the collected focus groups.

The last excerpt is from Group E. Prior to this excerpt, other participants had been discussing each of the different courses they were offered during their program in the U.S., and in this group as well, one of the participants specifically comments on how they prefer the more practical classes—that provide them with the actual material they can take and use directly in their classrooms—that they were offered in Korea as opposed to the more theoretical classes they were offered locally. Sina takes the next turn with a different opinion.

Ex.5.15. Group E: I think a little differently?

01 → Sina: 저는 조금 다른 생각- 비슷하면서도 다른 생각을
02 갖고 있는데요? 일단 국내에서 연수를 받을 때는
03 자체 activity 이런건 좋아요

04 Mod: 네

05 Sina: 그건 좋아요. 그런데? 여기 하와이에서 기대한건
06 한국에서 쉽게 만나지 못한 석학들로 부터
07 최신 이론을 줌::

08 Mod: 네네

09 Sina: 그거 가지고 내가 교실에서 어떻게 적용하는가를
10 해주지 않아도

11 Mod: 네

12 Sina: 내가 할 수- 어차피 영어교육이니까 implication 이 나올 수
13 있고? 그런게 많으면 오히려 좋죠.

01 → Sina: cenun cokum talun sayngkak- pisushamyenseto talun sayngkakul
I-SH-TP a little different thought- similar-at yet different thought-ACC
02 kacko issnunteyyo? iltan kwuknayeyse yenswulul patul ttaynun
have exist-but-POL first of all In Korea workshop-ACC take that time-TP
03 cachey activity ilenken cohayo
its own activity such thing it's good-POL
I have a different opinion- I have a similar yet a little different opinion? First of all, the activities we were introduced to when we were taking classes in Korea were all good.

04 Mod: ney
yes

05 Sina: kuken cohayo. kulentey? yeki hawaieyse kitayhan ken
that was good-POL but here Hawaii-at expect-RL thing-TP
06 hankwukeyse swipkey mannaci moshan sekhaktullo pwuthe
Korea-at easily meet-IE NEG-do famous scholars from them
07 choysin ilonul com::
recent theory-ACC a little
That was good. But? Here in Hawaii, the expectation I had, was to learn about the most recent theory in this research area from the famous scholars, which is difficult to come across in Korea, and a little::

08 Mod: ney ney
yes yes

09 Sina: kuke kaciko nayka kyosileyse ettehkey cekyonghanunkalul
that with-and I-NM in the classroom how apply-that matter-ACC
10 haycwuci anhato
do for me-IE NEG-do-even so
And even if they don't specifically give me the details as to how to apply those theories to my classroom, even so,

11 Mod: ney
mmhm

12 Sina: nayka hal swu- echaphi yengekyoyukinikka implication-i naol swu
I-NM can do possible anyway English education-TP implication-NM come out

issko? kulenkey manhumyen ohilye cohcyo.

possible and? such things many-then even more good-POL

I can do that on my own, because it's English education, and I can find the implications to apply and so? I think it's better for us to have more classes like that.

In line 1, Sina enters the discussion by first stating her opinion which is the opposite of the current flow of conversation, *I have a different opinion-* (line 1). But then she reformulates her initial stance and statement, by first indicating partial alignment to her co-participants, *I have a similar yet a little different opinion?* (lines 1-2), and before going into the core of her own perspective, she first touches upon the *similar* part of her opinion, *the activities we were introduced to when we were taking classes in Korea were all good* (lines 2-3). Following the moderator's acknowledgement token *ney* (yes), which also works as a continuer, Sina repeats the last part of her assessment, topicalizing *kuke-n* (that-TP, line 5), limiting the scope of her positive assessment to the *activity* they were introduced to, rather than the *classes we took in Korea* as a whole. Then, prefaced by a contrastive continuer, *kulentey?* (but? line 5), Sina goes on to provide her contrastive opinion—to that of her co-participants—constitutive of her personal expectation coming to the workshop in Hawaii, which was to be informed about the recent theories in this area of research (i.e., English education) from famous scholars, “who you would not come across on a regular basis in Korea” (line 6). She makes a contrast between the classes in Korea and Hawaii, by emphasizing the lecturers in Hawaii as ones given by “famous scholars in the area” (line 6). Then, she goes on to unpack her initial disagreement with further evidential account, working to reject her co-participants construction of “practical” classes as *good* classes. She constructs her opinion as a personal opinion (i.e., using first person pronouns), but unpacks her opinion in a way that each part of her formulation indexes each part of her co-participants' complaints. She starts by countering the gist of their complaint which was that the classes were too theoretical and failed to provide them with the practical material they can go and directly use

in their classrooms, *and even if they don't specifically give me the details as to how to apply those theories to my classroom* (lines 9-10). Then, she goes on to provide her solution to this part of the problem, referring to her ability as a trained professional in English education, *even so, I can do that on my own, because it's English education, and I can find the implications to apply* (lines 12-13), which in a wider sense indexes the ability of all participants in this focus group and not only herself. Finally, she reformulates her opinion as a conclusion derived from the evidence she has just suggested, *and so? I think it's better for us to have more classes like that* (line 13). Thus, in constructing an opinion that is directly opposite of the consensus that was being achieved so far among her co-participants, she does not simply state her disaffiliative stance. Rather, she formulates an argument that indexes the established roles they have as a group, adding evidence as a group which consequently provide a concrete support for her argument, which otherwise could have been buried within the opinion that had been formulated as a group.

The five excerpts in this section illustrated the diverse interactional paths taken by participants in constructing disagreement sequences in focus group discussion, lending further insight into how different opinions and topics are constructed within multi-participant focus groups.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter consisted of three major components, all focused on how and what interactional routes and resources are taken by participants in constructing topics relevant to the focus group protocol. The first section discussed three different ways in which participants agreed on or relied on their co-participants' talk to further provide or elaborate their own individual perspectives. The second section demonstrated in detail how participants also

collaborated together as a group or on behalf of co-participants as a way of formulating a response together as a group within the same established epistemic community (Heritage, 2013). Finally, the last section examined disagreement sequences, highlighting different disaffiliative stances taken by participants in formulating diverse opinions while keeping within community stance of their respective groups.

CHAPTER 6. PARTICIPANTS' ORIENTATION TO FOCUS GROUPS AS SOCIAL ACTIVITY

6.1. Introduction

Focus group is a specific method of acquiring information (i.e., to inform research questions or provide opinions on certain products) through discussion between participants who are deemed experts in the area of the discussion topic (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Puchta & Potter, 2004). Thus, as outlined in the previous two chapters, the interactional shape and the construction and organization of topics also take on forms pertaining specifically to focus groups. Puchta and Potter (2004) captured the specific characteristic of focus groups well in their conceptualization of focus groups as interactions: (a) guided by a trained moderator who sets the stage with prepared questions or an interview guide (protocol); with (b) the “goal of eliciting participants’ feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about a selected topic” (p. 6). While there is a tendency to treat focus groups as extended or group versions of dyadic interviews (e.g., referral to focus group *interviews*) and findings thus treated as group interview responses, the detailed examination of the interactions indicate that the interactional dynamics within focus groups are different from that of group interviews (see Figure 7).

Lacking thorough understanding of the details that constitute the focus group method, researchers have underused or rather misused this method, even qualitative researchers who have criticized moderator led focus groups as being too contrived (Lindegaard, 2014). The aim of this chapter is to show that contrary to such preconceptions, focus groups prove to be an ideal locus for observing and examining the natural production of social order within.

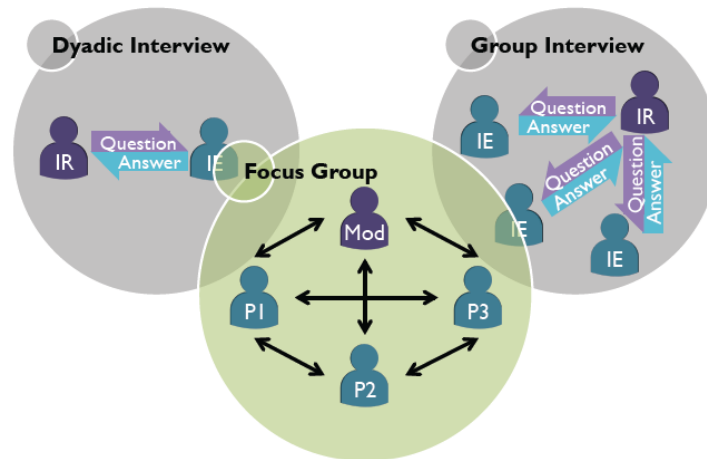


Figure 7. Interactional direction in interviews and focus groups

By examining participants' active and diverse methods of providing substantial information that better informs language program evaluative practices, I strive to provide evidence that focus group interactions are useful research tools with vast potential to answer questions that are still left to be asked within applied linguistics. The analyses will first highlight how participants orient to the focus group as an institutional activity—thus treating it differently from ordinary conversation, which provides important consequences for evaluative findings. Then, I will examine how participants orient to their roles within the interaction as *experts* (Puchta & Potter, 2004) and evidence of their actual lived experiences (Wilkinson, 2011) by constructing their information-provision using such available resources (Lindgaard, 2014).

6.2. Focus Groups as an Institutional Social Activity: Participants' Orientation

With roots in marketing research, focus group participants are recruited based on their related experiences and ability to provide relevant information to the research agenda of the moderator (Morgan, 1997, 2002; Puchta & Potter, 2004). As mentioned before, the intended

interactional engineering of focus groups is to induce lively discussion on relevant topics between participants, rather than have each participant answer the moderator's question in an orderly manner (Fig. 7). Therefore, in focus groups, being a *participant* is rather an "inference-rich category" (Sacks, 1992), with the diverse inferred roles of being: experts in the proffered topics, actual *participants* in the program being discussed, opinion providers, discussion leaders, topic providers, as well as topic evaluators. However, with the lack of use and misunderstanding of this aspect of focus groups, not only the researchers and analysts, but also the participants sometimes orient to their understanding of the focus group interaction as an "interview" activity and the institutional roles constituted within. Most times, participants do not particularly orient to these roles explicitly but rather weave in and out of the different depending on the context and situation. The excerpts in this section show, however, that there are instances in which participants make explicit orientation to a specific role they are undertaking *in situ*. The three subsections all outline how participants orient to their understood "roles" within the interaction by: (a) making a explicit referral to their understanding of the situated roles within the interaction; (b) striving to achieve the institutional goal of providing relevant information; and (c) checking recipient's understanding, thus again orienting to the institutional goal of accurately delivering information pertaining to the questions asked by the moderator.

6.2.1. Situated Identities: Participants' Orientation to Institutional Identities²²

Zimmerman (1998) introduced the notion of *discourse*, *situational*, and *transportable identities* as the social identities that come into play in interaction. Discourse identities relate to a speaker's current role in interaction (i.e., being the speaker or the listener), situated identities

²² As it has been made clear from the first chapter, this study treats focus groups as a different institutional discourse from that of interviews, and therefore I have avoided using the term interview (or interviewer, interviewee) thus far. For this particular section, however, the participants in the interaction make explicit orientation to the terms *interviewer* and *interviewee*, thus the explicit use of the terms for this section.

refer to the specific institutional context (i.e., being the moderator or participant in this focus group setting), and transportable identities are those that travel with individuals across situations and may be invoked at different times (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 90). In the current data, each individual holds a situated identity of being either the moderator or a participant, and as mentioned above, the category bound activities (Sacks, 1984, 1992) of being within such identity (roles) are to be the questioner or the response provider, respectively. While their situated identities as a moderator and participant stay mostly stable throughout the focus group sessions, their discourse identities—as speaker and listener, and questioner and response provider—which is “interactionally contingent rather than determined” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 91) often shift back and forth as we have already seen in the previous sections. In other words, despite the constraint ensued by the institutional purpose at hand, detailed analysis of the interaction suggests that there are indeed contingencies and changes within given roles even within institutionalized talk, as will be showcased below. In this subsection, I discuss the instances in which the participants actually orient to such reversal in the discourse identity, and make it relevant within the interaction.

Including the excerpts analyzed in previous sections, there were many instances in which the participants ask the question, hence bringing about a momentary shift in their discourse identities. Most times, this was neither problematized by the moderator nor by the other participants. There were, however, a few times where such reversal of discourse identities was oriented to and problematized within the interaction, which indicated that the participants not only have clear knowledge of the institutionality of the action at hand, but also that they recognize the possible illegitimacy of the situation and therefore questioned the morality of the ongoing action.

The first of the following two excerpts is other participant's other-orientation to the role reversal while the second excerpt shows an example of self-orientation of her own self-assessed problematic attitude of being a "good" interviewee.

Ex. 6.1. Group E: Interviewer Interviewee (1)

- 35 Sara: 그런 입장에서↑ 한국 선생님들이 하는 영어
 36 수업::↓이↑ 되게 지루하셨을 거 같기도 하고::
 37 그러면:: 영어 선생님들은 뭐가 문제가
 38 이런 생각 혹시 하셨던적 없으세요?
- 39 Everyone: [((gaze at Mod with smiles on their faces))
 40 Sina: [갑자기 바뀌었어 하하
 41 Mod: °물론-° (.) 아, 저요?
 42 Jini: 반대로 질문을 받으셨어. 하하
 43 Everyone: 하하하하
 44 → Jini: [Interview^{EE}::, Interview^{ER}:: ((pointing to Mod and Sara respectively))
 45 Sara: [((serious expression, gaze at Mod)) 아니, 왜냐면
 46 그 부분이,
 47 Mod: 네
 48 Sara: 그 부분이::↑, 이 프로그램에서 추구해야지 되는
- 35 Sara: kulen ipcang-eyse↑ hankwuk sensayngnim-tuli hanun yenge
 36 such position-at Korean teachers-NM do-RLTP English
 37 swuep::↓이↑ toykey cilwuha-syess-ul ke kathki-tohako:::
 class very much boring-must have been seem like-CONT
 37 kulemyen:: yenge sensayngnimitul-un mweka mwunceynka
 if so English teachers-NM what-NM problem-NM
 38 ilen sayngkak hoksi ha-syess-tencek epsuseyyo?
 such thoughts perhaps did you not have-Q
Being in such position, the Korean teachers' English classes must have been very boring for you, and if so, did you perhaps not think about "what could be the problems of the teachers"?
- 39 Everyone: [((all gazes on Mod with smiles))
 40 Sina: [°kapcaki pakkwi-ess-e° haha
 all of a sudden changed
The tables have been turned all of a sudden. haha
- 41 Mod: °mwullon-° (.) a, ceyo?
 of course oh, me-POL
Well, of course- oh, are you asking me?
- 42 Jini: pantaylo cilmwun-ul patu-syess-e. haha
 opposite-ACC question-ACC received
The moderator has been questioned, which is the opposite to what should be happening.
- 43 Everyone: hahahahaha
 44 → Jini: [Interview^{EE}::, Interview^{ER}:: ((pointing to Mod and Sara respectively))
 45 Sara: [((serious expression, gaze at Mod)) ani, waynyamyen
 well no, because-COND
 46 ku pwupwuni,
 that aspect-NM
Well no, because you know that aspect-

47 Mod: ney
 yes
 48 Sara: **ku pwupwuni::↑**, i phulokulaym-eyse chwukwu hayyacitoynun
 that aspect this program-at strive for must do-RP
 49 etten:: haykyel-ina silmali-ka toyl swu issulke kathase
 somewhat solution-or answer-NM could be so I think
 50 Woni: ((shift gaze to Mod)) uum:: ((nods))
mm
 51 Sara: cey-ka malssum-tulin-kecyo
 I-POL-TP tell-POL reason-POL
**That very aspect, could provide a solution or an answer to which this program
 could strive for. That is the reason I am saying all of this.**

Prior to this section, Sara had been giving her personal impression of the courses and here in line 35 she takes a sudden shift towards formulating a question to the moderator. Other participants orient to this shift in the directionality of Sara’s talk and they all turn their gaze to the moderator (line 39). At the same time, one of the other participants, Sina, verbally orients to this shift with laughter, *the tables have been turned all of a sudden. Haha* (line 40), making a direct orientation to the fact that there has been a change in the discourse identities of the moderator and another participant, Sara. The moderator, on the other hand, does not make any orientation to this matter, and softly starts to formulate a response to Sara’s prior turn. But then, recognizing a shift in the speakership (i.e., Sina’s remark in line 40) and the gaze from other participants that has turned to her, she shows recognition of a shift in interaction by providing a change of state token *a (oh*, line 41) mid-speech and seeks reconfirmation, *are you asking me?* (line 41). In the following turn Jini confirms Sina’s earlier remark, *the moderator was questioned, which is the opposite to what should be happening* (line 42) which is received by laughter from everyone else. In line 44, Jini reconfirms this action of role reversal and shift in discourse identities between the moderator and Sara by gesturing to the moderator, while referencing the technical terms constitutive of an institutional interview, *Interview_{EE}::*” and “*interview_{ER}::*” while gesturing to Sara, using elongated sounds at the end to emphasize her understanding of the difference in the meanings of the two words and also emphasizing the shift—where the

interviewer has become the interviewee and vice versa. However, while everyone else responds to Jini's accusation with laughter, Sara, undeterred, enters in overlap to Jini, with negation of her colleagues' accusations, and goes on to provide an account for her actions, *well no, because you know it's that very aspect that could provide a solution...* (lines 45-48) with a serious expression. Her serious expression along with her account indicates that she not only understands the membership-bound categorical predicative actions (Sacks, 1984, 1992; Stokoe, 2011) of the given roles in this certain institutional talk (i.e., that the interviewer asks questions and participants answer). But it also shows that her intention of taking such an interactional route—of asking the moderator on her earlier experiences which Sara thought was relevant to the talk she was trying to formulate—was to provide a good response (“solution,” line 48) to the moderator's stated reasons for conducting this focus group (i.e., developing and improving the program), rather than obstruct the institutional norm as was so suggested by her colleagues, jokingly as it were. Furthermore, her account also provides evidence that she was rather *being a good interviewee* as opposed to taking the role of interviewer as suggested by her co-participants. In other words, not only Sina and Jini—who readily problematized the sudden change in discourse identities—but also Sara orients to their understanding of the situated identities within the focus group interaction as well as the fact that “discourse identities implicate a sequential machinery by which participants manage their interaction” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 105).

The following excerpt is similar but slightly different in that this time a participant makes a self-assessment of her possibly problematic posture orienting to the institutionality of the interaction. This excerpt is about 20 minutes into the focus group, and the participants have just completed their discussion on each of their reasons for choosing to participate in this workshop

program. The refreshments that were ordered have been delivered to the table, and line 1 starts with the moderator offering the drinks to the participants.

Ex. 6.2. Group D-2: Interviewer Interviewee (2)

01 Mod: 이거 좀 드시면서
02 Yuni: 네
03 Rami: 네
04 Joni: ((sitting with arms crossed, deep into the chair, right next
05 to the moderator and hasn't said much in the last few minutes))
06 → 약간 내가 인터뷰이 °같이" 딱 이렇게 같이 으음:: ((nodding))
07 All: hahahahaha
08 Rami: 그러게 hh
09 Young: 너도 인터뷰이야? hh ((gaze at Joni))
10 Rami: [그러게 hhh 선생님이랑 같이 ((hand gesturing towards Mod))
11 Joni: [같이 같이- 면담하실 분 ((different, lower voice tone))
12 +Mod copies the position of Joni with arms crossed
12 Mod: haha 팔짱기고 이렇게 °이렇게° 듣고 있어 haha
13 All: hahahah
14 Young: 그렇지. 질문자하고 똑같은 hhh
15 Joni: 조용히 좀 해주세요. °조용히 좀 해주세요° 그런 이유로
16 하와이 온줄 몰랐네요 ((in higher tone of voice))
17 Rami: hh 질문 있으세요?
18 Joni: 그런 의도가 있는지 몰랐네요. (1.5) 궁금한 거 있으면
19 질문해도 되요? ((gaze to other participants))
20 All:ahaha
21 Mod: 하세요 hh
22 Rami: 뭐가 궁금하세요? hhh
23 Joni: ((in normal voice tone again, gaze back at her drink)) 일단 들어보고
24 Mod: haha 그럼 다른 분들은 ((resumes with former question))

01 Mod: ike com tusimyense
this a little eat-whilest
Please have some of these while we talk

02 Yuni: ney
okay-POL

03 Rami: ney
okay-POL

04 Joni: ((sitting with arms crossed, deep into the chair, right next
05 to the moderator and hasn't said much in the last few minutes))
06 → yakkan nayka interviewee °katha" ttak ilehkey kathi uum:: ((nods))
a little I-NM interviewee like DM like this mmmm::
It's a little like I'm the *interviewee, like I'm sitting here and nodding like this.

07 All: hahahahaha
08 Rami: kulekey hh
that seems to be the case

09 Young: neto interviewee-ya? hh ((gaze at Joni))
you-also interviewee-Q
Are you also the *interviewee?

10 Rami: [kulekey hhh sensayngnimilang kathi ((hand gesturing towards Mod))
yeah hehe teacher (mod)-with the same
Yeah, along with the moderator.

11 Joni: [kathi kathi- myentamhasil pwun ((different, lower voice tone))
with me with me talk about-do-POL person-POL-Q
Anyone, who would like to interview with me?

12 [+Mod copies the position of Joni with arms crossed
12 Mod: haha phalccangkiko ilehkey °ilehkey° tutko isse haha
haha arms crossed-state like this like this listening-EXIST haha
Haha. She is just listening to you talk with her arms crossed like this. haha

13 All: hahahaha
14 Young: kulehci. cilmwuncahako ttokkathey hhh
that's right questioner-with the same
There you go. She looks the same as the questioner. haha

15 Joni: coyonghi com haycwuseyyo. °coyonghi com haycwuseyyo° kulen iyulo
quiet a little do-please quiet a little do-please such reason-with
16 *Hawaii* oncwul mollasneyyo ((in higher tone of voice, acting mode))
Hawaii came-reason didn't know-POL
"please be quiet, please be quiet. I didn't know you were here in Hawaii for such a reason."

17 Rami: hh cilmwun issuseyyo?
haha do you have a question for us?

18 Joni: kulen uytoka issnunci mollasneyyo. (1.5) kwungkumhan ke issumyen
such underlying thoughts exist-whether didn't know curious thing if you have
19 cilmwunhayto toyyo? ((gaze at other participants))
questions-ask can I
"I didn't know you had such intentions in coming here. Can I ask you a few questions I'm curious about?"

20 All: hahaha
21 Mod: haseyo hh ((acting along))
please do

22 Rami: mweka kwungkumhaseyyo? hhh ((also acting along))
what-NM curious-Q-POL
What are you curious about?

23 Joni: ((in normal voice tone again, gaze back at her drink)) iltan tulepoko
well first hear and see
Well, let me first hear your response as well.

24 Mod: haha kulem talun pwuntulun ((resumes with former question))
haha then, other people-HON-TP
Haha, then what do other people think

In the case of this group, from the very beginning of the meeting, the participants showed to have very good rapport amongst themselves. They were all roommates, all four sharing the

same hotel room, and they admitted they always went places in the same group of four. Thus, it was not abnormal that the participants tended to leave out the honorific endings and talked more comfortably, as among friends, and as the focus group progressed, it was established that the participants were all in the similar age range as the moderator and at few points—as this excerpt—both the moderator and the participants would talk in a more comfortable manner and use fewer institutionalized honorifics. The reason I state this here is that the sudden use of honorifics in line 15 becomes a marking point of the understood institutionality of the focus group discourse. In order to understand this excerpt a little better, it is important to know the seating arrangement at the time.



Figure 8. Group D-2 seating arrangement

As shown in Figure 8, the camera is aimed at the four participants, while the moderator is sitting to the right of the camera, out of the camera's filming range. Joni, who is sitting next to the moderator, fits within the filming range, but is sitting in such a position that she is facing the other three participants rather than the camera or the moderator, and as she moves back and forth she moves in and out of the filming range as the picture also depicts. Just prior to this talk, Yuni had been talking about her reasons for participating in this program and then following a long pause the moderator comes in at line 1, offering more snacks—that have just been brought by the server—to the participants. Joni, who had been sitting in her seat with her arms crossed listening to her colleagues, speaks up in line 6, in reference to her own posture, which she indexes to be like that of an interviewer rather than the interviewee²³. She makes a reference to her cross-armed, slouching in the chair posture and says, *it's a little like I'm the interviewee, like I'm sitting here and nodding like this* (line 6). In other words, contrary to the previous excerpt where the orientation was other-initiated, in this case Joni makes a self-oriented assessment of her own possibly problematic actions. Her initial orientation to this problematic gesture is first followed by laughter from all participants, then by Rami's initial agreement in line 8. Young then picks up on Joni's self-orientation and asks, *are you also the interviewee?* with her gaze on Joni (line 9). Rami and Joni take this further as Rami agrees with Young in line 10, and makes indicative gestures that Joni should be grouped with the moderator as the interviewer, whilst Joni lowers her voice tone and enacts the role of a interviewer, *anyone? Who would like to interview with me?* (line 11). Even the moderator joins in *haha she's just listening to you all talk with her arms crossed like that* (line 12), describing Joni's current posture while also mirroring Joni's pose.

²³ Both here and in line 9, the Joni and Young pronounce the word “interviewee,” but we can tell from the context, that they are both indexing “interviewer.” They later admitted to being confused between the two words. This group was the group of elementary school teachers and this was the first time they were taking a workshop to become English subject teachers in Elementary school.

This action is received by laughter from everybody and Young comments in line 14 now that even the postures are alike and therefore Joni can indeed take on the role of the interviewer as well.

The interaction continues in a playful manner, but what Joni does in lines 15-16 is display that despite the light manner in which she carries out the situation—of her initial lack of participation in the talk as one of the interviewees—she has an understanding of what is entailed in the role of being the interviewer (Kvale 2012; Roulston, 2011). She displays understanding of three main actions that both herself and the other participants consider to be within the predicative role of the moderator: (a) manage the conversation in a professional manner (line 15, *please be quiet, please be quiet*, line 23, *let me first hear your response as well*), (b) give feedback on interviewees' responses in alignment to the institutional goal (lines 15-16, *I didn't know you came to Hawaii for such reasons*²⁴), and (c) ask questions.

Although slightly different from one another, both Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2 display the participants' understanding of the situated identities and their connected roles within the institutional talk they are involved in. While some of the earlier excerpts have shown that the shift within the situated discourse identities can occur without being problematized or causing trouble in the ongoing interaction, the excerpts in this section show instances in which the participants orient to and display their knowledge of the conformed norms of the institutional setting they are currently partaking in as well as the directionality of knowledge distribution that is pre-construed through the construction of such institutional setting. The upcoming excerpts display a different style of orientation towards the interaction.

²⁴ As mentioned few paragraphs above, just prior to this talk Yuni had been talking about her reasons for applying to this program and also she had disclosed that her intentions behind her participation was to seek opportunities for her family immigration to the U.S. in the near future.

6.2.2. Achieving the Institutional Goal: Checking Relevance

Despite the presence of the moderator and the periodic questions posited based on the focus group protocol, most times the discussion flowed freely between topics that were newly brought up or proffered by the participants. While this *freedom* of topic was not often problematized nor even oriented towards within the interaction, the two excerpts in this subsection display cases in which participants explicitly orient to the relevancy of the ongoing topic, bringing the interaction momentarily back to an institutional circumstance of achieving the goal of providing needed and relevant information to the discussion initiator: the moderator. By asking questions that (a) check the relevance of their talk (Ex. 6.3), and (b) confirm the moderator's needs (Ex. 6.4), the participants display and orient to their understanding of what constitutes the institutional activity—focus groups—they are currently involved in.

The first excerpt is from Group B, and following a question from the moderator about participants' local school visits, the topic has flowed to the issue of English education policy in Korea.

Ex. 6.3. Group B: Is this relevant?

- 01 Heri: 그니까는 우리나라가 짧은 시간에 이만큼↑↓
 02 어떤 궤도로 진입을 한데는, (.) 지금까지
 03 그 암기위주의, 지식전달위주[의::
 04 Mod: [그렇죠
 05 Heri: 어- 방법이 가장 효율적이었는데
lines 6 – 18 omitted
 19 Heri: °쉽지가 않아°
 20 (6.5) ((talk of food that's just been brought to the table))
 21 → Aeju: ((to Mod)) 선생님이 요구하시는 것은:: 이 프로그램하고
 22 관계가 있는 거잖아요?
 23 Mod: 네네
 24 Aeju: 지금 이 프로그램이 얼마나 교사한테::
 25 Mod: 네네
 26 Aeju: °에게 영향을 주는지=° ((questioning gaze to Heri))
 27 Mod: =아니 상관없어요, 네
 28 Sumi ((to Aeju, then Mod)) 답화가 저기니까
 29 Mod: ((to Sumi))) °네:°
 30 Sumi: 내용은 상관[없지
 31 Mod: [상관은 없어요
 32 ((Aeju starts comparing the general education system in Korea and U.S.))
 01 Heri: kunikka-nun wuli nala-ka ccalpun sikan-ey imankhum↑↓

02 and so-TP our country-NM short time-at this much
 etten kweytolo cinip-ul hanteynun, (.) ciksumkkaci
 some track-into come able to until now
 03 ku amki wicwu-uy, cisik cental wicwu[uy::
 the rote memorization method, knowledge delivery mainly-DAT
 04 Mod: [kulehcyo
 right-POL
 05 Heri: e- pangpep-i kacang hyoyulcek-i-ess-nun-tey
 um method-NM the most effective-was-PST-CONN
**Our country has been able to make this much progress in such short time
 because of the methods we have used, such as rote memorization and simple
 knowledge delivery.**

((lines 6 – 18 omitted))

19 Heri: °swipcika anha °
 easy-NM NEG
so it's really not easy to make the change

20 (6.5) ((talk of food that's just been brought to the table))

21 → Aeju: ((to Mod)) sensayng-nim-i yokwuha-si-nun kes-un:: i program-hako
 teacher(you)-POL-NM request-POL-RL thing-TP this program-with
 22 kwankyeyka issnun kecaynayo.
 related is isn't it-TAG
The information you require from us, though, is about the program here, isn't it?

23 Mod: ney ney
 yes yes
 24 Aeju: cikum i program-i elmana kyosahanthey::
 now this program-TP how much to teachers
 25 Mod: ney ney
 yes yes
 26 Aeju: °eykey yenghyang-ul cwununci= ((questioning gaze to Heri))
 to them influence-TP give-COND
how this program is influencing the participating teachers here, right?

27 Mod: =ani sangkwan epseyo, ney
 well, related NEG-POL yes
well, not necessarily, no.

28 Sumi ((to Aeju, then Mod)) tamhwaka cekinikka
 discourse-TP (goal)-is- so
Her goal is to look at the discourse, so

29 Mod: ((to Sumi)) °ney:°
 mm
 30 Sumi: nayyong-un sangkwan[epsci
 contents-NM doesn't matter
the contents don't matter

31 Mod: [sangkwan-un epseyo
 matter-TOP NEG-exist-POL
well, yes it doesn't matter too much.
 32 ((Aeju starts comparing the general education system in Korean and U.S.))

This excerpt starts with Heri's elongated turn on her opinion of the changes that are crucial in the Korean education system (lines 1-19; lines 6-18 omitted in the interest of space). About 14 minutes prior to this section of excerpt, the moderator had asked, "how were your local school visits?" and while the responses had started with their actual experiences in the local schools during their visit in the U.S., the discussion derived into the difference in the education culture and policy in the U.S. and South Korea. Since her initial question, the moderator had not contributed much to the discussion other than provide receipt tokens, and had let the talk flow among the six participants. After Heri finishes her turn in line 19, talk dwindles for a few seconds when a new food item arrives at the table. In the following line, Aeju uptakes the next turn with a question for the moderator: *the information you require from us, though, is about the program here, isn't it?* (line 21), which she then reformulates in lines 24 and 26, *how this program is influencing the teachers here, right?* With the last part of this question, Aeju, whose gaze had been on the moderator shifts her gaze—wide open as if questioning—to Heri, the previous speaker. Aeju turn, consisting of the initial and reformulated question here, takes on multiple actions: (a) displaying her understanding of the moderator's needs in conducting this focus group, and thus (b) checking the relevance of Heri's most recent turn—which has strayed quite a bit from the moderator's original question, and further (c) grounding the legitimacy of her 'unrelated talk' that is to follow (line 32). In other words, Aeju makes a B-event statement (Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Pomerantz, 1980, 1984) of confirming what the moderator needs by checking relevance on the ongoing talk—which is the only aspect visible at this point in interaction—in displaying her understanding of the institutionality of the ongoing interaction. Although the moderator provides positive continuer tokens *ney ney* (lines 23, 25) within Aeju's multiple turns, once the implication being made by Aeju (i.e., checking relevance to co-

participant's talk) becomes clear, the moderator shifts her response into a negative tone, *well, not necessarily, no* (line 27), negating Aeju's implicative question that Heri's turn was irrelevant or deterrent to the institutional goals or practices. At this point, yet another co-participant, Sumi, interrupts with her own understanding of the situation and the moderator's needs, *Her goal is to look at the discourse, so the contents don't matter*.²⁵ If Aeju's question ventured slightly into the moderator's epistemic boundary—by stating her question as a stated B-event, Sumi's turn takes the action of not only assuming the recipient's (moderator) rights to her epistemic primacy (of what she may need or not need) but also goes right on to make an assessment based on the assumed epistemic stance of the moderator (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012). The moderator's response that follows in line 31, *well, yes, it doesn't matter too much*, initially takes the form of an agreement by repeating part of Sumi's prior turn. But by substituting the affiliation seeking sentence final *-ci* with the particle *-un*—by which she is topicalizing the word *sangkwan* (relation, matter)—she is not fully aligning to Sumi's suggested affiliative stance, but is rather providing a limited alignment to Sumi's proposed assessment. Using topic marker *-un* the moderator is limiting the scope of her sentence predicate *epseyo* (NEG-exist), the moderator, within her alignment, is still marking possibilities in which *it may matter*, thus claiming back the epistemic primacy (Heritage, 2013) behind the needs and institutional goals situated in this interaction. Before the moderator has a chance to elaborate further on this matter, Aeju, however, takes the next turn and supported by Sumi and moderator's "assurance" that any topic may be of relevance, continues with her opinion on the topic Heri had previously been discussing.

A similar, second excerpt is from Group E, and leading into this section, Woni and Sina

²⁵ Prior to the interview, in briefly explaining the research and gaining consent from the participants, the moderator had explained her research interests were focused on conversation analysis (but had not suggested in any way that the focus group would only be subject to conversation analysis).

had been complaining about the unfairness of school visit allocation in the program. They had been complaining on behalf of other participants (i.e., who were not present at the focus group) focusing on some of the practical aspects of the unequal treatment among participants (e.g., some teachers were allocated to School A—in walking distance from their accommodation with free lunch provided, while some teachers were allocations to School B—50 minutes by bus, no lunch provided, and not really welcomed). After completion of their complaints, in line 1, the moderator addresses the original question to the other participants.

Ex. 6.4. Group E: Do you need this?

- 01 Mod: 선생님들이 가신 학교는요? ((to Sara, Lynn and Jini))
 02 (1.0) ((participants exchange glances))
 03 Sara: 저 회::는:: ((gaze at Mod, circling around herself, Lynn and Jini))
 04 Lynn: 뭐:: ((gaze going back and forth between Sara and Jini))
 05 Jini: 어↑↓ ((meeting Lynn's gaze))
 06 Sara: 같은 학교를 갔는데↑ 너[무나
 07 Jini: [너무::: 나 ((nodding))
 08 Libby: [너무:: [좋았어요 ((nodding))
 09 Sara: [좋았어요↓(.) 네,
 10 Jini: 그냥 계속 학교 스쿨 비지트 [하고 싶은
 11 Sara: [근::데:: 이제
 12 거기::에서는 사실 학교에::: 학교- 우리와
 13 관련된 문제점은 아니었는데 ((looks at Mod))
 14 → 그런것도 필요하신가요?
 15 Mod: 음 네에
 16 Sara: 거기 한국 선생님 두분이 계셨어요.
- 01 Mod: sensayngnim-tul-i kasin hakkyo-nunyo? ((to Sara, Lynn, & Jini))
 teacher-PL-NM go-POL school-TP-POL
What about the school you visited?
 02 (1.0) ((participants exchange glances))
 03 Sara: cehuy::nun:: ((gaze at Mod, circling around herself, Lynn and Jini))
 we-POL-TP
In our case
 04 Lynn: mwe:: ((gaze going back and forth between Sara and Jini))
well
 05 Jini: e↑↓ ((meeting Lynn's gaze))
yes!
 06 Sara: kathun hakkyo-lul kassnuntey↑ ne[mwuna ((nodding))
 the same school-ACC go-PST-CONT so much
 07 Jini: [nemwu::: na ((nodding))
 so much
(It was) soooo good.
 08 Lynn: [nemwu:: [cohasseyo

suggesting that her story will take a different turn. Then following a gaze that is directed to the moderator (line 13), she actually goes on to ask the moderator, *do you need such information as well?* (line 14). By prefacing her talk with this question, Sara is checking the relevance of the story she is about to tell, thus orienting to her knowledge of the institutionality of the ongoing discourse as well as her assumed understanding of the moderator's needs or purposes in conducting these focus groups. Similarly to the previous excerpt, by questioning the relevance of ongoing or upcoming talk, the participants are displaying their understanding of the situated goal, as well as orienting to the focus group as a specific institutional social activity. In other words, these excerpts indicate that, while focus group interactions are less structured and topics flow more freely compared to dyadic interviews (Roulston, 2011; Prior, 2011) or meeting interactions (Asmuss & Svennevig, 2009; Ford, 2008), they are also more structured and institutionally constructed compared to sequential order found in ordinary conversation (Schegloff, 2007; ten Have, 2007).

6.2.3. Taking Responsibility as Information Deliverer: Checking Understanding

The excerpts in this subsection illuminate cases in which participants orient to their perceived roles as *information deliverer* in assuring that the projected recipient (i.e., the moderator) has understood, or is aligned with information being provided. In other words, the participants do what Sert (2013) labeled to be “epistemic status checks” to their pursuit of the institutional goal of informing the moderator (epistemically lacking in this typical interaction) while situating themselves as experts (i.e., the epistemically advanced). Sert (2013) defined epistemic status check to be “a speaker's interpretation of another interactant's state of knowledge (e.g., ‘no idea?’, ‘you don't know?’), which is initiated in order to pursue certain interactional/pedagogical goals when a second-pair part of an adjacency pair is delayed” (2013, p.

14). Sert found that teachers in English language classrooms treated various multi-semiotic resources (e.g., gaze directions, gestures, and body orientations) as displays of insufficient knowledge in classroom talk-in-interaction and used them to initiate epistemic status checks as a way of moving the class forward.

In this subsection, two excerpts are analyzed in which participants are observed to make use of similar epistemic status checks before continuing on with their talk. In both excerpts, the moderator triggers the checks through multi-semiotic resources—especially through gaze—which is responded to by participants who produce epistemic status checks by displaying their orientation to the possible ambiguity of the situation. The first excerpt is from Group C, and just prior to this excerpt, Ema has claimed the floor after suggesting the participants return to the original topic of discussion (see Ex. 4.17).

Ex. 6.5. Group C: TETE?

- 06 Ema: ((takes a sip of drink)) 저의 expectation 을 말하면?=
 07 Mod: 네
 08 Ema: 전 사실, ((indicating other teachers)) 다 똑같겠지만::
 09 다 그냥 저희가 5 개월 동안 수업 많이 듣고?
 10 Soha: ((nods and looks at Ema))
 11 Ema: 계속 너무 이론적인 것 많이 해서::
 12 여기서는 그냥 그:: 배웠던 거를?
 13 복습하는 것도 있고? 저희:: 수업 시간에
 14 그니까 원래- 그- 한국에서 강조- 하는 부분이
 15 → 실제로는 좀 다르긴 하지만 [TETE 잼아요?
 16 → (((gaze to Mod))
 17 Nani: [((nods looking at Ema))
 18 Mod: [Ah:: ((quizzical gaze at Ema))
 19 → Ema: Teaching English Through English:,
 20 Mod: mm↑m::↓
 21 Ema: 그래서↓:: English:: 를
 22 Mod: 네
 23 Ema: 실제 상황에서 내가 그걸 구사하는
 24 것을 좀 더:: 많은- 부딪힐 수 있는
 25 경험을 많이 할거라고 예상을 하고?
 26 Mod: 네,
 27 Ema: 운:: 것도 있어요. 사실은.
- 06 Ema: ((takes a sip of drink))ceuy expectation-ul malhamyen?=
 my-POL expectation-ACC tell-COND

To express my expectations for this program?

- 07 Mod: ney
yes
- 08 Ema: cen sasil, ((indicating other teachers)) ta ttokkathkeyssciman::
I-TP actually, all the same-but
09 ta kunyang cehuyka okaywel tongan swuep manhi tutko?
all just we-POL-NM five months during classes lots take-and
For me actually, although I'm sure everyone here agrees with me, we took many classes for the 5 months in Korea?
- 10 Soha: ((nods and looks at Ema))
- 11 Ema: kyey sok nemwu iloncekin kes manhi hayse::
continuously too much theoretical thing lots do-CONT
12 yekise-nun kunyang ku:: paywessten kelul?
here-TP just that learn-PST thing-ACC
13 poksumha-nun kesto issko? cehuy:: swuep sikaney
revise-TP do-too is-CONT we-POL class time-at
14 kunikka wenlay- ku- hankwukeyse kangco- hanun pwunpwun-i
so originally that Korean-at emphasis put area-NM
15 → silceynun com talukin haciman [TETE canhayo?
in actuality a little different it is, but TETE CANH-pol?
And during those classes, we mostly learned theoretical aspects, and here we had hoped, during classes here (in the U.S), well, because the emphasis in Korea was, well, the reality is a little different but still, because in Korea, the emphasis is on TETE, right?
- 16 → [((gaze at Mod))
17 Nani: [((nods looking at Ema))
- 18 Mod: [Ah::? ((quizzical gaze at Ema))
- 19 → Ema: Teaching English Through English:,
- 20 Mod: mm↑m::↓
Oh, I see!
- 21 Ema: kulayse↓:: English::-lul
so English-ACC
- 22 Mod: ney
yes
- 23 Ema: silcey sahwang-eyse nayka kukel kwusa-hanun
actual situation-at I-TP that-ACC use-do-TP
24 kesul com te::: manhu- pwutithil swu issnun
thing-ACC a little more lots come across able do-PST-TOP
25 kyenghem-ul manhi halkelako yeysang-ul hako?
experience-ACC lots do-HEARSAY expect-ACC do-CONT
So, I had actually expected for us to have the opportunity to practice using English a lot more here?
- 26 Mod: ney,
yes
- 27 Ema: on::: kesto isseyyo, sasilun.
come thing-also is-PST-POL, actually
That's actually what I expected coming here, to be honest.

Following the excerpt from chapter 4 (Ex. 4.17), in which Ema claims the turn by suggesting the participants return to the moderator's initially suggested topic of "participants' goals and expectations" in coming to participate in the program, in line 6 of the current excerpt, Ema goes on to provide her own response to the moderator's initial question, repeating an exact word produced by the moderator in her initial question, *expectation*. Furthermore, in formulating her response, she does not restrict her response to herself only, but includes her co-participants by accessing their community status (i.e., physically pointing to co-participants, referring to their shared status, *ta ttokkathkeyssciman*:: [I'm sure it's the same case for everybody here, line 8]). Before going on to state her expectation, which only surfaces much later in the interaction (lines 25-27), she first launches into the account of why she arrived at such expectations, that as they had taken so many theoretical classes already in the 5-month component in Korea, they had expected more practical, speaking opportunities in the U.S. component. It is at this point, that Ema makes a reference to a specific English education policy in Korea that becomes the trouble source (Schegloff, 2007), triggering the subtle epistemic check, followed by Ema's reformulated self-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). A closer examination of Ema's turn illuminates why this sequence is considered an understanding check sequence as opposed to a simple repair sequence.

In her dissertation on the use of *-canh-* and *-ketun-* by learners of Korean as a foreign language, E. Kim (2013) discussed the speakers' use of *-canh-* to propose knowledge that is either considered common sense knowledge to share epistemic responsibility with the interlocutors (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), or to signal "membership knowledge," which is used to reflect the speakers' experience or knowledge that is "shared by a certain group of interlocutors delineated by categories such as age, nationality, or gender" (E. Kim, 2013, p. 88).

Ema's use of *-canh-* in line 15 indicates a similar use to E. Kim's latter description in that she is indexing a policy in Korea (TETE), which is shared knowledge between her and the other participants, and Nani's nod in line 17 is evidence that the other participants are indeed aware of what the acronym TETE indicates. But in this case, Ema's use of *-canh-* does not only index shared knowledge between the group of participants, but it is also being used to check the epistemic status of the moderator. By using the tag form *-canh-* instead of other more declarative or explanatory sentence final particles (in which case, the sequence could have been a clear cut repair sequence), Ema is orienting to the moderator's ambiguous membership status: (a) a possible member of the shared knowledge, based on the moderator's previous accounts (e.g., her experience as a short term English teacher in Korea, knowledge of some current policy-related terms); or (b) non- or partial member (i.e., having been away from Korea for a long period of time, currently not a teacher nor policy maker in Korea) of the shared knowledge. By shifting her gaze to the moderator, Ema displays that she is seeking some sort of indication of whether this knowledge is in fact accessible to the moderator. The moderator's ambiguous *Ah::* (line 18) with her quizzical gaze towards Ema confirms Ema's assumption, and consequently Ema provides the full form of the acronym TETE: *Teaching English Through English*. Ema's provision of the full form is not a repair but rather provision of information she has checked and confirmed to be epistemically K-1 (Heritage, 2012b) to the moderator. After confirming the moderator's understanding *mm ↑m:: ↓* (line 20), Ema goes on finally provide her response, *so I had actually expected for us to have the opportunity to practice using English a lot more here? That's what I expected, to be honest* (lines 25-27).

In the following excerpt, it is not the speaker but another participant that orients to possible ambiguity in the question asking process and therefore provides an epistemic status check. This excerpt is from Group E, a continued segment from Ex. 6.2.

Ex. 6.6. Group E: Reiteration

- 48 Sara: 그 부분이::↑, 이 프로그램에서 추구해야지 되는
 49 어떤:: 해결이나 실마리가 될 수 있을거 같아서
 50 → Woni: ((shift gaze to Mod)) 으음:: ((nods))
 51 Sara: 제가 말씀 드린거죠
 52 → Woni: ((gaze at Mod)) 그니까 영어를? 잘 하는 입장에서?
 53 Mod: 네네
 54 Sara: 한국 영어 선생님들이 수업- 하는 부분이?
 55 어떤 부분이 이걸 좀 참, 아니다. 이거는 내 흥미를
 56 전혀 끌어내지 못한다- 라는그런:: 부분이 아마
 57 한국 영어 선생님들이 더:: 보충해야↑
 58 [될 부분이잖아요
 59 Mod: [네, 네 네 네
 60 Sara: 이제 그거를 이 프로그램에 여기 이 XX 프로그램에
 61 반영을 하시면?
 62 Mod: 네
 63 Sara: 그게 해당
 64 Mod: 네
 65 Sara: 이 될 수 있지 않을까::
 66 Woni: 음:: ((nodding))
 67 Mod: 사실, 저 같은 경우는?

 48 Sara: ku pwupwuni::↑, i phulokulaym-eyse chwukwu hayyacitoynun
 49 that aspect this program-at strive for must do-TP
 etten:: haykyel-ina silmali-ka toyl swu issulke kathase
 somewhat solution-or answer-NM could be so I think
 50 → Woni: ((shifts gaze to Mod)) uum:: ((nods))
 mm::
 51 Sara: cey-ka malssum-tulin-kecyo
 I-POL-TP tell-POL reason-POL
**That very aspect, could provide a solution or an answer to which this program could
 strive for. That is why I am saying all of this.**
 52 → Woni: ((gaze at mod)) kunikka yenge-lul? cal ha-nun ipcang-eyse?
 in other words English-ACC well speak-NM situation-at
In other words, from the perspective of a person who speaks English well?
 53 Mod: ney ney
 yes yes
 54 Sara: hankwuk yeng-e sensayngnim-tul-i swuep- ha-nun pwupwun-i?
 Korean English teachers-NM class do-NM parts-NM
 55 etten pwupwun-i i-ken ccom cham, anita. ikenun nay hungmi-lul
 which parts-NM this is a little not this this-TP my interest-ACC
 56 cenhye kkulenayci mos-hanta- lanun kulen:: pwupun-i ama

at all bring out unable to such like areas-NM probably
 57 hankwuk yeng-e sensayngnimgtul-i te:: pochwung hayya↑
 Korean English teachers more improve must
 58 [toyl pwupwun-i-canha-yo
 to aspect-Q-POL
Which parts of the classes you took from Korean English teachers did you think was a little, well, something that made you think, “this doesn't interest me at all” or something like that?” It's probably those very areas that Korean teachers will need to improve on, right?

59 Mod: [ney, ney ney ney
 well, yes yes yes

60 Sara: icey kuke-lul i program-ey yeki i XX program-ey
 now that-ACC this program-at here this XX program-at
 61 panyeng-ul hasi-myen?
 apply-ACC do-POL-COND
Now, if you take that, and apply those ideas to this program, then?

62 Mod: ney
 yes

63 Sara: kukey haytap
 that solution

64 Mod: ney
 yes

65 Sara: i toyl swu iss-ci anhulkka::
 NM is possible think-Q
I think that could possibly be the solution

66 Woni: um:: ((nodding))
 mm::

67 Mod: sasil, ce kathun kyengwu-nun?
 actually, my-POL like situation-TP
Actually, in my case.

As was previously analyzed in Ex. 6.2, Sara had made a sudden shift in her stance (i.e., from giving her own account of her experience to formulating them into a question directed toward the moderator; see analysis for Ex. 6.2. for more detail) as a way of asserting her point which is stated here in lines 48-50, *that very aspect, could provide a solution or an answer to which this program could strive for. That is why I am saying all of this.* What Sara is referring to here as *that very aspect* is the moderator's own idea based on her experiences as a student in a Korean high school. In the middle of Sara's formulation Woni shifts her gaze to the moderator and offers an aligning token to Sara's assertion, with a nod (line 50). Then, when Sara completes

her talk in line 51, Woni, with her gaze still on the moderator, reformulates, or in this case, rephrases what she understood to be Sara's meaning of *that very aspect: In other words, from the perspective of a person who speaks English well?* (line 51). Woni's reformulation is neither in a full sentence structure, nor in a morphosyntactically question form. She uses fragments of Sara's talk from before with raising intonations, *English? As a person who speaks it well?*

The analysis in Ex. 6.2 had illuminated the fact that the moderator had not understood right away that Sara's question had been directed to her, along with the fact that the other participants had made it a laughable moment that the roles of question asking and answering had been reversed. Thus, in this sequence, directly following the above sequence, Woni, is orienting to her own possible understanding that the direction and meaning of the question may still be ambiguous for the moderator, and thus reformulates Sara's question, but in a way that she is also checking the epistemic status of the moderator, displayed by the way she is using fragmented phrases in a rising intonation with her gaze directed at the moderator. At this point in which Woni produces this understanding check, it is unclear from the transcript (unfortunately the video recording did not capture the moderator's facial expression at this moment) whether the moderator produced any facial expression or gestures indicating lack of understanding. But the fact that Woni's gaze was on the moderator as Sara was completing her turn (from line 51 onwards) provides evidence that whether lack of understanding was featured on the moderator's expressions, it was rather Woni who was being conscious and sensitive to how and whether the moderator was perceiving Sara's question. Woni's actions provides another specific aspect of multi-group focus groups, in which participants act as an aid of checking and helping understanding of the projected recipient.

Following Woni's check, the moderator displays her understanding with a repeated *yes* (line 53), but Woni's check also triggers Sara to provide a more detailed explanation of her question which leads into the next line, *Which parts of the classes you took from Korean English teachers did you think was a little, well, something that made you think, "this doesn't interest me at all" or something like that?" It's probably those very areas that Korean teachers will need to improve on, right?"* (lines 54-58). Using specific examples of thoughts that the moderator might have had as a student, Sara is constructing her opinion in a question form, while in the midst looking for the moderator's alignment using the *-canh-* formation (*right?*) at the end of her initial formulation (line 58). The moderator's response in line 59 can be seen as an alignment, but also seeing that the start of her response is in overlap with Sara's talk, it could also be a multiple continuer, *well, yes yes yes* (line 59). Upon the moderator's response, Sara completes her assertion, *Now if you take that (your opinions from your own experiences) and apply those ideas to this program, then?* (line 60), *I think that could possibly be the solution* (line 63, 65). In other words, Sara is formulating a question that in reality projects the action of opinion-giving: *If you are interested to know what might be the best methods for development of Korean English teachers, think back of your own experiences, and that will provide a solution to how you could improve the workshop program here.*

Contentwise, Sara's displayed opinion here is rather paradoxical in trying to link the moderator's experiences from almost 20 years ago and the current situation of English teachers when Sara herself has just made an argumentative point about how the education trends are changing so quickly. From the participants' displayed perspectives, however, it is interesting to note how participants make use of diverse resources and information obtained within the interaction to formulate responses to the focus group protocol. The findings from this analysis

provide another example of how the interaction in focus groups takes a different trajectory that is particular to such interaction between multiple experts in the area of discussion, thus further grounding evidence for the need for focus group interactions to be treated, used, and analyzed in their own arena (i.e., in a different way from that of dyadic research interviews).

The analyses in this section illuminated how participants display their orientation towards the institutionality of the ongoing interaction within the social activity of participating in focus groups through: (a) explicitly orienting to reversal in their presumed institutional roles within the interaction; (b) checking relevance of the ongoing and upcoming talk, and (c) checking understanding of the talk recipient and thus orienting to the situated purpose of the focus groups. While focus groups are one of few institutional loci for participants to freely and randomly express their opinions and thoughts, the excerpts in this section have displayed that participants do orient to the institutionality of the social activity at hand and construct and formulate their discussion according to their understanding of the contingent interactional requirements *in situ*.

The next section outlines another aspect of participants' orientation to the activity: their orientation to themselves as the "experts" of the information and opinions that are being conveyed to the moderator through the interaction.

6.3. Participants as Experts

Within the limited amount of research there is on focus groups, many studies focus on the role of the moderator, and the different strategies and questioning methods they might use to induce the most information from the participants (Lindegaard, 2014; Morgan, 1997, 2002; Puchta & Potter, 2004). Wilkinson's (2011) study focused on how her focus group participants constructed their individual experiences in certain ways, but other than that, no studies have quite

zoomed in on how participants construct themselves as individuals participating in a goal-oriented discussion, their experiences and opinions. Taking a slightly different perspective from the previous section where I examined participants orienting to the focus group activity as a specific institutional interaction, the excerpts in this section will inform how participants go about constructing their stories—relying on different interactional resources—as *experts* of the opinion and perspectives being delivered through their stories. The first subsection will outline instances in which participants directly claim epistemic primacy (Heritage, 2012a, 2013; Hayano, 2013) in conveying their opinions. The participants’ claim towards expertise is subtler and more indirect in the following subsection, where I examine the *native speaker* conundrum, a substantial aspect of the focus group findings. In this subsection, I strive to show how conducting a closer analysis of the participants’ interactional methods in proffering important yet sensitive issues may shed a different light on focus group findings.

6.3.1. Claiming Epistemic Primacy

Recent CA studies have examined epistemics in conversation as a motivating factor of the sequence organization of certain actions (e.g., questions and responses), as well as the use of specific linguistic forms that claim or disclaim relative degrees of knowledge for speakers and recipients (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011a, 2011b). These studies looked into “the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns-at-talk and sequences of interaction” (Heritage, 2012a, p. 370). Heritage and Raymond (2005) specifically looked at speaker assessments in first and second positions and examined how participants’ rights to provide evaluation were implicated in talk. One of their main points was that when a speaker is assessing a referent in first position, the speaker claims primary epistemic rights to make the assessment relative to the recipient. Heritage

(2013) used the terms *epistemic authority* and *epistemic primacy* interchangeably to refer to primacy in knowledge (also in Heritage & Raymond [2005] and Raymond & Heritage [2006]), and for the purpose of this dissertation, I will use the term *epistemic primacy* to refer to the dominance in knowledge made interactionally relevant.

As was the case in most of the studies listed above, a speaker's claim towards epistemic primacy usually becomes most relevant within a question and answer sequence. In research methods, such as these focus groups or other information seeking data collection methods (e.g., dyadic interviews and surveys) where the core purpose lies in acquiring research relevant information or knowledge from participants, the dominance of knowledge being shared may be naturally attributed to the information provider (i.e., interviewees, focus group participants, and survey-takers). Thus, it is not the purpose of this subsection to outline those more expected aspects of talk. Rather, the aim of this particular section is to show how participants themselves make interactionally relevant the act of claiming epistemic primacy within the interaction as a way of strengthening their evaluations or arguments.

The first excerpt (Ex 6.7) is from Group E again, and this excerpt immediately precedes Ex. 6.6. Just prior to this excerpt, one of the more vocal participants in this group (Group E), Sina, had been complaining about some of the classes that were offered to them in the program. Another participant, Sara, had joined in a little earlier and together they had started dissecting each of the courses and the instructors commenting on how some lectures were informative while some others seemed irrelevant or seemed rather oblivious of the current English education context in Korea. This excerpt is a continuation of Sara's comment of lectures that she considered to be less relevant to the teachers.

Ex. 6.7. Group E: Things have changed

01 Sara: 의 강의를 위해서 특별히 뭐 연구하고
02 오셨다는 느낌은 사실:: (0.3) ((gaze at Mod))

03 Mod: 네 ((to Sara))
04 Sara: 받지 않았거든요?
05 Mod: 네 ((gaze down to note))
06 Woni: ((nods))
07 Sara: 기존에 알고 계시는 거::를 가지고
08 말씀 하시죠? 그리고 한국적인
09 현실들을 잘 아시는 거예요: ↓
10 Mod: 네↓
11 Sara: 근데? >사실< 그거에 비해서 많이 변해가고있는
12 거는 잘:: 아직 모르시는거 같아요
13 Mod: =네
14 Sara: 일종의 고정 관념 [같은 느낌이 쯤 들더라고요.
15 Woni: [(nods))
16 Mod: 네= ((gaze back at Sara))
17 Sara: =사실 우리는 그것보다 훨:씬 빠르게 ((rotating hand gesture))
18 지금 [바뀌고 있고?
19 Sina: [(circling motion with her hand, then nods))
20 Mod: 네
21 Sara: 그래서 우리에게 이런걸 더 요구하고 그런건데?
22 Lynn: ((nods))
23 Sara: 그 부분은 아직 catch- 그걸 catch up 하시지는
24 못하는거 같고? 그냥 막연히 한국적인 EFL의
25 상황의 어떤막연한- 그런: 힘든 점?
26 Lynn: ((nods))
27 Sara: 그런 걸 너무 각인이 딱:: 되어 있으신
28 그런 느낌을 받았구요?

01 Sara: i kanguy-lul wihayse thunkyelhi mwe yenkwu-hako
02 this lecture-ACC for especially PT get ready-do-CONT
03 osyess-tanun nukkim-un sasil:: (0.3) ((gaze at Mod))
04 come-PST-TP feeling-TP actually
05 Mod: ney ((gaze at Sara))
06 Sara: yes
07 patci anhass-ketunyo?
08 received NEG-POL
09 **Well, I didn't get the feeling that the instructors had prepared the classes to cater especially to our needs?**
10 Mod: ney ((gaze down to note))
11 Woni: yes
12 ((nods))
07 Sara: kicon-ey alkokyeysi-nun ke:::lul kaci-ko
08 before-at know-CONT-POL-TP thing-ACC with
09 malssum-ul hasiko? kuliko hankwuk-cek-in
10 talk-POL-ACC do-POL-CONT and Korean-context
11 hyensil-tul-ul cal asi-nun keey-yo::↓
12 reality-PL-ACC well know-POL do-POL
13 **They talked about their previous research that was done before? And they also showed to have well-informed knowledge of the education situations in Korea.**
14 Mod: ney↓
15 yes
16 Sara: kuntey? >sasil< kuke-ey pihayse manhi pyenhaykako-issnun
17 but actually that compared a lot change-progress-CONT
18 kenun, cal:: acik molusinun ke katheyyo↓↑=

thing-TP well still don't know-TP thing seems like-POL
But actually, compared to what they know and think, the situation in Korea is changing really quickly, but I don't think they know that yet.

- 13 Mod: =ney
 yes
- 14 Sara: ilcong-uy kocengkwanyem [kathun nukkimi ccom tultelakoyo
 a kind of fixed concept (stereotype) like feeling-TP a little came to me-POL
it felt like they had a certain stereotypical image of Korea
- 15 Woni: [((nods))
- 16 Mod: ney= ((gaze back at Sara))
 yes
- 17 Sara: =sasil wulinun kukes-pota **hwel**:ssin ppalukey ((rotating hand gesture))
 actually we-TP that-compared a whole lot more quickly
- 18 cikum [pakkwiko-issko?
 currently changing-CONT
When in reality, the situation in Korea is changing so much quicker nowadays?
- 19 Sina: [((circuling motion with her RH, then nods))
- 20 Mod: ney
 yes
- 21 Sara: kulayse wulihanthey ilen-kel te yokwu-hako kulen-ken-tey?
 therefore to us such-thing more require-and so forth-Q
And that's why we are required to take part in such workshops (as this one) and so forth?
- 22 Lynn: ((nods))
- 23 Sara: ku pwupwunun acik *catch-* kukel *catch up* hasici-nun
 that part-TP yet that-ACC do-POL-RL
- 24 moshanun-ke kathko? kunyang makyenhi hankwukcekin *EFL*-uy
 not able to seems like-and just vaguely Korean-style -DAT
- 25 sanghwang-uy etten makyenhan- kulen:: himtun cem?
 situation-DAT certain vague something difficult aspect
- 26 Lynn: ((nods))
- 27 Sara: kulen kel nemwu kakin-i **ttak**:: toye issusin
 something like that too much significantly set-POL
- 28 kulen nukkim-ul patass-kwuyo?
 somewhat feeling-ACC received-POL
But in seems like that some instructors have yet to catch up on such current trends in Korea, and that they are still more focused and stuck on the vague knowledge they have of the past difficulties we have had in the Korean EFL context. That's the feeling I got from them.

In the first couple of lines, Sara provides her assessment of a few instructors, *Well, I didn't get the feeling that the instructors had prepared the classes to cater especially to our needs?* (lines 1-4), with her gaze fixed on the moderator, thereby specifically allocating the moderator as the recipient of her story. The moderator, whose gaze was initially also on Sara, provides a receipt token *yes* (line 3) followed by a continuer *yes* (line 5) and another participant, Woni, nods in agreement to Sara's assessment. Sara continues her assessment in line 7, but in

stronger form. Instead of hedging her argument by framing them as her thoughts or her feelings, she provides direct declarative-in-question-form accounts of the impression she got from these instructors: *They talked about their previous research that was done before? And they also showed to have well-informed knowledge of the education situations in Korea* (lines 7-9). Then, following the moderator's acknowledgement token, *yes* ↓ in line 10, Sara makes an assessment that is legitimized by the fact that she has more current access to the Korean education system and how it has developed over the last few years, *But actually, compared to what they know and think, the situation in Korea is changing really quickly, but I don't think they know that yet* (line 11-12). Although she prefaces her claim with positive acknowledgement of the instructors and their well-informed state of the Korean education system (lines 7-9), here in lines 11-12, she makes a strong claim of her epistemic primacy (Heritage, 2013) to the developments and upgrades that have been made in the Korean education system, and the fact that while she and the other teachers have access to this knowledge, the instructors do not.

Therefore, at this interactional moment, Sara is deviating from the given role as a *student* learning from the *instructor*, and rather, accessing her closer proximity to the topic at hand—the English education system in Korea—in claiming epistemic primacy to this information (see Figure 9). In an effort to provide a more accurate account of the situation as well as claim support for her initial assessment, she first slightly downgrades her initial evaluation, *it felt like they had a certain stereotypical image of Korea* (line 14), followed directly by a factual account of the actual situation in Korea, *When in reality, the situation in Korea is changing so much quicker nowadays?* (lines 17-18). Simultaneously, Sina—the participant sitting across from Sara—makes a circling motion with her hands, gesturing to enact visual support of what Sara has just explained. Sara continues to provide her understanding of the rationale behind the existence

of programs as such *And that's why we are required to take part in such workshops (as this one) and so forth?* (line 21). After all of which, she launches into the final part of her assessment along with her opinion on the matter, *but it seems like that the instructors have yet to catch up on such current trends in Korea, and that they are still more focused and stuck on the vague knowledge they have of the past difficulties we have had in the Korean EFL context. That's the feeling I got from them.* (lines 23-28).

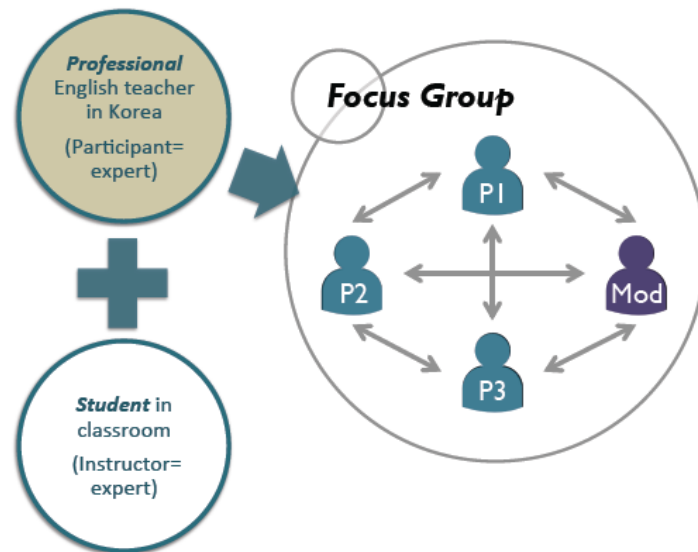


Figure 9. Participants' access to different roles and associated expertise

Sara frames her argument within this excerpt as her opinion and her personal story as she starts and ends her talk based on her own feelings (*I didn't get the feeling-. ... That's the feeling I got from them*; cf., Prior, 2011). However, throughout her turn, she claims access to epistemic primacy to the most current trends of the EFL situation in Korea, and despite the fact she is talking about the knowledge boundary of well-known professionals in the area, the current priority she has in accessibility to the discussion at hand (i.e., the current situation in Korean EFL context) legitimizes her such claims, which are neither questioned nor problematized by the

moderator or other participants. There were many instances within the collected 10 hours of focus group data, in which participants made such claims to epistemic primacy in: (a) conveying their opinion on the topic being discussed (77% of all opinion giving sequences) and (b) when suggesting improvements or changes to be made to the program (92% of all suggestion sequences).

Jun and Sue from Group G in the next excerpt provide a similar assessment. The three participants—Jun, Sue and Boni—have been comparing this workshop to other similar programs they attended, and have concluded that the quality of the current workshop and instructors is much better. Line 1 starts with a partial rationale for their assessment.

Ex. 6.8. Group G: They don't seem to know

01 Jun: 다른 데서 적은 돈으로 이런 유능한 강사를

02 모실 수 없으니까요

03 Sue: 저도 (0.3) 의견이 비슷한거 같아요

04 Mod: 네:

05 Jun: 근데 XX 수업 같은 거는?

06 흔히 들을 수 있는 얘기들? ((shakes head))

07 Mod: [네

08 Sue: [(nods)

09 → Jun: 사실은 (.) .hhh 한국 영어 교육의 현실을

10 잘 모르시는거 같더라고요

11 Mod: 네네

12 → Sue: 그래서 전혀 가슴에 와닿지 않고 ((smiley voice))

13 Mod: 네네

14 Sue: 그렇게 너무 실망스러웠고↑

01 → Jun: talun teyse cekun tonulo ilen yununghan kangsalul

other place-at small amount money-with famous instructor-ACC

02 mosil swu epsunikkayo

accommodate-HON NEG-possible-you see-POL

You know it would be impossible to accommodate such famous lecturers with such small amount of money.

03 Sue: ceto (0.3) uykyeni pisushanke kathayo

I-SH-also opinion-TP similar it is like-POL

I think I also have a similar opinion

04 Mod: ney:

I see

05 Jun: kuntey XX swuep-kathun kenun?

But class name in the case of thing-TP

06 hunhi tulul swu issnun yaykitul? ((shakes head))
often listen to possible-RL talk-PL
But in the case of lecturers like the *teaching techniques*? Those classes contained contents we can hear almost anywhere else?

07 Mod: [ney
I see

08 Sue: [((nods))

09 → Jun: sasilun (.) .hhh hankwuk yenge kyoyukuy hyensilul
actually Korean English education-DAT current situation-ACC
10 cal molusinunke kathtelakoyo
well don't know-thing it seemed like-POL
Actually it seemed like the instructors weren't very well-aware of the current situation in Korean education context.

11 Mod: neyney
Yes I see

12 → Sue: kulatory cenhye kasumey watahci anhko ((smiley voice))
and so at all heart-at touch NEG-and
And so the classes didn't quite make relevant sense to us?

13 Mod: neyney
yes yes

14 Sue: kulenkey nemwu silmangsulewessko↑
such thing too much disappointing-and?
Those areas were rather disappointing, and also?

In lines 1-3 Jun and Sue agree that the current workshop is better than some of the previous programs they attended, especially focusing on the *famous instructors* that made the core of the difference in the curriculum. But then in line 5, Jun shifts the tone of her assessment with a contrastive marker *kuntey* (but), and singles out a certain course, and describes it to have contained contents that were readily available elsewhere. In formulating her negative assessment in such a way, she is making a mirrored contrast to what she formulated other classes as *classes/instructors that could not be accommodated even with large amount of money* (lines 1-2), thus *rare* classes as opposed to the *common* class that this specific course turned out to be, *those classes contained contents we can hear almost anywhere else?* (lines 5-6). The gesture that follows—shake of her head—further displays her dissatisfaction, and in overlap with the

moderator's receipt token, Sue also nods in agreement. In line 9, Jun supports her statement of dissatisfaction with a negative assessment in accusing the instructor of having insufficient knowledge of the current situation in Korea, *actually, it seemed like the instructors weren't very well-aware of the current situation in Korean education context* (lines 9-10). Although she hedges her assessment with assuming tokens such as *kathelakoyo* (it seemed like), in stating this assessment, she is claiming primacy of the knowledge of the current education system in Korea over the instructor who taught that class. Sue supports this claim by almost immediately picking up on Jun's talk and further elaborating, *And so the classes didn't quite make relevant sense to us?* (line 12) which she confirms to have been a disappointing factor about the program (line 14).

The two excerpts have shown instances in which participants claim epistemic primacy pertaining to their professional roles they have as the current English teachers in Korea. As Figure 10 displays, the participants have access to diverse roles as information providers, learners and experienced professionals of the job they have come to further develop. Within their initial role of being the information provider, they go back and forth between the boundaries of their other roles, which enable them to bring their experience and expertise into the discussion. Their actual lived experiences as current working professionals in the context legitimize their claims of epistemic primacy over certified and acknowledged professionals in the area (e.g., workshop instructors), further lending important consequences for the program being evaluated. The detailed analyses, which enable specific illumination of how and when participants access these roles in the construction of their opinions and evaluations of the program lend crucial and specified diagnosis of the program thus better informing the final decision-making process.

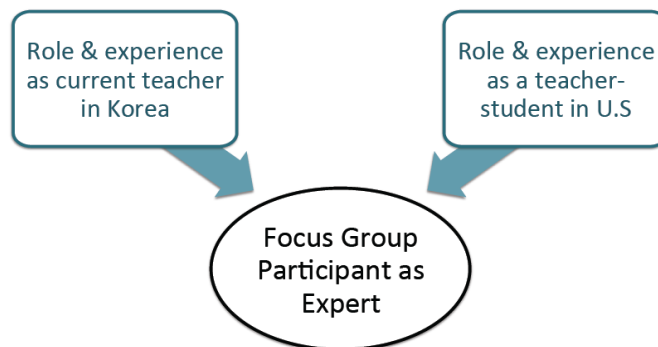


Figure 10. Diverse roles of participants

The final subsection examines a different aspect of participants projecting their gained expertise as a way of indirectly evaluating a policy implemented, accessing a larger scope of discussion.

6.3.2. *The “Native Speaker” Conundrum and Category Membership*

This last section addresses a substantial issue that was brought up in all seven focus groups: policy-related definition of “native-speaker teacher.” The excerpts in this subsection illuminate how the different interpretations and orientations towards the same concept can be diversely accessed and made relevant within the frame of talk being constructed.

The first excerpt is from Group A. The initial question that started this discussion was the moderator’s question on the recruitment procedures to this program. Having moved on to the topic of government-mandated goals of this program, Najin starts a story.

Ex 6.9. Group A: What I heard was

- 01 Najin: 저는 무슨 얘기를 들었냐면:=
 02 Min: 팔빙수 같네
 03 Najin: =구청에서, 왜 그 교육청당 원어민의 (.)
 04 뭐, 숫::자, 뭐 그런걸 계산하잖나요,
 05 근데 저희가 이 연수 프로그램으 받으면::,
 06 native speaker라고 저희를 계산한데요=
 07 Seoho: =계산해가지고 [쫓이는 거예요
 08 Min: [근데, 오호호호 native speaker가 아닌데 흐흐
 09 Churi: [이 연수 목적 중에 하나예요
 10 Mod: [°oh my goodness°
 11 Seoho: 쫓이기, 쫓이기 위한 것
 12 (3.0)

- 13 Min: °ᄇᄇ°
 14 Mod: well:: ((smiley voice)) were those hh expectations hh met?
- 01 → Najin: cenun mwusun yaykilul tul-ess-nya-myen
 I-TP what story-ACC hear-PST-Q-COND
What I heard was
- 02 Min: phathpingswu kath-ney
 shave ice like-DC
This is like Korean shave ice
- 03 → Najin: kwucheng-eyse, way ku kyoyukcheon-tang wenemin-uy (.)
 city council-at, why-DM that ministry of education-each native speaker-DT
 04 mwe, swus::ca mwe kulen-kel kyeysanha-canh-ayo,
 mm, number-TOP DM that-thing calculate-TAG-POL
 05 kuntey cehuy-ka i yenswu *program*-ul pat-umyen::
 but we-HON-NM this workshop program-ACC take-COND
 06 *native speaker*-lako cehuy-lul kyeysan hantay-yo=
 native speaker-QT us-HON-ACC calculate do-HEARSAY-POL
**At the city council, why, you know, the ministry of education delegates a
 certain number of native speakers mm per education district mm something
 like that, right? But the thing is once we complete this teacher-training
 workshop people are saying that they will count us as native speakers as
 well.**
- 07 Seoho: =kyesan hayka-ciko [ccwuli=nun ge-e-yo
 calculate and lessen
They calculate and then lessen-
- 08 Min: [kun::tey ohohoho, *native speaker*-ka
 but hahahah, native speaker-NM
 09 anintey hohoho
 not-CIRCUM hahaha
But well, hahaha, but we are not native speakers, hahaha
- 10 Churi: [i: yenswu mokcek cwung-ey hana-eyyo
 this workshop purpose admist one-POL
That is actually one of the stated purposes of this training workshop
- 11 Mod: [°oh goodness°
- 12 Seoho: ccwuliki, ccwuliki wihan kes
 lessen-NML, lessen-NML for thing
**it's to lessen the number of native speakers needed
 (3.0)**
- 13 Min: °hehe°
 haha
- 14 Mod: >°well°< ((smiley voice)) were those hehe expectations hh met?

In the case of this excerpt, what starts as being formulated as “hearsay” by the first speaker, Najin (lines 1-6), is taken up by a co-participant, Seoho and reformulated as an actual

fact (line 7), which is then once again upgraded by another participant, Churi, to be the explicit goal of the program (line 9). What starts as possibly true or possibly false information is upgraded to a stated fact by the collaborative response efforts by co-participants. The detailed analysis is as follows. The initial question that started this discussion was the moderator's question on the recruitment procedures to this program. Having started with the technicalities of the application process and being selected for participation, the discussion moves on here as Najin starts her turn in line 1. Najin starts her turn with a preface *What I heard was-*, framing the talk to come as a story she has heard from elsewhere. While this also acts as a way of holding her turn, she is also removing the primacy of the epistemic claim in the story to come away from her onto an unknown source of information (Heritage, 2012a). In line 3, she continues with her story, seeking collaboration from her fellow teachers (e.g., line 3, "why, you know," use of discourse marker "*mwe*"), but before actually telling the "story that she heard" (line 1), she first prefaces her upcoming story with information that she formulates to be a fact that everyone has access to, *at the city council, why, you know, the ministry of education delegates a certain number of native speakers (.) mm per education district mm something like that, right?* (lines 3-4). Without waiting for a response or agreement to her tag question, she continues with her *heard* story, *But the thing is, once we complete this teacher-training workshop, I hear that they will count us to be native speakers as well* (lines 5-6). In other words, while inserting actual information to provide background for the information she is about to deliver, she goes back to formulating the rest of her turn again as hearsay, thus refusing to commit herself to being the deliverer of possibly wrong or uncertain information (Wilkinson, 2011). Despite her uncertain footing (Goffman, 1978, 1981) indicated by her framing the fact as a heard story, her co-participants' uptake

collaboratively upgrades her *heard story* into an actual fact that exists and is in fact a stated goal of the program.

First, Seoho starts in line 7 and repeats the last phrase from Najin *so they calculate* and starts to elaborate—which was unfortunately not clearly picked up in the recording. But he is interrupted by Min (line 8) with her opinion, *oh my, but hahaha, we are not native speakers*, which aligns with Najin’s way of formulating the story, framing her turn with laughter and thus negating actual possibility of what has been suggested in the story (i.e., that they will have improved enough to be considered as native speakers upon the completion of the workshop). However, instead of aligning to Min’s formulation of Najin’s story as just a laughable incident, in the next turn, the remaining participant, Churi, comes in with his reformulation of the information, confirming the *heard story* to be the actual goal of the workshop, *this is actually one of the stated purposes of this training workshop* (line 10). In response to the moderator’s surprised evaluative comment *oh goodness* (line 11), Seoho continues from where he was cut off in line 7, and further elaborates on why such goal would indeed be a valid purpose for the Korean administrators, which would be to decrease the number of native speaker teachers required per educational district.²⁶

In delivering the documented information as a heard story, by which she is also disclaiming her epistemic primacy (Raymond & Heritage, 2006), Najin is not only distancing herself from any responsibility that being the information deliverer may carry (Heritage, 2012a), but is also indirectly providing her opinion of the policy. While the other participants choose a

²⁶ As a little background information (to help understanding of the extract), the Korean government has a specific set number of native-speaker English teachers each education district needs to employ. What the participants are suggesting/stating here is that by acknowledging Korean-native English teachers who have matriculated the 6-month workshop program to be considered under the category of “native English teachers,” the local ministry of education can save the money they would otherwise have to spend on recruiting foreigners to Korean K-12 schools. This has been a problem recently, not only regarding the expense but also the inability to screen out unqualified teachers.

more direct method of expressing their opinion on the policy by treating it as a laughable matter (Min: *but, hahaha, we are not native speakers*) or accepting it as a fact (Churi: *This is one of the actual purposes of this training workshop, Seoho: it is to lessen the number of native speakers needed.*), Najin is indirectly suggesting disbelief in the existence of such improbable policy by framing as a heard story as opposed to factual information. Either way, the participants are all accessing individual experiences and resources to provide a collaborated understanding as *experts* of the information being provided.

The next excerpt is from a little later in the same group, where the moderator refers back to this discussion of *being native speakers*, and Najin's disbelieving stance is further explicated in detail through her elaborated reasoning in this excerpt.

Ex. 6.10. Group A: We will never be native speakers

- 01 Mod: 그 아까 말씀하신 것 중에 좀 놀랐던게
 02 이 연수를 하는 이유 중에 하나가, 이걸 하고나면
 03 아까 한국 학교에서는 native speaker의 °신분으로°
 04 인정을 받는거라고 하셨자나요? 거기에 맞춰서,
 05 그제 거기서 5개월 하고? 여기와서 하신 게,
 06 거기에 align 된거 같아요? 진짜, 아:: 나 이거 하고
 07 났으니까 쯤, [쯤
 08 Seoho: [native speaker 처럼 수업 할 수 있겠다? ((smiley voice))
 09 Mod: 네, 뭐 그런=
 10 Min: 그건↓: 아니죠:: 좀 부족하죠↓=((gaze to Mod))
 11 Najin: =저도 처음에 그 얘기 들었을때, 어? 저렇게
 12 생각을 하실 수도 있다니:: 라고 생각 했던게::
 13 사실:: (.) 약간 다- 어른들 이잖나요
 14 Mod: 네네 ((gaze at Najin))
 15 Najin: 아이들 아니고, 그 다음에 6개월 동안 받는다 해도
 16 어차피, 어차피 5개월은? 한국에서 한 거고,
 17 물론, 거기 있는 동안은, 뭐 영어만 쓰세요::
 18 라고 이야기를 하시지만?
 19 Mod: 네
 20 Najin: 사실, 저희가 다 모여있는데,=
 21 Seoho: =영어로만 하기엔,
 22 Najin: 영어로만 하겠다는 사람이 있으면 조금:: (0.5)
 23 Mod: ((laughing)) 지금 같은 상황? haha
 24 Seoho: 네, 위화감이 haha 조성돼가지고 안돼
 25 Najin: °부담이° 된다거나? 위화감이 조성되었을 거 같아요.
 26 Mod: 네
 27 Najin: 근데? (.) 그런 상황이: 일반적으로 다:: 일반 사람이면
 28 다 생각 할 수 있는 상황인데, 거기 위에 계신

- 11 Naijn: =ceto cheumey ku yayki tulessulttay, e? celehkey
I-also at first that story heard-time huh like that
- 12 sayngkakul hasil swuto isstani:: lako sayngkak haysstenkey::
think-ACC do-HON able exist-Q-IE QT thinkg did-NM
- 13 sasil:: (.) yakkan ta- eluntul icanayo
actually a little all adults are-Q-POL
For me as well, when I first heard that story, I thought, “huh? People can think like that?” is what I thought. Because you know, if you think about it a little, we are all adults.
- 14 Mod: ney ney
yes yes
- 15 Najin: aitul aniko, ku taumey yuk kaywel tongan patnunta hayto
kids NEG-CONN that and then 6 months during receive say-also
- 16 echaphi, echaphi, 5 kaywelun? hankwukeyse han keko,
still still 5 months-TP Korea-at did was-CONN
- 17 mwullon, keki issnun tonganun, mwe yengeman ssuseyyo::
of course there exist-RL during well English-only use-IMPER-POL
- 18 lako iyaki-lul hasiciman?
QT say-ACC do-POL-NML-but
Not kids, and also even if we take these courses for 6 months. Still, still, we spend 5 months? of it in Korea, of course, they did say, speak only English in Korea as well. That’s what they say, but still?
- 19 Mod: ney
yes
- 20 Najin: sasil, cehuy-ka ta moye-issnuntey::=
actually we-SH-NM all gathered together-CIRCUM
In reality, we are always together and in such a situation well,
- 21 Seoho: =yenge-loman hakieyn,
in English-only to speak well,
for us to only speak English, well,
- 22 Najin: yengeloman hakeysstanun salami issunyen cokum:: (0.5)
in English only will do-TP person-NM exist-COND a little
If there is anyone who only speaks in English well it’s a little
- 23 Mod: ((laughing)) cikum kathun sanghwang? haha
now like situation
It would be a little like the current situation? haha
- 24 Seoho: ney, wihwakami haha cosengtoykaciko antway
yes disharmony-NM haha create-CONN not good
yes I think it would create a disharmonic atmosphere, haha, it wouldn’t be good.
- 25 Najin: °pwutami° toyntakena? wihwakami cosengtoyessul ke kathayo.
burden can be-Q disharmony-NM create-can do thing seems like-POL
It would either be quite a burden? Or create a strange atmosphere, I would think.
- 26 Mod: ney
yes

27 Najin: kuntey? (.) kulen sanghwang-i: ilpancekulo ta:: ilpan salamimyen
but such situation-NM normally all general person-COND
28 ta sayngkak hal swu issnun sanghwangintey, keki wiew kyeysin
all think possible situation-CIRCUM there at top exist-POL
29 pwuntulun:: hayngcenghasinun pwuntulun okaywelto ta yenge
people-HON-NM policy-POL-RL people-HON-TP 5 months-also all English
30 ssulke-lako saynggak hasinunkeko?
use-QT think POL-thing-Q
**But you know, you would think such a situation is quite logical, and you would think
any logical person would all think alike in such a situation, but the people up there
those people, who are in charge of the policy, they firmly believe that we will all
speak only English for all of the 5 months?**

31 Mod: um::
mm

32 Najin: yeki wase-to?
here come as well
And here (in the U.S.) as well?

33 Min: oykwukin-man mannantako
foreigners-only meet-QT
They think we will only meet with foreigners

34 Najin: hankwuk salamtulilang ta pang ccacwuko, hankwuk salamtuli manh:un
Korean people-with all room put together-CONN Korean people-NM lots-of
35 tongney-ey swukso-lul cacacwuko:: simcie cheumey wase chesnal
area-at accommodation-ACC arrange-CONN moreover at first came first day
36 konghang-ey tteleciko chesnal cemsim siksasalul ta kathi
airport-at arrive-and first day lunch meal-ACC all together
**They put us in the same room with Korean people, they arrange our accommodation
in the area where there are the most Korea people, and moreover, on the first day
we arrived? Once we got to the airport, we all had lunch together**

38 Seoho: selapel *haha*
Korean restaurant name haha

39 Najin: hasinuntey? hankwuk siktang kase [papul sacwusiko kulenuntey
eat together-CIRCUM Korean restaurant go and meal-ACC bought for us and such-CIRCUM
**The administrator here bought us lunch, but he took us to a Korean restaurant for
our first lunch.**

40 Seoho: [selapel kase mekko *haha*
Korean restaurant name go and eat *haha*
We ate at a Korean restaurant and...haha.

41 Mod: huhek
yikes

42 Najin: ilen sanghwang-eyse motwuko ta yenge-lul halkelako? 6 kaywelilanun
such situation-at everyone all English-ACC do-QT 6 months-CONTRA
43 sikanul? yukkaywel tongan kyey::sok yengeman ssese, a 6 kaywel
time-ACC 6 months during contiunuously English-only use-and ah 6 months
44 tongan wulika nehuyhantey yenge yenswe sikhyecwessunikka
during we-NM you-PL-to English workshop allowed-and therefore
45 >neneynun weneminchelem malhayla< kukey. (1.0)

you-PL-TP native speaker-like talk-IMPER that it
In such a situation, expecting all participants to only speak English? For 6 months? Thinking, “ah they will speak only English for 6 months, and because we allowed them the chance to take time off school and only speak English for 6 months, now you must all speak like native speakers” well, that is just.

- 46 Mod: yakkan (.) tongsangimong-ineyyo=
 a little “one bed two dreams”-IE-POL
Yeah, it is a little like having two very different goals through the one same workshop
- 47 Seoho: =ney:: kulehcyo:
yes that’s right

In this excerpt, the moderator brings up a previously mentioned story (Ex. 6.9) from the *something that you mentioned previously* (line 1) and provides a rephrased version of Najin’s story—that the participants will be considered as “native speaker” teachers once they complete the workshop—in constructing her question. In formulating her question the moderator goes through the process of: (a) readdressing aforementioned talk provided by participants (line 1), (b) evaluating the heard story, *I was surprised to hear* (line 2), (c) reconfirming, *that’s what you said?* (line 4), and (d) asking the question, *do you align to this?* (line 5), and then reformulating her question in the form of an imagined reported speech, *really, do you think ‘ah, now that I’ve completed this workshop, I can teach like a native speaker’?* (line 6). This last sentence is overlapped and completed in question form by Seoho, *I think I can teach an English class like a native speaker?* (line 8), which is then confirmed by the moderator, *yes, well, something like that* (line 9), after which another participant answers the moderator’s question with a negative stance, *That is, no, I think it’s insufficient to say that* (line 10). Seoho’s overlap and completion of the moderator’s question indicates his understanding of the moderator’s projected trajectory before she was able to complete her question. Seoho’s interruption is not problematized, neither by the moderator nor other participants, and on the contrary, the moderator accepts Seoho’s completed version of her original question (line 9, “yes, well, something like that”). The moderator initially

surrendered her epistemic primacy to the question being asked by starting the story as a reference to an already told story, thus expanding the boundary of her question to include the shared knowledge that both she and the participants have access to. While the outlook of the question seems like she is merely seeking positive confirmation of the aforementioned policy, she constructs the question in a way that a positive confirmation (yes) is a dispreferred response. In other words, she is asking, “so do you think it’s viable for you to be considered as native speakers after you complete this program?” which aligns to the policy, but by expressing her evaluation (“I was really surprised”) and reformulating the specifics in extreme case formulation (“after only 5 months?” “really?” [c.f., Pomerantz, 1986]) and then asking, “do you think this is possible?” the moderator’s inference toward the preferred response of “no,” is undisguisable. And two aspects of participants’ talk that follow confirm that they picked up on this specific question construction: (a) Seoho interrupts and finishes the moderator’s question with a smiley voice (line 8), and (b) Najin repeats a similar formulation method in providing her response, *when I first heard that story, I thought, ‘huh? people can think like that?’* (lines 11-12). In other words, both Seoho and Najin are aligning to the subjected preference towards the negative stance situated in the moderator’s question, and in the end, all three—the moderator, Seoho and Najin—come to a conclusion together that the negative inference to the implications of the policy is indeed viable (line 46, “one bed two dreams”).

Furthermore, Najin elaborately builds on her initial alignment to the moderator and continues to construct her opinion that explicitly displays her own understanding of what is entailed in the definition of *being a native speaker*, which she explicitly details is different from what is being posited by the policy-makers. She specifically points out the incongruence in the situated goal (i.e., deeming workshop completors as native speakers) and the reality: (a) of the 6-

month duration of the program, they spend 5 months of it in Korea speaking Korean (lines 15-16); (b) regulations mandate they speak English at all times during the 6-month period, but the atmosphere (i.e., all Koreans in a Korean context) does not allow for such regulations to be kept strongly, moreover, when kept, it will only ruin the scholastic atmosphere overall (lines 22-24); and (c) even during the 5-week U.S. component of the program, they all stay in the same hotel with other Korean participants (lines 33-35), with even fewer restrictions to the language they speak. Finally, Najin accesses her professional knowledge as a trained language teacher in questioning the logic behind such policy: (a) *we are all adults* (line 13); (b) *anyone with general logic would know that the given situation would never allow for adult learners to acquire the position of being a native speaker with just 6 months of classes and speaking English* (lines 27-28); (c) and so, *how can they* (the people up there [i.e., the administrators and policy-makers who would be highly educated individuals within the area of English education]) *possibly think it would be possible to situate and accomplish such impractical goals?* (lines 29-30).

Najin and her co-participants (Seoho and Min) together construct the contextual information and their own perspectives of the situation, which is interwoven within the interaction. And the analyses of these constructions allow a better-informed understanding of the complex relationship between the policy, policy-makers, and the actual execution of the policy and its effects.

The following excerpt is similar in that the speaker formulates the information he is about to share as a general opinion and also that the topic of the talk also concerns the native-speaker policy in the current English education in public and private schools in Korea. A relevant difference between the previous excerpt and this one is the fact that this one is from a group of elementary school teachers—who are subject to different policy and regulations. The elementary

school teachers taking part in this workshop are mostly those who have no experience in teaching English in classrooms. It is only recently that the English subject has become a mandatory part of the curriculum in Korean elementary schools (from Grade 3 and up), and as a way of supplementing the number of much needed English teachers, these participants were encouraged to apply to the 6-month workshop after which they start teaching English as a subject in their classrooms (cf., there were some participants—who are not in this excerpt—who have had a semester or two teaching English already, although they were not trained English teachers).

Ex. 6.11. Group D-1: People have said

- 01 Jena: 규정이 있으니까 3년 동안 영어전담을 해야해요
 02 Mod: 네네
 03 Jena: 국가에서 돈을 들여서 보내준거잖아요
 04 Mod: 네네
 05 Jena: 5년 안에 3년을 해야해요.
 06 Mod: 아::
 07 (2.0)
 08 Jinu: 이런 말도 또 있어요. (1.0) 우리 한국에 지금?
 09 Mod: 네
 10 Jinu: 많은 원어민들이↓ 와서 이제 >한국에 와서<
 11 co-teaching을 해요::? 실제로원어민들이
 12 한국에서 영어 교육을 하면서 많::은 영향력을
 13 미치고 있고 또 실제로↑ (.) 그 사람들이 학교에 와서
 14 학교 신문을 만든다거나::?
 15 Mod: 네
 16 Jinu: 아이들에게 그:: 영어를 가르치면서 그 발음이나, 그
 17 >intonation< 참 우리가- 한국인들이 도저히 따라 갈 수
 18 Jena: ((nods))
 19 Jinu: 없는 부분[들에 있어서
 20 Mod: [네네네
 21 Jinu: 많이 커버를 해주는데:: (.) 어:: 몇몇 사람들은
 22 이렇게 말을 해요. 장기적으로 초등교사를 우리 교사를
 23 양성을 교육을 많이 시켜서
 24 Mod: 그렇죠, 네,
 25 Jinu: 원어민들을? (.) 이제 나중에는? 이렇게 원어민 없어도?:
 26 Mod: 음::
 27 Jinu: 원어민에 버금가는 수업이 되게끔 하는 것이 최종
 28 목표인데,
 29 Mod: 음음
 30 Jinu: 과연 그것이 잘 될지는? 장기적으로 그렇게 계획을
 31 잡고는 있는데, 그게 과연 언제될지? 그죠?
- 01 Jena: kyucengi issunikka 3-nyen tongan yenge centam-ul hayyahayyo
 policy-NM exist-because three years during English teach only must do-POL

Because there is a policy in place, after we go back, we need to be in charge of the English subject for at least 3 years.

02 Mod: ney ney

oh I see

03 Jena: kwukka-eyes ton-ul tulyese ponaycwunke-canhayo
country-from money-ACC used-for send us-you know-POL

Because as you know, the Korean government has spent their money to send us here, you know?

04 Mod: ney ney

yes yes

05 Jena: onyen aney samnyen-ul hayyahayyo.

5 years within 3 years-ACC must do-POL

We must be charge of the English subject for 3 years within 5 years of completing this workshop.

06 Mod: a::

oh::

07 (2.0)

08 Jinu: ilen malto tto isseyo.(1.0) wuli hankwukey cikum?

such saying also EXIST-POL our Korea-at currently

People are also saying, in Korea currently?

09 Mod: ney

yes

10 Jinu: manhun wenemintuli↓ wase icey >hankwukey wase<

lots of native speakers came now Korea-to came

11 co-teaching-ul hayyo::? silceylo wenemintuli

co-teaching-ACC do-POL for real native speakers

12 hankwuk-eye se yenge kyoyuk-ul hamyense manh::un yenghyanglyek-ul

Korea-at English education-ACC do-CONT lots of influence-ACC

13 michiko issko tto silceylo↑ (.) ku salamtuli hakkyoey wase

put on exist-CONN also for real those people-NM school-to come

14 hakkyo sinmwunul mantuntakena::?

school newspaper make for example. or

We have many native speaker teachers who have come to Korea and do co-teaching with us. And really, native speakers have come to Korea and have made a lot of good influence in English education in Korea, that's all true. Like for example, they come to our schools and make the school newspaper and things like that?

15 Mod: ney

yes

16 Jinu: aituleykey ku:: yenge-lul kaluchimyense ku palumina, ku

to children that English-ACC teach-CONT the pronunciation or that

17 >intonation< cham wulika- hankwukintuli tocehi ttala kal swu

intonation DM we-NM Korean-NM no matter how much we try can't follow

18 Jena: ((nods))

19 Jinu: epsnun pwupwun[tuley issese

NEG-NM area-PL-at exist

When we teach English to our kids, there are areas such as pronunciation or intonation, that we as native Koreans cannot follow the proficiency of native speakers, and in such areas,

20 Mod: [ney ney ney
yes yes yes

21 Jinu: manhi cover-lul haycwununtey:: (.) e:: myech myech salamtulun
quite a bit cover-ACC for us-but well few few people-TP
22 ilehkey malul hayyo. cangkicekulo chotungkyusalul wuli kyosalul
like this say do-POL in the long run elementary school teachers-ACC our teachers
23 yangsengul kyoyukul manhi sikhyese
grow-ACC educate-ACC a lot enable-and
**They (the native speakers) cover those areas for us, but stil, a few people are
saying things like, in the long run, we need to educate our elementary school
teachers, our teachers a lot.**

24 Mod: kulehcyo, ney
right, yes

25 Jinu: wenemintulul? (.) icey nacwungeynun? Ilehkey wenemin epseto:
native speakers now later on like this native speaker NEG-exist-although
So the native speakers, now later on, even without the native speakers,

26 Mod: um::
yes

27 Jinu: weneminey pekumkanun swuepi toykeykkum hanun kesi choycong
native speaker as good as class-NM possible-enable do-RL thing-is final
28 mokphointey
goal and purpose, and yet
**Enabling English classes by native Korean teachers that goes beyond the classes
taught by native speakers is the final destination of our teacher education, that's
what they say is the purpose, but**

29 Mod: um um
yes yes

30 Jinu: kwayen kukesi cal toylcinun? cangkicekulo kulehkey kyeyhoykul
indeed whether that well be done-whether in the long run like that plan
31 capkonun issnuntey, kukey kwayen enceytolci? kucyo?
hold on currently-exist-but that indeed when possible right?
**Well, whether that is indeed possible? We have set it as a long run goal, but
whether and when that will be made possible, we'll have to wait and see, right?**

Prior to this talk, the moderator had asked the question of what their teaching load would be like once they returned to their school after the workshop program ended. As mentioned above the excerpt, these participants are all elementary school teachers, and some of them would be teaching English in the classroom for the first time. For example, one of the participants, Jena, was just talking about how her original major was Korean language education and how she would be co-teaching English classes with an English native speaker teacher. In line 1, she reveals the policy that follows the completion of the 6-month program, *because there is a policy*

in place, after we go back, we need to be in charge of the English subject for at least 3 years (line 1). She also gives her understanding of why such a policy is in place *because as you know, Korean government has spent money to send us here, you know?* (line 3), constructing this statement as a rationale for the aforementioned 3-year regulation. Following the moderator's aligning token *yes yes* (line 4), Jena then continues, further elaborating the specifics of the policy: *We must be in charge of the English subject for 3 years within 5 years of completing this workshop* (line 5), to which the moderator produces a change of state token *oh::*, showing that this is new information (Heritage, 1998, 2002) to her (line 6). Following a 2-second pause, Jinu launches into a relevant long story telling sequence that follows the trajectory as described below.

Jinu starts his talk with a preface, framing the information to come to be the general opinion of an unspecified population, *people have said, currently in Korea?* (line 8). He then goes on to provide the background of the current English class situation in Korean elementary schools, where co-teaching is prevalent, as the current status of the Korean English teachers is visibly at a lower proficiency level than that of native speaker teachers, especially when it comes to areas such as pronunciation (lines 10-21). He states that native speaker teachers *cover* for them a lot (line 21), especially in the areas that Korean teachers find difficult to do, more so as not many current elementary school teachers have professional training in teaching English in elementary schools²⁷ (line 10-21). At this point, after he completes the background section of his talk, he refers to the general *few people* again (line 22), by which again he transfers the grounds of the information he is about to provide as a *general* idea that floating around as a gossip, rather than concrete information that he can strongly claim. He then constructs the *story* that is floating around amidst the *general few* people, being that the actual purpose of this workshop as well as

²⁷ Even within this particular focus group, of the four participants, only two were trained to teach English as a subject while for the other two—the current interactants, Jena and Jinu—this 6-month workshop is their first training in teaching English as a subject.

any type of intensive English teacher development programs is to enable Korean teachers to obtain and develop the ability to provide English classes that go beyond the current ones that are provided by the native speaker teachers (lines 23-28). This information-provision is followed by his own opinion which starts with another disclaimer, *well that's what they say is the purpose* (line 27-28), and concludes with a mitigated version of his personal opinion formulated as a question, *well, whether that is indeed possible?* implicating questionable aspects of this “purpose” while also seeking alignment to his doubtful opinion *we'll have to wait and see*, with a final tag question *right?* (line 31).

As suggested by the policy-information provided by Jena just prior to Jinu's talk, and the fact that the participants have already described their non-English training background, the information Jinu shares in his talk is already shared information among the participants (except for the moderator). However, by formulating his talk so that the information is provided as the general opinion of a “few people”, rather than his own, Jinu is disclaiming any epistemic primacy from the information and on the contrary distancing himself from any epistemic responsibility (Heritage & Raymond 2012; Heritage, 2013) he might have by being the provider of sensitive information. However, despite the fact that he has framed the information within hedging and quotes with attempts to disclaim any epistemic responsibilities, the information itself is nevertheless produced and conveyed to recipients as news (i.e., moderator's receipt tokens) and along with his concluding remarks that outline his opinion of this “possible” policy to be implemented locally situates him as an *expert* delivering information.

The three excerpts in this subsection have highlighted how participants formulate their evaluative opinions and perspectives of controversial policies that have influence on the evaluation as well as the government-based program policy. The findings not only provide

implications for the need to readjust the immediate program goals but also lend larger policy-related implications for future development of English education in Korea. A detailed analyses of participants' opinions and information productions allow an examination beyond the simple evaluation question of what works and what does not, further onto an in-depth understanding of how participants perceive and understand the implemented policy and goals related to the program being evaluated, placing important implications for the program and its future development.

6.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I examined how participants orient to the interaction within focus groups as a social activity. The first subsection outlined participants orienting to the institutionality of focus groups. Through the act of explicitly orienting to the possible reversed roles between the moderator and participants, the participants displayed their understanding of the institutional roles that constitute an institutional discourse such as focus groups. Then in the following two subsections, the analyses illuminated the ways in which participants strived to achieve the institutional goal of providing relevant, understandable information to the moderator relying on diverse interactional resources specific to a multi-participant focus group interaction.

The second and last section investigated the ways in which participants delivered information with authority and epistemic primacy. The first subsection examined two excerpts in which participants claimed epistemic primacy on making assessments and evaluation of the program, accessing the context of Korean education system. Then, I examined three excerpts in which a prevalent topic surfaced within the interaction and examined how participants claimed

or disclaimed rights to the information and opinions they were providing based on their own understanding of the policy being discussed and evaluated.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

This study set out to examine the “whats” and “hows” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, 2011) of focus group interactions within the context of an evaluation for a professional teacher program. Along with the purpose of drawing out evaluative implications from participants’ opinions gathered within the multi-participant focus groups, I also set out with the goal to apply CA findings to re-specify the focus group as a useful methodology in applied linguistics. Treating the focus groups as a specific social activity and data collection method, I gave consideration to what constitutes focus group interactions as well as to how the participants oriented to this specific interaction as an institutional social activity. In this chapter, I will briefly summarize the previous chapters. Then I will discuss implications drawn from these findings. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of this study and conclude with suggestions for the direction of future research to be developed within applied linguistics and second language studies.

7.2. Summary of the Chapters

Chapter 1 started with the objectives of this study, grounding focus groups within the context of applied linguistics research, followed by the contributions I aim to make in this particular area of qualitative research methods in the field of applied linguistics.

As a way of situating this study within the research literature, in Chapter 2, I addressed three key topics that contextualize this study: language teacher development, focus group as a research method within program evaluation, and applied conversation analysis. By briefly outlining the research in each of the three areas, I attempted to make a connection that provides a comprehensive background for the current study. I especially highlighted recent research trends

in applied conversation analysis, which also act as the main impetus of this study: applying detailed interactional findings to inform research questions situated within larger contexts, such as program evaluation of a language teacher development workshop program. This chapter concluded by presenting the following research questions.

1. What are the interactional features that constitute focus groups as a research method?
2. How do the participants construct their opinions and perspectives, collaboratively and as an individual *expert* of the topic being discussed?
3. How can CA findings contribute to a better understanding of focus groups as an informative and useful research method in program evaluation?

Chapter 3 described the data context, research participants, and the data collection method, followed by the details of the CA transcription procedures as well as the process of Romanization, glossing and translation of the original Korean data.

Chapter 4, 5, and 6 constituted the analytic chapters. In Chapter 4, I investigated the interactional shape of focus groups. In the analysis, I showed the diverse ways and directions in which openings and turn allocations were distributed by all participants. Also, I examined the interactional complexity in doing uptake and constructing turn organizations within multi-party focus groups, which shed light on the actual interaction that goes on within focus groups, better informing the questions on participant roles prior research on focus groups have posed (Pierce, 2015; Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Morgan, 2010). The final section of this chapter discussed the ways turns were allocated, better informing the structure of participants' orientation to turn-taking procedures in a multi-participant interactional setting.

Chapter 5 examined topic construction. The detailed analyses of the multi-party discussion unearthed diverse ways in which participants relied on each other and their pre-existing social relationship as useful interactional resources in constructing their own opinions and arguments. In the analysis, I specifically considered cases in which participants (a) built their own opinions onto those previously provided by co-participants, (b) collaborated together as a group to provide a well-rounded response to the moderator's protocol-based questions, or (c) used disagreements as a way of providing diverse response types. The analyses in this chapter illuminated an important aspect of focus groups in that the group dynamics and set up of focus groups—that differ from interviews of other types of institutional discourse—enabled a wider pool and method of gaining diverse information from participants as *experts* in the topic of discussion, further details of which constitute the final analytic chapter.

The analyses in Chapter 6 built on this aspect of participants' role within the interaction, and investigated further how participants orient to focus groups as an institutional, social activity. The analyses in this chapter revealed that through various resources, participants acknowledged the ongoing activity as an institutional interaction. Thus, they constructed their talk in orientation to the understanding of their responsibility to act according to their situated roles as well as provide adequate information required by the protocol. The second part of this chapter highlighted how participants orient to their *expert* status by claiming epistemic primacy (Heritage, 2013) and in formulating their opinions as an insider on the issue of differing conceptualization and usage of the term *native speaker*. The discussion on this particular issue lends important implications for language education policies in South Korea, which I will discuss further in the next section.

7.3. Implications

Two sets of implications can be drawn from this study. I will first outline the implications based on the evaluative findings drawn from participants' opinions displayed through the interaction. Then, I will discuss the methodological implications concerning the re-specification of focus groups as a research method in applied linguistics research.

Focus groups can be used at all stages of a research or evaluation cycle (Pierce, 2015). In the case of the current study, focus groups composed the final part of the evaluation of the development program for EFL teachers, and the protocol was constructed based on the findings from the needs analysis (Brown, 2001), instructor interviews, and the researcher's observation findings, with the goal of informing in further detail the evaluative responses that constituted previous findings (Jung, *in work*). While a large component of the analyses focused on the interaction constitutive of focus groups—in an effort to identify the interactional layout of focus groups—there were also many evaluative findings that lent important implications about the language teacher development program as well as language education policy in South Korea. First, the findings illuminated that the participants recognized a gap between the language education policy in Korea serving as the impetus for the current goal and the situated curriculum of the program. As participants revealed through numerous occasions (e.g., Ex. 5.9, 5.14, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8), there exists a knowledge gap between the fast-paced changes occurring in the current English education system in Korea as they—current in-service teachers—have access to, and the curriculum being offered that has not been updated in recent years. While the data also illuminated participants' acknowledgment of the program benefits (e.g., Ex. 4.10, 4.12, 5.7), this gap surfaced as one of the biggest and most wide-spread concerns and complaints through all

seven groups. Such findings not only provide suggestions for evaluation-based recommendations to the stakeholders (Patton, 2008; Pierce, 2012) for the sake of program development, but also articulate the need to identify participants' perspectives and assessment of the program portrayed locally through discussion, which this study shows to be more recent and informative. Second, as surfaced in multiple excerpts in Chapter 6, the findings illuminated the discrepancy in the understood definition and conceptualization of what constitutes *being a native speaker* English teacher. While the participants took a more tentative attitude (e.g., constructing the information as a "heard story" [Ex. 6.9], referencing a general "some people" as the source of information, [Ex. 6.11]) in contributing to this discussion, it was clarified that the situated motive of the Ministry of Education in providing the funds for these development programs (i.e., to reduce the number of foreign-nationality native speakers by considering these teachers—who participated in these intensive workshops—as "native speaker" teachers) did not align with the participants' definition of *being a native speaker* teacher of English (Ex. 6.9, 6.10, 6.11). While they agreed that a part of their own goals was to improve their language proficiency through this program, they also highlighted aspects that differentiate them from *native speakers* and further stated that the 'government-mandated goals' were not achievable (Ex. 6.10). Moreover, participants challenged the assumption situated in this goal (i.e., that six months of English-only curriculum is enough to change the status of these teachers from non-native speakers to native speakers) by: (a) collaboratively describing the actual situation of the workshop environment where if you spoke only English, you would be the "weird one" (Ex. 6.10); and (b) even if they were to be exposed English-only environment for six months, *they would never be native speakers* (Ex. 6.9, 6.10, 6.11). In other words, participants indirectly negated the situated goal of the workshop program by not only specifically challenging the discrepancy between the provided environment

and the situated goal, but also by posing the problem of discrepancy in the definition of *native speaker teachers*. This lends important implications regarding the existing complexity in defining the term *native speakers*, politically and realistically. It would be suggested that there is a need for further clarification of concepts and goals situated by the language education policy, which should incorporate participants' understanding and alignment with the implemented policy. As long as the discrepancy stays intact, the two goals (i.e., the policy goal versus participants' perceived reality) will indeed be two parallel roads that never meet (e.g., Ex. 6.10, *one bed two dreams*).

On the other hand, participants also suggested possible changes that could be made, which they projected to be effective in furthering the development of their language proficiencies. Their suggestions included: (a) more chances to interact with local students and teachers, (b) longer periods of workshop, (c) opportunities to teach English in local schools, and (d) taking classes as part of the regular university curriculum in the U.S.. Their suggestions lent important decision-informing implications which were conveyed to the administrators at the completion of the evaluation (*researcher's personal correspondence*, 2013). Overall, the findings lent important implications concerning the discrepancies in the different conceptualizations and understanding of *being a native speaker*, which opens up a new scope of discussion in this area. In sum, the close analysis of focus group interactions allowed for better understanding of participants' detailed and specific needs and expectations for the workshop program, suggestions from which could be implemented to further improve the program. The interactional analyses also enabled better understanding of how consensus on certain opinions were achieved, while varied disagreements surfaced on others, consequentially affecting the validity of the findings from qualitative data as the focus groups. Finally, the findings suggested important implications

concerning the language education policies in South Korea, details of which provide new insights and directions for proper understanding, development and adjustment in the English language education policy in South Korea.

Methodological implications are that the in-depth examination of the interactional design of multi-participant focus groups not only allows for a better understanding of what actually goes on in focus group interaction, but also leads to practical applications for how to design and use focus groups to better inform research practices in applied linguistics. The analyses manifested that focus group interactions rarely elicit straightforward question-response sequences, but rather form a complicated maze of interaction as participants weave in and out of different roles and stances in accomplishing different actions (i.e., participants' roles constituted more than simply responding to the moderator's preconstructed protocol). The findings suggest that the focus group discussions foster an environment where participants can freely distribute and share their opinions as well as contingently feed off each other's opinions, consequently lending a wider scope of information and discussion. While it is true that the moderator is able to more or less control the discussion (Kruger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 2010; Pierce, 2015), this study has demonstrated that participants' discussion and direction of talk is far more contingent on the flow of the interaction, especially compared to other modes of qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews, standardized surveys, observation). In other words, while the general outline of the focus groups can be more or less pre-constructed and controlled by the moderator's protocol, the findings in this study suggest that the direction and results of the discussion is rather contingent on the participants and their interaction *in situ*. This suggests that unlike dyadic interviews, there is more variability in the discussion (see Fig. 11), consequently having unexpected affordances as an interactional method, which lends important implications for how focus groups should be

designed and used to fit the research purposes within applied linguistics. Furthermore, it also leads to the discussion on the role of the moderator, which can have practical applications for future research utilizing focus groups.

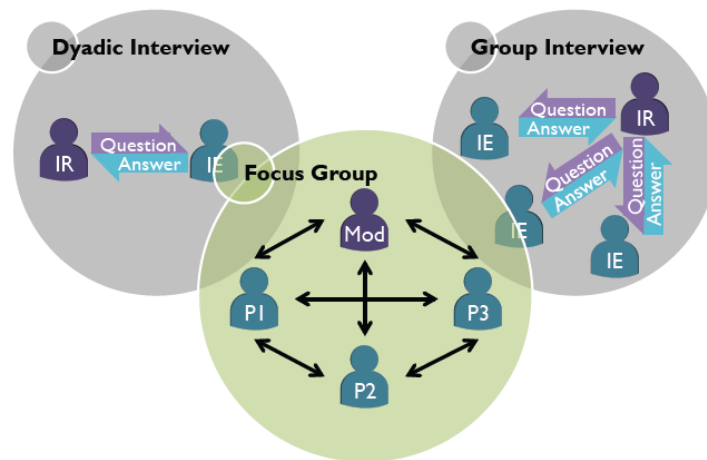


Figure 11. Interactional direction in interviews and focus groups (*Fig. 7. repeated*)

The final implication concerns the application of conversation analysis as the analytic tool, which allowed richer, more complex, and clearer description and thus, understanding of multi-party focus group interactions. As Pierce (2015) noted, multi-participant interactions such as focus groups can be rather complex, messy and less generalizable (Pierce, 2015), but these aspects can also be the very core contribution to research of the real world (i.e., authentic data representing the real world), which in fact is quite complex, messy, and individually constructed. Conversation analytic perspective aids this limitation by portraying the basic shape of interaction in focus groups (chapter 4) and the sequential aspects of the interaction that can be applied to better understanding focus group interactions, consequently providing a well-informed guide for future research designs and uses. It should be recognized that the examination of the interactional

shape in focus groups within this study is limited within this specific context (i.e., conducting focus groups for the purpose of informing program evaluation). As Kasper and Wagner (2014) clearly noted, “in order to achieve analytic generalization [ten Have, 2007, p. 149], collections need to draw on a variety of data (p. 176). In other words, while other focus groups conducted in other settings may lend different findings and implications, once we have a basic understanding of what constitutes focus group interactions, it becomes easier to locate and use the findings researchers were initially seeking through focus groups. And the current study makes a novel contribution in being the first study to situate its core focus on the examining the interactional organization of focus groups. Moreover, one of the underlying goals of focus groups is to elicit the individual participant’s opinion and perspective, which in the end come together to constitute the group opinion. As previous studies have noted (Krueger & Casey 2009; Morgan, 1997, 2010; Puchta & Potter, 2004), reaching a consensus is not a goal instituted within focus groups, but rather a method to facilitate individual participants’ opinions, which are projected to better inform research questions underlying the impetus for conducting focus groups. Thus, striving for generalizability contradicts the very core aspect of choosing focus groups as the research method. However, as the current study has shown, there are specific ways to achieve some generalizability; for example, conducting multiple focus groups does allow identification of topics and collected perspectives that identically surface through all the different groups (e.g., the issue of native speaker teachers, overall evaluation of the program in that the curriculum needs to be updated).

As such, applying conversation analysis to examine these interactions allowed for a more accurate, clear, and detailed depiction of how participants actually manage this complex setting, which further enable better insight into participants’ perspectives and opinions that were

displayed through participants accessing diverse interactional resources (which only a CA analysis could identify). Despite claims for the need to examine the interaction in focus groups (e.g., Belzile & Oberg, 2012; Morgan, 2010), not many have yet attempted to go beyond content analyses or setting the framework for interactional analyses, rather than actually examining the interactions—especially within program evaluation settings. As complex as it may be, there is no denying that conversation analysis provides the adequate tools to examine interaction, and this study makes a specific contribution in using conversation analysis to identify the core aspects and features of focus group interactions.

7.4. Directions for Future Research

This study explored focus groups as a research method within the context of program evaluation, opening up important and valuable implications concerning the methodology as well as the English language education policy in South Korea. By way of conclusion, I will discuss some areas of further inquiry that this study may open up.

First, this study contributes to the existing literature in that it is the first close examination of interaction in program evaluative focus groups conducted in Korean. Furthermore, seven different groups participated in the collection, which allowed for a better understanding of the interactions within this specific topic and context. In order to further expand the understanding and use of focus groups as a research method in applied linguistics, there is an exigency for more empirical, interaction-focused studies on focus groups conducted in different settings and in different languages, which will promote a global understanding of what constitutes focus group interactions.

Second, in attempts to provide an overall outlook of focus group interactions, this study focused less on the abundant multi-modal resources incorporated by the participants in constructing the focus group interactions. An important and informative future study would be to further examine in detail the ways in which participants use multi-modal resources, such as gaze, gesture, and facial expressions, in carrying out the interactions, which I believe will better inform the mechanics of how talk is constructed in multi-participant institutional discourse such as focus groups.

Finally, I believe that more empirical research on how CA findings can re-specify applied linguistics research method and thus better inform these practices is necessary. This study has demonstrated fruitful application of CA to focus groups as a research method. However, there is room for further investigations along this line of research. Focus groups especially, are one of the more underused methods of investigation, with the potential to unearth new topics and findings within applied linguistics. Furthermore, with the implementation of CA as the mode of examination, future studies will be able to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of yet to be identified topics using focus groups as a research method in applied linguistics. There is no denying the rigorous job of collecting, transcribing and analyzing large amounts of data entailed, which does bring up the issue of conducting feasible research within limited time. However, these limitations could be overcome with continuous training or even delegation of the work (e.g., training transcription specialists as we already have specialized statisticians working with complex quantitative data). Nonetheless, ignoring or merely summarizing the abundant interaction data because of the complexities involved in analytic method should no longer be excused. Using conversation analysis to examine in-depth the large amounts of data that is produced through interactional methods of inquiry within applied

linguistics—not limited to focus groups—further advance our understanding of applied linguistics research methods and practices as well as provide an inside perspective on disciplinary knowledge production in applied linguistic research practices.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (Focus Group)

An ethnography: Implementing conversation analysis to illuminate teacher training practices for EFL teachers

Investigators

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Purpose of this research

My name is Hanbyul Jung and I am conducting a research project as part of my requirement for earning a doctoral degree in Second Language Studies. The purpose of my research project is to learn more about XX (program name anonymized post-consent), as one of the teacher education programs for Korean teachers located in the U.S., and the participants of XX. The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about the thoughts, perceptions and experience of the participants at XX and I am asking you to participate in this focus group because you are currently a participant in the XX program.

What you will be expected to do

If you decide to participate, I will ask you to participate in a discussion with myself and 3 or 4 other members from your program who have also agreed to participate. Following a pre-constructed protocol, I will be asking you and the other participants questions about your expectations, perceptions and suggestions for development of the CAPE program. This focus group will last for about 50 to 60 minutes. I will audio and video-record the focus group using a digital video recorder and a digital audio-recorder. I will use the recordings to type up a transcript—a written record of what we have discussed—and analyze the information for this focus group.

Your rights:

Confidentiality

During this research project, I will keep all data from the focus groups in a secure, locked location. After I transcribe the focus group, I will erase the video and audio-recording. Only my faculty supervisor and I will have access to the recorded and transcribed data, although legally authorized agencies, including the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. All data to be obtained will be treated with absolute confidentiality, and when I report the results of my research project, and in my typed transcripts, I will not use your name or any other personally identifying information. Instead, I will use a pseudonym (fake name) for your name and replace any other personally identifying information.

To withdraw any time

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You can choose freely to withdraw from participation at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. You may also request the data be destroyed without any consequences.

Benefits

I believe there are no direct benefits to you in participating in my research project. However, the results of this study might help me and other researchers learn more about the teacher education programs you are currently participating in. If you would like a summary of the results of my research project, then please contact me at hanbyul@hawaii.edu and I will e-mail a summary report to you.

Possible risks

To my knowledge, there are no immediate risks. However, by giving your consent to participate in this research, you are at potential risk of losing your privacy as the focus group will be video and audio-recorded. However, I assure you that I will take all measures (i.e., assigning pseudonyms (**fake names**), no revealing of any personal information) to protect and ensure confidentiality and to ensure minimum risk of privacy loss. Furthermore, I will destroy and exclude any portion of the recorded data from my research should you request withdrawal from the study at any time.

To ask questions at any time

You are free to ask any questions regarding the present research. If any further questions arise, contact me (Hanbyul Jung) at (808) 956-5130 or hanbyul@hawaii.edu. If I cannot answer your questions, you may contact my supervisor (Dr. Gabriele Kasper) at (808) 956-8610 or gkasper@hawaii.edu.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the following signature portion of this consent form. You will be given a copy of this consent for future reference.

I certify that I have read and understand the above, that I have been given satisfactory answers to any questions about the research, and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the research at any time, without any prejudice or loss of benefits. I agree to be part of this study with the understanding that such permission does not take away any of my rights, nor does it release the investigators or the institution from liability for negligence. If I cannot obtain satisfactory answers to my questions, or have comments or complaints about my participation in this study I may contact: UH Committee on Human Studies (CHS) at uhirb@hawaii.edu or (808) 956-5007.

(Print your name)

(Date)

(Signature)

cc: copy to participant for future reference

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

1. How is Hawaii? Are you enjoying yourselves? (*building rapport*)
2. How did you come to participate in this program?
 - What was the recruit system? (volunteer/picked?)
3. What were your expectations, (needs, goals) when you started this program?
 - How have your expectations been met/or not met?
4. What have you learned/acquired (have you learned?) that is new (something that you didn't know when teaching in Korea)? (What were the particular interesting aspects of the program so far?)
 - What would you be able to use in your classrooms back in Korea? How?
 - What are some aspects that would not be applicable to your classroom in Korea? Why not?
 - What were perhaps some aspects that were considered as "good" techniques, but would rather be difficult to fit into the context of your own classrooms? (if there are any)
5. What are some things you might want to suggest or change within the program?
(*try to avert from issues of accommodation, internet speed and etc.*)

APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Based on the system developed by Jefferson (2004).

(.5)	timed pause
(.)	untimed micropause
(())	additional explanations or descriptions
-	sharp cut-off or an utterance
:	sound elongation
()	unclear fragment; best guess
.	a stopping or a fall in tone
,	continuing contour
?	a rising inflection
<u>underline</u>	speaker emphasis
CAPS	noticeably louder speech
=	contiguous utterances
[]	overlapping talk
↓ ↑	marked falling or rising intonation
°talk°	noticeably softer or quieter speech
“talk”	talk produced as represented speech; in a way that indicates the speaker is <i>voicing</i> someone else (or a past or hypothetical self)
>talk<	faster speech
<talk>	slower speech
hhh	audible aspiration
.hhh	audible inhalation

APPENDIX D: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE INTERLINEAR GLOSS

ACC	Accusative	INJ	Interjection
ATTR	Attributive	NML	Nominalizer
CIRCUM	Circumstantial	NM	Nominative
COMM	Committal	PL	Plural suffix
CONN	Connective	PNL	Plain speech level
COND	Conditional	POL	Polite speech level
COP	Copular	PROG	Progressive
DCT:RE	Deductive reasoning	PROS	Prospective
DM	Discourse marker	PRM	Promissive
FR	Factual Realization	PST	Past tense
GEN	Genitive	Q	Question particle
HEARSAY	Hearsay marker	QT	Quotative particle
HON	Honorific	RT	Retrospective
IE	Informal ending	TP	Topic marker
IMPER	Imperative	VOC	Vocative

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