Script Proposals in Undergraduate Supervision

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ABSTRACT: This article explores a particular interactional practice surrounding advice in undergraduate supervision. *Script proposals* allow advice-givers to individualise their advice, minimise resistance and provide a model while not undermining the client's agency (Emmison, Butler and Danby 2011). This device has been studied primarily in helpline interactions (Hepburn, Wilkinson and Butler 2014) but not yet in higher education. The audio-recorded data are from a meeting in which the tutor addresses student concerns regarding her writing process and referencing conventions. Several hallmarks of script proposals are present, including the student's previously displayed stance, the use of idiom, three part-lists (Jefferson 1990) and contrastive pairs. Membership categories are exploited to both include and exclude the student. The enactment of supervisory roles and qualities such as empathy is analysed and then discussed through the conceptual lens of the psychological contract (Cureton and Cousin 2012) and the educational alliance (Telio, Ajjawi and Regehr 2015). While also fulfilling her tutor-mentor role, in that she supports the student in her own decisions, the tutor acts as director or project manager (Derounian 2011), taking the student through the steps in the process in a logical order (Rowley and Slack 2004). The implications for practical applications are briefly considered.
Keywords: script proposal, advice, undergraduate, supervision

1. INTRODUCTION

Focusing on an advice-giving practice commonly referred to as a script proposal, this article is adapted from part of a larger study into advice practices in undergraduate supervision at a UK university. A script proposal consists of a speaker modelling words to be used at a later date by the recipient. An example from Emmison, Butler and Danby's (2011) study of Childline calls follows:

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Coun: Don't enter into it .hhhh when she comes along and dumps it
      on you: you say Mum (1.2) um (0.5) ah: I'm not your counsellor,
      (.) and I'm not your mother, (0.6)
Call: °Mm[:°
Coun:    [I'm so:rry tah hear that, (0.4) but it's not my business.
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Script proposals have been studied in helpline interactions (Hepburn, Wilkinson and Butler 2014), nursing practice (Defibaugh 2014) and in cognitive behavioural therapy sessions, where Ekberg and LeCouteur (2011) refer to the practice as hypothetical active voicing, but not yet in higher education supervision. This study seeks to plug this gap. I investigate the interactional management of resistance, supporting of autonomy, and orientation to different supervisory roles and qualities. For example, 'putting words into the student's mouth' via a script proposal may empower the student more than more directive advice formulations. However, unlike the script proposals put forward by call-takers on helplines, these script proposals are intended for the student's self-talk rather than for an audience.

Although research attention has focused on interactions in peer tutoring (Waring 2007 and Park 2012), writing conferences (Mayes 2015), office hours (Limberg 2010) and masters supervision

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(Bowker 2012, Svinhufvud and Vehviläinen 2013), there is no extant CA research on undergraduate supervision in a UK setting. Research has focused on staff and student *perceptions* of the supervisory relationship (Jamieson and Gray 2006) rather than interaction in first degree supervisory meetings. CA is an extremely useful approach for casting light on the interactional workings of the supervisory relationship, and therefore   adds to other research traditions.

This article is organized as follows:

Firstly, the relevance of existing studies of this interactional phenomenon is established in section 1.1. In order to situate the current study within the institutional context of undergraduate supervision, section 1.2 begins with an overview of the dissertation experience. The remainder of 1.2 surveys some of the literature from a methodological framework utilising interviews and questionnaires related to supervisory roles and qualities, before constructs of the psychological contract and educational alliance are introduced in order to illuminate staff-student relationships. Section 2 addresses the research design and research questions. Four extracts are analysed in section 3, and the research questions are discussed in section 4. I conclude by summarising the study's contribution to the field and making some suggestions for further research and practical applications.
Note that dissertation/ project/ independent study and supervisor/ tutor/ lecturer are used interchangeably. Conversation analysis is referred to as CA and Higher Education as HE.

1.1. Functions and Features of Script Proposals

Emmison et al (2011) argue that script proposals allow advice-givers to individualise their advice and provide a model while not undermining the client's agency. These devices are commonly found in third position after advice has been resisted and often rework the client's previous assertions (Hepburn, Wilkinson and Butler 2014). Such a device contains the three roles of speakership (Goffman 1981): that of the *author*, who designs the talk, in the Childline example above the call-taker, the *animator* who delivers the talk, in this case the child, and the *principal*, whose position is established through the spoken words, again the child.

Three part lists (or two part ones with repetition of the building blocks of the clause e.g. "I'm not your counsellor, I'm not your mother"), contrastive pairs (e.g. "I'm sorry to hear that but it's not my business") and idiom (e.g. "dumps it on you") strengthen the rhetorical force of script proposals. In her study of everyday conversation, Jefferson (1990) makes the point that people are rarely interrupted after the second part of lists. Furthermore, since list items represent a broader class of categories, they can be drawn on to represent events or actions as commonplace or normal (Potter 1996: 196-7). Idioms can be hard to challenge as they invoke the taken-for–grantedness of a common culture and have a self-sufficient character (Drew and Holt 1988). Conversely, Kitzinger (2000) argues that it is the very generality of idioms that enables respondents to resist them by maintaining they do not apply to their particular situation. However, when idioms are used in script proposals, they form part of an aggregate so may be more amenable to uptake.

Generally, script proposals consist of words to be used in a future conversation. In addition, Defibaugh (2014) analyses nurse practitioners' deployment of ventriloquism to deliver advice indirectly in the diabetes clinic through voicing a group of people not present in the conversation, whose behaviour is held up as *not* to be emulated:

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and A LOT OF PEOPLE so it this way they saw we:ll (.) I've got
medicine for three different things. what's the big deal if I
take medicine for two out of three things and it's a really big
deal (Defibaugh 2014:67)
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As it is up to the patient whether to align herself with this group or not, the Nurse Practitioner can distance herself from the advice to some extent.

In her study for a Dementia helpline, Wilkinson (2016:12) refers to a script proposal as:

a particularly skilled technique because it requires not only extensive background expertise in the kinds of issues under discussion, but also the ability to assess, there and then, what kind of a script is likely to work for that particular caller, based on what she has already said.

As Wilkinson notes, the recipient design involves capitalising on professional experience while shaping the script to the particular individual in terms of what they have just said. Recipient design relates to:

the multitude of ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974:727).

So the way in which the professional expertly tailors the script to the individual client is an important key to understanding how resistance is managed and autonomy is supported. In this regard, supervisors may have an advantage over call-takers in that they are more familiar with their supervisee. Consequently, they may have more than just the concerns raised in the meeting at their disposal when devising the script proposal.

1.2. Supervising Undergraduate Dissertations

At most UK universities, independent study modules involve several stages in that the student selects a topic (sometimes from a list related to staff expertise), submits a proposal, is allocated a supervisor, engages in a literature search which usually culminates in a literature review, sets up data collection (where relevant) and analyses data, writes up findings, a conclusion, an evaluation and recommendations for further study (Todd, Bannister and Clegg 2004). The dissertation is likely to be the largest piece of assessed work an undergraduate produces. Degree classification invariably takes the dissertation grade into account. So within the final year of increased pressure, the project is often a focus for intensified feelings.

Students are allocated a supervisor who is available for one-to-one supervision for around four hours over the duration of the independent study. Independence is emphasized. For instance, the Philosophy project guide from the university where this study was conducted uses the analogy of supervisors putting students on the right road, but it being the student's responsibility to walk down it. Certainly, a common conceptualisation of the research process is as a journey (Brew 2001) with choices and hurdles along the way. Masters and in particular doctoral supervision has attracted more research interest than undergraduate supervision. I draw on some of this literature as the crossover in experience may prove illuminating, while recognising that the goal for doctoral supervision of fully-fledged researchers with 'competent autonomy along the rackety bridge' (Gurr 2001) is over-ambitious for first degrees. 'Well-supported autonomy' (Oldmeadow n.d.) seems a safer and more appropriate goal for undergraduates.

More problematically, the findings in this section come from a non CA tradition, which may not easily translate into an interactional study. Orientation to roles and the display of qualities may be more impervious to CA analysis than resistance and support. Nonetheless, studies such as Mikesell et al. (2017) have analysed how a quality such as empathy is played out on the interactional stage.

1.2.1. Supervisory roles

Traditionally the role of the supervisor is to 'provide guidance, advice, instruction, encouragement, support' (MacKeogh 2006: 20). In fact, it is best to refer to roles rather than a singular role; according to Rowley and Slack (2004), there are a number of roles that a supervisor might adopt. These include:

- *provider of subject expertise, and ready access to the literature of the subject*
- *provider of access to research contexts (e.g. organizations)*
- *mentor, to support reflection on the process*
- *director or project management to take the student through the steps in the process in a logical order, and to a time scale*
- *advisor on research methodologies, both in relation to their selection, and appropriateness and in relation to specific design issues*
- *signpost or teacher assisting with access to the literature*
- *editor, supporting structuring and writing of the dissertation.*
  Rowley and Slack (2004)

To this list we can add *assessor,* since at undergraduate level the supervisor normally forms part of the marking team. It seems logical that different roles are salient at different times along the dissertation journey. Similarly, it would not be surprising to find that different qualities, which I discuss below, are valued at different stages, though there may be others whose significance is consistent.

1.2.2. Supervisors' qualities

Although the focus of the current study is not to investigate preferences, it is enlightening to see supervisory qualities listed in rank order. Derounian (2011: 97) found that for undergraduates the most valued qualities of a good supervisor in rank order were:

1. *Subject/literature knowledge*
2. *Realism and craft knowledge (borne of experience)*
3. *Responsiveness, willingness to negotiate*
4. *Encouragement but firm when necessary*
5. *Enthusiasm (for the topic)*
6. *Structuring/ steering/guiding*
7. *Accessibility*
8. *Empathy*
9. *Questioning 'Offers ideas but does not impose them'*
10. *Communicating clearly*
11. *Pushing, driving and challenging*
12. *Patience*
13. *Honesty*

Largely concurring with Derounian (2011), Jamieson and Gray (2006) found that the qualities most valued by undergraduates were:

- *being well-informed about the module and research project*
- *being available and easy to approach about any problem*
- *being interested*
- *providing comment on drafts*
- *ensuring that project was of appropriate size and difficulty*

They found that generally supervisors gave high priority to the same qualities as undergraduates.

1.2.3. Relationships

Although relationships do not have their own research question in the current study, they have a bearing on staff-student interaction. Indeed, transactions between students and tutors are central to student engagement, which is a strong predictor of success (Zepke and Leach, 2010). In their interviews with undergraduates exploring the dissertation experience, Greenbank and Penketh (2009) found that relationships were the most significant theme. There is not the space here to explore the possible effects of the rise in tuition fees on the dissertation experience and staff-student relationships. Suffice it to say that the study was conducted when tuition fees were around £3000 a year. Students can be conceptualised as service recipients and tutors as service providers. However, consumer constructions of students do not adequately capture the subtle complexities of modern-day student realities (Tight, 2013).

Irrespective of the above, there is consensus that the dissertation process is an 'emotional rollercoaster' (Shadforth & Harvey, 2004); Todd et al. (2004) cite Silén's (2003) analogy of 'chaos and cosmos' in which students are unsettled but also stimulated by the dissertation task. It is therefore not surprising that both pastoral and technical elements of the supervisory relationship contribute to producing a dissertation (Derounian, 2011).

1.2.4. The psychological contract and the educational alliance

Studies such as Cureton and Cousin (2012) have applied the conceptual lens of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1996) to HE service provision and learning relationships. A psychological contract refers to:

> *the subjective beliefs concerning rights and responsibilities that an individual holds with regard to an exchange agreement between themselves and an organisation which 'solidifies' into a mental model. (O'Toole and Prince 2015:161)*

Students may not articulate these understandings, but they may act as powerful determinants of attitude and behaviour (Koskina, 2013).

> *The affective components of student psychological contract appear to relate to being seen as an individual, non-categorisation, respectful interactions, being treated as an adult, fairness, trusting the lecturer and emotional availability. (Cureton and Cousin 2012)*

It will be interesting to see to what extent tutors and students appear to orient to the psychological contract when going about the business of supervision, for the elements coalesce with qualities highlighted in the supervision literature. For example, if a tutor demonstrates *subject knowledge and realism* it seems more likely that the student will trust him. Similarly, an emotionally available lecturer will tend to exhibit *empathy, be accessible, listen and be responsive*, all qualities listed by Derounian (2011).

Likewise, the educational alliance (Telio, Ajjawi and Regehr 2015) relates to the learner's belief in the existence of:

- *a mutual understanding of the purpose or goal of the relationship*
- *an agreement about how to work towards that goal and activities involved*
- *mutual liking, trusting and valuing of each other resulting in credibility judgements*

Thus it will be enlightening to see how the alliance is operationalised in staff-student interaction within the over-arching research questions.

2. METHOD

2.1. Aims

The aim was to specify interactional practices surrounding advice in undergraduate supervision and to describe the actions that are accomplished and the structures that do this, in this case script proposals. Four research questions were developed:

RQ1: How do tutors manage resistance, both potential and actual?
RQ2: How do tutors support students?
RQ3: Which supervisory roles do tutors adopt?
RQ4: Which qualities do tutors display?

I recognise that a 'purist' CA study would not list the identification of tutor roles, or particularly qualities, as one of its aims, but my aim here is to add to findings arrived at following different methodologies. This study falls into the 'discovery' category of applied conversation analysis (Antaki 2011). By specifying the interactional dynamics, I hope to hold up this practice to practitioners for discussion rather than prescription. This study was *not* designed to see which practices are 'effective', partly because it was beyond its scope to track and evaluate whether the advice given resulted in the student improving the dissertation. This would have involved comparing drafts with the final submission. Furthermore, such a 'before' and 'after' focus on the product would not have illuminated the management of resistance or autonomy, or the orientation to supervisory roles and qualities. Interviewing students about their advice take-up in terms of both mental processes and the execution of their project was also beyond the scope and aims of this study. That is not to say that CA cannot be combined with ethnography. Copland (2012) combined interviews with student teachers reflecting on their lived experience of feedback with CA analysis of feedback sessions themselves. Yet, notwithstanding the claims of Waring, Creider, Tarpey and Black (2012) who maintain that participants' reports may enhance conversation analytic claims, this study is in line with Pomerantz (2012) who sees such reports as irrelevant for CA's main undertaking: the analysis of interaction.

2.2. Data Collection

The data for the wider study on which this article is based were collected at a UK widening-participation university from five lecturers, only one of whom used script proposals. The researcher approached eight Law and Humanities colleagues, five of whom agreed to participate, each recruiting a student. This small opportunistic sample excludes non-native speaker students by accident rather than design. However, the Law student was from an ethnic minority, thus representing the composition of the diverse student body. Ethnic minorities are under-represented among our teaching staff and the sample echoes this. Information and consent forms were distributed. Tutors and students were not informed about the research agenda other

than that staff-student interaction was being explored. Indeed, in common with several CA studies, the decision to focus on advice sequences had not been made. While acknowledging the significance of the embodied turn and the limitations resulting from the decision not to use video, audio-recording was selected to facilitate data collection in staff offices. Tutors recorded their meetings without the researcher's presence, so as to minimise the 'observer's paradox' (Labov 1972:209). Clearly, however, both participants were aware of the recording. Although it is impossible to judge how much this may have affected the interaction, it seems likely that any observer effect was less than with the potential effect of video. In due course, tutors were sent the conventional transcript and offered the CA one in line with the remit of ongoing consent. Fortunately, with such a small sample, there was no withdrawal of consent. Names mentioned in the encounters were anonymised. Tutors and students are referred to by their discipline and gender.

Notwithstanding these steps, researching in one's institution poses extra ethical dilemmas as Costley and Gibbs (2006:244) explore in their discussion of the "ethics of care" required when conducting insider research. For example, the number of staff teaching a particular discipline can be small. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether all references to particular assignments and other contextual details which might enable tutors to be identified can be deleted, without losing meaning. Also, the relational responsibility to participants continues after the research is completed.

Recordings were conducted six months prior to the deadline when students had to submit an independent study of varying length according to their discipline. The requirement for Law was a proposal of 1,500 words (10% weighting) followed by a project of 7,500 words. Of the five recordings, the Law encounter is the shortest at twelve and a half minutes. The meetings were transcribed according to the conventions laid down by Jefferson (2004). Analysis was an iterative process involving working dynamically between the transcript and recording (Hepburn and Bolden 2017).

3. FINDINGS

The recordings include two sequences containing three main script proposals. This small number makes comparison of any recurrent features difficult but does allow more space for analysis. It also partly follows in the footsteps of single case analysis in CA (Schegloff 1988) as all scripts were delivered by one tutor. The first two scripts put forward a future action for the student to use for herself, whereas the final one verbalises the thought processes of unconscientious students, in line with the non-compliant patients in the diabetes clinic mentioned above (Defibaugh 2014). As noted above, script proposals are commonly used after resistance. However, the first proposal is occasioned by an account of the student's writing process rather than by a resistant troubles telling. Nonetheless, before analysing the script proposal itself in Extract 1b, the turns immediately before it call for examination as they make the advice uptake more likely. The second proposal is executed in an interactional environment where less work needs to be done beforehand to foster uptake of its advice.

3.1. Sequence 1

3.1.1. I know what to write but…

In common with Emmison et al (2011), the first script proposal does not come out of the blue. Five minutes earlier the tutor had already responded to the student's query about structure and the best order for the writing process, by eliciting the student's perspective by asking: "so

what did you think you would do?". She follows this with an extended advice sequence not reproduced here, which culminates in the student providing an account of her writing problems: "See, I know how to- like I know what to write but when it comes to writing it, it's just" (Extract 1a lines 1-2 below). The student is on a trajectory to explain the obstacle using the lexical hedge 'just'. Hodges (1997) explores the split that callers to an alcohol advice line make between their cognition and their behaviour in which they marshal 'just' to minimize the difference; here the student distinguishes between her knowledge of "what to write" and the process of writing it down. We join the pair at this point:

Extract 1a   I know what to write but

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1     S:      ↑See, I ↑know how to- like I know what to write but when it
2             comes to writing it, I[t's just
3     T:                           [I know::. I know.  It's hard
4             t[o  actu'lly s:tar:]t it, [isn't it,
5     S:       [Y' need to get in-]      [Yeah:,  Like  you  need  to  get
6             in to the flow of it.
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This only partly fits into the pattern identified by Emmison et al (2011), in that the student explains her writing problems rather than resisting the preceding advice. Subsequently, the tutor endeavours to fit the advice to her by modelling it as a proposed course of action which can be broken down into realistic steps.

But first, the tutor responds to the student in partial overlap with a repeated appeal to shared knowledge "I know, I know" (line 3), which endorses her account. The tutor's stance is to claim to know how the student feels. Her turn has elements in common with the turn design identified by Ford et al (2016) in that she takes up the 'empathy opportunity' (Frankel 2009) of the student's trouble description by both responding empathically and demonstrating independent understanding of her problem. The sound stretched "I know" provides an additional resource to display empathy. In their study of unprefaced TCU *I know* responses, Mikesell et al. (2017) cite the case of veterinarians' use of *I know* (Macmartin, Coe and Adams 2014) to reassure pet owners and provide a warrant for treatment. Similarly, in affiliating with the student's experience by claiming epistemic symmetry, the tutor may be normalizing it in order to reassure the student and as a warrant for her upcoming advice (Svinhufvud, Voutilainen and Weiste 2017).

She follows this stance with an affiliative reformulation of the student's proposition: "It's hard to actually start it, isn't it?" (lines 3-4). Thus she adds to her prior claim to understand with an example which demonstrates that understanding so that the student may feel "more powerfully" supported (Wilkinson 2016:15). This turn is built with a tag question. Hepburn and Potter (2007) discuss four features of question tags in advice giving: they are turn-medial, idiomatically constructed, refer to a b-event (Labov and Fanshel 1977) in the domain of the recipient as opposed to the speaker, and pursue alignment in the face of resistance. The tag is not turn medial here, though this may be due to the overlap resulting in a possibly abandoned turn completion, as evidenced by the falling intonation on the tag ending. Nor is this particularly idiomatic language, though it is in everyday rather than academic language. Another departure from Hepburn and Potter (2007) is that "it's hard to actually start it, isn't it?" does not necessarily relate to something only in the student's experience (a b-event). The design of the declarative is ambiguous in that it could refer to the individual student's writing efforts in particular, to student writing generically, or to the difficulties of writing for academics and students alike. Thus the tutor may be indexing the *writer-writer* relational pair, by which she

relates to the student as part of the community of practice of academic writers including herself (Mayes 2015). This practice may serve to minimise resistance.

Regardless of any ambiguity, the tag question design generates contingency as it makes relevant the student's response (Hepburn and Potter 2010:77) and promotes alignment. Indeed, the student produces a repaired "Yeah, like you need to get in to the flow of it" in overlapping alignment and in response (lines 5-6); the repair illuminates this as the student abandons the initial "You need to get in" to preface her assessment with an agreement token to respond directly to the tag question. Co-construction of the problem is evident; the tutor's pursuit of alignment has succeeded. The student's choice of *you* as opposed to *I* displays sustained orientation to the *writer-writer* pair. Having normalised the concern and shown her support for the student, the tutor can now alleviate her concerns (Svinhufvud et al 2017), or rather, show the student how to alleviate them for herself, thus supporting her autonomy.

3.1.2. *Why don't I write a bit that I know about?*

The scene is now set for the tutor to launch her script proposal, which she does in Extract 1b below:

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Extract 1b         why don't I write a bit that I know about?
(continued from 1a)
  7    T:   D'you know:, (.) it might be better, (.) to just write (.)
  8          BIts and pieces an' just say to yoursel:f, ">rather than<
  9          try to write at the start >or the beginning an'< just keep
 10          writin' it, why don't I write a bit that I know about."=So
 11          for example. .hh "I've got some stuff here on Kennedy an' I
 12          found this article an' I found, (.) sorry, Cato, I found
 13          Kennedy, I [foun' this] article,
 14    S:                [ °M h m: ° ]
 15    T:   .hhh I'm just going to write a bit about that an' I'm just
 16          going to do that ↑no:w," an' then at the end you might have
 17          a ↑bit about this and a ↑bit about that an' why don't you
 18          an' join it alto↑gether, .hhh  I th[ink by t]rying=
 19    S:                                        [°°M h m°°]
 20    T:   =to start from the beginning and go right, "I need to start
 21          at the >very beginning<,=e[xplain the    law   f l a t,"
 22          ]
 23    S:                              [Yeah:,     that's    what    I'm
 24          thinking,]
 25    T:   It's probably puttin' you off,
 26    S:   [#Y e a h:    hhhhhh      ]
 27    T    [(Once) you've found some] good stuff he:re,
 28          (0.9)
 29    T:   an' I mean tha- that is a brilliant ↑article to fi:nd, that
 30          ↓Russell Heaton one:,  So:, you know, I think that's going
 31          to be very helpful?
 32              (1.1)
 33    S:   >Yeah, cause that's what I was getting in my head, like I
 34          need to get< all the fi:rst before [Cato,=before=
 35    T:                                       [↑N o : :, you=
 36    S:   =[I can star'] i[t,
 37    T:   =[Do: : n't,]  [You don't, You know the bit you can hand
 38          in?=It [can be anything.
 39    S:          [Mm
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40                    (0.6)
41      T:    ['Could be a bit out'the middle if you want it to be,
42      S:    [Mm
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The use of "d'you know" (line 7) allows the tutor to introduce the delicate interactional work of the proposal. Ekberg and LeCouteur (2015:21) explore the use of *you know* (as opposed to the "d'you know" here) to make the forthcoming proposal sound commonplace. By then selecting the modal: "it might be better" the tutor suggests rather than imposes a solution. This combination lessens the chance of any resistance.

Several other hallmarks of script proposals are present. For instance, informal, idiomatic language is used throughout including in the immediate lead-up to the proposal; e.g. "bits and pieces" (line 8) and "I've got some stuff here on Kennedy" (line 11), "a bit about this, a bit about that" (line 17). The tutor designs her turn with a contrastive pair: "to just write bits and pieces … rather than try to write at the start" (lines 7-9). This turn design includes the student's previously displayed stance (Emmison et al 2011): *"I think by trying to start from the beginning and go right, I need to start at the very beginning, explain the law flat, it's probably putting you off"* (lines 18, 20-21) with greater volume on the second syllable of the first "beginning" (line 20) and on the first syllable of "very" for emphasis (line 21). These features serve to maximise alignment and increase the acceptability of the projected action (Emmison et al 2011). The tutor sets out a more accessible path by listing the student's achievements as the groundwork on which she can exert agency and build the recommended action: "I've got some stuff here on Kennedy and I found this article and I found sorry Cato, I found Kennedy, I found this article" (lines 11-13). Indeed, the self-repair on line 12 in which she inserts the author's name helps to reveal the attention she has paid to the student's efforts in order to fine-tune the script proposal. The upshot is presented as an advice-implementing interrogative: "why don't you join it altogether?" (lines 17-18). The student can knit her efforts together to construct her text.

The literature on script proposals does not include analysis of 'just', which features strongly here. However, in her study of alcohol helplines, Hodges (1997:137) analyses its use to construct things as "straightforward and simple". Writing about therapists' proposals (rather than script proposals) Ekberg and LeCouteur (2015:16) refer to their use of 'just' as a downgrading device. This is in line with Vasquez's (2004:48) conception of it to "more locally minimize the importance of the recommended action". Here the tutor repeats 'just' five times: "it might be better to just write bits and pieces and just say to yourself….and just keep writing it…..I'm just going to write a bit about that and I'm just going to do that now" (lines 7-16; words omitted), which has the effect of underlining the manageability of the bitesize steps she is putting forward. Lists are used to emphasise the normality of the forwarded action (Potter 1996: 197). Here they are used with a repeated 'just' to break the steps into doable tasks. In contrast to its use in unsolicited advice in everyday troubles-tellings after initial resistance (Holmes, Toerien and Jackson 2017), 'just' is an effective part of the tutor's arsenal to minimise resistance and promote uptake.

The tutor reverts to her own voice: "and then at the end you might have a bit about this and a bit about that and why don't you join it altogether" (lines 16-18) but then returns to taking the voice of the student: "I think by trying to start from the beginning, and go right I need to start at the very beginning, explain the law flat" (lines 18 and 20-21). It is interesting to contrast the tutor's portrayal of the student's stumbling block with her delineation of the more manageable route. The former is framed as frustrating with repeated use of 'try(ing)' (lines 9 and 18) and as hurdles to overcome with extreme case formulations (ECFs) (Pomerantz 1986) such as "I need to start at the very beginning, explain the law flat". The tutor treads carefully as this is in the

student's domain of experience. Indeed, with "Yeah that's what I'm thinking" (lines 23-24) the student orients to this assessment by reclaiming epistemic primacy.

The tutor sustains the delicate management of her epistemic stance by prefacing her assessment of the student's efforts thus far with "I think" (line 18). She also modulates this with "it's probably putting you off" (line 25) as opposed to a stronger modal formulation such as "it must be putting you off" or a straightforward declarative "it's putting you off". Hepburn et al (2014) explore summing up in idiomatic ways that are hard to refute so that the expert can move on to the next action. Here the tutor summarises the student's previous efforts with "It's probably putting you off", which is met with creaky-voiced agreement and laughter. The tutor does not join in. Instead in overlap she   undergirds her script proposal by praising the student's achievements (lines 27-31). In their study of home birth helpline calls Shaw and Kitzinger (2012) found that call takers used compliments to both affirm the action and empower the caller to future action. At this point the student is still in alignment, again orienting to her prior reasoning, as opposed to her current thinking: "yeah cause that's what I was getting in my head" (line 33). The tutor confirms that this prior thinking was incorrect. She then stresses the free rein the student has in choosing what to hand in, using an ECF: "you know the bit you can hand in it can be anything" (lines 37-38). She follows this with an increment marking the student's optionality: "could be a bit out of the middle if you want it to be". Thus the tutor brings the student's autonomy to the fore.

3.1.3   *But I sort of wanna write it*

However, in Extract 1c below (which is not analysed in detail here), the student then resists this more piecemeal approach (lines 43-45, 47 and 49). Nevertheless, eventually the student aligns with the tutor's further script proposal (lines 54-55) concerning when to write the introduction (line 61). In their analysis of script proposals Emmison et al (2011) discuss the paradox of client empowerment alongside expert direction. Perhaps here the student has been empowered to tackle the writing process in the way she views as best suited to her individual needs and preferences. Indeed, the tutor's *mentoring* role has been prominent, as I will revisit in the Discussion once I have analysed the second script proposal.

Extract 1c (continued from 1b) So you can say this is what I'm gonna write about

```
43    S:   h But I sort a' wanna li:ke, (0.3) <wri>te it (.) so then I
44         don't have to keep going back to it, >if you
45         [know >what I<< mea:n:,]
46    T:   [Y e a : : h h,       ] I know,=
47    S:   =So I'd [rather] have it=
48    T:          [Yeah: ]
49    S:   =[properly  do n e.
50    T:    [.h h H     But sometimes you know <*Paul Wilmott>, he
51         always says to students, .hh "Write the introduction at the
52         en:d, when you know what you've written¿"
53    S:   °Mmm°
54    T:   So you can say:, "This is what I'm going to write about
55         cause you already know what you did write about¿"
56            (0.6)
57    S:   I >thin' th' I am gonna do an introduction, cause obviously
58         this is< chapter one:, >so I don' wanna get this an'< then:
59         >go on=move on to gross negligence manslaughter<
60    T:   [M h m,      ]
```

```
61    S:    [an' then my] conclusion and then do my introduction?=
62    T:    =Yeah,=
63    S:    =But I want to mainly do it (0.3) over the: >Christmas
64          holidays< cause then, I've got quite a few work experiences
65          I'm doing?=next se[mester?
66    T:                     [Ri:ght.=Okay.  So you want to get it ou'
67          o' the way don't you[::,
68    S:                        [Yeah::.  [I'd wan::'=
69    T:                                  [Yeah::,
70    S:    =[mainly do it,]
```

3.2. Sequence 2

The second script proposal is developed in response to the student's query concerning referencing. This is executed without the preparatory work done before the first proposal, which had to deal with the student's account first. It is noticeable that the tutor swiftly launches the advice (see Extract 2 below lines 6-7). This is delivered with a directive formulation: "still reference it" in contrast to the suggestion format of the first proposal: "it might be better to just write bits and pieces" (Extract 1b lines 7-8). What follows is a combined benefit and problem account (Waring 2007:372) encapsulated by "it's better for you, w' I-I mean it stops plagiarism" (lines 8-9). With the false start combined with "I mean" the tutor is "hearably displaying spontaneous reasoning" that minimises the awkwardness of what is to come (Thompson and McCabe 2017:4). Then with the grammatical turn construction of "it stops plagiarism" rather than "it stops you plagiarising", the tutor avoids assigning potential blame to the student. Nevertheless, the tutor reverts to personal pronoun use with the more idiomatic and hedged: "it stops you kind of passing off other words as your own" (line 9 and 11). In a complex turn design starting with a latched "But", the tutor promptly turns to the benefits in terms of a "better grade". She follows this with reasons which orient to tutors as assessors: "what it shows us" (line 12) and a list of competencies the student can demonstrate if she follows the advice (lines 12-14). The tutor uses a three-part list to recycle the positive steps she has just listed (lines 15-16). The present perfect for future use: "I've read around, I've done my research" underlines the effort the student will have invested in complying not only with referencing requirements, but with displaying other *good student* attributes. This script proposal is not designed to be spoken, but to represent the accomplishments the student will be able to demonstrate she has mastered.

She is contrasted with the membership category of "people who think I'm gonna avoid that, I'm going to just pretend it was my words" (lines 17-18). The different choice of tense here is also illuminating; rather than using the present perfect as in: "people who think I've avoided that, I've just pretended it was my words", the tutor opts for an emphasis on decisions to cheat rather than the achievement of having invested effort which shows that the student "know(s) how to reference properly". She uses an ECF: "then they've got a very thin bibliography" (lines 18-19) to underline the poor outcome for students in the cheating category. The student shows take up of the advice by including herself with the pronoun choice of "we" in the contrasting category of students who will have "quite a long bibliography then" (lines 21-23). Both participants use "then", linking the polarised actions of cheating with undesirable outcomes, and following academic conventions with desirable ones.

Extract 2   I've read around, I've done my research

```
1     S:              [°.hhh° ]                [What if like, (0.5) I take
2           some knowledge from there:,
```

```
 3      T:    Mhm¿=
 4      S:    =but it's n:ot (0.5) a quote, >do I still< have to
 5            reference [it but >>put it in my own wo[rds<<.
 6      T:              [.hhH                       [Yeah. Yeah. (0.2)
 7            But still REF'rence it because that's where you got it
 8            from:#, .hh an:d, it's better f:or you, w' I- I mean it
 9            stops plagiarism, it stops [you kin' of=
10      S:                               [Mm:
11      T:    passing off other words as your own.=But also, it gets you
12            a bet'er gra:de? .hh because what it shows us is, you have
13            read this information you've .hh taken it in::, you can
14            analyse the information an' you're ref'rencing it
15            properly:, .hh So you're showing I've read arou:nd, I've
16            done my re:sear:ch, .hh I know how to reference properly:,
17            .hh Whereas people who think ">I'm gonna avoid< tha:t, >I'm
18            going to just pretend it was< my words," then .hh they've
19            got a very thin bibli(h)ogr(h)aphy(h)ehe, .hh becau[se   it
20            doesn't sh o w::                        ]
21      S:                                                  [So
22            we're gonna have quite a long:]
23            bibliogra[phy then.
24      T:             [Y:eah::, [yeah.
```

3.3. Summary

Whether she is advising on the writing process or referencing, the tutor breaks down proposed actions into manageable steps, which she voices as enacted by the student. This blurs the tension between expert direction and client empowerment (Emmison et al 2011). Prior to the first sequence the tutor manages potential resistance by empathising, aligning with and normalising negative emotions as subsequent platforms for her advice, while in the second she launches the script proposal directly after her advice and accounts. The first sequence is particularly recipient-designed in that it incorporates the student's previously displayed stance (Hepburn et al 2014). In the second the tutor positions herself as part of the academy who will be assessing the dissertation, and the student in the category of effective students, with which the student aligns herself. She is contrasted with the noxious identity of lazy students, along similar lines to the reported self-talk of non-compliant patients in Defibaugh's (2014) study of interactions in the diabetes clinic.

4. DISCUSSION

I will address the research questions in turn:

4.1. Managing Resistance

Considerable preparatory work is done before the tutor launches the first script proposal. She takes up opportunities for empathy and normalising which make it more likely that the student will accept the forthcoming advice. She points to the community of academic writers of which both she as an academic, and the student as a fledgling writer, are part. The script proposal is gently introduced and produced in bitesize chunks, grounded in the student's achievements which the student now needs to piece together. She also treads carefully when assessing the student's experience so as not to encroach on her territory of knowledge (Heritage 2012). All of these actions combine to reduce the likelihood of resistance, which is less of a potential problem in the second script proposal as the student initiates the query. Nevertheless,

her 'good student' category incumbency is deployed in that this script proposal and the prior turn revolve around her execution of a cluster of 'effective student' predicates including reading, researching and referencing. Here she is contrasted with the dispositions and activities of 'bad students' who resort to plagiarism. This juxtaposition reinforces the advice and further attenuates the likelihood of resistance.

4.2. Supporting Autonomy

The first script proposal gives prominence to the student being in charge of her dissertation rather than merely following guidelines. The tutor orients to her achievements, plans, autonomy and optionality. Indeed, the student eventually rejects the writing order the tutor promotes; she may have been empowered to tackle the writing process in the way she views as best suited to her individual needs and preferences. The second proposal relates far less to student autonomy as it focuses on the need to follow referencing conventions, with no leeway for the exercise of choice.

4.3. Supervisory Roles

In some ways the tutor acts as *director* or *project manager*, taking the student through the steps in the process in a logical order (Rowley and Slack 2004). The tutor's script proposals offer practical solutions borne of experience. Yet the script proposals also enable the tutor to perform her *structuring/ steering/ guiding* role (Derounian 2011) with a light touch by which ideas are offered, but not imposed. The tutor thereby orients to the *tutor-mentor* role, in that she supports the student in her own decisions and models how she can help herself. In fact, later in the meeting, as I noted earlier, the student rejects the order of writing suggested by the tutor. With "what it shows us" (Extract 2: line 12) the tutor also orients to the role of assessor; the institutional "we" may indicate specific reference to the staff involved in double marking dissertations or generic reference to the Law department or indeed all academics.

4.4. Supervisory Qualities

By sharing her concerns, the student orients to the tutor's *approachability*, a key quality identified by Jamieson and Gray (2006). The tutor also displays many of the qualities Derounian (2011) found were most valued by undergraduates. By acknowledging the problem and offering detailed advice, she manifests that she is responsive to the student's needs. Through showing that she is 'on the same page' (Mikesell et al 2017:31) she exhibits empathy. The tutor also demonstrates encouragement and enthusiasm, for example by providing a very positive object-side assessment of the student's progress to date: "that's a brilliant article to find" (Extract 1b: line 29) (Edwards and Potter 2017). Here she may be challenging any self-blame in a similar way to the call takers in Wilkinson (2016).

With the first script proposal in particular and the sequences leading into and out of it, the student and tutor display that theirs is a relationship of *trust* and *emotional availability,* qualities which constitute some of the affective components of the student psychological contract and of the educational alliance (Telio et al 2015). The tutor displays that she cares for her student. But the tutor does not stop at embracing the student's position; she offers practical solutions borne of considerable experience, in the form of detailed steps to tackle the writing process. Such practicality relates to the *realism and craft knowledge* which are high on Derounian's list of qualities.

4.5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study contributes to the growing body of interactional studies on advice and the management of resistance. In particular, it has investigated script proposals in a higher education setting and applied the construct of the *writer-writer* relational pair and category membership to sequences surrounding this device. It has also explored the enactment of supervisory roles and qualities, partly through the conceptual lens of the psychological contract and educational alliance.

The Law tutor demonstrates that she is "on the same page" and "embrace(s) the other's position" (Mikesell et al 2017:31), which generally helps to promote advice uptake. It also seems obvious that such displays of empathy oil the wheels of the student-tutor relationship. Wilkinson (2016) discusses the importance of displaying understanding, but in her recommendations to a dementia helpline she raises the query of whether call-takers could shorten the time spent empathising in order to take some pressure off the helpline. The Law supervision was the shortest meeting and demonstrating empathy did not take long, so this recommendation does not apply here, but may be worth considering for time-pressed practitioners.

Further studies could investigate encounters as students move along their dissertation journeys. These should use video where possible to capture non-linguistic interaction and orientation to drafts and other material on paper and the screen, following the work of Svinhufvud and Vehviläinen (2013).

It is hoped that this study has given readers a sufficiently rich insight into the experiences of a student and tutor dyad, and that the richness of these insights may enable them to be applied as appropriate to their own situations (cf Lincoln and Guba 1985). This stance reflects the criterion of transferability for qualitative research (Bryman 2014). This does not necessarily mean changing existing practices. Rather, it is hoped that sharing transcripts with tutors can provide them with a more theorized understanding of situated practice, and of their own competencies. The Conversation-Analytic Role-play Method (CARM) (Stokoe 2011), in which the trainer engages practitioners in a line by line uncovering of the transcript and recording could be used to stimulate discussion and awareness of the choices available in interaction. Students could also benefit from seeing and hearing examples of supervisory encounters so that they can reflect on their roles and options within this interactional space.

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