

## **Interaction between Female and Male Students in University Tutorials**

**A. Hlatshwayo**

*North West University (NWU), Mafikeng Campus, Private Bag X2046,  
Mmabatho 2735, South Africa  
Cell: 0835862356, Fax: 018-3892228, E-mail: Abigail.hlatshwayo@nwu.ac.za*

**KEYWORDS** Interaction. Initiative. Participation Effectiveness. Cline. Analytical Framework

**ABSTRACT** This paper reports on the effects of tutor gender on students' participation in university tutorials. It was hypothesized that students' 'participation effectiveness', that is the quantity of the speaker's discourse acts and turns, speaker's initiative during interaction and turn-taking levels would differ according to the gender of their tutor. Furthermore, students' participation would be affected by whether or not their gender was the same as that of their tutor. An integrated analytical framework with discourse categories like acts and turns was developed to analyze patterns of interaction and answer the question of how the quality of such patterns might be assessed. The main construct investigated was 'participation effectiveness' and the findings indicated that the female students' mean values for discourse acts in the female tutor-led tutorials were four times higher than those of the female students in the male tutor-led tutorials. The male students' mean values for discourse acts in the male tutor-led tutorials, on the other hand, were higher than those of the male students in the female tutor-led tutorials. In terms of turn participation, the male students' turns per student were higher than those of the female students in the male tutor-led tutorials, while in the female tutor-led tutorials, the female students' turns per student were higher than those of the male students.