

PEER-TO-PEER DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING BY
JAPANESE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

by
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ABSTRACT

Peer-To-Peer Dialogue Journal Writing by
Japanese Junior High School EFL Students

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A peer-to-peer “secret” dialogue journal project, emulating projects by Green and Green (1993) and Worthington (1997), was instituted between 30 Japanese junior high school students at one public school, and 15 students each at two other Tokyo public schools. The project spanned five terms during which the students exchanged journals weekly in English with partners, who changed each term. Using names and school names was forbidden. The supervising teachers did not correct or respond to the entries; they occasionally scanned them to check for sole use of the L2 and for appropriateness of content.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the pedagogical efficacy of peer-to-peer dialogue journals. In addition to the journals themselves, three sets of data were collected and analyzed: a free-writing quiz, a free-speaking quiz, and surveys. The journals and quizzes were transcribed using the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) software system (MacWhinney, 2000).

After the project, the journals were analyzed, using ANOVAs, for trends over the five terms in measures of total words and word types per entry, mean length of utterance

(MLU), and for common errors. As might be expected in a study with no teacher intervention, the trends did not indicate any statistically significant linguistic improvement over the life of the study.

However, in the third term, 290 eighth graders at all three schools took a ten-minute free-writing quiz. A one-way MANOVA showed that the journal participants significantly outperformed the non-participants on measures of fluency, accuracy, and syntactic complexity.

In the fourth term, 96 eighth graders at one school took a recorded three-minute free-speaking quiz. A one-way ANOVA showed that the journal participants outperformed the non-participants on the measure of fluency.

After each of the first four terms, the participants completed written surveys to gauge their attitudes toward their partners, the activity, and their feelings about their linguistic improvement.

I concluded that the secret journal may contribute to linguistic improvement and is valuable in providing an authentic and motivating vehicle for communicating in English, and for providing the interlocutors a forum through which to express their interests and anxieties.

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In addition to Mrs. Ishikawa, Mrs. Yumiko Sato of Toyotama Junior High School and Mr. Hiroyuki Doi of Nukui Junior High School volunteered to participate and were responsible for administering the project at their schools. Additionally, they helped by allowing testing and in supplying additional information. They also contributed valuable suggestions and insights. Without them too, the project would have been impossible.

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I'm truly blessed.

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‘This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby,’ said Squeers.....
‘We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement.....B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, bottin n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows ‘em. That’s our system, Nickleby; what do you think of it?’
‘It’s a very useful one, at any rate,’ answered Nicholas.

Nicholas Nickleby, Charles Dickens

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is fortunate for students and teachers alike that the language education system has progressed since the days of Dickens. However, the constant companion of the dedicated language teacher is the never-ending quest for engaging and instructive learning activities. Such learning activities have become even more difficult to locate or invent as children, adolescents, and young adults become more and more jaded due to the onslaught of output from brain-benumbing popular media-delivery devices. Chillingly, for the language teacher, the specter of the old nemesis always lurks: the foreign language used in the foreign language environment is inherently diluted, denatured, decontextualized, and nearly completely devoid of any semblance of authenticity. It is the challenge of the dedicated teacher to try to find a means of constructing a kind of quasi-reality that emulates a second language environment.

Certainly the use of realia helps, as does the recent trend toward task-based learning. Lessons with a native or native-like English-speaking teacher help. Homestays in the target-language countries are excellent for those with the money and the maturity to allow them to do so. Reading authentic material in the second language is a viable and

potentially valuable option. However, the EFL environment is still sadly lacking in opportunities for using the target language to do something real.

In 2001, I was teaching English at two schools in the Tokyo area: a girls' private junior high school and a coeducational public junior high school, and I was suffering mightily from the ills already described. While teaching at these schools I had been casting about for more engaging task-based activities, particularly opportunities to use English in authentic communicative situations. One of the recommended elements of the rather informal curriculum at the girls' private school was for the students to keep a diary comprising short daily entries. The students turned in the diaries weekly, after which they were read by their respective teachers, and the errors corrected exhaustively with a red pen. It soon became apparent that those diary entries suffered from two major drawbacks. The first was that the entries were written for the purpose of display. That is, the students rightly perceived that satisfying the teacher was a question of accuracy, so their diary entries were written in response to the tacit homework requirement for accuracy rather than for any particular communicative purpose. In responding to this expectation of accuracy, the entries often became rigid, simplified, and repetitive in order to avoid errors (Appendix A). The second major drawback was that no matter how many times we teachers corrected a particular grammatical, syntactic, spelling, usage, capitalization, or punctuation error, the same or similar errors were sure to find their way into future entries in exactly the same form. It became quite obvious that our corrections had little to no effect whatsoever. In short, the students merely ground out the same gray, meaningless prose week after week just to satisfy the homework assignment.

However, at that same girls' private school, the students also had penpals for a period of six weeks or so, just prior to their trip to Canada to stay with those same penpals. The enthusiasm with which the students anticipated, received, tore open, and read their penpal letters was light years ahead of the lackluster enthusiasm with which they received their corrected diaries. The penpal letters were not corrected, although isolated and infrequent help was given to the students upon request. In fact, the penpal activity was not perceived as a formal language learning activity at all, but merely as a throwaway means of introducing the students to their host families, and vice versa.

In December of that same year, I attended a seminar sponsored by Temple University Japan featuring Dr. Christine Casanave entitled *The Many Uses of Journal Writing*. While I was only able to attend part of seminar, I bought the reading packet. As I was thumbing through it on my way out the door, I noticed a short article by Green and Green (1993) entitled *Secret Friend Journals*. I was immediately intrigued and had finished reading the article by the time I reached the elevators.

In Green and Green's (1993) version of the secret friend journal activity, pairs of students from different classes exchanged a shared notebook on a regular basis. Their teachers were responsible for pairing the students, and collecting and distributing the notebooks. The critical requirement was that the individuals remained completely anonymous. In fact, the students were told nothing whatsoever about their partners, including their genders. Names, school names, addresses, or any other explicit personal data that expressly revealed a student's identity to his or her partner, were strictly forbidden. The students were identified by numbers and nicknames. In this notebook-

journal, the students were allowed to write about anything they wished, as long as the writing was solely in the second language. The journals were not corrected.

Within one week of leaving Dr. Casanave's seminar, I had instituted the first of two of what eventually became pilot projects for the much larger project treated herein. I felt that students writing to their peers without teacher intervention, in a low-pressure atmosphere of confidentiality and anonymity, perhaps even mystery, would be a more motivating challenge than mindlessly churning out diary entries only to be read by a teacher who would return them filled with red pen marks.

While the psychological advantages of such an activity seem numerous, dozens of questions arose. Would uncorrected peer-to-peer journals result in appreciable linguistic improvements in writing in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity? Might the journals result in improvements in the other macroskills, especially in reading and speaking? Would instances of peer scaffolding be apparent, that is, might partners assist each other in improvement of their language skills? Might the journals even provide a therapeutic vehicle for communicating anxieties and problems in the lives of these adolescents?

Ultimately, the specific answers to these questions seemed immaterial in light of two particularly perceptive comments that sum up what I consider success in the use of peer-to-peer dialogue journals. Casanave (2001) pointed out in her lecture that "if your students do their journals, that's success enough," and MacIntyre (2005): "If you can get adolescents to communicate in a second language, you've really done something." These comments are not muddled by academic doublespeak, but define the challenge precisely.

It is, then, the purpose of this study to examine on several different levels the much larger peer-to-peer secret dialogue journal project treated herein, in order to address the questions above, and additionally, as was said of the bear and the mountain, to see what could be seen.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dialogue journals provide learning opportunities that are far too rarely exploited in classrooms of all kinds. In second and foreign language classrooms, the linguistic, social, and psychological justifications for the use of dialogue journals are many. For the reader interested in those various justifications, the applicable literature comes from a broad range of sources, including those that address dialogue journals themselves, general psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, psycholinguistics, the psychology of second language learning, first and second language acquisition theory, and first and second language pedagogy. The following is an attempt to provide an overview of that literature and how it relates to dialogue journals, specifically the “secret friend” dialogue journal of interest in this study. The pertinent literature may suggest that the peer-to-peer dialogue journal fulfills many needs of the adolescent second language learner in an EFL environment.

The literature review will be divided into five sections: (a) dialogue journal literature, (b) psychology literature, (c) second language acquisition literature, (d) linguistic improvement literature, and (e) dialogue journals and the Japanese adolescent. Following the literature review, the research questions to be addressed in this study will be listed.

The Dialogue Journal Literature

“Secret” Dialogue Journals

Using the most common and powerful academic search engines, such as *Academic Search Premier* and *ERIC*, and my own scrutiny of the journal literature, I was able to identify only two articles addressing secret journal projects: Green and Green (1993) and Worthington (1997). Both articles discussed the authors’ experience with the use of the activity with university or young adult students studying in EFL environments, and both articles outlined the basics of administration of the activity. Both were outspoken in their support for the secret journal activity, and both expressed opinions as to the value of the activity from psychological and socio-linguistic perspectives, and as a pedagogical tool for fostering increases in linguistic proficiencies. However, neither was a research paper, and the views expressed by the authors as to the efficacy of the activity were empirically unsubstantiated.

Green and Green (1993) displayed enthusiasm for the pedagogical value of the secret dialogue journal in the first paragraph of the article:

What happens when students write dialogue journals to peers whose identities they don't know, instead of to the teacher? Lots of good things: an increase in motivation, an increase in awareness of writing as real communication directed to a real audience, and as a bonus, a decreased amount of work for the teacher. Absence of purpose, context, and an interested audience have frequently been cited as contributing to the lack of skill and fluency that plagues much student writing. (p. 20)

The authors then reviewed literature by Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen (1975) and Applebee (1984, 1986) that decried the quality and quantity of the writing produced by students in the classroom. They continued on to suggest that the literature supported the view that “good writing derives from the sense that what is

written is going to mean something to the interested reader” (p. 20). In their conclusion section, the authors pointed out that the secret dialogue journal fits in the middle of Britton’s (1970) “continuum of speech and writing acts,” at one end of which is “poetic language” and at the other end, “transactional language.” “In the center lies expressive language, the natural language of informal discourse among intimate peers” (p. 23).

Green and Green (1993) cited other authors who proposed student-to-teacher dialogue journals as a means by which students could begin to focus on content rather than formal accuracy. However, according to the authors, the student-to-teacher dialogue journal suffered from two major drawbacks: the amount of time it took the teacher to respond to the journals of a large number of students, and the fact that the teacher was not a peer and was generally not, therefore, able to participate fully in discussions of interest to younger students: “Few teachers, for instance, will fully share a student’s enthusiasm for the special effects in the latest teenage horror movie, or anxiety over a pending chemistry midterm” (p. 20).

Green and Green (1993) implemented “secret friend journals” at a university, a junior college, and a private business college, all in Puerto Rico, and at an intensive ESL course at Harvard University. They acknowledged that secret friend journals did not fulfill all the pedagogical writing needs of the students, but did fulfill goals that might include “motivating the students to write, developing student fluency and audience awareness, and in general giving the students the chance to have an enjoyable experience with writing in a genuine and nonthreatening communicative situation” (p. 21). The authors then continued by characterizing the foundation of the secret friend journal and the more general peer-to-peer dialogue journal: “Instead of writing to the teacher or a

graduate assistant, students usually write to other students, usually in another section of the same course, which greatly facilitates the development of a written rapport based on shared interests, tastes, and concerns” (p. 21).

One of the specific rules to be followed by the student writers was anonymity (Green & Green, 1993, p. 21). There were two reasons for it. One was to foster a continuing sense of mystery. “Keeping the correspondents’ identities secret gives the activity a game-like air of mystery which is highly motivating to the students” (p. 21). This atmosphere of secrecy provided a built-in motivation for writing: to get to know more about one’s partner, including that partner’s gender, in the absence of explicit personal information. The other reason was purely practical. In a continuing project, whether intra-school or inter-school, the teacher may later want to pair the students with different partners from the same pool. The absence of explicit personal information precludes the students from merely comparing their new partners with their friends based upon names alone, and forces them to reintroduce themselves to their new partners in detail and to negotiate permissible information about their new partners’ personalities and tastes. Green and Green acknowledged that while students participating in an intra-school project may eventually learn the identities of their partners, the journals, at least initially, force the interlocutors to develop their own writing voices and to decide what they would choose to reveal about themselves.

Another of Green and Green’s (1993) rules was that the journals not be corrected, although they were examined for the purposes of grading. There were two additional reasons for occasional quick scrutiny of the journals: to ensure the appropriateness of content, and to verify that the interlocutors were not slipping back into using their native

languages. Indeed, given that the journals were secret, and that authentic communication was the watchword, it would not have been appropriate for the teacher to violate the confidentiality of the journals in any blatantly obtrusive way. The wisdom was that it was better to have the interlocutors strive to rely on themselves, or to rely on their partners to respond with questions in instances where communication broke down. Even though Green and Green scanned the journals “quickly and holistically every week,” a fact that they told their students in advance, they found that the frankness of their students’ entries did not seem to suffer from the scrutiny.

The non-correction issue is an interesting one, a question that will be explored in more detail in *The Correction Controversy* section of this study. It has not been demonstrated that correction of student writing has any significant short- or long-term effects. Indeed, some studies suggested that correction was not worth the amount of time spent by teachers doing it. As Green and Green (1993) emphasized, the implication for the teacher is obvious. Not having to correct or respond to dozens of journals takes a huge burden of time and tedium off the teacher.

Furthermore, Green and Green (1993) pointed out that common homework collection problems, such as lateness, were a minor problem. “Most of the students hand in their journals on time, week after week; they seem much more reluctant to disappoint a peer audience than a teacher” (p. 22). The bulk of the time expenditure by the teacher to administer the activity was that required to prepare the notebooks (which could be used over periods of various lengths), pair the students, and to collect and distribute the notebooks.

The Green and Green (1993) article continued with excerpts from actual journals that served to illustrate the conversational nature of the communication, the peer bonding that took place, and an instance in which one partner assisted the other through a difficult personal problem. Toward the end, the article included 13 helpful suggestions as to the week-to-week administration of the activity. For example:

10. Check the first group of written journals for students who have revealed their names, even though you told them not to. Have correction fluid handy.
11. In general, try to intervene as little as possible. But do intervene if students are not following directions about the nature of the assignment or your minimum expectations, or if there appears to be a problem with a relationship between two writers. (p. 20)

While Green and Green (1993) referred to the journal activity as secret friend journals, Worthington (1997) referred to them as “secret exchange journals.”

Interestingly, Worthington made no reference to the earlier Green and Green article.

While the Worthington article had little new to add to Green and Green, it was based on slightly different theoretical underpinnings. The theoretical justification of Green and Green came largely from L1 writing pedagogy. On the other hand, Worthington based the justification for the secret journal activity on the discipline of process writing, in which the goal is the development of voice and fluency, and the voyage of self-discovery that can occur through the expressive process of writing, rather than the product of it.

Worthington (1997) found the same faults with student-to-teacher journals as did Green and Green (1993): the time demands of responding to the entries of students, and the dissimilarity of interests between those of the student and those of the teacher. In discussing these faults, Worthington strengthened the case for the secret journal activity on several fronts: the reduced workload for the teacher, and the superiority of peer-to-

peer journals over student-to-teacher journals resulting from the “commonality of interests” (p. 4) and the “opportunity for genuine and meaningful communication” (p. 3) between the students.

Prior to instituting her secret exchange journal activity, Worthington (1997) had had lengthy experience with student-to-teacher journals before she realized that her responses “were somewhat artificial and forced” (p. 3). Based on this realization, Worthington and a colleague adopted an approach suggested by Reid (1993): “Dialog journals need not be only between teacher and students. Students can be paired with (or they can choose) student dialog partners in the class” (p. 164). They instituted secret student-to-student exchange journals at a university in Taiwan. The justification for secrecy was the same as Green and Green (1993): “The reason for keeping identities secret was to add the element of mystery and anonymity which we hoped would encourage students to express opinions more openly than if their real identities were known” (p. 3).

Worthington (1997) made some revealing general observations about the journals from the weekly A4-sized page required each week. She noticed that the students often wrote more than required, while they tended to count words rather carefully in their more traditional writing assignments. The students eagerly anticipated picking up their journals to read what their partners had written, and expressed dismay in their own entries when the entries of their partners were short or were late. She also noticed that the students developed strategies for negotiating meaning in cases where the communication broke down: asking for clarification and for the meanings of certain words or phrases that were unclear. At the end of the first term, when asked which activity the students preferred,

student-to-teacher journals or peer-to-peer journals, “*All* [italics added] students responded that the student-student journals were superior and suggested that we continue using this form of exchange with students the following year” (p. 4).

Worthington (1997) closed out the article with several interesting excerpts from the students’ entries, and helpful suggestions for administering the activity, including those related to matching the students, especially those students who resisted any kind of activity that required effort.

Penpal Activities

A literature review based solely on the extant penpal activity literature, in either an L1 or an L2, would be a short one indeed. At the time that this literature survey began, the aforementioned academic search engines, as well as my on-going personal search, revealed only one, Crowhurst (1991). Recently, however, more penpal activities have been added, primarily those using e-mail as the medium of communication. Ushioda (2000), in her e-mail exchange project between Irish university students learning German and German university students learning English, was outspoken in her enthusiasm for this kind of activity: “This is where the particular strength of tandem learning lies. Its natural focus on language use, collaborative learning, and on subject matter and language of personal relevance and interest acts as a significant catalyst for learners’ intrinsic motivation” (p. 127).

Crowhurst (1991) instituted a journal activity in which the interlocutors were not peers, but teacher-education students and sixth graders, all of whom were native English speakers. Crowhurst matched 25 of her teacher-education students with 27 sixth graders

(two teacher-education students had two partners each) for two purposes: to educate the teacher-education students in the writing produced by elementary students, and “to provide sixth-graders with a real audience for their writing” (p. 212). As has already been mentioned, anticipation of receiving real communication is one of the engaging traits of dyadic journal writing. Crowhurst observed that “it quickly became apparent that ‘letter day’ was anticipated each week with considerable pleasure” (p. 215).

Concurrent with her observations on the psychological advantages of this type of journal writing, Crowhurst (1991) was one of the few authors who attempted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the linguistic progress of her students. The analyses were anything but statistically sophisticated, nor were the conditions under which the activity was administered and the data collected. The results were of some interest nevertheless. The measures included “letter length” (length of communication), syntax, paragraphing, openings and closings, questions, topics, and borrowed features. Crowhurst observed that “letter length increased notably” (p. 217), from an average length of 67 words in the first letter to an average of 160 words per letter in the next seven letters. The “mean t-unit length for the first letters was 7.46; mean t-unit length for letters #2 through #8 was 8.36.” However, the statistical significance is unknown. Crowhurst’s observations on paragraphing defied clear understanding, but she apparently concluded that although few of the students paragraphed [*sic*] their initial letters, their later letters included more paragraphs, although “paragraphing did not seem to be related to letter length” (p. 219). The openings and closings seemed to become less abrupt as the activity continued. Similarly, where few students asked questions in their initial letters, they asked more in subsequent letters. Topics became less “safe” and “general” in the

first letters to “more personal topics in later letters” (p. 221). Finally, and not surprisingly, openings and closings, the use of questions, topics, and words and expressions were increasingly borrowed from the teacher-education students by the sixth graders and incorporated into their own subsequent letters. While Crowhurst’s results were interesting, they were not tested for statistical significance. Furthermore, the data was insufficient to allow close scrutiny or replication. Whether participants in peer-to-peer dialogue journals would exhibit similar linguistic behavior remained to be seen.

Student-To-Teacher Dialogue Journals

Given the existence of few sources on penpal and peer-to-peer dialogue journal writing, we must turn to alternative literature to help provide the theoretical and pedagogical justification for the value of dialogue journal writing. Fortunately, there is an abundance of literature addressing student-to-teacher dialogue journals.

There were four books or edited collections that addressed the issues of first and second language dialogue journals, primarily student-to-teacher dialogue journals: *The Journal Book* (Fulwiler, 1987), *Students and Teachers Writing Together: Perspectives on Journal Writing* (Peyton, 1990); *Dialogue Journal Writing with Nonnative English Speakers: A Handbook for Teachers* (Peyton & Reed, 1990); and *Dialog Journals in the Multi-lingual Classroom: Building Language Fluency and Writing Skills Through Written Interaction* (Peyton & Staton, 1993). These were rich sources of theoretical and practical background material on dialogue journals, and included transcribed and facsimile excerpts from various projects administered by the authors, editors, and contributors. Unfortunately, the latter three sources are now out of print.

Fulwiler (1987) was an edited collection of articles by 48 contributing authors who addressed a wide range of diverse journal uses. It included the use of journals as tools for student and teacher self-reflection, and for teaching science and humanities, including English. However, it did not include any treatments of journal use in the second language classroom. In the Peyton and Reed (1990, Preface section) handbook, the authors focused on student-to-teacher dialogue journals with “nonnative English speaking students, at elementary through high school levels.” Peyton (1990) was an edited collection that included disparate contributions ranging from the use of dialogue journals with deaf students to an attempt, by Peyton herself, to quantify the acquisition of specified grammatical morphemes. Finally, the edited collection by Peyton and Staton (1993) recycled many of the themes found in Peyton and Reed, with individual contributions by Peyton, Staton, Reed, and one collaboration by Peyton and Staton. The inbreeding in this last collection was exacerbated by the recycling and sharing of data sources among the authors whose research emphases and analyses differed slightly.

In all four of these books the general term dialogue journal subsumed all forms of journal writing in which at least two interlocutors communicate through the medium of a common journal, in a native, foreign, or second language. The four books in question did not, however, encompass the whole range of variations on the dialogue journal activity. They were almost solely dedicated to dialogue journals in which students wrote to their teachers, while ignoring peer-to-peer dialogue journals. Witness Peyton and Reed (1990), who defined the dialogue journal as “a conversation between a teacher and an individual student” (p. 3).

That said, Peyton and Reed (1990) did acknowledge the possibility of other pairs of interlocutors, including native- and second-language writers, older and younger writers, and writers who are mentally-, physically-, or learning-challenged. They even conceded the potential existence of peer-to-peer dialogue journals: “Students at upper elementary or secondary levels might be paired with each other” (p. 10). However, even though the authors acknowledged this potential alternative, they failed to elaborate on it at all. It was surprising that peer-to-peer dialogue journals were basically neglected in these presumably comprehensive sources.

In most of the treatments of dialogue journal writing, including those above, there was one common element: The medium was consistently a common loose-leaf or bound notebook in which both teacher and student wrote their entries. The journals were exchanged on a regular basis. The subject matter was chosen by the writers or, in content courses, the journal was used to address more or less specific course content. The stronger member of the pair, presumably the teacher, responded to the content of the students’ entries rather than correcting or grading them, although the teacher could choose to model the correct linguistic form more or less explicitly, often in the form of recasts. The entries were confidential, confined to the teacher and the student, except in cases where the conditions were otherwise agreed. Furthermore, all of these sources made largely empirically unsubstantiated claims that student-to-teacher dialogue journals contributed to increases in the linguistic proficiencies of their students, and that the journals acted as valuable forums through which students could discuss their problems and anxieties, and vent their frustrations.

The most persistent question in these sources was whether or not low-proficiency writers would be able to carry on sustained communications in a second language with more proficient writers. Indeed, that was one of the initial concerns of the secret journal project to be examined in this study, a concern that was put to rest within the first couple of weeks of its administration. Peyton (1990) observed that “ESL learners can compose and express themselves in written English long before they have mastered its forms and structures” (p. 91). Peyton (Peyton & Staton, 1993, p. 2) echoed that confidence: “We discovered that these students *could* write, even though they were still learning English, and some at very beginning stages.” Sandler (1987) had a similar concern that was elucidated in the title of her contribution to Fulwiler (1987): *Letting Them Write When They Can’t Even Talk? Writing As Discovery in the Foreign Language Classroom*, a concern that she soon found to be groundless.

The four sources cited above (Fulwiler, 1987; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) provided critical background material for anyone interested in the pedagogical value of and administration of dialogue journals in a wide range of educational settings. However, they omitted any specific discussion of peer-to-peer dialogue journals. We must look beyond dialogue journal sources for additional theoretical justification for the use of dialogue journals with peers. Fortunately, the student-to-teacher dialogue journal sources also cite a wide range of scholarship that is relevant to peer-to-peer dialogue journals: Applebee, Britton, Brown, Bruner, Dewey, Freire, Krashen, Long, Swain, and Vygotsky, to name a few. It is these potential contributors to whom we now turn.

Psychology of Language Learning

The most often cited general rationale for the use of the dialogue journal in second language pedagogy is that it provides a vehicle for the interlocutors to write for meaning rather than for linguistic display. The writing is for a real purpose: to discover and explore subjects of mutual interest to the interlocutors, and is co-constructed out of the cultural context in which the interlocutors are situated. Cited in Peyton and Reed (1990, p. 28), Applebee's criticism of the then current writing pedagogy was especially salient.

Despite the tremendous interest in the past several years in providing more opportunities for writing and in improving the writing of nonnative English speaking students, much in-school writing continues to be done in response to specific teacher assignments, about teacher-assigned topics, with no particular audience in mind, and for no purpose other than evaluation of the student's writing ability (Applebee, 1984).

Holmes and Moulton (1995) suggested that dialogue journals emerged from the communicative competence movement: "Out of the communicative competence movement, dialogue journal writing has emerged as an L2 writing activity which researchers suggest supports the writing process by engaging writing partners in a two-way written interaction that encourages authentic communication" (p. 224). The authors then went on to suggest that the theories of both Paolo Freire (1973, 1987) and Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1978) provided the theoretical underpinnings and justification for dialogue journals. "Freire's impact on dialogue journal research comes from his Socratic notions about adult learning and his belief in the power of genuine dialogue to provide the fundamental context for all learning" (p. 224). According to Holmes and Moulton: "The developmental theories of Vygotsky (1978) are often invoked to explain how

dialogue journal writing supports language acquisition" and that Vygotsky "suggested that human learning is mediated through interaction with others" (p. 224).

Vygotsky: Scaffolding and the ZPD

In 1962, Vygotsky defined the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a metaphorical space between an expert or more capable figure, and a weaker learner or novice, in which the expert may assist the novice in the learning process through speech, by "scaffolding" the novice's knowledge or skills. In the student-to-teacher dialogue journal, which might be thought of as itself constituting the ZPD, the teachers stretch "their students' thinking and language skills...by using language slightly beyond the students' levels of proficiency (i.e., interacting with students within their 'zones of proximal development' [Vygotsky, 1962])" (Peyton, 1990, xi). In his *Introduction*, Fulwiler (1987) also addressed the Vygotskian contribution to dialogue journal writing.

However, recent research and scholarship suggest that the informal language of journals is too important to ignore. Leading language scholars, including Vygotsky (1962), Moffett (1968, 1982), Britton (1970, 1975), Emig (1971, 1977), Elbow (1973, 1982), Shaughnessy (1977), and Berthoff (1983), have argued, variously but persuasively, that human beings find meaning in the world by exploring it through language—through their own easy talky language, not the language of textbook and teacher. (p. 1)

Erickson (1996) later extended Vygotsky's concept and suggested that rather than a one-way transfer of knowledge, the expert might also benefit from the dialogue with the novice in a bidirectional exchange of knowledge: "In the new view, the student is seen as active, influencing the teacher while being influenced by the teacher" (p. 30). Hudelson (1993) applied a similar extended view of the bidirectional exchange of knowledge to student-to-teacher dialogue journals: "Thus learner and teacher together collaborate to

create written conversations, to exchange ideas and views, to learn from each other. In the process, both writers become teacher and learner” (p. xiv).

Van Lier (1996), however, highlighted a critical weakness in the expert-novice dichotomy: the inherent inequality in power between the expert and the novice that might serve to dilute the efficacy of the transfer or exchange of knowledge. He paraphrased Freire: “Paulo Freire has said that you can only have dialog when you have equality” (pp. 139-140). Clearly there is a power gap between a student and a teacher.

Donato (1994) made a quantum leap by extending the Vygotsky expert-novice dyad and adapting it to interlocutors in the second language classroom. While Vygotsky’s interlocutors were the expert and the novice, Donato’s interlocutors were, more or less, equally matched peers. Donato carried out a study that sought “to answer the question of whether learners can exert a developmental influence on each other’s interlanguage system in observable ways” (p. 39).

Donato’s (1994) participants were three well-acquainted students of French at an American university. Their interactions during a one-hour planning session for a follow-on oral task were videotaped and transcribed. The data were then examined for examples of collective scaffolding, that is, instances in which one or two of the partners assisted the other or others in acquiring a grammatical form necessary to carrying out the task. Donato found that of the 32 cases observed, in which one partner scaffolded another during the planning session, 24 were observed later during the task performance, where help was no longer available. He concluded that “the microgenetic analysis of collective activity has revealed that in the process of peer scaffolding, learners can expand their own L2 knowledge and extend the linguistic development of their peers” (p. 52). Donato

went on to apply his findings to the second language classroom: “By recasting the role of learners during social interaction, the current theoretical position supporting group work in second language classrooms will be expanded beyond simple opportunities to exchange linguistic artifact to that of the collective acquisition of the second language” (p. 53). To summarize, Donato demonstrated that through social interaction, peers could collectively scaffold each other with resulting increases in the proficiencies of both or all of the partners. Whether or not the peer-to-peer dialogue journal provides a venue for peer scaffolding remains to be seen.

If we accept a modification of the basic Vygotskian psychological view from a transfer of knowledge to an exchange of knowledge, and from an expert-novice dyad to a peer-peer dyad, it becomes evident that we need to examine additional literature in psychology and psycholinguistics in order to flesh out the theoretical justification for the use of dialogue journals in second and foreign language pedagogy.

Authenticity

Authenticity is often discussed in the psychology of language-learning literature, as well as in the second- and foreign-language writing pedagogy literature. Authenticity is defined as “the degree to which language teaching materials have the qualities of natural speech or writing” (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 27). Authenticity is a particular concern in the EFL environment because it is largely artificial and is confined to classrooms in which the language is decontextualized and often denatured. “Unfortunately, opportunities to use oral or written language interactively are missing in the classroom. Even students learning English as a second language often have few

opportunities in class to use English, to exchange genuine information with the teacher or with each other” (Peyton & Staton, 1993, p. 5).

Little (1997) was outspoken in his view of the importance of authenticity in language learning and the importance of “authentic texts” to language learning.

I argued that because they use the same psycholinguistic mechanisms language learning and language use are essentially inseparable, so that it is logically impossible to define a threshold of target language competence that learners must achieve before they are exposed to authentic texts: authentic texts should play a central role in language learning at all levels. (p. 235)

Van Lier (1996) discussed authenticity in detail and expressed a concern for the lack of effectiveness of L2 language teaching. “The fact that classroom language looks and sounds like classroom language is often taken as evidence of the artificiality of language lessons, and this in turn can then be used as an explanation for the lack of success of language instruction” (p. 123).

The challenge becomes trying to find activities that have a sense of authenticity. Is the second language dialogue journal, either peer-to-peer or student-to-teacher, authentic? One might quibble that it is not, given that in the former case, the interlocutors are using a language that is not their native language, and in the latter case, the student is using a non-native language while the teacher is using his or her native language, and in an environment of unequal power. However, in both forms of dialogue journals the interlocutors must use the second language to find a common ground upon which to communicate (or fail to do so), and after having done so, explore that ground. The medium may not be completely authentic, in the sense that the language employed is not the native language of at least one of the interlocutors, but the purpose is authentic.

However, Peyton and Reed (1990), primarily proponents of student-to-teacher dialogue journals, had no doubts: “Students have the opportunity to use writing to communicate: to express concepts that are important to them, to accomplish real purposes, to be read by an interested audience, and to receive a reply that is genuine and meaningful” (p. 11).

There is another authenticity problem in the student-to-teacher dialogue journal. The teacher may not qualify as an authentic audience. Not only are the teachers using their native languages, while their students are not, but as was pointed out in both Green and Green (1993) and Worthington (1997), student-to-teacher dialogue journals largely ignore a critical characteristic: teachers are often unlikely to know much about, nor are they able to appreciate the current and ever-changing tastes in popular culture of interest to children, adolescents, and university students. This situation is exacerbated in the EFL environment where native English teachers may be unable to appreciate the popular culture tastes of their student-interlocutors either because of poor second language skills, because they may be uninterested in those tastes, or both.

The gulf between the second language skill of the student and the native language of the teacher, the differences in tastes in popular culture, the unequal power relationship, and the mandate for the teacher to provide instruction may conspire to make the student-to-teacher dialogue journal unauthentic.

Just as easily, however, one could argue that the peer-to-peer dialogue journal qualifies as authentic. The entries of the interlocutors are genuine attempts at communication and are not produced for language learning reasons, although language learning may occur. Furthermore, the recipients of the communications are not asked to

do anything unauthentic with them, such as correcting errors. Indeed, they are merely asked to read them and respond in a completely natural manner, the same as they would in their native languages. The interlocutors communicate with each other for real purposes, about subjects of interest to them, in an environment of equality.

Autonomy

Autonomy is another topic often discussed in the second language learning literature. In discussing the importance of authenticity to language learning, Little (1997) suggested an important symbiotic relationship between authenticity and autonomy.

Authentic texts are directly relevant to the development of learner autonomy in two ways. First, on the affective level, learners who from the beginning have been exposed to authentic texts rapidly develop confidence in the face of the target language. In particular, they quickly cease to worry that their comprehension may be incomplete, since they know that much can be achieved on the basis of partial comprehension. Secondly, on the psychological level, authentic texts accommodate the two-way relation between language learning and language use, encouraging the development of techniques of language learning that entail language use and techniques of language use that entail language learning. (p. 231)

Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991), echoed by van Lier (1996), highlighted the role of autonomy as a critical component in their self-determination theory. They proposed that intrinsic motivation is the product of three innate needs inherent in the life of the human: “the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (or self-determination)” (p. 327). They continued on to define these three needs:

Competence involves understanding how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing the requisite actions; relatedness involves developing secure and satisfying connections with others in one’s social milieu; and autonomy refers to being self-initiating and self-regulating of one’s own actions. (p. 327)

The authors concluded that “simply stated, motivation, performance, and development will be maximized within social contexts that provide people the opportunity to satisfy their basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy” (pp. 327-328).

Peer-to-peer dialogue journals appear to satisfy all three of the conditions that contribute to maximizing intrinsic motivation. The interlocutors certainly have the competence it takes to establish and maintain relationships with others in their native languages. Using that same competence in second language communication seems an obvious step. Likewise the second condition, relatedness: A major part of the rationale for the peer-to-peer dialogue journal is for the interlocutors to establish and maintain relationships with others in their “social milieu,” a view shared by authors writing about Japanese adolescents (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). Finally, nearly complete ownership and autonomy are characteristic of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal, especially when the content is unspecified and there is minimal teacher intervention.

Peyton and Reed (1990) provided additional support for the importance of autonomy: “The dialogue journal can be a completely open-ended writing experience, a time when students can write freely about anything they want to, in any way they want to” (p. 28). The autonomy adds to a sense of ownership by the student, with added benefits: “When we feel a sense of ownership, we take responsibility” (p. 111).

Interest

Perhaps interest is the most elusive of the characteristics that teachers try to incorporate into their lesson plans. Any teacher who has spent more than five minutes in

a classroom full of learners can attest to the phenomenon of a minimally interesting activity and its benumbing effect on those learners, especially younger learners. There exists considerable literature that suggests that interest is a vital determinant as to whether a young student will learn or not, which is why interest remains a much-discussed topic in enlightened discussions of curriculum design.

To those who favor the learner-centered design, this is the key criterion. These persons note that knowledge exists in the learner when it is meaningful to his or her life. When it fails to be meaningful, it dehumanizes education. The interest criterion has been with us since the time of the child-centered school in the 1920s. Advocates of this movement urged that the child should be the source of the curriculum; in other words, the children's interest should determine the curriculum. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 219)

Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) discussed "motivating the academically unmotivated" and pointed out that "research has demonstrated that interest has a powerful facilitative effect on cognitive functioning. Its influence on academic performance has been established across individuals, knowledge domains, and subject areas" (p. 152). The authors continued with an observation especially applicable to young learners: "Theorists have also suggested that interest may be the key to early stages of learning, as well as to differences between expert and moderately skilled performers" (p. 152).

In one of the most comprehensive treatments of the factors that influence classroom interest, Bergin (1999) distinguished between person-centered interest and situation-centered interest, and remarked that in the short run a teacher may do little about the former, but that the latter "is manipulable by educators" (p. 87). He enumerated 12 situational factors that influence interest: hands-on, discrepancy, novelty, food, social interaction, modeling, games and puzzles, content, biophilia, fantasy, humor, and narrative. At least six of these factors seem to speak directly to a potential connection

between interest and the secret peer-to-peer dialogue journal: social interaction, content, hands-on, novelty, games and puzzles, and fantasy.

The contribution of social interaction to interest seems obvious: “To the degree that students perceive that a task or activity will allow them to socialize, especially with friends, they will tend to be interested in the task” (Bergin, 1999, p. 93), a view supported by Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001). Indeed, a primary goal of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal medium is to allow the interlocutors to socialize with the hope that in doing so their language skills, and perhaps their social skills, will improve.

For maintenance of socializing, mutually interesting content must be located and negotiated, a linguistic challenge in a second language, but an easier one when the interlocutors share similar cultural backgrounds. The content of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal is determined by the interlocutors themselves; they can discuss subjects of interest to one or both of them, rather than a topic chosen randomly by a teacher who provides it as a vehicle for linguistic display.

Writing in, drawing in (Appendix B), and exchanging a physical (rather than an electronic) peer-to-peer dialogue journal is very much a hands-on experience. As to novelty, the peer-to-peer dialogue journal is certainly an activity that few students have ever experienced in school. However, the downside of novelty, as Bergin (1999) points out, is that “stimuli that were once novel obviously become not novel after they have been around for a while” (p. 93).

The final two factors from Bergin (1999) -- games and puzzles, and fantasy -- overlap. As it relates to secret peer-to-peer dialogue journals, the process of imagining, negotiating, and eventually finding out at least some of the personal characteristics and

tastes of one's partner is game-like, with a strong element of fantasy. Egan (1986) made a particularly compelling case as to the importance of fantasy in the education of young students, and the extent of its neglect by educational delivery institutions: "The dominant model and principles are derived from educational research and theorizing that has almost entirely ignored the power and educational uses of children's imagination" (p. 1).

Clearly, interest is a major focus of companies and institutions that manufacture educational materials. Computer and ancillary businesses have not ignored the appeal to interest. Many of them are designing engaging learning activities for young people by striving for maximization of interest and autonomy through interactivity in often cleverly disguised game-like educational environments.

The secret peer-to-peer dialogue journal potentially has some of those characteristics that can contribute to interest as posited by both Bergin (1999) and Egan (1986): the opportunity to socialize with peers, content of interest that is co-determined by the interlocutors, a physical medium, novelty, and a secret game-like fantasy atmosphere. Whether the journals actually exhibit any of these characteristics, and whether verifiable linguistic and social development occurs is as yet unknown.

Anxiety

Many second language scholars argue that the number one factor that militates against successful second language learning is communication anxiety. Indeed, even those who have a high level of L2 competence can suffer insecurities in its use. For that matter, most humans are occasional victims of some insecurity in communicating even in their L1s, especially in particularly stressful situations.

In their review of the literature regarding language-learning anxiety, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) reiterated the now widely accepted distinctions amongst three types of anxiety: trait, situation specific, and state. A given language learner may generally be susceptible to anxiety because of a personality predisposition (trait anxiety). However, it is the classroom situation in which students may be asked to produce the second language in front of classmates that sparks situation-specific anxiety.

For the experienced EFL teacher at the junior high school level in Japan, the anxiety of the students is frequently obvious. When beginning English-learner proficiencies are combined with the purported Japanese abhorrence of oral communication and the raging insecurities of the young teenager, the stage is set for a classroom where very little oral interaction takes place. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) addressed the role of speaking in the classroom and its contribution to anxiety: “Difficulty in speaking in class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students” (p. 126). MacIntyre (1999) also underscored the importance of the role of anxiety in language learning, and in doing so, appeared to characterize the stereotypical Japanese adolescent in an EFL classroom.

Overall, the single most important source of language anxiety seems to be the fear of speaking in front of other people using a language with which one has limited proficiency. For this reason, language learning has more potential for students to embarrass themselves, to frustrate their self-expression, and to challenge their self-esteem and sense of identity than almost any other learning activity. (p. 33)

Peyton and Reed (1990) suggested that by supplementing live classroom communication with dialogue journals, some of the second language oral communication anxiety felt by students could be avoided, and some of the barriers that decrease their willingness to communicate, removed. “Dialogue journals can ease the pain of such face-

to-face encounters by providing a nonthreatening way for students to communicate” (p. 1). Holmes and Moulton (1995) pointed out that “perhaps one of the most significant claimed benefits of dialogue journal writing is the reduced anxiety that students experience through this medium of communication” and that “with reduced anxiety, students took greater risks with their writing, wrote more frequently, and improved their writing skills” (p. 225). The environment of the dialogue journal can eliminate much of the pressure that results from face-to-face communication: superficial acceptance or dismissal judgments based on factors such as appearance, athletic prowess, academic status, and popularity.

That said, it must be recognized that there exists a writing anxiety construct as well. “Similar effects can be observed when speaking or writing in the second language” (MacIntyre, 1999). Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) added empirical support for the writing-anxiety construct. Using modified and translated versions of the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) and SLWAT (the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test) with 433 Taiwanese English majors, the authors found a “significant and moderately high correlation” ($r = .65$) between measures of oral and writing anxiety. That is, anxiety experienced in the second language classroom was moderately correlated with second language writing anxiety. Despite the moderately high correlation, the authors distinguished “second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety as two related yet relatively distinguishable anxiety constructs” (p. 436), and that “some language learners may feel particularly anxious about speaking in the second language, and some about writing” (p. 438). The peer-to-peer dialogue journal may simply substitute second language writing anxiety for classroom oral communication

anxiety. It may be problematic, however, to detect signs of writing anxiety without extensive valid and reliable surveys.

Willingness To Communicate (WTC)

The flip side of the anxiety coin is willingness to communicate (WTC). In MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998), WTC is characterized as a combination of factors that influence one's likelihood of initiating an oral communication.

For those who teach elementary and adolescent students, the problem and the challenge are compounded. Inside the classroom, WTC is frustrated by academic pressures, family pressures, peer pressures, friendship pressures, gender pressures, pressures caused by differences in academic, athletic, appearance, and social factors. Outside the classroom, WTC may be thwarted by an array of factors not the least of which may be a lack of opportunity to communicate in the foreign language. Indeed, the foreign language teacher who teaches adolescents is fortunate to foster any foreign language communication whatsoever, inside or outside the classroom.

The WTC model by MacIntyre et al. (1998) will be examined in order to determine how and the extent to which it might predict a positive or negative role of WTC in peer-to-peer dialogue journals, in particular the secret peer-to-peer dialogue journal form of the activity. While the WTC model is designed to be applied to spoken language rather than written, for the moment that departure from intention will be put aside. Furthermore, not all of the model will be examined. Instead, a discussion of “the top three layers (*I, II, & III*), which represent situation-specific influences on WTC at a given moment in time” is more relevant to a discussion of dialogue journals than the

bottom three layers (*IV*, *V*, & *VI*), which “represent stable, enduring influences” (p. 547), that is, individual personality traits and attitudes.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) stressed the importance of *Layer III, Situated Antecedents of Communication* and its eventual effect on WTC: “we see the desire to interact with a specific person and state self-confidence as the most immediate determinants of WTC” (p. 549). The *Situated Antecedents of Communication* are, therefore, comprised of two contributing factors: the *Desire to Communicate with a Specific Person* and *State Communicative Self-Confidence*.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggested that there were two components that contributed to the desire to communicate with a specific person, or in a negative sense, militated against it: affiliation and control. “Research in social psychology reveals that affiliation often occurs with persons who are physically nearby, persons who are encountered frequently, physically attractive persons, and those who are similar to us in a variety of ways” (p. 549). The second component was control of the language to be used, the L1 or an L2, in a given communicative situation.

The other contributing factor to *Layer III* is *State Communicative Self-Confidence*. *State* here refers to the specific situation in which a potential communication may take place, for example, a foreign language classroom. The antithesis of state communicative self-confidence is state anxiety, a high degree of which would discourage WTC. That anxiety “may be increased by many factors such as unpleasant prior experiences, intergroup tension, increased fear of assimilation, an increased number of people listening, and so forth” (p. 549). For many students, foreign language classrooms

are often extremely high-anxiety environments that conspire against oral communication, as Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) observed.

Layer II of the model is labeled *Behavioural Intention*. MacIntyre et al. (1998) apparently equates the behavioral intention layer with what the model diagram (p. 547) shows as its only contributing factor: *Willingness to Communicate*. In the discussion of this layer, we find the Achilles heel of English language programs in Japan or perhaps in any foreign language environment. “In this sense, intention must combine with *opportunity* [italics added] to produce behaviour” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 548). Opportunities are few for authentic communication in an L2 in a largely monocultural and monolingual society, regardless of the degree to which an individual is willing to communicate.

The top layer of the model, *Layer I*, is *Communication Behaviour*. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), the desire to communicate with a specific person and state communicative self-confidence (*Layer III*) combine to minimize anxiety and maximize self-confidence. These factors, in turn, produce the desire to communicate. That desire, combined with the opportunity to communicate (*Layer II*), produce communication (*Layer I*).

In the adolescent peer-to-peer dialogue journal, the interlocutors have an opportunity to communicate in an L2, or affiliate in an L2, with those individuals with whom they most wish to do so, their peers (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). Control is not an issue; the language to be used is pre-specified, and the English proficiencies of most Japanese adolescents are similar. State anxiety is minimized; the journals are confidential, and the psychological and physical distances of the interlocutors preclude

superficial judgments that might militate against WTC. The playing field is level. Finally, the journals provide the opportunity to communicate in the L2, and for authentic purposes.

Second Language Acquisition Literature

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Just as many of the basic social sciences and practical pedagogy have more or less inadvertently contributed to the theoretical basis for the dialogue journal, so perhaps have the stalwarts of second language acquisition theory, for example, Krashen, Long, and Swain, as well as the works of Willis (1996) and Skehan (2003) on task-based learning.

The conditions for at least two of the main hypotheses of Krashen's (1981) now well-known second language acquisition theory, which he posits as necessary and sufficient for acquisition, may be inherent in the peer-to-peer dialogue journal. The two hypotheses are The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

Central to the former is "comprehensible input," which is loosely defined as input slightly above the current level of the receiver's interlanguage. Peer-to-peer dialogue journal entries written by interlocutors at roughly the same level of second language proficiency should be at the correct level to qualify as comprehensible. The drive to communicate successfully with one's partner is a powerful stimulant for making that input clear and understandable. With dialogue journals in a relatively homogeneous culture like Japan, the comprehensibility is increased by the shared cultural experience and similar interests, in many cases. In instances where communication breaks down or is unclear, "the more proficient language user facilitates the participation of the less

proficient participant by modifying the qualities of his or her interaction and language in a variety of ways, according to the perceived proficiency of the learner” (Peyton & Staton, 1993, p. 4). It may very well be that participants in a peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity supply each other with comprehensible language, in the usual sense of the word *comprehensible*. However, whether or not that language fosters acquisition is quite another question.

The latter component, The Affective Filter Hypothesis, pre-dated discussions of the role of the formal psychological construct of anxiety in the language learning classroom, examined previously. According to Krashen (1981), optimum second language acquisition occurs in a low affective-filter environment, that is, a low-anxiety environment. The state of low anxiety allows the learner to attend to input without distraction.

Krashen (1981) summarizes concisely what he views as the critical characteristic of the good language teacher: “The effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation” (p. 32). It remains to be seen if the peer-to-peer dialogue journal qualifies as a vehicle for providing that input in such an environment.

Just as Krashen was the formulator of the idea of comprehensible input, Swain (1985) was his counterpart in declaring the necessity of “comprehensible output” to language acquisition. Peyton and Staton (1993, p. 5) report that Swain

argues that just as important as comprehensible input is ‘comprehensible output,’ ‘being pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately’ (p. 249). The *use* of the language, in interaction with others, ‘provides opportunities for contextualized, meaningful [language] use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and

to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis' (p. 252).

Likewise, Long (1980) pre-dated the Vygotskian voices that now inform the field of second language learning by pointing out the crucial role of interaction in first- and second-language learning.

Early second language acquisition researchers foresaw and labeled factors that they claimed influenced second language acquisition. In many cases, their observations were supported by research on psychological and native-language psycholinguistic constructs that were later published and accepted into the second language acquisition field.

Task-Based Learning

In her book on task-based learning, Willis (1996) succinctly defined tasks as follows: "...tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 23). The characterization by Williams and Burden (1997) highlights the importance of tasks as a means of providing the forum for interaction through which language learning takes place.

One of the driving forces behind the current surge of interest in tasks within the foreign language classroom has been psycholinguistic. Studies of foreign language acquisition and theories about the way in which individuals acquire a foreign language suggest that a learner's language system develops through communicating meaningfully in the target language. In other words, individuals acquire a foreign language through the process of interacting, negotiating and conveying meanings in the language in purposeful situations. Thus a task, in this sense, is seen as a forum within which such meaningful interaction between two or more participants can take place. It is through the ensuing exchange and

negotiation of meanings that learners' knowledge of the language system develops. (p. 168)

Skehan (2003) adds additional support to the importance of interaction: "A contrasting view of interaction is that taken within sociocultural theory, where researchers explore how learners co-construct meaning while engaging in interaction" (p. 5). The dialogue journal seems to qualify as a task by any of the current definitions of task in the second language pedagogical literature.

Linguistic Improvement Literature

Writing Improvement

The dialogue journal literature is nearly uniform in explicitly and implicitly claiming that dialogue journal writing results in improvement in writing proficiency. In fact, virtually all the authors writing specifically about dialogue journals (Fulwiler, 1987; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) claimed a strong role played by the dialogue journal in promoting increases in writing proficiency, especially in fluency. However, it may also be that accuracy is promoted as well. The process of communicating about shared interests and tastes almost certainly fuels an additional concern for accuracy by the interlocutors in order to achieve mutual understanding, and to avoid the potential embarrassment that bad or unclear writing might implant in the eyes of one's partner.

In the process of negotiating meaning in the journal, the writer's linguistic competence develops (Peyton, 1990), who also observed that "dialogue journal writing, therefore, appears to provide a valuable context for the acquisition of a second language

in a written interaction” (p. 70). Sandler (1987) stated: “I have found that even at the most elementary levels journal writing, free composition, and other exercises that encourage students’ uninhibited use of language to explore their thoughts can bring surprising progress in language learning” (p. 312).

Despite numerous claims that penpal or dialogue journal writing results in improvement of writing proficiency, those claims are not supported by empirical evidence. There have been only three attempts at quantifying changes in writing proficiency: Crowhurst (1991), already discussed, Peyton (Peyton, 1990), and Casanave (1994).

Peyton (1990) studied the rank orders of grammatical morphemes supplied in obligatory situations. Her participants were five sixth-grade ESL students who had been in the U. S. less than a year. She studied 20 interactions of each of the participants over three sample periods (fall, winter, and spring) for six verb-related and four noun-related morphemes. The morphemes were then ranked by the percentage of those supplied to those required. Correlations were then run to compare the ranks from period to period; the correlations were strong, $r \geq 0.75$, $p < .05$, between the three sample periods, which meant that the same grammatical constructions were correctly supplied by the five participants at roughly the same relative percentage from period to period. Furthermore, Peyton’s rank orders were similar to the rank orders found by other researchers. Peyton claimed that this constitutes evidence of “universal patterns of acquisition” (p. 89).

While the Peyton (1990) study suffered from a small sample size, she found that the patterns of gains in the use of the morphemes studied were not uniform from individual to individual. None of the individuals made gains in the use of some

morphemes, while with others, all of the participants made gains of various magnitudes. With other morphemes, some individuals made gains while others did not. Peyton cited the common litany of reasons found in the second language acquisition literature for the differences in the apparent acquisition of the morphemes by the different individuals, and she speculated that they may have been affected by the different native languages of the participants. Despite the inconclusive, or at least, mixed results, Peyton concluded that “dialogue journal writing does reflect changes in the students’ language proficiency over time, even at the earliest stages of second language acquisition” (p. 91).

Casanave (1994), an advocate of student-to-teacher dialogue journal writing, studied the journal writing of 16 of her students, chosen neither “systematically or randomly.” She then selected two journals from each of three semesters from each of the 16 participants: the first two at the beginning of the first semester, the last two at the end of the first semester, and two from the end of the third semester, a total of 96 journals. She carried out 11 counts on the entries in these journals, but eventually focused on five that involved the length, complexity, and accuracy of the T-units. Casanave’s observations on the results of her study are insightful as they apply to relatively low-proficiency writers. She found, for example, that according to the T-unit analyses, 45% of her participants “did not progress” (p. 193). Rather than being disappointed, Casanave found occasion for optimism in this lack of progress in grammatical accuracy.

Let me say a few more words on the issue of grammatical accuracy. Time and again, in this research project and in my regular teaching, students have reported that they come to write more quickly and easily and with greater enjoyment over the three semesters of journal writing. I have observed that as students relax into their writing, and as they write more fluently, thoughtfully, and insightfully, the grammatical accuracy of the writing of some of them *decreases* [italics added]. I find the increases in fluency and insight exciting—and more interesting than

greater grammatical accuracy. But regrettably these signs of improvement have little face validity for many students, who see 'improvement' in traditionally narrow terms. (p. 193)

This trade-off of fluency for grammatical accuracy provides ammunition for those defending the use of uncorrected peer-to-peer dialogue journals in second language pedagogy, where the major goals may be defined by some as an opportunity for socialization, development of fluency, and autonomy in a low anxiety environment.

Little (1997) pointed out that because *oral* communication is the only form of communication that "requires language learners to produce an immediate response," authentic written texts allow the language learner to "plan, monitor, edit, and revise" thereby focusing on linguistic form, "giving particular attention to morpho-syntax" (p. 231). The delayed immediacy of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal makes it possible, though not obligatory, for the interlocutors to respond more accurately in the L2 in a genuinely communicative manner, but without the anxiety and pressure for speed found in face-to-face communication.

The Correction Controversy

Because dialogue journals are generally uncorrected, is it reasonable to assume that the writing proficiencies of peer-to-peer dialogue journal interlocutors will improve in the absence of correction? The correction-no correction or the response-no response controversy is one guaranteed to raise the hackles of the stereotypical language teacher armed with a predisposition to correct and a red pen. In the *Introduction*, I characterized my experience with correction and its effect, or lack of the same. Apparently, Lalande (1982) had similar experiences. He began his often-cited article with the tongue-in-cheek

observation that “some students exhibit remarkable consistency: they commit the same errors or types of errors from one essay to the next” (p. 140). Even so, he went on to support the view, at odds with his observation, that teachers should consider seriously the adoption of a policy of “total correction of written errors” and that teachers should help their students locate errors so that they can “invoke problem-solving/active correction strategies” (p. 147).

It is respected scholars in the second language writing field who have been outspoken on the correction or response issue, “What all of this means, then, is that we should respond not so much to student *writing* but to student *writers*” (Zamel, 1985, p. 97). Zamel’s views were often echoed in treatments of dialogue journal writing (Duppenthaler, 2002; Fulwiler, 1987; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993), all of which supported response to content rather than correction of linguistic errors.

Likewise, in the general ESL/EFL literature, there has been support for a non-correction approach. The strongest and most strident case for non-correction can be found in Truscott (1996), which gave rise to a heated debate on the subject. He posited that (a) “research evidence shows that grammar correction is ineffective,” (b) the “lack of effectiveness is exactly what should be expected, given the nature of the correction process and the nature of language learning,” (c) “grammar correction has significant harmful effects,” and (d) “various arguments offered for continuing it all lack merit” (p. 328). Truscott’s final sentence provides the *pièce de résistance*: “Thus, for the foreseeable

future my conclusion stands: Grammar correction has no place in writing classes and should be abandoned” (p. 361).

Ferris (1999) wrote a spirited response to Truscott’s contentions. She countered with a summary that represented her view: “However, there is mounting research evidence that effective error correction -- that which is selective, prioritized, and clear -- can and does help at least some student writers” (p. 4), and concluded with a reaffirmation of her case for some form of error correction of student writings with “...at least three important reasons to continue the practice until such time as it has been conclusively proven to be ineffective and/or harmful” (p. 8). First, according to Ferris’ surveys, students wanted it. Second, studies show that university content instructors were intolerant of common ESL errors. Third, correction could result in student writers becoming more self-sufficient in their abilities to self-edit.

In the same issue of the same publication, Truscott (1999) rebutted Ferris’ (1999) plea “to continue the practice until such time as it has been conclusively proven to be ineffective and/or harmful” by turning the argument on its ear: “the harmful effects of the practice provide a strong case for the opposite position -- that correction should be avoided until a convincing case can be made for its use” (p. 119).

There have been attempts at quantifying the advantages and disadvantages of correction, including works by Hillocks (1982), Lalande (1982), Fathman and Whalley (1990), Ferris and Roberts (2001), and Sheppard (1992). However, they are inconclusive and suffer from weak statistical methodology, small samples, or both. The slightly stronger statistical methodology used in the study by Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986)

led them to conclude that “this study, however, does not support the practice of direct correction of surface error” (p. 91). The upshot is that there is no conclusive evidence that correction works, as a general rule. Some students may benefit; some may be cowed by it. Most may just ignore it.

There is another major consideration that informs an educator’s decision to correct, respond, both, or neither. From the teacher’s standpoint, the real Achilles heel of the student-to-teacher dialogue journal is the time it takes to respond to each of the student writers. References to that time have appeared in nearly all of the treatments of dialogue journal writing, together with suggestions for correction and response that span the entire continuum from none through partial to total.

Harrison (1993), who is firmly in the pro-correction camp, perhaps inadvertently made a strong case against correction. She had to review 165 student-to-teacher journals every week. “There is no question that it is a time commitment; the journals for one class of 42 students takes me between 60 and 90 minutes to complete” (p. 76). That implies roughly four to six hours per week!

Truscott (1996) observed that “teachers grading large numbers of written assignments have serious problems with time and patience, problems that can easily affect the quality of their comments” (p. 350). Zamel (1985) added support: “According to one estimate (Somers, 1982), teachers take at least 20 to 40 minutes to comment on an individual paper” (p. 80). Leki (1990) observed that “Given the enormous amount of time and energy poured into written commentary on student papers, the picture that emerges from research on the usefulness of this commentary is problematic” (p. 63). Every one of

the authors reviewed made explicit or implicit reference to the time- or effort-consuming nature of teacher response.

As a final word, Hunt (1989) gave what is perhaps the most poignant support for non-correction and support for task-based learning: “We don’t learn language by having our errors pointed out and corrected; we learn as a by-product of using language in order to do things we care about doing” (pp. 82-83).

Oral Proficiency Improvement

Just as the dialogue journal may promote improvement in the writing proficiencies of the interlocutors, it is argued by some dialogue journal writers and researchers that dialogue journal writing may also foster some improvement in oral proficiency. However, empirical studies of the potential connection between the development of oral proficiencies and peer-to-peer dialogue journal writing simply do not exist, although the connection seems logical.

Elbow (1985) made perhaps the most comprehensive and compelling case for the psycholinguistic interconnectedness of speaking and writing. “Speech is usually social and communal, writing solitary. But we can make writing communal too by having people write together and to each other” (p. 290). Peyton and Reed (1990) observed that “[dialogue journal] writing has the qualities of good conversation” (p. 7). Britton (1975) cited in Fulwiler (1987) remarked that “the language of journals will look a lot like speech written down” (Fulwiler, p. 3). Ushioda (2000), in her e-mail exchange project between Irish university students learning German and German university students

learning English, found that the students “were clearly aware that e-mail discourse has close affinities with the spoken idiom” (p. 124). Takagaki (1997) speculated that “writing activities are expected to facilitate speaking in an indirect way” (p. 48).

In a reversal of the influences, based on the entries of their journal writers, Peyton and Staton (1993) discovered “that the same dynamics that promote oral language development promote writing development, for they are the dynamics that promote learning” (p. 3). Holmes and Moulton (1995) claimed that “another benefit is that dialogue journal writing facilitates the transference of oral English to written English” (p. 225).

While the connection between the writing and speaking proficiencies seems to be obvious, it remains for empirical inquiry to determine to what extent, if any, this is the case. In any case, the perceptions of the participants, according to Holmes and Moulton (1995), were that “most participants claimed the writing in the dialogue journals produced changes in the fluency of both their written and oral English” (p. 231).

The Japanese Adolescent

Given that the literature reviewed so far appears to allude to a potential value of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal in terms of practical second language pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and linguistic development, it is only natural to examine whether this activity may also address other potential needs of Japanese middle-school adolescents. However, studies in English of Japanese middle-school students are nearly non-existent. The most comprehensive and informative of the treatments of the lives of Japanese middle-school students was the ethnography by Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001), in

which the authors themselves admitted to the meager state of the research: “Japan’s preschoolers, elementary students, high school students, and even college students have been the objects of many studies and much scholarly debate. However, one group -- Japan’s middle school students -- has gone largely unnoticed” (p. 1).

The treatment of Japanese teens by White (1993) was another critically valuable source. *The Material Child* (White, 1993) addressed the world of the Japanese adolescent, and the fact that Japanese companies recognize the Japanese adolescent as a viable and sophisticated consumer group. To that end, Japanese companies commit enormous marketing resources to appeal to that group. As an example, it is not at all rare to see the same Japanese comic book character show up in animated movies and television programs, and on a wide variety of products from pencil cases to mobile phones.

The Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) ethnography was based on interviews and field notes gathered in Japanese middle schools over a period of 13 years. The generalizations about the Japanese middle-school environment were interspersed with narrative descriptions of five of their respondents as they progressed through their middle-school years. The authors stressed that Japanese adolescence is viewed by Japanese society as a positive time in the transition from childhood to adulthood. White (1993, p. 10) echoed this view: “In Japan, adolescence is not a limbo period but the most critical, most fully mobilized time of life.” Indeed, any foreigner who has ever witnessed the annual sports day at a Japanese middle school is bound to be surprised by the number of parents, siblings, and other relatives in attendance, with picnic lunches, for the whole day.

As Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) pointed out, this Japanese view of the adolescent is contrary to the Western, and particularly the American view, that adolescence is a time of emerging problems and that adolescents are universally “at risk.” Again, White’s (1993) view was parallel and critical: “Americans have created a mythical teen beast” (p. 36).

Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) went on to characterize the middle-school experience as one in which the student is weaned away from close family ties and the nurturing cooperative learning environment of the elementary school to a more stereotypical Japanese academic environment with the teacher-fronted lecture style classroom format, and increased peer socialization, with the school club playing a central role. At the same time, the contribution of the family to the life of the adolescent begins to diminish: “After entry into junior high school, students spend more time in school than with their families” (p. 98).

Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001) characterized the educational goals of the middle-school environment: “In Japan there is only one organizational model for middle grades and a clear organizational set of goals: preparation for the high school entrance examination; development of basic academic skills; and promotion of social skills via participation in club and extracurricular events” (p. 33). However, the news is not all good. Delinquency, bullying, and school violence continue to be a concern in many middle schools. “In the past two decades, middle school students have been the group most prone to in-school violence and school refusal syndrome” (p. 2). Furthermore, “The ‘intense years’ of Japanese middle school are characterized by a far higher level of pressure to perform academically than in most other nations” (p. 5).

With regard to the “promotion of social skills,” White’s (1993) ethnography profiled young, but sophisticated, Japanese consumers and observed that “friends are a teen’s most important resource” (p. 142). The importance of communicating with peers is widely recognized in the developmental psychology literature, and is a critically important facet in the lives of Japanese middle-school students as well, an issue addressed at great lengths by Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001):

The impact of Japanese middle schools on friendship is considerable. Student friendship throughout the middle school years reflects the intersection of three domains: adolescent subculture, the organization of the school, and the post middle school world. These factors come to life in student categories of friendship and cliques boundaries. A student-defined, gender-segregated world, where status is defined by expertise in children’s games, sports knowledge of popular culture, growing interest in the opposite sex, as well as social skills among peers, is a major dimension of friendship. (p. 46)

They went on to observe that “schools are truly the main stage for the drama of adolescent friendship during the middle school years” and that “middle school may impact adolescent friendship more powerfully than elementary school” (p. 45).

It remains to be seen if peer-to-peer dialogue journals have the potential for being a tool for promoting socialization. Can they provide a forum through which adolescents might discuss their problems and concerns, and in which one’s interlocutor might respond in an atmosphere of strict confidentiality? In fact, all of the dialogue journal sources cited herein (Fulwiler, 1987; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) included transcripts or facsimile reproductions of just such exchanges. Peyton and Reed devoted two entire sections entitled *Addressing Behavior Problems* and *Responding to Angry Entries* (pp. 75-79). A journal entry, by one of the public school female participants in one of my pilot projects, included just such an outburst. It

graphically demonstrated the potential utility of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal for providing a confidential forum for adolescent anxieties. Furthermore, it also emphasized where the student-to-teacher dialogue journal might fail to do so.

Mm...I don't like junior high school. Because, I hate teachers. 1) Disturb 2) Persistent 3) Repeat it like the old dog that knows only one trick. 'Be a good student.' I become aware when a second [probably meaning that she understood the first time]. Finally, an adult like 'A good child.' What do you think?

This excerpt may illustrate the potential for the peer-to-peer dialogue journal, in either a native or a second language, to fulfill certain psychological needs of the adolescent. While this potential is in itself a massive study, it will become more apparent as we examine certain characteristics of the secret journal in this study.

Summary and Gaps in the Literature

The most apparent gap in the literature is a wide one indeed: there are no treatments in English of peer-to-peer dialogue journals used with primary or secondary students in second language education. At least, none have been located so far. Concomitant with this large gap are answers to a host of questions that must be addressed in order to start to fill in this gap.

Treatments of university students communicating in a second language with each other through the medium of a shared dialogue journal (Green & Green, 1993; Worthington, 1997) have been reviewed, along with treatments of teachers communicating through dialogue journals with their second language students (Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993). All of the these authors and others

(Casanave, 1994; Crowhurst, 1991) made subjective or empirical claims that not only were their students capable of sustaining on-going dialogues with their peers or their teachers in a second language, but that some of the writing proficiencies of their students improved as a result.

Similarly, the second language literature seemed implicitly supportive of the pedagogical potential for peer-to-peer dialogue journals. Krashen (1981) posited that “comprehensible input” was necessary, and sufficient, for language acquisition. Other authors (Skehan, 2003; Williams & Burden, 1997; Willis, 1996) suggested that task-based learning was an efficacious means of acquiring a second language in that tasks brought an element of authenticity to the process of learning. However, major questions remain: Can low-proficiency adolescents maintain an extended and comprehensible dialogue with a peer in a second language through the medium of a dialogue journal, with minimal or no teacher intervention? If so, do their writing proficiencies improve over the course of the dialogue journal, and in comparison with other students not writing in a dialogue journal?

Authors who specialize in writing about the use of dialogue journals in second language learning (Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) and other authors (Elbow, 1985; Takagaki, 1997) suggested that writing practice could contribute to increases in speaking proficiencies. Holmes and Moulton (1995) suggested that the conversational nature of peer-to-peer dialogue journals was ideal for fostering increases in speaking proficiencies. These empirically unsubstantiated claims beg the question: Does participation in a dialogue journal activity promote improvement in speaking proficiencies of the participants in comparison with non-participants?

The psychology literature seemed to suggest that the psychological conditions inherent in the secret peer-to-peer dialogue journal are ideal in ways that should result in linguistic improvement. For example, the authenticity literature (Little, 1997; van Lier, 1996) addressed the importance of authenticity to second language learning. Similarly, autonomy was posited as an important factor (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Little, 1997; van Lier, 1996), a factor enhanced by those claiming advantages to teacher non-intervention (Truscott, 1996). Interest was claimed as a factor paramount in determining success in education (Bergin 1999; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Minimizing anxiety was especially important in the second or foreign language classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991), and the dialogue journal was especially adept at doing just that (Holmes & Moulton, 1995). Just as minimizing anxiety is important, so is maximizing the willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Vygotsky (1962) suggested a neutral zone (ZPD) in which education takes place between an expert and a novice. Donato (1994) extended that zone to peers. Therefore, if the peer-to-peer dialogue journal fills the aforementioned psychological conditions that are claimed to promote learning, is there evidence that learning is taking place, and do students writing in a dialogue journal perceive that they are learning? Furthermore, do the writers learn from their peers, and do they perceive that they learn from their peers?

Authors who specialize in studying Japanese adolescents (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001; White, 1993) and others (Bergin, 1999) emphasized the crucial role of socialization in the lives of adolescents, and in doing so, inadvertently added potential fresh support to peer-to-peer dialogue journals. If socialization is as important as these authors suggest, do

the journals seem to provide a vehicle for it? Furthermore, do the participants show any signs of anti-social behavior as a result of the psychological distance inherent in a secret journal activity?

In short, the peer-to-peer dialogue journal has explicit and implicit support from many and varied quarters as a seemingly ideal prospective pedagogical tool for use in the foreign and second language classroom. So, why do most language educators ignore peer-to-peer dialogue journals? That is the fundamental question, and is the question to which this study hopes to contribute some rudimentary answers, either directly or indirectly.

The research questions that follow are a subset of those that must be addressed before making an informed evaluation of the pedagogical value and efficacy of peer-to-peer dialogue journals used with young, low-proficiency second language learners. The scope of potential future research is nearly unlimited; any and all would be welcome in seeking to fill the myriad gaps in our knowledge.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions to be addressed.

Research Question 1: What trends do the participants' peer-to-peer dialogue journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project in linguistic measures of the total number of words written, the total number of word types written, and the mean length of utterances written?

Research Question 2: What trends in common errors do the participants' journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project, specifically spelling errors and *What...like Syntax Errors?*

Research Question 3: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency, complexity, and accuracy on a free-writing quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

Research Question 4: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency and lexical complexity on a free-speaking quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

Research Question 5: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity? Specifically, why did the participants volunteer for the activity, how much time did they spend on their entries, and upon reflection, did they like the activity?

Research Question 6: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward their partners, and is there any correlation between liking one's partner and the number of words written?

Research Question 7: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journals as a language learning activity?

Research Question 8: Do journal entries of participants in peer-to-peer dialogue journals show evidence of echoing, and might certain instances of echoing constitute scaffolding in the spirit of Vygotsky and Donato?

Research Question 9: Do peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants exhibit any detrimental behavior, such as lateness in turning in their journals, not following the journal rules, inappropriate language, or contentious exchanges that might cause a teacher considering this activity to reject it?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Because of the large quantity of data collected and the broad range of research questions to be addressed, the following section is rather lengthy. It encompasses six subsections, each with a different set of data collection procedures, and each with a different set of analyses to which those data were subjected. To summarize:

1. Secret Journal Project

This subsection covers the initiation and administration of the journal project over the full five terms, the selection of the participants, and a description of their English background. It also addresses the procedures used to transcribe the journal entries.

2. Trend Analysis

This subsection addresses the procedures that were used to select the linguistic features to be analyzed, and the procedures used to analyze the trends in those features over the life of the journal project.

3. Free-Writing Quiz

This subsection covers the participants, the procedures used in administering the quiz, and the procedures used in collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data.

4. Free-Speaking Quiz

This subsection describes the participants, the procedures used in administering the quiz, and the procedures used in collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data.

5. Surveys

This subsection encapsulates the procedures used in distributing, collecting, and analyzing the responses by the participants to the informal end-of-term surveys.

6. The Journals: Potential Pitfalls

This subsection summarizes the source of the data used in the discussion of potential pitfalls that might dissuade an educator from using the secret journal or a similar activity.

Secret Journal Project

The first of two pilot projects began in early 2002 between a girls' private junior high school and a coeducational public junior high school; I worked at both. The projects ran through the end of 2002, thereby encompassing about three terms. The scale of the projects was relatively small and informal, with fewer than 15 participating pairs. The pilot projects were crucial in helping clarify the potentials and the limitations of the activity, and the administrative system under which the activity best operated.

I initiated the major secret journal project, the subject of this study, at the beginning of January 2003, among three public junior high schools in a local Tokyo ward. In this project, 30 students at the school where I worked part-time (KD hereafter) exchanged journals through me with 15 students at each of two other schools (N and K hereafter): the total was 60 students, or thirty pairs.

Because it involved three public schools in the same ward, permission to do the project was a bit formal with the Japanese English teachers at each school discussing the project with their school administrators. The administrators gave oral permission to those teachers, and in my short discussions with two of the administrators afterwards they verified that they were aware of the project and showed interest in its progress. In the beginning, the only stipulations were that the project be an extracurricular one and that

the schools not be compared through testing, although the testing stipulation was later abandoned.

The initial project design was altered slightly as time progressed due to unforeseen events in the schedules of the participants. An overview of the final project design can be seen in Appendix C.

The Participants and Their School Environment

The 60 eventual secret journal participants were average public middle-school students from a Tokyo suburb. They entered the seventh grade at around 12 years old, and were 12-13 at the beginning of the journal project. At the time the project ended, a year-and-a-half later, the participants were in the ninth grade and were 14-15 years old.

Schools

All three schools that participated in the project are average public schools in the same ward (county), and all three are in close proximity. Schools N and T are within approximately 2.75 km and 1.75 km, respectively, of school KD. The enrollments of the schools varied. School T had only two classes of eighth graders: they averaged over 37 students per class. School KD had three classes which averaged over 32 students per class, and school N had four classes which averaged over 30 students per class.

Curriculum

Given that the schools are situated in the same ward, the curricula for the three schools are uniform and are mandated by a combination of the Japanese federal agency

responsible for education (the Ministry of Education or *Mombusho*) and the ward education committee. *Mombusho* (now called *MEXT*) provides general educational guidance, while the ward committee chooses textbooks and makes other day-to-day administrative decisions.

The students attended three 50-minute English classes per week, which were taught by their Japanese English teachers, based largely on the grammar-translation approach. Depending on the year of the student, the classes included 9-18 classes per year that were team-taught by a Japanese English teacher and a native English speaker, in an effort to bring more of a communicative approach to the classroom. The curriculum sequence was dictated by a textbook common to all of the middle schools in the ward.

The student populations at these schools are comprised primarily of adolescents of 100% Japanese ancestry. However, in my classes over the years there were some students with mixed ancestries, and occasional Korean and Chinese students, although none participated in this study. A growing number of the Japanese students have had experience living in foreign countries, primarily as a result of their fathers' occupations; some have lived in more than one foreign country. Additionally, parents are allowed to place children with learning disabilities in the public schools, so there are rare learning-challenged children in some of the schools.

I live very near school KD (about four minutes on foot), have toured the surroundings of these schools many times, and have observed that the composition of the neighborhoods from which the students come are so similar as to be indistinguishable. Therefore, in the absence of detailed financial data on every family, I feel it is safe to

speculate that the average socio-economic backgrounds of the students were about as uniform as possible.

Administrating Teachers

I was working with one and had worked with another of the three Japanese English teachers who helped administer the journal project. Having worked with more than 30 different teachers in this ward over a period of 13 years, I can report that they are outstanding teachers, well liked, and respected by their students. The third teacher came highly recommended by another teacher with whom I had worked in the past. I had observed him informally with his students in a coaching context; he is also an outstanding teacher, obviously well-liked, and respected.

Participant Selection

Because the secret journal project was not an official part of the ward-mandated curriculum, it was considered an extracurricular activity. Accordingly, the students had to volunteer to participate. At the school at which I worked (KD), the Japanese English teacher with whom I taught, and I, solicited volunteers to participate in the project. I personally urged some of the eventual participants, mostly marginally motivated boys, to participate in order to ensure a somewhat balanced level and gender mix. Some of those I asked declined to participate. The participants at schools T and N, where I was unknown to the participants, were recruited by their Japanese English teachers. There was no shortage of volunteers for the 60 total slots in the project.

The participants comprised a total of 23 males and 37 females. Of the 30 students from KD, 12 were males and 18 were females. Of the 15 students at school N, there were seven males and eight females, and at school T, there were four males and eleven females.

English Background of the Participants

Prior to the start of the journal project, the recently mandated elementary school English program had not yet been instituted, so it is safe to say that a large majority of the total number of students who entered these middle schools in April, 2002, had had little or no formal English training prior to entrance. It is after entering middle school that the majority of the students began to receive the English language training already portrayed.

After entering middle school the nature and amount of English language training received by the general middle-school student population begins to diverge, but only slightly. Some middle-school students attend *juku*, or cram schools. Most of those students receive supplemental English language training. However, the number of hours they receive, the quality of the training, and the total length of that training varies. A smaller minority of the students may attend a conversation school for periods of varying length.

A more detailed summary of the English backgrounds of the secret journal participants was not possible. Detailed individual data on the English backgrounds and English proficiency of the participants was not available.

In order to get a rough idea of the proficiencies of the participants, I asked their Japanese English teachers to assign each participant a holistic 1-3 point, subjective

English proficiency assessment. Of the 30 students from KD, seven were rated as 3s (excellent English students), while the remaining 23 were assigned 2s (average English students). At school N, of the 15 students, there were seven 3s, seven 2s, and one 1 (below-average English student). At school T, the 15 students were rated as follows: eleven 3s and four 2s. Eight of the participants at this school were members of the English drama club. The other two schools had no English clubs.

In summary, though it is impossible to characterize accurately the English language backgrounds of the general student population and of the journal participants, given the uniformity of education delivered in Japanese public schools, it is safe to assume that the English language background of the journal participants did not differ significantly from that of the non-participant student population.

Materials

The journals themselves were the standard B5-size bound notebooks found commonly in Japanese stationery stores or 100-yen shops. Some contained just 30 pages, which was more than adequate. A code indicating the school and the journal number was written in marker on the front cover, e.g., GJ12. The “12” identified the two students paired, and the “GJ” indicated the names of their respective schools. The codes were changed every term to help preserve the anonymity of the participants and their schools. The Japanese English teachers were given a check-list of only the participants at their own schools and their corresponding journal numbers, so that keeping records of the distribution and collection of the journals was a simple and minimally time-consuming

process. Furthermore, the secrecy of the pairings was preserved, even among the administrating teachers.

Procedures

Journal Procedures

In this section, the general procedures used in matching the participants, explaining the rules, and collecting and distributing the journals in accordance with the schedule are described.

Project Schedule

The participants were told that the journal project would continue for five terms. The participants started exchanging journals at the beginning of the last term of seventh grade (January 2003) and continued through July 2004, the first term of ninth grade (Appendix C). That period comprised five full terms. The dates of the first and last entries for each term were as follows: Term 1, January 17 and March 7, 2003; Term 2, May 2 and September 8, 2003; Term 3, September 16 and November 25, 2003; Term 4, January 15 and March 10, 2004, and; Term 5, May 18 and July 6, 2004.

Rules

The volunteer participants were told the general rules of the activity: (a) the journals would be confidential, (b) they would not be corrected, and (c) the journals might occasionally be scanned in order to verify appropriateness and that they adhered to exclusive use of English. Furthermore, the general and more specific rules were listed in

English on a sheet of paper that was glued to the inside of each journal (Appendix D). Besides admonitions not to use personal names, school names, Japanese, and not to lose the journal, the only other instruction was to be sure to answer one's partner's questions.

Matching

The initial matching of the participants from the different schools was based on the English proficiency assessment by their Japanese English teachers already discussed. Participants with similar assessments were paired. Furthermore, in this and all subsequent pairings, an attempt was made to balance the opportunities for genders to be paired with the same and with the opposite gender, to the extent possible given 23 males and 37 females. In general, the participants changed partners at the beginning of each new term, so eventually they were to have corresponded with five different partners.

After the initial pairings, and in addition to trying to achieve the aforementioned gender balance, a secondary effort was made to pair participants with similar interests and levels of motivation, as indicated by the approximate number of words written. As the project progressed and as I became more familiar with the writing of the participants, I was better able to pair the students with others likely to share interests. I was able to do so through a combination of examining key words and through the use of surveys. At the beginning of Term 3, I spent an inordinate amount of time matching the participants.

At the beginning of Term 4, I decided to re-pair 12 pairs of former partners in cases where they particularly seemed to like each other. Nine pairs from Terms 1 and 2 were reunited, all without knowledge of that fact. Additionally, three pairs from the immediately preceding term were re-paired. One male, who through the term-end surveys

indicated that he did not like any of his three previous partners, was paired with another male of about same level and a similar passion for baseball. However, this pairing was equally unsuccessful according to his survey response.

Delivery

I personally delivered the journals between the schools by bicycle. As a result of continual trial, we determined that the optimal target collection day was Tuesday, which necessitated picking up and delivering the journals on Wednesday or Thursday. As one might expect, an occasional journal or two were sometimes late; that necessitated an extra trip. Inter-school mail was sometimes used to deliver late journals. The incidence of late journals was minimal and minimally inconvenient. As Green and Green (1993) pointed out, their participants seemed loath to disappoint their partners by being late.

Transcription Procedures

There were four separate sets of data collected: the journals themselves, the free-writing quiz, the free-speaking quiz, and the surveys. The first three sets had to be transcribed. The specifics of the transcription conventions for these three data sets differed, so those specifics are discussed in the individual sections to follow.

The Transcription Software

I transcribed all of the journal entries, the free-writing quiz, and the free-speaking quiz using the CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) project software system (MacWhinney, 2000). The CHILDES system is a database available to

researchers wishing to study first or second language acquisition. A description of the full system can be viewed at <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/intro/>. CHILDES was initially designed as a repository for children's oral utterances that could be accessed and studied by any researcher who wished to. However, it can also be used for other purposes, such as written utterances.

The software and attendant materials are free and can be downloaded from the CHILDES website: <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu>. There are separate versions for the major operating systems. The system is supported by grants with the hope that researchers who use the system will contribute their databases to the project for all researchers to access.

The CHILDES system has three components: the Database, CHAT, and CLAN. The Database, which I did not use, has audio and written submissions from different languages involving children and adults who range from normally-developed to physically- and language-challenged.

CHAT is the data entry component. It has a standard transcription system that allows a wide range of input from simple transcription of spoken or written utterances, to the sophisticated tagging of features of interest to conversational analysis researchers. CHAT also allows input of audio and video sources that supplement the written conversational analysis transcriptions. Scans of all six of the actual entries for Term 3 by partners ID52M and ID21F, their transcriptions, and their linguistic analyses can be seen in Appendix E. Notice that the capitalization of the initial word of each utterance is not allowed by CHAT; capitals are confined to *I* and proper nouns.

CLAN (Child Language Analysis) is a collection of computer programs with a wide range of commands that allows the researcher to access transcriptions, manipulate

them, and create output according to the desired analysis. For example, in this study I used three commands almost solely: *freq*, *mlu*, and *kwal*. These commands have various switches that allow the researcher to narrow searches to even more detailed output. A description of the full range of commands and switches is beyond the scope of this study.

I used the *freq* command to determine the number of words and the number of word types found in a transcription or a set of transcriptions. In Appendix E, the command used was *freq +k @*. This command produced the number of words and the number of word types written by one pair of partners over the period of one term. The *+k* switch allowed all the capitalized words to be at the top of the word list rather than scattered throughout it in alphabetical order.

The *mlu* command gives the mean length of utterance based on the ratio of the total morphemes to the total utterances; each separate line in the transcription is considered an utterance. Morphemes are counted a bit differently than some grammarians might. For example, *play* is counted as one morpheme. *Player* and *playing* are also counted as one morpheme each; a grammarian might count these as two morphemes each. In the CHILDES system, then, the number of words (tokens) equals the total number of morphemes. I used the *mlu* command to determine the mean length of the utterances found in a transcription or a set of transcriptions.

Finally, I used the *kwal* command to search for a particular word or combinations of words, for example, *what* and *like*, for reasons that will be explained later. I also used *kwal* to search for certain tagged items, such as spelling errors.

Transcription Accuracy Verification

For the journals themselves, the free-writing quiz, and the free-speaking quiz, I did all of the transcribing myself because of the sheer volume of the data: 150 multi-entry journals comprising about 57,000 words, 290 free-writing quizzes, and 96 recordings of free-speaking quizzes. As I proceeded through the transcription process, I developed a rubric for each data set that was best suited to my research questions (Appendix F). The transcription rubrics changed slightly as I went along; that required that I go over the data in all three data sets several times in order to ensure consistent application of the rubric. I also went over the data repeatedly as new interests arose in the qualities of the utterances. I have made several qualitative evaluations of these data, but the focus of this study is not on those evaluations. In short, I have been over all three sets of data many times.

To ask an independent reader to go over even 10% of these data might have constituted cruel and unusual punishment. So, the issue of independent verification of the data transcription accuracy was addressed as follows. First, it is important to remember that the utterances of the participants were, on the whole, very simple (see Appendix E). However, in repeatedly going over the data, I have found very infrequent transcription errors. The bulk of those errors consisted of including or omitting certain function words, especially *a* and *the*. In the end I felt very confident about the accuracy of the transcriptions, and that any inaccuracies would be infrequent and would have little or no effect on the quantitative or potential qualitative evaluations of the data.

That said, I took additional steps to assure the accuracy of the transcriptions. For the journals transcriptions themselves, an independent reader selected ten journals at random and checked the third entry in each for accuracy. No errors were found. The

scans and the transcriptions checked are in Appendix G. Additionally, Appendix E contains scanned images of all of the Term 3 entries for one of the pairs of participants: ID21F and ID52M in journal number HJ26. It also includes the CHAT transcriptions of those entries, and the CLAN output of the total number of words produced by the pair, the number of word types, the type-token ratio, and the mean length of utterance.

In order to give other researchers access to these data, I have made the journal transcriptions and a sample of the scanned pages available to the CHILDES database. Additionally, the free-writing and free-speaking transcriptions will be available along with a sample of their corresponding scans and audio files. All of these data should be available online in the near future at <http://talkbank.org>.

Parental Permission

At the end of the project, permission to use the data for publication was solicited, which is not in keeping with standard practice in the U.S. I felt, as did the other teachers involved in the project, that soliciting permission prior to the project might be counterproductive to the secret nature of the activity and interfere with the frankness of the exchanges. Therefore, at the end of the project the participants were given a cover letter and a separate permission letter to give to their parents (see Appendix H). The letter summarized the project and guaranteed the confidentiality of the participants. In order to ensure that the students shed their standard adolescent tendency toward forgetfulness, and actually took the letters home, a ¥1,000 gift certificate (at school T) and ¥1,000 in cash (at schools KD and N), about \$10, was offered as a reward for returning the permission letters, whether permission was granted or not. Signed permission letters were received

from the parents of all 60 participants, two with thank you notes (one from a parent and the other from a participant) for being allowed to participate in the project.

Trend Analysis

Procedures

Because all of the entries written in all 150 journals by the 60 participants had already been transcribed using the CHAT transcription system, it was a relatively painless process to analyze the trends of some of the linguistic features in the entries over the five terms of the project (one-and-a-half years). The purpose was to determine if statistically significant linguistic changes had occurred in the participants' writing over the course of the five terms.

However, the range of possible linguistic analyses was constricted. For example, a measure of fluency would have been desirable, but it was impossible to have the participants clock the time they spent outside of class in writing their entries. Furthermore, it should be noted that because so many factors combined to influence the calculations that could be made, the resultant trends should be thought of as no more than very general indicators.

The secret journal project spanned five terms,. However, the number of entries written by each participant per term varied: Term 1 (4 entries), Term 2 (6 entries), Term 3 (6 entries), Term 4 (4 entries), and Term 5 (4 entries). In order to make the measures equivalent from term to term, some of the measures were normalized. In order to normalize the mean total number of words, the mean total number of word types, and the mean total spelling errors per word, they were divided by the number of entries per term.

Procedures: Total Words, Total Word Types, and Mean Length of Utterance

The following are the linguistic trends that were analyzed: (a) the mean total number of words produced per entry by term (hereafter, total words), (b) the mean total number of word types per entry by term (hereafter, total word types), and (c) the mean length of utterance by term (hereafter, MLU).

Using SPSS (Version 11.0.2), the descriptive statistics for the total words, the total number of word types, and the MLU by term were calculated. Then, using the *freq* function of CLAN, the total number of words written during each term by each participant was entered into a spreadsheet and normalized by dividing by the number of entries in the term. This produced a measure of the total number of words written by each participant per entry by term. Using the same normalization process, that same *freq* function yielded the total number of word types per entry by term for each participant. Finally, the *mlu* function yielded the mean length of the total utterances written by the participants by term. The MLU was not normalized to the different numbers of entries per term because the MLU is already a ratio (mean number of words per utterance). However, in order to check, I normalized this data. When normalized, the statistics were almost identical to those that had not been normalized, the differences in the number of entries per term notwithstanding.

In order to make a rough determination of how the vocabulary changed over the course of the project, selected vocabulary items were subjected to additional data manipulation. Thirty of the 60 participants were chosen at random using the SPSS (Version 11.0.2) random selection function. All four of the transcribed entries from Term 1 and all four entries from Term 4 for all 30 of the selected participants were separated

out and entered into two separate Word (Version 11.0) documents: one for Term 1 and one for Term 4. All non-vocabulary related items were deleted, for example, participant IDs and spelling error tags. The resulting vocabulary was copied and pasted into the Internet-based lexical analysis tool, *Web Vocabprofile* (Cobb, 2005). Within seconds, this powerful tool gives several analyses of the pasted vocabulary, for example, the numbers of word families, word types, and tokens, the percentages of function and content words, and the percentages of Anglo-Saxon cognates. However, my interest was in the distribution of the vocabulary over the first and second 1000-word lists (West, 1953), the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000), and off-list words, such as proper nouns.

I used SPSS (Version 11.0.2) to calculate the descriptive statistics and one-way, within-subjects ANOVAs, with the factor being the term (roughly equal periods of time, Terms 1-5), and the dependent variables outlined above: the mean total number of words per entry, the mean total number of word types per entry, and the mean length of utterance.

If the Wilks's λ multivariate test plus the other multivariate tests (Pillai's Trace, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root) indicated equal significant time effects at a significance level of $\alpha = .01$, follow-up pairwise comparisons were calculated for the dependent variables using the ten combinations of pairs: Terms 1 and 2, Terms 1 and 3, Terms 1 and 4, Terms 1 and 5, Terms 2 and 3, Terms 2 and 4, Terms 2 and 5, Terms 3 and 4, Terms 3 and 5, and Terms 4 and 5. Then the Holm's sequential Bonferroni procedure (Green & Salkind, 2003, p. 218) was used to determine the significant p values and to avoid committing Type I errors. Statistically significant pairs were singled out for further examination.

Finally, the means produced by SPSS (Version 11.0.2) were transferred back to Excel (Version 11.0), charted, and trendlines added in order to aid in the discussion of the results. Excel provides choices of types of trendlines: linear, logarithmic, polynomial, power, exponential, and moving average. Despite the fact that the polynomial choice was intuitively the best choice based on the line shapes on the graphs of the data in all three cases, I tried all five options (the moving average did not allow an R^2 calculation). The polynomial trendline was obviously a far superior fit in all cases to the data points than the other trendline options, so using Excel (Version 11.0), I charted the trendline using the polynomial option and had the R^2 value added to the chart.

Procedures: Errors

Separate from, but not unrelated to the linguistic measures above, are two error measures that are described, and the trends examined: (a) the mean total spelling errors per word per entry by term (hereafter, spelling errors), and (b) the percentage of *What...like syntactic errors* of the total occurrences per utterance by term (hereafter, *What...like syntactic errors*).

Spelling Errors

Using the *kwal* function of CLAN, spelling errors tagged during the transcription process were located automatically and counted manually. The rubric for what was not classified as a spelling error can be seen in Appendix F. The number of spelling errors by each participant in each term was entered into Excel (Version 11.0) and divided by the total number of words written by that participant in that term: this yielded a measure of

spelling errors per word by each participant by term. These results were then normalized to the different number of entries per term by dividing by the number of entries.

Finally, the means produced by SPSS (Version 11.0.2) were transferred back to Excel (Version 11.0), charted, a polynomial trendline added, and the option chosen to display the R^2 value on the chart in order to aid in the discussion of the results. All of the trendline options were tried, but the polynomial trendline was adopted for reasons already discussed.

One-way repeated-measures ANOVAs and follow-up pairwise comparisons were not calculated because of the relatively low number of occurrences of spelling errors to the total number of words produced.

What...like Syntax Errors

I noticed during the transcription process that a common type of syntactic error was “What do you like sports?” rather than “What sports do you like?” Using the *kwal* function of CLAN, all of the occurrences of *what* were located automatically. The total number of those *what* occurrences that were collocated with *like* were then counted manually. The total number of *What...like syntax errors* was also counted. Using Excel (Version 11.0), the percentage of errors to total occurrences was then computed by term.

The percentages by term were plotted on a line chart, after which a polynomial trendline was added and the option chosen to display the R^2 value on the chart. All of the trendline options were tried, but the polynomial trendline was adopted for reasons already discussed.

One-way repeated-measures ANOVAs and follow-up pairwise comparisons were not run as a result of the relatively low number of occurrences of the *What...like syntax errors* compared to the total number of utterances produced, and because a clear majority of participants did not attempt this construction at all.

Free-Writing Quiz

Toward the end of Term 3, a free-writing quiz was administered in order to gauge the writing proficiencies of the secret journal participants as compared to the non-participants.

Participants

On three separate days in December 2003, at the three schools participating in the secret journal project, a timed ten-minute free-writing quiz was administered to over 95% of the total number of eighth-grade students enrolled in the schools. The total number of students tested was 290: 59 of the 60 secret journal participants (one was absent), and 231 journal non-participants. Because of the disparity between the number of journal participants (59) and the number of journal non-participants (231), the random selection function of SPSS (Version 11.0.2), was used to select the quiz results of 59 journal non-participants from the total of 231, in order to equalize the sample sizes.

Materials and Procedure

I administered the quiz to 95 participants at the school at which I worked (KD) and where my presence was unlikely to have any effect on the results. The Japanese English teachers at schools N and T administered the quizzes on their own in order to avoid any potential effect that my presence might have had on the students and their quiz results.

The students were given no advance warning, and all of the students at each school were given the quiz on the same day in consecutive classes at the beginning of the period in an effort to eliminate preparation and to minimize warning of the impending quiz from class to class. The students were not allowed to use any reference materials, such as textbooks or dictionaries, during the quiz. The instructions for the quiz were written in Japanese in the heading of the quiz paper (Appendix I). The students were instructed to write a basic self-introduction and about anything relevant to their lives, for example, school, family, hobbies, interests, and sports.

The quizzes were collected and transcribed using the CHAT system in accordance with the transcription rubric in Appendix F. The quizzes were transcribed blind, that is, I did not know which of the quizzes were written by journal participants and which were written by journal non-participants. An independent reader reviewed 20 (17%) of the 118 original quizzes and their transcriptions, chosen at random using the random selection function of SPSS (Version 11.0.2). No transcription errors were found. Appendix I contains six scans of actual free-writing quizzes, three from the 59 journal participants and three from the 59 journal non-participants, and their CHAT transcriptions.

The performance of the students on four measures (four dependent variables) of writing was evaluated: fluency, accuracy, and lexical and grammatical complexity.

Fluency was operationalized as the total number of words written during the ten-minute quiz period. After transcription of the quizzes, CLAN made the word count automatic. The word count results were then entered into a spreadsheet.

For accuracy, rather draconian standards were employed. Even one spelling error, and other seemingly minor errors, like omitting an article, disqualified the sentence as error-free. Punctuation and capitalization, however, were ignored because the CHAT transcription conventions, which were designed for conversational analysis, would not allow them to be recorded in the standard manner. However, while neither punctuation and capitalization was of interest to this study, both were essentially accurate in all the samples. The measure, then, was the number of completely error-free sentences written during the ten-minute period.

Lexical complexity was measured using one of two available CLAN measures: the number of word types per word (the type/token ratio), and the total number of word types produced in the ten-minute writing period. The latter was chosen. The former would have allowed a student who wrote only one or two sentences to have a very high proportion of word types to total words. For example, one sentence such as “I like milk” would have a type/token ratio of 1.00, which indicates a high degree of lexical complexity, whereas writing only three word types in ten minutes would result in a relatively low measure of lexical complexity.

Grammatical complexity was a thornier issue. At least two studies (Casanave, 1994; Ishikawa, 1995), both conducted with university participants, used various measures or combinations of measures to try to quantify grammatical complexity, in itself a difficult undertaking. Ishikawa's study of "low-proficiency" university writers attempted to define a paradigm of low-proficiency writing measurement, but was inconclusive. Gaies (1980), however, posited that for very low-proficiency writing, the MLU (mean length of utterance) was the best quantifier. It is intuitively reasonable that second language middle-school students are likely to write very few complex sentences. In fact, in this study the vast majority of sentences are only one clause in length. So, I assumed that the MLU would give a rough indication of grammatical complexity. This was particularly convenient in that the *mlu* command in CLAN allows for a relatively effortless calculation. Only the MLU measure, already a ratio, was not predicated on the ten-minute time interval. Indeed, it would be quite possible for a low-proficiency student to score rather well on this measure by producing just one long sentence, perhaps even an error-riddled one. I felt that a student who produced one long sentence would very likely be able to produce multiple sentences as well.

First, the Pearson's r correlations between the six possible combinations of the four dependent variables were calculated, for the two groups separately and for the two groups combined in order to examine the strengths of the relationships among them. The data for the four dependent variables were then subjected to a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and then to separate univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) in order to determine if participation in the journal project resulted in

statistically significantly higher scores on the dependent variables, and if so, the magnitude of those differences.

To summarize, four evaluations of statistical significance of the performances of the journal participants compared to the journal non-participants were conducted on the transcribed data: the total number of words produced in ten minutes, the total number of word types produced in ten minutes, the total number of error-free sentences produced in ten minutes, and the average lengths of the sentences produced.

Free-Speaking Quiz

Toward the end of Term 4, a timed three-minute free-speaking quiz was administered in order to gauge the speaking proficiencies of the secret journal participants as compared to the non-participants.

Participants

On three separate days in March 2004, at just one of the three schools (KD), a timed three-minute free-speaking quiz was administered to over 95% of the total number of eighth-grade students. The total number of students tested was 96: 29 of the 30 secret journal participants at that school (one was absent), and 67 journal non-participants. One of the quiz-takers, a journal non-participant, was later eliminated from the statistical analyses as an outlier. Therefore, the final sample comprised 29 journal participants, and 66 journal non-participants: a total of 95 quiz-takers.

Materials and Procedure

I administered the quiz personally to the students at the school at which I worked and where my presence was unlikely to have any effect on the results. The quiz was recorded using a Sony Recording MD Walkman MZ-R910. I was seated off to the side at a distance and out of the line of sight of those being tested in order to avoid distracting them or adding to the pressure already upon them.

The students were given no advance warning of the quiz so as to prevent them from simply preparing and memorizing self-introductions. Given that a maximum of only 12 students from each class could be given the quiz on any one day, none of the dates of the quizzes were announced in advance. They were, in fact, separated by several days: March 4, 11, and 13. Using the SPSS (Version 11.0.2) random selection function, the students were selected and tested in random order. This system helped minimize anticipation and the opportunity for preparation by the students. The students were instructed by their Japanese English teacher to give a basic self-introduction and then talk about anything relevant to their lives, for example, school, family, hobbies, interests, and sports.

The quizzes were then transcribed using the CHAT system in accordance with the rubric in Appendix F. The recordings were transcribed “blind,” that is, I did not know which of the recordings were by journal participants and which were by journal non-participants.

To verify the transcription accuracy of the three-minute free-speaking quizzes, I used the SPSS (Version 11.0.2) random selection function to choose 10 (10%) from the total 95 quizzes. The chosen transcriptions are contained in Appendix J. An independent

reader listened to the recordings and checked them against the transcriptions. One transcription error was found (underlined in Appendix J). Student 2-1-11 (eighth grade, class 1, student 11), a journal non-participant, included *omerice* (a Japanese coinage for rice wrapped in egg) in one of his utterances. I transcribed this utterance as “omelets on rice.” Had I known this particular coinage, I would have transcribed it as “xx.” That is, it would have been counted by CLAN as one word, rather than three, and the xx stands for a Japanese word that has no direct translation into English and is not in common use in English. *Sushi* would have been transcribed as *sushi* and counted as one word; even though it has no direct translation into English, it is in common use in English. From these ten random transcriptions, a net loss of two words, out of 428 total, and two word types, out of 126, would have made no difference whatsoever in the statistics.

The measures adopted for analysis were a subset of those employed in the free-writing quiz. For the free-speaking quiz, I decided that the measure of grammatical complexity, the MLU, was rather meaningless given that it was often difficult to determine the utterance boundary. The measure of accuracy was also eliminated given that spoken utterances are rarely accurate in the same sense that written utterances are. A more reasonable measure might be *understandable utterances*, but given the fact that of the total utterances spoken by the quiz-takers, over 95% were easily understandable, the measure would have been minimally worthwhile. The measures of the number of words and the number of words types were retained. I felt that these two measures gave at least a general indication of the relative oral proficiencies in fluency and in one aspect of complexity (lexical) of the two groups.

First, the Pearson's r correlation between the two dependent variables was calculated in order to examine the strength of the relationship between them. The data for the two dependent variables were then subjected to a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and then to separate univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) in order to determine if participation in the journal project resulted in statistically significantly higher scores on the dependent variables, and if so, the magnitude of those differences.

To summarize, two measurements were carried out on the transcribed data: the total number of words spoken and the total number of words types used during the three-minute free-speaking quiz.

Surveys

At the end of Terms 1-4, informal questionnaires, written in Japanese, were stapled into the journals. The surveys were designed to gauge, informally: (a) the attitudes of the participants toward the secret journal activity, (b) the attitudes of the participants toward their partners, and (c) the perceptions of the participants as to the language learning value of the secret journal activity.

Materials and Procedure

The surveys were stapled into the journals and filled out by half of the participants after which I removed them from the journals to preserve the confidentiality of their responses. Prior to delivery to their partners, blank questionnaires were then stapled into each journal so as to allow the other half of the participants to respond.

The content of the surveys differed from term to term (see Appendix K). In discussions of most of the questions, the raw percentages provided the basis of those discussions. For those survey questions of interest that allowed them, Pearson's r correlations were calculated using SPSS (Version 11.0.2), either for examination of the correlations themselves, or as indicators of reliability. As a conservative indicator of reliability, the Pearson's r correlation was used in situations where exactly the same question was asked at a later date, as outlined in *Test-retest Reliability* by Brown (1996, p. 193).

The Journals: Potential Pitfalls

Materials and Procedure

During the administration of this project, I picked up and delivered the journals myself, so I had first-hand experience with the degree of lateness of the participants in handing in their journals. During the transcription process, I was able to observe incidents where the rules of the project were not followed, especially those regarding secrecy and use of the L1. I was also able to observe unusually interesting exchanges or utterances, including the use of inappropriate language and contentious exchanges, which were tagged during the transcription process using CHAT. These close observations allowed me to make informed estimates as to the degree of concern one might reasonably have about the behavior of the participants in their journals.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

At the end of the project there were 150 separate notebooks, that is, one notebook for each of 30 pairs over five terms. The notebooks included a total of 1,440 entries comprising 14,000 separate utterances with 57,000 total words. When the transcriptions were printed out, they occupied 464 A4-size printed pages. Because the terms differed slightly in length, and because of the vacation, academic, club, and school-event demands made on the students, Terms 1, 4, and 5 consisted of four entries per participant, while Terms 2 and 3 comprised six entries apiece. Following are the *Results* sections for (a) the trend analysis, (b) the free-writing quiz, (c) the free-speaking quiz, and (d) the surveys.

Trend Analysis

Linguistic Measures

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 1: What trends do the participants' peer-to-peer dialogue journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project in linguistic measures of the total number of words written, the total number of word types written, and the mean length of utterances written?

Table 1 contains the combined descriptive statistics for these three linguistic measures from each of the five terms of the study.

Scrutiny of the means of all three measures in Table 1 reveal that they were at maximums in Term 1 followed by precipitous decreases in Term 2. In Terms 3-5, the mean values stayed near the Term 2 values, with perhaps a slight upward trend in Terms 4 and 5. The means in Terms 2-5 never again reached those of Term 1.

Noteworthy are the high skewness and the very high kurtosis values for both the total words and the total word types per entry in Term 1. Examination of the boxplots for these variables revealed that these values were a result of the presence of two outliers (Appendix L). They were outliers in Term 1 only; Terms 2-5 had no outliers. Eliminating the outliers from future analyses was considered, but rejected. Likewise, transforming the data was considered; it too was rejected. Finally, eliminating one of two highly-correlated variables (total words and total word types) was considered; that idea, was dropped as well. The reasons for rejecting these possible solutions to the high skewness and kurtosis values in Term 1 will be addressed at length in the *Discussion* section.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Total Words, Word Types, and MLU ($N = 60$)

Term	1	2	3	4	5
Total words per entry					
Mean	47.15	36.25	37.37	40.17	38.67
Standard deviation	26.19	13.24	13.89	17.51	16.61
Minimum	19.25	14.50	14.33	12.00	16.00
Maximum	161.25	78.67	90.33	90.25	95.00
Skewness	2.53	1.30	1.18	1.03	1.29
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31	.31	.31	.31
Kurtosis	7.72	2.67	2.23	.84	1.89
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61	.61	.61	.61

Table 1. (*continued*)

Term	1	2	3	4	5
Total word types per entry					
Mean	21.35	15.35	15.40	18.79	18.42
Standard deviation	9.17	4.98	5.44	6.99	6.77
Minimum	9.50	7.33	6.83	8.00	7.75
Maximum	60.75	30.17	34.00	37.25	37.00
Skewness	2.29	1.08	1.07	.41	.66
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31	.31	.31	.31
Kurtosis	7.01	1.89	1.16	.41	.66
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61	.61	.61	.61
Mean length of utterance (MLU)					
Mean	4.04	3.91	3.90	3.88	3.96
Standard deviation	.59	.54	.55	.59	.65
Minimum	3.05	3.00	2.77	2.97	2.61
Maximum	5.88	5.91	5.11	5.32	5.85
Skewness	.96	1.55	.46	.70	.78
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31	.31	.31	.31
Kurtosis	1.49	3.78	-.21	.03	.52
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61	.61	.61	.61

Note. Measures, except for the MLU, are normalized to the different number of entries per term: Term 1 (4), Term 2 (6), Term 3 (6), Term 4 (4), Term 5 (4).

The Pearson's r correlations among the three linguistic measures are displayed in Table 2. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, independence, and linearity, with the reservations expressed previously with regard to the two outliers in Term 1.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients for the Number of Words, the Number of Word Types, and the Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) by Term

Measure	Number of word types	MLU
Number of words		
Term 1	.970	.802
Term 2	.946	.746
Term 3	.926	.705
Term 4	.937	.646
Term 5	.947	.738
Number of word types		
Term 1	—	.791
Term 2	—	.777
Term 3	—	.740
Term 4	—	.667
Term 5	—	.768

Note. All correlations are significant, $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Total Words

In order to examine the trend in total words, a one-way within-subjects ANOVA was conducted with the factor being the five terms (time), and the dependent variable being the mean total number of words per entry by term. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance, with the reservations expressed previously with regard to the two outliers in Term 1. The results for the ANOVA indicated a significant time effect, Wilks's $\lambda = .68$, $F(4, 56) = 6.51$, $p < .001$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .32$. Using a significance level of $\alpha = .01$ and the Holm's sequential Bonferroni procedure (Green & Salkind, 2003, p. 218), the follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated statistical significance only between Terms 1 and 2 ($p < .001$), and Terms 1 and 3 ($p < .001$).

By Term 5, the trendline was rising, as indicated by a moderate coefficient of determination, $R^2 = .636$. From Excel (Version 11.0): "The R-squared value, also known as the coefficient of determination, is an indicator that ranges in value from 0 to 1 and reveals how closely the estimated values for the trendline correspond to your actual data. A trendline is most reliable when its R-squared value is at or near 1." By taking the square root of R^2 , we get the value for the Pearson's r correlation, which in this case is $r = .798$. Using the table in Brown (1996, p. 164), we find that at $p < .05$ and $N - 2 = 5$ (N being terms, or data points) - $2 = 3$, the Pearson's r value does not quite reach the value required for statistical significance, $r = .805$. The correlation between the five data points and the automatic trendline generated by Excel (Version 11.0) does not quite attain significance, even though the trendline appears to fit the data moderately well.

Total Word Types

In order to examine the trend in the total word types, a one-way within-subjects ANOVA was conducted with the factor being the five terms (time), and the dependent variable being the mean total number of word types per entry by term. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance, with the reservations expressed previously with regard to the two outliers in Term 1. The multivariate results for the ANOVA indicated a significant time effect, Wilks's $\lambda = .36$, $F(4, 56) = 25.05$, $p < .001$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .64$. Using a significance level of $\alpha = .01$ and the Holm's sequential Bonferroni procedure (Green & Salkind, 2003, p. 218), the follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated statistical significance between six pairs: Terms 1 and 2 ($p < .001$), Terms 1 and 3 ($p < .001$), Terms 2 and 4 ($p < .001$), Terms 2 and 5 ($p < .001$), Terms 3 and 4 ($p < .001$), and Terms 3 and 5 ($p < .001$).

The overall trend in the total word types was very similar to that of the total words. Term 1 started off at a relatively high point, which again dropped precipitously in Terms 2 and 3: the low points. The number of word types again rose in Terms 4 and 5 to points slightly lower than Term 1. By Term 5, the trendline was again rising, as indicated by a moderate coefficient of determination, $R^2 = .616$. As with the total words, the correlation between the trendline and the data points, $r = .785$, did not reach statistical significance at $p < .05$.

As already discussed, the Pearson's r correlations between the total words and the total word types per entry by term were very strong ($r > 0.90$, $p < 0.01$) in all five terms.

As explained in the *Methods* section, the vocabulary from the Term 1 and the Term 4 entries, for 30 randomly selected participants, was subjected to lexical analysis using *Web Vocabprofile* (Cobb, 2005). The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Lexical Analysis of the Terms 1 and 4 Entries of Randomly Selected Participants ($N = 30$)

Word list	Term 1	Term 4
First 500 words	71.17%	71.77%
First 1000 words	81.87%	80.17%
Second 1000 words	5.23%	4.89%
Academic words	.31%	.31%
Off-list words	12.58%	14.62%

Note. Off-list words include words not on the other lists, for example, low frequency words and proper nouns.

Mean Length of Utterance

In order to examine the trend in the mean length of utterance (MLU), a one-way within-subjects ANOVA was conducted with the factor being the five terms (time), and the dependent variable being the mean MLU by term. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance, with the reservations expressed previously with regard to the two outliers in Term 1. The multivariate results for the ANOVA indicated no significant time effect: Wilks's $\lambda = .92$, $F(4, 56) = 1.23$, $p = .310$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .08$. Therefore, no follow-up

pairwise comparisons were calculated.

For the means of the MLU over the five terms, the R^2 value of the trendline was very strong, $R^2 = .953$. The Pearson's r correlation of total words to MLU was moderate to strong, and positive. The strongest correlation was in Term 1 ($r = .802, p < 0.01$). Term 1 saw the most words per entry ($M = 47.15$) and the longest mean length of utterance ($M = 4.04$).

Now that the results of trends in these linguistic measures have been presented, the results of trends in certain commonly occurring errors will be presented as well.

Errors

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 2: What trends in common errors do the participants' journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project, specifically spelling errors and *What...like Syntax Errors?*

Spelling errors

Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for spelling errors per word per entry by term. For Term 1, the mean is .0045. For example, to arrive at that value, the total number of spelling errors in Term 1 (203) was divided by the total number of words written by all of the participants in Term 1 (11,317). That value was then divided by the total number of entries written by the participants in Term 1, four. As another example, for Term 3, the total number of spelling errors (222) was divided by the total number of words written by all of the participants in Term 3 (13,452). That value was then divided by the total number of entries written by the participants in Term 3, six, to produce .0028.

After charting the means of the spelling errors per term and plotting the polynomial trendline, the trendline had a strong coefficient of determination, $R^2 = .732$. The statistically significant Pearson's r correlation, $r = .856$, $p < .05$, between the trendline and the data points adds credence to the upward trend in spelling errors after Term 3.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Spelling Errors Per Word Per Entry ($N = 60$)

Term	1	2	3	4	5
Mean	.0045	.0033	.0028	.0039	.0040
Standard deviation	.0036	.0030	.0025	.0042	.0034
Minimum	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000
Maximum	.0197	.0153	.0102	.0153	.0127
Skewness	1.53	1.89	1.22	1.51	.77
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31	.31	.31	.31
Kurtosis	4.26	4.62	1.26	1.40	-.23
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61	.61	.61	.61

Note. Spelling errors per word were normalized to the different number of entries per term.

What...like Syntax Errors

Another common error encountered during the transcription process was what I have called the *What...like syntax error*. For example, “What do you like food?” used

instead of “What food do you like?” The use of *like*, the most common content word in the journals, was so widespread that these syntax transformation errors were salient. Using the *kwal* command in CLAN, it was easy to go back through the transcriptions and locate all of the collocations of *what* and *like*. Table 5 displays the number of *What...like syntax errors*, the total occurrences of the collocation of *what* and *like* in this type of construction, and the resultant percentages of error to use.

Table 5. *What...like Syntax Errors to Total Occurrences by Term*

Term	1	2	3	4	5
Number of errors	13	38	54	28	18
Total occurrences	41	70	74	47	41
Percent	32%	54%	73%	60%	44%

Term 1 had the lowest percentage of errors per attempted use of the *What...like* construction. The number of attempted uses reached a maximum in Term 3, as did the errors in its use. Terms 4 and 5 saw decreases in both use and percentage of errors, with the Term 5 occurrences equaling those of Term 1.

After charting the means of the *What...like syntax errors* per term and plotting the polynomial trendline, the trendline had a very strong coefficient of determination, $R^2 = .951$. Likewise, the correlation between the trendline and the data points was very strong and statistically significant, $r = .975, p < .01$.

Free-Writing Quiz

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 3: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency, complexity, and accuracy on a free-writing quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

A ten-minute free-writing quiz was administered to 290 eighth-grade students at the three middle schools participating in the secret journal project. The details of the method of quiz administration, transcription, and analysis are found in the *Methods* section.

With equalized numbers of journal participants (59) and journal non-participants (59), separate sets of descriptive statistics were calculated for the four dependent variables: the total number of words, the total number of word types, the total number of error-free sentences, and the MLU. The descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Four Dependent Variables Measured on a Ten-Minute Free-Writing Quiz for Two Groups: The Journal Participants ($n = 59$) and a Random Sample of Non-Participants ($n = 59$)

Measure	Journal participants ($n = 59$)	Journal non-participants ($n = 59$)
Total number of words		
Mean	60.93	32.56
Standard deviation	28.25	22.38
Minimum	19	0

Table 6. (*continued*)

Measure	Journal participants (<i>n</i> = 59)	Journal non-participants (<i>n</i> = 59)
Maximum	154	97
Skewness	1.15	.85
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31
Kurtosis	1.67	.29
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61
Total number of word types		
Mean	36.95	21.76
Standard deviation	13.52	11.17
Minimum	16	0
Maximum	80	47
Skewness	.64	.35
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31
Kurtosis	.45	-.84
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61
Total number of error-free sentences		
Mean	7.29	3.86
Standard deviation	3.47	2.90
Minimum	2	0
Maximum	16	13

Table 6. (*continued*)

Measure	Journal participants (<i>n</i> = 59)	Journal non-participants (<i>n</i> = 59)
Skewness	.61	1.02
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31
Kurtosis	-.25	.88
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61
Mean length of utterance (MLU)		
Mean	5.03	4.40
Standard deviation	.98	1.11
Minimum	3.18	.00
Maximum	8.11	6.75
Skewness	.64	-1.27
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.31	.31
Kurtosis	.61	4.29
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.61	.61

Pearson's *r* correlations were calculated for the two groups, separately and combined, among the four dependent variables in order to determine their strengths. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of independence, normality, and linearity. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficients Among the Four Dependent Variables for the Journal Participants and the Journal Non-Participants

Dependent variable	Number of word types	Number of error-free sentences	MLU
Journal Participants ($n = 59$)			
Number of words	.947**	.678**	.621**
Number of word types		.681**	.632**
Number of Error-free sentences			.148
Journal Non-Participants ($n = 59$)			
Number of words	.954**	.737**	.533**
Number of word types		.695**	.629**
Number of Error-free sentences			.330*
Combined ($N = 118$)			
Number of words	.961**	.771**	.617**
Number of word types		.762**	.663**
Number of Error-free sentences			.334**

Note. ** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed).

Because of the extremely strong correlations between the total number of words and the total number of word types ($r = .961, p < .001$), the latter measure was eliminated from all future calculations. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

was then calculated in order to determine the overall effect of the independent variable (journal participation versus journal non-participation) on the three remaining dependent variables. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, linearity, and equality of variance.

At a significance level of $\alpha = .05$, an overall significant difference was found between the two groups on the dependent variables: Wilks's $\lambda = .74$, $F(3, 114) = 13.64$, $p < .001$. Because there were no missing data, separate follow-up univariate ANOVAs were automatically generated during the MANOVA calculation process for each of the dependent variables. The results of the ANOVAs are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Follow-up Univariate Analysis of the Variance (ANOVA) of the Three Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	$F(1, 116)$	p	Partial η^2
Number of words	36.56	.000	.240
Number of error-free sentences	33.85	.000	.226
Mean length of utterance (MLU)	10.55	.002	.083

At a significance level of $\alpha = .05$, after applying the Bonferroni correction ($p = .05/3 = .02$) to each ANOVA, all three measures were found to be statistically significant.

Free-Speaking Quiz

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 4: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency and

lexical complexity on a free-speaking quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

A three-minute free-speaking quiz was administered to 96 eighth-grade students at one of the middle schools (KD) participating in the secret journal project. The details of the quiz administration, transcription, and analyses are found in the *Methods* section.

As discussed, two dependent variables were chosen for analysis: the total number of words and the total number of word types produced in three minutes. It was hoped that these two measures would give a general feeling for the speaking fluency of the quiz-takers and the lexical complexity of their utterances.

Initially, using SPSS (Version 11.0.2), separate sets of descriptive statistics for the two dependent variables were calculated and plotted. A scatterplot of the two variables clearly showed an outlier whose z -scores for the total number of words and the total number of words types were $z = 3.846$ and $z = 3.723$, respectively. The outlier, a journal non-participant, was eliminated from all of the subsequent analyses, so the final tally was 95: 29 journal participants and 66 journal non-participants. The group sizes were not equalized. The descriptive statistics, minus the outlier data, were recalculated for the separate groups and are summarized in Table 9.

The Pearson's r correlation between the two dependent variables was then calculated. The data and charts were checked and found to conform to the assumptions of independence, normality, and linearity. The calculated Pearson's r value was $r = .968$, $p < .001$ for the combined groups. The Pearson's r value calculated for the separate groups

was $r = .953$, $p < .001$ for the journal participants and $r = .971$, $p < .001$ for the non-participants.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Two Dependent Variables Measured on a Three-Minute Free-Speaking Quiz for Two Groups: the Journal Participants ($n = 29$) and the Journal Non-Participants ($n = 66$)

Measure	Journal participants ($n = 29$)	Journal non-participants ($n = 66$)
Total number of words		
Mean	66.00	50.29
Standard deviation	30.15	33.59
Minimum	22	10
Maximum	137	144
Skewness	.58	1.24
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.43	.30
Kurtosis	-.31	.79
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.85	.58
Total number of word types		
Mean	37.52	30.23
Standard deviation	14.58	17.48
Minimum	14	7
Maximum	74	80
Skewness	.71	1.21
	100	

Table 9. (continued)

Measure	Journal participants (<i>n</i> = 29)	Journal non-participants (<i>n</i> = 66)
<i>SE</i> (skewness)	.43	.30
Kurtosis	.41	.76
<i>SE</i> (kurtosis)	.85	.58

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was originally intended, but the extremely high correlation ($r = .968, p < .001$) between the two dependent variables was such that the measure of total word types was eliminated, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted instead. The remaining dependent variable was the total number of words (fluency), and there were two levels or groups: the journal participants and the journal non-participants.

The data and charts were checked and found to conform to the assumptions of independence, normality, and homogeneity of variance. At a significance level of $\alpha = .05$, the ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the two groups on the dependent variable: $F(1, 93) = 4.68, p = .033$.

Surveys

At the end of Terms 1-4, short informal surveys were stapled into the journals prior to the last entry by each participant. The surveys (see Appendix K) were short enough that they could be completed in less than five minutes. Their brevity may account

for the fact that the completed return rate was 100%. No survey was administered after Term 5.

Journal Activity Attitudes

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 5: What do the informal end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity? Specifically, why did the participants volunteer for the activity, how much time did they spend on their entries, and did they like the activity?

At the end of Term 2, the participants were asked to choose one reason, out of five choices, why they became participants in the secret journal activity. Their responses are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Responses: “Why did you volunteer for the secret journal project?” ($N = 57$)

Response	Number of participants	(%)
I want to improve my English	36	63%
I like mysteries	9	16%
A teacher asked me to	5	9%
I want to make new friends”	3	5%
Other	4	7%

There were four responses to *Other*: they were the Japanese equivalents of “I have time,” “It sounded like fun,” “It sounded interesting,” and “No special reason.” Contrary to the instruction to choose only one option, three participants chose more than one of the five options: one chose *improve* and *friends*, another chose *mystery* and *teacher*, and the other chose *improve*, *friends*, and *teacher*. Their responses are not included in Table 10.

At the end of the Term 3, the participants were asked how many minutes they spent on their journal entries. Their responses are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Responses: “How many minutes do you usually write in your journal?”
(*N* = 60)

Minutes	Number of respondents	(%)
0-10	16	27%
10-20	22	37%
20-30	18	30%
30-60	4	7%
over 60	0	0%

At the end of the Terms 1 and 3, the participants were asked to choose one of five options in response to the survey question, “Do you like the secret journals?” The results are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12. Responses: “Do you like the secret journals?” ($N = 60$)

Response	Term 1		Term 3	
	Number of responses	(%)	Number of responses	(%)
I love it.	13	22%	11	18%
Yes.	22	37%	25	42%
So so.	25	42%	22	37%
No.	0	0%	2	3%
I hate it.	0	0%	0	0%

The reliabilities of the responses from Term 1 to Term 3 were checked, using the Test-retest Reliability method (Brown, 1996, p. 193), and determined to be very strong: $r = .98, p < .01$.

Attitudes of the Participants Toward Their Partners

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 6: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward their partners, and is there any correlation between liking one’s partner and the number of words written?

One question, in exactly the same form, was on all four of the end-of-term surveys: “Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?” The participants were given choices based on a four-point Likert scale: the equivalent in Japanese of *very much, yes*,

so so, and *no*. For example, in the Term 1 journal AB01, one participant liked his partner *so so* (2); his partner liked him *very much* (4). Similarly, in the Term 1 journal AB02, one participant liked his partner *so so* (2); his partner liked him *yes* (3).

From this question, two Pearson's r correlations were calculated in order to gauge the attitudes of the participants toward their partners. The data and charts were checked and found to have met the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence. One of the correlations was calculated for all four terms for the 30 pairs of participants, using their Likert scale responses to the question above. For example, 2 and 4, and 2 and 3. Only the Term 3 correlation value was significant, but moderate, $r = .412, p < .05$.

The other correlation calculated for the four terms was that between a participant's Likert scale response to "Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?" (e.g., 2), and the number of words per entry written to that participant's partner (e.g., 33.75). Again, the Term 3 correlation value was significant, but moderate: $r = .381, p < .01$. The Term 4 value was also significant, but weak: $r = .266, p < .05$.

Language-Learning Value Attitudes

Research Question 7

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 7: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journals as a language learning activity?

Perhaps the most important concern in this study was whether or not various linguistic proficiencies improved as a result of participation in the project. After Terms 1 and 4, the participants were asked to respond on a four-point Likert scale to whether they

thought the journals contributed to improvements in their writing, reading, listening, and speaking proficiencies (Appendix K). The surveys were spaced out so that the participants would have time to forget their original responses, and would have a better-educated feel for the potential contributions. The scale's equivalents in English are as follows: 4 = *a lot*, 3 = *a little*, 2 = *none*, and 1 = *I don't know*. The results are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13. Perceptions of the Participants as to the Journal's Contributions to Increases in Their Proficiencies in the Four Language Macroskills (*N* = 60)

Macroskill	a lot	a little	none	I don't know
Writing				
Term 1	26	27	2	5
Term 4	23	32	4	1
Reading				
Term 1	21	32	5	2
Term 4	17	35	5	3
Listening				
Term 1	4	25	18	13
Term 4	1	19	25	15
Speaking				
Term 1	6	31	13	10
Term 4	3	27	19	11

The reliabilities of the responses for each of the separate skills from Term 1 to Term 4 were checked using the Test-retest Reliability method (Brown, 1996, p. 193). The writing, reading, listening, and speaking reliabilities were strong at $r = .96$ ($p < .05$), $r = .98$ ($p < .05$), $r = .83$ (not significant), and $r = .91$ (not significant), respectively.

An equally important focus of this study was if, and if so, the degree to which the participants scaffolded each other, in the spirit of Vygotsky and Donato. At the end of the Term 3, the participants were asked: “Can you remember any instances from which you learned something about English from one of your journal partners?” The results are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Responses: “Can you remember any instances from which you learned something about English from one of your journal partners?” ($N = 60$)

Response	Number of participants	(%)
Many times.	8	13%
A few times.	37	62%
Never.	15	25%

From Table 14, fully 75% of the participants believed that their partners had contributed, at least a few times, to their knowledge of English.

Research Question 8

This section presents results pertinent to Research Question 8: Do journal entries of participants in peer-to-peer dialogue journals show evidence of echoing, and might certain instances of echoing constitute scaffolding in the spirit of Vygotsky and Donato?

At the beginning of the transcription process, I started to tag the cases of echoing that I encountered. Very quickly it became obvious that there were simply too many cases to tag, and that echoing could take on several forms: explicit error correction, echoing that served as a spatial connection of a partner's question to his or her response, and what I would call true echoing. This subject will be further explored in the *Discussion* section.

As a potential indicator of echoing, Pearson's r correlations were calculated between the total word output of one participant and the total word output of his or her partner, by term. The results were as follows: $r = .827$ (Term 1), $r = .498$ (Term 2), $r = .706$ (Term 3), $r = .760$ (Term 4), and $r = .489$ (Term 5), all at $p < .01$. These correlations range from moderate to strong, and all are statistically significant.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Following are separate *Discussion* sections for the following: (a) the trend analysis, (b) the free-writing quiz, (c) the free-speaking quiz, (d) the surveys, and (e) the journals: potential pitfalls.

Trend Analysis

Linguistic Measures

This section discusses Research Question 1: What trends do the participants' peer-to-peer dialogue journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project in linguistic measures of the total number of words written, the total number of word types written, and the mean length of utterances written?

Examination of the findings in Table 1 reveal that the means of all three of the linguistic measures showed clear maximums in Term 1, and sharp decreases in Term 2. In Terms 3-5, the mean values stayed near or slightly above the Term 2 values, but they never again approached the Term 1 values.

Noteworthy are the high skewness and the very high kurtosis values for both the total words and the total word types per entry in Term 1. The MLU values of skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable limits. As mentioned, examination of the boxplots for these variables revealed that these values were a result of the presence of two outliers, ID25 and ID55. These two participants were easily the top total word producers over the five terms. Furthermore, they were paired with each other in Term 1, and perhaps the novelty of the activity and their apparent high regard for each other (Appendix L) led

them to write so much. However, it must be remembered that these two participants were the only outliers out of the 60 participants, and they were outliers only in Term 1. There were no outliers in Terms 2-5.

While the writing performance of the two outliers was a blessing for the educators administering the project, it played some havoc with the Term 1 statistics. Consequently, some thought was given to eliminating them from the analyses in all five terms.

However, eliminating these two outliers purely for the sake of the Term 1 statistics would have been unacceptable in the context of trend analysis. Exceptions to the trends within a single group are as important as the trends themselves.

In addition to potentially eliminating the outliers from the trend analysis, some thought was given to transforming the data using the standard statistical transformations, which are readily available in SPSS (Version 11.0.2). However, statistical transformations make the data more difficult to interpret. A mean of 55 words per entry is easy to interpret; the square root of the mean of 55 words per entry, 7.42, is less easy.

Additional thought was given to eliminating one of the two highly correlated variables, total words or total word types, in order to gain statistical power. Similar logic accompanied my decision not to do so. The number of total words written and the number of total word types written are completely different measures of different proficiencies, their strong correlation notwithstanding. The trend in each measure is of interest on its own merits.

However, out of curiosity I calculated alternative set of statistics based upon eliminating the two outliers, and after a square root transformation. Elimination of the two outliers brought the Term 1 total word values for skewness and kurtosis back into

statistically more palatable limits: 1.64 and 3.73. Similarly, the Term 1 total word type skewness and kurtosis values became .93 and .62, respectively. However, eliminating the outliers made no difference in the eventual statistical significance of the multivariate tests generated during the one-way within-subjects ANOVA. Furthermore, there were no changes in the eventual pairs identified as statistically significant by the follow-up pairwise comparisons. That is, exactly the same pairs were statistically significant after eliminating the outliers as before.

Similarly, after the square root transformation, the Term 1 total word skewness and kurtosis values became 1.73 and 3.83, respectively, and the Term 1 total word type skewness and kurtosis values became 1.55 and 3.43, respectively, again more statistically acceptable. However, the transformation made no difference in the eventual statistical significance of the multivariate tests generated during the one-way within-subjects ANOVA. Furthermore, there were no changes in the eventual pairs identified as statistically significant by the follow-up pairwise comparisons. That is, exactly the same pairs were statistically significant after the transformation as before.

If I had been comparing separate groups and looking for statistically significant differences, the elimination of outliers or transformations might have been necessary and desirable. In this case, given that transformations and elimination of outliers had no effect on the eventual results, the discussion is, in a sense, moot.

The strong correlations between the total number of words per entry and the total number of word types per entry by term ($r = .926-.970, p < .01$) are intuitively obvious. As the participants wrote more words, they used more word types. One might be inclined to predict the same for the total words and the total word types, and the MLU. The

correlations are still moderate to strong, but not as strong as those between the total words and the total word types. More words and more word types do not imply longer sentences. With these low-proficiency learners, more words and more word types simply imply more sentences, of roughly the same length.

Total Words

The multivariate results for the one-way within-subjects ANOVA indicated a significant time effect, and the follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated statistical significance between Terms 1 and 2, and Terms 1 and 3.

Figure 1 clearly shows a maximum during Term 1, a dramatic drop in Term 2 and a slight increase in Term 3. The statistical significances are reasonable given the visual differences between Term 1 and 2, and Terms 1 and 3. In Term 1, the participants wrote the highest number of words per entry in the five terms of the project. In Term 2, the total word count dropped to the lowest point of the project. By Term 5, the trendline is on the rise, as indicated by a moderate coefficient of determination. It seems to signify that the participants are starting to write more total words in their entries.

The Term 1 results seem reasonable given a probable combination of the following factors: an enthusiasm for the new and unique secret journal project, and the fact that the participants had no idea what to expect from their partners and were loath to disappoint them with short entries or to embarrass themselves with substandard writing.

The Term 2 drop is also reasonable. Some of the enthusiasm was gone. The participants now knew what to expect, they had a feel for the relative proficiencies of their partners, and had gained some confidence in their ability to sustain a relatively

protracted written communication. The exchanges had been civil and non-judgmental, so the participants had little reason to worry about the length or the quality of their entries.

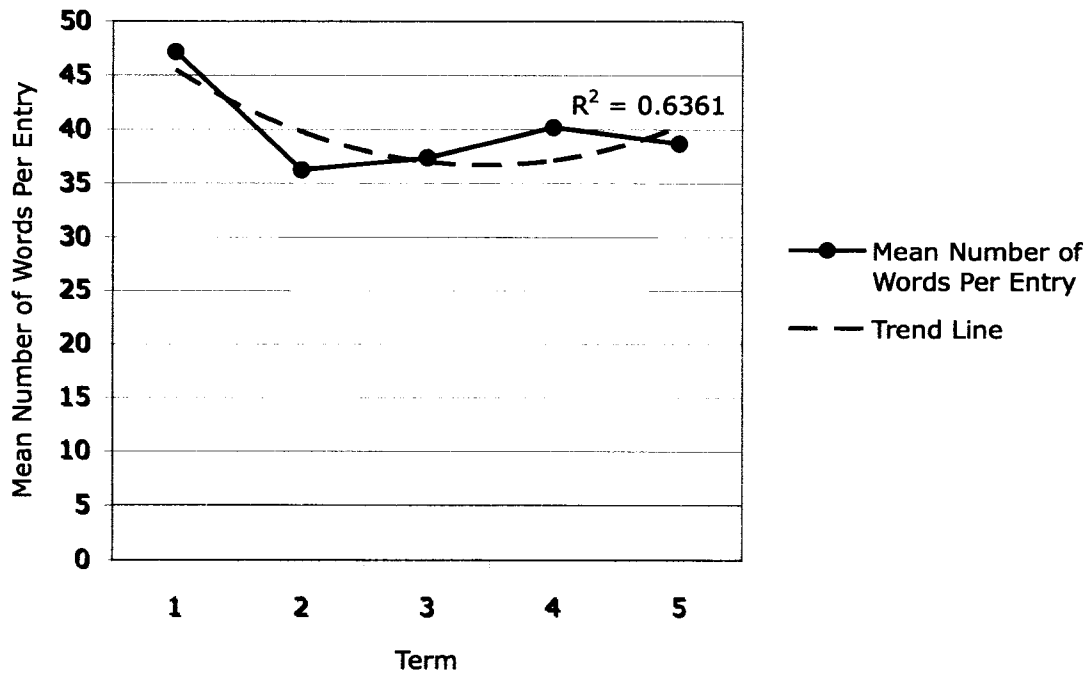


Figure 1. The mean number of words per entry by term.

However, the largest contributing factor to the drop in the total number of words per entry from Term 1 to Term 2 may well have been the higher number of entries in Term 2. Term 1 consisted of four written entries by each of the participants. The number of entries in all the terms was predetermined and an instruction sheet, including a schedule, was glued inside the front cover of the notebooks. Therefore, the participants were aware that Term 2 would consist of two additional entries as compared with Term 1. The same is true of Term 3, with six entries. Given the increased number of entries, perhaps the participants wrote fewer words in order to conserve their linguistic resources

and to dole out their personal information and tastes more judiciously over the two additional entries.

By Terms 4 and 5, with just four entries each, perhaps the participants were starting to feel more comfortable with their writing and were becoming more fluent (Casanave, 1994). Also likely is that the reduced number of entries once again led them to use up their linguistic resources and to complete their information exchange in a shorter time. Another contributing factor could have been an increase in the need to socialize with peers rather than family (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). Whatever the reasons, the trend was moderately up.

Total Word Types

After the one-way within-subjects ANOVA, the follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated statistical significance between six pairs: Terms 1 and 2, Terms 1 and 3, Terms 2 and 4, Terms 2 and 5, Terms 3 and 4, and Terms 3 and 5.

The overall trend in the number of word types was very similar to that of the total words (Figure 2), although there were more statistically significant pairs. This is even more apparent when looking at the composite chart (Figure 4) and the very high Pearson's r correlations (Table 2). Term 1 started off at a relatively high point, and again dropped dramatically in Terms 2 and 3: the low points. The number of word types rose again in Terms 4 and 5 to points only slightly lower than Term 1. By Term 5, the trendline was again rising, as indicated by a moderate coefficient of determination. This seems to suggest that the participants were starting to write more total word types in their entries, in addition to more total words.

The strong Pearson's r correlations between the total words and the total number of word types are intuitively reasonable: the more words written per entry, the more word types used. What is puzzling, however, is that while the pairwise comparisons found only two statistically significant pairs in the total word trend, they found six pairs in the trend of the total word types. Perhaps the reason is as follows: because there are always more total words than word types, fluctuations in the total words cause larger percentage increases and decreases in the total word types, and therefore, potentially more statistically significant changes.

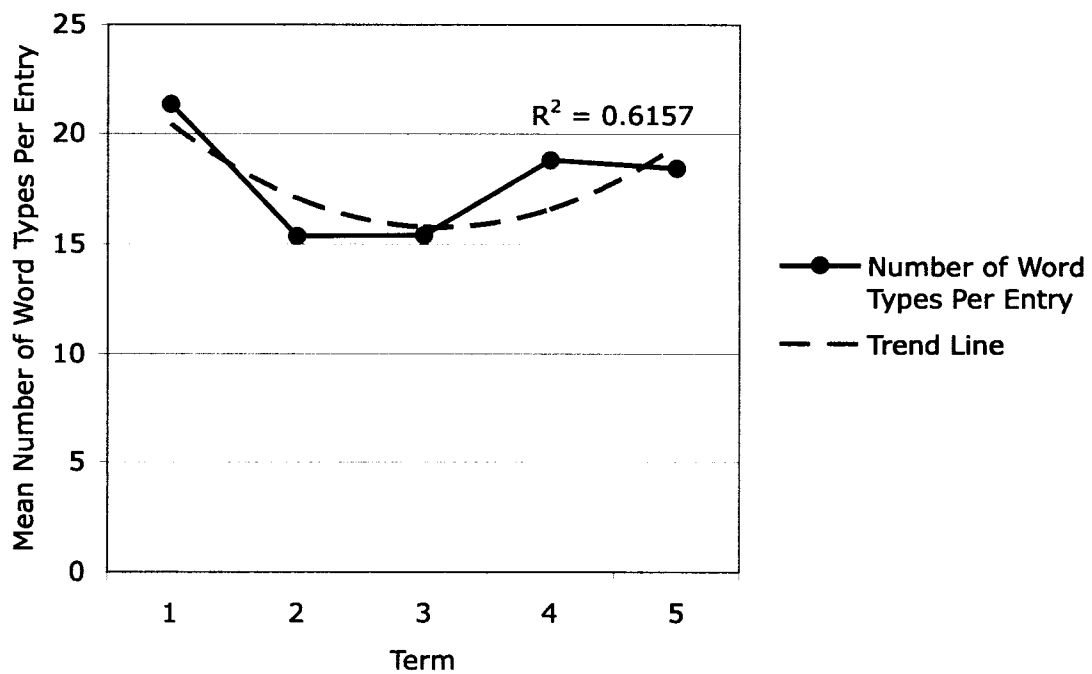


Figure 2. The mean number of word types per entry by term.

The reasons for the changes in the number of total words written by term were discussed previously: initial enthusiasm, followed by a combination of erosion of some of that enthusiasm plus conservation of linguistic resources, followed by faster deployment of those resources with, perhaps, a greater drive to socialize. In any case, given that the total words and total word types are so interdependent, whatever the reasons for the changes in the number of word types were, they were probably very similar to the reasons for the changes in total words.

The results of the lexical analysis, using *Vocabprofile* (Cobb, 2005), may seem puzzling. After all, as the overall English proficiencies of the participants developed over the year separating Terms 1 and 4, their journal entries ought to have shown more complex vocabulary. However, the percentages stayed about the same. The reason may be in the fewer number of words written by the selected participants in Term 4 compared to Term 1: 6,366 in Term 1 to 5,108 in Term 4. It also may very well be that the participants had found a comfort zone, so they were unwilling to take chances with their writing, and that their Term 4 enthusiasm for the activity was somewhat below that of their Term 1 enthusiasm.

Mean Length of Utterance

The multivariate tests generated during the one-way within-subjects ANOVA found no statistically significant changes in the mean MLU by term.

This is not surprising if one recalls that low-proficiency writers tend toward simple one-clause sentences with few modifiers, such as adjectives, and primarily in the present or simple past tenses. The lengths of the utterances did not change appreciably,

even in light of changes in the mean total number of words and word types per utterance by term, as has been discussed. In short, no matter how many total words and total word types the participants wrote per entry, the length of their sentences did not change significantly. That said, the very strong R^2 value indicates a strong likelihood of an increase in the MLU continuing into the future. Indeed, this is reasonable. After two years of English, the grammaticality of the written utterances of the students should start to show some complexification.

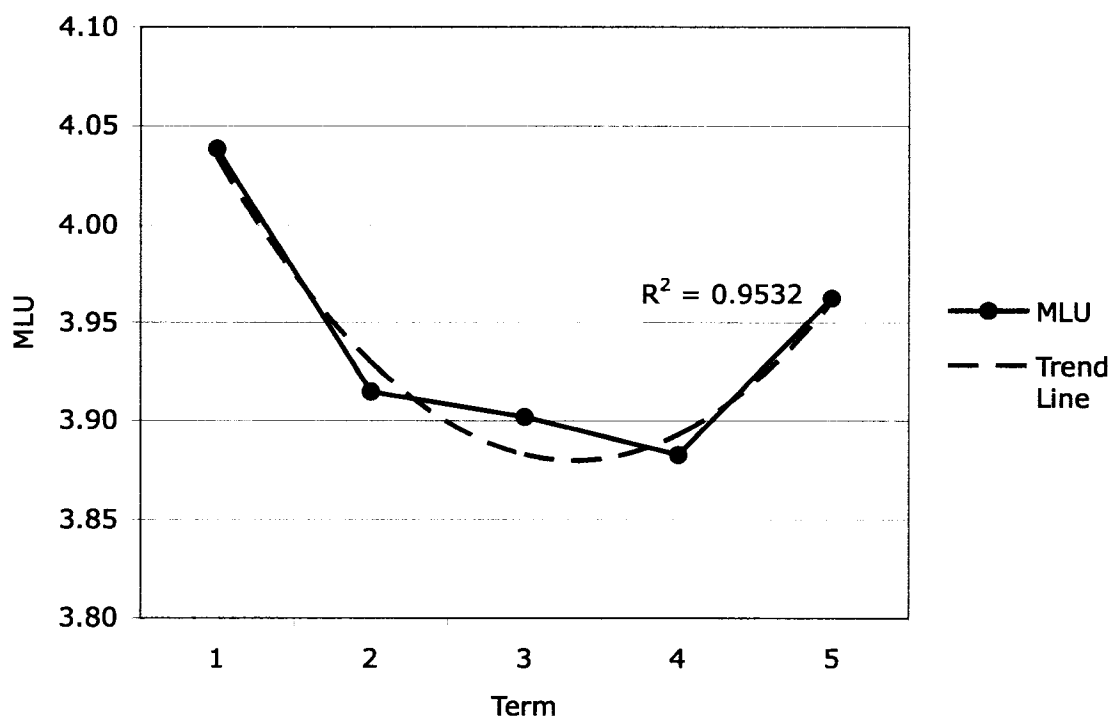


Figure 3. The mean length of utterance by term.

Figure 3 shows a trend very similar to those of the total words and the total word types: high in Term 1, decreasing in Terms 2 and 3, and on the rise by the end of Term 5. However, Figure 3 itself is highly deceiving. The MLU line appears to change

dramatically from term to term; in fact, the MLU changed very little (3.88 to 4.04), and the changes were not statistically significant. The composite, Figure 4, gives a much more realistic visual representation of the MLU.

The Pearson's r correlation of total words to MLU is more puzzling. The correlation is moderate to very strong, and positive. The strongest correlation is in Term 1 ($r = .802, p < 0.01$). Term 1 saw the most words per entry ($M = 47.15$) and the longest mean length of utterance ($M = 4.04$). These Term 1 results could be explained by saying that during the very first term of the project, the participants did not know what to expect, so they probably spent more time and took more care with their writing, wrote more total words, and more complex utterances than during the subsequent terms, when they were more knowledgeable about the emerging standards in the writing of their partners.

The explanations for the correlations between the MLU and the total number of words in Terms 2-5 are less obvious. To be sure, they are a bit weaker ($r = .646 - .746, p < 0.01$), but statistically significant and still fairly robust. However, recall that there was no long-term statistically significant change, nor were there any statistically significant pairs. In short, the mean length of utterance simply did not change much, which is undoubtedly due to the fact that low-proficiency writers are stuck in a kind of simple-sentence twilight zone, where modifiers and multi-clause constructions are rare.

But, perhaps the explanation lies with the participants themselves. Perhaps the more proficient and more motivated participants, who wrote more total words, also wrote longer and slightly more complex constructions. By the same token, the less proficient writers wrote fewer words in shorter and simpler constructions. Both cases would result in strong correlations.

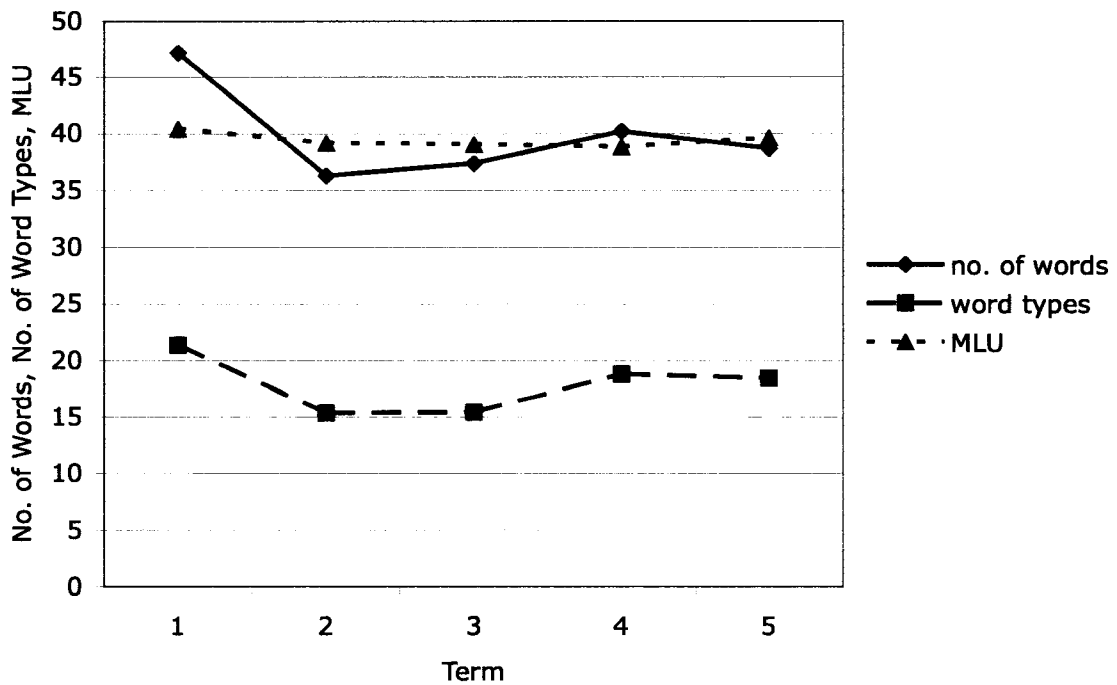


Figure 4. A composite of the trends in the three linguistic measures by term (MLU multiplied by 10).

Conclusions

So, why did these measures decrease after Term 1 only to begin increasing by Term 5? The most likely possibilities have already been discussed: declining interest in the secret journal activity after the initial novelty (Bergin, 1999) and the change in the number of entries per term. However, there are other potential reasons for the trends. In Terms 2 and 3, perhaps the participants became more conservative in their writing in hopes of avoiding errors, and as their fluency increased in Terms 4 and 5, began to worry less about those errors as Casanave (1994) suggested. Perhaps the participants were able to convey what they wished to convey in fewer and simpler words, and as their overall

proficiencies increased over the year-and-a-half, so did the linguistic measures. Perhaps the participants simply succumbed to the well-documented trend among Japanese eighth graders to take it a bit easy in their second year of junior high school in anticipation of the “hell” of the third year and the upcoming high school entrance exams (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). Perhaps the demands placed upon the time of eighth-grade junior high school students by school clubs, and in some cases *juku* (independent cram schools), made journal writing a low priority. Perhaps the general increases in Terms 4 and 5 were indicative of a rise in the desire to socialize. The overall reason is probably a combination of all of the above, plus others.

Now that the trends in these linguistic measures have been discussed, the trends in certain commonly occurring errors will be scrutinized as well.

Errors

This section discusses Research Question 2: What trends in common errors do the participants’ journal entries exhibit over the five terms of the project, specifically spelling errors and *What...like Syntax Errors?*

Spelling Errors

The minimum and maximum values in Table 4 indicate some interesting occurrences. Some of the participants made no spelling errors whatsoever in their entries in a given term. For example, six participants made no spelling errors in their Term 1 entries. This is particularly resonant in light of the fact that these participants were in the seventh grade of middle school, and for the most part were beginning English learners.

Their Term 1 entries had very few spelling errors: only 203 out of the 11,317 words (1.8%) written by 60 different participants.

Both Table 4 and Figure 5 show a dramatic drop in spelling errors per word from Term 1 to Terms 2 and 3. The trend is again remarkably similar to the trend in the total number of words written per entry (Figure 1). Upon viewing the spelling error trendline, the strong coefficient of determination, and the statistically significant correlation, the most intrepid of teachers might be concerned. Just when the participants seemingly should have been showing greater accuracy (at the end of the project), their spelling errors were actually on the increase.

The decrease from Term 1 to Term 3 may have resulted from the fact that the participants also wrote significantly fewer words per entry from Term 1 to Term 3: fewer words may have meant safer and more predictable language resulting in fewer spelling errors. The errors in Terms 4 and 5 were still fewer than the those in Term 1, but may have risen as the participants' fluencies increase, as suggested by Casanave (1994), who speculated that as writing fluency improves, students become less concerned with accuracy and complexity. This trend seems especially unusual when we recall that the participants used slightly fewer word types in Terms 4 and 5 than in Term 1, even though the decrease did not reach statistical significance. But perhaps there is no cause for concern. If the students are enjoying writing to and communicating with their peers, a few spelling errors here and there are unlikely to outweigh the other benefits.

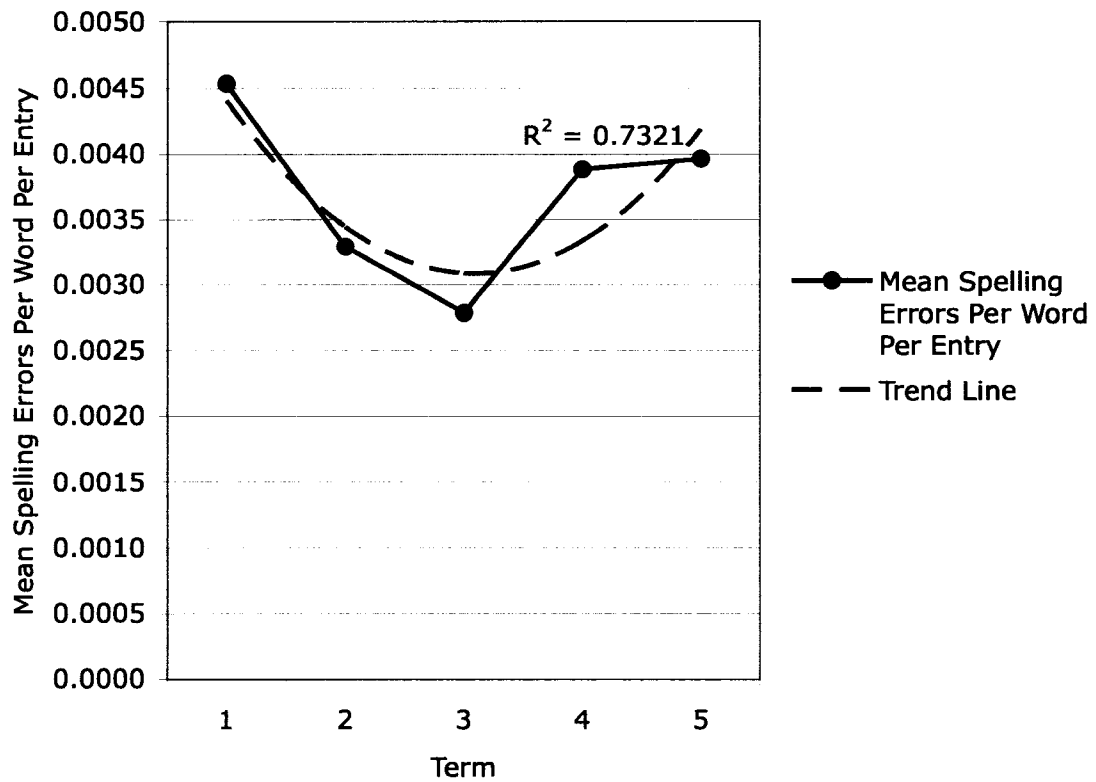


Figure 5. Mean spelling errors per word per entry by term.

What...like Syntax Errors

With regard to the *What...like syntax error*, Term 1 saw the lowest percentage of errors per attempted use of the *What...like* construction (Figure 6). The number of attempted uses reached a maximum in Term 3, as did the errors in its use. In Terms 2 and 3, it appears that the participants began using this construction in order to ask more specific questions about the tastes of their partners, for example, “What sports do you like?” The participants' lack of knowledge as to how to formulate this kind of question, and perhaps L1 transfer, may have combined to give rise to the increasing percentage of these errors. Terms 4 and 5 saw decreases in both use and percentage of errors.

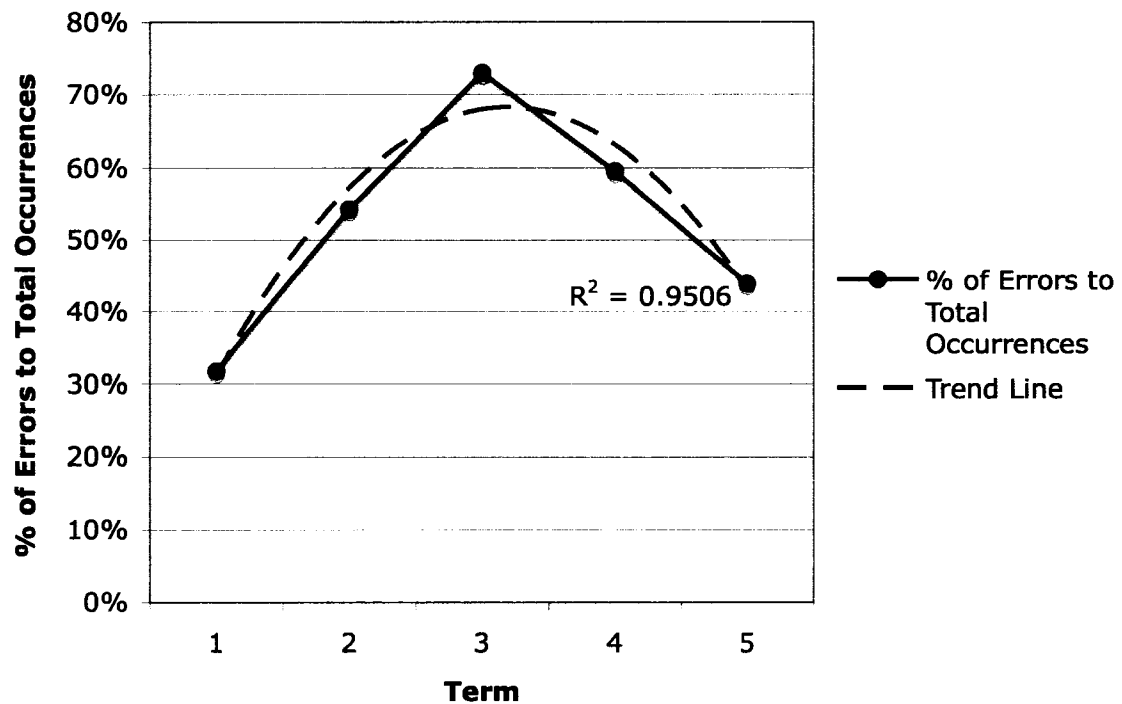


Figure 6. Percent of *What...like* syntax errors to total occurrences by term.

The seventh-grade students were very briefly exposed to this construction in a footnote in their textbooks (Asano, Ikeda, Kasajima, Shimomura, & Makino, 2002a) toward the end of their seventh-grade school year: “What sports do you like?” (p. 87). A more formal introduction to this kind of construction occurs in the main text of their eighth-grade textbooks (Asano, Ikeda, Kasajima, Shimomura, & Makino, 2002b): “What kind of movies do you like?” (p. 75). It is the confusion in the textbooks that is, perhaps, responsible for these errors. The participants may have been trying to ask more specific questions about the tastes of their partners in Terms 2 and 3, and were likely to continue to want to do so in Terms 4 and 5. Suddenly, in Terms 4 and 5, they began using this

construction less, and therefore, made fewer errors. Somewhere, from the brief footnote-like reference (“What sports do you like?”) to the slightly altered form (“What kind of movies do you like?”), which uses the polysemic *kind*, the participants may have lost confidence in its use.

However, it is also possible that the explanation for the decrease starting in Term 3 lies elsewhere. The most obvious explanation is that there were fewer entries per participant in Terms 4 and 5 (four each) compared with Terms 2 and 3 (six each). Perhaps the fewer entries simply allowed the participants fewer opportunities to need to attempt this type of construction.

Regardless of the reasons for the decline in the use of the *What...like* construction, the very strong fit of the trendline to the data (Figure 6) and the statistical significance presage a continuing downward trend after Term 5 in both the attempted use of this construction and concomitant errors in its use.

It must be recalled, however, that out of approximately 14,000 utterances, there were only 152 occurrences of this error. While fully 40 of the 60 participants made at least one of this error, just three participants accounted for 52 (34%) occurrences of this error. Because some of the participants never attempted this construction, and therefore, did not err, the trend must be viewed with a great deal of caution. The reliability of any inferences made from these data is further confused by the fact that there were cases in which a participant used both the correct form and the incorrect form in the same journal entry.

Conclusions

Of the two types of errors examined, spelling errors were on the rise, and the incidence of *What...like syntax errors* decreased. However, there is probably little cause for alarm. It may just be that the anticipated, but as yet undocumented, rise in the writing fluency of the participants has conspired to make them less concerned with accuracy, or that as the project progressed they simply relied more and more on safe constructions and known lexical items. Further exposure to the proper usage, and to proper spellings, is bound to rectify some of these errors.

Final Observations on the Trend Analyses

A reader hoping that peer-to-peer dialogue journals would culminate in statistically significant improvements in various measures of linguistic proficiency might be sorely disappointed with these results. There are statistically significant trends, to be sure: both downward and upward. Peers, left to their own devices, may not be likely to show major and obvious linguistic improvement, at least to a statistically significant degree. That said, however, there is a critical caveat to this observation. The complexity of research in a social setting militates against the researcher being able to collect rigorous scientific data, and even when fortunate enough to be able to do so, the researcher is further thwarted in being able to point to any one, or any series of causes, that might bring about a particular result. Before condemning the journal activity based on the statistics presented here, I think it safe to say that the participants did improve, if for no other reason than that they continued taking English classes at school. In fact, they probably improved considerably as a result of having participated in the journal project.

The unavoidable limitations on data collection, which precluded measuring fluency, and inferences based on those data and the statistical analyses simply do not show that improvement in any dramatic way.

Free-Writing Quiz

This section discusses Research Question 3: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency, complexity, and accuracy on a free-writing quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

A ten-minute free-writing quiz was administered to the eighth-grade students at the three middle schools participating in the journal project. The details of the methods of quiz administration, transcription, and analysis are found in the *Methods* section. The statistical results are found in the *Results* section.

A cursory examination of the means of the four dependent variables in Table 6 suggests that there might be statistically significant differences in the means of the total number of words, the total number of word types, and the total number of error-free sentences. However, the potential for statistical significance between the two groups on the MLU measure seems less obvious.

The minimums and maximums in the total number of words and the total number of word types are salient. For the journal participants, the total number of words ranged from 19-154; for the journal non-participants, the range was 0-97. A check of the data revealed that one randomly-selected quiz-taker, a journal non-participant, did not write a

single word. For the journal participants, the total number of word types ranged from 16-80; for the non-journal participants, the range was 0-47.

An examination of the data of all 290 quiz-takers discloses some interesting findings. Only two students out of 290 wrote nothing at all. On the measure of the total number of words and the total number of word types, eight of the top 10 producers (out of 290) were journal participants. For the total number of error-free sentences, the result was once again eight out of 10. However, on the MLU measure, the journal participants occupy only two of the top 10 positions.

The descriptive statistics for the journal participants are intuitively reasonable, especially in terms of the higher total numbers of words and word types produced compared to the journal non-participants. After all, the journal participants had practiced producing exactly the kinds of sentences called for in the quiz.

The accuracy of the sentences produced by the journal participants is a bit surprising. One might be tempted to assume that the combination of increased fluency fostered by the journal writing experience plus the lack of teacher intervention, either in modeling correct forms or explicitly highlighting errors, might lead to inconclusive results compared to the journal non-participants.

On the MLU measure, the sentences produced by the journal participants were only slightly longer (5.03 words per sentence) than those produced by the non-participants (4.40). The very similar distributions in Figure 7 suggest that there is a kind of standard sentence length produced by low-proficiency language learners. Single clauses dictate this standard sentence length. Modifiers and multi-clause sentences are few. Embedded clauses are nearly non-existent.

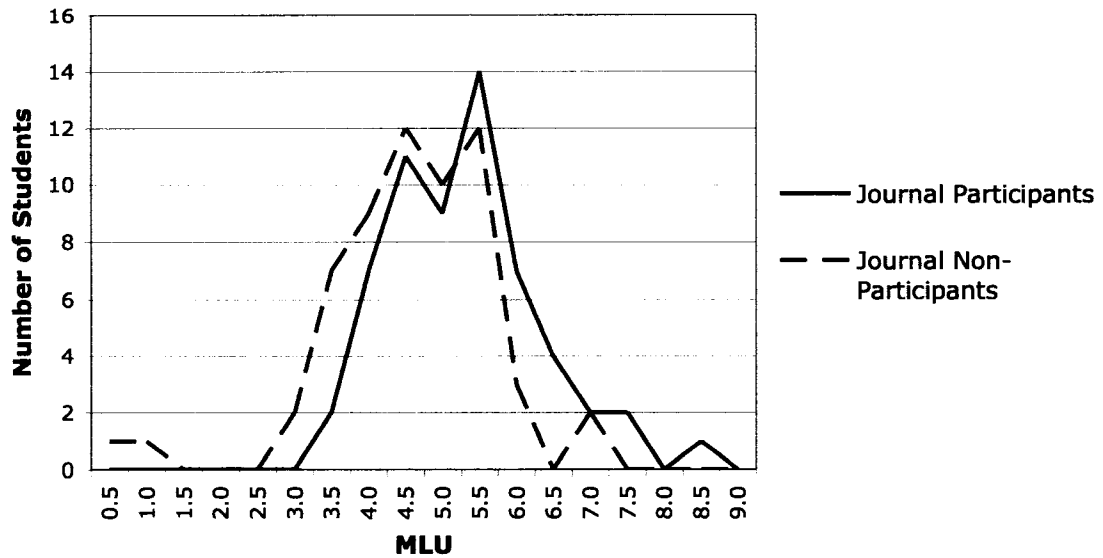


Figure 7. The MLU distribution for the journal participants ($n = 59$) and the journal non-participants ($n = 59$) on the free-writing quiz.

This is doubly evident when one looks at the distribution of one of the other variables measured in the free-writing quiz: the total number of words. For example, Figure 8 shows the distribution for the total number of words written in 10 minutes by both the journal participants and the journal non-participants. There is a clear visual difference between the two groups, one that is supported by the MANOVA and the separate follow-up ANOVAs.

However, prior to discussing the results of these statistics, the Pearson's r correlations highlighted a potential weakness in the analyses as outlined in the *Methods* section. For both the journal participants and the journal non-participants, the Pearson's r correlations between the total number of words written and the total number of word types were very strong, $r = .947$ and $r = .954$, respectively. The strengths of these correlations are intuitively reasonable: the more words written, the more word types

needed to express oneself. Tabachnik and Fidell (2001) point out that “Even moderately correlated DVs diminish the power of MANOVA” (p. 323). Their solution is as follows: “When correlations among DVs are high....It is both statistically and logically suspect to include all the DVs in analysis and *the usual solution is deletion of the redundant DV*” (p. 331). Based on this technique, I decided to eliminate the measure of total word types from all subsequent analyses. However, the measure of total word types is still of interest: it is an indicator of lexical complexity, while total words is an indicator of fluency. The descriptive statistics (Table 6) still include the measure of total word types.

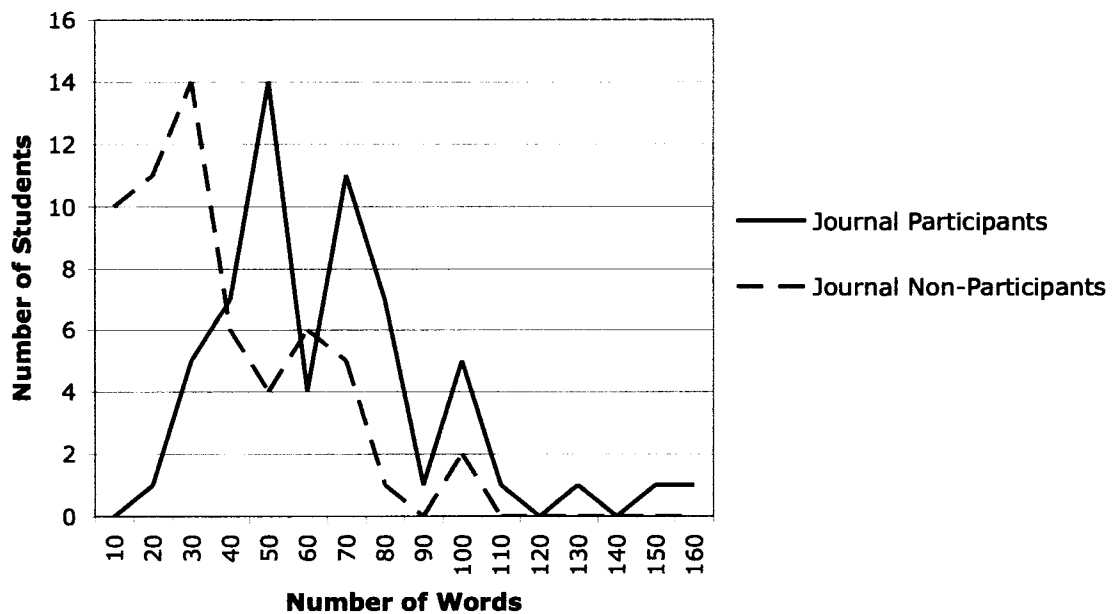


Figure 8. The distribution of the total number of words for the journal participants ($n = 59$) and the journal non-participants ($n = 59$) on the free-writing quiz.

After elimination of the measure of total word types, the MANOVA showed an overall statistically significant difference for a composite of the three dependent

variables, Wilks's $\lambda = .74$, $F(3, 114) = 13.64$, $p < .001$. Separate follow-up ANOVAs demonstrated statistical significance for the three remaining dependent variables, $p < .01$. However, the partial η^2 for the MLU (.083) implies that the contribution by the MLU variable to the total variance between the two groups was relatively small compared to the roughly equal contributions by the other two dependent variables: the total number of words ($\eta^2 = .240$), and the total number of error-free sentences ($\eta^2 = .226$).

From the correlation results, surprising is the moderate to strong, and statistically significant, correlation between the number of words written (fluency) and the number of error-free sentences written (accuracy): $r = .771$, $p < .01$. Contrary to expectation, as the number of words written by the 118 quiz-takers studied increased, the number of error-free sentences increased. Casanave (1994) posited that accuracy might be sacrificed on the altar of fluency; that would imply a negative correlation. That is clearly not the case here, although in the journal environment studied by Casanave, which was not a testing situation, it might very well have been. Actually, upon reflection, this phenomenon is logical. This was a quiz and the quiz-takers may have been assumed that accuracy was of paramount importance. Furthermore, as a generalization, a great deal of attention is paid to accuracy in the predominantly grammar-translation environment of English classes in Japan.

The correlation between the number of words and the MLU is moderate, $r = .617$, $p < .01$. Apparently, the writers who wrote more words tended to write longer sentences. This, too, seems intuitively logical.

The only weak correlation is between the error-free sentences and the MLU: $r = .334$, $p < .01$, for the combined groups. The correlation for the separate group of journal

non-participants mirrors the combined group, but the correlation for the separate group of journal participants stands out. The correlation is not only weak, $r = .148$, but not statistically significant. Compared to the journal participants, the journal non-participants wrote statistically significantly fewer words, fewer word types, fewer error-free sentences, and shorter sentences. However, the error-free sentences that they wrote tended weakly to be longer. Perhaps the journal non-participants, who probably had less self-confidence with regard to their writing, wrote longer sentences only when they were fairly sure that those sentences would be accurate. The lengths of the sentences written by the journal participants were largely unrelated to the accuracy of those sentences.

On the surface, at least, the preceding results make a strong case for the use peer-to-peer dialogue journals. Could an activity that requires relatively little teacher effort result in statistically significant gains in fluency, accuracy, and lexical and grammatical complexity? From the statistics summarized here, it certainly seems so. The claims of gains in linguistic proficiency, as posited by the authors specializing in treatments of dialogue journal writing (Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) appear to find support in the statistical significance of the features measured on the free-writing quiz, especially in terms of fluency, and grammatical and lexical complexity. Furthermore, despite the absence of teacher intervention in the journal writing, the journal participants seem to have learned to write more accurately, which lends credence to Truscott's (1996, 1999) claim that teacher intervention has no appreciable effect on student writing.

However, before rushing to judgment as to the effect that the secret journal might have had on the quiz results, one must realize that the journal participants were

volunteers, and the secret journals an extracurricular activity. The participants were not selected at random. How they were chosen, however, did not guarantee that only high achievers would participate. Some of the participants volunteered as a result of a modicum of pressure by their Japanese English teachers, or by me, especially for the purpose of trying to balance the more numerous female volunteers with at least some males. The *Surveys* section will provide more information as to why the participants joined the secret journal project.

The impression made evident by a quick scan of the journals is that perhaps half of the total 60 participants seemed not to be unusually motivated. Indeed, some of the journal participants regularly wrote fewer than five sentences per entry, even though they had a week to produce those entries. At the school at which I worked, there were many students who were very motivated toward English, but were not journal participants. In order to get a general idea of the overall level of the journal participants compared to the journal non-participants, the English grades awarded just after the free-writing quiz by the Japanese English teacher at the school at which I worked, with 30 participants and 65 non-participants, were analyzed. An ANOVA found no significant difference between the English grades of the journal participants and those of the journal non-participants.

Certainly, motivation accounted for part of the difference between the free-writing quiz results of the volunteer journal participants and the journal non-participants. However, it must be realized that motivation, without a medium in which to exercise it, would most probably not have expressed itself in such statistically significant differences between the two groups. Just as certainly, participation in the journal project made some

contribution to the superior performance of the journal participants on the free-writing quiz.

Free-Speaking Quiz

This section discusses Research Question 4: Do the peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants show statistically significant differences in fluency and lexical complexity on a free-speaking quiz compared to journal non-participants, and if so, to what extent?

The transcriptions of 95 three-minute free-speaking quizzes were analyzed. The quizzes analyzed were those of 29 journal participants and 66 journal non-participants. As discussed in the *Methods* section, two dependent variables were chosen for analysis: the total number of words and the total number of word types produced orally in three minutes. It was hoped that these two measures would give a general feeling for the speaking fluency of the quiz-takers and the lexical complexity of their utterances.

A cursory examination of the means of the two dependent variables in Table 9 suggests that there might be statistically significant differences between the two groups on these measures. However, while the means of both variables for the journal participants are higher than those of the non-participants, the ranges are narrower. On the measures of the total number of words and the total number of word types, the ranges for the participants are 115 and 60, respectively. The ranges for the journal non-participants are wider: 134 and 73, respectively.

An examination of the raw data reveals that for both the total word measure and the word-type measure, only three of the top 10 scorers (out of 96) were journal

participants. This is in contrast to the free-writing quiz where eight of the top 10 performers on both measures were journal participants

For the combined groups, a very strong Pearson's r correlation was found between the two dependent variables: $r = .968, p < .001$. This very strong correlation is intuitively reasonable: the more words spoken, the more word types required in order to express oneself. However, because the two dependent variables were so strongly correlated, eliminating one of them was justified, according to Tabachnik and Fidell (2001), as outlined in the *Free-Writing Quiz* section. So, the measure of total word types was eliminated. That left one dependent variable: the total number of words. The ANOVA, calculated with the measure of total words only, resulted in $F(1, 93) = 4.68, p = .033$. Because no Bonferroni correction was necessary, the ANOVA was statistically significant at a significance level of $\alpha = .05$.

The fact that the journal participants performed statistically significantly better than the journal non-participants on the three measures of the 10-minute free-writing quiz was not surprising, given that the journal writing gave the participants practice in producing just the kind of utterances tested. The fact that they performed statistically significantly better on the three-minute free-speaking quiz is surprising. Perhaps dialogue journal practice does lead to the gains in speaking proficiency claimed by some researchers (Holmes & Moulton, 1995; Peyton & Staton, 1993; Takagaki, 1997).

The significantly better performance by the journal participants compared to the journal non-participants on the two quizzes may suggest the higher level of motivation assumed in volunteer participants. However, the results of the journal participants on the total word measure of the free-writing quiz were clearly significantly different at $p <$

.001. We might call this an indicator of fluency. The journal participants were clearly more fluent. On the total word measure, or fluency, of the free-speaking quiz, the results of the journal participants were significant at $p < .05$, but barely so, $p = .033$.

As I pointed out in the *Free-Writing* discussion, simply being more motivated does not necessarily guarantee better performance. Having a vehicle to nurture that motivation is crucial. The journals apparently provided a vehicle that led to a distinctly superior performance by the journal participants on all of the measures of the free-writing quiz, including the fluency measure. Conversely, the absence of a vehicle for repeated oral self-introduction practice made the fluency performance by the same journal participants on the free-speaking quiz less decisive, any potentially higher level of motivation notwithstanding.

From the inconsistent performance of the journal participants, one might conclude that the volunteers participants may have been attracted to the secret journal activity for reasons other than improving their English. Perhaps they were attracted to the activity because of its unique and mysterious nature (Bergin, 1999; Egan, 1986), because of a desire to socialize (Bergin, 1999; Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001), or both.

While the degree to which the journal participants outperformed the non-participants on the fluency measures of the two quizzes may have been slightly different, the fact that they did so, and statistically significantly, has potential implications. The most obvious is the potential for improvement in oral proficiency as a result of participation in a written peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity. This is a fascinating subject for possible future study. If participants could be chosen at random, and if pre- and post-testing of speaking proficiencies of those participants could be conducted, my

personal view is that the conversational nature of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity would prove to contribute to major gains in speaking proficiencies. The act of writing down conversations and reading the conversations of one's partners surely allows the writer-reader to visualize the structure of that conversation and the components (e.g., pragmatics, syntax and lexical items) that comprise it. If it can be demonstrated that one relatively engaging activity can contribute to increases in two (or more) of the four macroskills, it would be hard for a committed second language educator to ignore.

Surveys

The surveys were an informal attempt to gauge the general attitudes of the participants toward the secret journal activity itself, their partners, and the value of the secret journal activity as a language-learning tool. It would have been desirable to have conducted formal, piloted, comprehensive surveys addressing these questions, but the already significant time demands placed on the participants and the supervising teachers by the secret journal activity itself precluded the gathering of additional data that might have corroborated the veracity of the results. However, I believe that the surveys give both an accurate picture of what they were designed to gauge, and a very interesting informal look at the attitudes of the participants.

Journal Activity Attitudes

This section discusses Research Question 5: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity? Specifically, why did the participants volunteer for the activity,

how much time did they spend on their entries, and upon reflection, did they like the activity?

At the end of Term 2, the participants were asked to choose one reason, out of five choices, why they became participants in the secret journal activity. Thirty-six of the respondents chose, "I want to improve my English." This is not surprising given the importance placed upon learning English, from the Japanese Ministry of Education (*Mombusho*, now known as *MEXT*) to the parents, as a key to remaining competitive in international commerce. Nine respondents chose the "I like mysteries" option and three chose "I want to make friends." These responses are consistent with the importance to learning of interest (Bergin, 1999), socializing with peers (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001), novelty, games and puzzles (Bergin, 1999), and fantasy (Bergin, 1999; Egan, 1986).

Prior to the project, I felt that one of the important potential attractions of the secret friend journal activity was the sense of mystery inherent in it. As we have seen, nine of the 60 respondents chose the *mystery* reason for their participation. After Term 1, when surveyed as to if they wanted to meet their partners face-to-face, 32 said *yes*, and 28, *no*. In fact, after one term of one of the pilot projects, I videotaped the participants at the two schools that participated. I showed the video of their partners at one school and was surprised that prior to viewing it, the participants were lukewarm about doing so. I gave the video of their partners to the other school where it was never viewed, even though the participants knew of its existence. The elements of mystery and anonymity, and the non-judgmental nature of the secret journal activity is quite obviously important to a significant percentage of the participants, whether it was the reason for volunteering for the activity, or not.

At the end of the Term 3, the participants were asked how many minutes they spent writing their journal entries. Despite the majority of the participants' expressed desire to improve their English, they really did not spend much time on their entries. Fully 93% of the participants spent less than a half an hour on each of their entries despite having a week in which to complete them. This seems like a rather paltry commitment to their writing, but in the life of the busy Japanese junior high school student, as characterized by Fukuzawa and LeTendre (2001), perhaps it is all the time they could afford. However, this result may also imply an increase in fluency claimed by many writers and researchers interested in various forms of dialogue journal writing (Casanave, 1994; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993).

I examined the word count data and the first three terms of the journals themselves for the four participants who responded that they spent from 30-60 minutes on their journals entries. All four were female students. Of the 60 participants, ID05F and ID55F wrote relatively large numbers of words, and in total words produced, ranked over the three terms: 3rd, 5th, and 11th; and 1st, 2nd, and 5th, respectively. ID14F also wrote relatively many words (14th, 7th, and 12th), and obviously spent an inordinate amount of time on her beautifully elaborate colored drawings (Appendix B). ID37F wrote relatively few words (55th, 30th, and 26th), but apparently also spent considerable time on her colored drawings.

At the end of Terms 1 and 3, the participants were asked to choose one of five options in response to the survey question, "Do you like the secret journals?" The responses show a slight erosion in the popularity of the activity as the terms progressed. However, even after four terms of participation, 60% of the participants responded that

they liked or loved the activity. For this kind of enthusiasm to bridge over a year seems a strong endorsement indeed. From these same responses, females showed more affinity for the secret journal activity; their average responses for the two terms were 4.0 and 4.0, the *yes* response. The males, however, responded at 3.4 and 3.3 on the average for the two terms, closer to the *so so* response. This may speak to the much discussed and researched speculation, which is beyond the scope of this study, that females are better at foreign languages, more motivated to study languages, and are more concerned about socialization than males.

Attitudes of the Participants Toward Their Partners

This section discusses Research Question 6: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward their partners, and is there any correlation between liking one's partner and the number of words written?

At the end of Terms 1-4, one question, in exactly the same form, was on each of the four surveys: "Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?" The participants were given choices based on a four-point Likert scale: the equivalent in Japanese of *very much*, *yes*, *so so*, and *no*. Two sets of correlations were conducted based on this question. The first was the correlation between the Likert responses of paired partners (see *Methods*), and the second was the correlation between the Likert response to the question and the number of words written by a given participant to his or her partner.

To simplify the first correlation conceptually: Did you like me as much as I liked you? Only the Term 3 correlation value was statistically significant, but moderate, $r =$

.412 at $p < .05$. This correlation is supported by a similar result for Term 3 between the Likert scale response to one's partner and the number of words written to that partner: $r = .381$ at $p < .01$. Of the eight total correlations, these two were of interest because they were moderate and statistically significant. Of the other six, one was weakly correlated and significant, while the others were nonsignificant.

The strength of these two measures was undoubtedly a result of the inordinate amount of time I spent prior to Term 3 in pairing the partners. I carried out extensive key word searches using CLAN; in many cases, participants with similar interests were paired. It was impossible to pair all of the participants based solely on this method, however, because one eye had to be kept on trying to optimize the balance between females and males. Given the moderate strength of these correlations, it may suggest that pairings are important: that they can affect liking one's partner, and that liking one's partner can affect the number of words that a participant writes to that partner. While this conjecture seems intuitively reasonable, more study of the effects of pairing is required.

Finally, as has been pointed out, some of the participants, who had expressed high regard for particular former partners through their Likert scale responses, were re-paired in Term 4. It is interesting that out of the 12 pairs that were re-paired with former partners in Term 4, only one pair determined that they had been partners before. Apparently, the reasons that they were able to make that determination were that they had been paired in the immediately prior term, and their interests, penmanship, and drawings were quite readily recognizable. The fact that 11 pairs did not realize that they had been paired with former partners is interesting. Perhaps the fact that they did not retain the journals themselves may have prevented them from being able to check. It may also speak to a

superficial nature of this kind of correspondence over a term comprising just 4-6 entries each.

Language-Learning Value Attitudes

Research Question 7

This section discusses Research Question 7: What do the end-of-term surveys (Terms 1-4) indicate about the attitudes of the journal participants toward the peer-to-peer dialogue journals as a language learning activity?

One of the most important concerns in this study was whether or not various second language linguistic proficiencies improved as a result of participation in the dialogue journal project, a claim made by all of the major contributors to the dialogue journal writing literature (Green & Green, 1993; Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993; Worthington, 1997). As has already been presented, the statistics from the free-writing quiz indicated that on the three variables measured, the writing proficiencies of the journal participants were clearly superior to those of the journal non-participants. Moreover, the statistics from the free-speaking quiz indicated that the groups were significantly different on one variable of speaking proficiency.

Perhaps the opinions of the journal participants themselves are more telling. After Term 1, 88% of the participants felt that the journals contributed *a lot* (43%) or *a little* (45%) to their writing proficiencies. Only two participants (out of 60) felt that there was no contribution, and five did not know. The Term 4 survey responses showed a slight strengthening in the attitude toward the writing value; 91% of the participants felt that the

journals contributed *a lot* (38%) or *a little* (53%). Only one participant was unsure of a potential contribution, and four participants responded that there was no contribution.

The attitudes of the participants toward the potential contribution of the journals to increases in their reading proficiencies were very similar to that of writing. After Term 1, 88% of the participants felt that the journals contributed *a lot* (35%) or *a little* (53%) to their reading proficiencies. Term 4 saw similar results, 86% of the participants felt that the journals contributed *a lot* (28%) or *a little* (58%).

These writing and reading findings are reasonable. It is not a stretch of the imagination to assume that regular reading and writing practice contributes to increases in reading and writing proficiencies, regardless of the vehicle for that practice.

Conversely, it is intuitively reasonable to predict that the participants would feel more negatively toward the contributions of the journals to their listening and speaking proficiencies. The responses support this prediction. In the Term 1 survey, only four participants responded that the journals contributed *a lot* to an increase in their listening proficiency and six participants to their speaking proficiency. After Term 4, the responses dropped to one participant and three participants, respectively. Equally reasonable were the *none* (no contribution) and *I don't know* responses. The *I don't know* response stayed about the same from Term 1 to Term 4 for both listening (22% and 25%) and speaking (17% and 18%). The *none* option saw a moderate increase for both listening (30% to 42%) and speaking (22% to 32%). Evidently, as the secret journal activity progressed, some of the participants became more convinced that the activity did not contribute to increases in their listening and speaking proficiencies.

The *a little* response is intriguing. After Term 1, 42% of the participants felt that the journal activity contributed to an increase in their listening and 52% to their speaking proficiencies. After Term 4, these responses eroded only slightly to 32% and 45%, respectively. Given that writing in the journals is a productive skill, as is speaking, perhaps the speaking responses are somewhat reasonable. The connection between reading the journal entries and being able to connect that reading to an audible representation is more abstract, and begs the age-old question of whether or not we mentally audibilize while reading. Regardless of the processes involved, a moderate number of participants felt that the secret journal activity contributed *a little* to both their listening and speaking proficiencies.

To summarize, the participants felt quite strongly that the secret journals activity contributed somewhat to their writing and reading proficiencies. They also felt that contributions to their listening and speaking skills were primarily *a little*, slightly less for *none*, with some uncertainty (*I don't know*). Out of a total 480 responses, 60 participants with four responses each (writing, reading, listening, and speaking) on two widely separated surveys (Term 1 and Term 4), fully 228 of those responses (48%) were to the *a little* option. Overwhelmingly, the participants felt that the activity contributed at least something to their proficiencies in all four macroskills. It is important to recall here that this activity involved no teacher participation or intervention. The proficiency increases perceived by the participants were due primarily to the participants themselves.

An equally important focus of this study was if, and if so the degree to which, the participants scaffolded each other, in the spirit of Vygotsky and Donato. At the end of the Term 3, the participants were asked: "Can you remember any instances from which you

learned something about English from one of your journal partners?" Fully 75% (45) of the participants believed that their partners had contributed, at least a few times, to their knowledge of English. Fifteen of the participants chose the *Never* option. Following on the participants' perceptions, perhaps the most critical question in evaluating the effectiveness of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal as a pedagogical tool deserving of wider use in foreign language education is whether the journals themselves show evidence that participants can and do contribute to improvement in their partners' linguistic proficiencies.

Research Question 8

This section discusses Research Question 8: Do journal entries of participants in peer-to-peer dialogue journals show evidence of echoing, and might certain instances of echoing constitute scaffolding in the spirit of Vygotsky and Donato?

The journals themselves do show massive evidence of echoing. However, whether that echoing constitutes peer-to-peer scaffolding in the spirit of Donato (1994) is subject to interpretation. As we have seen Donato strongly suggests that peers can scaffold each other: "It has been shown that learners are capable of providing guided support to their peers during collaborative L2 interactions in ways analogous to expert scaffolding documented in the developmental psychological literature" (p. 51). From Table 14, it is obvious that the majority of the participants believed that they had been scaffolded by their partners at least a few times.

However, there are various forms that scaffolding may take. The most obvious is explicit correction, that is, where a participant brings an error directly to the attention of

his or her partner. During the transcription process, I tagged all the explicit correction utterances, and found that there were very few cases. Perhaps the linguistic skills of the participants were such that they simply did not catch many of the errors made by their partners. Also likely is that participants failed to point out the errors of their partners because they did not wish to upset the social balance of the relationship by doing so, nor did they wish to leave themselves open to the potential embarrassment of being corrected.

In Term 1, there were only two cases of explicit error correction. One is a participant (ID34F) bringing the misspelling of her nickname to the attention of her partner (ID04M). The other case proved to be the most extensive of the project. A slightly higher proficiency partner (ID20F), who was the only participant in the secret journal project who had lived in a foreign country, corrected her partner (ID50F) on several occasions. On the first occasion, ID50F wrote, “I play cook. Do you play cook?” In the next entry, ID20F responded gently with the following sequence of utterances in which she corrected her partner and then modeled the correct form: “So! You like to cook? You don’t write, play cook. I like cooking, too! What do you cook?” ID50F realized her mistake and in her next entry corrected it with “I like cooking very much.”

In the very same sequence of entries, ID50F made another rather less-than-delicious mistake, “I like sushi and lice.” ID20F responded with “Lice, rice ok?” In her next entry, ID50F did not acknowledge the misspelling of *rice*, but went on to make three additional errors: she misspelled her partner’s nickname, failed to complete a sentence (“I read”), and misspelled *colors*. ID20F brought these errors to the attention of her partner in the following sequence of utterances: “My nick name is July! not Jury. colos→colors.

o.k.? (What do you mean 'I read'?)." ID50F responds with "Sorry, Jury→July. I read many books."

These sequences of correction and response to correction were very unusual. It is heartening to see the tact with which ID20F pointed out the errors and the readiness with which ID50F accepted and rewrote those corrections. However, perhaps ID20F tired of her partner's errors, or was disappointed that this first term of the project seemed to indicate that the journals would not be as much of a boon to the improvement of her English as she had expected, given her status as a returnee from the United States. In response to the Term 1, Likert scale question, "Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?" ID20F responded with the lowest option, *no* (1/4). In contrast, ID50F's response was *yes* (3/4). Both participants, incidentally, were in the top 20 of 60 participants in total word output over the five terms of the project.

In Term 2, there were no instances of overt correction of one's partner.

In Term 3, ID20F corrected a different partner, ID55F, who wrote, "I'll write about our blass band next page." ID55F had used the correct spelling, however, in an earlier utterance. ID20F responded, again gently, with "ps, maybe blass band would be brass band." ID55F seemingly gratefully acknowledged the error with: "Oh. I made a mistake, brass band. Thanks to you, I noticed that mistake." ID20F's response to this partner was decidedly warmer: In response to the Likert scale question, "Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?" both partners responded with *yes* (3/4). Over the course of the secret journal project, ID55F was the second overall total word producer.

Also in Term 3, in five successive utterances, ID58F chided her partner, ID23F, for failing to write the date on her entry and for "I did watch *Beauty and the Beast*":

“Minnie, please write the date. I did watch. It is wrong. I did not. I watched.” Unlike ID20F’s partners, however, ID23F did not acknowledge the help whatsoever, nor did she attempt similar constructions that might demonstrate knowledge of the correct grammatical form. Later, in disregard of the rules of the secret journal, ID23F solicited the name of her partner’s school to which ID58F testily replied, “What name school. Read rules. No school name. See you.” At the end of the term, in response to the Likert scale question, “Did you enjoy writing to your last partner?” ID58F responded with *no* (1/4), and ID23F was barely warmer with *so so* (2/4). Both partners were toward the higher end of total word producers: ID58F was 15th out of 60, and ID23F was 21st.

As in Term 2, Term 4 saw no instances of overt correction of a partner. Term 5 had one minor nickname correction, and one case where “echoing,” which will be discussed, was avoided. ID08M, one of the lowest overall word producers of the project (52nd out of 60), greeted his new partner with, “Nice to meet too you.” This being the fifth term of the project, a supervising teacher might be highly disappointed in this utterance, except for its accurate rendering of the prosody of the phrase. However, ID33M, also a relatively low producer (47th), avoided the echoing trap with ““Nice to meet you, too!”

What I have chosen to call “echoing” is where partners in peer-to-peer dialogue journals merely replicate utterances or portions of utterances that their partners had written in the immediately previous journal entry. Positive echoing is where a correct utterance or lexical item in one participant’s entry appears in exactly the same form in the subsequent entry by the partner. However, it is nearly impossible to determine whether a given item is echoed, or merely written correctly. Obvious examples of positive echoing

are those in which whole or partial utterances, usually questions, were merely copied in order to provide physical proximity of the question from one's partner to the participant's response. The following excerpt from Term 1 contained an example.

Date: 17-JAN-2003
ID29: I like baseball.
ID29: I play baseball after school.
ID29: Do you like baseball?
ID29: See you.
Date: 24-JAN-2003
ID59: Hello!
ID59: Nice to meet you, secret friend.
ID59: My name is, nickname, Tareneko.
ID59: Do you like baseball?
ID59: No, I don't.

Cases of negative echoing were all too obvious, and perhaps constitute the Achilles heel of uncorrected peer-to-peer dialogue journals. Negative echoing is when an incorrect utterance or lexical item appearing in one participant's entry also appears in exactly the same incorrect form in the subsequent entry by one's partner. Negative echoing can take many forms. Echoed misspellings are common, as seen in the following Term 1 excerpt.

Date: 17-JAN-2003
ID01: I'm member of baseball club.
ID01: I play baseball after school.
ID01: What's do you do after school.
Date: 24-JAN-2003
ID31: I'm a member of English club.

Echoed misspellings can take even more bizarre turns, as for example, when a spelling is changed from the correct one to an incorrect one in order to echo the spelling of the partner. In Term 1, in response to her partner's misspelling (*intresting*), ID03F obviously changed her correct spelling of *interesting* by erasing the correct *e* to make

intresting. There are also cases of what I call aggravated echoed misspelling. In Term 1, ID15F echoed her partner's misspelling of *volleyball*, *volleybell*, but aggravated the misspelling with *valleybell*.

Negative echoing was also quite common in what might be interpreted as misspelling as in the case of *basket ball* rather than *basketball*. Negative echoing also appeared occasionally in inflections, for example, in Term 2 when ID11F and ID48M expended fully ten rather comical utterances, each of which includes *homeworks*.

Date: 13-JUN-2003

ID48: Dear Mina.

ID48: Hello Mina.

ID48: How do you do?

ID48: I'm tired.

ID48: Because, I must do many homeworks.

ID48: Do you save homeworks?

ID48: You should finish homework early.

ID48: See you.

Date: 20-JUN-2003

ID11: Dear Ken.

ID11: Hello Ken.

ID11: How do you do.

ID11: I like homeworks!

ID11: Do you like homeworks!

ID11: See you.

Date: 27-JUN-2003

ID48: Dear Mina.

ID48: Hello Mina.

ID48: How do you do?

ID48: I'm fine.

ID48: I don't like homeworks.

ID48: Why do you like homeworks?

ID48: Goodby!

Date: 04-JUL-2003

ID11: Dear Ken.

ID11: Hello Ken.

ID11: How do you do?

ID11: I like homeworks.

ID11: See you!

Date: 11-JUL-2003

ID48: Dear Mina.
ID48: Hello Mina, how are you?
ID48: Do you have any plans for summer vacation?
ID48: I won't have free time.
ID48: Because, I will have many homeworks.
ID48: My school and juku's homeworks are very difficult.
ID48: I don't like homeworks.
ID48: Will you have free time?
ID48: Good summer vacation!
ID48: See you.

Fairly common were instances in which grammatical errors were echoed. In the following Term 2 excerpt, a project administrator might have hoped that the horribly non-standard initial utterance would have been caught by ID29, and ID59 scaffolded up to the correct form. Alas, it was not to be.

Date: 7-FEB-2003
ID59: What's do you club?
Date: 14-FEB-2003
ID29: What's do you club?
ID29: I'm a member of baseball club.

Were instances of negative echoing frequent? The simple answer is not really, but they might have been frequent enough to be worrisome to an educator evaluating the peer-to-peer dialogue journal format for inclusion in a curriculum. While I was tempted to try to quantify the incidences of echoing, I was put off by my inability to accurately recognize all of the instances of positive echoing. That would only have skewed the results in favor of negative echoing and misrepresented the positive pedagogical value of such an activity.

Another even thornier issue is whether or not echoing can or does constitute scaffolding, in the sense that *scaffolding* is usually used, especially in the Vygotskian (1962) sense of the expert-novice paradigm, or in the Donato (1994) sense, with the peer-

peer paradigm. I think it is safe to say that the participants in this study did learn from their partners, and did scaffold their partners in some instances. As we have seen, the participants believed they did, and there were enough obvious instances of echoing, both positive and negative, to suggest that they were sensitive to the utterances of their partners, with all that that means.

Also interesting, on a more general level, is the extent to which partners echoed each other in terms of total word output. The Pearson's r correlation values ranged from moderate to strong: $r = .827$ (Term 1), $r = .498$ (Term 2), $r = .706$ (Term 3), $r = .760$ (Term 4), and $r = .489$ (Term 5), all at $p < .01$. In other words, the participants tended to write a similar number of words to their partners as was written to them by their partners. It seems logical that if matched participants tend to mirror the total word output of their partners, consciously or unconsciously, then it is highly likely that, at least in some cases, they will echo specific utterances and lexical items.

Regardless of the conclusion drawn by an educator with regard to the pedagogical value of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal, it seems likely that it can be the forum, the ZPD if you will, through which scaffolding may take place. The challenge may be to find a form of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal vehicle that will result in more scaffolding of language skills. Potential alternative forms of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal activity will be discussed later.

The Journals: Potential Pitfalls

To this point we have examined the potential for contributions by peer-to-peer dialogue journals to increases in foreign language proficiencies. Educators convinced that

peer-to-peer dialogue journals do have the potential to contribute to increases in linguistic proficiencies, and are contemplating initiating similar projects in their institutions, may have questions about potential drawbacks to the activity that might prevent or seriously impede the success of the project.

This section discusses Research Question 9: Do peer-to-peer dialogue journal participants exhibit any detrimental behavior, such as lateness in turning in their journals, not following the journal rules, inappropriate language, or contentious exchanges that might cause a teacher considering this activity to reject it?

Prior to initiating the 60-participant secret dialogue journal project, I had several concerns regarding administration of a project so large, based upon experience garnered from the pilot projects.

Lateness

The first concern was an administrative nightmare resulting from the potential for widespread lateness by the participants in turning in their journals. Given a modicum of patience on the part of the activity administrator and the recognition that even well organized and disciplined students will occasionally be forgetful, that concern largely turned out to be unfounded. Indeed, for a project in which 60 junior high school seventh graders participated through five terms into the ninth grade, the occurrences of lateness were surprisingly minimal. Certainly, the Japanese teachers who administered the project on a daily basis played critical roles in ensuring that the participants turned in their journals on time. Furthermore, the individual notebook numbering-identification system

was well planned and streamlined so as to ensure that collection and distribution of the journals were minimally confusing.

Finally, perhaps the most important contributing factor was, as Green and Green (1993) suggested, that the participants were loath to disappoint their partners by being late. Upon reflection, I am very impressed by the responsible behavior demonstrated by the adolescent participants. Whatever inconveniences I had originally anticipated, in picking up and delivering the journals, were minimal, considerably fewer than I had initially expected.

As a word of advice, I would urge administrators to be flexible. The journal exchange process seemed to work best by setting a consistent due day (e.g., Tuesday), and then actually picking up the journals late the next day, that is, Wednesday. In the fewer than 10 cases over a year-and-a-half where a participant missed the due day and the back-up day, the delinquent journal was usually sent through the inter-school mail.

The Journal Rules

The degree to which the participants adhered to the journal rules, particularly those regarding use of the L1 and secrecy, was impressive. The pilot projects included a couple of lapses into use of the L1, albeit to a very limited extent. In the journal project treated herein, out of approximately 14,000 total entries over a year-and-a-half, I was forced to erase or blacken out utterances in Japanese fewer than five times. However, I missed some very minor uses of Japanese during the project, and allowed some to stay in cases where it made sense, for example, picture labels and nouns with no understandable counterpart in English.

Utterances that gave specific personal information, such as the location of a participant's residence, were almost non-existent. During the second term, one of the participants (ID03F) identified the ward in which she resided, an utterance that I failed to notice. After doing so, she asked her partner (ID50F) where she lived. Her partner, in compliance with the journal rules replied with: "It's secret."

In fact, the participants adhered to the rules of secrecy so well during the project that when I questioned some of them after the project, they said they had no idea at all which schools their interlocutors attended, the physical proximity of the schools notwithstanding.

Inappropriate Language

During one of the pilot projects, one male was a bit flirtatious with his female partner, who nevertheless seemed not unwelcoming of his attentions. The fact that the partners did not meet each other in this particular secret journal project was an advantage; in this case both the partners were the more fortunate for it. Because of these exchanges, I had a bit of trepidation about the potential for inappropriate language or exchanges.

During the secret journal project treated herein, there were only two examples of language that was inappropriate. One male (ID29M) included, in the top margin of his entry for that week, three two-word utterances written in pencil, almost as an afterthought, that were offensive, and in fact, threatening: "Kill you, You're die, You're bitch." However, the beginning of his formal entry on that same page was completely friendly: "Hello! Nice to meet you Daisy," as was the rest of the entry.

The fact that these inappropriate utterances, followed by friendly utterances, were the first of the term to a new, yet obviously female partner, might be cause for tempering one's concern. However, the female partner brought the utterances to the attention of her Japanese English teacher. Her teacher mentioned the incident to me and I passed it along to the boy's Japanese English teacher. In consultation with that teacher, we decided that it would be better if I mentioned the complaint to the boy. I did so in a very non-confrontational manner, the boy was obviously embarrassed and at my suggestion, erased the offensive entries immediately. Subsequent entries from both participants continued in a totally civil and friendly manner. I did not want to belabor his embarrassment by asking the reason for the offensive entries, so I did not. I suspect, however, that the entries found roots in the boy's favorite band, Porno-Graffiti, or some other pop group with a similar high regard for sociopathic lyrics.

At the end of the term, in response to the 4-point Likert-scale survey question, "Did you like your last partner?" the girl responded *yes* (3/4). By contrast, in response to the same question, the boy rated this partner at *no* (1/4). In fact, this boy rated all four of his partners on which he was surveyed at *no* (1/4) over the course of the project. Perhaps this boy had personal issues that fuelled this behavior. This incident highlights the potential value of the secret dialogue journal as a window to personal issues, concerns, and anxieties of the adolescent, and its potential for signaling teacher intervention where required, if the confidentiality of the secret journal does not appear to have been violated.

The only other inappropriate utterance was a physically isolated (on the page) leave-taking: "fuck you," by one of the boys. On the page facing the offensive entry, the boy's partner was completely civil and friendly, and showed no sign whatsoever of

recognition of its offensiveness or any response to it. Coincidentally, the offending boy's partner was the offender discussed just previously.

Only two examples of inappropriate language are hardly cause for concern, especially in light of the overall tone of friendship and civility that permeate the journals in general.

Contentious Exchanges

Finally, I also anticipated that the physical and psychological distance afforded by a secret dialogue journal might allow the interlocutors a forum to vent some adolescent-anxiety steam. In fact, I believe the secret journal activity to be ideally suited to just such a purpose, and that it might prove to have formal therapeutic potential.

Again, over the course of 1,440 entries, there were only two incidents. The most overt was occasion for a smile from me, and the teachers to whom I mentioned it. "I don't like you" was the final Term 3 utterance of a girl, whose total word output over the five terms was a bit below average, to her male partner, whose total word output was well below average: fourth from the bottom. The aforementioned smile would have been impolitic had her pronouncement been read by her partner. Hers, however, was the very last entry and I held back this journal back rather than giving her partner the opportunity to read it. It is a tribute to the valiant effort that this girl made throughout the term to try to find and maintain a common ground on which to communicate with this boy.

There was one other contentious exchange that would not likely have occurred between physical acquaintances, either face-to-face or in writing. Throughout his participation in the project, one boy (ID54M) identified himself quite closely with Brazil,

and was quite obviously soccer crazy. In fact, in one Term 2 entry, he remarked that he had lived in Brazil (I came from Brazil!), an assertion that his Japanese English teacher disputes categorically. Out of the 60 participants in this project, this child was the most willing to take chances with his English by trying difficult syntactic constructions, which often ended up rather convoluted, but generally understandable. For example, after his assertion of having lived in Brazil, he wrote: “As for me, the pro soccer player absolutely becomes, and wants to repay the kindness to people indebted in Brazil!” One must admire this boy’s chutzpah and the warmth inherent in this attempt.

However, he and his fifth partner (ID07M) were uncharacteristically combative, as evidenced in an interesting exchange during Term 5. The exchange is transcribed verbatim below in its entirety.

01-JUN-2004

ID54: Hi!

ID54: I tell you to your question.

ID54: My soccer is dribble and pass!

ID54: I'm pivot it.

ID54: It's very interesting.

ID54: I play soccer as well as Beckham!

ID54: It's joke.

ID54: By the way, what do you do after school?

ID54: I play soccer after school, every day.

ID54: And every morning.

ID54: It's very hard!

ID54: But I like soccer so I can play soccer ever day.

ID54: Soccer is my dream!

ID54: See you again!

08-JUN-2004

ID07: Hi!

ID07: You are so crazy that I can't understand you.

ID07: Why do you like soccer so much?

ID07: I think you are fool.

ID07: Your letter is very big and dirty.

[refers to the quality of his partner's hand-printing]

ID07: I think you write letter more beautiful from now on.

ID07: I'm sorry to speak ill of you.
 ID07: Well, I talk with my friends after school.
 ID07: These contents are occurrence, teacher's things, friend's things, boyfriend's things and so on.
 ID07: They are a lot of fun.
 ID07: I have an advice.
 ID07: You should not only to play soccer but also to talk with you friend.
 ID07: Do you have any friends?
 ID07: Which high school do you want to go?
 ID07: I want to go Waseda Jitsugyo.
 ID07: See you!
 15-JUN-2004
 ID54: This time, because I want occasionally to write a lot, it writes by a small character.
 [in this entry, D54 cleaned up the quality of his hand-printing considerably, and scaled it down so that he could write more on a page]
 ID54: For you!
 ID54: It was amazed at you.
 [I was amazed at you.]
 ID54: Do you put only sentences that hold the person in foolish?
 ID54: Moreover, it has made some mistakes in sentences on the way.
 ID54: I think that you should do your English language skill somehow before you hold me in foolish.
 [criticizes his partner's English]
 ID54: So holding out of study English.
 ID54: Otherwise, you'll never pass the Waseda Jitsugyo.
 ID54: Maybe you'll not pass Sundai either.
 [D54 suggests that D07 may not pass the entrance exams to these high schools if his English does not improve]
 ID54: Did you understand my English?
 ID54: Maybe, you can't understand my English.
 ID54: Because you seem not study so much.
 [criticizes partner's study habits]
 ID54: Ahhhh.
 ID54: I'm sorry to speak ill of you.
 ID54: By the way, why do you like talk with your friends?
 ID54: I can't understand it.
 ID54: I have a lot of friends.
 ID54: But I don't talk with my friends much.
 ID54: Because I don't need talk with my friends.
 ID54: So I don't have to talk with my friends.
 ID54: What do you talk with your friends?
 ID54: I don't want to go high school.
 ID54: Because I accession of the soccer team.
 [perhaps, aspire to play professional soccer]

ID54: But I can go anywhere high school.
ID54: Because I'm a genius.
ID54: I have a question.
ID54: Please tell me.
ID54: Why are you so passionate?
ID54: I think wonder it.
ID54: See you again!
22-JUN-2004
ID07: You are clever!
ID07: Do you like Kick?
ID07: Kick is my favorite lap singer group.
[lap is probably rap, or perhaps, pop]
ID07: I prefer Clever a Little.
ID07: I don't like MCU.
ID07: He isn't cool.
ID07: Clever graduated Keio Gijuku.
ID07: Do you know?
ID07: Bye.
29-JUN-2004
ID54: I don't know Kick.
ID54: Why do you like it?
ID54: I'm not interested in singer group.
ID54: Why are you interested in singer group.
ID54: But I like Eminem very much.
ID54: Do you like Eminem?
ID54: He is a very good singer.
ID54: See you again!
06-JUL-2004
ID07: I like Eminem, too.
ID07: I watched Eight Mile.
ID07: Did you watch it?
ID07: I like Lose Yourself and Without Me.
ID07: What song do you like?
ID07: I like Bon Jovi the best.
ID07: I went them concert.
ID07: Do you have a girlfriend?
ID07: Bye.

The rancor is obvious. In fact, with former partners, ID54M expressed little need for talking with friends, even though he claimed that he had friends. Soccer apparently occupied nearly all of his time and interest. The rancor seems in danger of continuing unabated until the partners find common ground in a music group. After discovering that

common ground, the tone of the entries improves. Again, the secret dialogue journal format seems to lend a valuable service, both psychologically and linguistically, in allowing interlocutors to vent impassioned opinions, and then to repair their relationships by introducing different subjects.

The foregoing were the only apparent examples of exchanges that were out of the ordinary and were cause for some initial concern, had the incidents been more numerous. However, the vast bulk of the exchanges were friendly, gracious, civil, and often, heartwarming. I was gratified that the journals were not just a medium through which to vent frustrations and anxieties. I was just as gratified, however, that the journals did provide a medium for those frustrations and anxieties where no other alternative might have been available.

In conclusion, the four potential concerns I had with regard to administering a project on this scale (lateness, disregarding the journal rules, inappropriate language, and contentious exchanges) occurred, but on a scale so small as to be dismissible. The fact that the Japanese English teachers, who administered the project on a day-to-day basis, were respected by the students unquestionably made the administrative process a painless one. Furthermore, as already stated, the participants seemed unwilling to disappoint or alienate their partners by being late, or by displaying anti-social behavior. The value of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal as a vehicle for socialization is one that ought to be examined and evaluated more rigorously. I sometimes wonder if children who are isolated and alienated from their physically immediate peer groups might not benefit from a less proximal chance to socialize in an low-anxiety and non-judgmental atmosphere.

ALTERNATIVES

Regardless of the results of the statistical and holistic results herein, my strong feeling is that the present project was an unqualified success. In fact, I believe that if rigorous in situ data collection methods, more accurate linguistic measurements, and more reliable holistic evaluations had been possible, the participants in this project would have shown improvement by all measures, if for no other reason than they spent extracurricular time on their journals.

However, in reflecting on the secret journal project addressed in this study, I cannot help but think about ways in which this type of activity might be improved so as to maximize its overall pedagogical value in the foreign language environment, while not adding to demands on the time and energy of overworked educators. In considering various alternatives, I believe that two qualities of the present project ought to be sacrosanct: the secrecy of the identities of the participants, and the confidentiality of their writing.

A question that often arises is whether e-mail is a viable alternative, either in the form of a one-on-one key-friend program or a cyberspace chatroom. Certainly, from the administrative standpoint it is easier. That consideration aside, I dislike the idea of using an e-mail alternative with younger learners for several reasons. First, and most obvious, is the fact that not all students, particularly younger students, have access to computers, a network, or both. One is prone to assume that in a high-tech society, everyone has access, but in a recent informal survey at my elementary school, only about 50% of the students had access to a working computer; even fewer had access to the Internet. Second, if some

monitoring of the participants by the activity administrator is desired, e-mail may be problematic for the administrator whose computer skills are minimal. Furthermore, security is a widely recognized issue. The chatroom environment may fail to protect young learners from potential breaches of security or from other forms of predatory behavior. Third, for the teacher using dialogue journals with the hope of fostering linguistic improvement, grammar- and spell-checkers, and cut-and-paste functions make automatized accuracy and repetition all-too-available crutches that may be undesirable.

The notebook-type dialogue journal medium has more of a sense of permanency. It allows easy review of prior entries. Anticipating and receiving a physical object, rather than an electronic transmission, is akin to receiving a present, with all the attendant excitement. Furthermore, the notebook-type dialogue journal allows children and adolescents to do what they do naturally, as experienced educators know: they embellish their writings with drawings, some quite elaborate, that bear part of the burden of communication (see Appendix B). Finally, the act and pace of handwriting almost certainly contributes to greater automaticity in letter and word recognition than typing does.

Given the foregoing argument in favor of the physical medium of the notebook-type dialogue journal, alternatives to the present project have different sets of challenges that make them more or less attractive to potential activity administrators. Undoubtedly, the lack of responsibility for correction, the potential for linguistic improvement, and the development of social skills could hardly be anything but attractive to the most jaded educator. Why then, are peer-to-peer dialogue journals not in wider use?

There are probably three major reasons: (1) teachers do not see that there is educational value to this kind of activity, (2) finding another teacher or other teachers who are equally committed to administering an activity like this, and the right number of suitable partners may be problematic, and (3) distance and delivery.

With regard to the first reason above, I hope that this study has implanted at least a hint as to the potential for educational value, and that follow-on research will be undertaken to more clearly delineate the strengths and weaknesses of that potential.

The second reason, finding equally enthusiastic and committed teachers and the right number of suitable partners, is a challenge. Enthusiastic and committed teachers are usually already busy. Furthermore, they may be leery of the value of such an activity and, consequently, may not be willing to give it the attention that is required to keep it going. It has been reported that less-than-successful dialogue journal projects, those that do not make it into print, have suffered from less of a commitment by the teacher at one end than by the teacher at the other, which causes resentment, frustration, and disappointment among the teachers and the participants. With committed teacher-administrators at both ends, finding enough partners may not be that difficult. Small discrepancies can be addressed by assigning the more motivated writers more than one partner. Larger discrepancies may be addressed creatively in any number of ways by project administrators.

It is the third reason that is perhaps the major challenge, distance and delivery. Here distance refers to both physical distance, and to cultural and adolescent subcultural distance. The secret journals in this project were exchanged between three geographically close public schools in the same ward among students of the same age, of the same basic

English proficiency, and with very similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. My feeling is that perhaps the cultural and school backgrounds in the present project were simply too alike to stimulate as much piquing of interest and stretching of the participants' linguistic capabilities as might be possible under different circumstances, the regular rotation of partners notwithstanding. While the proximity made delivery simple, perhaps the cultural and linguistic distance among the participants was too close.

In many ways, the short informal pilot projects that preceded the present project were superior. The schools were close enough that delivery was not an issue. However, both the school culture and the linguistic ability of the two groups were quite different. The school cultures of the coeducational public school and the girls' private school were disparate enough that a sizeable portion of the written exchanges was spent in mutually exploring the differences in the respective school environments. The linguistic distance between the two schools was also considerable. The participants at the girls' school had many more English classes per week than the public school, which rather than intimidating the public school participants, led the public school participants to use more complex syntactic constructions and a wider range of lexical items than they might have otherwise, had they been paired with students from a very similar school environment and at the same linguistic proficiency level. In part, the result of this school-culture and linguistic distance was that the written exchanges between the participants were clearly more complex and spirited than those found in the present project.

However, another factor was almost certainly at play here as well. The participants in the pilot projects were ninth graders, so they were a bit older and more mature than the participants in the present project. Older interlocutors have more

cognitive and experiential resources upon which to establish and maintain communicative relationships. These resources may allow the older interlocutors to transcend the limitations of a particular culture or subculture.

As I have speculated, the participants in the present project were a bit too close, both culturally and linguistically. However, much more distance, as between participants in different countries, while having some clear advantages also has drawbacks. The obvious one is delivery. But, there is another very real problem. I observed the penpal letter exchanges between students from the girls' private school mentioned herein and the adolescents from Canadian families with whom the Japanese students were to stay in a homestay program. While the penpal letters were eagerly anticipated and received, interest often fell off quickly after the letters were read. While the linguistic distance did not prevent basic communication, the exchanges suffered because the cultural and adolescent subcultural backgrounds were too distant. The Canadian children knew little to nothing about popular Japanese interests and adolescent icons, and vice versa. The common cultural background upon which the journal participants established their relationships in the present project was much better developed and more predictable, while it was nearly non-existent with the Japanese-Canadian penpals.

In summary, physical distances or large psychological distances in culture or adolescent subculture may conspire to lessen the pedagogical value of a peer-to-peer dialogue journal project, especially among young learners.

One option for altering the project like the one in this study is for the participant schools to be in the same country, but more geographically separated: a little more might be sufficient, widely separated schools might be even better. While the cultural

backgrounds and the adolescent subcultures of the students would be similar, the school backgrounds of public schools in, for example, Tokyo and Niigata, might be different enough that they would foster greater interest and a broader range of language usage. Again, however, delivery could be a problem, although mail and delivery service prices are reasonable and could be budgeted for. Another potential detractor could be the psychological power relationships between city children and country children, but that is beyond the immediate challenge.

This brings us back to schools that are geographically close, and how the project might be altered to improve it, recognizing that it will never be perfect. One suggestion is relatively simple, and is probably the solution that is the most viable. The present project was between 30 participants at one school, and 15 participants at each of two other schools. That meant that the participants at the 15-participant schools ended up writing to five different partners at exactly the same school, even though ostensibly the participants did not know that. The uniformity of school experience might have diluted interest. The suggestion is that equal numbers at a minimum of four schools be paired. Rotation would give each participant a chance to communicate with participants from three other schools. Furthermore, if the four schools could be more geographically distant, perhaps in different wards, they might be more culturally distant enough, in terms of both school- and adolescent-subculture, that interest would be preserved at a higher overall level.

Another idea that could liven up the exchanges is to have a round-robin journal with more than two partners contributing to the journal. Properly administered, it might be a workable alternative to the two-partner option, which can suffer from decreasing

interest and linguistic risk-taking, especially when one of the partners is linguistically weak, unmotivated, or both.

Other factors might be manipulated to various degrees to suit the participants and the goals of the activity. Administrators could extend the length of time that partners are paired or pair partners that are of slightly different ages, for example junior high school students with elementary students as in a project I am now co-administering. Teachers could require the participants to make an effort to correct their partners' errors, either overtly or by modeling the correct forms. Page or word limits are an option, as is some degree of specificity as to subject matter. Teachers could allow the participants in-class time to work on their journal entries, with assistance provided on request. Teachers might scan the journals periodically to see if there are any frequently occurring common errors; they then could choose to teach to those errors without making the violation of confidentiality apparent.

If I were to do another project on a scale similar to the one in this study, I would try to find four schools among which to rotate partners. I would require all the students in a particular class to participate. I would lengthen the number of entries per participant to, perhaps, eight. In the middle-school environment, I would extend the project well into the ninth grade. I would give the participants some class time during which to write their entries and solicit help from the teacher. Also, I would use higher quality, bound notebooks so as to increase the perception of value by the participants.

As is apparent, the form that the activity ultimately takes is very much a factor of the imagination of the administrators. Likewise, its success is very much a factor of the degree of commitment by those administrators. Properly administered, the students

themselves will provide the inertia. Whatever the form adopted in a given project, the paramount advantage is that the journal provides opportunities for detailed and repeated self-introductions, a critical basic skill in learning a second language. This goal ought to remain uppermost in the mind of any potential project administrator.

CONCLUSIONS

There were five basic sections in the *Discussion* chapter: (a) a trend analysis of selected linguistic measures and errors over the five terms of the project, (b) a comparison of the performance by journal participants and journal non-participants on selected linguistic measures of a free-writing quiz, (c) a comparison of the performance by journal participants and journal non-participants on two linguistic measures of a free-speaking quiz, (d) the participants' responses to the end-of-term surveys, and (e) the potential pitfalls of administering a project similar to this one.

The conclusions in the *Trend Analysis* section were that the trends in the linguistic measures and errors over the five terms were inconclusive and probably more a result of fluctuations in the enthusiasm of the participants for the project, for their partners, and constraints on their time. Bona fide linguistic development probably occurred, but its nature and extent are still unknown. However, the results were such that further study is warranted.

The free-writing quiz saw the journal participants outperforming the journal non-participants significantly on all three linguistic measures. However, this result suffered from initial unavoidable project limitations that precluded random selection of the journal participants.

The free-speaking quiz indicated statistical significance between journal participants and journal non-participants on the measure of total words (fluency).

The survey results showed that a comfortable majority of the participants enjoyed taking part in the secret journal project, and felt that the journals themselves and their

partners combined to contribute to improvements, of various degrees, in their second language skills.

The initial worries that I had about the behavior of the participants turned out to be unfounded. They proved to be a well-behaved and well-adjusted group of young people.

I have several holistic impressions of this secret journal project that bear summarizing. Self-introductions and the rudimentary exchange of personal tastes are among the skills that are most often taught to the beginning second language learner. The secret journal activity allowed learners the opportunity to develop those skills, and with the changes in partners, allowed them repeated opportunities to do so. Furthermore, it allowed the learners to do so in a low-anxiety and confidential atmosphere that has, inherent in its design, an aura of mystery. Any activity that provides opportunities for repeating the self-introduction process in any kind of realistic or quasi-realistic environment is useful.

Statistical vagaries aside, journal participants did outperform the non-participants significantly on both the writing and speaking tests. The secret journal writing activity contributed to significant differences in not one but two different macroskills, and thus must be regarded as an important pedagogical tool.

It should be remembered that most of the learners in this study had had little experience with English prior to middle school. During the secret journal project, they received little or no help from their teachers with their journal entries, and despite that fact, there were virtually no communication breakdowns between the 150 sets of eventual partners who collectively generated 14,000 utterances over a year-and-a-half. On the

contrary, the exchanges were overwhelmingly comprehensible, informative, friendly, positive, occasionally spirited, and often heartwarming. To the potential skeptic who might doubt the ability of low-proficiency, adolescent foreign language learners to carry on protracted communications without teacher intervention, there are 150 journals that refute that view. The 60 middle-school learners themselves provided the inertia to carry the activity forward with a minimal expenditure of time and effort by the administering teachers. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the cost-benefit ratio of such a motivating and interest-generating activity must be very low compared to other pedagogical activities at this level, a fact that curriculum designers can hardly overlook.

Finally, beyond providing a vehicle for language learning, the secret journal activity has the potential for meeting other needs of the adolescent, specifically, socialization and the development of social skills, again in a low-anxiety, confidential, and non-judgmental atmosphere. I myself was an awkward adolescent in junior high, with poorly developed social skills, low self-confidence, and a bad haircut! One might argue that some things never change. However, I believe that at that time I might well have welcomed a chance to participate in an activity like the secret friend dialogue journal, which is a medium that encourages the development of both language and social skills.

It is my hope that some time in the near future a truly random sample of students can participate in a similar study, complete with pre- and post-testing, in order to determine what we may already suspect: that the secret journal activity is not only motivating, self-propelling, relevant to the participants, and easy to administer by the teachers, but that participation results in increased linguistic proficiencies, not only in

writing, but perhaps in other macroskills as well. If eventual research demonstrates conclusively that this is so, the secret journal would prove to be a powerful second language pedagogical tool.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT PROJECT DIARY WRITING SAMPLE

This is a scanned sample of 10 days of diary entries written by one of the students as part of the curriculum at one of the schools that participated in the pilot projects.

Pilot Project Diary Writing Sample

Wednesday, December 16
 It was a sunny day. I went to movie theater with my mother. I bought comic, I watched TV. I did winter homework. I was tired. I went to the park with my dog.

Thursday, December 17
 It was a sunny day. I read some comic. I listened to some music on M.P. I did winter homework. I watched TV. I went to the library.

Friday, December 18
 It was a sunny day. I spoke to my friends by telephone. I did clean my room. I read book. I listened to some music. I did winter homework. I was tired.

Saturday, December 19
 It was a sunny day. I made pan cakes. I read some comic. I listened to some music. I did winter homework. I watched video.

Sunday, December 20
 It was a sunny day. I went to the my grandfathers house. We made Mushi. Mushi are very delicious. I like it. I ate some Mushi.

Friday, December 21
 It was a sunny day. Today was winter holiday. I listened to some music. I read some books and comic. I studied English. I went to Kihyoji with my friends. I was happy.

Saturday, December 22
 It was a sunny day. I studied winter homework. I was tired. I wrote New year cards for my friends, teachers. I was very tired. I bought postal cards.

Sunday, December 23
 It was a sunny day. I wrote New year cards for my friends, teachers, cousin. I bought postal cards. I was tired. I listened to some music.

Monday, December 24
 It was a sunny day. I read some comic. I listened to some music. I bought some comic. I was happy. I did winter homework.

Tuesday, December 25
 It was a sunny day and cold. I listened to some music on M.P. I went to the Kihyoji with my friends. I spoke to my friends by telephone.

APPENDIX B
ILLUSTRATIONS

These are black and white scans of one entry each by two partners in Term 1. They are outstanding examples of illustrations found in many of the journal entries. The actual colored entries are even more impressive.

No. _____
Date 2003 / 1 / 29

Dear Steepy ~

about:

- I play the Sax
- I like movies, too. But I sometimes go to the movies

Questions:

- Which do you like comic books?
- What pen are you using in the drawing?

I like [BLACKCAT] ♡. (by woody jump)
It's very very interesting



「Black CAT」 character
Her name is 「Eve」
It's very "cute"!



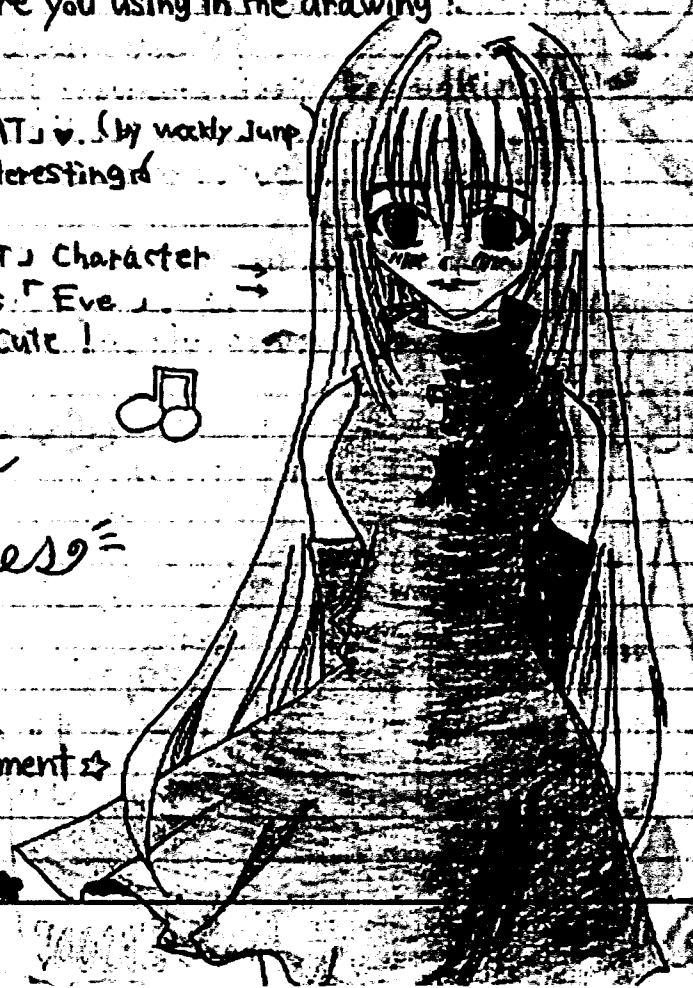
See you at

next time ~



I'll wait for your comment ~

From Kiba ~



2003 . . . 9 . 5

Dear KINO

The Sax is Cool!!!

The Sax!?! I really envy you!

I wanted to do it. But, a teacher decided selfish that my part was trombone!



She is flying



Answers

- * I like 'Fruit basket'. And. a monthly 'Ribon' etc.
- * I using three pens. (Merupen, Gpen, Meripen.)

Question

* What will you give presents in ST. Valentine's day?

P.S.

- o I know the 'Black cat'.
- o You forget to write the date!

Bye

from SNOOPY

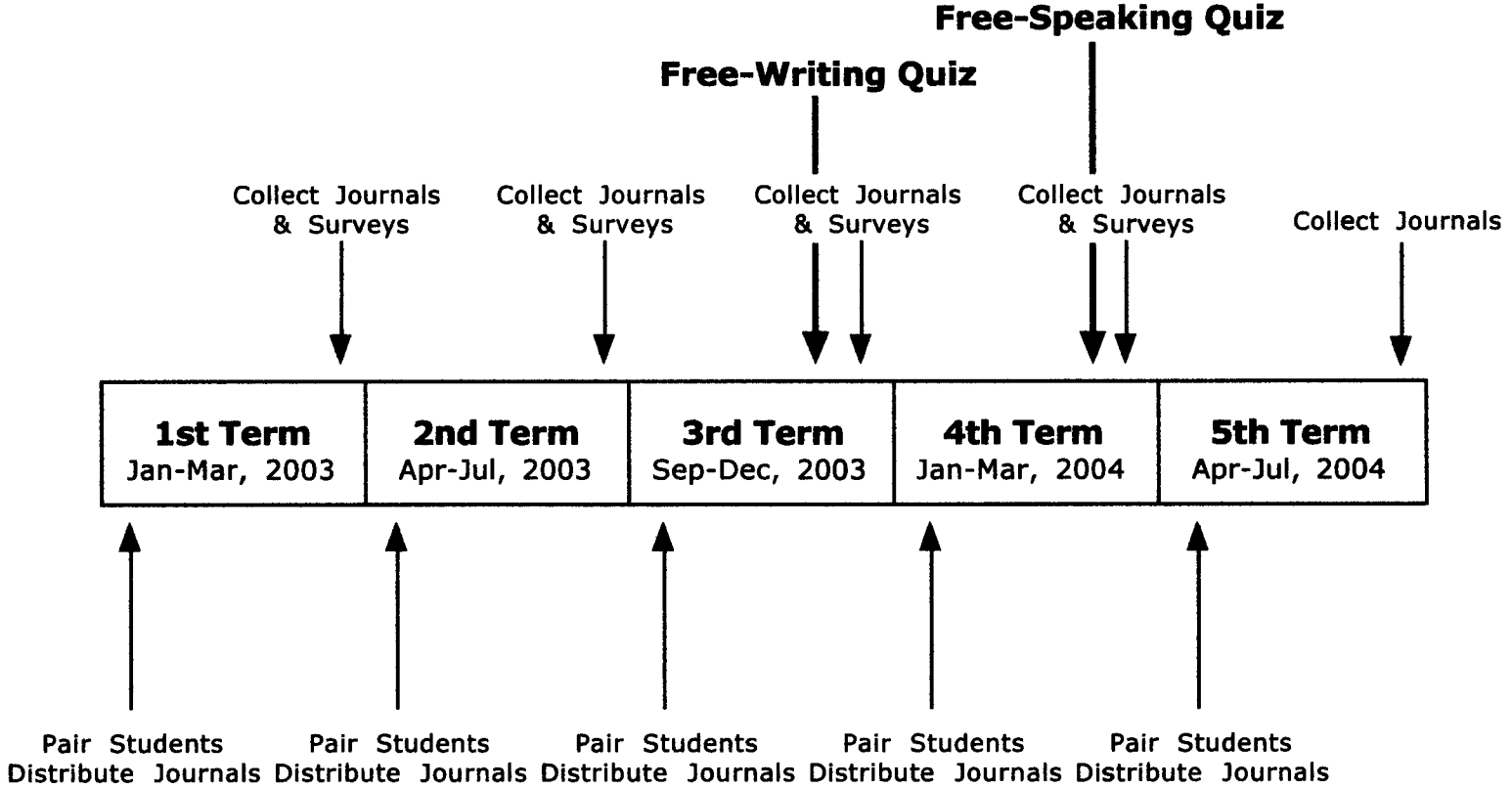


APPENDIX C
PROJECT DESIGN

This is an illustration of the project schedule.

Secret Journal Project Design

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APPENDIX D
JOURNAL ENCLOSURE

This is an example of the enclosures glued into each journal every term. It includes the schedule, the rules, and instructions for returning a lost journal.

Secret Friend Journal Rules

NO'S:

- No names (nicknames OK)!
- No school names!
- No Japanese (no *katakana*, no *hiragana*)!
- Do not lose this journal!

YES'S:

- Write the date.
- Answer your friend's questions.
- Be on time; remember, your friend is waiting for your message!

Write about whatever you want, including:

- about your family: sisters & brothers, mother and father, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, friends (no names)
 - hobbies, interests, favorite sports-books-magazines-manga-TV programs-movies-actors & actresses-places in Japan or in the world-what you want to do (job)-etc.
 - what you did last weekend, what you are going to do next weekend, what you did over the holidays, what you are going to do over the holidays, etc.
-

The Schedule (Please don't be late!)

Schools D & E

May 2

May 16

May 30

June 13

June 27

July 11

School F

May 9

May 23

June 6

June 20

July 4

July 18

このノートを見つけた方は下記にお知らせ下さい。

〒176-0003

東京都練馬区羽沢 2-1 2-1 1

ステーブ ・ コノリー

Telephone: (03)5999-5997; e-mail: connolly@inter.net

Most Important.....Have Fun!!!!!!!

APPENDIX E

SCANNED JOURNAL ENTRIES, TRANSCRIPTIONS, AND ANALYSES

This is a complete set of the Term 3 entries in journal HJ26 for one pair of partners: ID21F and ID52M. This set was chosen semi-randomly; they were chosen to be representative of the length of entries of most of the participants. Also included is the combined transcription, and separate CLAN analyses for each of the partners.

Entry 1, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No.

Date

September 16

Tuesday

Dear sister friend

Hello! I'm a school boy, of Junior high school.

I play soccer. What sports do you play?

I'm genius. Are you a genius?

I like English and math.

What subject do you like?

See you!

No.

Date

Dear school boy !!

Hello !! My nickname is Pooh.

I'm girl. How are you?

I play badminton. Are you nice player?

I'm so-so.

I'm don't genius ... ?

I like music and homemaking.

See you next time ... ☆

Entry 2, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No.

Date

Dear secret friend

Hello! I answer your question.

I'm not fine. I'm not nice player.

Do you like soccer? I like soccer very much.

I don't play badminton.

see you again

No.

Date

Sunday, October 5

Dear school boy

Hello ☆ How are you?

I don't like soccer...

But I like to watch baseball.

Do you like baseball?

I like singer Aya Ueto and Kinki Kids.

Do you like singer?

See you next time...

Entry 3, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No.

Friday October 10

Date

Dear secret friend

Hello! I'm fine. How about you?

Yes, I like baseball.

I like kinki kids, too!

But I don't like Koichi.

Are you happy? I'm not happy.

See you again!

No.

Date

Monday, October 20

Dear school boy

Hello. How are you? I'm fine.

I don't like Koichi...

I like Tsuyoshi

Do you like any books?

I like book.

See you next time.

Entry 4, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No.

Monday, October 27

Dear sister friend

Hello!! I'm fine, too.

I like books. I usually read many books.

I'm going to Ibaraki.

What are you going to visit?

See you 

No.

Date

Sunday, November 2

Dear school boy

Hello. How are you? I'm fine.

I'm going to Ikebukuro.

What color do you like?

I like black and orange and pink.

Why do you go to Ibaraki?

See you next time.

Entry 5, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No. _____

Tuesday, November 11

Dear secret friend

Hello! I'm fine, too.

I like orange, too

I answer your question.

I meet my uncle. so I'm going to Ibaraki.

see you again!

No. _____

Date _____

Dear school boy

Hello!! How are you? I'm fine.

Do you like playing volleyball?

I like playing volleyball.

Do you like watching volleyball?

I like watching volleyball.

See you next time ...

Entry 6, Term 3, ID52M & ID21F

No.

Date

Dear secret friend

Hello! I'm fine, too.

Yes, I like playing volley ball.

but, I don't like watching volley ball because I'm boring it.

Do you have a computer? I have a computer and it's surf the internet.

see you again!!

No.

Date

Dear school boy

Hello!! How are you? I'm fine.

Yes, I have a computer.

But I can't mail.

What kind of food do you like?

I like sushi and fruits.

See you next time ...

Transcriptions

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: D52 Child, D21 Child
@Age of D52: 14;
@Age of D21: 14;
@Sex of D52: male
@Sex of D21: female
@Date: 16-SEP-2003
*D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
%err: \$SPL
*D52: hello.
*D52: I'm a school boy of junior high school.
%com: gender identification
*D52: I play soccer.
*D52: what sports do you play?
*D52: I'm genius.
*D52: are you a genius?
*D52: I like English and math.
*D52: what subject do you like?
*D52: see you.
@Date: 24-SEP-2003
*D21: dear School+Boy.
*D21: hello.
*D21: my nickname is Pooh.
*D21: I'm girl.
%com: gender identification
*D21: how are you?
*D21: I play badminton.
*D21: are you nice player?
*D21: I'm so+so.
*D21: I'm don't genius.
*D21: I like music and homemaking.
*D21: see you next time.
@Date: 30-SEP-2003
*D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
%err: \$SPL
*D52: hello.
*D52: I answer your question.
*D52: I'm not fine.
*D52: I'm not nice player.
*D52: do you like soccer?
*D52: I like soccer very much.

*D52: I don't play badminton.
 *D52: see you again.
 @Date: 07-OCT-2003
 *D21: dear School+Boy.
 *D21: hello.
 *D21: how are you?
 *D21: I don't like soccer.
 %com: rejection of potential common interest
 *D21: but I like to watch baseball.
 *D21: do you like beseball [: baseball]?
 %err: \$SPL
 *D21: I like singer Aya+Veto and Kinki+Kids.
 *D21: do you like singer?
 *D21: see you next time.
 @Date: 14-OCT-2003
 *D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: hello.
 *D52: I'm fine.
 *D52: how about you?
 *D52: yes, I like baseball.
 *D52: I like Kinki+Kids, too.
 *D52: bat [: but] I don't like Koichi.
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: aar [: are] you happy?
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: I'm not happy.
 *D52: see you again.
 @Date: 21-OCT-2003
 *D21: dear School+Boy.
 *D21: hello.
 *D21: how are you?
 *D21: I'm fine.
 *D21: I don't like Koichi.
 *D21: I like Tsuyoshi.
 *D21: do you like any books?
 *D21: I like book.
 *D21: see you next time.
 @Date: 28-OCT-2003
 *D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: hello.
 *D52: I'm fine, too.
 *D52: I like books.
 *D52: I usually read many books.

*D52: I'm going to Ibaraki.
 *D52: what are you going to visit [: visit].
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: see you.
 @Date: 04-NOV-2003
 *D21: dear School+Boy.
 *D21: hello.
 *D21: how are you?
 *D21: I'm fine.
 *D21: I'm going to Ikebukuro.
 *D21: what color do you like?
 *D21: I like black and orange and pink.
 *D21: why do you go to Ibaraki?
 *D21: see you next time.
 @Date: 11-NOV-2003
 *D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: hello.
 *D52: I'm fine, too.
 *D52: I like orange, too.
 *D52: I answer your question.
 *D52: I meet my uncle, so I'm going to Ibaraki.
 *D52: see you again.
 @Date: 18-NOV-2003
 *D21: dear School+Boy.
 *D21: hello.
 *D21: how are you?
 *D21: I'm fine.
 *D21: do you like playing volleyball?
 *D21: I like playing volleyball.
 *D21: do you like watching volleyball?
 *D21: I like watching volleyball.
 *D21: see you next time.
 @Date: 25-NOV-2003
 *D52: dear sicut [: secret] friend.
 %err: \$SPL
 *D52: hello.
 *D52: I'm fine, too.
 *D52: yes, I like playing volleyball.
 *D52: but, I don't like watching volleyball because I'm boring it.
 %com: rejection of potential common interest
 *D52: do you have a computer?
 *D52: I have a computer and it's surf the Internet.
 *D52: see you again.
 @Date: 02-DEC-2003

*D21: dear Shool+Boy [: School+Boy].
%err: \$SPL
*D21: hello.
*D21: how are you?
*D21: I'm fine.
*D21: yes, I have a computer.
*D21: but I can't mail.
*D21: what kaid [: kind] of food do you like?
%err: \$SPL
*D21: I like sushi and fruits.
*D21: see you next time.
@End

Analyses

> **freq +t*D52 +k @**

freq +t*D52 +k @

Sat Nov 26 17:52:41 2005

freq (15-Dec-2004) is conducting analyses on:

ONLY speaker main tiers matching: *D52;

From file <Macintosh HD:Users:connolly:Temple-Related:Secret

Journal:Transcriptions:3rd

Term-Transcriptions:HJ26-ID52&21.cha>

1 English

16 I

12 I'm

2 Ibaraki

1 Internet

1 Kinki+Kids

1 Koichi

4 a

1 about

4 again

2 and

2 answer

3 are

1 badminton

1 baseball

1 because

2 books

1 boring

1 boy

2 but

2 computer

6 dear

4 do

3 don't

5 fine

6 friend

2 genius

3 going

2 happy

2 have

6 hello

1 high

1 how

1 it
1 it's
1 junior
11 like
1 many
1 math
1 meet
1 much
1 my
1 nice
3 not
1 of
1 orange
3 play
1 player
1 playing
2 question
1 read
2 school
6 secret
6 see
1 so
3 soccer
1 sports
1 subject
1 surf
1 the
3 to
5 too
1 uncle
1 usually
1 very
1 visit
2 volleyball
1 watching
3 what
2 yes
14 you
2 your

72 Total number of different word types used
193 Total number of words (tokens)
0.373 Type/Token ratio

> freq +t*D21 +k @

freq +t*D21 +k @

Sat Nov 26 17:55:01 2005

freq (15-Dec-2004) is conducting analyses on:

ONLY speaker main tiers matching: *D21;

From file <Macintosh HD:Users:connolly:Temple-Related:Secret
Journal:Transcriptions:3rd

Term-Transcriptions:HJ26-ID52&21.cha>

1 Aya+Veto

14 I

8 I'm

1 Ibaraki

1 Ikebukuro

1 Kinki+Kids

1 Koichi

1 Pooh

6 School+Boy

1 Tsuyoshi

1 a

5 and

1 any

7 are

1 badminton

2 baseball

1 black

1 book

1 books

2 but

1 can't

1 color

1 computer

6 dear

8 do

3 don't

4 fine

1 food

1 fruits

1 genius

1 girl

1 go

1 going

1 have

6 hello

1 homemaking

6 how
1 is
1 kind
18 like
1 mail
1 music
1 my
6 next
1 nice
1 nickname
1 of
1 orange
1 pink
1 play
1 player
2 playing
6 see
2 singer
1 so+so
1 soccer
1 sushi
6 time
3 to
4 volleyball
1 watch
2 watching
2 what
1 why
1 yes
21 you

66 Total number of different word types used
191 Total number of words (tokens)
0.346 Type/Token ratio

> mlu @

mlu @

Mon Sep 19 07:34:28 2005

mlu (15-Dec-2004) is conducting analyses on:

ALL speaker tiers

From file <Macintosh HD:Users:connolly:Temple-Related:Secret

Journal:Transcriptions:3rd

Term-Transcriptions:HJ26-ID52&21.cha>

MLU for Speaker: *D21:

MLU (xxx and yyy are EXCLUDED from the utterance and morpheme counts):

Number of: utterances = 56, morphemes = 191

Ratio of morphemes over utterances = 3.411

Standard deviation = 1.521

MLU for Speaker: *D52:

MLU (xxx and yyy are EXCLUDED from the utterance and morpheme counts):

Number of: utterances = 52, morphemes = 193

Ratio of morphemes over utterances = 3.712

Standard deviation = 1.955

APPENDIX F
TRANSCRIPTION RUBRICS

Included are the transcription conventions for the journals themselves, the free-writing quiz, and the free-speaking quiz.

JOURNAL TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

- Multi-word proper nouns are counted as one word by joining the words with + e.g., Harry+Potter
- *Thank you, so so, good bye* are counted as one word by joining the words with + (e.g., *thank+you*), they are not tagged as a space errors (\$SPC); misspellings (e.g., *good by*) are joined and tagged as spelling errors
- According to CHAT convention, only proper nouns, months, days of the week, and *I* (and derivatives, e.g., *I'm, I'll*) are capitalized; the first letter of the first word of an utterance is not capitalized
- Japanese words commonly used in the west (e.g., *sushi, ramen*) are transcribed as such; misspellings of those words (e.g. *susi*), according to western standards are tagged as spelling errors
- Japanese words generally unknown in the west are replaced with the CHAT convention xx; that is, they are counted as separate words, but as one word type
- Numerals (e.g., *14, 14th*) and symbols substituted for words (e.g., *&* for *and*) are entered into CHAT as xx
- Unrecognizable words are entered into CHAT as xx
- Where a space is omitted (e.g., *comicbooks*), the words are separated with the CHAT convention + (e.g., *comic+books*), counted as one word and tagged as a space error (\$SPC); the same system applies to adding a space (e.g., *basket ball*), the words are joined with the CHAT convention + (e.g., *basket+ball*) counted as one word and tagged as a space error (\$SPC)
- Dates are not entered
- Short labels accompanying drawings are not entered, if not in English

FREE-WRITING QUIZ TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Transcription Conventions

- Punctuation and capitalization ignored (except as required by CHAT)
- Numerals (e.g., 2) omitted
- Numerals used in times (e.g., 7:30) omitted
- Symbols (e.g., &) omitted, as are letters used in substitutions (*a* and *b* as used in “My friend is a and b.”)
- Two-word proper nouns (names, titles, well-known personalities, place names, etc.) are counted as one word
- Romanized Japanese words are included, regardless of spelling

Error-Free Conventions

Acceptable:

- Starting a sentence with *And*
- Misspellings of foreign names (personal names, titles, well-known personalities, place names, etc.)
- Misspellings of Japanese words in general use in the west (e.g., *susi* instead of *sushi*)
- Omitted *the* in the case of school clubs (e.g., “I’m in brass band club”)
- Omitted *the* with musical instruments (e.g., “I play horn”)
- Omitted *my* with *family* (e.g., “I like family”)
- Incorrect conjunction (e.g., “I like English, but I don’t like math *and* P. E.”)
- Omitted second article (e.g., “I have a sister and brother”)
- Omitted *any* (e.g., “I don’t have pets”)
- Substitution of *another* for *the other* (e.g., “I have two brothers, one is sixteen and another is twelve”)
- Use of *very* with *fun* (e.g., “It was very fun”)

- Use of present continuous to mean future (e.g., “I’m going to Ikebukuro” instead of “I’m going to go to Ikebukuro”)

Unacceptable:

- Incomplete sentences
- Spelling errors (except for foreign names and Japanese words)
- Omitted plurals (e.g., “I like dog”)
- Starting a sentence with *because*
- Omitted *a* in the case of use with *member* (e.g., “I’m member of brass band club”)
- Omitted *to* in infinitives (e.g., “I don’t like study”)
- Omitted initial article (e.g., “I have sister and brother”)
- “Hello” used as a complete sentence
- Superfluous space (e.g., “volley ball”)
- Omitted space (e.g., “comicbooks”)
- Countable romanized Japanese words, not pluralized (e.g., *onsen*)
- Strings of related nouns or adjectives not separated with final *and* (e.g., “...pudding, melon, strawberry.”)
- Missing nominalization (e.g., “*Study* is very difficult”)
- Omitted referent (e.g., “I like reading the book” with no referent to a particular book)

FREE-SPEAKING QUIZ TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

- Multi-word names (personal, titles, well-known personalities, place names, etc.) are counted as one word
- Japanese words unknown to the transcriber, or not commonly used in English (e.g., *natto*), are entered in to CHAT as xx; they are counted as separate words, but as one word type
- Japanese words commonly used in English (e.g., *sushi*), are entered in to CHAT as spelled in English
- Incomplete words are not recorded
- Repeated complete words are transcribed and counted as separate words (e.g., I...I...I...)

APPENDIX G
JOURNAL TRANSCRIPTION ACCURACY VERIFICATION

Included are scans of 10 actual journal entries, chosen randomly, and their transcriptions which were checked by an independent reader.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal AB14

2007 / 1 / 29

Dear Sleepy ♪ ,

about:

- I play the Sax . ♪
- I like movies, too. But I sometimes go to the movies.

Questions

- Which do you like comic books?
- What pen are you using in the drawing?

I like 「BLACKCAT」 ♡. (by Weekly Jump)
It's very very interesting ♪

♪ 「Black CAT」 Character
Her name is 「Eve」.
It's very "Cute" !

See you at

next time ♪ =

♪ I'll wait for your comment ☆



CHAT Transcription, Journal AB14

@Date: 31-JAN-2003
*D14: dear Snoopy.
*D14: answerswears [: answers].
%err: \$SPL
%com: heading
*D14: I play the sax.
*D14: I like movies, too.
*D14: but I sometimes go to the movies.
*D14: questions.
%com: heading
*D14: which do you like comic books?
%com: tagged syntactic transformation error
*D14: what pen are you using in the drawing?
*D14: I like Black+Cat, by Weekly+Jump.
*D14: it's very very interesting.
*D14: Black+Cat character.
*D14: her name is Eve.
*D14: it's very cute!
*D14: see you at next times.
*D14: I'll wait for your comment.
*D14: from Kino.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal AC27

Yes

Date

Dear Secret friend

January 31st

Friday

Hello!! I like Bob Sapp too!!

I don't like soccer, But INAMOTO very much.

I like

Nice to meet you too.

from a girl

See you again!!



CHAT Transcription, Journal AC27

@Date: 31-JAN-2003

*D22: dear secret friend.

*D22: hello!

*D22: I like Bob+Sapp too!

*D22: I don't like soccer, but I like Inamoto very much.

%com: rejection of potential common interest

*D22: nice to meet you too.

*D22: from a girl.

%com: gender identification

*D22: see you again!

Scanned Entry 3, Journal EF27

May
Dear Mina

Dear Mina.
Hello, Mina, how are you? I'm fine.

I like foods.

I like Yakimaki, too.

Don't you like in foods?

I don't like shiitake mushroom.

What is that page number's name?

I don't know.

Do you play video game?

I play video game.

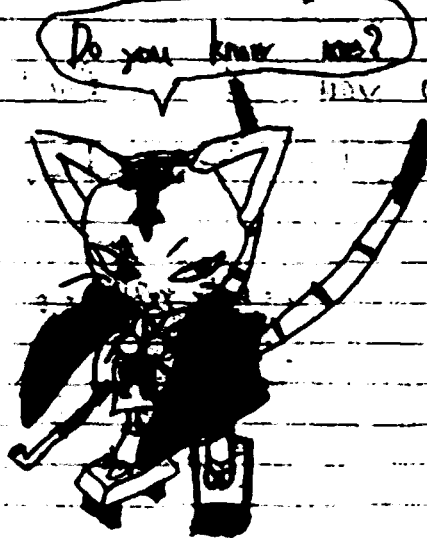
I like video game very much.

Do you like to draw of picture?

I don't like to draw.

Because, I don't draw well.

Goodbye!



CHAT Transcription, Journal EF27

@Date: 16-MAY-2003
*D48: dear Mina.
*D48: hello, Mina, how are you?
*D48: I'm fine.
*D48: I like foods.
*D48: I like xx, too.
%com: Japanese word, yakiniku, grilled meat
*D48: don't you like in foods?
*D48: I don't like xx mushroom.
%com: Japanese word, shiitake, kind of mushroom
*D48: what is last page xx name?
%com: unknown word, sonstar's, maybe monster's referring to drawing
*D48: I don't know.
*D48: do you play video game?
*D48: I play video game.
*D48: I like video game very much.
*D48: do you like to draw of picture?
*D48: I don't like to draw.
*D48: becose [: because], I don't draw well.
%err: \$SPL
*D48: goodbye!
*D48: do you know me?
%com: cartoon balloon to drawing

Scanned Entry 3, Journal GJ05

No. _____

Date September 29 Monday

Hello !! Tara !! How are you ? I'm fine!

I like Soame Street, too. My favorite character is
elmo & Zoy (!) ! very cute!

My favorite subject is English & Japanese . and you ?

See you next ! Your picture is very nice !!



CHAT Transcription, Journal GJ05

@Date: 30-SEP-2003

*D37: hello, Tara.

*D37: how are you?

*D37: I'm fine.

*D37: I like Sesame+Street, too.

*D37: my favorite character is Elmo xx Zoy.

%com: symbol substitution ("&" symbol for "and")

*D37: very cute.

*D37: my favorite subject is English xx Japanese.

%com: symbol substitution ("&" symbol for "and")

*D37: and you?

*D37: see you next.

*D37: your picture is very nice.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal GJ14

No _____
Date _____

Hello, money.

I am in soft tennis club.

I was play tennis yesterday.

Do you like tennis?

I went to TDS yesterday.

I had a good time.

See you.

CHAT Transcription, Journal GJ14

@Date: 30-SEP-2003

*D39: hello, Money.

*D39: I am in soft tennis club.

*D39: I was play tennis yesterday.

*D39: do you like tennis?

*D39: I went to T+D+S yesterday.

*D39: I had a good time.

*D39: see you.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal HJ21

No
Date

Dear → Tom **

Hello !! I play the guitar. Do you play the guitar?

Yes, I do. (Do you play sports?)

I like light blue. What do you like color?

Do you like tennis?

My favorite subject is English and music.

Do you like English and music?

I like to read book. Do you like book?

See you!

From Em.

CHAT Transcription, Journal HJ21

@Date: 30-SEP-2003
*D50: dear Tom.
*D50: hello.
*D50: I play the guitar.
*D50: do you play the guitar?
*D50: do you play sports?
%com: echoed question
*D50: yes, I do.
*D50: I like light blue.
*D50: what do you like color?
%com: tagged syntactic transformation error
*D50: do you like tennis.
*D50: my favorite subject is English and music.
*D50: do you like English and music?
*D50: I like to read book.
*D50: do you like book?
*D50: see you.
*D50: from Emi.

Hello ! .

A1 My favorite color is Pink .
A2 I like udon too !

Q1 I play tennis after school .
What do you do after school ?
Q2 I have two brothers .
Do you have any brothers ?

-talk -
A . Because .
I want to New York 10 years ago .

 Good by ! .

CHAT Transcription, Journal KM11

@Date: 27-JAN-2004
*D05: hello!
*D05: my favorite color is pink.
*D05: I like xx too!
%com: Japanese word (generally unknown to NS), udon
*D05: I play tennis after school.
*D05: what do you do after school?
*D05: I have two brothers.
*D05: do you have any brothers?
*D05: talk.
*D05: because, I want [: went] to New+York xx years ago.
%err: \$SPL
%com: number, 10
*D05: good+bay [: goodbye]!
%err: \$SPL

Scanned Entry 3, Journal LM29

1 26

Nice to meet you

I like tennis very much. (What do you like sports)

Yes, I do. I like comic books. (Do you like books)

My favorite subject is English. It's very interesting

Yes, I do. I like dog. (Do you like animals)

Do you like dog?

Yes I do. I like movie. (Do you often watch TV)

No I don't. (Do you like picture)

I like susi very much.

Do you like susi?

From Tom

see you

CHAT Transcription, Journal LM29

@Date: 27-JAN-2004

*D04: nice to meet you.

*D04: I like tennis very mutch [: much].

%err: \$SPL

*D04: what do you like sports.

%com: tagged syntactic transformation error: many echoed questions and errors

*D04: yes, I do.

*D04: I like comic books.

*D04: do you like book.

*D04: my favorite subject is English.

*D04: it's very interesting.

*D04: yes, I do.

*D04: I like dog.

*D04: do you like animal.

*D04: do you like dog?

*D04: yes, I do.

*D04: I like movie.

*D04: do you often watch tv.

*D04: no I don't.

*D04: do you like picuture [: picture].

%err: \$SPL

*D04: I like sushi very mutch [: much].

%err: \$SPL

%com: echoed error

*D04: do you like sushi?

*D04: see you.

*D04: from Tom.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal LM34

No
Date

Dear, Anri

Hello !!! Thank you for your letter. I like P.E, too.

I play soccer with a classmate. It's very interesting.

I have older brother and older sister.

I want younger brother.

By the way, Do you like movies? I like movies very much. I saw the LAST SAMURAI. It's very

interesting!! What kind of movies do you like?

I like science fiction movies.

What do you like comics? I like Inuyasya and NARUTO. Do you know Inuyasya or NARUTO?

They are very interesting.

I am suddenly became sleepy. I am looking forward to hearing from you. Good night !!

from Kirua

CHAT Transcription, Journal LM34

@Date: 27-JAN-2004
*D25: dear, Anri.
*D25: hello!
*D25: thank+you for your letter.
*D25: I like pe, too.
*D25: I play soccer with a classmate.
*D25: it's very interesting.
*D25: I have older brother and older sister.
*D25: I want younger brother.
*D25: by the way, do you like movies?
*D25: I like movies very much.
*D25: I saw the Last+Samurai.
*D25: it's very interesting!
*D25: what kind of movies do you like?
*D25: I like science fiction movies.
*D25: what do you like comics?
%com: tagged syntactic transformation error
*D25: I like Inuyasha and Naruto.
*D25: they are very interesting.
*D25: I am suddenly became sleepy.
*D25: I am looking forward to hearing from you.
*D25: good night!
*D25: from Kirua.

Scanned Entry 3, Journal PQ24

Date

☆ DEAR ... LISA GREEN ☆

Hello.

"M☆GIC" → ☆ ... A

↳ "MAGIC" ok? ww

My favorit TV is "HANETOBİ"

Do you know "HANETOBİ"?

Shioti is very nice. ◊◊ ww

I like Shioti. (*^o^*)

☆ See you ☆

FROM ... MAGIC.

CHAT Transcription, Journal PQ24

@Date: 01-JUN-2004
*D51: dear Lisa+Green.
*D51: hello.
*D51: Magic xx a.
%com: unknown meaning, drawn star
*D51: Magic, ok?
*D51: my favorit [: favorite] tv is Hanetobi.
%err: \$SPL
*D51: do you know Hanetobi?
*D51: Shiori is very nice.
*D51: I like Shiori.
*D51: see you.
*D51: from Magic.

APPENDIX H
PERMISSION DOCUMENTS

Included are the Japanese translations of the cover letter and the letter of permission submitted to the parents of the participants. Also included is the original English from which the translations came.



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E-mail: connolly@inter.net

保護者の皆様へ

秋冷の候、皆様方におかれましては、益々ご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます。

さて、この度、2003年1月から2004年7月まで、皆様のお子様に関進第三中学校、貫井中学校、豊玉中学校の生徒とともに「シークレット・ジャーナル（秘密の日記）」プロジェクトに参加していただきましたことに、深くお礼申し上げます。お子様の英語力は、「現実味のある」状況の中で書くことで向上するものと感じました。実際、この3校の中学2年生290人全員に行った10分間クイック・ライティング・クイズでは、ジャーナル・プロジェクトに参加した生徒の方が参加しなかった生徒に比べ、英語の正確さ、流暢さ、複雑さの点において、統計的に優れた結果を示しています。

私は現在テンプル大学日本校のドクターコースで研究を続けています。アメリカの大学では、未成年者からデータを取って研究プロジェクトを行い、博士論文などの形で出版する場合には、保護者の方の承諾を得るよう義務づけられています。

今回のプロジェクトに関しまして、参加者の身元は、この研究に基づくいかなる出版物においても分からないようになっていきます。事実、今回のプロジェクトは、「シークレット・ジャーナル（秘密の日記）」でしたので、参加者の身元は、参加者同士にも分からないように

なっていました。また、このプロジェクトのお手伝いをしていただいた3人の先生も他の学校の生徒を知りませんし、またジャーナルも持っていません。さらに、私は開進第三中学校の非常勤講師にすぎませんでしたので、大部分の生徒の顔と名前が一致しませんし、またこのプロジェクトに参加した大部分の生徒のことも知りません。

皆様のお子様の身元がこのプロジェクトに基づく研究論文の読者には分からないようになっていきますので、ご安心いただきたいと思います。承諾書を添付いたしますので、お手数ですが、署名をされた後すみやかにご返送いただければ幸いです。受け取り次第、ご協力いただいたことに対する私の感謝の気持ちとして、お子様に1,000円送らせていただきたいと思います。

皆様方のご理解とお子様のご協力に心よりお礼申し上げます。集めたデータから浮き彫りになりましたのは、皆様方のお子様がこのプロジェクトから多くのことを学び、また多くの生徒が日記を書くことを通して「秘密のパートナー」と話すことが楽しいと繰り返し報告していたことです。

私自身としましては、練馬区で13年に渡り教鞭をとってまいりましたが、皆様方のお子様と一緒にこのプロジェクトに取り組んだことが、これまでの人生の中で最も良い思い出となりました。心から感謝申し上げます。

Steve Connolly

Dear Parent,

As you may know, from January, 2003 through July, 2004, your child participated in a “Secret Journal” project with students from Kaisan Daisan JHS, Nukui JHS, and Toyotama JHS. I felt that the students’ English would improve as a result of writing in a “real” situation. In fact, on a 10-minute quick writing quiz given to all 290 8th-graders in the three schools, the journal project participants significantly outperformed (statistically) the non-participants in measures of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

I am currently working on my doctorate degree at Temple University Japan. American universities require that the parents of any under-aged participants in a research project must give their permission for their data to be used in a study that may be published, for example, in my dissertation.

The real identities of the participants will never be revealed in any publication resulting from this research. In fact, the real identities of the participants were unknown to each other since these were secret journals. Also, the three teachers who helped me in this project do not know the students from the other schools, nor do they have the journals. Furthermore, since I was just a part-time teacher at Kaishin Daisan, I really cannot connect most of the faces of the students with their names, nor do I know most of the students who participated in the project.

You can be totally secure that the identities of your children will never be known to any of the readers of research based on this project. I have attached a permission letter. If signed and returned, the student will receive 1000 yen as a token of my appreciation for participating.

And I thank you, and your children for their participation. Based on what I know about the data collected, your children benefited a lot from their participation, and most of them expressed repeated enjoyment of talking through writing to their secret partners.

My 13 years of teaching junior high school in Nerima Ward was one of my fondest experiences in my life.

スティーヴ・コナリー様

コナリー氏の「シークレット・ジャーナル（秘密の日記）」プロジェクトにおいて、私の
子供から得られたデータを研究に使うことを承諾し、この研究内容が部分的にであれ発表さ
れることを了解します。 また、このジャーナルの中で、ニックネームを含め私の子供の身
元が完全に守られることを理解しています。

平成16年 月 日

お子様のお名前

学校名

中学校

保護者のご署名

印

To Mr. Steve Connolly

I give my permission for any data generated by my child as part of Mr. Connolly's "Secret Journal" project to be used in his research, and I understand that some of this research may be published.

I understand that my child's real identity, including nicknames used in the journals, will be strictly protected.

Date

My child's name _____.

School name _____.

My signature _____.

APPENDIX I
FREE-WRITING QUIZ

Twenty transcriptions were checked against scans of the actual quizzes by an independent reader. Included are six, chosen randomly, of the twenty sets of scans and transcriptions: three by journal participants and three by journal non-participants.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Non-Participant, KD119

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
4. "Stop"の合図ので終えて下さい。
5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。
6. その後は、何について書いても良いです。
例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等。...

My name is Name .
I like spors tennis .
I am play tennis park .
I was play bersc-1 park .

@Date: 27-DEC-2003

*119: my name is Name.

*119: I like spors [: sport] tennis.

*119: I am play tennis park.

*119: I was play bersbool [: baseball] park.

@End

Accuracy Count: 1 correct utterance.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Participant, KD140

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
4. "Stop"の合図で終えて下さい。
5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。
6. その後は、何について書いても良いです。
例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等...

My name is

I want to be nurse.

I like friend, family and many.

I don't like school. Because, I don't like study.

I like "Nakayama kinnikun," and "Hayasiya Ipei,"
and "Kisitani Gorou," and "Musasi,"

@Date: 27-DEC-2003

*140: my name is Name.

*140: I want to be nurse.

*140: I like friend, family and many.

*140: I don't like school.

*140: because, I don't like study.

*140: I like Nakayama+Kinnikun and Hayasiya+Ipei and
Kisitani+Gorou and Musasi.

@End

Accuracy Count: 3 correct utterances.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Non-Participant, KD333

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
4. "Stop"の合図で終えて下さい。
5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。
6. その後は、何について書いても良いです。

例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等...

Hey!!

My name is Name .

I live in Sakuraday.

I play badominton after school.

I like badominton. But I don't like three minits run.

I want to be well badominton playre.

I like school! Because school is fun!

But I don't like study. Study is very difficaunt. I must study so mutch.

@Date: 27-DEC-2003

*333: hey.

*333: my name is Name.

*333: I live in Sakuraday.

*333: I play badominton [: badminton] after school.

*333: I like badominton [: badminton].

*333: but I don't like three minits [: minute] run.

*333: I want to be well badominton [: badminton] playre [: player].

*333: I like school.

*333: because school is fun.

*333: but I don't like study.

*333: study is very difficaunt [: difficult].

*333: I must study so mutch [: much].

@End

Accuracy Count: 3 correct utterances.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Participant, KD340

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
 2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
 3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
 4. "Stop"の合図で換えて下さい。
 5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。
 6. その後は、何について書いても構いません。
- 例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等...

My name is^v
I'm twelve^v years old
I have sister and brother
I'm member of buras band culd
I play the tuda
My hoby is read a books
I like comic^v books
I like peach
I have two^v pets
My sister is^v ninteen
My brother is seven
I like shopping^v
I don't like^v P.E.
I like home make

@Date: 27-DEC-2003

*340: my name is Name.

*340: I'm twelve years old.

*340: I have sister and brother.

*340: I'm member of buras [: brass] band culd [: club].

*340: I play the tuda [: tuba].

*340: my hoby [: hobby] is read a books.

*340: I like comic books.

*340: I like peach.

*340: I have two pets.

*340: my sister is ninteen.

*340: my brother is seven.

*340: I like shopping.

*340: I don't like pe.

*340: I like home+make [: homemaking].

@End

Accuracy Count: 7 correct utterances.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Non-Participant, NB01

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
4. "Stop"の合図で終わって下さい。
5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。
6. その後は、何について書いても良いです。

例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等...

My name is Name .
I'm from Japan.
I'm go to Nukui junea hischool.
I'm 14 years old.
I play tennis everyday because I like play tennis.
I'll tennis player.
I like playing game.
I don't like study. Because study is difficult

@Date: 08-DEC-2003

*B01: my name is Name.

*B01: I'm from Japan.

*B01: I'm go to Nukui junea [: junior] hischool [: high school].

*B01: I'm years old.

*B01: I play tennis every day because I like play tennis.

*B01: I'll tennis player.

*B01: I like playing game.

*B01: I don't like study.

*B01: because study is difficult [: difficult].

@End

Accuracy Count: 3 correct utterances.

Free-Writing Quiz, Journal Participant, NB18

1. これは10分間の記述式のクイズです。
2. 書けるだけ書いて下さい。
3. "Go"の合図で始めて下さい。
4. "Stop"の合図で終わって下さい。
5. まず、自己紹介から書き始めて下さい。 10
6. その後は、何について書いても良いです。
例：家族、友達、学校、クラブ活動、趣味、興味のある事、スポーツ、等...

My name is _____
My hobby is playing baseball.
Playing baseball is very funny for me. But I don't like
watch baseball. I like playing baseball.
I like playing video games. It is very funny, too.
I don't have good eyes. Because I play video games very long time.
My family is four people: I, my father, my mother and
my brother. My brother is younger than I. My brother
plays baseball.

@Date: 08-DEC-2003
*B18: my name is Name.
*B18: my hobby is playing baseball.
*B18: playing baseball is very funny for me.
*B18: but I don't like watch baseball.
*B18: I like playing baseball.
*B18: I like playing video games.
*B18: it is very funny, too.
*B18: I don't have good eyes.
*B18: because I play video games very long time.
*B18: my family is four people.
*B18: I, my father, my mother and my brother.
*B18: my brother is younger than I.
*B18: my brother plays baseball.
@End

Accuracy Count: 10 correct utterances.

APPENDIX J
FREE-SPEAKING QUIZ

Ten randomly chosen transcriptions were checked against the audio recordings of the quizzes by an independent reader. Included are all 10 transcriptions: three by journal participants and seven by journal non-participants.

Free-Speaking Quiz, 10 Randomly-Chosen CHAT Transcriptions

Class 2-1, Student 6 (journal participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 106 Child
@Date: 11-MAR-2004
*106: my name is name.
*106: I'm forty years old.
*106: I like to play tennis and soccer.
*106: I'm member of the tennis club.
*106: I like, I like to, I play soccer with my friend.
*106: it's very interesting.
*106: and I like sing.
*106: I like songs, sing to sing.
*106: I like Glay.
*106: they are very cool.
*106: I like sushi.
*106: and I like, I like to play swim, I, I like to swim.
*106: it's very interesting.
@End

Class 2-1, Student 11 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 111 Child
@Date: 09-MAR-2004
*111: my name is name.
*111: I like eating.
*111: I like food is curry rice, curry xx, omelets on rice, xx and xx.
*111: I play the baritone.
*111: I every day practice.
*111: practice is difficult, but fun.
@End

Class 2-1, Student 18 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 118 Child
@Date: 11-MAR-2004

*118: my name is name.
*118: I'm forty years old.
*118: I am student.
*118: I don't like study, but I like English very much.
*118: I study hard.
*118: my family is father, mother and sister.
*118: father is teacher for junior high school.
*118: mother is teacher, too.
*118: sister is high school student.
*118: I like sports.
*118: I like tennis very much.
*118: I play tennis.
*118: I'm member of the tennis club.
*118: I want to be tennis player.
*118: I like food is ramen, sushi, and curry and rice.
*118: I like, I like miso ramen.
*118: but, I don't like xx ramen.
@End

Class 2-1, Student 40 (journal participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 140 Child
@Date: 09-MAR-2004
*140: my name is name.
*140: I like badminton.
*140: I like Miyazaki+Toru because he is very interesting.
*140: I like Japanese.
*140: I don't like math.
@End

Class 2-2, Student 3 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 203 Child
@Date: 09-MAR-2004
*203: my name is name.
*203: I play table tennis.
*203: I like swimming.
*203: I like skating very, very much.
*203: I play table tennis.

*203: I'm fourteen years.
*203: I like science.
@End

Class 2-2, Student 4 (journal non-participant)

Font: Monaco:14:0

@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 204 Child
@Date: 11-MAR-2004
*204: my name is name.
*204: I like ramen.
*204: I like yaki soba.
*204: I like basketball.
*204: I play basketball.
*204: I play basketball after school.
*204: I want to be basket player and boxing player.
@End

Class 2-2, Student 6 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 206 Child
@Date: 09-MAR-2004
*206: my name is name.
*206: I like, I like beef.
*206: I play baseball every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
*206: I have one brother.
@End

Class 2-2, Student 18 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 218 Child
@Date: 04-MAR-2004
*218: my name is name.
*218: I'm fourteen.
*218: I like, I like baseball.
*218: I like to play baseball very much.
*218: my family is good family.
*218: my favorite, my favorite subject is pe.
*218: it's very interesting.
*218: I, my, I don't like, I don't like Japanese.

*218: it's hard.
*218: my favorite movie is Lord+Of+The+Rings.
*218: it's very exciting movie.
*218: I like study because it's interesting.
*218: I like soccer and I like.
@End

Class 2-2, Student 31 (journal participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 231 Child
@Date: 11-MAR-2004
*231: my name is name.
*231: I'm fourteen years, fourteen years old.
*231: I like school because my talking with my friends.
*231: I like basketball.
*231: and I like season is winter the best of all season.
*231: I, I went to go ski.
*231: I usually go to ski.
@End

Class 2-3, Student 19 (journal non-participant)

@Font: Monaco:14:0
@Begin
@Languages: en
@Participants: 319 Child
@Date: 09-MAR-2004
*319: my name is name.
*319: I from Korea.
*319: I'm live in Japan.
*319: I like soccer.
*319: my favorite movie.
*319: I love is Japan.
@End

APPENDIX K
SURVEYS

Included are copies of the actual surveys, in Japanese, and the English from which they were translated. These informal surveys were administered at the end of Terms 1-4.

極秘

(一つの__に✓を付けてください)

1. 私の名前は_____ (この質問は極秘です。)
2. 私は _____ 男の子 _____ 女の子。
3. あなたは、ジャーナルが好きですか？
_____ 大好き _____ 好き _____ 普通 _____ 嫌い _____ 大嫌い
4. あなたは、journalが writing に、役に立っていると思いますか？
_____ とても _____ 少し _____ いいえ _____ わからない
5. あなたは、journalが reading に、役に立っていると思いますか？
_____ とても _____ 少し _____ いいえ _____ わからない
6. あなたは、journalが listening に、役に立っていると思いますか？
_____ とても _____ 少し _____ いいえ _____ わからない
7. あなたは、journalが speaking に、役に立っていると思いますか？
_____ とても _____ 少し _____ いいえ _____ わからない
8. あなたは前回の相手に、書くのが好きでしたか？
_____ とても _____ はい _____ 普通 _____ いいえ
9. あなたは、journalを書くのに、どの位時間や努力が必要でしたか？
_____ とても _____ 少し _____ あまり
10. あなたは、journalの相手に、直接会いたいですか？
_____ はい _____ いいえ
11. 私は _____ 男の子 _____ 女の子 _____ に書きたい。
12. 日本語でjournalについて何かあれば書いてください。

極秘

1. 私の名前は_____

(この質問は極秘です)。

2. あなたは前回の相手に、書くのが好きでしたか？

___とても ___はい ___普通 ___いいえ

3. どうしてシークレットジャーナルの企画に参加しましたか？
(最も重要な一つに✓を付けて下さい。)

___ 英語を上達したから。

___ 新しい友達を作りたいから。

___ 謎めいた事が好きだから。

___ 先生にたのまれたから。

その他、(下に書いてください。)

Top Secret Questions (2nd-Term Translation)

1. My name is _____.
(This questionnaire is top secret!).
2. Did you like writing to your last partner?
a lot yes so-so no
3. Why did you volunteer for the secret journal project?
(Check the 1 most important.)

I want to improve my English.

I want to make new friends.

I like mysteries.

A teacher asked me to.

Other, please write:

極秘

1. 私の名前は_____。
(この質問は極秘です).
2. あなたは前回の相手に、書くのが好きでしたか？
___とても ___はい ___普通 ___いいえ
3. ジャーナルを書くのに、何分位かかりますか？
___0-10分 ___10-20分 ___20-30分 ___30-60分 ___60分以上
4. 今までに外国に住んだ事がありますか？
___はい ___いいえ
もし、住んだ事があつたら、どこに住んでいましたか？

どの位、そこに住んでいましたか？

5. ジャーナルの相手から英語について、なにか教えられた事、学んだ事？
___たくさん ___数回 ___全くない
6. あなたは、ジャーナルが好きですか？
___大好き ___好き ___普通 ___嫌い ___大嫌い

極秘

1. 私の名前は_____。
(この質問は極秘です)。
2. あなたは前回の相手に、書くのが好きでしたか？
___とても ___はい ___普通 ___いいえ
3. あなたは、journalが writing に、役に立っていると思いますか？
___とても ___少し ___いいえ ___わからない
4. あなたは、journalが reading に、役に立っていると思いますか？
___とても ___少し ___いいえ ___わからない
5. あなたは、journalが listening に、役に立っていると思いますか？
___とても ___少し ___いいえ ___わからない
6. あなたは、journalが speaking に、役に立っていると思いますか？
___とても ___少し ___いいえ ___わからない

Top Secret Questions (4th-Term Translation)

1. My name is _____.
(This questionnaire is top secret!).

2. Did you like writing to your last partner?
a lot yes so-so no

3. Do you think the journals helped your **writing**?
a lot a little no I don't know

4. Do you think the journals helped your **reading**?
a lot a little no I don't know

5. Do you think the journals helped your **listening**?
a lot a little no I don't know

6. Do you think the journals helped your **speaking**?
a lot a little no I don't know

APPENDIX L
PARTNERS ID25M AND ID55F

Included are scans of the first entry in Term 1 by each of the partners, ID25M and ID55F. They were outliers in terms of total words and total word types produced in Term 1. They seemed to have an excellent relationship throughout the term.

Term 1, Entry 1, ID25M

No.

Date

January 16th

Dear Secret Friend,

My name is K. I'm very glad to write to you as a pen friend. Let me introduce myself.

I like tennis. I am a member of the Tennis Club. I play tennis after school on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some times on Saturdays and Sundays.

There are seven in my family. My parents, one sister and one brother. My grandfather and grandmother live with us, too.

How many are there in your family?

Do you have brothers or sisters?

Please tell me something about yourself.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

your Secret Friend,

K

Term 1, Entry 1, ID55F

January 20 2003

No.

Date

Dear K

Nice to meet you. My name is S.

Can you speak English well? I'm so so. I am good at reading English, but not at writing. But I continue to writing this note and I will be good at writing English very well.

By the way, If you are a boy, you can become "Prince of tennis."

I'm a member of the brass band and my part is percussion. I play the timpani now, but I often play the drums too.

Let me introduce my family. There are five in my family. My parents and two sisters (One is ten, another one is six).

Go next page!! →

No.

Date

I wanted elder brother. Which is your brother younger or elder?

By the way, do you like soccer? I like soccer very much. I play soccer in PE now. I'm looking forward to PE.

Please tell me your school life.

Bye for now.

your secret friend.

S