ESL dialogue journaling in the home environment

Younghwa Choi
Iowa State University

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ESL dialogue journaling in the home environment

by

Younghwa Choi

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Program of Study Committee:
Roberta Vann (Major Professor)
Viviana Cortes
Marcia Rosenbusch

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2003

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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

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has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the possibility of parents supporting their children's second language (L2) writing fluency development in a home context through the process of dialogue journaling. Dialogue journaling in English between a mother, the researcher of the present study, and her two ESL children was carried out at home for 8 months. The written texts from the two children were analyzed using four measures of L2 writing fluency development. The four measures are: 1) morpheme acquisition, 2) word production, 3) management of non-shared topics, and 4) use of language functions.

The results suggest that the children increased their writing fluency during the 8-months of journaling. Both children showed a major increase in three morphemes: the progressive “-ing”, copula “be” verbs, and irregular past tense. The overall total word production almost doubled during the 8 months. Both children also demonstrated an ability to create a context for topics for which their audience did not have a shared knowledge and each showed growth in their mean word for the non-shared topics. Furthermore, the children showed an ability to use language functions selectively in meeting their needs, although only one child showed an increase in the number of functional language use. Both children’s use of language function illustrated that their use of journaling activity was highly individualized, with both children using journaling to carry out different chosen goals. Most importantly, the children managed to sustain the dialogue journaling at home with continuous motivation and encouragement. The findings from the study suggest that dialogue journaling is valuable language development tool for children and a rewarding experience for the involved parent.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

In recent years journaling has come to be viewed as an important ingredient in English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy education. Indeed, it is considered an excellent practice in the second language (L2) in the US and first language (L1) literacy education in other countries as well. For example, in my home country, Korea, children are typically encouraged or required by the schools to keep daily journals in their L1. This is widely believed to lead to better writing skills in the L1. Regardless of this belief, in many Asian countries, the typical focus in the L2 education is mostly on linguistic rules and teachers do not provide enough opportunities for any type of interaction (Jones, 1999). This has led to an assumption that L2 writing means creating “grammatically perfect sentences” to many English as Second Language (ESL) students, especially among Asian student writers (Leki, 1991; Thomas, 1993). Leki (1991) points out that ESL students perceive and place a great value in writing classes in the U.S. primarily as opportunities to achieve grammatical perfection but do not recognize the importance of the rich content. It seems to be of utmost importance for second language educators to emphasize the importance of content-rich papers in second language (L2) writing and, yet, recognize the expectation of many ESL students, for error-free production.

In addition to the issue of content-rich writing, there is yet another great challenge for second language educators to address and that is how young ESL children studying in an English dominant environment can acquire native-like rather than a pidginized grammar. Specifically, young ESL students, the “ear learners” of English, primarily acquire English proficiency in informal contexts from unconscious acquisition processes rather than through formal instruction in classrooms, (Reid, 1998). Reid (1998) explains that these “ear learners” of English have learned through sudden immersion in the language and the culture of the U.S. As a result, they
have developed relatively higher English oral fluency and listening skills in comparison with their literacy skill. Specifically, the writing skills of “ear learners” display “the conversational, phonetic qualities of their ‘ear-based’ language learning, as well as the use of their self-developed ‘rules’ that may, upon examination, prove to be overgeneralized or false”, (Reid, 1998, p. 4). This was very evident with my two children and was the impetus for trying dialogue journaling with them.

The impetus for the journaling came a year after my family arrived in the U.S. in February 2001. During the first year, my nine-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son had achieved an intermediate level of oral proficiency or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in their L2, but their literacy skills required for their academic work, or Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) seemed much lower (Cummins, 1979; 1984). I was eager to exert extra effort and provide home support that could contribute to my children’s academic proficiency in reading and writing. At first, I considered providing grammatical explanations for written errors, but soon realized that the concept of “grammar” was new to them and the terminology confusing. I realized that my children’s abstract reasoning in English grammar was not yet developed. However, as a Non-Native Speaker of English (NNSE) myself, who had been an English teacher in an EFL context for many years and a mother of two young “ear learners” ESL students, I felt that achieving grammatical competence would be the biggest challenge for them in the months to come.

Despite these concerns, I was committed to providing meaningful practice that could balance attention to the rich content and form of writing without explicit grammatical explanation. I also had expectations about accuracy, but as prospective ESL educator I espoused the views of theorists who argued for a holistic approach to CALP. Since my children were “ear learners” of English, as described by Reid (1998), I felt providing them with some type of feedback without emphasizing formal grammar was an ideal option. With these issues
and concerns in mind, I was intrigued by the views discussed in the L2 literacy class I was taking, particularly about a dialogue journal activity and how it could provide the students with invaluable opportunities to improve their written language skills.

I immediately decided to have my daughter Emily and son John (both pseudonyms) start journaling in English, a foreign language for all of us, in mid February 2002. I asked my children to write any thoughts, requests or anything they wanted to talk about everyday and I would reply to their writings as frequently as possible. They were also told not to worry about grammar and just concentrate on the content because “Mom can understand everything.” In other words, they were under no pressure of having to write correctly and accurately. The dialogue journal activity seemed an appropriate language development tool that could meet the objectives I had in mind concerning both content and form. Our journaling continued for the purpose of the study for 8 months from February 8, 2002 to October 8, 2002.

Within the first six weeks of our journaling, I noticed my children self correcting a few grammatical and spelling errors after my responses, but for some other errors, they would continue making them. This immediately prompted me to look into the process of journaling we were engaged in and trace how my children developed as writers. While conscious of the informal nature of this learning environment, I believe that an attempt to conduct research focusing on my children’s L2 writing fluency development can contribute to knowledge about SLA and L2 literacy development by giving us insight into the language development of “ear learners”.

**Previous research on dialogue journaling**

The dialogue journal has caught the attention of researchers in ESL literacy education. (Staton, 1984; Shuy, 1984; Peyton, 1986; Dolly, 1990; Burniske 1994; Holmes & Moulton, 1997; Reid, 1997). The dialogue journal is a continuous written conversation between a teacher or
other adult and students, in which students are given the choices of topics of their interest or concern to write about to a known, real audience who might or might not share the topics of choice but respond to the content of the writing without evaluating it based on form. (Strackbein, 1987; Dolly, 1990). Researchers suggest that engaging in a meaningful and naturally motivated written interaction with an authentic audience may facilitate L2 writing development, (Staton, 1984; Shuy, 1984; Peyton, 1986; Dolly, 1990; Reid, 1997; Holmes & Moulton, 1997). These studies also suggest that this meaningful written interaction can be encouraged through a teacher-student dialogue journal, and demonstrate the increase in the writing fluency in different aspects in L2 through the content-related meaningful responses from the teacher over a period of time.

This practice has been widely studied by many researchers for a variety of effects on both NSE (Native Speakers of English) and NNSE (Non-native Speakers of English) including improving confidence to write both in ESL class and other classes by NNSE (Reid, 1997), employing functional usage of written language by NSE and NNSE (Shuy, 1984, 1988), providing elaborate details to meet the needs of specific audiences and cover the background knowledge on the topics of the journal entries by NSE (Kreeft, 1984), and gaining perception of writing as “an ideal tool of empowerment for both students and teachers” by NSE (Bode, 1989 p.568). Through this dialogue journaling, ESL students appear to achieve acquisition of some grammatical morphemes (Peyton, 1986). The teacher implicitly provides correct grammatical forms to the errors students produce in teacher’s message-related responding entries, and the students are able to correct their errors from noticing the difference between their products and the teacher’s.

Dialogue journaling appears to be one of the most promising measures to consider in the development of writing fluency in L2 by the “ear learners” of ESL students. It both acknowledges and helps develop rich-content through message-related responses and focuses on
form through correct modeling in responding entries. Up to this point, the full body of dialogue journal research has focused on the academic environment where the teacher dialogues with the student. However, the development of writing fluency in L2 through a dialogue journaling has not been examined in a home environment. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the effects of dialogue journaling in writing fluency development in a home environment between a mother and her two children, who are of limited English proficiency level in their L2.

In spite of its benefits, a teacher-student dialogue journaling is a time-consuming process that a teacher in a classroom with twenty or more students might not be able to sustain. She may well be overwhelmed with the amount of journals to be read and responded to in addition to other day-to-day tasks. If this practice is found in the home environment to provide a variety of positive effects found in previous studies, then it could provide another means for literacy education in a home environment as well as a channel for honest communication between members of a family. As described by Reed (1988), the journaling process provided her a communication channel, through which she had opportunities to deal with the problems many of her students had (Reed, 1988). Building a firm relationship with children through mutual trust and communication, especially during the pre-adolescent period, may prevent many of the struggles families face from lack of communication and understanding.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of writing fluency in the home environment through the process of dialogue journaling between two limited English proficiency siblings who were ESL students and their mother. To fulfill this purpose, the study addresses the following research questions:
Q1. Which type of response to error, explicit or implicit, is more effective with respect to error correction?

For this question, each participant's entries were closely examined in respect to the error correction, content, length of entries after explicit response.

Q2. To what extent, if at all, does writing fluency develop?

1) Is there an increase in correct use of target morphemes? (Peyton, 1986)

2) Is there an increase in overall word production, the number of entries and topics; and the mean word counts per entry and topic in time period?

3) Is there an increase on non-shared topics during the journaling (Kreeft, 1984) and higher mean words on non-shared topics compared to the shared topics?

4) Is there an increase in the number of language function use in the process of journaling? (Shuy, 1984).

The Organization of the Study

In Chapter 2, I will begin with a brief review of the literature pertaining to both spoken and written fluency development in L2. I will further review the theoretical framework developed based on studies that traced stages through dialogue journaling and its effects on the learners. In addition, I will review research focusing on the findings from studies on dialogue journaling and on modeling forms in written responses. In Chapter 3, I will provide a detailed outline of the methods used in this research including background information on the participants and of the journaling process. I will also discuss the data analysis procedure. In Chapter 4, I will present the findings of this study. Finally in Chapter 5, I will present a summary of the results and discuss the limitations and the implications for future research.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents a review of the literature relevant to the study of using a dialogue journal in a home environment with children who are non-native speakers of English. The first part focuses on the importance of providing opportunities for both oral and written language practice in SLA. The next section will review the effectiveness of a dialogue journaling and the theoretical claims that justify the benefits of the practice. The next section reviews studies conducted on dialogue journaling between teacher-NSE students and a teacher-NNSE students, which support the usefulness and effectiveness of a dialogue journaling. The last section will address the issue of providing correct modeling of form and structure in responding entries during the course of the journaling exchanges and how this strategy is considered to play an important role in writing fluency development in the L2.

Role of Interaction in SLA

The crucial role of "comprehensible input" has been recognized in second language research (Long, 1983; Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Loschky, 1994). "Comprehensible input" alone, however, serves no useful purpose in the process of SLA and it is usually provided through the interaction between NSE- NNSE in natural conversation (Long, 1983) and NNSE- NNSE interaction (Long & Porter, 1985; Varonis & Gass, 1985). Research finding suggests that greater opportunities for negotiation of meaning are provided in NNSE-NNSE interactions (Varonis & Gass, 198). Through this natural interaction, meaning is negotiated when a comprehension problem occurs and thus language acquisition is promoted by providing learners with genuine motives to understand and be understood, simply put, to communicate (Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Loschky, 1994; Varonis &
Gass, 1985). Peregoy & Boyle (2001) state, “This trial and error process of give and take in communication as people try to understand and be understood is referred to as the negotiation of meaning” (p.46). Under these conditions, learners, and especially young ESL students in school, find themselves in a rich learning environment in which oral language develops naturally through countless opportunities for the negotiation of meaning. The negotiation of meaning is facilitated as the topics of interaction are of immediate interest to them. In this way NSE input becomes comprehensible input for SLA (Peregoy, et al. 2001). Second language educators further encourage a variety of activities that involve group work to maximize the classroom opportunities for language production and “talk is valued as a learning tool” (Peregoy, et al. 2001 p.106).

There is an argument in SLA for the importance of providing an appropriate medium that will provide opportunities for a child to produce language at his/her level (Shuy, 1988). Second language educators, therefore, need to place greater emphasis on providing a learning environment that promotes production of language that parallels with the learners’ spoken competency level.

**Dialogue Journal as a Medium for Interaction in Written Language**

The genuine motivation to communicate with a partner through written interaction also plays a crucial role in the development of writing in L1 (Kreeft, 1984; Shuy, 1988a, 1988b; Staton, 1988) and L2 (Staton, 1984; Shuy, 1984; Peyton, 1986; Dolly, 1990; Reid, 1997; Holmes & Moulton, 1997). These studies suggest that written interaction can be promoted through a teacher-student dialogue journal as a medium that would promote genuine communication with a partner, therefore providing opportunities for both L1 and L2 writing development. A dialogue journal provides a natural way to accomplish this development.

The use of a teacher-student dialogue journal originated in mid-1960’s with Leslee Reed,
a sixth grade teacher in a Los Angeles public school who started this practice with her native English-speaking students for the purpose of communication. The students in her class were given a choice of what to write about in their personal journal while she provided them with a written response. As she was not interested in tracing her students' linguistic development, her approach to responding to her students' journal was to focus only on the content of their writing. She was interested in building a real communicating channel through which students expressed their true feelings and developed their personalities (Reed, 1988). The dialogue journal, as described in her work, is different from traditional journaling in that it is a continuous written conversation with partners exchanging a variety of topics of importance and interest to them. The continuation of a written conversation with a genuine topic of interest provides a natural-like medium, in which a high percentage of personal issues that are generally regarded as characteristic of oral language are found (Shuy, 1985). Shuy (1985), based on the findings, concludes "dialogue journal writing is more like oral language than is any kind of oral language that research is able to capture" (p. 479).

The findings led us to believe that the beginning written communication skills can be developed through a dialogue journaling practice starting from the oral fluency the learners have already achieved. Thus, the journal writer builds on this previous knowledge and "uses the natural social conditions inherent in oral language to provide the basis for mastering written communication" (Staton & Shuy 1988, p. 196).

As these studies suggest, dialogue journaling is expected to provide a medium for a meaningful natural-like conversation condition in which ESL "ear learners" are given opportunities to use oral skills they have already achieved and transfer them into the written form.

A theoretical view of written language development also supports the importance of transfer of oral language knowledge at the given level of competency achieved by a child to a medium like the dialogue journal (Shuy, 1988a). By participating in a journaling dialogue, a
child is given opportunities to practice appropriate written language at his/her competency level in a continuous natural-like conversation condition.

Theoretical Claims for L1 and L2 Development

For many children, L1 oral language fluency is quite well developed when children first enter school, whereas written language is not. In oral conversation, the focus is on the presence of an audience and the speaker often receives feedback from the audience whether or not the meaning is conveyed as originally intended by the speaker (Gumperz, J. J., H. Kaltman, & O'Connor, C., 1984). The speaker may also rely on extra variables such as "physical context, gesture, paralinguistic cues, etc." in carrying out oral communication or conversation to the level of understanding (p. 4). Written language, on the other hand, lacks all of the above variables, which in turn puts greater demand on the communicative tasks (Gumperz et al., 1984). The writer in written language must provide the context or background knowledge through "syntactic and lexical means to specify referents, indicate semantic and pragmatic connections between propositions, and give thematic cohesion to the discourse" (Gumperz, et al. 1984, p. 4). This is the skill a writer must acquire but it is difficult even for experienced writers to achieve in the absence of mutual feedback from a given audience (Shuy, 1988a).

When children develop written language skills in school, they are learning skills of processing, as well as production of a written representation of language they have already acquired. The written language produced as part of school work, however, is judged based on expectations of school criteria rather than criteria equivalent to the children's natural developmental stage of oral language (Shuy, 1988a).

Based on the developmental sequence of oral language style, children first encounter the intimate and casual style and later develop the formal style (Shuy, 1988a). However, a writer passes through both intimate and casual stages that are present in oral language and starts from
the formal level in school in the absence of an audience. (Shuy, 1988a) This is the big gap that children often have to face in writing class as they are “expected to perform the equivalent of producing formal monologues without having first gone through the developmental stages found in oral dialogue or conversation” (Shuy, p.77). On these grounds, Shuy challenges the assumption that educators make about written output and calls for adapting these criteria to suit the students’ oral language development.

The distinctive characteristic of casual speech in children ages 4 to 6 can also be the presence of language functions that they need for them to accomplish tasks in real life (Griffin & Shuy, 1978; as cited in Shuy, 1988a). The functions may include “requests for substances, information and clarification” (p.79). The children could “complain, deny, give directives, explain and offer sanctions” (Griffin & Humphrey, 1979; as cited in Shuy, 1988a, p.79). Through oral conversation, children are allowed to employ functional language to get things done through interaction with an audience. In written language, the lack of interaction with a real audience limits the use of functional language. Shuy (1988a) simply states it thus:

...conventional school writing actually restricts the focus of the wide range of children's language functions in much the same way that the formal speech restricts the repertoire of language choices available to speakers in their casual or even consultative registers. (p.79)

This restriction would put an even greater burden on “ear learners” of young ESL students who have only acquired oral fluency mainly from children of a similar age in a school context without adequate exposure to formal writing.

The writing development process should therefore have parallels with the characteristics of casual oral language that the “ear learners” already have acquired, namely, through the presence of authentic meaningful interaction with a real audience. To replicate the natural communication situation, writing tasks should be carried out in the presence of opportunities to
try out functional language at the early stage of writing development before moving up to the level of conventional writing as determined by the school curriculum criteria. Consequently, it seems reasonable to expect that the dialogue journal practice seems to provide a theoretically sound and appropriate measure for “ear learners” of ESL children to practice, especially those whose competence is at the casual stage.

**Findings from Studies on Dialogue Journaling between NSE and NNSE Students**

The dialogue journaling data of 26 NSE students in Mrs. Reed’s class during the 1978-1979 academic year served as a database for a variety of studies by the researchers (Kreeft, 1984; Shuy, 1988b). Dialogue journaling has also gained ground as a practice among teachers of ESL students (Staton, 1988a). The database used for research on teacher-NNSE student dialogue journal was based on data obtained from 6 sixth grade ESL students in Mrs. Reed’s 1980-1981 ESL class (Shuy, 1984; Peyton, 1986). In 1980-1981, Mrs. Reed was transferred to a different school where she worked with ESL students and also used dialogue journaling with them.

Many ESL students view dialogue journaling as a channel for communication and an opportunity for using English in a natural context with support from their NES teachers (Peyton, 2000). Research focusing on both a teacher- NSE student and a teacher- NNSE students dialogue journal demonstrated development in a variety of areas that are considered characteristics of mature writing.

Based on the analysis of Mrs. Reed’s class journal, a NSE student demonstrated topic elaboration as journaling proceeded by providing extra “information to make a given topic interesting and coherent to their target audience”, which suggests that the writer is aware of his/her audience (Kreeft, 1984. 144). “Elaboration” is defined as providing extra details on description on the topic. Therefore, elaboration on a topic in written language is very valued as it requires an extra effort to enhance comprehension of the audience and, therefore, indicates
strong competency in written language (Staton, 1988c). Due to the lack of cues that are normally present in oral language (Gumperz et al., 1984), only communicatively competent writers are able to employ the skills of providing explicit specific information to any audience (Staton, 1988c). Topic elaboration on the participant came very unconsciously and naturally as he was only making sure that his/her teacher is interested in a topic of real concern to him (Kreeft, 1984).

The student involved in a teacher-student dialogue journal also showed a shift from shared to non-shared topics as the journaling continued (Kreeft, 1984). The presence of topic shift from shared to non-shared is seen as another indication of writing fluency development as writers must provide necessary background information in written language to create a context to meet the audience’s needs. By means of creating context, a writer is anticipating the very question his/her audience would ask; therefore, the writer is providing answers to the anticipated questions (Kreeft, 1984). The provision of necessary information for non-shared topics demonstrates a learning process that can also be seen in oral language acquisition, in which a writer is “implicitly interactive” with an audience and anticipating the question and providing the information (Kreeft, 1984, p. 149). This process is named “interactional scaffolding” whereby the adult reader supplies necessary cues during conversation for learners to move further along (Cazden 1979, as cited in Kreeft, 1984, p.145). This is based on one of Vygotsky’s theory that states “development of the child begins in social interaction with an adult as guide, until the child internalizes the kind of help received from the adult and guides himself” (1978, as cited in Kreeft, 1984, p.149). The participant involved in a dialogue journal practice progressed naturally through the process of written interaction (Kreeft, 1984).

The analysis on the dialogue journaling of both NSE and NNSE students in Mrs. Reed’s class reports the students’ use of the written language to perform a variety of functions such as: “complaining, thanking, evaluating, reporting facts, questioning, or giving a directive…” (Shuy,
1984; 1988b, p.107). The "functional nature of the interaction" makes the very essential attribute of the continuous engagement of participants in dialogue journal writing (Staton 1988b p.4) (Italics in original). Function language is defined as "The underlying knowledge that people have that allows them to use their language to make utterances in order to accomplish goals and to understand the utterances of others in terms of their goals" (Shuy, 1988b, p.107). The analysis of the function language use allows us to further examine not only the visual sentence level written products but a writer's underlying language competency in expressing underlying thoughts or ideas, which therefore, examination of the learner's use of language functions can also be an effective indicator in determining of writing ability (Shuy 1988). Research compared the results of functional language use of NSE with that of NNSE and found that the most frequently employed functions were similar in both studies (Shuy, 1984). They include giving both personal and general facts, and expressing opinions. In addition, the percentage of reporting personal facts was very similar in both studies.

The special features of content-related responses especially in a dialogue journal play an important role in L2 writing development. For example, the learners gain confidence and become more motivated to write as the process focuses more on meaning rather than on form (Burniske, 1994; Reid, 1997; Holmes & Moulton, 1997). The focus on meaning seems to be the main point as an adult ESL learner specifically points out in a study that "the attribute of dialogue journals that seems to account most for the enhanced motivation for writing was the uncorrected, ungraded format" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p.619). This observation indicates the need for second language educators to dismiss the belief that many ESL students have about their written product as having to be error-free for it to be considered "good" writing (Holmes & Moulton, 1997).
Modeling in Teacher’s Response in Dialogue Journal

Modeling of a correct grammatical form as part of the teacher’s response entries in a dialogue journal seems to provide another tool for ESL learners to improve their L2 writing fluency in “linguistic forms” (Peyton, 1986; Reid, 1997). Research findings from an analysis of journal data by ESL students indicated that although considerable individual variation among the six ESL students was evident, all of them demonstrated acquisition of a few verb-related English morphemes through the dialogue journaling activity over a period of ten-months (Peyton 1986). The particular morphemes of study were chosen based on the observable increase in the occurrence, number and frequency of morpheme use in the journaling process. The morphemes of the Peyton study included the progressive auxiliary “be” + “ing” and past tense “ed” marking of regular, irregular verbs and third person singular “s” ending. The study found that there was little or no gain in the past tense marking of regular verbs. Peyton points out that the acquisition of some morphemes is attributed to the modeling correct grammatical forms in the teacher’s responses to students’ entries.

As mentioned earlier, it is argued in the literature that a teacher’s response is inevitably tuned to the learner’s English proficiency level for the purpose of comprehension, while aimed at providing correct grammatical forms and structures in the responses (Kreeft, Shuy, Staton, & Morroy, 1984; Peyton, 1986; Dolly, 1990; Reid, 1997; Peyton, 2000). The importance of this tailored input is also noted by Krashen (1985) through his input hypothesis (i + 1 theory). The theory states that learners need to be exposed to the structure of their level (i) and the input that is part of the next stage in the target language (1). Second language educators provide i + 1 input through caregiver talk modifying the input based on the level of the learner (Krashen, 1985). In practice, providing the input in i + 1 level may be much simpler than it sounds. The input providers need to supply the learners enough input for the understanding of what is being said or read. Therefore, i + 1 will usually be covered in the presence of enough input and if the
comprehension is achieved and the teacher's deliberate intention to provide $i + 1$ level is not required (Krashen, 1985).

The corrective modeling in Mrs. Reed's responses to her ESL students' journaling was analyzed while searching for evidence supporting the hypothesis that written responses provide optimal condition for the enhancement of second language acquisition. The optimal condition for SLA requires that the "teacher's input be clear and comprehensible, and adapted to the individual student's level" (Staton, 1984, p. 159). The findings from Staton's analysis show that there was little evidence of teacher varying her linguistic features of language use to adapt to the level of proficiency of the audiences but the teacher varied her interactional language features through the written conversation to accommodate the students (Staton, 1984). Simply expressed, in order to enhance comprehension, the teacher was intentionally making a greater effort to modify her interactional structure in her linguistic input. The finding suggests that that "the teacher's natural language input in response to a language learner can be "optimal for that learner at the moment in time" (Staton 1984 p.186) (Emphasis in original). Again, this emphasizes the importance of the negotiation of meaning through interactional structure to provide the comprehensible input required for SLA (Long 1983).

Summary

Previous studies in SLA have indicated that interaction is useful in L2 oral fluency (Long, 1983). This interaction can be practiced in a dialogue journal as it provides a bridge for transferring the oral language that a child has already acquired to written language in a conversational medium through a continuous meaningful written conversation with an audience (Kreeft, 1984). As a mother or caregiver provides comprehensible input that is naturally tuned to the level of child language competency, an audience also provides written responses in a dialogue journal that is naturally tuned to the level of the audience's language competence.
(Staton, 1984). Based on convincing arguments provided from previous research, this practice can be expected to ensure a great opportunity for ESL students, and especially "ear learners," to naturally produce written language from employing the oral fluency they have already achieved. As with many educational aspects, ESL instruction should tried its foundation on the needs of students and not on the perspectives of educators.

Regardless of numerous benefits of dialogue journaling, it would be unrealistic to provide this practice in many educational contexts due to the lack of time. However, the idea that literacy education can only take place in educational institutions needs to be challenged. In other words, it would seem that parents also can provide the benefits of journaling at home as they do with L1 oral language development. This is the impetus of the present study.

As a mother with a special interest in L2 literacy issues, I was convinced that it would be a great opportunity to provide home support for my children, Emily and John, through dialogue journaling. Through this practice, I wanted them to employ written language as a tool to carry out their communicative needs.

The next chapter, Methods, will explain how the dialogue journals were used as a database in search for evidence of development in various aspects of language use over a period of 8 months. Emily and John's entries will be analyzed by drawing mainly on the previous research by Kreeft (1984), Shuy (1984) and Peyton (1986) that I have reviewed in this chapter.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Chapter

The first part of this chapter contains a detailed description of the participants, a description of the setting, and a description of how motivation was maintained during the journaling as well as a description of the time frame of the motivation and encouragement in a table is provided. The last section of the first part contains a description of the dialogue journaling between the researcher and the two participants with examples of explicit modeling and implicit modeling provided for grammatical errors produced by the participants.

The second part of this chapter explains the data transcription process and analysis procedure in the context of the research questions.

Part I

Participants

The participants of the present study were my two children, Emily, a 5th grade girl, and John, a 4th grade boy, and myself, the researcher of this study. At the time the journaling began, Emily was 10 years 8 months, and John was 9 years 3 months. At the end of the data collection period, they were 11 years, 4 months and 9 years, 11 months, respectively. They had been enrolled in an elementary school in Ames, Iowa since arriving in the United States in February 2001. Before arriving, the children had mastered the alphabet, a few names of animals, colors, numbers in English, and a few very basic greetings such as “Hi, how are you?” through informal instruction from me. Neither had had any formal English grammar instruction. In school in Ames, they were placed in a pull-out ESL program. In this program, ESL learners are pulled out of the mainstream classroom for 30-minute sessions twice a day 5 days a week. For each session, 3 to 4 ESL students of a similar proficiency level study with a teacher. Lesson content varies widely, but emphasizes a variety of activities that increase interaction between the students.
Although my children sometimes spoke English at home with me, they did not receive any other private reading and writing instruction outside of school. The journaling began one year after we arrived in the U.S. The children were in the intermediate ESL class at the time when the journaling began. The children's ESL class reports in March, 2002 state: The learner has acquired and mastered the strategies needed to perform specific language-related tasks, but still needs support in academic language.

Before our arrival in the U.S., Emily and John had finished three years and two years of elementary education, respectively. In their Korean elementary school, students are encouraged and sometimes required to write a diary every day in their L1. This has been a nationwide trend since the early 70's. I remember writing a diary almost everyday in my 6 years of elementary school. During those 6 years, most students wrote a journal or diary and turned them in to their teachers. While teachers sometimes wrote short feedback regarding the content, most of the teachers would stamp in red "excellent", "very good", and so on. The length of the diary varied, but writing daily was strongly emphasized. My children were also involved in simply writing what they did on that specific day. The children thus wrote a diary everyday in the evening in Korean in their designated journaling book and turned it in to their teachers. First graders were allowed to add pictures. The teachers also emphasized that writing a diary would improve their writing skill, one of the subjects included in the national college entrance exam. With this background in journaling, my children naturally accepted the idea that the more you write, the better your language skill would be.

**Personalities of the Participants**

One participant in this study is Emily, my daughter, who is an active, competitive overachiever. She is an independent girl who is not too willing to try new things unless she is fairly certain of the outcome. She does not like failure. She has high self-esteem, but is
sensitive to rejection. She does not ask for help in most of her tasks in school or at home. She sometimes challenges me, but nevertheless obeys. She does not like to be punished or reprimanded in the presence of her brother, friends, or anyone. Therefore, my husband and I are very careful in handling her when we say “No” to her and try very hard not to hurt her feelings. Considering her personality traits, repeated reprimands can easily demotivate her and hurt her self-pride.

The second participant is my son, John. He is an active, happy, out-going boy, who is not yet too serious about school, achievement, or his future. He often shows a great interest in many activities but loses interest very easily without much hesitation. He is quite tolerant to hearing “No” without much disappointment and continues to challenge and disobey his mother or father. In other words, he does not take “No” too seriously and often gets into trouble. He gets encouraged very easily and at the same time discouraged just as easily. He is, however, very frank about his feelings. He often tells me he hates me when he is angry and he loves me when he is happy. In contrast to his sister, he may get irritated when criticized or corrected, but soon forgets about it. Like many younger children, he expresses jealousy over his sister when he notices that greater attention is being paid to her and complains immediately and endlessly. Since he often complained, even as a small child, his grandfather once gave him the English nickname “complain boy.”

I am the third participant in this study, the children’s mother. I was born in Korea, raised in a middle-class family with parents who placed much value on education as many other parents do in Korea. My first exposure to English was in my middle school in Korea, where I was taught English in a traditional classroom where linguistic “rules” were the main focus of language learning. My first exposure to NSE was during my 8th grade year for about 6 months in the U.S. I was enrolled in a middle school in the U.S. for a semester, where I had opportunities to improving English skills, mostly in speaking and listening areas. After
finishing my high school, I returned to the U.S. to complete a Bachelor’s degree at the University of Texas at Austin, where I met my husband, a Korean. After graduating from college, I remained in the States for four more years and had my children and raised them while my husband finished his Ph.D in Chemistry. We went back to Korea from 1993 to 2001. During that time, I taught English in both private institutions and a public school for 5 years and decided to return to the U.S. to obtain a MA degree in TESL.

The Setting

I purchased a hardbound spiral-note book for our family journal writing process. Starting February 8, 2002, I made the first entry in our “Family Journal” and my children joined writing entries with topics of interest and/or concern, to make requests and complaints, etc. This journal book was placed on the living room or dining table, and a pen was always attached to the inside of the spiral, not only for the sake of convenience, but also so I would be able to examine the children’s writing process, including their own corrections on errors, markouts, etc. I instructed the children to write an entry or entries when they came home, or any time of the day on weekend. I also instructed them to write any thoughts, requests or anything they wanted to talk about every day in English so that their father would be able to know what was happening to us while he was gone. My husband stayed with us for one year in the States working as a visiting scientist at the University in Ames and left about a week after we began our dialogue journaling activity. The children were very disappointed at his leaving that they wanted to share things with their father while he was gone. We enjoyed dialogue journaling. Often, the children specifically asked me to respond or write an answer to their questions or requests. I tried to respond to their journal as frequently as possible in the order in which entries were written, but sometimes was unable to do so. Responding promptly to every entry was a very challenging task for me as Emily and John became more and more demanding for a response.
They often asked me to respond immediately after they wrote an entry otherwise their sibling would write another entry without leaving any space for my response. Often, as I responded they would immediately read the response and write back and ask for another response. They would sometimes show dissatisfaction when I did not provide responses fast enough. I provide an overview of the variety of encouragement and motivation I provided in different time frames in the process of journaling in the next section.

Description of how motivation was maintained during the Journaling

The dialogue journaling continued very smoothly for the first two weeks. Both of my children wrote entries and I responded to them in the order in which they were written. However, the children seemed to lose interest in writing journals about 2 weeks after our journaling began. They mentioned that they did not enjoy writing entries and did not enter any entries for about 4 days while asking how long our journaling would continue. The continuation of the journaling became the biggest challenge for this study. The major motivation I emphasized to the children was the belief that the journal would help their father know what had happened to us while he was gone. This turned out to be quite a powerful motivation for them and they were eager to write things they wanted to tell their father. However, this motivating factor was short-lived as they began to speak to their father more frequently on the telephone. Another motivational strategy I used was emphasizing that they must improve their English proficiency level before going back to Korea. Otherwise, our separation from their father would turn out to not be worth our sacrifice. Knowing that they were fairly motivated to learn English, I tried to convince them that their English proficiency level would improve as they wrote more. I also told them to write with more thought on the content than the grammar itself suggesting that I could always understand what they meant. In other words, I hoped to reduce the pressure of having to write correctly and accurately. With
these motivations and incentives, journaling again proceeded quite smoothly.

However, I again faced a struggle about two months later when they started to get tired of writing. By this time, I was carrying out the journaling for my research, in addition to teaching writing to my children. I again tried to employ every possible motivation and incentive to continue our journaling. I sometimes wrote a specific question in my entry for them to answer in their entry. As they continued with their journaling activities, I routinely complimented them on their content, pointing out how interesting their entries were and how much their writing skills continued to improve. For example, John wrote about how he scored a point in a soccer game during his lunch recess and I responded with great excitement, telling him how talented he was in sports, and other activities like drawing and playing different musical instruments. From time to time, I also talked about some of the contents in the journal entries on the phone with their father in the presence of the participants to show my interest in their entries in addition to mentioning how much their English writing skills had improved. Many times, we talked about funny events they mentioned in the entries during our mealtime to show my continuous interest on the events and asked what had happened afterwards. In other words, I was validating the discourse activity and connecting journal entries with everyday life by bringing the topics of entries into oral family conversations on the phone and at the dinner table. I also often emphasized to my children that, as a mother, I felt lucky to have this unique opportunity of having the dialogue journaling with my two children that not many parents have, and I cherished this opportunity very much. These types of discussions with the children and with their father on the phone definitely seemed to encourage and motivate the children to continue with the journaling activity.

The most powerful motivation seemed to emerge sometime during the month of May. One day in May, I saw my children giggling and laughing as they were reading their previous entries. They were laughing at their own errors from earlier entries and were able to orally
provide correct explanations for their errors. They were very proud of themselves as they noticed how much they had improved. I believe that small but very powerful incident gave a boost to their motivation to continue our journaling.

I was ready to face another challenge during the summer when my husband came to visit us. I was not certain whether to include him in our journaling activity. Since I was in the process of collecting data for the present study, I had to decide on this. When their father came, Emily, in particular decided that her father should not participate in the family journaling experience or see the journal until we all went back to Korea, because she wanted her father to notice her big improvement in English writing skills. Frankly, it was a relief. The journaling continued over the summer as it became a part of our routine activity and my children were involved in writing entries. Interestingly, at the end of 8 months when my data collection for the project was completed, the children insisted that we should continue with our journaling.

**Feedback to the Journal Entries**

The main purpose of this journaling activity was to develop rich-content through message-related responses and focus on form through correct modeling in responding entries. As a result, I provided responses to the content while modeling grammatically correct forms in the response. The modeling of correct grammatical form is expected to serve two goals. First, I expected the children to notice the difference between what they had produced and what I had produced and be able to self-correct their own errors without me giving them an explicit instruction on form. Second, I did not want my children to feel that their entries were being constantly corrected as this might interfere with their output. I feared that by putting greater emphasis on the grammatical aspects of the language and thereby possibly cause them to lose interest or motivation in participating in the activity. While providing correct grammatical form to the children's error, I put greater emphasis on a natural-flow of our written conversation so
that the children would not notice my implicit modeling of correct forms to their errors.

Example of modeling (indirect correction of error)

The following entries are examples of one of John's entries and my response to the content and simultaneous model of the correct form.

John: Mom, I know you loves me a lot but I don't like you because you make me really angry when I was playing violin.

Mom: John, I know you love me also, but I still like you very much even if you are angry with me. I am sorry again but I really want you to use your time wisely. Love mom.

Example of Explicit Correction

Emily: Yes I was like Yeil's house. Because there was big living room. But I still like the old one. But I wish......

Mom: Emily! You should say "I liked it". Oh, I see what you mean. You liked the old house from outside. I also think that outside or the front view of the old house is better than the new house.

I included a few samples of actual journal entries written in our journaling book in the Appendix (see Appendix C). I also blackened the original names of the participants in addition to other names of persons that appeared in the journal entries.
Part II

Transcription

In order to answer the research questions, I collected and transcribed 107 journal entries from Emily and 82 from John in a period of eight-months (February 8, 2002 - October 8, 2002). In the process of typing, I did not make any corrections or other changes to the children’s entries. Every item or word in the entries, regardless of its correctness, was typed exactly as the participants wrote them. I also transcribed the words, which were written in Korean. The participants’ own corrections were depicted using symbols (see Appendix A).

I used the “Word Count” function under “Tools” in MS Word program to carry out the actual word counts, making two separate documents for each of the participant’s entries. For the word count, neither symbols nor words crossed out by participants were counted (see Appendix A). The rationale here is based on the assumption that the crossed out items were usually misspelled words or ungrammatical phrases that the participants managed to self-correct immediately or were words they did not intend to produce. Therefore, these crossed-out items were not counted as their written products. The crossed out items do, however, provide insight into the writing process and therefore are important to retain. I also deleted the words written in their L1. The rationale here is based on the fact the purpose of this study was to examine the development of writing fluency in their L2, therefore, words written in their L1 should not be counted as the products of the journaling. After completing the transcription and word tabulations, I analyzed the entries in a variety of ways as guided by the two research questions of the present study.

Research Question 1

Which type of response to error, explicit or implicit, is more effective with respect to error correction?
In order to answer this question, I provided explicit responses to the errors my children made.

**Research Question 2**

To what extent, if at all, does writing fluency develop?

Fluency development was measured based on the following:

1) **Is there an increase in correct use of target morphemes?**

The purpose of this analysis was to examine the acquisition of five verb-related morphemes by the children in the process of a dialogue journaling. Due to the nature of a dialogue journaling, the progressive “be” + “ing” (past and present), simple regular and irregular past verbs and copula “be” verbs were frequently observed. The frequency of occurrences of the “s” ending on third person singular present tense verbs was not as high as other morphemes, but I find it also an important rule the children need to acquire. Based on this, I made a decision to examine the acquisition of these 5 verb-related morphemes (Appendix B).

In the presence of correct modeling through message-related responding entries by me during our journaling, I expected the children to acquire morphemes as suggested by the findings in Peyton’s study (1986). Although I also provided correct modeling of different types of errors such as spelling errors, inappropriate expressions, and infinitives, and so on in my message-related responses throughout our journaling period, these were not the focus of this study.

I examined the acquisition of 5 target morphemes by means of the following procedure. The percentage of the correct usage of a specific morpheme was obtained by dividing the number of that specific morpheme “supplied” by the total number of contexts where that particular morpheme is “required” (Peyton, 1986). In the process of journaling, I expected an increase in percentage of “supplied” of each morpheme, which suggests morpheme acquisition.
Example 1.

John : Mom, I want to tell you about something yesterday at the school I was drinking, the water and didn’t talk...

Table 1. Description of morpheme analysis for example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past progress</td>
<td>was drinking</td>
<td>Past “Be” and “ing” Required. &amp; Supplied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.

John: How come when I *was waer my *buch and *tuch the snow then snow go in to my buch So my feets are freezing!

(*was waer meant was wearing; buch meant boots; tuch meant touch)

Table 2. Description of morpheme analysis for example 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past progress</td>
<td>was waer</td>
<td>Past “Be” supplied; “ing” required but not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past regular</td>
<td>tuch</td>
<td>Past ending “ed” required but not supplied:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>Past tense “went” required but not supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past progress</td>
<td>are freezing</td>
<td>Past “Be” and “ing” required but past tense “were” not supplied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of decision making on obligatory context or “required” context for present or past tense verb was quite clear. However, determining either “present” progressive or simple present tense was quite ambiguous in a few contexts. For example, a few times John started his entry as shown here:

John: I have (X—X) I wite this today. .......

John: I wite this today......

John : I wite this today. .......
In these three consecutive entries, he meant to say “I am writing this entry today”. John was told by his sister to write a date before writing an entry. He, however, has a little problem reading the calendar and time. Instead of writing the date, he might have chosen to start a sentence with the above statements. For these entries, I counted as present progressive “required” but “not supplied.”

When both present and past forms are stated in the same context, the verb tense can be determined based on the time frame of that particular event. However, some were not always as clear as it sounds. For example:

John: John write this today. Mom when I was waiting for the <school> bus in front of are house my class room neam’s brother he all ways saying shot up and I am so mad......

In this entry, John is talking about a small incident in the morning. He mentioned that he is very angry but it was ambiguous whether he “was” mad at that time or whether he “is” still mad as he was writing his entry. For this particular entry, I counted as “supplied” knowing that it would be most likely that he was still angry, otherwise he would not have written that entry. I encountered a few ambiguous cases where I had to rely on my knowledge as much as possible. For the most part, being aware of the context of the writer’s entry definitely facilitated my decision making to place the items under “supplied” or “required.”

Many times, Emily used the contraction form of “I am” as “am” and “You are” as “your”. For example, she wrote, “am not angry at John” or “your misunderstanding mom!” In these cases, she knows that the presence of the “Be” verb is needed and therefore, this should be treated as a spelling mistake, which is not the main focus of this analysis. She is able to distinguish between a context that requires “I” and “I am”. The same is true for “you” and “you are”. Considering her as an “ear learner” of English, it is reasonable to expect that she does not
differentiate “am” from “I’m” since they are phonetically very similar. Therefore, in this case, I counted it as supplied.

2) Is there an increase in overall word production, the number of entries and topics; and the mean word counts per entry and topic in time period?

An increase in words generated in each entry is one way of measuring fluency development. I hypothesized that an increase in word production over the process of dialogue journaling is an indication of fluency development.

In order to examine the presence of an increase in word production, I divided all entries written by both participants into four 2-month periods. I counted the total word production, the number of entries, and the number of topics written in each period. The number of entries and topics entered in a time period may provide insights on the children’s involvement in journaling. In addition, I tabulated the mean words per entry and the mean words per topic. An increase in the mean words per topic may also suggest writing fluency development.

By dividing the data into an even period of time, I was also able to examine the number of entries written and the total word production by each participant in comparison with the other participant within the given period of time.

3) Is there an increase on non-shared topics during the journaling (Kreeft, 1984) and a higher mean words on non-shared topics compared to the shared topics?

The purpose of carrying out this analysis was to examine the subjects’ written language ability in creating a meaningful context for non-shared topics in answering anticipated questions from his/her audience. My assumption was that the ability to accommodate the needs of the audience demonstrates fluency development (Kreeft, 1984). I also expected my findings, as Kreeft (1984) found, to show an increase in the number of non-shared topics with an audience as the journaling proceeds.
A shared topic is defined in this study as one in which both the writer and audience were familiar. This included situations in which I was present at the moment the event occurred. Many times, my children mentioned taking part in an event at school, but also wrote about it in their journal, presumably with the expectation of eliciting a comforting written response from me. I categorized these topics as shared since they were mentioned to me before being written about in our journal. An example of a shared topic is:

Emily: Thank you mom. I'm really glad that you said you can asked dad. Mom I'm really sorry about the key. I'll do my best.

In this entry, Emily refers to two topics I knew about. For the first topic, she wanted me to ask her father for a favor she wanted from him, and we both knew what it was. In the next sentence, Emily was writing about the “key” that she had got into trouble for losing.

A non-shared topic is defined in this study as one in which one of the participants was not familiar with the topic. This included situations in which I was not present at the moment of the event written about in the children's entry. An example of a non-shared topic is:

John: Mom, when I was playing football at lunch recases I was runningback fro the First and then my team throw the ball at me so I was running and I fall down and my face heart so I chose to not to be runningback. So when we are playing Im always the guy who guard the running back.

In this entry, John was writing about what he did during his lunch recess, about which I was unaware. Therefore, at the time when I read his entry, this was a non-shared topic. Some entries contained both shared and non-shared topics and I treated them as so. I have encountered a few topics that I could not confidently place into one category or another. However, I based my decision on personal judgment as to whether they should be categorized as shared or non-shared topics.
The time the participants spend together may be another variable to take into consideration when analyzing this data set. I expected a higher percentage of shared topics during the summer vacation since the time spent together by the children and me is greatly increased. The rationale here is based on the assumption that greater time spent together between interlocutor would produce greater number of shared topics. In table 3, I provide the dates of the participant’s school year and the summer vacation.

Table 3. Dates of the participants’ academic year and the summer break

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring semester</th>
<th>Summer vacation</th>
<th>Fall semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 08, 2002 - May 31, 2002</td>
<td>June 1, 2002 - August 21, 2002</td>
<td>August 22, 2002 - Octpber 08, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, I divided both Emily’s and John’s entries from four 2-month periods into two categories, shared and non-shared topics. In order to increase the reliability of the results, I repeated the process two times and resolved any disagreement. I first counted the number of topics in each category (shared and non-shared topics) and calculated the percentage of each type in each period. The percentage of the shared vs. non-shared topics in each period allowed me to examine the presence of topic change from shared to non-shared from period to period for each participant.

To discover whether a writer would produce more language for a non-shared topic than one which was shared, presumably to accommodate anticipated questions from the receiver, I calculated the mean words for both topics. I calculated the mean words by dividing every entry in each period into two categories, shared and non-shared topics, and counting the total number of words produced for each category using the “Word count” function, and dividing total words
in shared topics by the number of shared topics to obtain the mean words per topic. The same process was repeated for the non-shared topics.

4) Is there an increase in the number of language function use in the process of journaling? (Shuy, 1984).

A dialogue journal permits the use of social functions of language, that is, language which illustrates “what we use language for, and what we expect to achieve by using language that we could not achieve without it” (Halliday, 1976. p.18). Language acquisition can be seen as learning to use linguistic functions, which can in turn be used to measure writing ability through the use of function language (Shuy, 1988b).

For the present study, I categorized the data into 12 language functions based on the taxonomy used in Shuy 1984 (Table 4). I chose this particular taxonomy because the written texts used to analyze the function language use in Shuy’s study (1984) were from ESL students who were involved in a dialogue journaling with a teacher in school context. The participants in Shuy’s study also resided in the U.S. approximately less than a year before the journaling began. This is similar to the length of time my children resided in the U.S. before our journaling began. After the analysis of the written texts, I wanted to provide a comparison in the function language use by ESL students in a school context and in the home context. This could provide useful information on home journaling. I provide a definition and an example of each category below:

1. Reporting information: Expression of general, personal informational facts regarding past events, daily activities, daily plans for later hour, and future plans.

   Example: Emily: At 9:00 my Tuter teacher is coming. But actually my Tuter teacher’s coming at 9:45. (General facts)
2. Expressing opinion: Expression of feeling toward addressee, situation, school, friends, sibling; Expression of missing their father, being lonely at school, sad, happy, disappointed; Expression of small wishes, personal preferences.
   
   Example: Emily: ....... And I hope you will get better and better so you will not have any cold. (Small wish)

3. Asking questions: Asking simple questions to addressee, asking addressee’s general opinion; Asking questions the children are not aware of regarding situation; Asking simple vocabulary word in English. Excluding requests in question form.
   
   Example: John: mom do you think I did a good job today at your friend house
   (Asking a simple question)

4. Making requests: Asking addressee that requires a physical services, mental attention, or oral services.
   
   Example: John: can we go to rbise so we can buy rosebeafe and mom should we go now because I am so hungre OK? (Physical service)

   Example: John: Why don’t you think about that? (Mental attention)

   Example: Emily: Mom can you ask dad with Email that will more good. (Oral service)

5. Asking permission: Asking for a grant that does not involve addressee’s physical services; Asking for a “yes” answer.
   
   Example: John: can Emily and I play at outside because I hate to be stuck in home.
   (Asking for permission)

   
   Example: John: mom I have a someting to tell/ you how come you all ways play game when you study now ......
7. Clarifying: Expression of clarification of a misunderstanding from the other participants;
   Example: Emily: mom your misunderstanding I don't want to quit the flute lesson

   Example: Emily: I sorry about the morning happened....

9. Thanking: Expression of appreciation
   Example: Emily: Mom thank you. I really apreshape you. Thank you mom Thank you again.

10. Answering questions: Answer to simple questions from addressee; sometimes simple “yes” or “no”.
    Example: Mom: .......So daddy called? What did he say?
             John: he said what your mom doing and I say she went to school.

    Example: Emily: I'll pray for your every night. I'll promise.

12. Threatening: Expression of simple threat to the addressee.
    Example: John: Mom if you do that <again> Im going to(X) bake my own cuntree(s) with my dat this thursday when you.....

Shuy (1988) categorized the language functions into 14 categories for the analysis of data collected in an academic context. Because the present study was carried out in a different context, at home, I made a few changes in terms of grouping a number of categories into one or adding a few more categories such as functions asking permission, making requests, answering questions, promising, clarifying, and threatening. Table 4 shows the changes I made for the present study.

The functions reporting general facts, reporting personal facts and predicting in Shuy’s (1984) study fall under reporting information in this study. Shuy’s functions reporting general facts, reporting personal facts and predicting were informative facts that include a writer’s daily activities, past activities, future activities, different traditions in the writer’s home country,
weather, etc. For this study, most of the children’s entries under the function *reporting information* were reporting facts concerning daily activities, events of the day, and daily plan in a later hour, etc. The functions *evaluating* and *reporting opinion* in Shuy’s study fall under the function *expressing opinion* in this study. Shuy distinguished *evaluating* from *reporting opinion* by explaining *evaluating* as an opinion that can be judged on external norms whereas *reporting opinion* as an expression of feelings that cannot be judged by external norms. In this study, evaluation was also accompanied by the inner feelings of the writer.

Table 4. Comparison of categories of two studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting general facts</td>
<td>Reporting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting personal facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting opinion</td>
<td>Expressing opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking general information</td>
<td>Asking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking academic information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking personal question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking opinion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making requests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving directives</td>
<td>Asking permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking for clarification</td>
<td>Clarifying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>Apologizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>Thanking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answering questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Threatening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four functions asking general information, asking academic information, asking personal question and asking opinion in Shuy’s study (1984) fall under asking questions in this study. The children produced many questions, most of which were general and personal questions, which made dividing them into 4 categories unnecessary. The function making requests used in the present study offers a broader category than Shuy’s more narrowly classroom-oriented giving directives. For the current study, an option is available to the reader under the function making requests function since they were directed to their mother.

For the process of analyzing texts into a variety of categories, I based my judgment on Shuy’s (1984) analysis. I first determined a unit of analysis for the sake of consistency. I marked each identifiable sentence representing one idea as one unit representing one function. Shuy (1988) explains that this procedure is somewhat interpretive but offers great consistency in the long run. However, due to the children’s limited writing skills, the task of identifying a sentence was not a simple matter. For those unidentifiable sentences, I used an arbitrary marker to indicate where one idea ends. Many times the children used connecting words “and” when changing ideas or subjects. After marking each function, I counted the number of occurrences and tabulated the frequency of occurrences relative to other functions used in percentage for period 1 and period 4.

Sometimes one idea that can be represented in one sentence using connecting words or phrases was represented in a few identifiable sentences. This may have happened due to their limited writing skills such as a lack of connecting words.

Example 1: Emily: At 9:00 my Tuter teacher is coming. But actually my Tuter teacher’s coming at 9:45.

In this entry in example 1 above, Emily is reporting information about her tutor coming late (one idea) in two identifiable sentences. These two sentences, therefore, were categorized as one function, reporting information.
In example 2 below, John is asking a question regarding his aunt’s health condition. This one idea is represented in three different fragments, and last two are connected by “or”. These fragments represented one function, *asking questions*.

**Example 2:** John: mom is my aunt. is my aunt is sike or she got/......

(slash (/) indicates one unit).

In other cases, more than one idea was written in one entry using the connecting word “and”. In this case, each sentence was categorized each time a function was identified. This is the complete entry of above example 2.

**Example 3:** John: mom is my aunt. is my aunt is sike or she got/ and tell my sister to stop kicking my xx Ok / and one more ting playing game I just can’t believe you that you are not playing game when you study/ would you please stop playing games when you study:

In example 3 above, there are four functions total in one entry, all connected by “and” or sometimes without any signs of sentence completion. First, as mentioned, John is asking a question regarding his aunt’s health condition (*asking questions*). Second, John is making a request for me to tell his sister to stop kicking him (*making requests*). Third, he is expressing his opinion about my previous statement (*complaining*). I, however, categorized this as complaining. I will provide the rationale for this below. Finally, he is making another request to tell me to stop playing game when I am studying (*making requests*).

In contrast, the children produced many fragments, run-on sentences, and, a few times, they produced phrases representing different functions connected without any punctuation at all. For this case, I decided to consider one unit as one phrase representing one idea.

**Example 4:** Emily: Mom can you ask dad with Email that will more good.

In this sentence, there are two ideas, therefore, two functions were identified in one sentence. The first function is *making requests* (requesting for me to ask her father something)
and the second function is *expressing opinion* (Emily is suggesting that sending an e-mail sounds better than asking her father on the phone).

In this study, the children’s use of the language function *complaining* was in the form of different functions and many times was accompanied by the use of *making requests, reporting information, or expressing opinion*. For these, I have based my judgments while categorizing the data on my knowledge of the context surrounding the event. For example:

**Example 5:** Emily: Did you read my letter / please give me your letter to me.

The word “letter” in above example meant my responding entry. This entry was written in the form of another language function (*asking questions*) but I categorized it as a function of *complaining* and *making requests* based on the context of the entry. In her prior entry, Emily had written a long complaint about her brother being very rude to her and her friends and had really asked for help. She wanted me to do something about it. I failed to read her entry immediately, she wrote another entry immediately afterward, implicitly complaining. In the entry above, she was complaining to me about my lack of response and my not doing anything to her brother. Therefore, this particular entry was categorized under *complaining* and *making requests*. For some entries, the clue was available in the previous entry but for others, the clue was available from other sources.

**Example 6:** John: at the school we went out side in the morning/ and of course it was cold out side/ and today it was hat and /I was cold(X)hat to becauese I was waering a long pantes.

The first sentence in example 6 was *reporting information*. The second, John was *expressing opinion* regarding the weather. The third sentence, he was again *expressing opinion* and the last sentence he seemed *reporting information* but it was *complaining*. That morning, John asked me if he could wear shorts but I insisted that he should wear long pants. He went to school that morning discontented. After school, he came back home and wrote the above entry
while he was still angry. He even misspelled his word “hot” in the third sentence but self-corrected in the fourth sentence.

Most of the language functions were quite clear as to where each idea ends. There were also a few entries that required an understanding of the specific context, the writer’s personality, emotional states and relationship with the audience to be categorized properly. However, as a participant-observer familiar with the context, I had certain insights in categorizing functions.

As I was the sole analyzer of this study, I analyzed all entries at least three times in order to verify and increase the reliability of the results. For some entries, it was very clear from the first analysis. However, for a few entries, I had to repeat the analysis process over 3 times and check for the consistency. Regardless of repeated analysis, I had few sentences in dispute but the dispute was negligible that it did not affect the results in percentages.

Analyzing the entries based on the categories I listed above in table 3.5 will allow us to visualize the functional use of written language by the participants. In addition, the findings from previous studies suggest that the more fluent the student, the higher the number of functions used. This analysis, therefore, will provide the written language competence for the underlying competence of children’s ability in using written language.

For the analysis of the entries, I chose those written in the first 2-month period and the last 2-month period. The rationale for choosing this particular data is to see to what extent a variety of functions were used before the children were introduced to dialogue journaling and whether their use of functions increased after 6-month of experiences with dialogue journaling.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the procedures I used to examine the writing fluency development of two children in their L2 over 8 months of a dialogue journaling activity. I provided a measure to examine an effectiveness of implicit feedback and explicit feedback to
errors in this activity. For the purpose of determining fluency development, I have based my judgments on the increase in the following areas: 1) correct use of target morphemes, 2) overall word production, 3) non-shared topics and a higher mean of word counts in non-shared topics, 4) the number of language function use. Based on these analyses, I will attempt to look for evidence on the effectiveness of dialogue journaling for SLA development in a home environment.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study was to examine L2 writing fluency development by two young ESL students with their mother, the researcher of this study, in the process of dialogue journaling in a home environment. Guided by the research questions, I analyzed the written texts by the two participants. I present the major findings in the order of the research questions followed by their corresponding discussion. In the subsequent sections, I also discuss the unexpected, yet tremendously valuable, by-products of the journaling experience. All names of the participants and referrals in journal entries have been given pseudonyms. In addition, I transcribed words written in Korean and provided the translations in English in brackets. The symbols in the transcription are provided in Appendix A.

Major Findings

Research question 1.

Which type of response, explicit or implicit, is more effective with respect to error correction?

I was unable to collect enough data to provide any conclusive answer, because I discovered that the children put too much attention on errors after my explicit feedback, thus inhibiting their desire to write. However, the following paragraphs and example entries will provide different but very useful information regarding the two types of responses I provided to my children.

I provided explicit feedback to John in March when I noticed a frequent spelling error of the word “always”. The following excerpts provide a clear pattern of my explicit feedback during our exchanges. In order to clearly refer to the texts, I provide the entry numbers for this
section only. I wrote the following entry (Mom 37) after I noticed his spelling error in one of his school assignments.

March 27, 2002

Mom 37: John! I don't understand. Why do you always spell “always” wrong? You always write “All ways” This is wrong. Anyway, .........

John 20: Mom, I want to tell you something yesterday .........

Without commenting on my explicit feedback in my entry Mom 37, John changed the topic, making another spelling error on a different word in his entry John 20 above. John, again, misspelled the word “all ways” in his entry John 21.

John 21: ........Mom when I was waiting for the <school> bus ............Nancy's brother he all ways saying shot up and I am so ......

It seemed that John was completely ignoring my feedback and I was curious if he even read my response. I spotted the same mistake in his school assignment again a few days later that I mentioned it to him referring to my journaling response. “That’s not important” was his reply. Hearing his response, I did not feel the need to provide explicit feedback to him anymore because I had the same feeling at that point that he did not need to spell accurately.

In July, I provided explicit feedback on regular past “ed” ending, which I placed a little more emphasis on than on the spelling mistake. In addition, I was still interested in determining the effectiveness of explicit response in a dialogue journaling activity. The following extracts illustrate exchanges between John and me.

July 13, 2002

John 49: Mom could we go to swimming pool with Jenny and Sarah and Kate at 1 because Jenny ask us if we can go ...... please! Please !!!!
Mom 85: John! You may go to the swimming pool only if you finish all your assignments. You know ....... Joseph, if Jenny asked you yesterday, then you should say “Jenny asked us if .....” OK?

John 50: what's this word mean

(The “word” in question was “assignments” in my entry Mom 85).

John, I thought, completely ignored my second explicit response in my entry Mom 85 on July 13, 2002, and he wrote entry John 50 asking a different question. However, a few days later, I was specifically told not to do that again from John. I had doubts about whether he was reading my entries, but he was. I tried to trace if he had even made any corrections upon receiving explicit feedback in my response. I perused his entries from John 52 (July 18) to John 57 (July 29), and found 5 contexts that required “ed” ending where he did not provide it. I also perused my entries during that period of time, but I found that I did not model any “ed” ending either. However, in John 58 below, he showed overgeneralization on “ed” ending.

John 58: mom how much did my dad sleep ed because I want to play football and tell me when I was gone.

He may have been a little conscious about “ed” endings after my feedback. Only once in entry John 58 (above) did he try to respond to the explicit feedback by adding “ed” ending to the word “sleep + ed”. He attempted to make corrections but kept on making mistakes. He wrote only 6 entries for 11 days after my second explicit feedback but otherwise did not show any signs of discouragement or disappointment. This is rather less than his usual entry frequency, but this seemed due to my husband’s visit and a summer vacation trip. For John, explicit feedback was not a preferable response as he had made it clear.
After little success with John regarding explicit error correction, I decided to provide explicit feedback to Emily during the summer when she persistently missed the regular past “ed” endings. The following excerpts illustrate the exchanges between Emily and me.

**August 02, 2002**

Emily 71: Mom today night (tonight). I cook for John Because he said that his hug(X) hungred. ..... 

**August 05, 2002**

Mom 91: Emily, when you are talking about something that happened before, than(X) then you should use past tense. For example, you should say “I cooked...”

Emily 72: Mom, Yesterday we [because we said good-bye] it was kind of [lonely]. Mom I didn’t ....... 

As John, Emily seemed, at first, to be completely ignoring my explicit feedback (Mom 91) to her error in the entry Emily 71 and continued with a different topic in the subsequent entry (Emily 72).

Two days later (August 07, 2002), she wrote another entry (Emily 73) below that she again did not provide the past tense “ed” ending the verb “happen”. I again provided my second explicit feedback in my entry Mom 92 to her error in her entry Emily 73.

**August 07, 2002**

Emily 73: Mom, I have many friends ....... Today at LEE PARK there was the some interesting happen today at ....

Mom 92: Emily, you should say “there was something interesting thing happened today”. Anyway, Emily, I didn’t think that was interesting...

Emily’s next entry (Emily 74) below on the same day shows an interesting form.

Emily 74: Yes I was like Yeil’s house. Because .......

Mom 93: You should say “I liked it” Oh, I see ...
She seemed to be aware of the “past tense” form but did not fully understand the rule. I provided the third explicit feedback (Mom 93) on her regular past “ed” ending based on my assumption that she might be able to understand the “rule” when she is conscious of the form. However, after my feedback in my entry Mom 93, Emily simply responded with silence, just as she would do in oral communication. She literally stopped writing. The number of words in her entries from Emily 75 to Emily 80 decreased dramatically. The mean word counts of these 6 entries was 32 words. Considering the mean words per entry in Period 4 was 45 words, this was below the average. Her entries after the above exchanges include the following:

**August 09, 2002**

Emily 75: Mom it’s me Emily again. Well I like it too. I’m kinda happy to go uncle’s house. but Anyway I still want to see Kristine. Kristine is so cute. and (X)

Emily 76: I’m going to do watch movie. name is life is beautiful. I love that movie because the(X) that movie is so beautiful. Well I’ll write in(xxx) later.

**August 12, 2002**

Emily 78: “Mom” I know that. but I’m want to see my daddy.

**August 13, 2002**

Emily 79: “Mom” it’s me again Emily. I really miss daddy already. I and it didn’t even pass one day. Well I really really miss daddy.

As these entries show, Emily seemed to be a little demotivated. In Emily 75, she had the intention of continuing but stopped after writing “and”, then she crossed it out. In Emily 76, she specifically mentioned that she would write later. In Emily 78, she wrote two simple sentences about how much she missed her dad. I should also point out that Emily’s unusually short entries should not be attributed to solely to my explicit feedback. She was very disappointed about her father going back to Korea. She might also have been “sad” after watching a movie.
Interestingly, the entry *Emily 82* provides me with a corrective response to my entry *Mom 98* below.

**August 16, 2002**

*Mom 98:* ..... About John, I need to be harsh to Jo sometimes. Otherwise, John will get ..... 

*Emily 82:* ... but I'm still little worried. I know that....... Actually you got your spell wrong with Jo. You should write John.....

In this entry, she corrected me, just as I had corrected her in previous responsive entries. It seemed to imply that she might not prefer that type of response and that she did exactly the same to me, presumably hoping that I would feel the same. Her entry a few days later suggested that explicit feedback may have led to over-concern with form.

**August 22, 2002**

*Emily 84:* ............. also I just got a mistake of writing I'm kind of worry.

**August 26, 2002**

*Mom 100:* ............. Emily, what mistake are you talking about? What mistake in writing?

**August 27, 2002**

*Emily 85:* .... The mistake means that I sometimes wo(x)rong(x) wrong with a spelling, but I'm trying to write better and spell. wh wright (XX). ..... 

*Mom102:* ... Emily, don't worry about (X) too much about mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. I sometimes make or write wrong spelling. I sometimes misspell easy words, too. I can really tell that you are trying to write better also. Good for you. ........
Two exchanges above (Emily 84 and Mom 85; Emily 85 and Mom 102) suggested that even a few explicit corrections have caused her to be concerned. After these exchanges, I did not want to continue with providing explicit feedback or search for the effectiveness between the two types. She orally told me during this time that she was sorry for making mistakes but never explicitly told me to stop correcting her. These entries show that she was conscious of her errors and that she was acknowledging the need to correct herself. However, this was exactly the opposite of what I wanted to achieve through our journaling experience. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I did not want my children to feel that their entries were being constantly corrected, thereby possibly causing them to lose interest and motivation in participating in the activity. I stopped providing explicit feedback starting with Mom 94.

For neither Emily nor John, was explicit feedback very effective in correcting errors and teaching linguistic “rules”. But interestingly, they reacted differently. Because Emily seemed conscious of regular past tense, I wanted to make the rule clear to her and therefore I provided a greater number of explicit feedback to Emily. She provided apologies for her mistakes and became conscious of her errors at a certain point. John seemed to be aware of form to an extent where he tried to add “ed” endings at some point though he kept on making mistakes and had the courage to express his feelings.

Based on the reactions from both Emily and John, it seems that in experimenting with providing explicit feedback, individual variation should be considered. If my children had experienced traditional classroom teaching where explicit feedback is a dominant feature, Emily and John might have gained knowledge of linguistic “rules”. This knowledge may also have been accompanied by a sense of guilt or shame, especially for Emily, when mistakes are made. Since it was not the case for Emily and John, I thought it was much more valuable and important in the learning to sustain their motivation and confidence than to continue my search for the answer on the effectiveness of explicit feedback.
Research question 2.

To what extent, if at all, does writing fluency develop during journaling?

1) Is there an increase in correct use of target morphemes (Peyton 1986).

2) Is there an increase in overall total word production, the number of entries and topics; and the mean word counts per entry and topic in time period?

3) Is there an increase in non-shared topics during the journaling and higher mean words per non-shared topics compared to the shared topics? (Kreeft, 1984)

4) Is there an increase in the number of language function use in the process of journaling? (Shuy, 1984).

I should emphasize two points before presenting the results. First, the present study is a case study conducted with two participants; therefore, the sample is too small to reach any absolute conclusion about the effectiveness of a dialogue journal activity for all ESL learners. Second, it is also inconclusive because I did not control the participants’ other exposure to a variety of other input in ESL context, which no doubt contributed to the growth of their fluency and proficiency. However, the results will still be valuable as documentation of the process as two ESL students carried it out in a natural home environment with their mother in their L2 and how they evolved as writers during that period of time.

1) Is there an increase in correct use of target morphemes?

I examined 5 morphemes: progressive “ing”, copula “be-verb”, past tense irregular verbs, past tense “ed” ending on regular verbs, and third person singular “s” endings on present tense verbs. I particularly chose the above morphemes because the first three morphemes were frequently occurring verbs and the last two morphemes 4 and 5 were difficult to acquire (Peyton, 1986).
Results

Emily's morpheme acquisition

Table 5 provides the percentiles of five verb-related morphemes “supplied” in contexts in which they were “required”. Emily showed signs of improvement on the progressive “ing”, copula “be” verb and irregular past tense morphemes in the process of dialogue journaling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb-related Morphemes</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Be + ing</td>
<td>91 %</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>92 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copula Be verb (Pres. &amp; Past)</td>
<td>93 %</td>
<td>84 %</td>
<td>91 %</td>
<td>96 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular Past Tense</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>57 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Past Tense</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>50 % *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Singular “s”</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
<td>50 % *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The percentage in * less than five “required” contexts.
- The percent in Tables are rounded up.

Emily supplied a high percentage of the progressive “ing” (91%) and copula “be” verb (93%) from the Period 1, with a slight fall from Period 2 on the progressive (80%) and copula “be” verb (84%). The percentiles of two morphemes, however, showed a continuous increase after Period 2 and Emily managed to keep them above the 96% range in Period 4. She nearly mastered these morphemes. For the irregular past tense, Emily started at the 75% in Period 1 and dropped to 60% in Period 2 and further to 57% in Period 3 but reached the 100% accuracy in Period 4 (see Figure 1).

For the regular past tense “ed” endings and third person singular “s” endings, there were not enough “required” contexts throughout the journaling process. For “ed” endings, there were only two “required” contexts and only one correct form was provided in Period 4 that 50% accuracy is inconclusive at this point. In Period 4, the 50% accuracy for the third singular “s”
ending was achieved from only two “required” contexts that Emily was able to provide one “s” ending.

Figure 1 Emily’s percentile of morphemes supplied in required contexts

![Graph showing percentile of morphemes supplied in required contexts over periods]

**John’s morpheme acquisition**

The results in Table 6 reflect that John reached 94% accuracy on the progressive “ing” and copula “be” verb morphemes in Period 4. John acquired a high accuracy level on the copula “be” with a slight fall from Period 3 (97%) to Period 4 (94%). John’s use of the progressive form in Period 1 (57%) was not as accurate as the copular “be” but reached 94% accuracy in Period 4 (Figure 2). John also managed to show improvement on the irregular past tense forms reaching 70%.

Table 6 Percentile of morphemes supplied in required contexts by John.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb-related Morphemes</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Be + ing</td>
<td>57 %</td>
<td>83 %</td>
<td>88 %</td>
<td>94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copula “Be” verb (Pres. &amp; Past)</td>
<td>88 %</td>
<td>87 %</td>
<td>97 %</td>
<td>94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular Past Tense</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>73 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Past Tense “ed”</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Singular “s”</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
<td>25 % *</td>
<td>50 % *</td>
<td>0 % *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The percentage in less than five “required” contexts.
On the other hand, John achieved only 14% on the regular past tense "ed" in Period 4. Third person singular "s" does not provide any conclusive evidence on the acquisition. As in Emily's case, there were fewer than five "required" contexts for all 3 periods. For Period 2 and 3, there were four "required" contexts and John provided only one correct form in Period 2 (25%), and two correct form in Period 3 (50%).

Figure 2 John's percentile of morphemes supplied in required contexts

Discussion

At the beginning of the children's journaling, they were placed in an "intermediate level" ESL class at their public elementary school. I am unable to verify the children's exact English fluency level at the beginning or end of their journaling, but the assumption here is that the children started from a point in their L2 development in Period 1, and ended at a certain level after our journaling period (Period 4), and any progress might be reflected in part by the acquisition of certain morphemes.

Interestingly, there are a few similar patterns of acquisition shared by both participants. The three morphemes (progressive "ing," + "be" verbs, copula "be," and irregular past tense
form) seemed to show a gradual improvement and all reached a level above 70% accuracy for both children. These three morphemes out of five target morphemes were also very frequently "required" thereby frequently used forms in the journaling process. The other two morphemes (regular past "ed" and third singular "s") were not "required" as frequently as the three morphemes mentioned above. As they were used less frequently, the results indicate little improvement or low percentile range.

The findings in the present study are similar to Peyton's (1986) in which the progressive "ing", copula "be" and irregular past, were also very frequently found morphemes and showed improvement. The findings in Peyton's study also indicate that the third singular "s" and regular past "ed" were rarely used by any of the participants and there was little or no improvement of these morphemes over time. In this study, the infrequent use of singular "s" and regular past "ed" was also evident.

The results raise a few interesting questions. First, what could have caused ESL students to produce less of a certain form over another? Could the preferences be caused by the nature of journaling process or a participant's self-confidence in using a certain form? Second, could the improvement of a certain form be attributed to frequent opportunities of trial and error, or is little improvement of other forms due to lack of opportunities?

Based on the results discussed above, I cannot ascertain that the children have gained knowledge in five target morphemes solely as a result of journaling, since I did not test them on knowledge of the target morphemes of my study before and after the journaling, nor did I control for their exposure to the morphemes outside of this context. There is no evidence to support whether the forms they used were acquired during the process of journaling or had already been acquired but were only now showing in their entries in the form of written language. In addition, an increase in percentile may not reflect complete acquisition. There was a certain period of time where a few overgeneralized forms appeared. The participants might have
provided the correct form during those trial and error periods without full understanding of "rules". However, while such positive outcomes cannot be attributed to the dialogue journaling study alone, it is also possible that the study made a contribution to this progress.

2. Is there an increase in overall total word production, the number of entries and topics; and the mean word counts per entry and topic in time period?

In this section, I report on the growth in productivity and fluency as measured by an increase in total word productions, the mean word counts per entry and topic. An increase in mean words may suggest that a writer is focusing on a topic by providing details on the same topic. The elaborating details on a given topic suggest writing fluency development (Staton, 1988c). I also report the number of entries and topics per time period. An increase in the number of entries and topics may indicate a writer's involvement in the activity.

Emily's word productivity

Results

As shown in Table 7, Emily demonstrated a continuous growth in total word production as well as the number of entries and the number of topics entered from period to period. The total word counts show almost 170% growth from Period 1 to Period 4, with Emily producing 877 words in Period 1 and jumping to 1491 words in Period 4 (column A). The word production did not show a big increase during the first 4 months. Emily produced a total 877 words in Period 1 and 964 words in Period 2, but total word production increased dramatically from Period 2 (964 words) to Period 3 (1424 words). The word production in Period 3 to Period 4 also showed a relatively small increase, from 1424 words to 1491 words (see Figure 3).

The number of entries entered per period also increased from 24 entries in Period 1 to 33 entries in Period 4 (column B); however, it remained constant at 24 entries for the first 4 months (Period 1 and 2). Emily also entered a greater number of topics as the journaling
proceeded from 31 topics in Period 1 to 48 topics in Period 4 (column C). Emily seems to show a continuous increase in column A, B and C (see Figure 3 and 4).

Table 7 Emily's productivity per time period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period (2 months)</th>
<th>Total word Counts</th>
<th>No. of entries</th>
<th>No. of topics</th>
<th>Mean words per entry/STD*</th>
<th>Mean words per topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Feb.8 - Apr.7)</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37 / 3.16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Apr.8 – Jun.7)</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40 / 4.25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Jun.8 – Aug.7)</td>
<td>1424</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55 / 8.90</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Aug.8 – Oct.7)</td>
<td>1491</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45 / 5.26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 8 months</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* STD is the standard deviation.

As shown above, the mean words per entry (column D) and mean words per topic (column E) also increased with slight decreases in both in Period 4. I provide the standard deviation for the mean words per entry in column D. The mean words per entry increased from 37 words in Period 1 to 45 words in Period 4, with a big jump to 55 words in Period 3. The mean words per topic remained the same for the first 4 months (28 words), but increased to 36 words in Period 3. This again showed a small decline to 31 words in Period 4 (see Figure 5).

**Discussion**

An increase in word production is generally expected in the process of journaling. However, the results in Period 3 indicate quite a dramatic increase. This may have resulted from a single entry in Period 3. In this entry, Emily was complaining about John, her brother, making a fool of himself in front of her friends and the word counts of this entry alone reached 219 words as shown in the large Standard Deviation for Period 3. Considering the mean of 55 words per entry in this period, this was quite a long entry and the longest entry Emily
produced within the period of 8 months. The higher mean words in Period 3, summer vacation, may be attributed to entry 53 but it also suggests that Emily might have found more interesting topics to her (see Figure 5). If Emily’s very long entry 53 were to be taken out of the tabulation, the mean words per entry in Period 3 is still 48 words, which is higher than the other periods. As mentioned earlier, Emily’s observation of her own writing improvement toward the end of May might have motivated her to produce more language.

**John’s word productivity**

**Results**

John’s total word production increased from 813 words in Period 1 to 1429 words in Period 4, although not in a continuous pattern (see Table 8 and Figure 6). This is almost 180% growth from Period 1 to Period 4 (column A). In Period 3, however, the total word production, the number of entry (column B) and the number of topics (column C) dropped (see Figure 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total Word Counts</th>
<th>No. of Entries</th>
<th>No. of topics</th>
<th>Mean word per entry/STD*</th>
<th>Mean words per topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Feb.8 - Apr.7)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43 / 4.27</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Apr.8 – Jun.7)</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44 / 5.42</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Jun.8 – Aug.7)</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44 / 6.56</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Aug.8 – Oct.7)</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60 / 7.61</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 8 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers alone showed a big decrease during his summer vacation but the mean words per entry (column D) remained high at 44 words per entry. Furthermore, the mean words per topic (Column E) actually increased from 27 words in Period 2 to 42 words in Period 3 (Figure 8).
Figure 6
John's total word counts

Figure 7
John's number of entries and topics

Figure 8
John's mean words per entry and mean words per topic
Discussion

Although John’s total word production showed a big drop during the summer, the mean words per entry and topic actually increased, suggesting that his topics became more elaborated. John’s time for outdoor activities probably left less time to write his entries, but when he did, he wrote about them in a more detailed and elaborated way. This may have been a factor of the summer vacation, or John’s growing proficiency in English. John’s total word production almost doubled in Period 4 (1429 words) from Period 3 (756 words). After John’s academic year began, he met new friends and new teachers and he was very excited to start his new year. John wrote two entries after having a little argument with his friend. The words produced in two entries were 155 words and 168 words each. These two entries might account for a big jump in total word production in Period 4, accounting in part for the high mean words per entry in Period 4 (60 words). If I take these two entries out of tabulation, the total word production is still high of 1106 words in Period 4. In other words, John’ overall word production increased in the process of dialogue journaling over a period of 8 months.

Comparison of two participants

It is also interesting to compare the results between the children (Figure 9 & 10). The results in these figures show the total word counts and the number of entries entered in the same period of time by both children. As shown, the summer vacation seemed to have a very different effect on the journaling process of the two participants.

The results can be explained in many ways and from many different perspectives, but as the mother of these children, I want to focus in my explanation on the aspects of the childrens’ attitudes towards journaling. During the summer vacation, it is generally the case that there are a variety of outdoor activities that children find more interesting than academic work. As
explained in the previous chapter, Emily is an academically highly motivated girl whereas John is not yet serious about school.

With this background knowledge on the children, Emily might have felt a little pressure in writing journal entries for her improvement in English and at the same time wanted to please me as I could have provided a little pressure in writing entries. Emily’s following two entries during our summer vacation provide an illustration.

**July 18, 2002.**

*Emily: Mom you need to write something. So that I can write something else to put in the letter. Anyway you need to write something not us not dad you!!!!!!*

**July 23, 2002.**

*Emily: Mom why are you not writing a letter to me so that I can prove English a lot. writing(XX) write something. ...I am really excited to come Nebraska....*
The word "letter" in both entries meant my reply and the word "prove" meant improve. In her first entry, she seems to be complaining about my lack of responses during the summer to her journal entries. These entries illustrate that Emily was taking our journaling activity seriously as a measure to improve her English, accounting in part for her increase in the number of entries entered.

John, on the other hand, did not seem to feel as much pressure as his sister did in improving his English. He fully enjoyed his summer and did not spend much time writing his entries. John's entries, however, increased once his academic year began. Although his English might have improved during the summer, John seemed to realize his improvement and gain confidence in writing during his 4th grade year a few days after the school began. This might have encouraged him to take this journaling more seriously than previously, as the entry below illustrates.

September 04, 2002.

John: Mom, guess what I use a new word like sincerely, so I'm asking if you are happy when I was asking using a new word.

Mom: I also used a new word today but it is very hard word. Do you want to know? It is "course of action". Anyway, I'm happy about you using new words all the time. This indicates that you are learning and your English is improving a lot. When do you use the word "sincerely"?

In this exchange, John was proud of himself using a new word. I intentionally used another new word "indicate", and he orally asked me the meaning of "indicate" and "course of action" while he was reading my response.

Frankly, I had not noticed the importance of this entry until a few months after my data collection period ended. One day in February 2003, I asked John about our journaling and told him we could stop if he did not want to write. He answered that he wished to continue, adding
that he was trying out new words at school that I had written in my responses to his journal entries. I am unable to verify the dates he has been trying out new words but I believe that he became a little more serious about journaling after this incident.

Emily also seemed to be motivated after school started when she received compliments from her ESL teacher on her improvement in English. In class, she also gained confidence after she scored well on a reading test, on which her native English-speaking classmates had scored in approximately the same range. Her pride in herself at that time might have given her additional motivation to continue in our journaling activity.

In short, although both children gained writing fluency as shown by increases in word production, the number of entries and topics and the mean words, they differed from one another in their motivation and in what they gained from the process. This suggests that we can expect a larger group of children to also respond to journaling in a variety of ways and probably to benefit in highly individualized ways.

3) Is there an increase on non-shared topics during the journaling and a higher mean words per non-shared topics compared to the shared topics? (Kreeft, 1984)

The purpose of this analysis was to examine an increase in non-shared topics by the participants in the process of journaling, suggesting a writer's written language ability in creating a meaningful context for non-shared topics in answering anticipated questions from his/her audience (Kreeft, 1984). I also compared the mean word counts in non-shared topics with shared topics under the assumption that a higher word production may suggest more elaboration.

Emily's use of non-shared topics

Results

Emily demonstrated an increase in non-shared topics during the process of journaling, suggesting that writing fluency development in that a writer must produce more language to
create a context for an audience in non-shared topics (Kreeft, 1984). Table 9 presents the percentages of both shared and non-shared topics produced by Emily in the 4 periods (see Figure 11).

While Emily's percentage of non-shared topics in Period 1 was only 6%, it reached 31% in Period 4. In Period 2, it increased to 11% and again to 27% in Period 3, the summer vacation. Emily's non-shared topics further increased to 31% after school started and this is much higher than the percentages in Period 1 (6%) and in Period 2 (11%), which both were academic periods.

Table 9 Emily's percentile of shared vs. non-shared topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.*</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-shared Topic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Topic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No. is used as an abbreviation for “Number”.

Though an increase in non-shared topics is one measure of fluency development, a comparison of a mean word counts between the shared and the non-shared topics may provide another measure in determining writing fluency development.

Table 10 Emily's mean word counts in shared vs. non-shared topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Mean Words on Shared Topic</th>
<th>Mean Words on Non-Shared Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emily produced a mean of 28 words under shared topics in Period 1, which is lower than the mean words in non-shared topics (39 words). The mean words on shared topics did not show much increase as the journaling proceeded, and they ranged between a low of 25 words in Period 3 to high of 28 words in Period 1 (see Figure 12). The mean words on non-shared topics, however, stayed in a much higher range, that is, between 30 words in Period 2 to 62 words in Period 3.

**Figure 11**
Emily’s percentile of shared vs. non-shared topics in time period

**Figure 12**
Emily’s mean words in shared vs. non-shared topics in time period

**Discussion**

The 27% of non-shared topics during the summer is somewhat higher than expected. I expected a lower percentage of non-shared topics during the summer, since the time Emily spent with me during her summer break was much higher than the time she would during the academic year. I expected as a writer spends more time with an audience, he/she would produce a lower percentage of non-shared topics. Emily also had more exciting exposures to a variety of
outdoor activities during the summer that she might have wanted to inform me of; this may explain the higher percentage of non-shared topics in comparison with her academic year in Period 1 and 2. It seems that the length of time spent with her journal interlocutors did not affect the result as much as I had expected. A higher percentage of non-shared topics in Period 4 (31%) compared to the Period 1 and 2 (academic periods) may be attributed to her meeting new friends, and teachers, in addition to being in the highest grade level (6th grade) in her school.

The higher mean word counts on non-shared topics strongly demonstrates that Emily is providing more language in non-shared topics, presumably in order to create the necessary context for her audience. Furthermore, the continuous increase in the mean words in non-shared topics, in turn, strongly supports that Emily is acquiring skills in providing details to inform an audience in the process of journaling. As noted earlier, the mean words of 62 words in Period 3 is maybe unduly high because of the very long entry 53, a non-shared topic.

Below two examples are written in Period 1 and in Period 4, which demonstrate Emily’s elaboration of non-shared topics.

In Period 1, Emily was referring to a non-shared topic as she was writing about a movie she saw at her friend’s house. Her entry was in reply to a question I initiated when she seemed very moved after coming back from her friend’s house. Her reply was:

March 31, 2002

Emily: Yes, it was good. there is one women. The women was really smart, but she love somebody who’s in 경찰 [gang organization] But he was smart latter she teach somestudy but she have 양 [cancer]. Latter she’s died before she marry with that men. That she love someone.

This entry provides not only a basic storyline of the movie, but also details on presumably two of the main characters. Emily elaborated on the male character’s job and why
the woman was sick and died. The words written in Korean suggest that she was very eager to convey the meaning of topics.

Below is another example on a non-shared topic, this time from Period 4, which illustrates her effort to explain a topic about which I knew nothing.

August 27, 2002.

Emily: ........ Mom I have an very bad news. When six grader doesn't do there homework then they got a Yellow card. if te(x)hey didn't do there homework three times then you gets three yellow card then I'm OUT OF SCHOOL. that's very bad news. so I need to do my homework. When I do have homework, but still I didn't get any yellow card.

In this entry, she managed to provide more information on what a “yellow card” is by developing a context regarding why she must do her homework in the future. Emily used capital letter words to convey how serious the situation is from her perspective, thus altering her language for her audience.

John’s use of non-shared topics

Results

John also demonstrated an increase on non-shared topics in the process of the dialogue journaling (see Table 11). In Period 3, however, his non-shared topics stayed the same as in Period 2 (23%). In Period 4, the percentage of non-shared topics jumped dramatically to 55%, much higher than what he produced during his previous academic year (Period 1 and 2). A comparison of the mean word counts on shared and non-shared topics provide an additional measure of writing fluency development.

The mean words in shared topics, as shown in Table 12, stayed within a range of a low 26 words in Period 3 to a high 35 words in Period 3 and 4. Expectedly, the mean on non-shared
topics is in a higher range from a low of 28 words in Period 2 to a high of 66 words in Period 3 (see Figure 14).

Table 11 John’s percentile of shared vs. non-shared topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-shared Topic</td>
<td>4 15%</td>
<td>8 23%</td>
<td>4 23%</td>
<td>16 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Topic</td>
<td>23 85%</td>
<td>28 77%</td>
<td>14 77%</td>
<td>13 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27 100%</td>
<td>36 100%</td>
<td>18 100%</td>
<td>29 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 John’s mean word counts in shared and non-shared topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Mean Words on Shared topic</th>
<th>Mean Words on Non-Shared topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

I also expected a lower percentage of non-shared topics during the summer vacation (Period 3), but as with Emily, John’s percentage of non-shared topics did not drop (see Figure 13). The results in Table 12 indicate that John produced more language for non-shared topics, although he did not show much difference in the mean word counts between categories in Period 1 and 2 (see Figure 14). In fact, in Period 2, John produced almost the same mean words in both categories (shared and non-shared).
From Period 3, the means in shared and non-shared topics were distinctively different. In Period 3, summer vacation, the mean in non-shared topics jumped to 66 words while the mean stayed in 35 words in the shared category. During that time, he entered only 4 non-shared topics, but provided elaborating details on the topics he chose. Two of the topics were about very new experiences for him. The mean numbers of words of non-shared topics in Period 4 is 61 words, while the mean in shared topics stayed at 35 words. In Periods 3 and 4, John produced almost twice the number of words in non-shared compared to shared topics. This may suggest that he developed skills for creating context approximately 4 months after beginning the journaling activity.
Below is an example of John’s entry of a non-shared topic in Period 1.

March 27, 2002

John: Mom, I want to tell about something yesterday at the school I was drinking the water and didn’t talk because Mr. Smith told us to be quiet and I did and J was talking and Mr. S told me to sit on my [chair] and I was really upset and J was eating water.

In this entry, John is complaining about being unjustly punished and trying to create a context for me to picture the situation of an event and convey that he was obeying the teacher. As he did not know the English words, he resorted to Korean to convey the meaning as clearly as possible. Although this is not the focus of my study, it shows that he was conscious of the reader and knew I would be able to get the message.

In another entry in Period 2, John wrote about another non-shared topic. John provided an elaborate description of his “sadness” as his friend left for an other city.

John: mom it’s OK about the presents for mr. Smith and its to late to give presents for mr. Smith and Branden told me that he is leaving tomorrow and he give his new home address and phone number and he told me that he is going to miss a lot and I think I am going to miss him. Now I have to make a new friend to play with can you pray for me tonight please because I need somebody to be my best friend and have a great summer vacation!

In this entry, John is again creating a context to make me understand why I need to pray for him. If I had known that Branden was leaving, he would not have had to provide so many details about the situation when asking for a prayer. He was again creating a context to convey his feelings of sadness and the provision of details was intentionally used to get more attention from me.

The higher mean word counts in non-shared topics also supports the claim that John is providing more language for non-shared topics in order to meet the needs of his audience, which
indicates that his writing fluency is developing in terms of acquiring skills to accommodate the needs of an audience.

Although the percentage of non-shared topics increased as the journaling proceeded, this increase could have resulted from other factors such as time of exposure to an audience, the relationship of a writer with an audience, intimacy of the topics, or simply a preference of topics by a writer rather than the writing fluency development. In other words, topic shift might not be a good indicator in determining the writing fluency development in a dialogue-journaling activity. There seem to be more factors involved in topic shift than the level of writing fluency of a writer.

The comparison between the mean words on shared and non-shared topics reported above indicates that both Emily and John’s entries showed a higher mean of words on non-shared topics on average. Furthermore, the continuous increase in the mean words on non-shared topics strongly suggests that both Emily and John are developing skills to provide a context in the process of journaling.

4) Is there an increase in the number of language function use in the process of journaling?

To answer this research question, I analyzed language function use by the children in the first 2 months (Period 1) and the last 2 months (Period 4) of the journaling process. My goal was to examine how effective dialogue journaling was as a medium in using function language by comparing the functions used in children’s early (Period 1) and late journaling period (Period 4). In addition, a comparison of the children’s function language use in the present study and with that of the ESL students at school context in Shuy’s (1984) may provide further insights about the language function use in the dialogue journal. The categories in Table 13 were mainly drawn from Shuy’s study of language function use by ESL students (1984).
**Emily’s use of language functions**

**Results**

The results in Table 13 indicate that Emily used 8 functions in Period 1 and 10 functions in Period 4 (see Figure 15). The most frequently used functions in Period 1 are *expressing opinion* (43%), *reporting information* (17%) and *making requests* (16%). Although Emily used a larger number of functions in Period 4, her language use in Period 4 actually becomes more centered on two functions: the most frequently, *expressing opinion* (44%) and the second frequently, *reporting information* (34%). The third frequent language function use by Emily was the function of *making requests*, 16% in Period 1 and 7% in Period 4. Emily also used *complaints* (9.0%; 1%), *asking questions* (8%; 5%) and *thanking* (2.0% in Period 4 only).

**Discussions**

For Emily, the especially high percentiles of 43% and 44% in *expressing opinion* in both periods are surprising because, as I have mentioned, she tends to be introverted. *Expressing opinion* in the present study is mostly an expression of feelings. While Emily usually does not express her feelings in her L1 oral language, she managed to do so through writing journal entries in her L2. This seemed to be empowering for Emily as a short conversation with her after my data collection revealed. When I told Emily that she did not have to continue our dialogue journaling if she did not wish to, her immediate answer was “No.” She wanted to continue journaling, explaining that she enjoyed writing because she could receive comfort from me when she was “sad.” She exercised her power in writing her second language to receive comfort she often did not voice orally in her L1, Korean. Interestingly enough, I was not aware of the fact that I provided her with such comforting messages. As her emotional needs were so great the function *expressing opinion* emerged as the most frequently used function (see Figure 15).
Table 13 Percentile of function language use by two participants in relation to total use by that participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Emily</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>John</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting info.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing opn.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making requests</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking perm.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Her use of *reporting information* doubled from Period 1 to Period 4. This big jump might be attributed to her “back to school” event as a sixth grader in school. Aside from meeting new friends and a teacher, she was involved in extra activities including school band, chorus, and orchestra after gaining confidence in English. She wrote many entries regarding her new friends, school subjects, and events, presumably to share them with me. Furthermore, as mentioned, writing diaries was very encouraged in Korea. To be more specific, entries under “I” include daily activities or plans, which is a function common to diary writing in Korea. Emily might have undertaken her entry writing as she did at school in Korea. Although she had an unlimited choice of topics, she could still have been attuned to that previous habit.
The function *making request*, considering the home environment, directed to me is an expected result. Staton (1984) wrote that *giving directives*, the equivalent of *making requests* for the present study, depends on the different status relationship between conversational partners; frequent use of requests in Emily's data suggests that she is quite comfortable requesting favors from me as her mother.

Figure 15 Emily's use of function language

![Bar chart](image)

1. Reporting information
2. Expressing opinion
3. Making requests
4. Complaining
5. Asking questions
6. Thanking
7. *Apologizing
   Promising
   Answering questions
   Asking permission
   Clarifying
   Threatening

*The percentile in 7 is combined values of all six functions listed under 7.*

Although it was not frequently used (only 2.0%), the function of *thanking* is an interesting point to elaborate on. In one entry, Emily mentioned that she was very worried about her Social Studies test the following day that she could not sleep and asked me what I would do if she did very "bad" on her test while emphasizing the fact that she had really studied hard. In oral language, I would definitely have been angry at her knowing that she had not studied as much as she could have. In written language, however, I had to comfort her. Now, as I read the previous entries in the process of analysis for the present study, I think she might...
have already realized the power of written language at that point. She thanked me immediately after I responded. In oral language, Emily also expressed appreciation a few times. Similarly, she expressed her sorrow in writing so I could only reply with a comforting message.

The low percentage of asking permission was rather a surprise for me. I expected a higher percentage of this function. Emily used asking permission as only 3.0% of her total language use in Period 1. After perusing her use asking permission, I realized that this function usually required an immediate response. The lack of possibility of immediate response may account for the low percentage. In other words, permission from me usually requires an immediate response, but Emily knew that I do not usually respond immediately, and did not consider asking for permission as an option in journaling activity. She must have asked for permission orally. Expectedly, Emily did not use threatening as I have never heard her threaten me orally either.

Basically, Emily used 8 functions in Period 1 and 10 functions in Period 4, although most of her function use was mainly concentrated on three functions: reporting information, expressing opinion and making requests. An increase in the number of functions used might support her writing fluency development as suggested by Shuy (1984). However, her language use seemed more concentrated as the journaling proceeded, which may imply that she developed a way of using journaling activities for the purpose of her choice, receiving comfort.

Emily demonstrated her ability to use her written language selectively. More importantly, Emily was able to accomplish certain goals she could not achieve in her L1 oral language in the journaling process regardless of her limitations in her L2.
John’s use of language functions

Results

For John, 73% of his use of language functions in Period 1 fell under three functions of language: expressing opinion (26%), making requests (26%) and complaining (21%) (see Table 13; p.71 & Figure 16). Although not as high as the other three functions, John also used reporting information (11%) and asking questions (9%) frequently. In Period 4, John’s use of function focused more on reporting information (40%) and expressing opinion (21%), but he still used complaining (16%) and making requests (10%) over 10% each. The reporting information (11%) was John’s third most frequently used function in Period 1. John’s use of this function jumped to 40% in Period 4. John’s use of asking permission was also limited. He used this function 6% in Period 1 and 3% in Period 4. John did not use apologizing, promising, asking for clarification or thanking in Period 1 and 4. John used a total of 7 functions in both periods.

Figure 16 John’s use of function language

1. Reporting information
2. Expressing opinion
3. Making requests
4. Complaining
5. Asking question
6. Thanking
7 *. Apologizing
   Promising
   Answering questions
   Asking permission
   Clarifying
   Threatening

Numbers in x-axis represent categories. Categories are in next column.

*The percentile in 7 is combined values of all six functions listed under 7.
Discussion

For John, *Reporting information* was the only function that showed an increase as the journaling proceeded. The jump from 11% to 40% might be attributed to his greater involvement at school. In Period 4, John gained confidence in English and received more compliments from his teacher on his writing improvement. Every week, the students in his class were assigned to write a short story using spelling words of the week and he has been very involved with the activity.

John’s infrequent use of *asking permission* was also an unexpected result because this function is commonly observed in his L1 oral language. This might be attributed to the lack of immediacy of the written response. An interesting use of *asking permission* was observed; he used it in an informative form. In his entry, John informed me that he had a fight with his friend and he was going to say something bad the following day. Although this could be categorized under *reporting information*, it can be understood as implicitly asking permission: “mom, can I say something bad? If you do not say anything about it, then I will take this as a ‘yes’.” Knowing the circumstance, this entry was categorized under the function *asking permission* as this was implied. He knew that I would respond to his entry and was waiting for the response. He would not explicitly ask for permission to do something I would definitely not appreciate. Although this is a very commonly observed functional use in his oral language, he provided just one such instance in his journaling in Period 1 and two in other periods.

Knowing his personality, his non-use of *thanking* came as a surprise but this might have to do with his or our family lifestyle. In other words, John had not seen his father orally expressing thanks to me, so he might have unconsciously constrained himself from using that function. Interestingly, he used *threatening* once in Period 1. It is provided as an example in the category definition in Chapter 3.
Comparison of language function use between the children

My comparison of the function language use between the two children indicates that the children's function language use in the dialogue journaling is highly individualized based on the purpose of the activity.

In Period 1, Emily used only 3 out of 12 functions over 10% each: expressing opinion (43%), reporting information (17%), and making requests (16%). In Period 4, her use of functions became more concentrated on two main functions, reporting information (34%) and expressing opinion (44%). The remaining 9 functions were complaining the high at 9% in Period 1 and answering at 1% in both periods (see Figure 15).

In Period 1, John used four functions over 10% each: expressing opinion (26%), making requests (26%), complaining (21%) and reporting information (11%). In Period 4, John also used same 4 functions over 10% each of the total. Asking questions was used an average of 7.5% of the total (see Figure 16). Although John’s use of reporting information is quite high in Period 4, he managed to use other functions as well. Function use was more evenly distributed for John than for Emily.

This suggests that although they were given the same audience, free choice of topics and time, as well as the same journaling book, Emily and John used this journaling activity for different purposes. Emily used it mainly for expressing her feelings and informing events while John used it for a variety of purposes including informing, requesting, and complaining.

Interestingly, the use of the functions making requests and complaining decreased from Period 1 to Period 4 for both participants. This might suggest that I might have been more careful and attentive to my children’s needs in the process of our journaling so that their needs and complaints were less. As I will explain in next section, Additional Findings, journaling provided me with a wealth of information about my children.
A high percentage of *reporting information* by both participants was observed, which might indicate that the nature of a dialogue journaling limits language use to informative writing to a certain extent. This interactive journaling might have put a burden on the writer to provide information; regardless of the free choice of topics they are given. In addition, the use of the function *asking permission* was also limited due to the lack of immediacy in responding.

With the specific purpose of journal use being an individual choice and the limited nature of a dialogue journaling, it would be inappropriate to judge writing fluency development based solely on the number of functions used by the participants in the dialogue journaling process. Although an increase in the number of function language uses may partially indicate writing fluency development, several factors including academic ability and personality, in addition to writing fluency may influence function language use (Shuy, 1984). The dialogue journaling might have encouraged the participants to use the functions to achieve a certain purpose rather than to use a greater number of functions, suggesting that because of these differences in priorities and common needs, every activity educators present to students with a certain objective, even in the same classroom, should take into account individual variation and its impact on production. In addition, individual students should not be judged solely by the accomplishments against a standard objective.

**Comparison of the function language use between the two studies**

In addition to answering the research question, the comparison of language functions in the home environment and in school contexts is also an interesting part of this study. In comparison to Shuy’s study (1984), Table 14 shows the average percentage of function language use in the present study and Shuy’s study. I should again emphasize that the nature of each category might have some variation in terms of language functions, so a direct comparison may not be totally appropriate.
As shown in Table 14, the function *reporting facts* was the most frequently used function in Shuy's 1984 classroom context. It was used (52.7%) in relation to all functional language use. In the present study, *reporting information* was 25.5% of total language use. The high percentage of *reporting information* (52.7% in Shuy's; 25.5% in mine) further supports that the nature of a dialogue journaling limiting the function language use to informative writing to a certain extent. The higher percentage in Shuy's study (52.7%) might be attributed to the informative writing being directed to their teacher, with whom the students might have felt more pressured to share more things than my children with me. Interestingly, the function *reporting opinion* in Shuy's and *expressing opinion* in my study both showed 33.5%.

Table 14 Comparison of function language use in two studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting general facts</td>
<td>Reporting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting personal facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting opinion</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting opinion</td>
<td>Expressing opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking general information</td>
<td>Asking question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking academic information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking personal question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking opinion</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking opinion</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for clarification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving directives</td>
<td>Making requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>Asking permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for clarification</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>Apologizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>Thanking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>Answering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for clarification</td>
<td>Threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The use of **complaining** and **making requests** was higher in a home context. The children in this study used 15% of the function **making requests**. Although the direct comparison of the function **making requests** in the current study and the **giving directives** in Shuy's might not be appropriate, a high percentage of 15% in home and a very low percentage of 0.2% at school indicates an interesting contrast. In traditional classrooms, it is generally believed that the teacher carries out the function of giving directives, not the students, which may contribute to the low percentage. The high percentage of **making requests** observed in the present study may result from the informal nature of our exchanges at home. This also suggests that the participants in this study felt more of an "equal" status with me than that of a teacher in an academic context; therefore the use of **making request** seems highly context dependent.

The presence of extra categories such as **promising**, **answering**, **asking permission** and **threatening** also indicate a variety of language use at home, which in turn illustrates that the need and opportunities for a variety of function language use in a home context is probably less constrained than it is in the classroom.

In short, the function language use in an academic context seem mostly restricted to two functions (functions equivalent to my study: **reporting information**, 52.7%; **expressing opinion**, 33.5%); whereas, its use is a more widely distributed in the home context.

In summary, the participants of limited English proficiency in this study were able to employ their L2 written language into a variety of functional uses for communicational needs. However, the nature of dialogue journaling seems to constrain the use of functional language to a certain extent because the writers use a high percentage of the reporting function in order to communicate with an audience. Furthermore, the comparison demonstrates that function language use is heavily dependent on context such as the relationship and social rank between the interlocutors, as well as the social situation. This comparison supports the view that language may be influenced by social structure (Wardhaugh, 1997). The findings from the
comparison also suggest that the language use was more evenly distributed at home which may lead us to assume that a variety of needs in an informal natural context at home can facilitate and provide more opportunities for a variety of functional language use.

Additional Findings

Though journaling began as a tool for developing writing fluency in the L2 for my children, the actual accomplishment was the development of mutual understanding, especially between my daughter, Emily, and me. As the researcher of this study, I must admit that at the beginning, I was preoccupied with formulating the research questions and eager to trace and examine the improvement in my children's writing fluency development in the context of my research questions. However, there was a wealth of information that cannot be explained quantitatively. Journaling at home with my children had far-reaching effects on our relationship.

As a result of this study, I realized the power of written language. The beauty of this journaling was having an opportunity to explore a child's honest inner feelings represented in written language.

Emily 29: "mom" I know that I'm wisely the time. Mom I'm so sorry about that. Write the answer. What do you think when I don't want to do something but you said to. then what do you think what my felling.

(Emily meant to say that she is sorry for not using her time wisely. She got in trouble for not using her time efficiently. She was wasting her time.)

Until I read this entry, I had not very seriously thought about how my children felt when I told them to do things they did not appreciate. This is a type of environment I grew up with and I heard my children complaining about everyday small tasks. I took this everyday mom-child routine very lightly and naturally. Emily's feelings represented in a few written symbols, however, moved and struck me. I remember Emily complaining orally many times, but never
took it seriously enough to sit down and think. With writing, I did. This shows that through her writing, Emily expressed her discontent and showed that she really wanted me to understand her better. This type of small experience happened countless times in the process of reading and responding and provided me with a wealth of information and insights about my two children I would not have, otherwise, received.

It is through the written word that my children and I were able to effectively communicate and show our honest feelings toward each other and negotiate our relationship. This journaling activity also gave me a chance to find out more about myself especially in how I treat my children. I had always thought that I was a loving and understanding mother, but many times, I was completely the opposite. Finally, after the analysis of the children’s use of function language, I felt very relieved to see that Emily confides her feelings and communicates with me. I believe I have achieved her trust through written communication. This might explain a small increase in Emily’s non-shared topic as the journaling proceeded, suggesting she might have enjoyed a closer communication with topics she shares with me and wanted to develop a closer relationship with me. To any mother, this is a profound accomplishment.

I became especially attached to the journal when I had to apologize to my two children. In our tradition, it is very unnatural for parents to say “Sorry” to their children. My children do not take my words of appreciation or apology seriously if I express them orally, whether in Korean or English. With journaling, I was able to honestly express myself to my children and they were receptive to my words.

This trust, I believe, is important in the process of building a stronger relationship between members of a family. I believe the journaling became an important part of our communicational mode, through which we may be able to share more aspects of our lives. This was the beauty of journaling.
Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the writing fluency development of two young ESL learners in the process of a dialogue journaling with me, their mother, in their L2 at home over a period of 8 months. In order to examine writing fluency development, I collected, transcribed and analyzed the written texts from 8 months of a dialogue journaling activity between my two children in a variety of ways: Specifically, I looked for an increase in 1) correct morpheme use; 2) word productivity; 3) non-shared topics and higher mean words per non-shared topics in comparison with the shared topics; and 4) the number of function language uses during the journaling process. In addition, I provided a few explicit feedback to both participants to examine the effectiveness of implicit vs. explicit responses through the journaling process. The results indicated that the participants showed very different responses to the explicit feedback, but was no evidence of a positive effect. The explicit feedback was an ineffective means to correct the participants' errors. Furthermore, Emily showed a reluctance in continuing with the journaling, reminding us of the importance of individual variation and the inadvertent negative effect some practices may have on individual learner.

The major findings were:

- Major increase in the progressive "ing", copula "be" verb, and irregular past tense.
- Minor or no increase in the regular past "ed" endings and third person singular "s" endings
- Doubling of total word production and gradual increase in the number of entries.
- Increases in the mean word counts per topic and entry with the presence of the individual variation.
• Increase in the number of non-shared topics and a higher mean word counts on non-shared topics.

• A larger variety of function language use in the home contexts than found in the classroom context.

• Individual variation in functional language.

• Individual variation in the children's motivation and purpose of using journaling activity.

• Evidence that ESL children of limited English proficiency were able to employ their L2 written language for variety of functional uses for communicational needs, which they often did not even voice orally in their L1.

In addition to the findings guided by the research questions, I also gained a wealth of information through this journaling process. My children and I have gained much from the experiment. The participants also gained confidence in L2 writing. I noted that they show no hesitation in completing writing assignments from school regardless of their difficulties with English. One additional finding is that it is possible to sustain the interest and participation of two Korean ESL children in at home dialogue journaling, through which we developed a new sense of mutual trust and closeness that is thrilling for me as a mother.

The findings of this study confirm findings of other researchers who looked at the outcome of dialogue journaling. As documented by numerous studies (Kreeft, 1984; Peyton, 1986, 2000; Bode, 1989; Dolly, 1990; Reid 1997), the most promising products from the dialogue journal are confidence and motivation to write on the part from the participants. There seems to be a direct cause–effect relationship between confidence in L2 and success in L2 writing. Losing confidence in L2 writing will result in little success in SLA (Winer, 1992; Thomas, 1993).
Implications

The results of my study, along with prior studies, suggest that dialogue journaling should be encouraged both at home and in academic contexts. Dialogue journaling appears to increase L2 writing fluency in addition to building a stronger relationship through a message-related response to the topics of a writer’s interest and concern. Therefore, dialogue journals may be an important tool, especially with new ESL students who may be more vulnerable to their new environment. Through this written communication, a teacher, parent, or mentor might be able to address a student’s problems or difficulties with more care, which will in turn facilitate a new student’s process of assimilation.

A second implication can be for those members of a family who are struggling from a lack of understanding and communicative ability. This study suggests that written language can have greater emotional impact on some learners than oral language even when the written language is a second language. In this case, it seems more sincere communication can be carried out through written language when in an L2, thus building a stronger bond between the members of a family. Thus, the home dialogue journaling can foster 1) language development, 2) confidence in the L2, and 3) social bonding and enhanced understanding between family members.

Suggestions for using dialogue journals

One lesson of this thesis is that children will have individualized responses to dialogue journaling. Thus, dialogue journaling can be modified based on the needs of the students by introducing a variety of activities that could facilitate acquisition of a certain linguistic form or skill. Dialogue journaling with a beginning ESL student may be a challenging task; however, the activity can be modified. For example, a teacher may start with an entry to a newcomer explaining a homework assignment as she would in oral language, and/or providing a brief
introduction of himself/herself. The communication can be carried out with very short messages and pictures and drawings as needed to communicate.

A teacher or parent may also introduce the idea of using new words or phrases once or twice a week on a regular basis and incorporate the new vocabulary in the journaling activity. To further encourage bonding among the participants, they may have a face-to-face dialogue, for example, during mealtime. A teacher or parent may also assign a topic for an entry on a regular basis that would elicit a certain grammatical form and continue with a discussion regarding the topic through a dialogue journaling. A mentor may introduce a topic of the writer’s interest in a variety of ways by modeling by styles compare and contrast, cause and effect, and so on. The dialogue journal is an opportunity to initiate a written conversation that naturally engages the students in using the L2 and, therefore, elicits writing and fosters language development from a student.

Furthermore, although the finding in this study suggests an explicit response to errors was not effective in the journaling, it could still be introduced with a small modification. For example, a teacher might suggest a “correction time” once or twice in the activity. In this case, a teacher or parent may intentionally produce student’s potential errors for a student or child to correct a teacher’s or parent’s error. It would be fun for a student to correct a teacher’s or parent’s error. The potential activity in dialogue journaling can be endless as there are numerous ways of varying the activity.

Dialogue journaling should always be sustained through continuous encouragement and motivation, by emphasizing the progress a writer makes, and excitement, by talking about what the child writes on his/her entries. Teachers or parents should also show that they value this unique opportunity of having the written interaction with their students or children and must cherish each entry a student or a child enters.

Most of all, the key to the continuation of journaling is not only on students or children
but also on teachers or parents. It requires a great deal of motivation and patience from teachers and parents also as they provide a sincere message-related response to each entry a student or a child writes. Teachers’ or parents’ should also pay a careful attention to meet the needs of a writer so that the writer could have a full trust in journaling as a medium to share his/her thoughts. This full trust should be built within the first 6 to 8 week period after journaling begins in order to encourage journaling as a regular habitual activity. Finally, parents and teachers should always consider individual variation, with modifications based on the needs of the child and keeping in mind that children are likely to vary in the functions and topics they wish to pursue in their dialogue journals.

**Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

Certain limitations to the study should be considered. First, in this longitudinal study examining a variety of aspects of writing fluency development, I was the participant-observer and the sole analyzer of the written texts produced by the children. As the data analysis required both the objective (word counts and correct morpheme use) and the subjective judgment (shared vs. non-shared topics and use of the function language), the limitation I faced was that I had to rely on my own judgment and intuitions throughout the analysis process and at times when trying to account for what the children did with my responses. In order to increase the reliability of the results, a greater number of analyzers might be useful. However, because much of the analysis required a full understanding of the context, having a third person carry out the analysis would also have been problematic.

A second limitation was the relatively small number of participants. In order to gain more conclusive findings about how children with different backgrounds respond to journaling, studies similar to this one need to be conducted with children from other language groups, ages, and social backgrounds.
children were exposed to dialogue journaling and a second group was not. A pretest and a posttest focusing on the aspects of language development that are explored such as the use of functions and morphemes might also allow the researcher to make firmer assertions about, for example, whether or not a morpheme was newly acquired.

A second recommendation for future research is to have different partner settings for dialogue journaling. For example, a comparison of writing fluency development between an adult and a student journaling in comparison with peer journaling might provide insights into the effectiveness of adult modeling. In addition, the latter set might provide different opportunities in terms of the variety of functional language use than those of a teacher-student set.

Another possible focus for future research is to examine the effectiveness of a dialogue journaling at home in the participants’ L1 written language and the possibility of the transfer of writing skills into the L2. This could open opportunities for at least some parents of ESL students to take part in their children’s English literacy education in the home.

A final possible direction for future research is to carry out the activity in an EFL context. The exposure to the L2 and opportunities for the L2 production are somewhat limited in EFL contexts, thus dialogue journaling could provide another medium for second language practice. Therefore, the findings may provide more suggestions and insights about SLA in EFL contexts.

Conclusion

In spite of its limitations, this study confirms that the dialogue journaling between a mother and her children in a home context provides a medium of written communication with topics of writers’ concern and interest in the presence of an audience, and therefore, appears to facilitate L2 writing fluency development and increase confidence and motivation to write in the L2. It would seem that writing development is also facilitated as the ESL children are using language they have already acquired from casual interaction and transferring it into written form.
language they have already acquired from casual interaction and transferring it into written form through an oral-like medium. This study supports the active role of parents in the language development of their children by fostering L2 in ways similar to parental efforts in assisting with L1 acquisition. Finally, it seems that many parents could benefit from the experience of journaling with their children and deserve the joy it brings and the unique opportunity it provides to learn about their children's inner feelings, therefore building stronger family relationships.
**APPENDIX A**

Symbols used for the transcription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(X----X)</td>
<td>Crossed out the whole Sentence</td>
<td>Ex) I don't like that when his (X----X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I don't like that when his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(--------)</td>
<td>Crossed out the word and wrote something over it</td>
<td>Ex) Eugene is good the(---) at English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eugene is good the English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>Word that was inserted</td>
<td>Ex) I'm going &lt;again&gt; back to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm going back to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>Crossed out the word right in front</td>
<td>Ex) But I have (X) want to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>But I have want to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>Crossed out a letter right in front</td>
<td>Ex) I ge(x)uess she is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I guess she is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(xx)</td>
<td>Crossed out two letters right in front</td>
<td>Ex) I ges(xx)uess she is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I guess she is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX B**

Criteria for the correct use of the target morphemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb-related Morphemes</th>
<th>Criteria for the correct usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Present progressive** (present “be-verb” + “ing”) | To be counted as “supplied” of a present progressive form, the participants must show:  
  - The correct present tense “be-verb” in a context that is required.  
  - The correct “-ing” form in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| **Past progressive** (past “be-verb” + “ing”)   | To be counted as “supplied” of a past progressive form, the participants must show:  
  - The correct past tense “be-verb” in a context that is required.  
  - The correct “-ing” form in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| **Copula “be” verb** (Present and Past)          | To be counted as “supplied” of copula “be”, the participants must show:  
  - The correct present tense “be-verb” in a context that is required.  
  - The correct past tense “be-verb” in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| **Third Singular “s”**                          | To be counted as “supplied” of third person singular “s” ending, the participants must show:  
  - The correct use of “s” ending in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| **Regular Past Tense ending “ed”**               | To be counted as “supplied” of regular past tense “ed” ending, the participants must show:  
  - The correct use of “ed” ending in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| **Irregular Past Tense**                        | To be counted as “supplied” of irregular past tense form, the participants must show:  
  - The correct use of irregular past form in a context that is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
Our Family Journal

February 8, 2002  11:30  pm  Friday

You guys, the castle you made at church was really awesome.

I'm very tired today, but it was very excited to see that castle.

You guys did a great job today!

Mom, how come when I was wearing my boots and took the snow then snow go in to my boots so my feet are freezing!

Your feet were freezing when you were wearing your boots?

I'm very sorry  Next time try not to go into snow too long.  -Mom.

Mom it's  I want to tell you something.  How come I don't have a boots.  I mean can you buy snow boots for me?  If you have a time I need a snow boots and snow flak.
Feb 19 2008 9:35 Am

This morning I have to do the flute and we have a some big well I can quite a this

the name new can it
did she think it
and we have a love of

my star mom do you thing I did a good job today at your
friend house

Yes I think you behaved really well today at your is lunch meeting
I am very proud of you all.

Don't waste paper
Mom, I know you are a lot but I don’t like you because you make me really angry when I was playing violin.

I know you are also an I still like you very much even if you are angry at me. I’ll see you back. I really don’t want you to use your time wisely.

If you ever make me again, I will really mad at you. But you if you do that again, I’m not going to be live with you. And I’m going again.

Mom you don’t going to bake to my in centre by my dad. Thursday when you
Hi mom, it's me. I'm going to be a little late. It's been a long day, and I just need to relax a bit. I think you'd like me too. I've been trying to figure out how to write the answer. I hope you're doing well. I'm going to be back in a little bit. Love you, mom.

Feb 2, 2007, 10 p.m.

Hi mom, it's me again. I was just wondering if you're doing okay. I want to try going to the school again, but I think it's good to try first. I hope you're doing well. I love you, mom.

Feb 9, 2007, 9:35 p.m.
"mom"

Mom do we have time to play today if we are done with everything we need to do please its cool outside because my sister and I promise that we're going to play and she said that she is gonna come.

July 13 2002  Mom

Mom, its [redacted]. I'm really excited about Daddy come's in about 2 days later. Actually I do not have surprise for Daddy. Well I do have thing to surprise Daddy. Play flute and violin.

[redacted], I'm excited about Daddy coming also your improvement on flute and violin would be the greatest surprise to Daddy. Can you do it.
8/28/02

"Mom" I don't think they will do his homework. Actually I'm really sorry about today morning. I mean yesterday. I really need to do something.

Mom: Aug 28, writes:

Mom do you know that [BLANK]? 

They broke the rule because Mrs. [BLANK] came to our classroom to talk about the rule, and [BLANK] had a toy gun. The rule is not to bring toy guns. The rule is not to bring weapons. [BLANK]

Yes [BLANK] do. Mrs. [BLANK] says they will have to yellow card the rule for a day. "Thank good Tuesday's [BLANK] is okay. Actually, I am also very sorry about it as well."

but do you have to.
I remember the principle from elementary school. I also did not bring a pencil or any other prohibited items to school. I remember these rules. OK, I cannot bring toys or other prohibited items to school. Such as, erasers, pens, pencils, or anything else. I asked the teacher about this, and he told me not to bring them. I did not like the teacher, but I did not go to the teacher to ask for help. I still did not understand why they did not allow me to bring these things. I remember this as if it happened yesterday.

Aug 30

I was in elementary school, not as a girl, as a boy. I remember that I also brought a big knife to school. I was a good student, I got into a lot of trouble with my classmates. I was not good at math, but I did well in science. I remember that I asked the teacher about this, and he told me not to bring these things. I still did not understand why they did not allow me to bring these things.
Oct. 2/07

Mom,

Mom, today we were reading a book called "Stone Fox" and everybody had a turn to read and suddenly it was my turn and he lost where we were and so Mrs. ___ said let's just skip and start to read and Mrs. ___ was very happy because she was very happy and at the end he even could read and everybody was saying wow and suddenly it was my turn and he didn't even read one word so I think Mrs. ___ was pleased. I'm not sure I'm just guessing but young Tom is good too because he didn't speak English but at the first of English and yesterday I was happy and today I was happy too because it was indoor recess so ___
I don't have a chance to bother me and I hope it's not an outdoor race tomorrow! Today it's kind of long so I think you're going to have a lot of things to answer.

Oct. 3, 02

Mom:

I got a really great news. I don't have to get a detention room because I found my homework. It was in my Access folder.

Oct. 6, 2002

Mom:

Mom, yesterday the movie was kind of scary and fun, but mostly the storyline was scary but it was last year. After all because the team... help...
REFERENCES


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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