A CASE STUDY IN PEER COLLABORATION: INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING AS CONTEXT FOR THINKING AND KNOWING ABOUT LITERATURE IN A SECOND CULTURE

by

Sandra Jane Darrell

B.A., SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, 1974

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APPROVAL

NAME   Sandra Jane Darrell

DEGREE   Master of Arts

TITLE   A Case Study in Peer Collaboration: Interactive Dialogue Writing as Context for Thinking and Knowing About Literature in a Second Culture

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair   Michael Manley-Casimir

_____

Judith Scott, Assistant Professor
Senior Supervisor

_____

Kelleen Toohey, Associate Professor
Member

_____

Dr. Mary Kooy, Limited Term Assistant
Professor, Faculty of Education
External Examiner

Date: _August 2, 1994_

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ABSTRACT

One of the major challenges facing ESL students as they learn to read literature in a new culture is understanding the cultural-specific schemata on which text is based. If an individual's world knowledge does not include the relevant schemata needed to comprehend the text, they will be limited in their ability to test their hypothesis against the text. ESL students need to discover the cultural norms and reality from which meaning in the text is inferred if they are going to make appropriate inferences. Comprehension of culturally based schema requires that the ESL student have the opportunity to explore the cultural assumptions (i.e. the unique worldview and sociocultural knowledge) shared by members within the "interpretive community".

It is the purpose of this study to observe and describe how interactive dialogue journal writing can contribute to the ESL students' understanding of text and the world through which meaning is negotiated. More specifically, this study investigates the role and meaning of "interactionally assisted elaboration" as it occurs in students' writing when they discuss topics related to the reading of the novel, "The Outsiders" by S.E. Hinton. It is through the "talk" in

these elaborated dialogues that ESL students gain an insight into the perspectives held by their peers thereby adding to their individual understanding and interpretation of text in the target culture.

The researcher used a qualitative case study technique to investigate the written interactions between six high school ESL students and their peer tutors. The researcher adopted a role like that of a participant-observer, participating in interactive reading activities as the students' ESL teacher. Observations, interviews, fieldnotes and samples from the students' dialogue journal writing made up the data described and interpreted in this study.

Analysis of the transcripts shows that each set of dialogue partners based their writing on commonly identified topics within the novel. By studying the patterns of elaboration within topics, we are able to see how meaning becomes increasingly explicit in these conversations. A gradual transformation of topic takes place as students learn to define and refine their interpretations of text. This study shows how the use of interactive dialogue writing between peers can bridge the gap between the text's context and the ESL students' cultural schemata.

I wish to extend my appreciation to

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. The Background to the Study

After teaching elementary ESL students for fifteen years, I thought that it would make an interesting change to teach older ESL students at the High School level. It was going to be hard saying goodbye to the many friends (both parents and teachers alike) that I had made over the years while teaching at this small rural elementary school. However, I knew that I would return during the different seasons to stock my freezer with the fresh fruits, vegetables, chicken, and beef grown by the staff and local community. Hardest of all, was saying goodbye to the one hundred and forty-one students, each of which I knew by name from having been in their classes team- teaching. Although saying goodbye is sad, part of me was excited at the prospect of changing teaching assignments.

I arranged to meet my new colleague a few days prior to the start of the new school year. The ESL caseload had doubled in the past year and I had been hired as part of the teaching team. When I arrived at the High School that morning, I made my way to the portable that I would be sharing with my new colleague. As I walked into the room, I noticed the starkness - to my surprise, there were no books. My first question after introducing myself was, "Where do you keep the books?" I was informed

that the texts and workbooks were locked up in the cupboard so that they would not be stolen. I obviously wasn't being specific enough so I reworded the question to ask what kind of literature was in the resource room. I will always remember the response that I got to that question:

> "We don't have any of that. I read them a book once. They didn't understand it. They didn't like it"

It came as a great shock to me to find out that the study of literature was not considered part of the ESL course syllabus at my new school.

Further discussion revealed that this teacher valued the teaching of linguistics as was evidenced in her choice of a grammar-based ESL curricula. Reading comprehension was viewed from a "linguistic" point of view with meaning being conceived from within the text and independent of the reader. Reading literature was something that you did in your own time once you became totally fluent in the English language. The study of literature was not valued by this teacher because it was not seen as contributing to the ESL student's linguistic proficiency in the language.

I believe that literature does have an important role to play in developing the ESL students' language proficiency. Literature should be included in the ESL program because it provides a meaningful context for students to become familiar with an authentic language intended for

native speakers. The language of the text reflects the patterns of social interaction in the target culture. The study of literature in the ESL classroom helps students to develop the ability to interpret text and learn how meaning can be created through reading. When ESL students are given the opportunity to explore and express their ideas about literature they develop the functional expertise to negotiate meaning. It is through this process of interaction that ESL students develop the social and linguistic skills which are essential to the development of second language proficiency.

However, the echo of my colleagues words, "They didn't understand it. They didn't like it" ring out as a reminder that there are some real challenges facing ESL students as they learn to read literature in a second culture. This study recognizes the impact that background knowledge has on the comprehension and interpretation of text by ESL students. One of the major challenges facing ESL students as they learn to read literature in a second culture is accessing the implicit cultural knowledge presupposed by the text. An ESL reader can have difficulty comprehending a reading selection when the relevant cultural background assumptions and constructs are outside of their realm of experience (Brown et al., 1977;

Steffensen et al., 1979; Reynolds et al., 1982; Nelson, 1987). ESL readers

will naturally draw upon information gained from their own experiences

and background when they try to interpret text. If that individual's world

knowledge does not include the relevant schemata needed to comprehend

the text, s/he will be limited in their ability to test their hypothesis

against the text.

Research that relates the students' cultural knowledge to their ability

to read in a second language is of interest to this thesis because it

focuses attention on the sociocultural nature of the reading process.

Students need the opportunity to explore the cultural assumptions of the

target culture (eg. values, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions) from which

meaning in the text is inferred. Fish (1980) writes that "there is no

single way of reading that is correct or natural, only ways of reading that

are extensions of community perspectives" (p. 16). Interactive dialogue

journal writing may offer students the opportunity to determine "from

which of a number of possible perspectives reading will proceed" (p. 16).

2. The Rationale of the Study

This study into cross-cultural dialogue journal writing is

intended to provide teachers with information on how ESL students

can use a collaborative writing experience to explore and develop

their understanding of literature in the target culture. Readers need

to make use of their background knowledge to construct meanings to

help them read the text. Accessing cultural knowledge is essential

if language minority students are to bring their own experiences into

their learning. The information in this study is intended to be useful

to teachers who are seeking ways to help ESL students make reading

a meaningful experience.

3. Interactive Dialogue Journal Writing

In this study, I examined the use of cross-cultural dialogue journal

writing among peers as a way to provide the context for students to

express and experiment with their understanding of texts. Staton (1987)

gives us a glimpse into the power of response in dialogue journal writing

when she writes:

> The dialogue journal is designed to create interactions in
> which two minds can unite to bring about new understanding,
> new ideas, new possibilities (pg. 54).

The collaborative nature of dialogue journal writing offers students the

opportunity to talk about the text while developing both the necessary

prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge essential for comprehension.

In this study, six ESL students were paired with peer tutors from the school's Peer Tutoring Program. Peer tutors were chosen to be the dialogue partners for the ESL students over the teacher researcher for two main reasons:

1. There was little social interaction between ESL students and the mainstream school population. Part of this alienation stemmed from the fact that the ESL classroom was situated outside of the main school building. It was hoped that they ESL students would become comfortable enough with their dialogue partners so as to be able to ask them information about school and community life as well as to engage in dialogue about their reading.

2. The dialogue that would evolve from peer collaboration would provide an additional form of authentic discourse about the novel because it would reflect another teenager's perspective.

The idea of dialogue journal writing was introduced to the ESL students as an opportunity for them to establish contact with another student and perhaps share their ideas and opinions with them as well as to ask any questions that they might have about the school and community.

When we started our novel study, "The Outsiders", by S.E. Hinton, students were encouraged to share their reading experience with their peer tutor by exploring ideas and feelings, making enquiries about parts of the text that they found puzzling or comparing individual interpretations of the story. An interactive approach was used to teach this novel to the ESL students. Students participated in a variety of cooperative learning activites designed to enhance their background knowledge about the novel. The three reader response activities took place in class during the reading of the novel. After students had the opportunity to talk about the story in their cooperative groups, they were encouraged to continue the dialogue with their Peer Tutors and find out their opinions. Time was regularly made in class to ask the ESL students if they would like to share comments made by the Peer Tutors on the topics that we were discussing. At no time during the study were the Peer Tutors and ESL students physically together in the same room. At the end of each period, students were given fifteen minutes to write in their dialogue journals.

In my role as participant-observer, I observed and documented their dialogue journal conversations. The interactions revolving around the novel forms the data for the analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative

research techniques were used to collect data in this study. A multiple,

embedded case study design is used to observe and describe how

interactive dialogue journal writing between peers contributes to the ESL

student's understanding of literature in a second culture.

4. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to observe and describe how cross-cultural interactive dialogue journal writing can contribute to the ESL student's understanding of text and the world through which meaning is negotiated. It is the "talk" in these written dialogues that may give ESL students an insight into the perspectives held by their peers, thereby adding to their individual understanding and interpretation of text in the target culture. This thesis examines whether elaboration does occur in dialogue journal writing between peers and how meaning becomes more explicit through these elaborated discourses.

The questions guiding this inquiry into the effect of using cross-cultural dialogue journal writing as a context for thinking and knowing about literature in the target culture were as follows:

1.   How can dialogue journal writing facilitate extended discourse
       that enhances thinking and knowing about literature in a
       second culture?

2.   How are interactionally assisted elaborations accomplished in dialogue journal writing between peers?

3.   How does the elaboration of topic within dialogue journal writing lead to a gradual transformation of topic, and the students' knowledge about themselves and their world within the new culture.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explores some key issues related to learning to read literature in a second culture. A review of the literature on schematheory research and evolving constructivist theory will be included as they provide the basis for the theoretical orientation taken in this inquiry. Specific research in cross-cultural reading comprehension will be reviewed as it impacts on how readers integrate new cultural-specific knowledge into existing knowledge in memory. In addition, an overview of the controversy regarding the use of literature in the language classroom, is included to give the reader an idea of the rift in this area of ESL reading pedagogy.

Central to this study is the idea of collaborative research in the classroom. Literature that discusses student-centered approaches in learning are reviewed along with research on peer tutoring so that the reader will have the background information to asses the role of peer collaboration in learning to read in a second culture. In the final section of this chapter, research regarding the use of interactive dialogue journal writing with ESL students is reviewed to provide the theoretical basis for the context in which the learning in this study takes place.

1. **Schema Theory and ESL Reading**

Mason & Au (1990) describe schema theory as "a way of trying

to explain how people store knowledge in their mind, how they use

the knowledge they have, and how they acquire new knowledge" (p. 7).

Schema theory is quite a recent phenomenon evolving out of studies

by computer scientists (Minsky, 1975, Winograd, 1975) on

simulations of human cognition. It wasn't until the late 1970s that

schema theory was applied to understanding the reading process

(Rumelhart, 1980; Adams & Collins, 1979; R.C. Anderson,

1977,1978).

Within schema theory, the reader's background knowledge is

recognized as a critical factor in the reading process (Dale, Duffy,

Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Tierney, 1990; Anderson and Pearson, 1984;

Carell & Eisterhold, 1983, and Steffensen, Joag-dev, & Anderson 1979).

Several studies on the effect of background knowledge on reading

comprehension conclude that it is the perspective that students bring to

their reading that influences the associations that they make (Langer,

1982, 1984; Steffensen, M.A. & Joag-Dev, C., & Anderson, R.C. 1979;

Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, & Goetz, 1977). Students from

different cultures with a different "linguistic-experiential reservoir"

(Rosenblatt, 1985) often have difficulty comprehending a reading

selection when the relevant cultural background assumptions and

constructs are outside of their realm of experience (Brown et al., 1977;

Steffensen et al., 1979; Reynolds et al., 1982; Nelson, 1987). If an

individual's world knowledge does not include the relevant schemata

needed to comprehend the text, he/she will be limited in their ability to

test their hypothesis against the text.

This study examines how new cultural-specific schemata in

literature can become more explicit to ESL students as they explore and

discuss their ideas on topics of interest to them with their dialogue

partners. Anderson and Pearson (1984) describe this interaction of new

information with old knowledge as "comprehension".

> To say that one has comprehended a text is to say that she has
> found a mental home" for the information in the text, or else
> that she has modified an existing mental home in order to
> accommodate that new information (p. 255).

Evolving from the schema-theoretical research comes constructivist

theories that share a view of knowledge as being:

> "an active construction built up by the individual acting within a
> social context that shape and constrains that knowledge, but does
> not determine it in the absolute sense" (Applebee, 1992; p.3)

This is a radical shift from the traditional views of ESL reading comprehension that placed more emphasis on the language being comprehended and not the comprehender (Carrell, 1984, p.332). In these "linguistic" views of comprehension, meaning was believed to be in the text and comprehension failures were viewed to be due to language deficits (eg. unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar misapplied, etc.). Recent research into schema theory has most reading researchers now agreeing that the two process (i.e. the language-based process and the knowledge-based process) interact in the reading process (Grabe, 1991; Carrell, Devine, & Eskey,1988; Adams and Bruce, 1980; Stanovich, 1980; Rumelhart, 1977).

The learner is an active participant within constructivist theory and instruction shifts from the teacher being the expert who transmits absolute knowledge to one who helps students learn to construct and interpret for themselves. In the traditional sense, the construction of knowledge has been represented diagramatically by Wells and Chang Wells (1992) as:

> EXPERT - - - - - [KNOWLEDGE] - - - - - - > NOVICE
> ...in this mode, little or no provision is made for students to contribute their interpretations and reformulations as well as whatever expertise they have, since the underlying orientation is typically that of knowledge transmission (p. 97)

Within a constructivist framework both the learner and expert

view themselves as "members of a learning community" where

knowledge is constructed collaboratively. Wells and Wells represent

the relationship as follows:

KNOWLEDGE

EXPERT   LEARNER

COMMUNITY
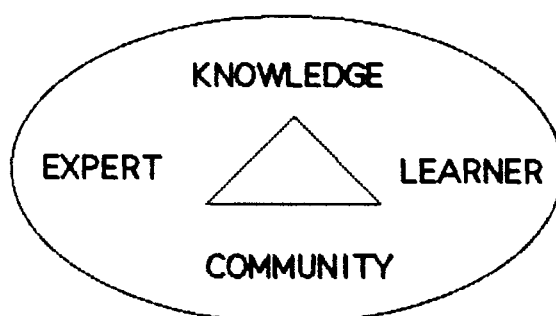
Wells & Wells, 1992. p. 97

Wells & Wells emphasize that it is not the spatial arrangement that

learners find themselves in within these two orientation that makes

the difference in instruction but rather the difference is found in:

> ...the nature of the discourse itself, which arises from the way
> in which the participants relate to each other and to the topic
> that they are addressing (p. 96).

2) Dialogue Journal Writing

The first documented use of dialogue journals with non-native

speaking students was in Leslie Reed's grade six classroom in Los

Angeles (Staton, et.al., 1984). The researchers in this early study

explored the many aspects of the journal interaction that supported

and promoted second language acquisition. Walworth (1985) first

demonstrated the advantages of using the dialogue journal to discuss

literature with both ESL and hearing imparied students. In a similar

study, Steffensen (1988) adapted Walworth's approach and uses

dialogue journal writing with an ESL population as a way to develop

literacy skills and learn about the new culture. Walworth's (1990)

recent study clearly of interactive dialogue journal writing with ESL

and deaf children clearly demonstrates that content-focused use of

dialogue journal writing fits within the interactive theories of

reading that have evolved from constructivist theory.

> Dialogue journals focus squarely on the learner; learning
> proceeds in steps beginning from where the learner happens to
> be rather than from some preconceived model coming from the
> outside. Learning occurs through negotiations with the teacher
> on the meaning (and meanings) contained in the text"
> (Walworth, 1990), p. 46,).

The collaborative nature of dialogue journal writing offers

students the opportunity to talk about the text while developing both

the necessary prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge essential for

comprehension. Wollman-Bonilla (1989) summarizes the benefits of

dialogue journals when she writes:

> Journals invite children to use expressive language that is
> addressed to oneself or a trusted reader and is informal and
> conversational in tone. Using expressive language allows
> writers to explore ideas and feelings and formulate
> hypotheses, predictions, and questions as they record their
> developing meanings on paper. Moreover, through the act of
> writing, students adopt the reflective, spectator role. As
> spectators they can contemplate how the text evoked certain
> emotions and ideas, consider how these might be expressed,
> imagine others' perspectives, and organize, evaluate and share
> their reading experiences (p.112).

In Peyton and Staton's (1991) graphic that follows, we are able to

see how effective dialogue journals "use a system with three equally

important components: (1) the written communication itself, (2) the

dialogic conversation, and (3) the responsive relationship between a

literacy learner and a more competent member of a literature culture" (p.

xvii).

MODEL OF DIALOGUE JOURNAL COMMUNICATION
Written Form of Communication

Dialogue Journal

Dialogue   Relationship
                                                with a More
                                                Competent Other
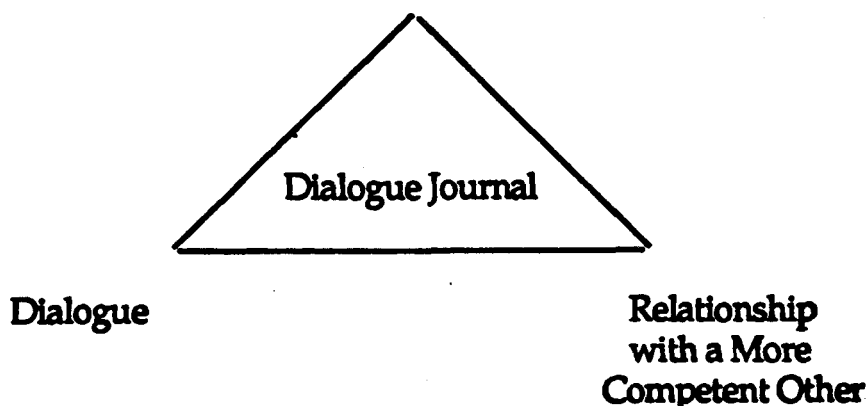
(Peyton & Staton, 1991, p. xvii)

Peyton and Staton warn us that the simplicity of the model may be

misleading because we may be inclined to look at the visible product of

the written journal and not recognize the underlying "dialogic structure

and the crucial relationship with another mind that must develop" (p. xvii).

The theoretical implications of this statement will be addressed at a

later point in this chapter as they impact on the researcher's choice of

context for the learning that takes place in this study.

The students are "at the center of [their] own learning" in

dialogue journal writing because they choose what topics to write

about and how to present their ideas (Staton, 1988b; Rupert &

Brueggeman, 1986). When students have a voice in their own learning

it empowers them to interact with the text by using their knowledge

to compose meaning from their reading (Peyton, J. & Staton, 1991;

Bode, 1989; Bromley, 1989; Atwell, 1987). The empowering nature

of the dialogue that emerges from these conversations in writing

leads Fine (1989) to conclude that "collaborative writing has the

potential to become a tool for activating multiple voices and

multiple versions of self and the world within the classroom" (p.

501). Students are encouraged to use their journals to share their

ideas, express their feelings and to ask questions. The teacher's role is to respond to the students' writing by encouraging and validating their thinking. Teachers help students explore their responses and sometime extend their ideas. When students feel that their personal responses are valued, they feel a "powerful urge" to share their ideas and questions (Stillman, 1987).

The form of collaborative writing that takes place in this study is somewhat similar in focus to what Bromley (1989) calls "buddy journals" or the "Secret Friend Journals" used by Green & Green (1993). The same procedure is followed as with dialogue journals except that the students are now interacting with their peers. Bromley describes the buddy journal as a diary that a pair of students keep together in which they write back and forth to each other, "conversing" in writing. She highlights the benefits of buddy journal writing in the following way:

> "The buddy journal is a natural way for students to integrate reading and writing in a purposeful and personally meaningful context. Students usually generate their own topics. Journals are interactive as students take turns responding to each other. Writing is functional since students describe feelings and activities, ask questions, make requests, share ideas, and

build relationships with each other. Buddy journals require students to read entries in orders to write responses to a partner and can provide almost immediate feedback to written messages" (p. 12)

The "secret friend journals" of Green & Green (1993) were similar in nature to Bromley's "buddy journals" except that they were used with first year ESL students at the university level. Their dialogue partners were other ESL students who were in another section of the same course. Green & Green's research showed that peers writing to peers provided "an increse in motivation, and an increase in awareness of writing as real communication directed to a real audience" (p. 20). They also found that the "secret friend journals" facilitated "the development of a written rapport based on shared interest, tastes, and concerns" (p. 21)

Both of these types of journals that use peers as dialogue partners are excellent examples of "student centered" approaches to teaching reading and writing. The study reported in this thesis adds another dimension to interactive journal writing with peers by asking students to explore literature with their dialogue partner. The ESL students were encouraged to share their ideas, express their

feelings and ask questions about their reading in their journal

writing. The rationale for using peer tutors as dialogue partners

will be discussed in further detail in a later part of this chapter as

will the research on dialogue as scaffolded instruction. A brief

overview of the research on using literature in the language

classroom is reviewed at this time because its inclusion in the ESL

syllabus is, in itself, a controversial decision.

3) Literature in the ESL Classroom

Many ESL researchers recognize the pedagogic, academic,

intellectual, cultural, and linguistic benefits of using literature in

the language classroom (Gajdusek, 1988; Collier & Slater, 1987;

Spack, 1985; Widdowson, 1984, 1983; Di Pietro, 1983, and McKay,

1982). However, the inclusion of literature in the language

classroom has been a recent phenomenon. Linguists such as Topping

(1968) have argued that literature should be excluded from the ESL

curriculum because of its cultural connotations and complexity in

structure and grammar. Instead, the use of a more functional kind of

English (eg. content textbooks, grammar books, informational sets,

etc.) was encouraged in the language classroom. Often times,

literature has been removed from the ESL syllabus because of the perceived difficulties that it presents for ESL readers. Paradoxically, by removing the source of the student's conflict (i.e. literature) we erase the possibilities that students have for engaging in an authentic discourse to make meaning from their reading. Instead of engaging in a discourse that promotes the student's thinking and knowing about literary texts, we remove the solution to the problem thereby limiting the type of the discourse which the individual can become involved. (Applebee, 1992; Gajdusek, 1988; Widdowson, 1983, 1984; MacKay, 1982).

Many teachers now believe that we should not deny our ESL students the opportunity to read literary works even if they may be linguistically or culturally beyond their language proficiency. Collier and Slater (1987) take a comprehensive look at using literature in the language classroom. They outline four major reasons for using literature as part of the language teaching program. Collier and Slater remind us that many ESL speakers love literary texts, and want to read literature so they can become more familiar with patterns of social interaction in the target culture.

The created world of fiction portrays these [social interactions] in contextualised situations, and this gradually reveals the codes or assumptions which shape such interaction....A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions, what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors (pp. 3-5).

Literature also provides valuable authentic material and is important because it says something fundamental about human issues. Pugh (1989) writes about the natural convergence of literature, culture and ESL as being a powerful medium for both inter and intracultural growth.

.....literary works may transcend any particular place or time or may link students with their immediate culture and enable them to participate in its development. In both cases, students are finding their identities as members of a community (local or world) with shared values rather than as separate individuals with only their own problems to solve (p. 321).

Literature in this sense gives us an opportunity to explore the multiple realities of human experience.

Since literary texts were intended for native speakers, they provide excellent authentic exposure to the language for the ESL speaker. McKay (1982) explains that in the traditional sense, literature has been used to teach language usage, but rarely has it

been used to develop language use. She sees the advantages of using

literature for this purpose to be that:

> Literature presents language in discourse in which the
> parameters of the setting and role relationship are defined.
> Language that illustrates a particular register or dialect is
> embedded within a social context, and thus, there is a basis for
> determining why a particular form is used. As such, literature
> is ideal for developing an awareness of language use (p. 530)

As such, literary texts provide "additional familiarity with many

different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode:

with irony, exposition, arguement, narration" (Collier & Slater, p. 4).

The wide variety of language functions used in a literary context can

became memorable to the student through the context of the

literature being read.

According to Widdowson (1983) when we read literature, we

have to employ interpretive procedure in a way that is not required

of us in other types of reading. In literature there isn't a given

frame of reference. The reader has to create meaning through the

actual discourse process itself.

> Literary schemata are created internally, within the literature
> itself. They're not projected from outside (p. 30)

The study of literature enables students to develop the ability to interpret a discourse. This skill is a critical feature of language learning and can be applied to "a range of language uses, both literary and non-literary, which they [students] encounter inside and outside the learning situation" (Widdowson, 1975, p. 84). The interpretive procedures that evolve out of the study of literature are summarized by Spack (1985) as follows:

> By interpreting texts and considering alternative interpretations, students come to understand in a fundamental way how meaning can be created through reading (p. 706).

The final reason given by Collier and Slater for using literature in the language learning process is the "personal involvement that it fosters in readers".

> Engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system. When a novel, play or short story is explored over a period of time, the result is that the reader begins to "inhabit" the text. He or she is drawn into the book. Pinpointing what individual words or phrases may mean becomes less important then pursuing the development of the story (1987, p. 6).

When students become personally involved with literature, it

"encourages talking" (Enright & McCloskey, 1985). Students need opportunities to talk about the text while developing both the necessary prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge necessary for comprehension.

In order for such collaboration to take place, students have to have "genuine motives" for interacting and it has to be with real context (Long & Porter, 1985). The reader has to actively create their own frame of reference by reading within the literature itself. A reader has to employ interpretive procedures in a way that is not required of them in conventional discourse. As a result of this interaction with text, the reader begins to learn the procedures by which one creates meaning from discourse (Widdowson, 1984). When students are given an opportunity to use language to explore and express their ideas, they come to an understanding of how meaning can be created through reading.

In this research study, peer tutors were the main collaborators with the ESL students as they engaged in a written conversation about the novel, "The Outsiders" (Hinton, 1967). A brief history of the use of peer tutors will follow so as to give the reader an idea of the unique possibilities that exists when peers work collaboratively together to build meaning from their reading.

5) Peer Tutoring/Peer Collabortion

Many educators have used peer tutoring in some shape or form

since the Spartan times of the eighth century BC (King, 1982).

However, Topping (1988) claims that the first systematic use of

peer tutoring in the world was used by Andrew Bell in the eighteenth

century. Each class in Bell's school was paired into tutors and

tutees. He saw peer tutors as an efficient way to enhance the

education of his students. Topping points out that Bell also

emphasized the moral and psychological benefits of peer tutoring in

that it "cultivated the best dispositions of the heart by teaching

children to take an early and well-directed interest in the welfare of

one another" (p. 14). However, the popularity of peer tutoring began

to decline in the late nineteenth century. Topping (1988) attributes

the decline in peer tutoring to the state providing money for public

education and teaching becoming increasingly professionalized.

Peer tutoring did not receive much attention until the United

States began to focus on problems of underachievement in the public

schools in the 1960's. The "Tutorial Community", a study done by

Melaragno (1969) showed how peers could be used as mediators in

instruction. Their target group was the ethnic minority low-income population in the United States. Early efforts in peer tutoring are reviewed by Allen (1976). In a more recent review Sharpley and Sharpley (1981) examine 82 peer tutoring programs and concludes that both peer tutors and tutees show attainment gains and sometimes improvement in social behavior and attitudes to each other. Subsequently, Cohen, Kulik & Kulik (1982) assessed 65 school programs using peer tutoring. They used quantitatively measured outcomes to show that the peer tutored groups out-performed the control groups on the subjects being taught.

The success of these programs encouraged the development of a wide range of peer tutoring projects in the elementary schools (Topping, 1987, Enright & McCloskey, 1985; Enright and Gomez, 1984; Hester, 1984; Wong-Fillmore, 1982; Cazden et al. 1979). Research into the cognitive and academic advantages of peer tutoring with ESL students became the focus of a large number of studies in the 1980's (Webb, 1985; Chamot and O'Malley, 1984; Johnson, 1983; Strong, 1983; Cooper et al., 1982; Cummins, 1980). Peer tutoring has shown to be effective in developing children's reading through, Paired

Reading (Topping, 1988); Relaxed Reading (Lindsay, Evans & Jones, 1985); Shared Reading (Greening & Spenceley, 1984, 1987).

The peer collaboration that takes place between the ESL students and their peer tutors in this study is investigated within a Vygotskian perspective. When Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development to explain the actual processes by which children came to adopt the role of adults in culturally organized activities, he recognized the contribution that adults as well as "more competent peers" make in the learning process. Vygotsky (1978) defines the zone of proximal development as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, p. 86). One concept evolving from Vygotsky's zone of proximal development that has implications for this study is the role that instructional scaffolding plays in the shifting of control and responsibility for learning.

The term "scaffold" was first used by Bruner (1978) as a

metaphor to be applied to students when adults temporarily provided

frameworks to support children in their use of language. Scaffolding

has been described as a "process that enables a child or novice to

solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be

beyond his unassisted efforts" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90). A

shift in responsibility and control takes place as the learner requires

the support from the scaffold less and less. McNamee (1979) uses

the term "coherence" to describe the role of an adult in guided

interactions with a child.

> The basic hypothesis is that the transition to independent
> functioning occurs because the adult... is continually guiding
> and encouraging the child to reach, and the child is continually
> having to work to make sense out of the adult's (actions). The
> adult makes demands of the child that are just beyond the
> child's grasp, and the child then struggles to find coherence in
> what the adult is saying. If the adult didn't make demands that
> were a little too difficult for the child, or if the adult simply
> did everything for the child, there would be no struggle for
> coherence...On the other hand, if the adult is confusing, or
> talks way above the child's head... then there is no possibility
> for transition. The adult's talking would be meaningless
> and beyond the child's potential. (p. 65)

Scaffolding development is a means of providing support that is both

adjustable and temporary.

6) Dialogue as Scaffolded Instruction

The role of dialogue is crucial to the process of development because it is the means by which support is provided and adjusted. The concept of dialogue as scaffolded instruction in interactive journal writing is of interest to this study because it has a direct connection to the ESL students learning and achievement. According to Bruner (1988), one of the fundamental assumptions in Vygotsky's work is that "thought is internalized dialogue, that thoughts and ideas are first acquired by someone externally through dialogue, become internalized, and then elaborated into differentiated thought" (p. vii). Learning within the context of interactive dialogue writing takes place when students are actively involved as conversational partners with the teacher or "more competent tutors" in situations in which they are thinking together about the same topic or problem."(Staton, 1984). Jerome Bruner has described the nature of the interaction that occurs in interactional dialogue writing follows:

> ...what the teacher must be, to be an effective competence
> model, is a day-to-day working model with whom to interact.
> It is not so much that the teacher provides a model to imitate.
> Rather, it is that the teacher can become a part of the student's
> internal dialogue - somebody whose respect he wants, someone
> whose standards he wishes to make his own. It is like
> becoming   a speaker of a language one shares with somebody.

The language of that interaction becomes a part of oneself, and the standards of style and clarity that one adopts for that interaction become a part of one's own standards. (1966,p.124).

In dialogue journal writing, students have equal opportunity to bring up topics that are of interest or concern to them in their learning. The learning tasks are not already predetermined by the teacher. Instead, the teacher's role in interactive writing becomes one of "helping the student to see his or her experience from a different perspective, and to suggest how actions and outcomes are connected. (Staton, 1984, p. 149). Dialogue can actively involve students in their learning by engaging them in "active mental processing of their current experience and knowledge in such a way that both new concepts and general strategies for thinking are introduced" (Staton, p. 156). Staton diagramatically compares the traditional understanding of the relationship between language and thought:

Have a thought or idea ──────────► Express the idea in language

to an interactive perspective that includes the social and mental activities which lead to a particular linguistic utterance.

Engage in purposeful
social dialogue to reach
a goal

Express the idea
in language

Try to understand what
the other person is saying

Generate a new thought
or idea
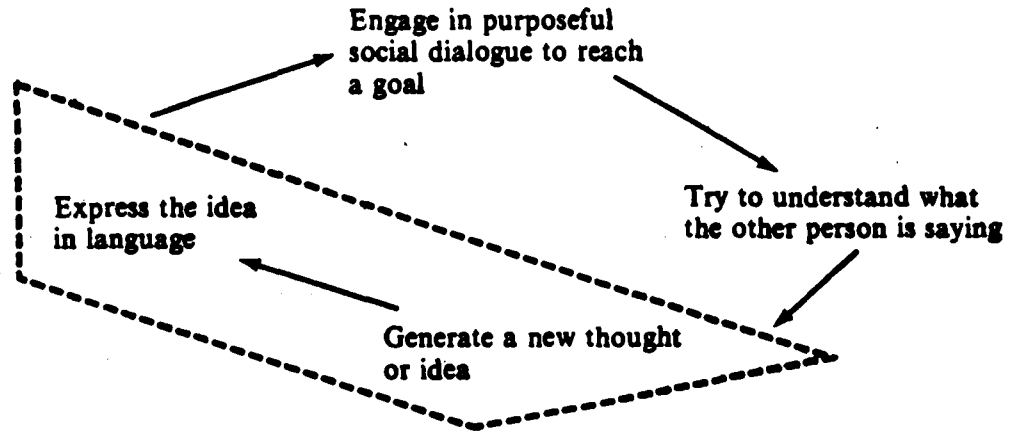
(Staton, 1984, p. 57)

Of particular interest to this study is the special pattern that

Staton sees evolving within conversational writing when the dialogue is

about a shared goal or problem in which there is a struggle for

comprehension. Staton visualizes a "conversational ladder" with "both

persons contributing different rungs, with each person's statement

building on the others (p. 157).

Goal

Teacher makes explicit
statement of concept
(her goal)

Student asks question

Teacher offers elaboration
on meaning

Student tries to state
connection

Teacher asks question about
connections between A, B, C

Student knowledge
A, B, C

Teacher asks question building
on student interest

Student interest
in problem

Beginning
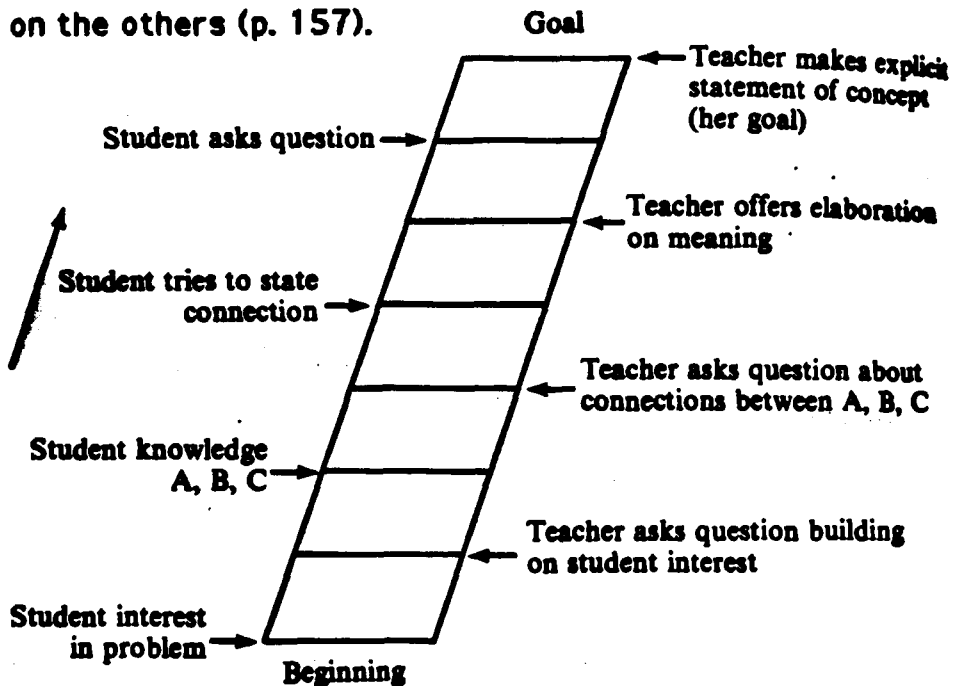
(Staton, 1984, p. 158)

The nature of the interactional scaffolding as described in Staton's model of interactive journal writing takes into consideration the social context in which learning is situated. In interactive dialogue journal writing, students chose the topics that they are interested in and their dialogue partner validates their knowledge and experiences by modelling more frequent use of a more complex or more general level of encoding and reasoning about events being discussed. Staton (1988b) describes how elaboration works in scaffolding the student's thinking and reasoning.

> The journal writing in itself is a collaborative task, in which the teacher's strategies may be seen by the student as a natural part of the student's effort to communicate effectively by describing what happened. And each topic discussion involves both writers taking turns saying something about the same topic, so that the teacher's elaboration can become a direct extension of the student's meaning (p. 304).

This study investigates the role and meaning of "interactionally assisted elaboration" as it occurs in the students' writing when they discuss topics related to the reading of the novel, "The Outsiders". Staton's (1988b) "cateories of elaboration" are used in the analysis of the conversations that took place between the ESL students and their peer tutors about their reading. A discourse analysis of the language functions used by each dialogue partner was made at both the sentence and discourse

level (Shuy, 1988b). The researcher was specifically interested in how language functions such as "requests" contributed to the elaboration of topics within these written conversations.

The transcripts describe how a mutual bond of respect and trust evolved between the dialogue partners during the study. The interactive nature of these conversations was such that both partners had an opportunity to share cultures and views. Analysis of the data indicates that the ESL students gained an insight into the perspectives held by their peers thereby adding to their individual understanding and interpretation of text in the target culture. This study contributes to the growing research that supports the belief that interactive dialogue writing between peers can provide a context for thinking and knowing about literature in a second culture.

In Chapter four, each case study will be investigated to see how students go about discovering new ideas, or as Bruner most aptly says "go beyond the information given" to make new learning possible.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

A multiple case study design was employed to investigate how

dialogue partners went about collaboratively building knowledge as they

engaged in the reading of the novel, "The Outsiders".

I. Research Design

A case study design was chosen for this research project because it

is a type of qualitative research by which "educational processes,

problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that

in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice" (Merriam, 1988,

p.32). According to Merriam (1988), a qualitative case study can be

defined as:

> an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity,
> phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic,
> descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in
> handling multiple data sources (p. 21).

A case study research design can be used to give us "an in-depth

understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved "

Merrian, p. xii). An overview of the research design and the reasons for

choosing case study methodology are presented below, while more

detailed discussions of the cases, the data collection techniques, and

analysis strategies can be found later in this chapter.

The logic of case study research derives from the worldview of

qualitative research which has as its paramount objective the

understanding of the meaning of an experience (Merriam, p. 16). A major

assumption underlying qualitative research is:

> that there are multiple realities - that the world is not an
> objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and
> perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of
> interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form
> the basis of perception. Research is exploratory, inductive and
> emphasizes processes rather than ends (Merriam, 1988, p. 17).

The purpose of this research is to understand the "multiple realities" of

the participants in this study and discover how their individual

worldviews impact on their reconstruction of knowledge as they engage

in the process of dialoging about their reading of the novel, "The

Outsiders". Through the use of case study research, the objective of this

study is to explore and describe how the talk in these dialogue journals

can lead to new understanding, new ideas, and new possibilities for ESL

students as they interpret literature in a second culture.

A multiple, embedded case study design (Yin, 1984) will be used as

the framework for investigation in this study. An embedded case study

allows the researcher to focus the inquiry so that specific phenomenon

evolving from individual dialogue journals can be investigated. Yin

(1984) cautions researchers that one of the major "pitfalls" that occur

when using the multiple, embedded case study design is "when the study

focuses only on the subunit level and fails to return to the larger unit of

analysis" (p. 45). In this study, three samples of students' dialogue

journal writing are presented and interpreted at the individual case level.

An individual case summary which includes tabular information is written

at the end of each case so that the researcher can return to the data and

examine the generalizability of the data across cases. Both Merriam

(1988) and Yin (1984) advocate the use of a multiple-case design as a way

to increase the generalizability of the finding of a study.

Both quantitative and qualitative research techniques will be used

to collect the data. The quantitative data in this research study will

provide an overview of writing topics initiated by students in their

dialogue journals. Data documenting the frequency and type of language

functions used by both dialogue partners in each case study also makes up

the background information in this study. A student survey was used at

the end of the study to see how students evaluated the learning

experience. The qualitative data focuses on describing and interpreting how students went about the process of collaboratively building knowledge about the novel they were reading. The data base for the above described research were transcripts from the student's dialogue journals. Another source of qualitative data was the semi-structured interviews with the participants and the general observations recorded by the participant -researcher throughout the study. This use of multiple methods of data collections will enable triangulation in this study. Triangulation, through the use of multiple methods of collecting data, can improve the validity of the interpretations of the data and, therefore, of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merrian, 1988).

2. Participants and Site

This research took place over a six month period in an urban High School of approximately 1,500 students. Six ESL students and 6 peer tutors participated in this study. The ESL students had a varying degree of knowledge about the linguistic organization of the English language along with basic reading skills. The researcher attempted to include two case studies of students who approximated the beginning, intermediate

and more advanced level of language proficiency. The researcher sought

corroborating evidence from each participant's regular classroom English

teacher, the other ESL teacher on staff, and the results of the students'

SLEPT tests before determining the ESL students' language ability.

The students in this case study represented a variety of linguistic

backgrounds: two Punjabi speakers, one Laotian speaker, one Spanish

speaker, one Polish speaker, and one Vietnamese speaker. The ESL

students had been in Canada for less than two years. For the purposes of

this study, choice of participants was made on linguistic background and

language proficiency levels rather than on gender. Four of the case

studies are male and two are females. The peer tutor distribution by

gender is reversed with four female native English speakers and two male

native English speakers participating in the study.

The Peer Tutors that were matched with the ESL students in this

project were chosen by the Peer Tutor instructor. They had experience in

keeping reflective journals as part of their Peer Tutoring course

requirement but had no specific instructions in dialogue journal writing.

However, part of their Peer Tutor training was a module on developing

interpersonal communications in tutorial relationships. No names were

used on the journals that were exchanged. Instead, a numbering system

was used to indicate ownership. The Peer Tutor teacher and the

researcher thought that students might feel less inhibited in their writing

if they didn't know their dialogue partners. Many of the dialogue partners

took our attempt at keeping the journals anonymous as a challenge and

tried to guess the identity of their partner. Even though gender wasn't

indicated, it was clear from the comments made by the ESL students that

they had determined the gender of their dialogue partner through the

responses written in the journals.

3. Procedure

The first two months of the dialogue journal writing project

involved students writing on topics of mutual interest to them. The

researcher considered it important to give both dialogue partners

experience with this particular genre of writing before introducing the

idea of dialogue as a way of thinking and knowing about literature. A

sense of mutuality and trust began to develop between dialogue partners

as they established a personal relationship with each other during this

phase of the study. The dialogic relationships that evolved through these

written interactions contributed to the students' confidence when they

shared their thoughts and ideas about the novel in the later part of the study.

The ESL students were asked to pick a novel for this project. It was suggested to them that they might like to survey their Peer Tutor and ask what novels they had enjoyed reading and why they thought that they were good. The ESL students were given a week to put together a suggested list of novels for the class to read. Each student presented their list of novels and a class decision was made to read "The Outsiders", by S.E. Hinton.

The procedure used to distibute the dialogue journals throughout this project was complicated by the fact that the journals had to be delivered to the Peer Tutor instructor who then distributed them to the Peer Tutors who were not all in the same block as the ESL students participating in this study. One teacher's journal accompanied the students' dialogue journals. Inside was a checklist that documented when the Peer Tutor received the ESL student's journal and when they had completed their responses. Additional information regarding the absence of a student in the study or other administrative concerns about the project were included in this teacher's journal.

4. Data Collection Techniques

The primary source of data in this research study are the students' dialogue journals. At the initial phase of the study, transcripts were made of the written conversation of both dialogue partners in each journal. Topics focusing on the novel study, "The Outsiders" were identified in the transcript. All comments that were related to a specific topic were made into a second transcript that was transcribed in hierarchical order and coded numerically. The researcher then identified the elaborated comments in each topic-frame by using Staton's (1988) "Categories of Elaboration" in interactive writing. The language functions in each transcript were coded at this phase of the analysis (See Appendix 1). Fieldnotes depicting the participant-observers observations were kept by the researcher throughout the study. A formal student survey was given at the end of this project.

5. Data Analysis

The method of analysis used in this study builds on the research techniques used by Staton (1988b) in her study on dialogue journal writing. Like Staton, this study takes the view that to be communicatively

competent in the written language students must know how to

communicate explicit, specific information to their audience.   The

primary focus of Staton's study was to determine if elaboration occurred

in dialogue journal writing and if so, about what topics.   The results of

her study are relevant to this research because she describes why and

under what conditions elaboration becomes functional for students.

Staton's study offers insight into how the implict meaning presupposed by

text can become more explict to ESL students through the elaborated

discourse in dialogue journal writing.

Staton identifies topics that have been elaborated by students in

their writing. She then looks for evidence to see if students went "beyond

the information given to add new information" to the topic. When

additional details were added, she counted these topics as elaborated.

Staton then applies a type of discourse analysis that enables her to

classify the elaborated comments within each topic into three categories.

An overview of the three types of elaborated comments is as follows:

I. Adding Details
    Giving more information about the topic by adding details -
    describing actions, actors, objects, inner perceptions and
    feelings; telling what it is like, or not like, or is an instance of;
    and giving meaning.

2. Comparison and Classification

Comparing or classifying the experience or event with others
- telling what it is like, or not like, or is an instance of; adding
a framework to the topic by stating what the event is like;
bringing in background knowledge.

3. General Principle

The last kind of statement identified by Staton in her study of
elaboration is "an explicit statement of a causal relationship, a
general concept or a principle about events, social interactions or
feelings" (Staton, 1988; p. 288). Staton uses the term
"general principles" to refer to all meaningful generalizations
about the connections between events or experiences or
actions.(p. 288)

Each of the categories of elaboration in Staton's analysis enables

the conversation between dialogue partners to move from an implicit level

to one where meaning becomes more explicit. A complete topic-comment

structure is formulated by using the following sequence of elaborations.

COMPLETE TOPIC-COMMENT STRUCTURE
(Staton, 1988)

TO AN INITIAL TOPIC STATEMENT:

Implicit   1. Add sufficient details to be informative

      ↓

      2. Place the topic in a framework of meaning

Explicit   3. Make explicit the underlying proposition of which
      the topic demonstrates

It is the purpose of this study to observe and describe the

conversations of students as they "talk" about topics related to "The

Outsiders". Tabular information describing the frequency of occurrence of

both language functions and categories of elaborations is provided at the

individual case level. Each case has its own summary that describes how

the task of meaning making was interactionally accomplished through the

elaboration of topics. A cross-case analysis was done at the end of the

study following the replication mode for multiple cases (Yin, 1984).

6. Definitions

a) Elaboration

This study will use the same definition of elaboration as Staton

(1988):

> Elaboration is usually defined as providing more detailed
> information about a specific topic, or giving evidence and reasons
> for an arguement, whether oral or written. Elaboration is prized in
> written discourse because greater specificity and detail and more
> explicit statements of what things or experiences are like and how
> they are related are necessary for comprehension in written
> communications (p. 278).
> Elaboration is a qualitative feature of discourse which involves
> decisions about the structures of a statement to accomplish a
> particular function - complaining, reporting, requesting help"
> (Staton, p. 307)

b) Peer Tutor

Peer Tutoring is a credit course offered to students who have a B+ average or better at the school where this research study takes place. The term "more competent peer" is used to describe these grade 12 Peer Tutors who are the ESL students' dialogue partners. These students have received the status of "more competent peer" solely on their ability to model the conventional discourse used to express ideas and thoughts in the target culture.

This study recognizes and validates the perspective that both dialogue partners bring to their reading. In many cases, the ESL students have a more in-depth insight into certain aspects of the novel, "The Outsiders" (eg. crime, violence, and death) than do their native speaking Peer Tutors. The dialogic nature of these conversations is such that reciprocal learning can occur through the sharing of multiple perspectives and realities on topics discussed in these journals.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

This chapter introduces the six specific cases of ESL students. In each case, a brief family history, educational background, and general language proficiency will proceed the focus on elaborated discussions about "The Outsiders". The sample dialogue used as examples in this chapter is coded numerically in the order that it appears in the original transcript of the dialogue journal. The alphabetical letter represents the case study being discussed (eg. Case Study A - Jagjit). The researcher described how the task of meaning making was interactionally accomplished in each case study. The individual case summary discusses how these conversations have enabled the ESL student to reconstruct their knowledge about the text and about themselves and their world. The researcher will interpret any generalizations or observable patterns that become apparent across cases in the next chapter.

CASE STUDY A - JAGJIT

Jagjit is a seventeen year old student who came to Canada two years

ago from India. He attended a large school in India for ten years. English

was one of the subjects that he studied at school. In addition to going to

school in India, he was also training as an apprentice tailor. Jagjit wears

many of his own creations to school and they are very impressive. He

summarizes up his taste for fashion when he writes:

A68 I love weird clothes, anything that not everyone is wearing, I like.
A69 I like to be very comfortable, especially at school."

Jagjit is the youngest of four boys. His oldest brother remains in India

and his other two brothers are here in Canada working at a mill. His

father is employed at the Sikh temple and his Mom is at home.

I met Jagjit as he was starting his second year of school in Canada.

His family was very worried about how he was fitting into his new life.

He had cut his hair, started smoking, drinking, and was hanging out with an

undesirable crowd. Jagjit had just finishing doing a one hundred hour

stint of community service for an impaired driving charge when I met him.

I used to watch him sauntering along the sidewalk having a smoke before

he got to my class out in the portable. There was always an apology for

being a few seconds late but once he was there, he was one of the most

polite, enthusiastic, hard working students in the class. Since these case

studies are written up almost a year after the collection of the data, I

can report that this story has a happy ending. I just watched Jagjit walk

across the stage a few weeks ago to get his graduation diploma. He

decided to continue using the peer tutors this year to help him in his

content area courses and as a result of their assistance and a lot of hard

work on his part, he graduated from high school. He is very proud of

himself as is his family.

Sixteen of the topics in Jagjit's dialogue journal qualified as being

elaborated. The elaborated dialogue from these topics was transcribed

across all entries made by Jagjit and his peer tutor. Six of the sixteen

topics were related to the novel study, "The Outsiders". (Refer to Table 3

for a complete list of topics and word count for both dialogue partners in

this case study.) The total word count in the elaborated topics written by

Jagjit is 1,249 words. Jagjit's peer tutor wrote 1,263 words on the same

topics. Thirty percent of the dialogue written by Jagjit was on topics

related to "The Outsiders". Jagjit's peer tutor wrote slightly more (thirty

four percent) about the novel.

The purpose of the data gathered in Table 1 was to give the

researcher insight into who was making the contributions to the dialogue in these journals. Prior to the beginning of this project, the peer tutor teacher and I were concerned that the tutors might monopolize the conversations in these journals because of their proficiency in using the English language. In this case study, Jagjit and his peer tutor wrote comparable amounts in their journal entries. When the tutor did offer slightly more dialogue it was in response to requests for information made by Jagjit in his journal.

Fourteen of the sixteen topics in this journal were initiated by Jagjit. The two topic-comment sentences initiated by the peer tutor were both requests for personal information. The language functions (see Shuy, 1988 - Appendix 2) used by Jagjit in his topic-comment sentences are as follows:

    1 - Report Personal Information
    3 - Report Personal Opinion
    4 - Request Personal Information
    2 - Report Academic Information and Opinion
    3 - Request Academic Information and Opinion
    1 - Request Clarification

An analysis of the topic-comment sentences written in this journal clearly shows that Jagjit had input into the direction that the conversation took in this journal. It now remains to be seen how the task

of meaning making was interactionally accomplished between Jag and his

dialogue partner. Examples from three topic-comment structures will be

presented in each case study and then analyzed to see how the peer tutor

contributed to the elaboration of that topic. It should then be possible to

present examples of new layers of meaning that evolve from the dialogue

between Jagjit and his peer tutor as they discuss elements of the novel

that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Jagjit: 10/02/93	ElaboratedCategory
A141: My class start to read a novel outsiders.	
A142: We are only on chapter one.	(1)
A143: I read first 12 pages	(1)
A144: I think you have read this novel.	

Peer Tutor: 12/02/93	
A154: Yes, I have read "the Outsiders".	(1)
A155: It was an extremely good book.	(2)
A156: Do you like it so far?	
A157: Where are you in the book now?	
A158: Tell me how you are feeling about the Outsiders.	

Jagjit: 15/02/93	
A171: Now we start Chapter 2.	(1)
A172: I have read first 4 pages of chapter two.	(1)
A173: I think this novel is very intrusting.	(2)

Jagjit introduces this topic by stating that his class is about to

start reading the novel, "the Outsiders". In this exchange of dialogue,

Jagjit was seeking confirmation as to whether the tutor had also read the novel. Even though Jagjit did not ask a direct question in line 144, his tutor understood the intent of his concern and responded that she had read the book. The tutor then added more information to the topic by classifying the book as "an extremely good book". She then encourages Jagjit to elaborate on the topic by requesting further details about how he likes the book and where he is in his reading. Jagjit responds to her requests for additional information by elaborating with detail and comparing the novel to others read as being "very interesting".

No further elaboration is given by the tutor on this topic. The peer tutors responses in this entry have been within the level of development in which Jagjit is operating. She added a second category comment to the discourse (i.e. classification) and made a series of requests that would enable Jag to also indicate how he felt about the novel that he was reading. Jagjit responded to the sequence of questions asked by the tutor and as a result, was able to elaborate on how he felt about reading the novel.

EXAMPLE 2

Jagjit: 10/02/93   Elaborated Category

Elaborated Category

A145: We are talking about the character
      called ponyboy.
A146: I think that he looks like yonger boy.   (1)
A147: not to tall.   (1)
A148: and I think he nice person of Greaser.   (2)
A149: he always wanna be alone.   (1)
A150: he kind sad mood.   (1)
A151: if you have read this novel than you can tell
      me what kind a person he is how he is
A152: Do you agree that ponyboy looks like or do
      you see him looking different?

Peer Tutor: 12/02/93
A157: Ponyboy was my favorite character in
      that novel.   (2)
A158: He is kind and nice, he's sensitive and a
      bit of a loner.   (1)
A159: I see him as medium in height, skinny, and dark;
      shaggy hair.   (1)
A160: I always felt sad for him when I was reading
      the novel.   (2)
A161: The ending is sad but I'm sure you'll enjoy it. (2)
A162: I cried but you probably won't.   (2)
A163: I cry very easily and I always get bugged because
      I cry over movies and books.   (3)

Jagjit initiates the topic by reporting an academic fact about the

character Ponyboy. He elaborates on how he sees this character by

providing details of about how he looks and what kind of person he might

be. Jagjit is curious to know how his description of the character

matches that of his peer tutor. He requests two academic opinions from

his tutor to find out how she views Ponyboy. Jagjit's second request for

information is not only an attempt to have his opinion of Ponyboy

validated by his peer tutor but a request for further information about how she sees the character.

Jagjit's peer tutor responds to his request for academic information with giving her personal opinion about Ponyboy being her favourite character in the novel. In so doing, she has validated Jagjit's choice of topics by indicating that it is a worthwhile topic to discuss. Lines 158 and Lines 159 give similar details to those given by Jagjit, except they use a more conventional model of language. A significant aspect of the last four lines of the peer tutor's response is the demonstration of an "aesthetic response" to this particular character. Jagjit has tried to do the same in lines 148 - 150 but it remains implicit in the dialogue. By comparing how she felt when reading the novel and indicating that the ending is an instance of a sad event, Jagjit's peer tutor has added details that make explicit why this story affects her in such a way that she cries.

Example 3

Peer Tutor: 12/02/93   Elaborated Categories
A166: What do you think it would be like
        to be in their group?
A167: Do you think life would be hard
        for them?

Jagjit: 15/02/93

A175: I like these kind movies and novels because
     I like gangs, and do party with friends.   (3)
A176: I think in next couple chapters
     will be more piecefull.   (2)
A177: I don't think they will live together too long.   (2)
A178: For them life will be to hard.   (2)

Peer Tutor: 17/02/93

A187: Would you like to be part of their gang?
A188: Why do you like gangs?
A189: Do you think Johnny & Ponyboy make
     good friends?
A190: Why do you think life is hard for them?

Jagjit: 23/02/93

A199: I wouldn't want to be part of their gangs
     because it long time ago.   (2)
A200: Now I would be member of gang if here's
     any gang now because I always wanna be friends   (3)
A201: Johnny and Ponyboy have good friends because
     they always their for help them.   (3)
A202: I know life realy [is hard] for both of them
     because they are too young   (3)
A203: They don't have life expereance   (2)
A206: In your opinion what choices did Johnny have?
A208: In my opinion both gangs are fighting each other.   (1)
A209: Both gang don't care who's will be alive
     and who's gonna die.   (2)
A210: This is my opinion.
A211: What is your opinion?

Peer Tutor: 24/02/93

A212: Life is hard for both sides because they are all
     young, insecure and fighting for a chance to
     become important.   (3)
A213: They all want to belong and the only way they
     think that they can prove their worth is by
     fighting with the other gang.   (3)

A214: Not only is it hard for Johnny & his gang because
  they are poor, it is equally hard for the socs
  because they all have money.   (2)
A215: Being rich isn't always as easy as people
  make it out to be.   (3)
A216: You don't have to be in a gang to have
  good friends.
A217: A gang isn't usually a good thing.   (2)
A218: Alot of bad things can happen when you
  are involved with gangs.   (2)
A219: You can hang around with really good friends
  and have fun with out doing things like drugs,
  or crimes or fighting.   (3)
A220: Tell me what you think of all this, K.

Jagjit's peer tutor initiates the dialogue in this topic by requesting

a personal opinion from him about how he would like to be in a gang. The

peer tutor also adds a request for an academic opinion when she asks

Jagjit why life would be hard for them [the Greasers]. Both of these

questions serve to continue the dialogue and allow Jagjit to bring his

personal background experience into his reading. In the first instance,

Jagjit responds by explaining that it would be a good idea to belong to a

gang because he could do a lot of partying with friends. His response to

the peer tutor's second question leads him to make a prediction as to what

he thinks will happen in the next few chapters (i.e. that they won't live too

long). His elaboration of topic takes the form of classifying the next few

chapters as being "piecefull".

The next sequence of questions posed by the peer tutor (lines 187 - 190) let Jagjit know that this is an interesting topic that they are discussing and invite him to further elaborate on his previous entry. The first two requests from the peer tutor seek to have Jagjit elaborate by giving more specific reasons as to why he would be interested in joining a gang. She also includes an academic request for information that requires Jagjit to think about whether or not Johnny and Ponyboy make good friends. The tutor then rewords an earlier request for academic information that asks why he thinks life is hard for them.

Jagjit clarifies an earlier response by stating that he would not like to be part of their gang because the setting of the story was in the past and belonging to that gang was dated. However, he reaffirms his earlier position and tells his peer tutor that he would like to be a member of a present gang because it was important for him to have friends. This information was not made explicit in his first attempt to answer this question. This time, he adds a general principle to his response when he explains that good friends like Johnny and Ponyboy are always there to help each other. Jagjit attempts to make specific the general principle behind his response to his peer tutor's last question when he explains that

life really is hard for both gangs because they are very young and don't

have life experiences. The intent in both level 3 categories of elaboration

are easily perceived. The final entry by Jagjit on this topic is a request

for an academic opinion on what choices Johnny actually had when he

killed the Soc. He gives his opinion by adding two elaborated comments

that compare how each gang feels about fighting. Jagjit then asks again

for his peer tutor's opinion.

The peer tutor provides Jagjit with a sequence of eight elaborated

statements that summarize all of the requests for information made in

the topic. She made explicit many of the underlying comparisons made by

Jagjit as a response to the same questions. For example, in line 212, she

elaborates on life being hard for both gangs by giving possible reasons for

this being the case. Line 213 provides a statement that describes the

general social interactions that motivate gang members to fight. In line

214, the peer tutor elaborates on life for both gangs by comparing being

rich and being poor. She then follows with a general principle that states

that "being rich isn't always as easy as people make it out to be". This

topic ends by the peer tutor going beyond the events in the story to give

her opinion as to why she thinks gangs are not a good idea. Her elaborated

comments make explicit the dangers of gangs and what can happen when

you hang around with the wrong kind of people. Her last general comment

is a statement that makes explicit an alternative type of lifestyle that

offers good friendship without the negative influence of drugs, crime and

fighting that goes with gangs.

Summary of Case Study A - Jagjit

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by the

Jagjit and his peer tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsiders".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"			
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES		
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
A-JAG	16	17	7
A-PEER TUTOR	9	12	9

Jagjit wrote a total of forty elaborated comments about the novel.

Almost forty percent of Jagjit's comments involve only the addition of

specific details about actions, actors, objects, and locations or settings.

The peer tutor wrote about half as many category 1 comments as Jagjit.

Forty-two percent of of Jagjit's comments were category 2 (detail +

comparison or classification) as compared to forty percent written by his

Peer Tutor. The Peer Tutor contributes nine elaborated category 3

comments (detail + principal+comparison or classification) which is

slightly more than the seven elaborated comments used by Jagjit in his

writing.

This summary of elaborated comments will be compared across

cases to see if any patterns in usage evolve. A qualitative analysis that

focuses on the interactional accomplishment of meaning within these

elaborated topics will then discussed. A data summary of language

functions used by Jagjit and his Peer tutor will first be presented in order

to give us an insight into the communicative interactions that were

occuring within this case study.

Language Function	Frequency of Occurrence ESL Student – Peer Tutor		
Reporting Personal Opinions	0	–	3
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	25	–	0
Reporting Personal Information	1	–	0
Requesting Personal Opinion	2	–	3
Requesting Academic Information			

and Opinions	10	-	9
Responding to Requests for Personal Information	2	-	0
Responding to Requests for Personal Opinion	3	-	0
Responding to Requests for Academic Information	12	-	26
Evaluating	0	-	1
Thanking	1	-	0
Total:	58	-	44

Forty three percent of the language functions used by Jagjit were reporting academic facts and opinions about the novel that he was reading. The second language function used most frequently by Jagjit in his journal writing was requesting academic information and opinion. Almost sixty percent of the language functions used by Jagjit's peer tutor, were responses to Jagjit's requests for further academic information or his peer tutor's opinion about some element in the novel. The peer tutor responds to twelve out of thirteen requests for information made by Jagjit. The peer tutor made only nine requests for academic information. Jagjit responded to eight out of the nine requests made by the tutor to provide additional academic information or opinion.

The general pattern in Jagjit's journal writing saw him reporting academic facts and opinions that included many elaborated details. He

would then make a request to his peer tutor for additional information

and opinions on the topic he was discussing. In many instances he wanted

to find out how his views compared with his dialogue partners. His Peer

Tutor would model back a response that gave additional meaning to the

toic being discussed. Jagjit's Peer Tutor generally gave her own

elaborated account of the event by adding a detail to the topic being

discussed along with a comparison or classification of the event. The Peer

Tutor's elaborated structures served to make the topic more complete by

establishing a framework of meaning. The Peer Tutor would then

encourage Jagjit to elaborate on the topic by requesting additional

information or opinion. These requests for additional information served

to continue the dialogue and mark the topic as being of interest to Jagjit's

Peer Tutor. Jagjit responded to almost ninety percent of the tutors

requests for information. Jagjit often used category two and category

three elaborated structures in his journal responses. The final response

in many of the topics saw Jagjit's Peer Tutor completing the interaction

by making explicit the underlying meaning of the topic being discussed.

The peer tutor would bring coherence to the topic by making meaningful

generalizations about the connections between the events and

experiences that had been talked about in the topic. In this case study, the elaborated dialogue provided by the peer tutor became an explicit extention of Jagjit's meaning.

The similarity in the frequency of occurrence in the analysis of elaborated structures shows that the conversations between Jagjit and his peer tutor were within Jagjit's instructional level. The peer tutor wrote at only a slightly higher level beyond Jagjit's capacity to respond. She did not write any more in length than Jagjit. Both Jagjit and his dialogue partner took turns talking about the topics in the journal. Since Jagjit did not have to ask for any clarification about the language being used and his responses were appropriate to the requests being made, it can be assumed that the Peer Tutor adapted her language to what she perceived to be a level that would be understood by Jagjit. Many of the language structures and vocabulary that were modelled in the peer tutor's writing were incorporated into Jagjit's journal entries.

One of the last entries in the journal writing in this case study, has the peer tutor asking Jagjit as to whether he has enjoyed writing in this book and if it has helped him at all.

Peer Tutor: 12/04/93
A271: Do you enjoy writing in this book?

A272: Does it help you at all?

Jagjit: 14/04/93
A278: We are finished our project so thank you for helping me.
A279: I have learned many things about yourself, about you and about your culture.
A280: I enjoyed it, I like writing to somebody.
A281: Yes you have helped me some of my stuff.

Peer Tutor: 21/04/93
A286: I wish we were still going to write in this book.
A287: I enjoy hearing things about you.
A288: I wonder if we'll ever know each other.
A289: I hope that I have helped you in at least some small way.
A290: I hope school goes good for you and I also hope you have an enjoyable life.
A291: Always remember to stay true to yourself and live for you, and no one else, K. Take Care.

This dialogue journal writing project offered Jagjit a context for inquiring into issues that were of importance to him both socially and academically. Jagjit was able to bring his own experiences into his reading and share his ideas and opinions about the novel with his peer tutor. The dialogue in the topic on "Gangs and Friendships" is of special interest to this study because it clearly demonstrates what happens when the ESL student has a more extensive knowledge on the topic than the Peer Tutor. The interactionally assisted elaborations that took place in this topic allowed Jagjit to become increasingly specific in articulating his individual perspective on gangs and friendship. Jagjit was able to share

his prior knowledge about gangs with his Peer Tutor and in so doing, contributed to his partner's knowledge about a world that she had very little insight into. Jagjit made it clear that he would not change his perspective on gangs because he considered friendship to be very important. Both Jagjit and his Peer Tutor added a different perspective to their understanding of this topic.

CASE STUDY B – JAY

Jay is a sixteen year old student Spanish speaker from El Salvador.

His family fled to Canada three years ago because of threats on their life.

Jay's father had been killed when he was nine years of age and in his

journal we find out that he still blames himself for what happened. An

early entry in his dialogue journal (December 2, 1992) summarizes the

intensity of the feelings that he has about what happened to his father.

B40: I don't like the violation in this world.
B41: Everytime when I think about my father I get angry.
B42: My dad was killed back in my homeland.
B43: I get angry because I know who killed my dad.

Jay is one of the advanced speaker of English in the case studies

being analyzed in this research. He enjoys attending school in Canada and

is doing very well academically considering his lack of formal educational

background in El Salvador. According to Jay, the only schooling he

received came from within the home. Jay attended a large urban high

school in Vancouver for two years before his "parents" (his mother has

since remarried) pulled him out and moved to Clearbrook. He tells his

tutor that the reason for the move was because he used to hang around

with some gang members and his parents didn't want him to get into

trouble. At the time Jay started writing in his journal, he was missing

his "friends" in Vancouver and felt very lonely. This is probably one of the reasons that such a strong friendship developed between Jay and his dialogue partner.

Twenty of the topics in Jay's dialogue journal qualified as being elaborated. The elaborated dialogue from these topics was transcribed across all entries made by Jay and his peer tutor. Nine out of the twenty topics related to the novel study, "The Outsiders". (Refer to Table 4 for a complete list of topics and the word count for both dialogue partners in this case study). The total word count in these elaborated topics is 2,089 words written by Jay and a total of 1,263 words written by his Peer Tutor. Sixty one percent of the dialogue written by Jay was on topics related to the reading of the novel. Jay's peer tutor wrote forty five percent of her comments about the novel. In this case study, Jay wrote about twenty percent more on topics than did his peer tutor.

Sixteen of the twenty elaborated topics in this journal were initiated by Jay. The four topic-comment sentences initiated by Jay's peer tutor served to request a personal opinion, report personal information, request personal information from Jay and report a personal opinion about the value of dialogue journal writing. The language

functions (see Appendix 1) used by Jay in his topic-comment sentences

are as follows:

> 3 - Report Personal Information
> 4 - Report Personal Opinion
> 4 - Report Academic Information and Opinion
> 2 - Request Academic Information and Opinion
> 2 - Request Personal Information
> 1 - Apologizing

When we look at which dialogue partner initiates the topic-comment

sentence, we clearly can observe that Jay had input into the direction

that the conversation took in this journal. The variety of language

functions used in the topic-comment sentences analysis give us an insight

into the wide range of communicative language used in his journal writing.

A more detailed look at the language functions used in this case study will

follow after we investigate how meaning making was interactionally

accomplished between Jay and his dialogue partner. Examples from three

topic-comment structures in this case study will be presented and then

analyzed to see how the peer tutor contributed to the elaboration of that

topic. It should then be possible to present examples of new layers of

meaning that evolve from the dialogue between Jay and his peer tutor as

they discuss elements of the novel that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Jay: 03/02/93   Elaborated Category

B179: We went up to page 11 and the story
      is already telling us that Ponyboy is
      different from the others.

B180: He likes school, and he likes to read books.   (1)

B181: My question is "Why Ponyboy has been made
      different from the others by the author?

B182: We were talking about Ponyboy and we know
      that he is 14, he likes to look tough, he lives
      with his 2 older brothers because his parents
      died in a car accident, and he likes his hair long.   (3)

B183: he says that his hair long makes him look
      toughfer.   (2)

B184: Do you agree with me that ponyboy looks
      like these.

Peer Tutor: 11/02/93

B191: Ponyboy is made different by the author
      because the author wanted to create a character
      who was unlike everyone else.   (3)

B192: Ponyboy seems to be a very sensitive boy and
      so that is why he has to hide his emotions.   (3)

B193: Having long hair makes him feel tough and
      makes him feel safer.   (3)

B194: I agree with you about all your comments
      on Ponyboy.

     Jay initiates a discussion with his peer tutor by asking why the

author has made Ponyboy different from the rest of the characters that

have been introduced in chapter one. He describes the age and appearance

of Ponyboy and emphasizes the fact that Ponyboy has long hair so he can

look tough. Jay also elaborates on the setting of the story by explaining

that Ponyboy now lives with his brothers because of the death of his

parents in a car accident. Jay wants to know how his assessment of the

character Ponyboy compares to that of his peer tutors so he makes a

request in line B184.

Jay's peer tutor responds to Jay's request by first acknowledging the

fact that the author had indeed made Ponyboy a different character than

anybody else in the story. In lines B192 and B193, the peer tutor makes

explicit the underlying reasons as to why Ponyboy appears so different

than the other characters. First of all, she writes that he is a "very

sensitive boy and that is why he has to hide his emotions". She adds a

general observation about Ponyboy's long hair by stating that he wears it

that way because "having longer hair makes him feel tough and makes him

feel safer". In this example, Jay's peer tutor built on his interpretation of

the character and setting by making two meaningful generalizations that

made explicit the underlying meaning behind why Ponyboy was made

different by the author and as to why he wore his hair long. Jay's peer

tutor in line B194 validates his opinions of Ponyboy which in turn makes

her contribution to the dialogue one of extending Jay's original ideas about

the story. This example contains a complete topic-comment structure in

that the dialogue moves from adding sufficient details to be informative,

to then placing the topic in a framework of meaning. The final

contribution of the peer tutor makes explicit the underlying proposition of

which the topic demonstrates (ie. the reason why Ponyboy is made to be so

different from the other characters).

EXAMPLE 2

Jay: 15/02/93   Elaborated Category
B201: The part that I like in chapter 2 is when
      Ponyboy is surprised when Johnny told Darry
      to leave the girls alone.   (2)
B202: Pony knows that Johnny is even afraid of his
      own shadow, he is not that kind of person who
      will act tough or to be tough.   (2)
B203: Ponyboy also knows that Darry would hit
      back to anyone without asking any questions
      when someone would tell him to back-off.   (2)
B204: Why do you think that Johnny told Darry to
      leave the girls alone?
B205: And why was Ponyboy surprised when
      Johnny told Darry to back-off?

Peer Tutor: 17/02/93
B215: It sounds like you are enjoying the book
      the Outsiders.
B216: I think Johnny told Darry to leave the girls
      alone because he is concerned that Darry may
      get carried away because he does things
      without thinking.   (3)
B217: Ponyboy was surprised when Johnny told Darry
      to back off because Johnny is afraid of many

things and it took him a lot of courage for
Johnny to stand up to Darry.   (3)
B218: Ponyboy was not expecting Johnny to do this.   (2)

In example two, Jay is talking to his peer tutor about a part of the

story in chapter two that he liked. He describes Ponyboy being surprised

when Johnny stands up to Darry when he starts to bug two girls at the

drive-in movies. Jay knows enough about Johnny's character to recognize

that "he is not that kind of person who will act tough or to be tough".

(B202) Jay is curious as to why Johnny acted out of character especially

since he knows that Darry would usually hit anybody back without asking

any questions. Jay requests his peer tutors opinion as to why Johnny

acted this way and why it was such a surprise to Ponyboy.

Jay used two categories of classification to describe what type of

people Johnny and Darry were. In so doing, Jay gives the event a

framework of meaning. However, he still has not made explicit why this

action took place. Jay's peer tutor extends the meaning of the dialogue by

making explicit the underlying motivation for Johnny's behaviour. Jay's

peer tutor explains that Johnny stopped Darry from bothering the girls

because he knew how Darry could get "carried away because he does things

without thinking. (B216). The peer tutor puts Ponyboy's reactions to this

event in perspective by explaining to Jay that his surprise originates from

the fact that he was not expecting Johnny to act this way towards Darry.

She adds that it took a lot of courage for Johnny to stand up to Darry. The

peer tutor's response expands the interpretation that Jay had of Johnny in

that it gave the underlying motivation behind the action and in so doing,

made the nature of the character Johnny more explicit to Jay.

EXAMPLE 3

Jay: 15/02/93   Elaborated Category
B211: Have you ever been in a situation like the one
        that Pony found himself into?

Peer Tutor: 17/02/93
B219: I have never been in a situation such as Pony,
        have you?
B220: I can imagine how Ponyboy must have felt.

Jay: 23/02/93
B231: I have been in situations almost like in the
        one that Ponyboy had, but almost the same.   (2)
B232: The part that I like is when Ponyboy and
        Johnny cake are in the park and they start
        a fight with four socs.   (1) + (2)
B233: Do you think that Johnny had a choice or
        what would you had done if you were Johnny?
B234: When I was 9, back in my homeland, I
        found myself in a situation like the one that
        Johnny found himself into.   (1) + (2)
B235: It was between 5 and 6 p.m.   (1)
B236: My dad was talking to one of his friends on
        the other side of our house and I was seating
        on a chair outside the house, when six men
        came and asked for my dad.   (1) + (2)
B237: my little brother spoke and told them that

my dad was in the otherside of the house and they went to get him.	(1) + (2)
B238: At that moment I knew that there was something wrong going on and that I had to do something about.	(3)
B239: I knew where the weaponds of my were, so I went into house to get a gun, but the guns were hiding on the wall they were up high and I couldn't reach them.	(3)
B240: They took my dad and I didn't do anything about it.	(3)
B241: My plans were to get a gun and shoot to scare the mens away.	(2)
B242: Since then I haven't seen my dad.	(2)
B243: I learned kick boxing.	(1)
B244: I had the high position in kickboxing in Vancouver.	(1) (2)
B245: I'm teaching my friends how to defend themselves.	(1)

Peer Tutor: 25/02/93

B254: That is quite a situation you were in with your father.	
B255: How old were you when this happened?	
B256: You did the best you could and I think that was very brave.	(2)
B257: Did it anger you and does it still?	
B258: In the park when Johnny had a choice to fight the four socs he must have felt fear.	(1) + (2)
B259: If I was in his place I think I would try to avoid fighting because it only leads to more pain to deal with.	(3)
B260: What would you have done?	

Jay: 03/03/93

B270: I was nine years old when I experience the situation of my father.	(1) + (2)
B271: I felt angry with my self because I couldn't do anything to help my dad.	(3)
B272: I also felt like it was kind of my fault of	

      my father's death.   (2)

B273: I think that a way to solve problems is to
        talk about them and come to an agreement.   (3)

B274: I don't think that fighting is not the
        answer, but sometimes you don't have a
        choice then just defend your self.   (3)

Peer Tutor: 10/03/93

B289: That was quite a frightening situation you
        found yourself in.

B290: You are very smart to know that not fighting
        is a good way not to get in trouble but I
        agree with you because sometimes we need
        to defend ourselves.   (3)

This is a most powerful example of how an individual's background experiences come into play in their reading. I think that it is very clear that Jay's peer tutor validated his experiences and helped him make sense out of a very tragic situation. In an early part of this journal, Jay made reference to his concern about how he hates the violation in this world and the death of his father in this homeland. It was not elaborated on at that time by his peer tutor. Again in December of 1992, Jay asked his peer tutor it she had ever been in danger: "have you ever been followed, running away from someone, hiding from someone, being afraid?" (B66). This time, Jay's peer tutor responded with an example from her personal experience of a time in California were she had been followed by a man but managed to escape safely. She summarizes her response with a

comment that gives Jay an indication of how she feels about this topic:
    B79: I have never been in great danger and I hope I never will be but
    sometimes we are.

The topic of dangerous situations resurfaces a few months later in

February when the Peer Tutor asks Jay if he has ever been in a situation

similar to the one Ponyboy found himself in. I think that it was necessary

for these two dialogue partners to established a close relationship with

each other before they could feel comfortable talking about such a

sensitive and tragic topic. Jay was able to tell his Peer Tutor his story by

comparing his life to similar situations that took place in the novel. For

example, Lines B234 to Lines B244 have Jay describing having to make a

similar choice as to that Johnny had to make when he shot Bob to save

Ponyboy's life. Jay elaborates on this topic by giving a complete topic-

comment structure. Jay' Peer Tutor acknowledges the situation that he

has just described and asks for further information as to how old he was

when this event happened. She also assures him that he did the best he

could of done and that she thought he was very brave in the attempt that

he was trying to make. These comments made by the Peer Tutor serve to

validate Jay's experience and the request for further information (B255)

lets Jay know that the topic is important enough to be warrant

further discussion.

The peer tutor is very perceptive in picking up on the implicit anger underlying Jay's inability to do anything to protect his Dad from being taken away. She asks him in Line 257 if it still angers him when he thinks about what happened. The Peer Tutor then switches back to the novel and suggests that Johnny must also have felt fear when he had to make a similar choice when he attempted to defend Ponyboy. At this point in the dialogue the Peer Tutor offers Jay an insight into her own opinion of what she would probably do if caught in a similar situation. (B259) She follows giving her own account of the event with a request for Jay to give his opinion as to what he would have done.

Jay adds further details about his own personal situation and then elaborates by making it explicit how he blames himself for his father's death (B271-272). He then makes an elaborated statement that is very similar in nature to the peer tutor's position that people should solve their problems through talking and coming to an agreement. Jay's background experience enables him to extend his position on violence as a solution to problems when he points out that sometimes there is no choice and you just have to defend yourself. The Peer tutor responds to Jay's

comments by reaffirming that not fighting is a good way to stay out of

trouble. However, she also acknowledges the experience that Jay has

shared with her about this topic and extends her view on violence by

making the comment that in some cases, "we need to defend ourselves." In

this example, both Jay and his Peer Tutor went beyond the events in the

story to talk about the underlying causes of violent behavior and what

might be possible solutions for dealing with the problem.

Summary of Case Study B - Jay

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by Jay

and his peer tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsiders".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"			
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES		
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
B-JAY	19	29	21
B-PEER TUTOR	6	22	19

Twenty eight percent of the elaborated comments written by Jay involve

the addition of specific details about actions, actors, objects, and

locations or settings. Jay's Peer Tutor wrote fewer (12.5%) category one comments as compared to Jay. The majority of Jay's comments (42%) were level two comments (detail + comparison or classification) in which he brought in his background knowledge to compare the events in the story with his own experiences. Both Jay and his Peer Tutor have written a similar amount of category three comments (detail + principal + comparison or classification) in their writing. Jay wrote a total of sixty-nine elaborated structures about the novel in his journal as compared to the fourty seven written by his Peer Tutor.

The following summary of language functions used by Jay and his Peer Tutor gives us an insight into the communicative interactions that were occuring within this case study.

Language Function	Frequency of Occurence ESL Student - Peer Tutor		
Reporting Personal Facts	5	-	1
Reporting General Facts	0	-	1
Reporting Personal Opinions	12	-	16
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	22	-	3
Requesting Personal Information	2	-	2
Requesting Personal Opinion	1	-	3
Requesting Academic Information Opinion	11	-	4
Responding to Requests for Personal Information	5	-	4
Responding to Requests for Personal			

Opinion	8	-	0
Responding to Requests for Academic Information	10	-	21
Giving Encouragement and Support	0	-	4
Thanking	2	-	0
Giving Empathy	0	-	2
Total:	78	-	61

Twenty eight percent of the language functions used by Jay in his journal writing involved reporting academic facts and opinions. The second language function used most frequently by Jay in his journal writing was the reporting of personal opinions at fifteen and a half percent. The language functions involving reporting made up fifty percent of Jay's speech acts. Twenty-nine percent of the remaining language functions were responses to his Peer Tutor's requests for further information or opinion. Eighteen percent of Jay's speech acts were requests for personal and academic information. Jay used a total of ten different language functions in his journal writing.

The language functions making up the speech acts of Jay's Peer Tutor differ from his in that forty percent are direct responses to Jay's requests for personal and academic information. An analysis of the requests made by Jay in topics related to the novel indicate that the peer

tutor responded to ten out of ten requests for academic information and two out of two requests for personal information. Only fifteen percent of the Peer Tutor's speech acts were requests for either personal or academic information from Jay.

The general pattern in Jay's journal writing saw him introducing a topic by reporting academic facts and opinions and to a lesser degree the reporting of personal facts and opinions. He then gave a framework to the topic by comparing the event to similar experiences in his life. At this point, Jay would invite his peer tutor to give her opinion about the event. On several occasions, Jay would explicity ask his peer tutor how her interpretation of the event compared to his. From the summary of elaborated structures, we can see that Jay's peer tutor did not contribute much detail in her responses. Instead, she would add additional meaning to the topic by making elaborated comments that involved comparison or classification. Forty six and a half percent of her elaborated comments are of this nature. Even though Jay used a similar amount of category two elaborated comments in this writing, it was the different perspective that his tutor brought to the topic that was of the most importance to Jay in these discussions. Through the course of his dialogue journal writing,

Jay was able to continually develop new layers of meaning about the novel, himself, and events in the world around him.

One of the strategies used in 40.5% of the Peer Tutor's comments was extending the dialogue by moving to a more general level of meaning. This strategy works for Jay's Peer Tutor because he is an advanced speaker of English. He does not need a lot of details to comprehend the topic being discussed. Jay's Peer Tutor is very perceptive at making explicit the general principles or concepts underlying the topics introduced by Jay. She knew how strongly that he felt about the violence that he had experienced in his life and how he planned to protect himself if it ever happened again. After briefly comparing his tragedy to that in the novel, the Peer Tutor makes a powerful general statement that indicates to Jay that violence is not always the answer. Jay acknowledges her contribution to the dialogue and builds on her comment by stating that "sometimes you don't have a choice then just defend yourself" (B274). Jay's Peer Tutor validates his modification of her general principal by indicating that she agrees with him that in some situations "we need to defend ourselves". The interactionally accomplishment of meaning was clearly evident throughout the topics

discussed by Jay and his Peer Tutor in their dialogue journal writing.

It is important to include data that gives us an indication as to how students valued the opportunity to talk to each other in these dialogue journals. The following transcript lets us observe Jay and his Peer Tutor as they discuss the topic of dialogue journal writing.

Peer Tutor: 01/12/92
B55: I enjoyed giving you my opinions and enjoyed reading yours.
B57: I enjoy looking forward to your next letter, Jay!

Jay: 06/12/92
B59: How are you doing em?
B60: This is Jay and I love to read your letters.
B61: I think that your opinions are interesting because people from all over the world have different opinions about things.

Peer Tutor: 08/12/1992
I'm glad you enjoyed my opinions. I enjoy your too.

Jay: 14/04/93
B365: I'm finished reading the outsiders with my class mates and we are sad because she just told us that we are not going to write in the journals no more.
B366: So I just wanted to thank you for the time you expended writting in the journal, answering me.
B367: I also thank you for helping me and sharring your ideas, your opinions and thoughts about the outsiders.
B368: If you have anything to say please write back!
B369: Your friend, Jay.
B370: Take care of yourself.

Peer Tutor: 07/05/93
B371: Jay, I can't believe that this year is finally coming to an end.

B372: It is sad to see that this is my last letter to you.
B373: I want to wish you all the best in everything you do.
B374: I'm glad you really enjoyed reading the Outsiders.
B375: You seem like you have great potential in all that you will do.
B376: Remember Ponyboy and how he always wanted the best.
B377: I am going to miss your letters and I'll always remember them.
B378: Take care of yourself.
B379: Your friend always, Em.

Jay had made excellent progress in his content area courses througout the

year so a decision was made to give him the "Most Improved Student of the

Year Award." Two weeks before the end of school, Jay and his family were

gone. No forwarding address was given.

Case Study C – Bouakeo

Bouakeo is almost seventeen years old and was born in Laos.

Bouakeo came to Canada three years ago. She lives with seven people in

her family. Bouakeo's father cuts mushrooms and she also does this job on

weekends and during holidays. The family is not well off financially and

money for extras at school is limited. Bouakeo did not receive any formal

schooling in her home country. Her family moved around and lived in

various camps in Laos and Vietnam for many years. The death of her

brother is one of the more tragic moments in Bouakeo's life. Bouakeo is

very quiet at school and she finds learning English a struggle. Her

language proficiency level would be considered low intermediate.

Bouakeo was transferred to my ESL class at the beginning of a new

term which was approximately six weeks later than most of the students

in this study. Consequently, she did not have the time to establish the

personal relationship with her dialogue partner as compared to some of

the other ESL students in this study. However, Bouakeo started the novel

study at the same time as the other participants in this project. A

longitudinal analysis of the development of topics within Bouakeo's

journal makes an interesting contribution to our understanding of

interactive dialogue journal writing with students who are at the beginning stages of language acquisition.

Twelve topics in Bouakeo's dialogue journal qualified as being elaborated. The elaborated dialogue from these topics was transcribed across all entries made by Bouakeo and her peer tutor. Seven of the twelve topics were related to the novel study, "The Outsiders". (Refer to table 5 for a complete list of topics and word count for both dialogue partners in this case study.) The total word count in these elaborated topics is 855 words written by Bouakeo and 780 words written by her peer tutor. Seventy percent of the dialogue written by Bouakeo was on topics related to the novel study. (Note: This statistic is influenced by the fact that Bouakeo started writing her journal at a later time than most of the other students in this case study. If given more time prior to the beginning of the novel study, Bouakeo would probably have written on a variety of topics that were of interest to her.) Bouakeo's peer tutor wrote sixty percent of her comments about the novel. This statistic is influenced in the same way as in Bouakeo's writing in that here would probably have been a wider range of topics discussed if given more time.

The data in Table 6 gives the researcher an insight into who was

making contributions to the dialogue in these journals. Even though

Bouakeo would have the least amount of language ability as compared to

the ESL students in other case studies, she writes slightly more than her

peer tutor. Bouakeo's dialogue partner did not monopolize the

conversation and write more than her even though she is much more

proficient in using the English language. When we study the patterns of

elaboration in this case study, we will see how Bouakeo's peer tutor wrote

at only a slightly higher level than Bouakeo so that meaning could still be

interactionally accomplished within the dialogue.

Eleven of the twelve topics elaborated on in this journal were

initiated by Bouakeo. The only topic-comment sentence introduced by the

Peer Tutor was a request for academic information and opinion. The

language functions (see Shuy, 1988-Appendix 1) used by Bouakeo in her

topic-comment sentences are as follows:

> 2 - Report Personal Information
> 5 - Report Academic Information and Opinion
> 1 - Request Academic Information
> 1 - Thanks
> 1 - Complaint

This data further supports the claim that Bouakeo had input into the

conversations that took place in this journal. The next section of this analysis will investigate how meaning was interactionally accomplished between Bouakeo and her dialogue partner. Examples from three topic-comment structures will be presented and then analyzed to see how the peer tutor contributed to the elaboration of that topic. It should then be possible to present examples of new layers of meaning that evolve from the dialogue between Bouakeo and her peer tutor as they discuss elements in the novel that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Bouakeo: 15/02/93	Elaborated Category
C69: We start read chapter two in class.	(1)
C70: We talk about Johnny!	(1)
C71: On Friday night ponyboy and Johnny go to watch movies and they saw two girls came back than sat down beside Johnny.	(2)
C72: Johnny looked around for Dally, then managed a shy "Hi" to the girl and tried to watch the movie.	(1)*
C73: Dally started to put his arm around her, but Johnny reached over and stopped him.	(3)*
C74: Johnny said "leave her alone, Dally".	(1)*
C75: Dally was taken off guard.	(1)*
C76: Daly stared at Johnny in disbelief.	(1)*
C77: Johnny gulped and got a little pale, but Johnny said "you hear me.	(1)*
C78: Leave her alone and they fighting Johnny is win, but Dally is lost.	(2)
C79: I think Johnny is good guy, because he help two girls.	(3)

(Note: The * mark indicates that the dialogue is taken from the "The Outsiders".)

Peer Tutor: 17/02/93
C83: How do you think the girls felt that Johnny &
      Dally started fighting over them?
C84: The girls were preppy weren't they?
C85: From what I remember, afterwards Ponyboy &
      Johnny go somewhere and look at the sky.   (1)
C86: Am I right?
C87: I really need to reread the book.
C88: It's such a good book.   (2)

In example 1, Bouakeo is not sure how to talk about the book that she

is reading. I have highlighted the dialogue that has been copied directly

from the text. It is interesting that Bouakeo has introduced the topic in

her own words, supplied detail directly from the text, and at the end

comes to her own conclusion as to what the sequence of events in the

story means. There is very little invitation for interaction within this

dialogue. However, the peer tutor tries to extend the conversation with

Bouakeo by asking her how she thought the girls felt when Johnny and

Dally were fighting over them. The peer tutor makes a reference to the

girls as being "preppy" and asks Bouakeo if she agrees with her

assessment. The Peer Tutor then makes a guess as to what the next event

in the story might be and asks Bouakeo for confirmation as to whether she

is right. She closes the dialogue by indicating that "The Outsiders" was

really a good book to read and that she really should reread

it again. The topic is not extended past this point. In general, there is

very little interaction in this dialogue.

EXAMPLE 2

Bouakeo: 10/03/03	Elaborated Category
C141: Hi! Today we talk about hero.	(1)
C142: Anyone can be a hero, if they want too.	(3)
C143: Look like ponyboy, Johnny and Dally.	(1)
C144: They came be hero.	(1)
C145: They help kids in the fire church and they don't care about themself.	(3)
C146: They came be hero.	(1)
C147: I dont have any hero.	(1)
C148: What do you think makes a hero?	
C149: Do you have a hero?	

Peer Tutor: 23/03/93	
C153: I agree with you that Johnny & Ponyboy are heroes in that situation.	(2)
C154: Putting one's life in front of someone else's in a dangerous situation is heroic.	(3)
C155: I don't have a serious hero.	(1)

Bouakeo is gradually understanding the nature of dialogue journal

writing. She introduces the topic of heroes by indicating to her tutor that

her class has talked about heroes. She presents her ideas on what it takes

to be a hero and elaborates on the topic by giving examples of the heroes

in the story. Bouakeo now understands that you can continue the topic by making requests for further information from your Peer Tutor. She asks her Peer Tutor what she thinks makes a hero and if she personally has any heroes. The Peer Tutor acknowledges the contribution that Bouakeo has made on the topic by indicating that she agrees with her that both Johnny and Ponyboy are heroes. She models Bouakeo's category 3 comment (C145) by giving a specific definition of a heroic event:

"Putting one's life in front of someone else's in a dangerous situation is heroic". (C134)

Even though the Peer Tutor does not have a serious hero, she indicates that response to Bouakeo so she knows that she is responding to her question.

EXAMPLE 3

Bouakeo: 31/03/93	Elaborated Category
C169: In chapter 9 Johnny was dead in the hospital and Dallas go out of the hospital.	(1)
C170: He going to the rumble and they won but they don't know yet Johnny was dead.	(2)
C171: When they go to hospital the doctor said sorry!	(1)
C172: Johnny was died.	(1)
C173: I have a question ask you.	
C174: Why did Randy told Ponyboy, he not going to rumble?	
C175: And why did Dally worry about Ponyboy?	

Peer Tutor: 01/04/93

C176: If I remember correctly, Randy told Ponyboy
       he wasn't going to rumble because Randy knew
       what happened at these rumbles.   (3)

C177: The police would be involved and there
       could be deaths.   (1) + (2)

C178: Randy didn't want Ponyboy to be involved
       because he was already in some trouble.   (3)

C179: Darry worried about Ponyboy because it is his
       responsibility to take care of him and he
       didn't want social services to take Ponyboy
       away into a home for boys.   (3)

There has been a noticeable development in Bouakeo's ability to comment on events in the story when we compare example one and example three. Bouakeo provides her Peer Tutor with the details surrounding the events in chapter 9 when Johnny dies in the hospital. She asks two very interesting questions from the novel that both required a considerable amount of implicit background knowledge to make the connection as to why they would be relevant to the story. Bouakeo's Peer Tutor responded to these requests for further information by giving her background information on what kinds of things happen at rumbles and the consequences of being caught in one if there were any deaths involved. The Peer Tutor establishes the connection between Ponyboy getting caught at the rumble by the police and being put in a home for boys because Darry

explained that Randy knew that this could happen so that's why he advised

Ponyboy not to go to the rumble. This explanation by the Peer Tutor builds

on Bouakeo's understanding of the topic by making explicit the underlying

consequences that attending a rumble might have on Ponyboy.

Summary of Case Study C – Bouakeo

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by

Bouakeo and her Peer Tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsiders".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"			
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES		
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
C-BOUAKEO	16	14	8
C-PEER TUTOR	8	21	9

Note: Nine elaborated structures used by Bouakeo in her dialogue journal have not been included in the above summary because they were comments copied directly from the text. Once Bouakeo became aware of the nature of dialogue journal writing, she used her own language in the dialogues.

Forty two percent of the elaborated comments used by Bouakeo in

her writing involve the addition of specific details about actions, actors,

objects, and locations or settings. Bouakeo's Peer Tutor wrote half as

objects, and locations or settings. Bouakeo's Peer Tutor wrote half as many category one comments. Thirty seven percent of category two comments (detail + comparison or classification) are used by Bouakeo in her journal. Over half of Bouakeo's Peer Tutor's elaborated comments involve category two comments. This high percentage of category two elaborations is an indication that the Peer Tutor is trying to add a framework to the topic by comparing or classifying the experience or event with others. By describing what an event is like, or not like, or is an instance of enables Bouakeo to bring in any background experience that might be related to event being talked about.

Category 3 comments (detail + principal + comparison or classification) are almost equally represented in the elaborated discourse of both dialgoue partners. The Peer Tutor does not go beyond Bouakeo's language ability to include elaborated principles or concepts that have not been introduced or commented on by Bouakeo. If she were to do so, the dialogue would cease because it would become meaningless to Bouakeo. A discussion of how dialogue journal writing facilitates the interactional accomplishment of meaning will be discussed in more detail after the data summary of language functions is presented.

An overview of the language functions used by both dialogue partners gives us an insight into the communicative interactions that took place between Bouakeo and her Peer Tutor in their dialogue journal writing.

Language Function	Frequency of Occurrence		
	ESL Student	–	Peer Tutor
Reporting General Facts	0	–	4
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	53	–	28
Requesting Academic Information and Opinion	8	–	12
Responding to Requests for Academic Opinion	0	–	16
Giving Encouragement and Support	0	–	1
Thanking	2	–	0
Total:	63	–	61

Eighty four percent of the language functions used by Bouakeo in her journal writing involved reporting academic facts and opinions. Initially, Bouakeo did not understand the interactive nature of dialogue journal writing and assumed that she was restricted to giving academic information or opinions. The first instance where Bouakeo became personally involved in her writing was when she was describing the movie "The Outsiders" to her dialogue partner. Part of the confusion could have stemmed from the fact that Bouakeo arrived late into the ESL class when

the dialogue journal writing project was well underway. Many of the other students in the classroom had the opportunity to explore a variety of topics with their dialogue partners before we started to read the novel. It appears to be extremely important to give ESL students an opportunity to experience dialogue journal writing before suggesting that they use their journals to converse about topics in a specific content area. Many of the initial topics discussed by the other students in this study served to establish a sense of mutuality and trust between the dialogue partners. Those relationships need to be established before dialogue partners can feel comfortable sharing their ideas and thoughts with another individual.

One more interesting comment about the language functions analysis in this case study is that none of the twelve requests made by the Peer Tutor for academic information and opinion were responded to by Bouakeo. One possible reason may be that Bouakeo does not have sufficient language ability to communicate a response to these requests. It may also be that the Peer Tutor was writing beyond her level of language ability. At first glance, this may seem the case until you look at the language functions used in this case study. If the peer tutor was writing above Bouakeo's level of comprehension, one would see a large range of language functions

being used in the dialogue. This Peer Tutor uses less language functions than any other Peer Tutor in these case studies. It seems more likely that Bouakeo needs some practice with this genre of conversational writing along with some experience in talking about books. Once Bouakeo understands that dialogue journal writing is like having a conversation with a person in writing, it is possible that there would be a wider range of language functions used in her writing.

Case Study D – Katryna

Katryna is the youngest student in this study at almost fourteen

years of age. Katryna was born in Poland and speaks Polish. She attended

school in Poland until the family moved to Quebec one and a half years ago.

She is also fluent in French. Katryna studied English in both Poland and

Quebec. She would be considered one of the most advanced students in

this study. She is an accomplished pianist and enjoys reading books in a

variety of languages. Like Bouakeo, Katryna transferred into this course

at the change of term. The other ESL students had already started writing

to their dialogue partners in their journals. However, Katryna began the

novel study at the same time as the other students.

Katryna comes from a stable family environment where she lives

with her parents, three brothers and a sister. Katryna is the youngest

child in the family. Both of her parents are "professionals" and Katryna

expects to be a doctor. Her dialogue journal writing makes an interesting

contribution to the overall study on interactive writing as a context for

thinking and knowing about literature in a second culture because of her

high level of language proficiency and the fact that she is the youngest

student in the study. An analysis of the conversations between Katryna

and her peer tutor provide interesting data of when two dialogue partners

are operating at similar levels of language proficiency. It appears that

the patterns of elaboration are "short-cutted" in the topics discussed by

these students. When we examine specific examples of topic-comment

structures, we will see that in many cases the ability to refer to a

general principle or concept was made directly without the addition of a

lot of detail. In these cases it was clear to the other speaker that the

person had the appropriate background knowledge to make meaning of the

topic being discussed.

Nine of the topics in Katryna's dialogue journal qualified as being

elaborated (see Appendix 1). The elaborated dialogue from these topics

was transcribed across all entries made by Katryna and her peer tutor.

Six of the nine topics were related to the novel study. (Refer to Table 6

for a complete list of topics and word count for both dialogue partners in

the case study). The total word count in these elaborated topics is 1,091

words written by Katryna and 598 words written by her peer tutor.

Seventy percent of the dialogue written by Katryna was on topics related

to the novel study. (Note: This statistic is influenced by the fact that

Katryna started writing her journal at a later date than most of the other

students in these case studies. If given the same time at the beginning of the study, Katryna would probably written on a variety of topics that were of interest to her. Katryna's peer tutor wrote sixty two percent of his comments on the novel study. This statistic is influenced in the same way as in Katryna's writing in that there would probably have been a wider range of topics discussed if given more time. In general, Katryna wrote twenty percent more than her peer tutor on all topics which indicates that she made substantial contributions to the dialogue.

Katryna initiated all nine of the elaborated topics in this dialogue journal. This tells us that the direction taken in the journal was entirely determined by Katryna. The language functions (see Appendix 1) used by Katryna in her topic-comment sentences are as follows:

1 - Report Personal Information
5 - Report Academic Information and Opinion
1 - Request Academic Information
1 - Request Personal Information
1 - Thanks

An analysis of these topic comment sentences written by Katryna clearly shows that she directed the conversations throughout this journal. It now remains to be seen how the task of meaning making was interactionally

accomplished between Katryna and her peer tutor. Examples from three topic-comment structures will be given and then analyzed to see how the peer tutor contributed to the elaboration of that topic. It should then be possible to present examples of new layers of meaning that evolve from the dialogue between Katryna and her peer tutor as they discuss elements of the novel that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Katryna: 23/02/93	Elaborated Category
D072: Now we are talking about soc guy named Bob who was killed by Johnny to defence Ponyboy.	(2)
D073: I think that he had to do it because as we read in chp. he was quiet and he will never touch anybody, but what about killing a human.	(3)
D074: My opinion is that he had to do it.	(2)
D075: He had to do something, if not the four socs will kill his friend Ponyboy.	(3)
D076: It was too late to run away and he didn't have a choice.	(3)
D077: What is your opinion about it?	

Peer Tutor: 26/02/93	
D078: Johnny had to kill him because it was too late for them to back down.	(3)
D079: I am sure that he didn't want to do it, but if he didn't kill him, Ponyboy would die.	(3)
D080: Either one of the Socs died or else Ponyboy.	(3)
D081: Johnny made the right choice.	(2)
D082: Do you think that Johnny and Ponyboy could have avoided all this? How?	

Katryna: 04/03/93
D084: I don't know, but I think no because it was too
        late for them to run away!   (3)

Katryna gives a complete topic-comment structure in support of her

opinion that Johnny acted in self defence when he killed Bob. She explains

that Johnny didn't have a choice because there wasn't any time to run away

from the other gang. Implicit in Katryna's defence of Johnny is a personal

concern about killing a human. She seeks her Peer Tutor's opinion about

the shooting. Katryna's Peer Tutor responds to her request by giving a

complete topic-comment structure that makes the connections needed to

understand why Johnny kill Bob. He feels that somebody was going to die

in that situation and is definite in this opinion that Johnny made the right

choice. He asks Katryna if this situation could have been avoided and

Katryna again responds by stating that she didn't know, "but I think no

because it was too late for them to run away". (D84) This last request for

information allows Katryna to reconstruct her knowledge of the event and

decide if she wants to change her opinion about how she felt about the

shooting.

EXAMPLE 2

Katryna: 04/03/93   Elaborated Category

Elaborated Category

D085: Last time we read chp. 5 "The Outsiders" and
    I have one question for you.
D086: Can you tell me, of course if you know:
    What that poem mean for you?
    "Nature's first green is gold,
    Her hardest hue to hold.
    Her early leaf's a flower;
    But only so an hour.
    Then leaf subsides to leaf.
    So Eden sank to grief,
    So dawn goes down to day.
    Nothing gold can stay."
D087: Please! My teacher asked me what that mean
    and on thrusday she will ask me again, if you
    want to help me please tell me.

Peer Tutor: 08/03/93
D088: I think that the poem means that when you
    are a kid it is like gold.   (2)
D089: Everything is new to a kid, like gold.   (2)
D090: If you don't understand that, read the bottom
    of page 154.   (1)

Katryna: 12/03/93
D091: Whew!
D092: I read page 154.   (1)
D093: I thought that you're right.   (2)
D094: Everything is new to a kid like gold.   (2)
D095: You're right.

Katryna: 31/03/93
D134: I have one question for you, why do you
    think the last words that Johnny said to
    Pony before death were, stay gold Pony,
    stay gold?

Peer Tutor: 02/04/93
D137: He said "Stay Gold Ponyboy" because by

that he was saying for Ponyboy to stay new. (3)
D138: He was referring to the poem that we talked
about it earlier (page 154). (2)

Many of the ESL students in these case studies had difficulty

understanding Robert Frost's poem on page 69 of the novel. The poem had

been introduced in the ESL class by having students listen to the narrator

read the poem in the audiotaped version of "The Outsiders". Students had

the opportunity to talk to each other about their initial reactions to the

poem. Students were told to think about the poem in more detail and be

prepared for a discussion on the next occasion that we met. I encouraged

students to ask their dialogue partners about the poem if they were

interested in hearing another person's opinion. Katryna obviously followed

up on this suggestion as is evidenced in Line 087 in her journal.

Katryna's Peer Tutor responds to her request for additional

information by elaborating on the poem with two comparisons of how

everything is new to a kid like gold. He suggests that there is further

information available on page 154. Katryna indicates that she understands

his explanation by rephrasing the interpretation that he has given her.

This makes for good topic continuation, but it is obvious from Line 134

and 135 that Katryna does not understand the poem. Her Peer Tutor's

elaborated response did not carry adequate information to make meaning comprehensible.

Katryna asks her Peer Tutor if he would clarify the comment "stay gold Ponyboy" that Johnny made to Ponyboy on his deathbed. The peer tutor provides Katryna with a more explicit interpretation that states that Johnny wanted Ponyboy to stay new. This makes a lot more sense to Katryna as compared to the Peer Tutor's previous statement when he said that "when you are a kid it is like gold." I imagine that Katryna searched her background knowledge for what she knew about "gold" and came up with some physical characteristics about gold that didn't seem to match a description of a person. Katryna needed to know that "stay gold Ponyboy" was a reference to the poem that Johnny and Ponyboy shared and it was advice from Johnny for Ponyboy to stay "new".

This is not a good example of an elaborated topic-comment structure because the peer tutor did very little to extend or model the topic initiated by Katryna. Very few specific details have been given about the poem. I don't think that the Peer Tutor has an understanding of the relationship of the poem to the experiences shared by Johnny and Ponyboy in the novel. The Peer Tutor does not seems to have made the necessary

connections needed to make explicit the underlying concept that the poem

represents. This poem has proved to be challenging to both dialogue

partners in this case study. It is interesting to note that the other

advanced speaker (Jay) in this study also found the poem difficult to

understand or as he said "I liked that poem too, but it was kind of hard for

me to translate" (B299)

EXAMPLE 3

Katryna: 12/03/93	Elaborated Category
D095: Today we talk about what do you think makes a hero.	(1)
D096: Well, I wrote about Ponyboy and Johnny (example.)	(2)
D097: When they safed 5 little kids from burne church.	(2)
D098: They didn't care about them selves because they thought that they must safe them, and they did.	(3)
D099: I think that everyone can do something special, even if it's very dangerous to safe others life.	(3)
D100: I think that you can do something special even if you are an ordinary person.	(3)
D101: What do you think makes a hero?	
D102: And do you have any heroes?	

Peer Tutor: 17/13/93	
D103: What I think makes a hero is that this person cares about other people.	(3)
D104: A hero sacrifices themselve in order to save a fellow person.	(3)
D105: A hero enters a dangerous situation to enable to save someone else, not worrying about	

their own lives.	(3)
D106: To me, those people are heroes.	(2)
D107: I have no particular hero.	(2)
D108: The people that I consider heroes are those who risk their lives everyday to make our lives alot better.	(3)
D109: These people are like firefighters and policeman and bombsquad men.	(2)
D109: They help us.	(2)
D110: Who is your hero?	

Katryna: 23/03/93

D112: I want to answer your question, so I don't have any! sorry	(2)

Katryna offers a complete topic-comment structure in her dialogue about heroes. Her elaborated discourse expands on the topic of heroes by first of all outlining the criteria for being a hero followed by examples from the novel of heroic acts. Katryna further adds to the topic by giving her own account of the influence of this heroic act on the judge's perception of the character of Johnny. As Katryna points out, "...the judge will know that they are heroes that they couldn't have planned out the death of Bob. Johnny killed Bob because he was drowning Ponyboy". (D304-035) Katryna is able to make the connection between the heroic rescue by Johnny and Ponyboy and the influence that event might have on the decision made by the Judge at the trial. She predicts a more favourable

outcome for Johnny as a result of his heroic efforts.

Katryna's peer tutor acknowledges her contribution to the topic by modelling a very similar response that makes use of the word "courage" to describe the underlying motivation for the rescue. He then adds a new perspective to the topic by expanding the definition of heroism to include ordinary people who can be heroes with their family and friends. In line D322 in the original transcript of this case study, the Peer Tutor explains that "All it takes is the kindness from your heart". It would have been helpful for the sake of coherence if the Peer Tutor had provided Katryna with some examples of what he meant by this statement. However, the topic is not elaborated on after this point.

Summary of Case Study D - Katryna

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by Katryna and her Peer Tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsiders".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"		
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES		
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
D-KATRYNA	7	19	14
D-PEER TUTOR	4	11	15

Only seven percent of the elaborated comments written by Katryna involve the addition of specific details about actions, actors, objects, and locations or settings. Katryna's Peer Tutor wrote even less (4%) category one comments than her. Almost half of Katryna's comments are category 2 (detail + comparison or classification) as compared to the thirty-six and a half percent written by her Peer Tutor. Katryna added a framework of meaning to many of the events being discussed by adding her background knowledge to the topic. Both Katryna and her Peer tutor make almost the same number of category 3 comments (detail + principal + comparison or classification). The Peer Tutor responds in a close match to Katryna's level of reasoning.

The following summary of language functions used by Katryna and her Peer Tutor gives us an insight into the communicative interactions occuring within this case study.

Language Function	Frequency of Occurrence		
	ESL Student	–	Peer Tutor
Reporting Personal Opinion	3	–	1
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	37	–	0
Requesting Academic Information and Opinion	15	–	6
Responding to Requests for Academic Information	10	–	27

Evaluating	1	-	0
Thanking	1	-	1

Total:	67	-	35

Sixty percent of the speech acts evident in Katryna's dialogue journal writing involved the reporting of academic fact and opinion along with the reporting of some personal information. Only twenty percent of the Peer Tutor's language functions were used for this purpose. The language function used most frequently (77%) by the peer tutor was responding to requests for academic information or opinions. Katryna made fourteen requests for academic and personal information and her Peer Tutor responded to all of her requests. It should be noted that Katryna first provided her own interpretation of the event being discussed in most cases except the topic about the Robert Frost poem. In all but one of these cases, Katryna's Peer Tutor completed the interaction by making explicit the underlying meaning of the topic being discussed. His elaborated dialogue became an extension of Katryna's meaning.

Katryna had asked her dialogue partner for clarification of the Robert Frost poem on page 69 of "The Outsiders". The Peer Tutor had made an incorrect inference when he tried to interpret the poem which in turn

affected Katryna's comprehension. In this particular case, the interactional accomplishment of meaning was thwarted because the Peer Tutor's interpretation did not make any sense to Katryna. The Peer Tutor had not made explicit the underlying meaning in the phrase "Stay Gold Ponyboy". Other than this one incident, the task of meaning making was interactionally accompished in this case study when the Peer Tutor extended Katryna's account of the topic by making more explicit the underlying meaning of the events that she was describing. An analysis of the elaborated structures used in this case study of an advanced English speaker shows that category three comments (detail + principal + comparison or classification) are effective in accomplishing the task of meaning making without first having to provide details to build the ESL student's background knowledge about the event being discussed. It seems that the instructional level becomes personalized as the conversation adjusts to meet the specific needs of the ESL student within the dialogue.

Case Study E - Beant

Beant is an eighteen year old student from India. This is his first

year in Canada. He lives with his parents, two brothers and one sister.

His father is a teacher at the Sikh temple in Abbotsford. Beant had

learned some English at his school in India and for the purposes of this

study, would be at the intermediate level of language proficiency. The

format of dialogue journal writing is very appropriate for Beant in that he

has many social issues that he wants to talk about in his journal writing.

E19: I cannot change the world.
20: If every body help to change something we will change the world.

Beant's peer tutor was very sensitive and perceptive when

responding to Beant's specific concerns as to why people have to suffer

prejudice and discrimination. She brought in examples from her own life

experience to illustrate and clarify many of the concerns written about by

Beant. An analysis of this journal lets us see how a dialogue that is

grounded in the personal experiences of both partners can then be

transferred and become part of the interpretation given to similar events

that took place in the novel, "The Outsiders". This journal has been

included as one of the case studies because of the powerful impact that

the dialogue has on introducing new layers of meaning to the perceived

conflicts within both the story and the world in general.

Seventeen of the topics in Beant's journal qualified as being

elaborated (see Appendix 1). The elaborated dialogue from these topics

was transcribed across all entries made by Beant and his peer tutor.

Seven of the seventeen topics were related to the novel study, "The

Outsiders". (Refer to Table 7 for a complete list of topics and word count

for both dialogue partners in this case study.) The total word count in

these elaborated topics is 1,326 words written by Beant and a total of

876 words written by his peer tutor. Seventy one percent of the dialogue

written by Beant was on topics related to "The Outsiders". Beant's peer

tutor wrote fifty percent of her comments about the novel. A comparative

overview of the word count lets us see that Beant made a substantial

contribution to the conversation even though his language proficiency

level was considerably less than his dialogue partners.

Thirteen of the seventeen elaborated topics in this journal were

initiated by Beant. This statistic indicates that Beant clearly had input

into the direction that these conversations took. An analysis of the

language functions (see Appendix 1) used by in Beant's topic comment-

sentences gives us an insight into the type of information that is of

interest to Beant.

> 2 - Report Personal Information
> 2 - Report Personal Opinion
> 6 - Report Academic Information and Opinion
> 1 - Complaint
> 1 - Request for Academic Information and Opinion
> 1 - Report Personal Information

The language functions used by Beant's peer tutor were all requests for

personal information about him. It now remains to be seen how the task

of meaning making was interactionally accomplished within these topics.

Examples from three topic-comment structures will be presented and then

analyzed to see how the peer tutor contributed to the elaboration of that

topic. The researcher will then interpret the effect that these

interactionally assisted elaborations had on Beant's interpretation of text.

It should then be possible to present examples of new layers of meaning

that evolve from the dialogue between Beant and his peer tutor as they

discuss elements of the novel that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Peer Tutor: 15/02/93   Elaborated Category
E76: You asked why I thought ESL students have a
     hard time making friends.
E77: I think it's because of the fact you are from India.   (3)

E78: You are from a different culture and speak
     a different language. (3)

E79: I don't think it should matter, but that's my
     personal opinion. (3)

E80: Language and culture shouldn't matter. (3)

E81: People have the same basic features, skin
     colour should not matter. (2)

E82: This is a major flaw in our society. (3)

E83: When we lived in Europe we didn't speak the
     language. (1) + (2)

E84: It was so hard to communicate with the people. (3)

E85: I understand the problem you have in stores too. (2)

E86: It's hard to communicate when the people don't
     try to understand. (3)

E87: People can be rude without intention. (3)

E88: I can't wait to here from you again.

E89: If you have any questions, let me know.

E90: Keep me informed on your book too.

Beant: 23/02/93

E97: Some time we have so bad time because if
     you don't have any friend you can't go out
     your home like jail. (3)

E98: I think you know but meen.

E99: You go home and watch t.v. do home work
     and go to a bed. (1)

Beant: 13/03/93

E196: Last month my friend was go. [died] (1)

E197: So I am so upset now. (2)

E198: He was my friend when I am a little kid. (1) + (2)

E199: He was only a 19 year's old. (1)

E200: We are also read Chapter 9 same happening
      here in novel. (2)

E201: My feelings just like Dallas because I am
      thinking like Dallas (3)

E202: Why this happen to him why not somebody
      else.

E203: He was prity nice guy.   (2)
E204: This happen is only a nice guys have.
E205: Can you tell me How do I adjust myself.
E206: I can't be forget him.   (2)

Peer Tutor: 02/04/93
E207: That is too bad your friend leaving.
              [incorrect inference]
E208: I don't know why bad things happen to
          nice people.
E209: Maybe because they are nice to everyone
          that people are jealous of them.   (3)
E210: And those people just want some bad to
          come out of them.   (2)
E211: I really don't know, but that's my opinion.

Example one has been included in this case study because it

demonstrates the social context in which the learning in these journals

takes place. This topic on friendship runs throughout the entire length of

the journal writing project and includes both dialogue partner's personal

stories along with discussion about the friendships that exist between

characters in the novel. It is evident that Beant's dialogue journal

provides him with the context to share his feelings about school and

community. He was having a difficult time making the transition into this

new culture. Beant welcomed being able to share his thoughts and

feelings with his Peer Tutor and I think the feeling was reciprocal.

In example 1, Beant makes reference to a friend of his when he

writes: "Last month my friend was go." (E196) I know from talking to him

in class that he is referring to the death of a close friend that he grew up

with. However, this is not made explicit in the dialogue and his Peer

Tutor makes the assumption that his friend has moved away. Beant

compares his personal situation to that found in Chapter 9 in the novel

when Dallas finds out that Johnny has died. Beant elaborates on his

feelings being similar in nature to Dallas by making reference to how they

both think alike.

> "My feelings just like Dallas because I am thinking like Dallas. Why
> this happen to him? Why not some body else? He was prity nice
> guy." (E201-203)

Beant invites his peer tutor to respond to his loss by asking if she has any

suggestions as to what he might do to get over his loss. He also wants to

know why these things seem to happen only to nice people.

Even though Beant's Peer Tutor makes an incorrect inference and

assumes that his friend has moved away, she still acknowledges the event

by stating that it is "too bad your friend leaving". The Peer Tutor explains

that she doesn't know for sure why it appears that bad things happen to

nice people but she suggests a possible reason for these things happening.

In so doing, she extends Beant's thinking by offering a different

perspective on the topic. Beant does not make any further elaboration on

the topic of friendship.

EXAMPLE 2

Beant: 23/02/93   Elaborated Category

E104: The Socs are rich that is why they are
       not working and they drink bears and wine.   (3)
E105: They goes bad side there life is so bad
       because they are not use on money to buy
       bear and wine.   (3)
E106: they use money in on there parents.   (2)
E107: Other side of Greasers are poor not poor   (2)
E108: I meen the middle class.   (1)
E109: they have a hard life because if they are doing
       like socs they can't alive so they are working.   (3)
E110: They need to do work.   (2)

Peer Tutor: 25/02/93

E112: I think that the Socs and Greasers both have
       hard times.   (2)
E113: The Socs are very rich and are expected to
       maintain a certain attitude.   (3)
E114: The Greasers have nothing.   (2)
E115: All teenagers have problems.   (3)
E116: Life is hard for everyone.   (3)
E117: I don't think it matters were people live,
       the language they speak, the colour of their skin,
       they way they live.   (3)
E118: People are basically the same.   (3)
E119: Life is hard for everyone.   (3)
E120: The choices we make will affect our lives forever. (3)

This topic evolves out of a reader response activity that was done in the ESL class as part of the novel study. I had asked students their opinion about Cherry Valence's statement to Ponyboy about life being just as hard for the Socs as it was for the Greasers. Beant gives an elaborated response in his journal that contains a complete sequence of specific details about both Gangs, and the underlying reasons as to why he sees life being very different for each. Beant explain that the Socs are rich and that they can afford to drink beer and wine as well as hang out in the bad areas of town because they get money from their parents. Beant attempts to put the Greaser's in perspective by describing them as being members of the middle class who have to work very hard to get money. Beant effectively compared the status of each group before he moves on to his general opinion that life is harder for people who are dependent on working for their survival.

Beant's peer tutor adds a new perspective to the topic when she suggests that perhaps both gangs have hard times but in different ways. She details the ways in which she sees life being difficult for each group and then moves to a more general position about life being hard for all teenagers because everyone has their own set of problems. The tutor adds

more details to clarify that life is hard for everyone regardless of who

you are, the language you speak, or the colour of your skin. The final line

in her journal entry makes explicit the underlying principle on which her

response is written:

"The choices we make will affect our lives forever." (E120)

It is very clear in the Peer Tutor's journal entry that she did not

invalidate Beant's interpreted of the comment made by Cherry Valence.

Instead, she presented a more holistic interpretation that suggests that

all people have problems. Her analysis reminded me of the old adage that

you can't judge a person until you have walked in their shoes. The Peer

Tutor is trying to widen Beant's interpretation of the topic by offering

alternative perspectives for him to think about. She concludes her journal

entry by making a powerful statement that would certainly be appreciated

by Beant who is somewhat of a philosopher:

"The choices we make will affect our lives forever". (E120)

EXAMPLE 3

Beant: 09/03/93   Elaborated Category
E155: What do you think makes a hero?
E156: My opinion I think if some did good job
      for peoples he was a public hero.   (3)
E157: Something is every were like if somebody

did good job in war he was war hero. (2)

E158: If somebody doing hard and he did his dremes
      like lincoin first prime minster of united states. (2)

E159: Do you have a hero or any heroes?

E160: ok say I somebody doing best he can
      but he can't bullied up. (3)

E161: What do you think for him?

Peer Tutor: 23/03/93

E166: My opinion of a hero is anyone that can help
      others when in need without taking the glory
      and thinking they were higher than others
      for doing it. (3)

E167: I don't have a hero, but if I get one I'll
      let you know. (2)

E168: I'm not sure what you meant by the last
      part of your note, but I'll try and answer.

E169: If a person is doing the best they can, then
      no one should expect them of not doing well. (3)

E170: Do the best you can and you'll be rewarded for it. (3)

Beant elaborates on the topic of heroes by first giving his understanding of the general principle on which heroism is based. He then gives two examples of different types of heroes (eg. a war hero, and a person who follows their dreams). Following this elaborated discourse on heroes comes a statement that appears to be of real importance to Beant:

> "ok say I some body doing best he can but he can't be bullied up.
> What do you think for him?" (E161-162)

This is the most incomprehensible sentence in all of Beant's journal

writing. Beant's Peer tutor makes an attempt to respond to Beant's request for personal information by stating that she isn't quite sure what he meant by the last part of his note, but she would try to answer. In dialogue journal writing, there is no problem switching from talking about an academic issue to one more personal in nature. The Peer tutor tries to perceive the implicit meaning within Beant's statement and responds with a general principle that elaborates what she has determined the underlying issue to be. The peer tutor ends with a positive comment that encourages Beant to try and continue doing the best he can. She explains to him that somehow his efforts will be recognized and he will be rewarded accordingly.

Summary of Case Study E - Beant

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by Beant and his Peer Tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsider".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"		
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES	
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
E-BEANT	20	29	19
E-PEER TUTOR.	11	21	23

Twenty-nine and a half percent of the elaborated comments written by

Beant involve the addition of specific details about actions, actors,

objects, and locations or settings. Beant's Peer Tutor wrote about half as

many category one elaborated comments. The majority Beant's comments

(42.5%) were level two comments (detail + comparison or classification)

in which he brought in his background knowledge to compare the events in

the story with his own experiences. Forty two percent of the elaborated

comments made by the Peer Tutor are level three (detail + principal +

comparison or classification). Beant wrote fifty eight elaborated

comments about the novel as compared to his the fifty five written by his

Peer Tutor. This was the second highest amount of elaborated comments

used by ESL students in this study.

The following summary of language functions used by Beant and his

Peer Tutor will first be presented in order to give us an insight into the

communicative interactions occurring within this case study.

Language Function	Frequency of Occurrence ESL Student - Peer Tutor		
Reporting Personal Facts	9	-	3
Reporting General Fact	1	-	2
Reporting Personal Opinions	7	-	11
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	48	-	1

Requesting Personal Information	1	-	2
Requesting Personal Opinion	4	-	0
Requesting Academic Information and Opinion	10	-	4
Responding to Requests for Personal Information	5	-	0
Responding to Requests for Personal Opinion	0	-	8
Responding to Requests for Academic Opinion	1	-	10
Giving Encouragment and Support	1	-	6
Apologizing	2	-	0
Thanking	3	-	4
Giving Empathy	0	-	4
Total:	113	-	54

Fifty-seven and a half percent of the comments made by Beant in his journal writing involved the language function of reporting. Two thirds of these speech acts were reports of academic facts and opinion about the novel, "The Outsiders". Only one of Beant's Peer Tutor's comments involved the reporting of Academic Information and Opinion. Beant makes ten requests for academic information and opinion about the novel. His peer tutor responds to all of these requests. Beant also responds to all this Peer Tutor's requests for both personal and academic information. Fourteen out of the fifty four language functions used by the Peer Tutor were social in nature. They were positive comments that served to build

up Beant's confidence as a learner. In total, Beant used a total of one hundred and thirteen language functions in his writing on the novel. This was almost twice as many comments as his Peer Tutor who used fifty four language functions in her writing.

About half of the language functions used by Beant in his writing about the novel are elaborated comments. Beant welcomed the opportunity to share cultures and views as well as voice his opinion on the many topics discussed in the novel. Beant would generally present his ideas on the topic and then solicit an opinion from his Peer Tutor. He was very interested in comparing how his views on different aspects of the novel compared with his peer tutor. Beant's elaborated account usually took the form of adding a few details about the topic followed by comparing the event with a similar experience from his own life. The majority of Beant's elaborated comments (72%) fall into the level one or two category of elaboration (detail + comparison or classification).

Beant's Peer Tutor provides half as many level one details in her writing. Instead, she would model back a response that validated Beant's knowledge and experience. She would then give additional meaning to the topic by providing a different perspective or example from the novel or

her life experience. The Peer tutor almost always provided this information before moving on to give a general principle or concept.

After providing a framework of meaning, Beant's peer tutor would generally ask him to comment on the topic being discussed. These requests for further information served to continue the dialogue and mark the topic as being of interest to the Peer Tutor. In all instances, Beant made an attempt to extend the dialogue by responding to the Peer Tutor's requests for information. In many instances, Beant was able to use level two and three elaborated comments in his responses.

Beant and his Peer Tutor were very good at taking turns saying something about the topics being discussed. The Peer Tutor encouraged Beant to express his thoughts and opinions on all of the topics related to the novel study. Beant's peer tutor provided a considerable amount of interactionally assisted elaborations to make this happen. Eighty percent of the Peer Tutor's elaborated responses are category two and category three comments. The Peer Tutor's elaborations became a direct extension of Beant's meaning on topics related to the novel study.

I think that this is probably one of the first extended experiences that Beant has had in talking to a native speaker about his ideas and

opinions on life and learning. Beant sums up this dialogue journal writing

experience in this last journal entry to his Peer Tutor:

Beant: 14/02/93
    E226: Hi! This is last leter I am writing because we are finish the
    Outsiders and movie.
    E227: Nice to talking to you.
    E228: If I writing some thing wrong before forget me.
    E229: I don't know how do writing.
    E230: But I love dairy this.
    E231: good bye.
    E232 Thank you for helping me this dialogue journal.
    E233: I think you are a good person because you gave all answer.
    E234: I want thank you for all kindness. bye. hope see you later.

    Peer Tutor: 19/04/93
    E235: Well I guess I have to say good-bye now.
    E236: I really enjoyed spending time to write you.
    E237: I hope that you have a great summer.
    E238: Thank-you for taking the time to write me.
    E239: I'm deeply sorry that I have to say good-bye.
    E240: Your writing skills have improved greatly since I first started
    writing you.
    E241: Congratulations, this has been a job well done.
    E242: Well, I guess I should go now. Good-bye!! Hope

The Peer Tutor was very perceptive throughout this journal. Beant

was initially angry and frustrated with native speakers and learning

English at the beginning of this dialogue journal. His Peer Tutor validated

his prior knowledge and experiences throughout all of the topics in this

journal. The analysis of the language functions indicates that she made

the most social functions of any Peer Tutor in this study. These language functions purpose served to build up Beant's self esteem as a person and a learner. Beant's Peer Tutor addressed both the social and academic contexts for learning. The interactionally assisted elaborations in this dialogue journal added new layers of meaning to Beant's interpretation of the novel.

Case Study F - Trung

Trung is an eighteen year old student who came to Canada two years

ago. His family initially settled in Toronto but after a half year, they

moved out to the West Coast. He provides us with an insight into the

background behind his arrival to Canada when he writes:

F005: the reason I left my country because of the communist.
F006: since 1975 the north Vietnamese took over the South Vietnamese.
F007: they destroy everything down took over my family land put my dad
       in prison because he was the South Vietnamese's solder.
F008: after he escape the prison we have to leave our homeland & got to
       Malaysia for 2-3 years then came to Canada.

There has not been much continuity in Trung's educational background. He

explains that he did not get to go to school for very long when he lived in

the camps in Malaysia. He finds learning English very difficult and is

often frustrated by his pronunciation. Trung's language proficiency level

would be considered low intermediate.

Trung's family life has not been without its tragedies since he

moved to Canada. His Mom has been diagnosed with a terminal cancer and

his little sister at two and a half years of age fell out of their third floor

apartment to her death on the sidewalk below. Trung was the first one to

reach her, and as the eldest son, called for an ambulance and then made

the necessary arrangements for burial. In addition to going to high school,

Trung works a full time job at a local Pizza restaurant. He is often very

tired during the day but tries very hard to do well in his courses.

From the very beginning of his journal, Trung found a friend to talk

to about school, community life and the novel that he was reading. As it

turned out, his dialogue partner had some idea of how he felt being new at

the school.

FO12: I understand how hard it would be to get used to a new country
because my parents have had a hard time understanding English and
Canadian Life. (Her parents are from Japan)
FO13: Your past life was very tragic.
FO14: Now you're in Canada and if you have any questions just ask me.

Trung appreciated the fact that his dialogue partner had shared that

information about her parent's life and their friendship developed from

that point. Trung's journal is included in this study because it is an

excellent example of how the peer tutor has adjusted her language to make

it understandable to Trung so they can discuss various events in the novel.

The interactionally assisted elaborations provided by the tutor give us an

insight into how dialogue journal writing can be effective with ESL

students who have limited proficiency in using the English language.

Sixteen of the topics in Trung's dialogue journal qualified as being elaborated (see Appendix 1). The elaborated dialogue from these topics was transcribed across all entries made by Trung and his peer tutor. Seven of the sixteen topics were related to the novel study, "The Outsiders". (Refer to Table 8 for a complete list of topics and word count for both dialogue partners in this case study.) The total word count in these elaborated topics is 1,439 words written by Trung and a total of 1,038 words written by his peer tutor. Thirty percent of the dialogue written by Trung was on topics related to "The Outsiders". Trung's peer tutor wrote twenty five percent of her comments about the novel. When we compare the word counts of both dialogue partners we can see that Trung made a substantial contribution to the dialogue. Even through Trung's language ability would be considered low intermediate, his peer tutor did not write any more on topics than he did.

Twelve of the sixteen topics in this journal were initiated by Trung. We can clearly see the impact that Trung's conversation has on the direction that the conversation takes in this journal. The language functions (see Appendix 1) used by the peer tutor in the four topic-comment sentences that she introduced were two requests for personal

information from Trung and two reports of personal information. The
language functions used by Trung give us an indication as to the nature of
information that is of importance to him.

    2 - Report Personal Information
    3 - Report Academic Information
    2 - Request Personal Information
    5 - Request Academic Information

An overview of the language functions used by Trung in this topic-
comment sentences clearly indicates that he is requesting additional
information from his peer tutor. The high occurrence of requests may be
related to his level of language proficiency. The across case analysis of
requests in Chapter five should add validity to this statement. It now
remains to be seen how the task of meaning making was interactionally
accomplished between Trung and his peer tutor. Examples from three
topic-comment structures will be presented and then analyzed to see how
Trung's peer tutor contributed to the elaboration of that topic. It should
then be possible to present examples of new layers of meaning that evolve
from the dialogue between Trung and his peer tutor as they discuss
elements of the novel that are of importance to them.

EXAMPLE 1

Trung: 03/11/93   Elaborated Category
F154: Anyway I have a question for you.
F155: Do you have any of your friend a hero?
F156: What do you think makes a hero?

Peer Tutor: 23/03/93
F157: I'm a new person just for today not
      that it matters course you aren't aware of
      who she was anyway.
F158: I went to Maui, Hawaii for 2 weeks.
F159: We had a really neat time.
F160: We went snorkeling on the coral reefs
      and saw tons & tons fo fish.
F161: I also saw giant sea turtles.
F162: It was so exciting.
F163: We went boogie boarding which is similar
      to surfing.
F164: I don't really have a hero but if I did I think
      I would want her/him to have alot to say about
      the world and the events going on.   (3)
F165: To be able to voice their opinions.   (2)
F166: Who is your hero?

Trung 24/03/93
F167: Hello my new person, of course I'm not aware
      of who she was or who you were it nice to
      talk to you anyway.
F168: you were it nice to talk to you anyway.
F169: It's nice to hear you were having a good
      time during last two weeks.
F170: I didn't go anywhere too so it was not too
      much fun to tell you.
F171: I guessed I have some heroes too but I
      forgot now.   (1)

Trung: 31/03/94
F184: Hello. I am glad you are back.

(Note: The dialogue not related to the topic "heroes" has not been coded. However, it is included in this example because it provides us with insight into the importance of developing a shared frame of reference in dialogue journal writing.)

Example 1 has been included in this research study because it allows

us to see what happens to the dialogue when the "more competent peer"

monopolizes the conversation. Staton (1988) writes:

"The teacher initiates and elaborates only on events which represent a mutual topic discussed previously in the journal and about which the student has expressed concern" (p. 300).

Example one makes it very apparent that the Peer Tutor is not modelling

the role of the "more competent peer" in this exchange of interactive

writing. The new Peer Tutor introduced the topic about her recent trip to

Hawaii, then proceeds to describe her own experiences about the holiday.

The Peer Tutor makes the assumption that Trung is interested in hearing

about her Spring Break holiday to Hawaii. She proceeds to tell him of the

wonderful time that she has had and describes the many exciting things

that she did on her trip. Trung responds by telling her that it

is nice to hear that she had such a good time during the holidays but does

not elaborate as to what he did during Spring Break because he didn't go

anywhere and it would be boring to talk about in comparison to her

holiday. The conversation on this topic does not continue because it was

not been established as a topic of mutual interest.

The Peer Tutor does respond to Trung's request for information about

heroes in their conversation (Lines 164-165). She gave a brief two

sentence elaboration that offered a general principle about the topic. It

would have been useful for the Peer Tutor to have first provided some

elaborated detail that might have served to have given Trung some

additional background information about the topic. One way to have done

this was to have made reference to the heroes and their deeds that took

place in the novel. The new Peer Tutor had no idea of Trung's language

proficiency and consequently made the assumption that she did not have to

scaffold the dialogue to make meaning comprehensible. That knowledge

would have become apparent through extended discourse on a variety of

topics with Trung. Trung makes it clear in line (F171) that he does not

wish to carry on this conversation any further with his new Peer Tutor. He

tells her that he has some heroes but, "I forgot now". Trung's comment in

Line (F184) indicates how pleased he is at the return of his original Peer

Tutor.

EXAMPLE 2

TRUNG: 24/02/93   Elaborated Category
F124: Hello. This time I have some question for you.
F125: In the story chapter 4, ponyboy and Johnny
      having trouble again by the Socs.   (2)
F126: There was five Socs beat 2 Greasers and
      drown ponyboy in the fountain then Johnny
      kill one of the Soc's to defence.   (3)
F127: So, in your opinion what choices did
      Johnny have?

Peer Tutor: 24/02/93
F131: I think Johnny didn't have much of a choice.   (2)
F132: It was out of self defence so I think his
      actions are justified.   (3)

Example 2 shows Trung elaborating on the incident in chapter 4

where Johnny kills Bob in self defence. Trung gives details about the

situation and established the connection between Johnny's shooting of Bob

and the need to defend Ponyboy. The underlying meaning of Trung's

comments remains implicit in the dialogue. He does not have the

vocabulary to describe the event in more detail . The Peer Tutor builds on

Trung's interpretation of the events in this incident by making it explicit

that Johnny did not have and choice in the matter. In her final comment

she models the use of the term "self defence" as it applies to Johnny. In

the last part of this comment, she indicates that Johnny's actions are

justified. Even though Trung's peer tutor used more complex language in

these elaborated comments, I do not think that Trung will have any

difficulty with comprehension because the dialogue was an extension of

his own interpretation of the event.

EXAMPLE 3

Trung: 01/04/93

(He is talking about the Robert Frost Poem on page 69 of "The Outsiders".)
F142: What's this poem mean.
F143: Would you tell me about your opinion?
F144: My opinion mean there are many color
in nature and the sunbird is look petty
but it will be dark soon.   (3)

Peer Tutor: 09/03/93
F146: I think this poem is talking about children.   (2)
F147: When they say "Natures first green is gold"
they mean children, when they are born are
"Nature's gold" when they say "her early   (3)
leaf's a flower; but only so an hour" means
everything is a new experience for children.   (3)

As was mentioned in an earlier case study, the interpretation of the

Robert Frost poem on pate 69 of "The Outsiders" was a challenge to ESL

student at all levels of language proficiency. Trung attempts to give his

interpretation of what he thinks the poem means and then asks his peer

tutor for her opinion. The Peer Tutor responds by giving a line by line

interpretation of the poem. She attempts to elaborate on the meaning of

key vocabulary and phrases. She finalizes her interpretation be stating

what she perceives to be the underlying meaning of the poem. Trung's peer

tutor uses a complete topic-comment structure in her interpretation of

the poem.

Summary of Case Study F - Trung

The following table compares the elaborated structures used by

Trung and his Peer Tutor in topics related to the novel, "The Outsiders".

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"			
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES		
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION
F-TRUNG	6	6	6
F-PEER TUTOR	2	8	6

One third of the elaborated comments written by Trung involve the

addition of specific details about actions, actors, objects, and locations

or settings. This is three times the amount of category one comments as

written by his Peer Tutor's. Trung uses an equal amount of category two

and category three elaborated structures in his writing. Trung writes a

total of eighteen elaborated structure in his journal. This is the least

amount of comments of all ESL students in the case studies. Trung's Peer

Tutor does not write any more than Trung with a total of sixteen

elaborated comments. This is also the least amount of elaborated

comments written by any of the Peer Tutors in this study. Fifty percent

of the Peer Tutor's comments are category two elaborations (detail +

Comparison or Classification). Both students write an equal amount of

category three elaborated comments (detail + principal + comparison or

classification).

The following summary of language functions used by Trung and his

Peer Tutor gives us an insight into the communicative interactions

occurring within this case study.

Language Functions	Frequency of Occurrence		
	ESL Student	–	Peer Tutor
Reporting Personal Facts	12	–	3
Reporting Personal Opinions	1	–	5
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	2	–	1
Requesting Personal Information	1	–	0
Requesting Academic Information and Opinions	10	–	9
Responding to Requests for Academic			

Information		10 -	6
Giving Encouragement and Support		1 -	1
Complaining		1 -	0
Apologizing		1 -	0
Thanking		2 -	0
	Total:	41 -	24

Thirty six and a half percent of the language functions used by Trung in his journal writing involved reporting academic facts and opinions. Twelve out of fifteen of these speech acts involved reporting personal facts. Only two out of fifteen language functions involved the reporting of academic facts and opinions. Trung uses an equal amount (24%) of language functions that are requests for information and opinion as well as language functions that are responses to requests for information and opinion. Ten out of the eleven requests made by Trung were requests for academic information and opinion with only one request being made for personal information. Twenty-five percent of Trung's overall speech acts on topics related to the novel were responses to the Peer Tutor's requests for academic information.

The language functions making up the speech acts of the Peer Tutor are very similar to Trung's except that his Peer Tutor makes about ten percent more requests for academic information and opinion. An analysis

of the requests made by the Peer Tutor indicates that Trung made an attempt to respond to all of her requests. However, when Trung made requests for information from his Peer Tutor, only half of his questions were answered. Many of the responses made by the Peer Tutor did not add elaboration to the topic and as a result, Trung did not have the necessary scaffolding to continue the topic.

Part of the reason can be attributed to the fact that two new peer tutors were introduced to Trung during the novel study. (Trung's Peer Tutor went on an extended holiday, so the Peer Tutor instructor changed dialogue partners). Trung appeared to become visibly disappointed when he realized that his original dialogue partner was not writing in the journal. He tried to be receptive to the idea of writing to a new person but he began to express some concern in class when his questions were not being answered by his new dialogue partners. Trung lost his confidence and was not sure what to write about. It appeared to be almost like being in conversation with a person to all of a sudden find them gone and a new person trying to carry on where they left off. It just doesn't work. The new dialogue partners did not share the same frame of reference that had been build up by Trung and his original dialogue partner

through the exchange of ideas and opinions on topics of mutual interest.

The evidence compiled from the dialogue in this case study, indicates that the short-termed substitution of a "more competent peer" has had a negative effect on the learning that has taken place within this journal. Since there was no established shared goal or problem between the new Peer Tutors and Trung, there was no struggle for comprehension and very little new information was given to help Trung extend his interpretation of text. In interactive writing, students chose the topics that they are interested in and their dialogue partner validated their knowledge and experiences. The role of the Peer Tutor is to model a more complex level of encoding and reasoning about the events in the topic being discussed. We can see why this did not happen in many of the topics related to the novel study in Trung's journal.

However, Trung and his original Peer Tutor were successful in establishing this special relationship in the many topics that they chose to write about in the earlier part of this journal. One excellent example comes from a topic on Christmas where Trung takes on the role of expert and explains the history of the Japanese New Year Festival to his second generation Japanese Peer Tutor. Even though she has experienced the

holiday with her parents, she apparently wasn't that well informed on the topic. Trung was able to compare the similarities between his Vietnamese New Year celebration and the Japanese celebration and give his Peer Tutor the reasons behind certain traditions. A mutual bond of respect and trust had evolved between Trung and his partner during the early part of the study. It must have been disappointing for Trung to have lost his dialogue partner during our journal writing project.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

I. TOPIC ANALYSIS ACROSS CASES STUDIES

This study shows that dialogue journal writing between ESL

students and Peer Tutors can facilitate extended discourse that enhances

thinking and knowing about literature in a second culture. Table two is

the results of a longitudinal study into the type of topics related to the

novel study that were discussed throughout the dialogue journal writing

project. A comparison of word counts between ESL students and Peer

Tutors in these topics, indicates that the Peer Tutors did not use their

native proficiency in English to monopolize the conversations and write

more than the ESL students. In five out of the six case studies, the Peer

Tutors wrote less than the ESL students and in the last case study, both

dialogue partners wrote approximately the same amount (1,249 words to

1,265 words).

The collaborative nature of these written conversations appears to

regulate the quantity of dialogue that is written by either partner. One of

the four maxims of cooperativeness in discourse (Grice, 1975) supports

the idea that when excessive details are given by one partner, it violates

the "principle of communicative cooperativeness". When one partner

monopolizes the conversation in dialogue journal writing, the dialogue

ceases to be interactive and instead parallels a genre of writing closer to

that of a personal letter.

An analysis of the topic-comment sentences in all elaborated topics

related to the novel gives further evidence that the ESL students had a

voice in their learning. Only fifteen percent of the forty-seven elaborated

topics analyzed in this study were initiated by the Peer Tutors. This

statistic clearly shows that the ESL students had a personal interest in

the topics that were discussed in their journals. A summary of the

language functions used by ESL students in topic-comment sentences (see

Table 9) shows that sixty four percent of the students initiated the topic

by reporting facts about the story or by giving a personal opinion of an

event from the story. The second highest used language function was the

request for information and opinions about the novel from their Peer

Tutor. The language function of request and opinion was used most

frequently to initiate topics that discussed the Robert Frost poem. Many

of the ESL students found the Robert Frost poem difficult to understand

as is evidenced in the comments of the most advanced speaker in this

study:

Jay: "I like that poem too, but it was kind of hard for me to translate". (B299).

A more qualitative analysis of these topics will follow in the third section of this chapter.

2. LANGUAGE FUNCTION ANALYSIS ACROSS CASE STUDIES

The identification of language functions across cases provided a useful focus for analysis in this study. The summary of language functions used by both ESL students and Peer Tutors in Tables 10 and 11 gives us an insight into the underlying ideas and thoughts on which these conversations were based. When we identify the language functions within the data the general patterns of interaction between dialogue partners becomes apparent. We begin to have a more in-depth understanding of the nature of the conversations that were taking place between dialogue partners as they engaged in "talk" about the novel, "The Outsiders".

An analysis of the language functions used in these case studies indicates that the type and frequency of language functions differs between the ESL students and their Peer Tutor. When we look at the frequency of language functions across all topics , we find that the ESL

students made 187 comments that reported facts and opinions about the

novel that they were reading. The Peer Tutors used this language function

only 33 times in their writing. The second highest language function used

in these conversations by the ESL students were requests for academic

information and opinion. Sixty-five requests for academic information

and opinions were made across all topics related to the novel. The highest

frequency of language functions used by the Peer Tutors (106) are

responses to these requests for additional academic information and

opinion. The Peer Tutor's second most frequently used language function

is the making of requests to the ESL students to elaborate on the topics

being discussed.

It was not the purpose of this research to do an in-depth analysis of

the frequency and type of language functions used by students in this

study. Instead, an overview of the most frequently used language

functions was undertaken so as to determine the interactive nature of

these conversations. It was important to the validity of this study to

establish that the ESL students not only initiated the topics being

discussed in their dialogue journals but were able to effectively continue

the dialogue by reporting their own interpretation of facts and opinion

about the novel. The language function analysis indicates that the Peer

Tutors effectively responded to the ESL students' requests for additional

information and opinions about the novel. This study will look at the

interactionally assisted elaborations that evolved from the scaffolding

provided by the Peer Tutors in their responses in more detail later in this

chapter. The analysis of language functions verifies that the ESL

students' experiences with literature were validated as topics for

discussion in all cases througout this dialogue journal study. The

language function analysis clearly shows the interactive nature of

dialogue journal writing and how ESL students are given the opportunity to

express and experiment with their understanding of text.

3. PATTERNS OF STUDENT ELABORATION

The purpose of studying the elaborations made between dialogue

partners was to determine whether the collaborative exchange of ideas

and opinions helped to change the ESL students' approach to reasoning

about events in the story and whether this lead them to reconstruct their

knowledge of the text that they were reading. The data in each case study

was reanalyzed using Staton's (1988) "Categories of Elaboration" in

dialogue journal writing. When the elaborated categories were identified in these topics, we gained an in-depth understanding of how the task of meaning making was interactionally accomplished between dialogue partners. Once the process of elaboration was descrobed across cases it became possible to see how this knowledge led to a gradual transformation of topic and the students' knowledge about themselves and their world.

Table 12 gives a summary of the elaborated structures used by both dialogue partners in topics related to "The Outsiders". It is interesting to note that each ESL students write almost twice as many category one comments that add additional detail about actions, actors, objects, and locations or settings than did their Peer Tutors. The more advanced students in this study tended to make significantly more level two comments that made use of their background information to add detail + comparison or classification of the event being discussed than their Peer Tutors. The reverse holds true for students designated as having a lower level of language proficiency. In their case, the Peer Tutor offers more level two comments that served to put the details of the topic into a framework so that meaning would become more apparent to the ESL

student. There is a close match in the use of category three comments by the ESL students and their Peer Tutors regardless of language proficiency.

The Peer Tutor's role with lower level language proficiency students was to take on the task of stating the meaning in the topics introduced by the ESL students. The Peer Tutors did this by modelling responses that added specific details to the topic, and then gave comparisons or classifications from their own experiences as to what the event being discussed was like or not like. Sometimes these level two elaborated comments were a classification of the topic with a similar experience familiar to the Peer Tutor. These level two elaborated comments served to give meaning to the topic by providing a framework for the details being discussed. They also served to give the ESL students another perspective (a native speaker's) on that topic. The Peer Tutor would often request the ESL student's interpretation or opinion after they had made a category two elaborated comment. This enabled the ESL student to make use of their background knowledge to construct meanings to help them read the text.

These requests by the Peer Tutor for further elaboration on the topic served to mark the topic as one of interest plus it also allowed the ESL

student to bring their knowledge and experience into their learning. Many of the ESL students who responded to these requests for additional information after having a level two comment modelled for them, were able to extend the dialogue and offer a personal perspective by comparison or classification of the event or character being discussed. If the ESL students responded to the requests for elaboration at this level of understanding, the Peer Tutor would often then model the general principle on which the topic or event was based. The Peer Tutors never jumped to a level three comment with ESL students at the lower level of language proficiency without first having provided a framework to discuss the meaning of the topic.

There are only a few instances in this study where students with lower level language proficiency were able to independently make explicit the underlying meaning on which the topics were based without the assistance of the interactionally assisted elaborations provided by their Peer Tutors. Most of the completed topic-comment structures in Bouakeo's and Trung's journals involved the Peer Tutor modelling the full sequence of giving detail, adding meaning by giving examples of experiences and then comparing and contrasting them with other experiences, and then

making explicit the general principle or concept on which the topic is —
based. The Peer Tutor's elaboration in these topic-comment structures
helps to make the meaning of the topic more explicit for the ESL student.
In this sense, the task of meaning making is interactionally accomplished
with the Peer Tutor stating the meaning in the topics being discussed. As
the ESL student engages with their Peer Tutor in dialogue about topics
that interest them, they gradually are made aware of the implicit
meaning of the many events that they are interested in discussing. The
language used by the Peer Tutor in these elaborated exchange of ideas
becomes an extension of the ESL student's meaning.

When we analyze the elaborations made by the more advanced ESL
students in their writing, we find that there are far more complete topic-
comment structures. The Peer Tutors do not find it necessary to supply a
lot of detail to these ESL students on topics being discussed. Instead,
they validated the knowledge and experience of the ESL student and then
compared or classified the event by adding their own perspective. In many
instances, the Peer Tutor went on to immediately offer a general principle
or concept about the event. At this point, they would often request the
opinion of the ESL student as to how their interpretation compared to the

one that they had written. On many occasions, the advanced students offered the entire topic-comment structure by elaborating on the topic independently. These advanced students were interested in comparing their views with those of their Peer Tutor. The Peer Tutors would then extend the ESL student's picture interactionally by providing explicit information that they perceived to be underlying the topic being discussed. Some of these new layers of meaning were extremely useful to the ESL students, because they provided an insight into the interpretation of events from a specific cultural perspective that they might not have had access to otherwise.

Many of the Peer Tutors challenged the thinking of the more advanced ESL students by asking them to consider a different perspective in their thinking. It was very interesting to observe how conflicting ideas were handled in interactive writing. Two excellent examples from Jay and Jagjit's journals show that both of them used a full sequence of elaborated responses to give their reasons as to why they had interpreted an event in the way that they did. In Jagjit case, he was able to make his reason for having a particular interpretation more explicit (i.e. his support for friendship in gangs) and give specific examples to this Peer Tutor as

to what he had meant when he first introduced the topic for discussion. Jagjit's increased ability to articulate his interpretation of the event was directly related to the modelling provided in the elaborated comments made by his Peer in the initial sequence of the dialogue on this topic. As a result of Jagjit's increased specificity and explicitness about the topic, his Peer Tutor was better able to assess the underlying meaning of the topic by recognizing the importance of friendship to Jagjit. Jagjit's peer tutor then offered an alternative scenerio to the topic that validated the importance of friendship without the danger of belonging to a gang. In Jagjit's case, his beliefs were that strong that he held with his interpretation but now had a very clear understanding of a different perspective on the issue of friendship and gangs.

Jay also modelled a full sequence of elaboration in his response to the challenge to this thinking made by his Peer Tutor. In Jay's case, his arguement was so explicit and specific in detail that the Peer Tutor was the one who ended up changing her perspective as a result of the knowledge that Jay had shared with her on violence and the need for self defence. What is important about these two examples was that both ESL ✓ students felt confident enough with their dialogue partners to give a more

extensive sequence of comments that further elaborated on their stance.
Both examples also show that dialogue journals provide the context for
ESL students to find their own voices and share their ideas with a peer in
the target culture.

4. STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING ELABORATION

The Peer Tutors used a similar set of strategies to respond to ESL
student comments, from the perspective of elaboration as did the teacher
in Staton's (1988) study on the elaboration of topics. Examples of the four
strategies used by the Peer Tutors to elicit more elaboration of topic in
this research study are as follows:

I. **"Acknowledgment or confirmation of the student's comment
without elaboration" (Staton, p. 298).**

There are many instances of these comments throughout all of the
case studies. Sometimes the Peer Tutor agrees with or acknowledges the
ESL student's comment in a one or two sentence response, (see example a).
The tutor may also restate the ESL student's implied meaning (see
example b).

Example a)
Bouakeo:
    C142: Anyone can be a hero, if they want to.

C143: Look like Ponyboy, Johnny and Dally.
C144: They can be hero.

Peer Tutor:
C153: I agree with you that Johnny and Ponyboy are heroes in that situation.

Example b)
Jay:
B62: I think that friendship is good as long as you have friends that won't take you into any kind of crime.
B63: Because I had bad friends in Vancouver I got into a gang.

Peer Tutor:
B67: In you letter you said that in Vancouver with your friends that you had got in trouble by being involved in a gang.

According to Staton, these responses "serve to create or acknowledge a shared reality of feelings and opinions and are critical to maintaining the dialogue" (p. 299). These comments validate the ESL students' experiences by letting them know that the Peer Tutor has an understanding and similar feelings about the event being discussed. Over a period of time, these responses help to build a "foundation of mutuality". Acknowledgment or confirmation of the student's comment is essential to ✓ the continuation of the dialogue.

2. "Request to the student for elaboration" (Staton, p. 298)

The Peer Tutors requested information from their dialogue partners

on a regular basis. These requests do not add new information to the

dialogue but served to mark the topic as one of interest or importance to

the Peer Tutor. Their main function was to encourage the ESL students to

elaborate on the topic being discussed. The majority of the requests made

by the Peer Tutors in this study were requests for academic information

and opinion. The following examples show how the Peer Tutor's request

encourages the ESL student to elaborate on the topic.

Example a)

Peer Tutor:
F115: Why do you think the "Soc" beat up on the "Greasers"?
F116: When you read more of the story then you can tell me about it.

Trung:
F121: The Socs and the Greaser are the gangs in the same town
F122: Usually the gangs try to beat up each other to see who's afraid of who but the socs is not fair about fighting
F123: that's what I know and I would tell you what I'll read OK?
F123: thanks about question me too.

Example b)

Peer Tutor:
G046: They all had their good points but Ponyboy did not enjoy doing some of the things that all his friends did.
G047: Why do you think he did what he didn't like to do?

Katryna:
G052: Because he was the youngest and he has to do what his brother told him to do and I thing [k] that's why.

These requests are a very important part of the dialogue because they enable the ESL student to bring their background experiences into their learning.

3.   **"Modeling an elaborated comment on the student-initiated topics" (Staton, p. 298).**   ✓

There are no examples in Staton's data base that indicate that the teacher elaborated on a topic that was only of personal interest to her. The teacher elaborates on topics that are of mutual interest to both herself and the student or a concern that the student might have. The data in this research indicates that one substitute Peer Tutor in Case Study F modelled a series of elaborated comments on her trip to Hawaii. There was no interest in this topic from the ESL student and the dialogue between them was abruptly ended when the ESL student (Trung) had a selective memory loss on the topic being discussed (i.e. heroes).

Other than this one instance in this research data, the Peer Tutors modelled many elaborated comments on topics of mutual interest as is evidenced in Table 12. The Peer Tutors often modelled a full sequence of responses to the advanced students in the study. This involved first adding specific details to the topic, and then additional meaning by giving

examples by either comparison or contrast as to what the experience was like or not like. The Peer Tutor then modelled the underlying general principle or concept that they perceived the topic to be based on (see example a). With ESL students who are not as proficient in using English, the Peer Tutors would often model the first two phases of this sequence. They would usually model additional details about the topic and then establish the relationship of the topic to other experiences by comparison or classification. In many cases, the Peer Tutor would follow the modelling of category one and two comments with a request for the ESL student to elaborate on the new information that has been presented to them (see example b).

Example a)

> Beant:
> E54: I think moving is hard because we have to move many things and its when you go to that place its difficult to make friends.
> E56: I think we are not moving to another place anymore.
> E57: What do you think if we join any game!
> E58: If we go to store if we can't talk we can't buy anything!
>
> Peer Tutor:
> E76: You asked why I thought ELT students have a hard time making friends. (acknowledges topic)
> E77: I think it's because of the fact you are from India.
> E78: You are from a different culture and speak a different language.
> E79: I don't think it should matter, but that's my personal opinion.

E80: Language and culture shouldn't matter.

E81: People have the same basic feature, skin colour should not matter.

E82: This is a major flaw in our society.

E83: When we lived in Europe we didn't speak the language.

E84: It was so hard to communicate with the people.

E85: I understand the problem you have in stores too.

E86: Its hard to communicate when the people don't try to understand.

Example b)

Bouakeo:

C041: Today we read The outsiders and teacher talk about ponyboy in the class.

C042: I think he look like Paul Newman.

C043: He looks tough.

Peer Tutor:

C062: Ponyboy is the narrator of the story, isn't he?

C063: I remember that Ponyboy & Johnny were my favorite characters.

C064: Maybe because of their age.

C065: They were kinder and more likeable than Darry or Dally.

C066: Who do you like so far?

4. "Extending or completing the student's picture interactionally" (p. 298).

Staton has not differentiated between the strategies used by the teacher in her study for modelling and extending elaboration on topics discussed in the dialogue journals. According to Straton, each of these two strategies provide the modeling of "specificity and explicitness". The teacher extends the elaboration in cases where the student has already

made a partial or full sequence of elaborated comments on the event being

discussed. The purpose of this strategy is to extend the student's thought

by offering new or additional information from another person's

perspective. These modeling and extension strategies provide ESL

students with excellent examples of new vocabulary that is used within a

familiar context (see example a).

Example a)

> Trung:
> F125: In the story chapter 4, ponyboy and Johny having trouble again
>   by the Socs.
> F126: There was five Socs beat 2 Greasers and drown ponyboy in the
>   fountain then Johny kill one of the Soc's to defence.
> F127: So, in you opinion what choices did Johny have?
>
> Peer Tutor:
> F131: I think Johnny didn't have much of a choice.
> F132: It was out of self defence so I think his actions are justified.

Extention strategies were used by all of the Peer Tutors in this study.

However, the frequency of use of this strategy increased along with the

language proficiency of the student. The advanced ESL student made more

independent level three elaborated comments that could be extended on by

their Peer Tutors. The Peer Tutors modeled more category one and two

elaborated comments with students who had lower levels of language

proficiency.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATION FOR TEACHERS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. IMPLICATION FOR TEACHERS

This research study into dialogue journal writing between ESL

students and Peer Tutors is intended to provide teachers with information

on how ESL students can use a collaborative writing experience to explore

and develop their understanding of literature in the target culture.

This study recognizes that there are many factors influencing reading

comprehension in a second language (i.e. automaticity, syntactic and

vocabulary knowledge, general background knowledge). This study was

primarily concerned with the importance of establishing a collaborative

context for thinking and knowing about literature that would enable ESL

students to access cultural knowledge that is essential if they are to

bring their own experiences into their learning. The information in this

study is intended to be useful to teachers who are seeking ways to help

ESL students make reading a meaningful experience.

Peers have provided a valuable contribution to the learning that has

taken place in this study. ESL students were able to engage in dialogue

with their Peer Tutors on aspects of the story that were of personal

importance to them. The interactive nature of the dialogue journal

allowed ESL students to gradually build on their understanding of topics

over a period of time. The analysis of the topics related to the novel

study in these journals lets us see how the task of meaning making was

interactionally accomplished across case studies. Regardless of the ESL

student's language ability, the Peer Tutors helped each dialogue partner

establish a framework of meaning where they could begin to understand

the topic that they chose to discuss. Once the framework had been

established, the topic was elaborated in varying degrees by both dialogue

partners throughout the writing project. Some topics continued to be

developed with meaning gradually becoming more explicit to the ESL

student over a period of months.

The ability to add new layers of meaning over a period of time is the

key to the ESL student's ability to reconstruct their knowledge about the

literature being studied. The ESL students were continually assimilating

new information from the collaborative exchange of ideas and opinions

contributed by their Peer Tutors. The ESL students were able to expand

their understanding of the topic or in some cases, revise previously held

perspectives on the event being discussed. The conversations in these

dialgoue journals enabled the ESL students to reconstruct their knowledge about the literature being studied, and their knowledge about themselves and their world. Wells, Chang, & Maher (1990) also see conversation as the key factor in learning as it provides, "a forum in which individuals calibrate their representations of events and states of affairs against those of other people, and realign and extend their existing mental modes to assimilate or accommodate to new or alternative information" (p. 97). The research in this study has shown that dialogue journal writing between peers has offered a context for thinking and knowing about literature in the second culture.

2. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Only one literature selection ("The Outsiders") was used in this study of interactive dialogue journal writing between ESL students and their Peer Tutors. The universal appeal of such a novel to teenagers may have helped ESL students to overcome some of the culture-specific knowledge in the text thus creating a higher level of thinking in their elaborated dialogue comments. A wider selection of literature over a greater period of time may have added more validity to the study by

providing a larger quantity of data for analysis.

If a wider range of literature was used over an extended period of time, it would have been possible to have applied the comparative part of Staton's analysis which identifies frequency of occurrence of elaborated structures in students' writing over a period of time. Staton was able to show growth in ESL student's ability to use elaborated structures by analyzing the data at different times to see if any gains had been made in the frequency of elaborations being used by ESL students. The students in this research study started to read the novel about two-thirds of the way through the project. Since it was the topics related to the novel that I was interested in analyzing, I was restricted to using data from a particular time period in the journals.

The ESL students involved in this study are from five cultural backgrounds (i.e. Punjabi, Vietnamese, Laotian, Polish, and Spanish). This study is therefore limited in scope by its exclusion of other cultural groups. A more comprehensive study would include a wider variety of students from different cultures and a larger number of students at various levels of language proficiency.

I would not recommend that substitute Peer Tutors be allowed to

take the place of the regular Peer Tutors except in cases where the original dialogue partner is going to be away for an extended period of time. Five out of six ESL students expressed concern when their original dialogue partner was absent and a new Peer Tutor wrote in their place. Jagjit's comments are indicative of the feelings expressed by many of the other ESL students in this study.

    Jagjit: 31/03/94
    A254: How come you didn't write me back.
    A255: What happened to you?
    A256: Are you sick?
    A257: I have nothing to write down.
    A258: I will wait until you will write me back.

It appears extremely important that a dialogic relationship based on a shared sense of mutuality be in place before a collaborative exchange of ideas takes place between ESL students and their dialogue partners. The substitute Peer Tutors' writing seemed stilted and not reflective of the regular patterns of interaction that were established between the original Peer Tutors and their ESL dialgoue partners. The quality of the data collection becomes inadvertently influenced by inclusion of the substitute Peer Tutor's elaborated comments in the data collection.

    The ESL students in this study did not receive any specific training

in the use of dialogue journals other than to be informed that they were conversations in writing. When Reed (1988) used dialogue journal writing with ESL students, she gave an explicit lesson to her students after one month of journal writing that stressed the "specificity of referencing, and elaboration". Reed used examples from the student's journals (writer's names are not identified) to show examples of what constitutes a good journal entry. I think that the ESL student's in my research study would have had less anxiety at the beginning of the study if they were more familiar with the genre of journal writing and the type of language functions used most frequently to converse in these written conversations.

The Peer Tutor teacher acted as the intermediary between the Peer Tutors and the researcher in this study. As part of their regular course, the Peer Tutors had some training in leadership and communication skills. It would have been useful for the Peer Tutors to have had more direct instruction about their role in dialogue journal writing along with strategies to encourage ESL students to elaborate on their interpretation of the novel, "The Outsiders". It would have been beneficial for the Peer Tutors to have had more knowledge about learning in a second culture.

The value of peer collaboration in this study cannot be underestimated. The learning that took place was a direct result of students interacting with other students and collaboratively reconstructing knowledge together. I have already indicated the positive response to dialogue journal writing in some of the individual case studies. At the end of the project, I surveyed each ESL student to get their opinion of the project and to ask for any suggestions that they might have for the future use of dialgoue journal writing between students at the school. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix three. The surveys supported the comments that the ESL students made in their dialogue journals about dialogue journals being a positive writing experience for them. It was extremely important for many of the ESL students to know that they had a friend who they could talk to about what was on their mind, explain their feelings, and ask both personal and academic advice. Many of the ESL students were visibly sad when the journal writing project came to an end.

Throughout this study, we have observed how dialogue partners have engaged in conversation about topics in the novel, "The Outsiders" that were of personal interest to them. Meaning gradually become more

explicit to the ESL students through the interactionally assisted

elaborations provided by their Peer Tutors. At the same time, the Peer

Tutors also became increasingly aware of the different perspectives held

by their ESL dialogue partners. Dialogue journal writing enabled students

to expand on their understanding of the topic or in some cases, revise

previously held perspectives on the event being discussed. Cross-cultural

dialogue journals can provide the context for students to express and

experiment with their understanding of literature in the second culture.

TABLE: 1

LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF ESL
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

CASE STUDY	LANGUAGE BACKGROUND	LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL - SLEP TEST
A - Jag	Punjabi	Intermediate
B - JAY	Spanish	Advanced
C - Bouakeo	Laotian	Low Intermediate
D - Katryna	Polish	Advanced
E - Beant	Punjabi	Intermediate
F - Trung	Vietnamese	Low Intermediate

*Language Proficiency Scores based on SLEP Test results
  (June, 1993).

TABLE 2

STUDENT ELABORATED TOPICS RELATED TO THE NOVEL STUDY, "THE OUTSIDERS"

TOPICS	A - JAG	B - JAY	C - BOUAKEO	D - KATRYNA	E - BEANT	F - TRUNG
Progress and Opinion	X	X	X	X	X	X
Death of Father		X				
Dangerous Situations		X				
Ponyboy	X	X	X	X		
Johnny	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gangs/Friendship	X	X	X	X	X	X
Robert Frost's Poem	X	X	X	X	X	X
Life for Both Gangs		X			X	X
"The Outsiders" - Movie			X			
Heroes	X	X	X	X	X	X
The Final Rumble/Ending			X		X	

TABLE: 3

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY A – JAG

TOPIC	WORD COUNT:	
	ESL Student	Peer Tutor
Personal Background Information	286	– 225
School	54	– 76
Drugs and Alcohol	28	– 63
Marriage and Dating	127	– 116
Food and Clothes	53	– 60
Sports and Games	13	– 43
Christmas	118	– 94
"The Outsiders" – Progress & Opinion	47	– 34
"The Outsiders" – Ponyboy	69	– 79
"The Outsiders" – Belonging to a Gang	164	– 176
"The Outsiders" – Johnny	58	– 50
"The Outsiders" – Robert Frost's Poem	40	– 37
"The Outsiders" – Heroes	19	– 48
Spring Break	25	– 69
Complaint About Not Writing	39	– 37
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	65	– 90
TOTAL WORD COUNT:	**1,249**	**– 1,263**

TABLE: 4

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY B - JAY

TOPIC	WORD COUNT: ESL STUDENT - PEER TUTOR		
Personal Background Information	171	-	113
School	122	-	77
Drugs and Alcohol	49	-	55
Dating and Marriage	25	-	42
Music	7	-	11
Death of Father	34	-	0
Friendship/Gangs	147	-	46
Academic Insecurity	11	-	15
"The Outsiders" - Progress & Opinion	73	-	100
Christmas	163	-	140
New Year's Plans	196	-	204
Weekend/Recreational Activities	45	-	116
"The Outsiders" - Ponyboy	110	-	102
"The Outsiders" - Johnny	108	-	76
Dangerous Situations	397	-	213
"The Outsiders" - Life for Both Gangs	39	-	86
"The Outsiders" - Robert Frost's Poem	56	-	53
Spring Vacation	227	-	160
"The Outsiders" - Heroes	93	-	84
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	116	-	117

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 2,089 - 1,671

TABLE: 5

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY C - BOUAKEO

TOPIC	WORD COUNT:		
	ESL STUDENT	-	PEER TUTOR
Personal Background Information	156	-	161
"The Outsiders" - Ponyboy	132	-	41
Complaint About Not Writing	6	-	24
"The Outsiders" - Progress & Opinion	4	-	4
"The Outsiders" - Johnny	121	-	76
Identity	11	-	10
"The Outsiders" - The Movie	129	-	170
Spring Break	75	-	80
"The Outsiders" - Robert Frost's Poem	5	-	58
"The Outsiders" - Heroes	59	-	53
"The Outsiders" - The Ending	149	-	74
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	8	-	29
TOTAL WORD COUNT:	**855**	**-**	**780**

TABLE: 6

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY D - KATRYNA

TOPIC	WORD COUNT:		
	ESL STUDENT	-	PEER TUTOR
Personal Background Information	180	-	144
"The Outsiders" - Progress & Opinion	84	-	6
"The Outsiders" - Ponyboy	157	-	102
"The Outsiders" - Johnny	162	-	44
"The Outsiders" - Belonging to a Gang	106	-	61
"The Outsiders" - Robert Frost's Poem	154	-	71
"The Outsiders" - Heroes	100	-	89
Spring Break	116	-	71
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	32	-	10
TOTAL WORD COUNT:	**1,091**	**-**	**598**

TABLE: 7

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY E - BEANT

TOPICS	WORD COUNT:	
	ESL STUDENTS:	PEER TUTORS
Personal Background Information	59 -	74
School	81 -	43
Food	17 -	21
Change	24 -	0
Friendship	304 -	207
"The Outsiders" - Progress & Opinion	51 -	58
"The Outsiders" - Johnny	152 -	21
Complaint About Not Writing	12 -	10
"The Outsiders" - Life for Both Gangs	83 -	97
Weekends/Entertainment	99 -	74
"The Outsiders" - Robert Frost's Poem	63 -	28
"The Outsiders" - Heroes	65 -	42
Self-Esteem	47 -	66
Spring Break	97 -	29
Summer Plans	0 -	31
"The Outsiders" - Summary	98 -	0
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	74 -	75
TOTAL WORD COUNT:	**1,326**	**876**

TABLE: 8

ELABORATED TOPICS IN CASE STUDY F - TRUNG

TOPIC	WORD COUNT:		
	ESL STUDENT:		PEER TUTOR
Personal Background Information	216	–	145
School	83	–	74
Music	13	–	0
Friendship	148	–	34
Genre of Books Enjoyed	40	–	30
Quality of Trung's Handwriting	36	–	36
Christmas Holidays	215	–	239
Spring Break	104	–	63
"The Outsiders" - Progress & Opinion	118	–	38
"The Outsiders" - Socs & Greasers	112	–	46
"The Outsiders" - Life for Both Gangs	55	–	52
"The Outsiders" - Johnny	54	–	22
"The Outsiders" - Robert Frost's Poem	32	–	47
"The Outsiders" - Heroes	52	–	42
Complain - New Dialgoue Partner	108	–	131
Value of Dialogue Journal Writing	53	–	39
TOPIC WORD COUNT:	**1,439**	**–**	**1,038**

TABLE: 9

SUMMARY OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS USED BY ESL STUDENTS IN TOPIC-COMMENT SENTENCES

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS			
Reporting Personal Opinions	Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	Requesting Personal Information	Requesting Academic Information & Opinion
% OF TOPIC-COMMENT SENTENCES			
3	64	3	30

TABLE 10

Summary of Frequency of Language Functions Used by ESL Students in Topicss Related to the Novel, "The outsiders"	
Type of Language Functions	**Frequency Across Topics**
Reporting Academic Facts and Opinions	187
Requesting academic information and Opinions	65
Responding to requests for Academic information	43
Reporting Personal Facts	26
Reporting Personal Opinions	21
Thanking	12
Responding to Requests for Personal information	12
Requesting Personal Opinion	9
Requesting Personal Information	5
Reporting General Facts	3
Responding to Requests for personal Opinion	3
Giving Encouragement and Support	2
Apologizing	2
Evaluating	1
Complaining	1

TABLE 11

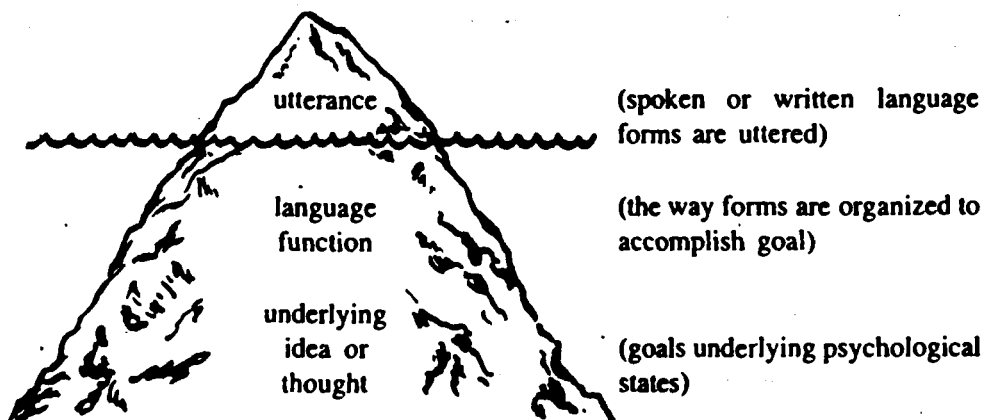| Summary of Frequency of Language Functions Used by **Peer Tutors** in Topicss Related to the Novel,"The outsiders"	
Type of Language Functions	**Frequency Across Topics**
Responding to Requests for Academic Information	106
Requesting academic information and Opinions	44
Reporting Personal Opinions	42
Reporting Academic Facts	33
Responding to Requests for personal Opinion	16
Giving Encouragement and Support	12
Reporting General Facts	5
Reporting Personal Facts	4
Responding to Requests for Personal Information	4
Giving Empathy	4
Requesting Personal Opinion	3
Requesting Personal Information	4
Evaluating	1

TABLE: 12

ELABORATED STRUCTURES USED BY BOTH DIALOGUE PARTNERS IN TOPICS RELATED TO "THE OUTSIDERS"				T O T A L
CASE STUDY	ELABORATED STRUCTURES			
	(1) DETAIL	(2) DETAIL COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	(3) DETAIL+PRINCIPAL +COMPARISON OR CLASSIFICATION	
A-JAG	16	17	7	40
A-PEER TUTOR	9	11	9	30
B-JAY	19	29	21	69
B-PEER TUTOR	6	22	19	47
C-BOUAKEO	16	14	8	38
C-PEER TUTOR	8	21	9	38
D-KATRYNA	7	19	14	40
D-PEER TUTOR	4	11	15	30
E-BEANT	21	29	19	69
E-PEER TUTOR	11	21	23	55
F-TRUNG	6	6	6	18
F-PEER TUTOR	2	8	6	16

APPENDIX 1

ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS
(Shuy, 1982, 1986, 1988)

The analysis of language functions in this study is based on the

research of R. Shuy (1982, 1986, 1988). J. Staton requested Shuy's

assistance in developing a method for analyzing the dialogue journal

conversations that took place between L. Reed and her grade 6 students in

the early 1980's. They saw language functions existing "between actual

human language behavior that linguists describe and the underlying

psychological states that psychologists often study" (Shuy, 1986, p. 128).

The iceberg model that follows, illustrates Shuy's perception of language

functions.

utterance — (spoken or written language forms are uttered)

language function — (the way forms are organized to accomplish goal)

underlying idea or thought — (goals underlying psychological states)

"This iceberg model asserts that underlying ideas or thoughts are
first conceptualized as language functions (such as reporting facts
or opinions, giving directives, complaining, thanking, promising,
etc.). These conceptualized functions are then realized as

observable behavior, written, spoken or signed, as in American Sign Language. Only that which is spoken, written or signed is observable and recordable. Linguists have traditionally focused their study of observable speech on the sounds, the morphemes, the lexicon, and the syntax. The recent concern for language functions is simply a move toward larger and deeper units of analysis" (p. 128-129).

Definitions and Examples: Language Functions
(Shuy, 1986, pp. 131 - 135)
(Shuy, 1988, pp. 113 - 119)

I. Reporting Personal Facts. The reporting of facts makes up a large portion of the speech and writing of most individuals. It is useful, however, to categorize two types of fact reporting: reporting personal facts and reporting general facts. Personal facts include events related specifically and personally to the writer. Such facts can be things that happened to the writer or to those immediate to and in some way connected to the writer. Examples include the following:

Andy S-68: Today I am second come to school
U Chal S-136: Saturday and Sunday I went to the Karate

2. Reporting General Facts. In addition to personal facts, writers in this sample also report many general facts. These are not specific to the writer directly. Rather, they are shared facts and generalizations held by a wider group of people. Examples include the following:

Kemmy S-6: we did the book
U Chal S-84: In Brazil the Carnival start Feb. on the first Monday and
            finish three days later.

3. Reporting Opinions. An opinion is an expression of feeling, preference, or evaluation which is not judgeable or verifiable against an external standard or norm. As such, it does not imply positive knowledge. Examples of reporting opinions include the following:

Andy S-68:   I like you and Miss V-face
Laura S-103: I like when you read the book after lunch in like a relax
            time.

4. Requesting Personal Information. A significant amount of human interaction consists of asking questions. Most school-based writing excludes question asking by students, since the traditional form of writing, the essay, is not interactive. In dialogue journals, however, many questions are asked by students. As in normal conversation, it is often necessary to request clarification, to request personal information, to request general information, and to request opinions.

Requests for personal information are self-explanatory: one writer asks the other for information about himself or herself. Examples include:

Michael S-17: You don't know the Burma Language, right.
U Chal S-10:   How many year you live in Los Angeles?

5. Requesting Academic Information. Dialogue journal writers in this sample also request information related to classwork. Such requests are of two kinds: facts and procedures. Although these two types could be broken up separately, we have decided to lump them together in this analysis. Examples are as follows:

U Chal S-91:   Can I finish the Social Studies work on other day?
Laura S-13:   Mrs. Reed can you help me with the time tibols.
Michael S-13: Mrs. Reed, what is a Social Studies.

6. Requesting General Information. Requests for general information here refer to requests made by one writer to the other about general facts (see 2 above). Such facts are not personal or specific to the person being asked, nor are they specific to school, classroom, or academic knowledge. They refer to general world knowledge. Examples include:

Kemmy S-5: How spelling Name Mrs. Vu.
U Chal S-81: What is valentiens? (valentines)

7. Responding to Questions. When the entry of either student or teacher is clearly indicated as a response to a question, which was asked by the other writer in an immediately preceding entry, it was marked as a response to a question. Such responses were usually also reports of opinions, personal facts or general facts. Thus, they were marked as the simultaneous functions of responding to questions, and one or the other of these reporting functions. (Note: The responses in this study are labelled

according to the reporting language function that they are in response to).

8. Requesting Opinions. Opinions have been defined in 3 above as expressions of feeling, preference, or evaluation not verifiable against an external norm. Request for opinions are requests for such expressions made by one writer to the other. Examples include:

Michael A-8: Do you like play Baseball Basketball, or kickball.
Kemmy S-63: do you like sun Mrs. Reed.

9. Requesting Clarification. One of the most important language functions for the successful negotiation of schooling is that of learning how to find out what has not been made clear. In oral language there are many direct and indirect strategies for requesting clarification available to the competent speaker. Nonnatives must learn some of these strategies or face continuing confusion or ignorance. In this sample, there is only one instance of a student request for clarification, as follows:

Michael S-76: Mrs. Reed, what are you talking about.

The teacher used this function more frequently, however, as the following illustrate:

To Michael T-9: (I'm not sure your idea is clear). Could you explain it?
To Laura T-104: (Where are your new stamps from?) I can't read that
                 word.
To Su Kyong T-9: I'm not sure what your last sentence says.

10. Thanking. Thanking is an expression of gratitude or appreciation or the acknowledgement for favors, service, or courtesy. Examples include:

Laura S-14: Mrs. Reed Thanch you for everything.
Michael S-8: Thank you for tell me "you are very good to help"

11. Evaluating. Evaluating differs from reporting opinions in that opinions, as noted in 3 above, express feelings, preference, or evaluation which is not based on or judged against external standards or norms. Evaluations, in contrast, are based on, or judged against, actual or perceived standard or norms. Although the evidence of such external standards often is not stated, it can be readily inferred. Examples include:

Andy S-70: Yesterday homework is hart (hard)
Laura S-16: Mrs. Reed Italian and English is ruealy good.

12. Predicting. Predicting is found in statements in which the writer expresses an indication that someone will do something or plans to do something in the future, such as the following:

Andy S-71: Tomorrow my mom come to house.
Su Kyong S-72: (Simon is not good) but I think hes gona do and good.

13. Complaining. Complaining involves stating a supposed prejudice against the writer and giving an account of such prejudice. Examples include:

Laura S-103: I am still in level 6, it is easy for me but you and Mrs. G – donth let me pass.
Michael S-127: You said I was making so much noise right becuse I can't not see and its hot too Mrs. Reed.

14. Apologizing. An apology is an expression of regret for having injured, insulted, or wronged another person, specifically the person being apologized to. Examples include:

Andy S-8: I don't know I can speak english. teacher I am sorry.
Michael S-84: I was wrong and I did not think about what you tell me.

APPENDIX 2

FOUR STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHERS TO RESPOND TO STUDENT COMMENTS IN DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING

(Staton, 1988, pp. 298-300)

1.   **Acknowledgment or confirmation of the student's comment without elaboration**

- The teacher will agree with or acknowledge the student's comment or restate the student's implied meaning

- "These responses serve to create or acknowledge a shared reality of feelings and opinions, and are **crucial to maintaining the dialogue**".

- These responses add no new information to the topic nor do they add more general meaning.

Purpose:
"Their purpose is to communicate the teacher's understanding and similar feelings about the student's experience. these responses continuously build a **"foundation of mutuality"**.

2.   **Request to the student for elaboration**

"The teacher also requests more information from the student about a topic, which serves both to **mark the topic as one of interest** or importance to her, and to **encourage the student to elaborate"**

Note:
Strategy 1 (Acknowledgment) and Strategy 2 (Requests for Information) **serve to continue the dialogue**, but neither involves elaboration on the part of the teacher.

3. Modeling an elaborated comment on the student-initiated topic

"The teacher initiates and elaborates only on events which represent a mutual topic discussed previously in the journal and about which the student has expressed concern".

"The teacher's responses often model the full sequence of giving specific details, and then add some meaning by establishing the relationship of the topic to other experiences, classifying it, and drawing out the underlying proposition or concept it represents".

4. Extending or completing the student's picture interactionally

"When a student does give an elaborated account, offering specific details, the teacher often adds a detail and then moves directly to a more general level of meaning". Staton uses the term "extension" because the teacher often skips giving underlying information to "establish a personal perspective by contrast or classification". In these cases, the teacher "moves directly to the more general concept or principle which she perceives as underlying the student's topic". Often times, this strategy is used with more mature students when the teacher wants to deliberately challenge their thinking.

APPENDIX 3

DIALOGUE JOURNAL STUDENT SURVEY

I. Did you enjoy writing to your Peer Tutor?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What did you enjoy talking about the most? (eg. school,

family, boyfriends/girlfriends, music, holidays, "The

Outsiders"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you think that your Peer Tutor learned anything about your
culture? How could you tell?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What kinds of things have you learned about your Peer Tutor's culture through writing to each other in this dialogue journal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you think that you would feel comfortable talking to your peer tutor if you met in another social situation within the school. Explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. In what way did your Peer Tutor add to your understanding of the novel "The Outsiders"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Has this journal been an interesting writing project for you? Explain why or why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Would you like to make any suggestions for the future use of dialogue journal writing between students at our school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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