Written Dialogue Journals: Affective and Linguistic Aspects of Student-Teacher Interaction

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I. Introduction

A. What are dialogue journals ?

Dialogue journals are essentially personal written journals[1] that have been taken one step further : two people participate in an ongoing written conversation. As a teaching tool, dialogue journals have been used in a variety of ways, but there are always two common factors that underlie the use of dialogue journals in the classroom.

First, since dialogue journals are based on mutual trust, it is important that students understand that journals will not be shown to anyone. Second, students should also be informed at the beginning of the project that the purpose of the journals is not overt language correction. The role of the teacher is not to correct but to respond to student entries. We will return to these points in greater detail later.

It has been found that dialogue journals are an extremely flexible as well as powerful tool. Each teacher can set up a dialogue journal system to meet the needs of the students as well as the demands of the particular teaching situation. The journal can consist of a bound notebook exchanged between teacher and student as often as is needed, whether on a weekly or monthly basis, or whenever the student wants feedback. Some teachers demand a certain minimum of writing from the students, for example, ten minutes a day, a page a week, and so on. Other demands could be topic-related. For example, the journals could be used in conjunction with a subject-matter class such as literature, with the students writing their impressions of what they are currently reading. Journals can also be bound notebooks exchanged between between two students in the same class, in different classes, or even in different schools. Dialogue journals can also be not written but taped (spoken) journals, also with many possibilities for adaptation to individual teaching situations.

B. Dialogue journals in the conversation class.

Dialogue journals are often used in the writing class as a supplement to

sentence-combining exercises, guided compositions, and other kinds of structured writing practice. The purpose is to get the students comfortable with the process of writing, from the physical feel of the pen as it travels across the pages of the notebook, to the abstract cognitive processes that occur when writing generates ideas and not just the other way around.

Dialogue journals are also being used by teachers of conversation classes, generally with a much different purpose in mind. Here I would like to talk briefly about my own experiences with the dialogue journal in the conversation class. One word of warning, however: because of the flexible and extremely personal nature of the dialogue journal, my experiences might be very different than other teachers'. This, perhaps, epitomizes the difficulty of evaluating the effectiveness of dialogue journals. Most of the reports on dialogue journal use do tend to be extremely anecdotal and subjective, and there is still a real lack of "hard-core" research on the subject.

At the time I first used dialogue journals in my two English conversation classes at Sapporo University Women's Junior College, there were 35 students in each class. Even with pair-work and small-group projects, I despaired of ever being able to hold a one-on-one conversation with students. To provide the opportunity for personalized communication, I asked the students to keep dialogue journals. There were no requirements as to amount or frequency of writing to be done; students could turn in the journals whenever they felt the need for a response. As a "pilot project", this arrangement turned out rather well for me in terms of getting used to the mechanics of dialogue journals, but, as can be expected, the students who were the most capable of writing responded the most, while students who were in the most need of practice wrote the least. I realized that a little more structure was called for.

The next year, I again had two classes with a total of 65 students. To provide a "safety net" of structure, I gave the students the option of using either a notebook or a cassette tape to do a dialogue journal exchange with me. The students were asked to write a page a week or to speak about three minutes a week, but were free to give me their notebooks or tapes whenever they were ready to do so, whenever they felt the need for feedback. At that time, I responded and returned the notebook or tape. In order to stress that this project was completely voluntary, the students were also given the option of completing the written exercises that followed at the end of every chapter of their textbook (In Touch, Book 2; Castro and Kimbrough; Longman; 1980) in lieu of the dialogue journal project. As only one student chose not to do the journal dialogue project, I was faced with the prospect of responding to 57 written and 7 spoken journals. However, in spite of the requirement for a page (or three minutes) a week, in fact there was a great variation in the amount of written and spoken discourse actually produced, so that I was not completely overwhelmed by the work as I had thought I would be.

Year	Total Ss	Written Journal	Taped	Textbook	Project Requirements
(1)	70	70			none
(2)	65	57	7	1	One written page *or* 3 minutes of taped discourse per week

If asked, I would have said that the journal project was "successful" and that the students were "motivated". Pedagogical articles on dialogue journal use often contain such enthusiastic and holistic evaluations[2]; although inspiring, such generalizations are not particularly helpful because there is so little concrete information given.[3] In light of the large amount of time invested by both students and teachers, we need to discover the *factors* that make dialogue journals successful.

There are many ways of defining "successful". A writing teacher might determine success based on the amount of discourse, on the variety of topics, or on the students' perceptions of themselves as writers. As a conversation teacher, even before beginning the dialogue journal projects, my concept of successful journals was heavily influenced by certain underlying assumptions :

a. L2 acquision depends partly upon the lowering of the affective filter.[4] → Successful journals should promote mutual student-teacher trust.

b. Self-confidence is essential for L2 acquisition.[5] → Successful journals will help students gain self-confidence through non-corrective feedback.

c. The good language learner tries to get input.[6] → Successful journals will contain more instances of student-initiated solicits.

d. Freed from time, topic, and correctness constraints, students will produce discourse typical of their interlanguage level, neither over- nor under-monitored. → The quality of writing generated by the journals will depend on each student's ability. However, as optimal journal use means *communication*, students will adjust their writing so that they will not attempt stuctures so far above or below their competency levels that communication is impeded. Optimal use of the dialogue journal project also implies that students write as much as they can.

To determine whether dialogue journals actually do fulfill these goals, it is necessary to investigate the affective and linguistic aspects of student-teacher interaction. Do students actually feel more confident and are affective barriers lowered because of student-teacher interaction ? On a linguistic level, how do students and teacher influence each other in terms of eliciting discourse ? If the students keep personal journals (without teacher response), then the amount and quality of discourse generated by each student depends on ability, motivation, etc. But if one of the points of the dialogue journal is to elicit as much comprehensible discourse as possible from the students, then we need to see what type of teacher responses elicit discourse from not only the "good" students but from the "poor" students as well.

C. A Hypotheses for research.

It can be hypothesized that the student-teacher interaction that occurs in dialogue journals would lower the affective filter and increase student self-confidence, which would indirectly facilitate L2 acquisition. We can determine whether the Ss themselves perceive these intervening variables to be important aspects of dialogue journal use by administering an attitudinal questionnaire.

We can further hypothesize that, on a linguistic level, student-teacher interaction will vary with the general competency level of the students, specifically, that less two-way communication occurs at the lower competency levels where it is most needed. If writers of the more fluent journals are "good language learners", one of whose characteristics is the ability to get input, they would be able to solicit more responses from the teacher than the poorer writers. Furthermore, the less fluent journals would contain a larger number of unanswered teacher-initiated solicits.

STUDY ONE: AFFECTIVE ASPECTS OF STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

II. Method

A. *Subjects.* 57 Japanese women, all first-year junior college English majors who had completed an optional student-teacher dialogue journal for one year, were asked to complete an attitudinal survey about the experience.

B. *Materials and procedures.* A questionnaire (see appendix) was administered on the last day of the class to all students, including those who had not chosen to do the written dialogue journal option. To avoid any misunderstanding, it was translated into Japanese for them. This questionnaire was constructed rather poorly for research purposes, but it did elicit a good response from the students, most of whom wrote additional comments on the back. The parts of the questionnaire that are applicable to this study (questions 2 and 3 as answered by the 57 Ss) appear below :

Question 2 : Why did you choose the option of the written journal? (Check any answers that apply.)	Ss	%
A. I had kept a journal before and felt comfortable with the format.	3	5.3%
B. I'd never kept a journal before and wanted to try it.	31	54.4%
C. I felt that I could express myself better by writing than by speaking.	39	68.4%
D. I felt I needed to practice writing and this would be a good chance.	40	70.2%
E. I wanted to keep a taped journal but I didn't have a tape player.	3	5.3%
F. Other :	1	1.8%

Question 3 : Please check any statement that applies to you.	Ss	%
A. Because of this project, I felt my teacher got to know me better.	31	54.4%
B. Because of this project, I felt that I got to know my teacher better.	28	49.1%
C. This project gave me more confidence in my reading ability.	3	5.3%
D. This project gave me more confidence in my writing ability.	19	33.3%
E. I usually made notes before writing in my journal.	17	29.8%
F. I tried to use words and expressions that we had learned in class.	25	43.9%
G. During the year I wanted to switch to another kind of project. (Why? Please explain.)	2	3.5%

[Note : Ss and % add up to more than 57 and 100 respectively because students were allowed to check more than one answer for both questions.]

III. Results

We can see that all but three students had never kept a journal before. The sheer novelty of keeping a journal in English was probably a big factor in motivating the students. There were only three students for whom this option was a second choice because of a lack of equipment. (The availability of cassette players might be a very important factor in other countries, but not in Japan !) The fact that the most common (s=40) response was that they wanted to use this chance to practice writing was rather eye-opening to me, given the level of the students here. Although Japanese students do quite a bit of writing, it is generally highly structured sentence-level grammar practice. Obviously, the attraction lay not only in the chance to practice writing, but in the fact that they could write about whatever they wanted to write, without being corrected.

Here it would be useful to look at some of the comments the students wrote on the back of their surveys. (Translated into English and paraphrased.) It seems that for every opinion, another student states the opposing opinion :

··· I wanted the journal corrected. (3 Ss)
··· I hated writing "compositions", but this was a good chance to use "everyday" English.
··· I enjoyed exploring my own thoughts in English.
··· I ran out of things to write about.
··· It was really a bother having to do all that writing.
··· I learned to like writing in English.

Question number three shows us that one of the main goal of journals was reached : helping students and teacher get to know one another, thus providing the trust that can foster communication. More than half (s=31) of the students felt that through the journals, I had gotten to know them better. (I was actually surprised that the number of students checking that response was that *low*. I felt

that I had gotten to know nearly all the students much better.) Nearly half (s=28) of the students felt that they had gotten to know me better. Perhaps this calls for some clarification. Of course, I responded to questions such as "When did you come to Japan?", and I sometimes volunteered information about myself, but my responses were more often along the lines of agreeing with something a student had said, sympathizing, etc. I would imagine that what the students actually felt was not *intimacy* but *empathy.*

Comments about the more emotional aspects of journal writing tended to be positive :

··· I enjoyed the contact with the teacher. (3 Ss)
··· At first I had my doubts about this project, but then I realized that my English was improving.
··· I felt uneasy because I didn't understand the purpose of the journal.
··· I felt really encouraged when the teacher gave me praise.
··· The journal was good because I found out how much English I *didn't* know.
··· I gained a lot of confidence.

Many students commented that they thought it would be easier than it actually was to keep a journal, that it was very difficult for them to write, that they really had intended to write more, and so on, but that *they felt it was worth it anyway.*

Few (s=3) students gained confidence in their reading ability because of the journals. This is understandable, as my comments were purposefully kept simple and clear. They did, however, have to deal with the challenge of handwritten text.

Some students seemed to set relatively high standards for themselves when they wrote. Quite a few students (s=17) said they made notes before they wrote. (Most preparation probably involved looking up words and phrases in a dictionary.) And a surprisingly large number (s=25) of students claimed they tried to use words and expressions they had learned in class. I would like to believe that this is true, but there is no way of verifying it. Perhaps some students checked this statement because they believed that this was what I wanted to hear, or perhaps some students felt that this was what they were doing, yet it was not actually the case. Or, to look at it from another angle, perhaps it doesn't really matter whether or not the students were practicing expressions they'd learned in class— what is important is that they *perceived* the English they were learning in their classes as being of use to them.

IV. Discussion

In the introduction to this paper, I noted that dialogue journals are based on the principles of privacy and non-corrective responses. The justification for these principles, which underlie the affective aspects of student-teacher interaction,

are found in the humanistic rather than scientific arena of language teaching.

The goal of the language teacher of the 1980's has been communicative competence. But all too often the so-called communication that takes place in the language classroom is forced, limited or even false. I am not speaking here of language ability or even Gricean rules of discourse. I mean that the people who come and sit in the classroom day after day have many roles in their varied lives; they may be sons and daughters, husbands and wives, parents, workers, and so on. Yet they are only seen in one very narrow role, that of "student". The person who is standing up in front of them also has many varied roles in his or her life, yet is only seen as a "teacher". There are many anecdotes of children who come upon their grade-school teacher shopping in the supermarket and manage to gasp out, astonished, "But Mrs. Brown, I didn't think you ate *food*!"

This sort of situation exists in every classroom to a certain extent. We all stay within the roles that society—especially a respect-oriented society such as Japan—allots us, or that we allot ourselves. These roles are safe and reassuring, but do limit the possibilites for communication. If I communicate *as a teacher* then I find myself doing the things that teachers are "supposed" to do : direct, correct, approve or disapprove. None of these activities encourage communication. If I communicate *as another human being* the possibilities are endless : encourage, question, tell a story, make a joke, sympathize, advise, and so on. The privacy of the dialogue journals affords us a chance to cast off the teacher/student roles and simply relate as two human beings, at least to some extent.

Elimination of student-teacher roles is one reason why dialogue journals require non-corrective responses. At first, this may be equally difficult for students and teachers, who are both uneasy at the loss of their roles. Some teachers find it difficult not to pick up a red pen when they open the journal notebooks; some students ask again and again that their grammar be corrected. However, overt language correction would only reinforce student/teacher roles instead of reducing them.

Without overt correction, students can write without fear of making a mistake—not to be underestimated as a factor in poor language learning. Teachers can, however, do *covert* correction when they respond to student entries in the journal. While still responding to what is said, not to how it is said, the teacher can incorporate the correct language, thus providing a model. This type of response is much closer to the way native speakers who are not language teachers respond to nonnative speakers' mistakes, or to the way mothers respond to their children.

The debate on error correction in general is still raging. But whether or not other types of spoken or written discourse are corrected, the dialogue journal is one place that overt error correction should not take place. If the teacher is still unconvinced, a quick calculation of the time that would be needed to correct all the dialogue journals should be sufficient. The task of simply reading and responding to students' journals can be time-consuming enough to discourage the most enthusiastic of teachers. But for those instructors who wish they could

communicate more freely with their students about real-life matters, dialogue journals can be a valuable forum.

Thus, through student-teacher interaction in dialogue journals, restrictive classroom roles and fear of failure are gradually replaced by mutual trust and self-confidence, leading to greater L2 acquisition.

STUDY TWO: LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

V. Hypothesis

Since dialogue journals are meant to be interactive, with participants taking the alternating roles of reader and writer, it can be hypothesized that the more successful journals would contain direct questions and responses as well as simple monologue. We can call these questions or bids for responses "solicits". These solicits could be direct questions, "What kind of sports do you like?" or indirect questions, "I wonder if people in America like to eat rice." They would *not* include rhetorical questions such as "Hello Mrs. Yonesaka. How are you?" that do not demand a response. The solicits could be in either direction (T→S or S→T) and may or may not be responded to. [In this paper, a response will be shown by an additional arrow, eg. T→S→T means that the teacher has asked a question and the student has responded.]

I hypothesized that the writers of the "good" journals were "good language learners", one of whose characteristics is the ability to get input[8], and that they were able to solicit more responses from me than could the writers of the "poor" journals. I also hypothesized that the "poor" journals would contain larger numbers of unanswered solicits from me than would the "good" journals; ie., that there would be less two-way communication occuring.

VI. Method

A. *Subjects.* (Same as Study One.)

With 57 journals at my disposal, I could very well have picked out three "good" and three "bad" journals and compared the amount and types of solicits and responses in each group. However, as an emotionally-involved participant, my concept of "good" and "bad" might be based too highly on personal, not linguistic, criteria. Therefore, in order to find journals representative of high and low proficiency levels, I decided to evaluate a random sampling of thirteen dialogue journals for two variables : total number of error-free T-units, and average length of error-free T-units. These journals would then be analyzed for number and type of solicits.

B. *Instrumentation.* Language researchers have found the concept of T-units[9] to be very valuable in assessing overall writing proficiency. The average length of

a writer's T-units is often used as a measure of overall first-language proficiency. Obviously, "I've got a dog named Blue." ($\bar{X}$=6) shows more maturity than "I've got a dog. His name is Blue." ($\bar{X}$=4). For this study, however, journals were evaluated not according to average length of T-units, but according to average length of *error-free* T-units, which Larsen-Feeman has determined to be a better measure of second-language proficiency.[10]

No measurement of language proficiency is without its drawbacks, of course. Witte[11] cautions that mean T-unit length may not be a stable individual trait over time, that is, that there may be great variation in a single writer's production of T-units. This means that the average length of error-free T-units found in a single sample of discourse may not be an accurate indication of a writer's proficiency. However, as journals are written over a long period of time, we can expect mean length of error-free T-units to be a useful instrument in determining writing proficiency.

One of the goals of the dialogue journal is to get students to produce as much discourse as possible : writing for fluency rather than for accuracy. If we were *only* looking for volume, we could rate the journals by total number of words, or pages, or grams of paper used. However, a global, impressionistic rating of the journals would be based on *how much communication had taken place.* If there are large areas of a journal that can only be answered with a "?? I don't understand....", then this requirement has not been fulfulled. For this reason, the total number of *error-free* T-units was used in evaluating the journals along with the average length of error-free T-units.

C. *Procedure.* A random sample of thirteen dialogue journals was analysed for total number of error-free T-units and for mean length of error-free T-units. The scores that were obtained were then converted into standardized scores (T scores) with equal means and equal variances. These scores were combined to

(Table 1) Total number and mean length of error-free T-units

Ss	Total number of error-free T-units	T score	Mean length of error-free T-units	T score	Total T scores
1	126	73.0	7.2	61.5	134.5
2	102	65.9	6.7	55.4	121.3
3	54	51.8	6.9	57.9	109.7
4	66	55.3	6.5	53.0	108.3
5	47	49.7	7.1	58.5	108.2
6	42	48.3	7.1	58.5	106.8
7	29	44.4	6.7	55.4	99.8
8	50	50.6	5.8	44.6	95.2
9	8	38.2	6.3	50.6	88.8
10	19	41.5	5.9	45.8	87.3
11	16	40.6	5.4	39.7	80.3
12	40	47.7	4.8	32.5	80.2
13	24	43.0	4.9	36.5	79.5
(n=13)	($\bar{X}$=47.92) (s=33.93)		($\bar{X}$=6.25) (s=0.827)		

(Table 2) Frequency of Solicits

Ss	S → T	T → S	S → T → S	T → S → T
1	0	2	3	0
2	1	0	9	3
3	0	7	0	2
4	1	3	8	2
5	0	3	2	2
6	0	4	3	0
7	0	4	0	2
8	1	3	6	0
9	1	2	2	0
10	0	2	1	1
11	0	1	2	0
12	0	3	3	2
13	0	0	0	4
(n=13)	($\bar{X}$=0. 3)	($\bar{X}$=2. 62)	($\bar{X}$=3. 0)	($\bar{X}$=1. 38)

arrive at an overall score for each journal. The journals were then ranked, with S_1 having the highest score and S_{13} having the lowest. (See Table 1.) For our purposes, the top two scores were ranked "good", the bottom three were ranked "poor", and the rest were considered average. The journals were then checked for number and type of solicits. (See Table 2.)

VII. Discussion

Contrary to my expectations, S_1, who ranked first on both frequency and length of error-free T-units, engaged in very little two-way written discourse. Further analysis of my own *unsolicited* responses showed a large amount of phatic language, "I understand", "I think so, too." and so on. It seems that, as S_1 was producing a large amount of discourse without any prompting on my part, I only felt the need to empathize, to agree, in the same way a listener says "Uh-huh" and "Ummmm".

In fact, S_1's journal was not as detailed or as fluent as that written by S_2, who *attempted* many more complex structures. I didn't feel the need to prompt her because she generally wrote in great detail anyway. In fact, not only is the number of S→T→S the highest, but the quality of her solicits was also high.

> S_2 : (After one full page of describing her job during the summer, how much money she made, and how she decided to spend it) "At any rate, I had bought a lot of thing. But all of them are necessary thing, I think. And the rest of the money saved. What do you think of the way of money using?"
> T : "I think you spent your money very well. I'm glad you managed to save a little of it."

The writers that were ranked as "average" or "poor" were generally not able to ask questions that produced long responses from me. Their solicits were occasionally too general or too vague for me to be able to formulate a satisfactory reply,

S_9 : How get through Christmas, an American ?
("How do Americans celebrate Christmas ?").

Much more often, they were simple "yes/no" or "stock phrase" questions,

S_{12} : Excuse me, how old are you ?

I was struck by their similarity to the "What do you think of Japan ?" and "Can you eat *natto* ?" types of questions that non-Japanese are often faced with. The students seemed to be practicing certain routines (most common was "What kind of …… do you like ?") that they had learned long ago.

Although this type of solicit may not be especially creative, it highlights the fact that students need and want to practice what they already know, and that journals can provide the opportunity for this to happen.

It seems that the way I tended to respond to solicits was influenced not only by the type of question, but by the surrounding discourse, that is to say, by how the student led up to the question. With the poorer writers, these questions seemed to come "out of the blue", to be unconnected to the rest of the entry :

S_{12} : I worked to 5 : 00 p. m. from 12 : 00 today. I was tired. I work at hamburger restaurant. All workers are nice people. Can you drive a car ?

Because the rules of discourse are broken, this passage reads like something from the theater of the absurd. We can choose to respond to the question at face value, of course, or we can attempt to reconstruct the thought process that generated the question, "Yes, I can drive. Do most of the people at your job drive to work ?" In any case, whether rightly or wrongly, such sudden questions made me feel that the student was not really concerned with getting an answer but was simply acknowledging my presence in fits and starts.

On the other hand, the "average" journal writers seemed to be more or less consistently aware of the reader and often checked for comprehension :

S_8 : Today I bought a book. This book is an essay of Toshihiko Tahara. Do you know him ?

It is tempting to generalize that the better students who find writing intrinsically satisfying do not feel the need to solicit responses, and that the poorer

students who *need* more responses are incapable of generating them. If this is indeed so, it implies that the teacher must be extremely sensitive to individual students' writing capabilities and underlying needs when responding to the journals.

Not only do solicit *types* vary according to the ability of the writer, but Table Two shows more S→T→S solicits occuring among the upper range of writers. S_1, S_2 and S_4 were responsible for more than half (n=20) of the total S→T→S (n=39). Although a clear pattern does not emerge, this study suggests that student ability does indeed have an effect on the amount and type of teacher response. There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this.

First of all, teachers need to be aware of students' writing strategies. Perhaps the teacher needs to respond to the underlying functions (eg. Is S_{12} trying to change the subject, or is she attempting to bring the teacher into the dialogue, or is she commenting on the number of co-workers who drive?) as well as to the surface meaning. What seems to be happening in the dialogue journals is not necessarily so.

Secondly, teachers need to be keenly aware of individual student writing abilities. Some students might be in more need of direction than others. As was mentioned earlier, suggestions for topics might help poorer students to focus. However, this could easily backfire, putting the teacher back into the authoritarian role with the student simply following directions. One would need to carefully ease the student into this kind of writing, perhaps through a prior dialogue journal "discussion".

Thirdly, the physical layout of the notebook should be carefully employed in order to encourage a maximum number of responses to solicits. For example, both teacher and students can get into the habit of drawing a box in which the other person can reply.

eg. Next week, a friend of mine is coming to visit. I want to take her to Otaru. What do you think we should see there?···→

For very low-level students, a question can be accompanied by a checklist of possible answers.

eg. Next week, a friend of mine is coming to visit. I want to take her to Otaru. What do you think we should see there?···→ (Please check ! ☑)

- ☐ The Kita-Ichi Glass Factory.
- ☐ The Otaru Aquarium.
- ☐ The Herring House
- ☐ other : _____

There are, of course, many other possibilities, but the point is that if the notebook is crowded with writing, there is often simply no place to respond.

VIII. Conclusion

This study indicates that student-teacher written dialogue journals lower the affective filter and increase student self-confidence, both of which have been shown to have a positive effect on L2 acquisition. This alone is sufficient justification for their use in the L2 classroom. However, because of the heavy time investment, we need to discover specific patterns of solicits that encourage student-teacher interaction. This study finds that frequency and type of solicits, whether originating from T or Ss, varies with the general proficiency level of the students.

The better writers were able to solicit more responses from the teacher but did not necessarily respond more to solicits themselves. Their solicits were generally well embedded in the discourse, that is, they did not take the reader by surprise. The average writers often checked for teacher comprehension, but like the poor writers, often reverted to stock questions to solicit responses. Solicits by poor writers were often inappropriate or inadequately led up to.

Therefore, teachers need to be aware of how their own responses may be unconsciously affected by the student proficiency level. By responding to the function of student solicits as well as to their surface meaning, more S-T interaction might be encouraged.

The possibilities for research in this area are numerous. How would these results be affected if only one variable were changed— if the journals were S ←→ S rather than S ←→ T? if the journals were taped rather than written? if there were topic or time constraints? Further investigation is certainly needed and should prove useful to the many teachers who are currently using dialogue journals in their language classes.

APPENDIX

SURVEY

For next year's students, I'd like to take a survey about the project you did this year (journal/taped journal/exercises). Please answer the survey carefully and honestly. Your answers will be kept anonymous, and have no relation to your final grade. Thank you.

1. Which option did you choose to do?
   A. Written journal
   B. Taped journal
   C. Expansion exercises
2. Why did you choose it? (Check any answers that apply.)

   Written Journal :

   A. I had kept a journal before and felt comfortable with the format.
   B. I'd never kept a journal before and wanted to try it.
   C. I felt that I could express myself better by writing than by speaking.
   D. I felt I needed to practice writing and this would be a good chance.

E. I wanted to keep a taped journal but I didn't have a tape player.
F. Other :

Taped Journal :

A. I had kept a taped journal before and felt comfortable with the format.
B. I'd never kept a taped journal before and wanted to try it.
C. I felt I could express myself better by speaking than through writing.
D. I felt I needed practice speaking and this would be a good chance.
E. I felt I needed practice hearing and this would be a good chance.
F. Other :

Expansion exercises :

A. I felt comfortable with the format.
B. I felt it would help me remember what we learned in class.
C. I felt it would take the least amount of time and effort.
D. Other :

3. Please check any statement that applies to you.
   A. Because of this project, I felt my teacher got to know me better.
   B. Because of this project, I felt that I got to know my teacher better.
   C. This project gave me more confidence in my reading/listening ability.
   D. This project gave me more confidence in my writing/speaking ability.
   E. I usually made notes before speaking or writing in my journal.
   F. I tried to use words and expressions that we had learned in class.
   G. During the year I wanted to switch to another kind of project.
      (Why ? Please explain.)
4. Do you want your notebook or tape returned to you after winter vacation ? Yes / No
5. Do you give me permission to reproduce parts of your project for research purposes ? All entries will be kept anonymous, and proper names would be changed. Yes / No
6. If you have any other comments about this project, please feel free to write on the back of this paper in English or Japanese.

Signature : _____

FOOTNOTES

1 "Writers' journals. Learning logs. Freewriting... These have been standard methods in English/language arts classes from kindergarten through college... Teachers rely heavily on them for needed frequent practice in writing, for developing fluency and combating writing apprehension... " (*English Journal*, p. 47)

2 An example of this type of evaluation : "I have found enthusiastic participation. That is to say, students are more willing to write, and seem most pleased by the personal attention. " (*Dialogue*, p. 11)

3 Faneslow notes that general, judgmental comments are harder to translate into practice than are specific, descriptive comments. He is speaking about teacher-training, but the principle remains the same. (Faneslow, p. 1-10)

4 "Given two acquirers with the exact same input, the one with a lower filter will acquire more.... [This] implies that our pedagogical goals should not only include supplying optimal input, but also creating a situation that promotes a low filter." (Krashen and Terrell, p. 38)

5 Guiora and Acton have hypothesized that one of the psychological factors determining successful L2 acquisition is the degree of permeability of language ego boundaries. This "entails having a well-defined, secure, integrated self or sense of self", which allows the learners to "move back and forth between languages" without experiencing any sense of threat to their identity. (Rivers, p. 452)

6 Burt and Dulay posit that "having the right attitudes may... encourage [L2 learners] to try to get more input... and also to be more receptive to the input they get." (Krashen and Terrell, p. 38)

7 "Mistakes can be viewed as threats to one's ego. They pose both internal and external threats. Internally... the learner... becomes critical of his own mistakes. Externally, learners perceive others... judging their very person when they blunder in a second language." (Brown, p. 117)

8 Rubin (1975) found that successful language learners employed strategies that enabled them to get input. An example of this would be the L2 learner who nods and smiles in order to keep the conversation going even when he or she doesn't understand.

9 "Kellog Hunt (1965), a first-language researcher, first devised the construct of a T-unit. -Very simply, T-units slice up a passage into the shortest possible units which are grammatically allowable to be punctuated as sentences...'" (Larsen-Freeman, p. 288)

10 "From all available evidence, it appears that the average length of T-units is a satisfactory index of syntactic maturity for L1 acquisition. Yet we have learned from our own research that a more powerful measure of L2 proficiency is the length of *error-free* T-units." (ibid., p. 294)

11 Witte, Stephen P., "The reliability of mean T-unit length", 1983.

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