PEER RESPONSE IN COLLEGE ESL WRITING CLASSROOM

by

SAYAMON SINGTO

(Under the Direction of Linda Harklau)

ABSTRACT

Using Conversation Analysis (CA), this study examined how ESL students interacted with one another when engaged in peer response activity in a writing classroom, particularly how they managed assessments of peers' writings. During a 16-week long period of data collection, participants' interactions in peer response activity were recorded using a digital video camera. Participants were also interviewed and archival data were collected which included participants' writing assignments, the course syllabus, and other course materials. Participants' interactions were then transcribed and analyzed using CA methods. Three major findings included: a) the use of laughter in peer response activity, b) the various roles taken by the participants when providing or receiving writing feedback, and c) the conversational strategies used in handling negative feedback on one another's writing. The analyses showed that laughter was influenced by the participants' language proficiency or ability to help their peers solve writing problems. The analyses of peer response groups revealed that the participants negotiated roles at the beginning of a session and took turns assuming roles of a primary reviewer, a secondary reviewer, and an author. The ways in which each participant played these roles was one of the indicators of a degree of group collaboration. Finally, participants employed various interactional strategies in dealing with criticisms of peers' writings. It was found that participants oriented towards a preference for agreement. Negative criticisms of peers' writings were generally delivered in indirect manners using hedges or other linguistic devices in order to minimize

threats to participants' face. However, one of the participants did not immediately address threats to the addressee's face but did so toward the end of their peer feedback session. This unique feature of peer interactions was discussed in relation to the nature of lingua franca communication. Finally, the findings of this study had significant implications on the issues of assigning students to peer response groups and of training students for peer response activity, which incorporate discussions of how they might handle face threats.

PEER RESPONSE IN COLLEGE ESL WRITING CLASSROOM

By

Sayamon Singto

B.A., Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, 1994

M.A., Mahidol University, Thailand, 1997

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2005

PEER RESPONSE IN COLLEGE ESL WRITING CLASSROOM

by

SAYAMON SINGTO

Major Professor: Linda Harklau

Committee: Kathryn Roulston
                  Betsy Rymes

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
University of Georgia
May, 2005

DEDICATION

To my parents who have helped me become who I am today. I am grateful for your

unconditional love and for always believing in me. I don't say this often enough, but I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people have helped me get to this point in my life and I am indebted to all of you for what you have done for me. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Linda Harklau who has been the most wonderful advisor any one could ask for. You have guided me through every step of my graduate career. You were always willing to spend time reading my drafts, as well as talking about my research and any problems that I had in the process of conducting and writing my dissertation. You were also very encouraging and supportive that after every meeting, I felt much more confident about my ability to complete my research. You are also an incredible teacher. I learned so much for all the classes that I took with you.

I am also extremely fortunate to have Dr. Kathy Roulston and Dr. Betsy Rymes on my committee. I would like to thank Dr. Roulston for offering me all the insightful comments on multiple drafts of my dissertation. Your expertise on Conversation Analysis was proven to be extremely helpful as you always encouraged different ways of looking at my data. Several graduate classes that I took with both Dr. Rymes and Dr. Roulston provided me with practical knowledge of how to conduct research and analyze data. I have to thank Dr. Rymes specifically for introducing me to the field of discourse analysis in the classes that I took with you. These classed helped me discover one of my research interests, exploring social interactions or the way that people interacted with one another.

I have to thank all my research participants for allowing me to learn so much about peer response activity from observing you in class and talking with each of you outside of class. Your willingness to let me record your interactions in class contributed greatly to the completion of my research. Each one of you welcomed me into the classroom. I wish you the best of luck in your future career, and I will always be thinking of you.

I am grateful for the opportunity to get to know the course instructor and to observe your class. The semester-long observation was essential for the planning of my research, particularly the logistics of data collection. I also have to thank the course instructor for facilitating the data collection stage of my research by providing me copies of the course syllabus, handouts, and the participants' writing assignments.

I have to thank two of the most important people in my life, my parents. You have instilled the importance of education in me for as long as I could remember. You have sacrificed so much of your personal comfort and happiness in order to allow me to get the best education that you could afford, to explore things that were worthwhile, and to become who I am. I am forever grateful for your love and support. Thank you for believing in me. I also have to thank my lovely sister for helping me cope with my silly little problems that only you would understand. You are so full of life, and I love you for that.

I also need to thank another important person in my life, Gregory. You are the best thing that happened to me in graduate school along with getting my education. You endured a lot of my "neurotic" episodes while I was writing my dissertation. You have always been willing to listen and help me deal with my problems. You have been the source of comfort and happiness. Thank you for cooking all those wonderful meals and desserts, for cheering me up, for always being there for me, and most importantly for loving me. I am so glad that I have you in my life, and I am thankful for everything that you have done for me. I love you.

I would also like to thank all my friends at UGA for making my experiences here memorable.

And finally, I would like to thank Thammasat University for the financial support during the first four years of my doctoral study, the UGA Department of Language and Literacy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Interactions between teachers and students and those among the students themselves constitute a large part of classroom events. Dialogue has been viewed as an essential element in order for learning to take place (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Nystrand, 1997). As such, classroom interaction has long been the focus of second language acquisition (SLA) research, which attempts to describe a structure of classroom discourse, patterns of interactions, as well as various factors that shape the way participants of classroom events interact with one another.

Classroom Interactions and Language Learning

The sociolinguistic approach that focuses on the connection between local linguistic practices and their context has been employed to examine how language is used in different settings or social situations. Within educational contexts, researchers have identified various discourse features of the classrooms and contextual factors that influence the way teachers interact with students (cf. Gumperz, 1986; Heller, 1999). One of the distinctive features of classroom discourse is Mehan's (1979) concept of the three-part interactional sequence: "Initiation-Reply-Evaluation" (IRE). The IRE sequence illustrates how classroom discourse sometimes reflects institutional processes of social regulation, social control and reproduction as enacted by classroom teachers. SLA researchers have employed the IRE sequence as a basis for an analysis of teacher-student interaction in different participation structures, focusing on the extent to which participants of classroom events follow or deviate from the IRE sequence and on the consequences of those actions and how these patterns of interaction affect students' opportunity for participating in classroom events and their language development (cf. Hall, 1998; Hicks, 1995/1996; McCormick & Donato, 2000; Nasssaji & Wells, 2000; Poole, 1992;

Verplaetse, 2000; Wells, 1993). Some SLA researchers have focused specifically on the roles of the teachers in both providing corrective feedback to students (cf. Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Long, 1996; Mackay & Philp, 1998; Ohta, 2000; Pica, 2002), and in implementing a discussion-based classroom activity that aims at creating opportunities for conceptual and linguistic development through classroom interactions that encourage more student participation (cf. Goldberg, 1991; Patthey-Chavez et al., 1995).

Research on classroom interactions has also been influenced by the constructionist epistemology. Knowledge or meaning is not discovered but constructed (Crotty, 1998). The basic generation of knowledge is always social. As such, social constructionism can be understood in terms of the way knowledge is constructed by, for, and between members of a discursively mediated community (Hruby, 2001). A social world is produced by its component actors through their active constitution and reconstitution of frames of meaning whereby they organize their experiences (Giddens, 1976). A study of social phenomena entails an examination of a social world that people construct through their involvement in social activities (Blaikie, 1993).

Within the constructionist paradigm, a classroom is a locale for generation of knowledge, a process that requires collaboration among its members. The influence of the constructionist perspective can be found in a number of SLA research studies that focus on the relationship between different types of classroom interactions and the acquisition of a language. Some of these research studies examined teacher-student interactions in teacher-led whole class discussion (cf. Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Hall, 1998; Poole, 1992). These studies identified patterns of second language (L2) classroom discourse and the extent to which each of these patterns facilitated or inhibited students' acquisition of a language.

Another group of SLA researchers examined interactions between L2 learners in various kinds of collaborative classroom activities (cf. Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; DiCamilla & Antón, 1997; Ohta, 2000; Romney, 1997; Swain, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Influenced by sociocultural theory in which language production is viewed as a communicative act and a cognitive activity, these researchers described various cognitive processes that occurred through dialogic communication among students and how these processes mediated language learning. Dialogues in students' native language were used as a tool to regulate mental activity, enabling students to complete L2 learning tasks (cf. Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Swain & Lapkin 1998). Through dialogues, L2 students were able to provide appropriate assistance for each other, creating opportunities for language learning within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Ohta, 2000).

In addition to sociocultural-inspired research, the importance of classroom interactions on language development is emphasized in Long's interaction hypothesis which contends that negotiated interaction facilitates language acquisition as conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in negotiated interactions provide learners with comprehensible input (Long, 1983; 1983b, 1985; 1996). This line of research has focused on the effect of negotiated interactions on different aspects of L2 students' language development (Mackey & Philp, 1998; Polio & Gass, 1998). The impact of negotiated interaction on L2 development is determined by learners' participation in various experimental conditions that are separated from regular classroom activities.

In short, existing SLA research studies tend to suggest a relationship between classroom interactions and language learning. Researchers have presented findings that support the use of

certain classroom activities and interactional strategies that promote language development through increased learner involvement in learning tasks.

Peer Response Activity and Second Language Writing

Findings from SLA research on classroom discourse generally encourage the use of collaborative learning activities in language classrooms, and the field of second language writing has embraced findings from SLA research and adopted collaborative learning activities in second language writing classrooms. Among these collaborative classroom activities is peer response activity where students work together in a pair or a small group in order to provide comments on each other's writings. Peer response activity has gained increasing popularity in writing classrooms due to the shift from a product-oriented to process-oriented approach in writing. This change has resulted in an emphasis on multiple revisions of a composition. Thus, in addition to feedback from an instructor, peer response activity has been viewed as an avenue for students to learn how to revise their compositions through interactions with their partners. Similar to other collaborative learning activities, peer response activity involves dialogues between students.

As mentioned earlier, the potential benefits of dialogic interactions on language learning provide a rationale for the use of peer interactions in language writing classrooms. Different aspects of peer response activity have been examined by L2 researchers in an attempt to identify the effectiveness of peer feedback and the various factors that contribute to the success of this activity. The effectiveness of peer feedback has been determined by its impact on revision (cf. Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Prater & Bermúdez, 1993) and by students' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer feedback (Magelsdorf, 1992). Peer feedback has been compared to feedback from instructors or trained raters (cf. Connor & Asenavange, 1994; Nelson & Murphy, 1992/1993). The types of revisions in subsequent drafts have also been related to training or

modeling of peer feedback activity provided for students (Berg, 1999; McGroaty & Zhu, 1997; Zhu, 1995). The findings from these studies suggest that training affects the quality of the comments that students provide for each other.

Another strand of peer response research has focused specifically on students' interactions with their peers while engaging in peer response activity. From the cognitive perspective, researchers have described certain patterns of interactions that facilitate learner's progress to a higher level of language development (cf. De Guerrero, & Villamil, 1994; 2000). Researchers have analyzed talk in peer response groups and identified different categories of readers' stances and the extent to which each of these stances benefits writers (Lockhart & Ng, 1995), as well as role relationships between group members that reflect different degrees of control over the direction of the task exerted by each member of the group (Storch, 2002). Studies focusing on the affective aspect of peer response activity have identified a relationship between the patterns of interactions and learners' perceptions of themselves as writers as well as their attitudes towards their peers (Amores, 1997; Nelson & Carson, 1995; Nelson & Murphy, 1992).

Rationale and Significance of the Study

In analyzing learners' interactions, researchers have typically employed discourse analytic methods in order to draw conclusions about the content and function of learners' talk, the roles that they take when interacting with peers, their attitudes towards the activity and one another, and the cognitive benefits for learners. In most cases, researchers have utilized an inductive componential analysis of the talk to identify salient themes, recurring patterns or certain characteristics of the talk that are relevant to the research questions. A unit of analysis has normally included only the utterances but not other prosodic (e.g. stress, intonation pattern,

volume) and paralinguistic (e.g. gaps, pauses) features. Furthermore, analysis has focused mainly on the content of the talk. The unit of analysis is usually isolated sentences or independent clauses produced by each speaker. Other features of talk that would explain how stances or role relationships between the students evolve in each turn of talk have been excluded from this kind of analysis.

The content of talk has been used to examine the social dimensions of student interactions (cf. Nelson & Murphy, 1992). Based on students' utterances, researchers have unpacked how students perceived each member's role in the peer response groups. Such analyses included many references to non-verbal interactions such as gestures and laughter. However, researchers did not include such features in the transcripts; thus, readers lack information about how these features play a part in constructing certain roles for each participant. In addition, many other aspects of the interaction may also be missing. For example, the researchers' conclusion that one of the participants took a role of an "attacker" was based on the assertion that this student was aggressive and frequently interrupted other group members. However, the transcript did not show the manner in which the interactions took place.

A more comprehensive analysis is needed to reveal how, for example, a dominant/passive pattern of interaction is actually constructed through the sequential organization of talk. This kind of analysis includes how students take turns, how turns are allocated in the talk and when and how students interrupt each other. In addition, students' orientation to the face-threatening nature of peer feedback and the extent to which they attempt to mitigate threats to peers' faces are good indicators of the types of role relationship that are constructed through the talk.

The existing literature on student interactions in peer response activity and other types of collaborative writing activities has offered valuable insights into the cognitive and affective

impacts of interactions on L2 students' language development. However, research studies in this area tend to focus their analysis on the content of talk and exclude other contextualization cues. According to Gumperz (1992), these contextualization cues signal how semantic content is to be understood, and how they operate at various levels of speech production including syntax, phonology, prosody, and paralinguistic signs such as markers of tempo and overlaps. These aspects of talk are usually excluded from the analysis of peer interactions. Classroom interaction research in SLA can benefit from analytical methods that take into account the delivery of the utterances and how they are taken up by listeners or addressees

Conversation analysis (CA) offers analytical concepts and methods that enable fine-grained analysis of interactions. CA originated in the field of sociology particularly from the work of Harvey Sacks, Gail Jefferson, Emanuel Schegloff and their colleagues (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992). Early CA work was based on Sacks' inquiry into the possibility of conceiving a "stable, reproducible, cumulative, natural observational science of social action" (Drew, 2005, p. 73) through an examination of conversation which was regarded as one of the primary forms of social actions. Drew also states that CA's exploration of conversation as a means through which people conduct their life affairs and manage social relationship is based on four basic concepts: turns at talk and turn taking, turn design; social action, particularly people's understanding of each other's conduct; and finally sequence organization. While relying on these basic concepts, two main groups of CA researchers differ in their foci when analyzing talk-in-interaction. According to Sanders (2005), one group of CA researchers focuses on the "stable resources for conversation" (p. 67) such as ways of opening up and closing a conversation, while the other examines the emergent actions and practices in conversation such as laughter or troubles talk.

The detailed analysis of talk facilitated by CA takes into consideration such features of talk as prosody, paralinguistic signs, pauses, overlaps or even laughter. These features are vital to understanding the situated meaning of utterances. The ways that speakers design their turns of talk often index the positions they take, their attitude towards the subject matter under discussion and towards other speakers, and also their orientation to social relations. Turn designs include speakers' decisions of lexical choices and the manner in which their speech is delivered. The same sentences can be interpreted differently depending on factors such as patterns of intonation or gestures that accompany the speech. Speakers can also design their turns in ways that evoke, suggest or impose certain expectations on other participants (Duranti, 1997). Speakers may deploy interactional strategies that enable them to indirectly disagree with others or resist certain agendas imposed upon them.

The following excerpt of L2 student interactions in peer-editing activity serves to illustrate the potential utility of CA.

Excerpt 1

1	**P:**	Does the writer tell you interesting information
2		in this paragraph.=
3	**C:**	=sure
4	**P:**	↑S:::ure= (looks at C)
5	**C:**	=Yes
6	**P:**	A::nd
7		(2.0)
8		interesti::ng (.) con↑tent
9		(3.0)
10		Interesting content.
11		(2.0)
12		U::m
13		(0.5)
14		I don't know.
15	**C:**	You don't interesting (.) this paragraph?
16		(3.0)
17	**C:**	You do not?

From this example, we can see how a CA approach can document and account for the way the students negotiate disagreement and how they implicitly show their attitudes toward each other. P initiated a question about one aspect of the paragraph. C, the author of the paragraph immediately provided an assessment of her own writing. C's positive assessment came right after P's turn ended on line 2. Latching between the two speakers' turns on line 2 and 3 showed that there was no gap between the turns. This implied that C was confident of her assessment. However, the way that P responded to C's assessment showed that he did not seem to agree with her. This was evident in the elongated sound in the utterance "sure" as well as his gesture that accompanied his response. C, whose assessment had been challenged, responded very quickly on line 5, insisting on her previous assessment. Such a response might have signaled to P about C's perception of her writing. Thus, pauses within P's turn on lines 6 to 8 showed that he hesitated and might have tried to avoid making a negative comment about C's paragraph.

According to Harvey Sacks' concept of preference organization in a conversation, pause and delay in a question-answer pair usually precede dispreferred response from an answerer. It is possible to state that both P and C were aware of this characteristic of conversation. Although P's turn on lines 6 to 8 was a relatively neutral comment if taken literally, it was understood as a negative comment by C as evident in her reaction on lines 9 to 10. The pause on line 10 could also be explained as P's attempt to avoid making negative comments.

This example shows that prosodic features (e.g. stress and tone of voice), paralinguistic cues (e.g. gaps and pauses) and gestures need to be taken into consideration in determining how speakers' utterances should be understood. These elements also reveal how participants in a conversation orient to situated meanings of the utterances. In other words, these

contextualization cues play an important role in how participants manage criticisms and praise of peers' writing.

CA as developed by Sacks and other major CA scholars including Schegloff and Jefferson has generally been employed to examine mundane naturally occurring conversations. This strand of CA- also known as basic CA- focuses on the normative structures and resources such as turn taking, repair and other dimensions of interaction's organization that make social interaction possible and intelligible (Heritage, 2005). The second strand of CA applies the findings from basic CA research to study talk in social institutions such as law, medicine, mass media and education. Institutional CA examines how social and institutional orders which are considered as contextual factors originating from outside an interaction are evoked or manipulated by participants in their interaction (Heritage, 1997). Although the boundaries between ordinary conversation and institutional talk cannot always be clearly defined (Hester & Francis, 2002), the assumptions are that there are some distinctions between ordinary conversation and institutional talk and that it is possible to define some distinctive features of talk in particular institutional settings. While institutional interaction in each particular setting may differ in terms of its overall structural organization or may involve special turn-taking system, Drew and Heritage (1992) suggest that institutional talk generally exhibits three main characteristics. The first feature is participants' orientation to specific goals relating to their institutional relevant identities (e.g. teacher and student). Secondly, there are certain constraints in regards to what are considered allowable contributions to the social action at hand. Lastly, institutional talk is defined within the inferential frameworks and procedures that are specific to particular institutional contexts. CA researchers have examined talk in various institutional

settings, and findings from these research studies have been used in suggesting different ways to facilitate effective interactions in certain contexts (ten Have, 2001).

Despite the differences in the types of talk researchers choose to study, both basic and institutional CA researchers rely on the use of detailed transcription that allows for a close analysis of actions that members accomplish in their interactions in a turn-by-turn basis. The empirical method of CA reveals the social assumptions that underlie the verbal communication process by focusing on actors' use of speech to interact, i.e., to create and maintain social meanings (Gumperz & Herasimchuk, 1975).

Much CA work has generally focused on data in which members interact in their native language. The prototypical conversationalist is a monolingual speaker in a stable first language setting, preferably the analyst's own (Wagner, 1996 p. 232). However, CA concepts and methods have begun to be used in analyzing non-native discourse in which one or more participants do not interact in their mother tongue (Carroll, 2000; Firth, 1990; 1996; Firth & Wagner, 1997, Kidwell, 2000; Wong, 2000b;). When none of the participants speaks their mother tongues, this type of nonnative discourse is known as "lingua franca." Olsher (2000) explains that some of the issues in a study of nonnative discourse include an attempt to describe discursive practices, sequential organization and organization pattern of non-native discourse (p.6), compare and contrast these features with those of native-speaker interactions, and identify when and how participants' cultural and social identities of native and nonnative speakers are exhibited in their interactions.

Researchers have suggested the potential application of CA methods in second language acquisition (SLA) research (Markee, 1994; 2000; Mori, 2002; Wong, 2000a). With fine-grained transcripts, CA enables SLA researchers to make empirically grounded claims about the direct

impact of comprehensible input and output on language acquisition by identifying behaviors that suggest that learners have understood and learned new language as a result of social interactions (Markee, 2000), and about interactional understanding among participants as displayed in turn taking and sequential organization of talk as opposed to a focus on linguistic forms only (Wong, 2000a). CA allows for an examination of the claim of authenticity of simulated classroom language learning tasks (Mori, 2000).

Another area of SLA research that can benefit from CA concepts and methods is research on peer interaction in a second language writing classroom. Despite the existing body of literature on the many aspects of peer interaction, there is still a need for research that focuses specifically on unpacking social meanings behind student utterances by relying on verbal and non-verbal features of the talk captured in the transcript. Such features as turn-taking organization, overlaps, interruptions or the organization of laughter and gestures can help reveal social values and social relationships that are inherent in peer interactions in L2 classrooms, and the extent to which peer interactions facilitate second language writing development.

This study attempts to explore these features of talk in peer response activity in order to understand how ESL students manage assessment of peer writing. Such an understanding will enable writing instructors to identify behaviors that are conducive to successful peer response activity as well as those that lead to problematic or less successful interactions. On a broader scale, this study will contribute to the field of SLA by providing a counterargument to some of the findings from previous research that sometimes overemphasize positive impacts of peer interaction and strongly advocate learner-centered classroom activities. The kind of analysis employed in this study will illustrate that, similar to interactions in other social contexts, peer interaction in a classroom is a complex phenomenon, and, despite its intended instructional

purposes, students may have different personal agendas and backgrounds that could lead them to

interact with one another in ways that are not always conducive to language acquisition.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

The central goal of this study was to examine the nature of ESL student interactions in peer response activity. This semester-long study employed video and audio recordings of student interactions in their writing class along with interview and archival data in an attempt to answer the following questions:

- How do students formulate and manage assessments of peers' writing?

- How are students' interactions constructed and constitutive of social rules, values and relationships?

- How do student interactions impact one another's opportunities for language learning?

This study used the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach embedded in ethnographic research. The CA approach made possible the micro-analyses of participant interactions in peer response activity. Ethnographic methods were employed to gather contextual information about the participants and the ecology of the writing classroom that was the site of the research. The microphenomena of peer talk in a writing classroom were linked with the broader contextual features such as the participants' backgrounds, their writing needs, their expectations of the writing class, and attitudes towards their peers. Following Schegloff's (1991; 1992) advice, invocation of these contextual features was grounded in empirical data in the talk that demonstrated the relevance of these features for the participants.

Research Site

This study took place in the fall semester of 2003 in an ESL (English as a Second Language) writing classroom (UNIV 1115/1117) at a large public university in the Southeastern

region of the U.S. The Division of Academic Enhancement offered the course under the title

"English Composition and Grammar for Non-native Speakers" primarily to prepare ESL

(English as a Second Language) freshmen for the required English 1101 course, a freshman-level

composition course. All freshmen, both native and non-native speakers of English, were required

to take a grammar test when they entered their undergraduate programs. Those freshmen who did

not meet the required score on the grammar test would then take a writing placement test to

determine whether they could enroll in English 1101. In this test, students had to write a five-

paragraph essay on one of the three given topics, and they needed to receive at minimum, the

score of 2 from a 5-point-scale to be eligible for enrollment in English 1101. Students who

received a score of 2 or below were recommended to enroll in UNIV 1115. In addition to

freshmen, the "English Composition and Grammar for Non-native Speakers" course was open to

international graduate students who had difficulty with American-style academic writing. These

graduate students would enroll in UNIV 1117.

According to the syllabus, the course aimed at helping ESL students gain greater control

of English grammar and sentence structure and to expand their vocabulary knowledge through

frequent grammar and vocabulary assignments. The required texts included *Understanding and

Using English Grammar* by Betty Azar, *Time: Reaching for Tomorrow* edited by Linda Schinke-

Llano, and *The Longman Dictionary of American English*. The first text was used on a regular

basis in the class as a reference for grammar instruction. Students were also asked to complete

grammar exercises in this text as their homework. The second text *Time: Reaching for

Tomorrow*, which was a collection of articles from *Time* magazine, was not used regularly in

class. However, students were asked to read these articles and complete weekly vocabulary

assignments where they were expected to write new sentences containing vocabulary words

originally used in the articles. The instructor also prepared supplementary materials on topics relating to paragraph and essay writing. In order to familiarize students with American-style academic papers, students completed several paragraph-writing assignments in the first part of the semester and wrote three essays during the remainder of the semester. Over the course of the semester, students were given several open-book quizzes following most of the grammar units. At the end of the semester, students took a final exam that consisted of a grammar section, a vocabulary section and a short writing section.

Preliminary Work at the Site

In the spring semester of 2003, I was given permission to observe the ACAE[1] 0098/ UNIV 1117. Through a semester long observation, I became familiar with the teaching methodology and classroom procedures. I learned that the instructor placed an equal emphasis on both English composition and grammar as evident in the change of the title of the course. The official title of the course as listed in the University Schedule of Classes was "*Basic Composition for Multilingual Writers*"; however, the instructor felt that the title *"English Composition and Grammar for Non-native speakers"* described the objectives and the nature of the course more appropriately.

The way in which the instructor organized her class did reflect equal emphasis on grammar and writing. The class usually started with students, in pairs or small groups, discussing their grammar and vocabulary assignments. Following each grammar unit was an open-book quiz. In addition to frequent grammar and vocabulary assignments, students were required to write several essays, and were expected to revise each essay based on comments from the instructor and peers

Although the instructor encouraged interactions between students by assigning them to work together in discussing grammar assignments or exchanging their essays for peer comments, the amount of talk between students was still very limited. The instructor and I discussed this situation and attempted to find ways to promote more interactions between students. Later in the semester, the instructor started incorporating a collaborative writing activity in which students, in pairs or small groups, used grammar and vocabulary words that they had learned in the class to compose short in-class essays. Similar to other writing assignments, students had to revise these short-essays based on the comments from the instructors or those from other students in the class. The use of this activity was based on the literature on collaborative talk in L2 writing classroom that reported positive effects of collaborative dialogue in providing opportunities for second language learning. In particular, the idea of asking students to co-author an essay was inspired by the writing tasks described in Antón and DiCamilla's (1998) study, and Swain and Lapkin's (1998) study. Although the target languages in both studies were Spanish and French respectively, the findings were applicable to an ESL context since students in both of these classroom contexts were asked to complete writing tasks in a language other than their mother tongues.

I observed a substantial increase in the amount of talk and interactions generated while students were co-authoring the short essays, particularly when compared with what usually occurred while students were peer-editing each other's work. Based on the observation, I decided to expand the focus of the study to include student interactions in both the peer feedback activity and other collaborative writing activities.

Data Collection

This study focused primarily on how ESL students interacted with each other when they engaged in collaborative classroom activities including peer response activity, collaborative paragraph writing and group discussion of grammar exercise. The primary source of data was video and audio recordings of student interactions during these collaborative classroom activities. In addition to peer interactions, I observed other teacher-led activities such as discussions of grammar, vocabulary and various aspects of academic writing. Student writing products, textbooks, the course syllabus and other teaching materials such as handouts provided by the instructor constituted archival data for this study. Towards the end of the semester, I interviewed each participant in order to understand how they perceived both their role and their peers' roles in the collaborative learning activities. In summary, this study employed four types of data including 1) video and audio recordings of student interactions, 2) interviews with students, 3) field notes based on classroom observations, and 4) archival data (i.e. course syllabus, handouts provided by the instructor, students' writing products).

Data collection spanned about 15 weeks throughout the fall semester of 2003. The class met twice a week, each for a period of one hour and fifteen minutes. I observed most class meetings for their entire duration except for those classes in which students were given quizzes. I usually arrived at the class 5-10 minutes prior to class time to set up recording equipment. During class time, I normally sat in the back of the classroom, generating field notes of teacher-fronted activities. A similar approach to field notes was used while observing the participants' interactions. I did not participate in any classroom activities.

Each class usually started with a group activity where students compared their answers to grammar homework assigned in the previous class meeting. This activity generally took

approximately 5-10 minutes, after which the instructor would lead a discussion on grammar and vocabulary. Later on, students sometimes engaged in peer-feedback activity where they exchanged comments on one another's paragraphs or essays. The major part of the data for this study came from audio and video recordings of these peer-feedback sessions. This part of the class meeting usually lasted approximately 10-15 minutes.

In the following section, I will provide further details regarding data collection procedures.

Video and Audio Recordings

A digital video camera was used to record student interactions during peer feedback activity and other collaborative writing activities. The camera was placed in front of or to the side of a pair or a group of participants to record their interactions for the entire time that they engaged in collaborative learning activities. At the beginning of each class meeting, the instructor usually divided the participants into two or three groups and the participants remained in this group for the rest of the class time. The schedule for data collection was organized in a way that each participant was observed and recorded for a relatively equal amount of time in comparison to others. Each session of these collaborative classroom activities generally lasted for approximately 10-15 minutes. In addition to a digital video camera, I used a minidisk recorder to record the participants' conversations. Throughout the data collection period, I recorded 17 sessions of participants' interactions, totaling approximately 244 minutes of interactions. The following table displays the numbers of peer response sessions recorded, each session's members and the length of each session.

Table 2.1 Distribution of peer response sessions recorded and their length

Peer Response Session	Participants	Length (minutes)
1	Lua	8.29
	Eva	
	Miki	
2	Soo-nee	13.82
	Hanako	
	Raul	
	Jun	
	Jane[2]	
3	Hanako	8.00
	Eva	
	Sumi	
4	Hanako	9.10
	Eva	
	Sumi	
5	Miki	14.06
	Lua	
	Jun	
6	Soo-nee	14.37
	Jane	
7	Hanako	16.24
	Lua	
8	Eva	19.14
	Hanako	
	Sumi	
9	Lucy	5.0
	Sumi	
	Hanako	
	Jun	
10	Hanako	9.0
	Jun	
	Jane	
11	Lua	14.10
	Sumi	
	Raul	
12	Soo-nee	26.30
	Miki	
	Jun	
	Eva	
13	Sumi	23.31
	Hanako	
	Lua	
	Raul	

Table 2.1 Distribution of peer response sessions recorded and their length (continued)

Peer Response Session	Participants	Length (minutes)
14	Eva	10.00
	Miki	
15	Eva	12.30
	Miki	
	Sumi	
16	Jun	23.10
	Soo-nee	
	Hanako	
17	Raul	17.50
	Hanako	
	Lua	

Interviews

The participants were interviewed during the last two weeks of the semester after they

had had substantial experiences with collaborative learning activities. Each interview lasted for

about 45-80 minute and was recorded using a minidisk player (see Appendix B for interview

guides). The interview usually began with questions about the participants' backgrounds and

then proceeded to questions on how they perceived the course and their experiences

collaborating with peers. In this second portion of the interview, I also asked the participants to

describe the extent to which they enjoyed and benefited from peer feedback or other

collaborative activities. The participants were also asked to identify some problems that they

encountered when providing and receiving feedback on peer writings.

Archival Data

Archival data included the information about the course provided on the Division of

Academic Enhancement's website, a course syllabus, textbooks, handouts provided by the

instructors, and students' writing products. The instructor provided me a copy of the course

syllabus at the beginning of the semester. I also received copies of handouts that the instructor

used in each class at the beginning of the class. I made copies of participants' writing

assignments that were the focus of each peer response session.

Data Analysis

Participant Interactions

I transcribed all the recorded peer response sessions using the transcription system

developed by Gail Jefferson (see Appendix A for transcription conventions). The transcripts

captured participants' actual words and illustrated a sequential organization of talk which

included such features as simultaneous utterances, overlapping utterances, contiguous utterances,

and interval within and between utterances. The transcripts also indicated characteristics of

speech delivery, which included such features as prolonged vowel, rising or falling intonation,

volume and within-speech laughter. Following Ochs' (1999) suggestion that researchers avoid

using strictly standard orthography, I adopted a modified orthography that roughly captured the

way utterances were pronounced as opposed to the way they were written. In addition to the

aural features of talk, I provided descriptions of some visual qualities of the talk such as gestures

that accompanied participants' talk. This was a selective process and the marking of participants'

utterances relied on "the transcriber's knowledge of when and how a given utterance qualifies for

marking against the backdrop of 'normal' or 'neutral speech" (Baker, 1997, p. 114).

After multiple readings of the transcripts, I noticed several actions that were performed in

each peer response session. Pomerantz and Fehr (1997) describe this stage of CA analysis as

characterizations of actions which can be done by asking the question, "What is this participant

doing in this turn?" (p. 72) and considering the relationship between the actions that make up

that particular sequence of talk. Some of the actions that were frequently performed in peer

response sessions include initiating comments on peer's writings, responding to comments given

by others (i.e. agreeing or disagreeing with others), and requesting information. These actions became the foci of my analyses. In the next step of the analysis I considered how the participants formed and delivered these actions. For example, to disagree with comments or suggestions given by their peers, participants could ask questions that forced their peers to reconsider those comments instead of directly rejecting the comments. Participants could also partially agree with the comments at the beginning of the turn and then launch disagreement later in the turn.

CA provided the basis for the ways I interpreted participant interactions and examined how participants' turns at talk were sequentially related. Several CA concepts were employed in order to examine the sequential organization of participant interactions. The concept of turn-taking organization (See. e.g. Sacks, et al, 1974) was employed in examining the distribution of talk in a pair or a group of participants and the occurrences of overlaps or interruptions among the participants. The concept of preference organization (See, e.g. Sacks, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984) was used in order to examine how participants managed assessments of peers' writing, particularly when they expressed disagreement of one another's ideas, comments or feedback. While CA provided a methodology to examine how a conversation occurred, other discourse analytic concepts such Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory and Grice's (1999) Cooperative Principle provided additional frameworks for examining how participants managed assessments of one another's writings and handled threats to one another's faces as a result of assessing their peers' writings.

In addition to verbal interactions, participants' non-verbal interactions including such features as laughter, eye gaze and gestures were considered in an attempt to identify their relationship to the verbal counterparts and how they helped construct certain role relationships among the participants. Essentially, CA was chosen as a data analysis method because it allowed

my interpretations of participant interactions to be grounded in empirical evidence in the

transcripts.

Interviews

I transcribed all the interviews, and examined the transcripts for evidence of the

participants' perspectives of their experiences working with peers and their perceptions of the

writing course in general. Themes and categories that emerged from multiple readings of each

transcript were identified. Interview data provided information supporting the analyses of the

participants' interactions.

Field Notes

Field notes generated during the observations of peer feedback sessions provided

additional information for the analysis of participant interactions. They contained information

about each peer feedback session that I observed. For example, I included the topic of the writing

assignment that was the focus of the participants' conversation. I also described my general

impression about group dynamics or problems that the participants faced in each session.

Archival Data

Different types of archival data were incorporated into the analyses of student

interactions. Information about the Division of Academic Enhancement available on its website

provided broader contextual information about the general missions of the department. A course

syllabus provided information about the objectives of the course and those of the classroom

activities. This contextual information was taken into consideration when analyzing and

interpreting participants' interactions in the writing classroom, particularly the extent to which

classroom practices, participant interactions, and their written products reflected the objectives of

the course. Teaching materials such as textbooks, handouts, and student writing assignments were used as references for the analysis of participant interactions.

In the following chapters, I will introduce the participants of the study and present the findings of the research which are divided into three main parts. I will also discuss pedagogical implications of the research findings for second language writing classrooms and methodological implications for SLA research on classroom interactions in general.

CHAPTER 3

PARTICIPANTS

All students who enrolled in UNIV 1115/1117 in the fall semester of 2003 agreed to

participate in the study. Half way through the semester, one of the participants dropped out of the

course, leaving a total of eight participants. Three out of six undergraduate students were

exchange students from Japan and Uruguay. These three exchange students chose to come to the

U.S. during the junior or senior year of their undergraduate studies and would return to their

home countries to finish their degrees. Two undergraduate students originally came from South

Korea and attended middle school and high schools in the U.S. One of the undergraduate

students was from Iceland and received an athletic scholarship from the university where this

study took place. Two graduate students audited the course in order to improve their English

language skills. The following table summarizes the background information of the research

participants.

Table 3.1 Participants' Background Information

Participant's Name	Enrollment Status	Age of Arrival to U.S	Length of Residency in U.S. (up to the beginning of the research)	Country of Origin
Sumi	Undergraduate	14	4 years	South Korea
Jun	Undergraduate	14	4 years	South Korea
Eva	Undergraduate	19	2 weeks	Iceland
Hanako	Undergraduate (through an exchange program)	20	2 weeks	Japan
Miki	Undergraduate (through an exchange program)	20	2 weeks	Japan
Lua	Undergraduate (through an exchange program	20	2 weeks	Uruguay
Soo-nee	Graduate	30's	3 years	South Korea
Raul	Graduate	50's	2 years	Colombia

The following section provides detailed descriptions of the participants of the study as gathered from the interviews.

Sumi

Sumi was eighteen years old when the study took place. She moved to the U.S. from South Korea with her family when she was 14 years old and attended middle school and high school in the U.S. Sumi was familiar with American classrooms and could speak English very fluently. She took the course based on a recommendation from her academic advisor. She was a music major and had an ambitious plan for her future. She loved performing and at the time of the study, she was one of the best amateur flute players in the state. She planned to pursue Master's and Doctoral degrees in music performance, and then become a professional flute player or a college professor. She mentioned that as a music student, English was important to her because in addition to performing the music, she needed to be able to explain to her audience her interpretation of the piece she performed.

Jun

Jun came to the U.S. when he was 14 years old to attend middle school while the rest of his family remained in South Korea. He had graduated from high school and was in his first year of college when this study took place. Like Sumi, Jun had substantial experience with American classrooms and could communicate in English fluently. However, he expressed that he sometimes had difficulty with academic English, particularly the writing aspect. He had originally enrolled in ENGL 1101 but the instructor of the course recommended that he take UNIV 1115 to prepare himself for the kind of writing assignments required in ENGL 1101. Sumi and Jun had known each other since middle school and sometimes spoke Korean to each other in class.

Eva

Eva came from Iceland with an athletic scholarship that required her to be on the university track team while she was pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Sport Science. Eva's native language was Icelandic, but she had studied English as a foreign language in her home country. Although she mentioned that she had limited exposure to English outside of the classroom in Iceland, I noticed that she could speak English fluently. When asked about her English language proficiency, she commented that she had trouble expressing herself when she first arrived in the U.S. However, her English improved greatly after a few months in the U.S, and she credited her improvement to interactions with friends in her track team. Unlike Sumi and Jun, Eva was required to take UNIV 1115 because she was in the "Developmental Study Program." The program was designed to provide academic assistance for students whose SAT scores were lower than what was normally required by the university but were accepted to the university because of their athletic skills. Based on her score from the verbal part of the SAT, Eva was required to take UNIV 1115 as a pre-requisite for English 1101. At the end of the semester, however, Eva took the same test again and received an almost perfect score. She mentioned in the interview that the reason that she had failed the test the first time might have been that she took the test on the first day she arrived in the U.S and she was still exhausted from traveling.

Hanako

Hanako had been in the U.S. for only a few weeks when the study began. She came from Japan through an exchange program and would stay in the U.S. for one year, after which she would return to Japan to finish her undergraduate degree. Hanako studied English as a foreign language in Japan when she was in middle school. She also studied German in high school and spent some time in Germany. Hanako was not required to take UNIV 1115, and when asked why she

enrolled in the course, she mentioned that she wanted to take a class which she was certain that she could, in her words, "catch up." Since UNIV 1115 was designed for non-native speakers of English, Hanako believed that she would be able to understand the lectures better than she would in other classes primarily composed of American students.

Miki

Miki also came from Japan at the same time as Hanako and was in the same exchange program. Her English language learning experiences were quite similar to Hanako's. She began studying English in middle school mostly with Japanese teachers. She mentioned that there was only one teacher who was a native English speaker in her school in Japan. As a result, students generally did not have much chance to practice their listening-speaking skills. Miki expressed that she often had difficulty understanding lectures in American classrooms and attributed her problem to the fact that she had very limited interactions with native speakers of English when she was in Japan. She had difficulty adjusting to American classrooms where professors encouraged students to participate in class discussion. Miki even mentioned that she was intimidated by the size of the class and was often hesitant to ask questions.

Lua

Lua was an exchange student from Uruguay. Like Miki and Hanko, Lua expressed that she needed a class that would help improve her English writing skills. Spanish was her native language and she started learning English as a foreign language when she was in Uruguay. She also spoke Portuguese and French. She was able to communicate effectively in English and did not seem to have a lot of difficulty with the American-style classroom which was often characterized by active participation on the students' part. Lua was quite an active member of the class as she frequently contributed to class discussion and asked questions.

Soo-nee

Soo-nee was one of the two graduate students auditing the class at the time the study took place. She received her Master's degree in South Korea before she came to the U.S. with her husband when he decided to pursue a Doctoral degree. She started learning English as a foreign language when she was in middle school in South Korea. Soo-nee loved to write and had worked for a publishing company in South Korea where she wrote children books. Once in the U.S., she continued taking English language classes at the American Language Program as she planned to pursue a Doctoral degree in the U.S. Four years after she arrived in the U.S., Soo-nee entered a doctoral program in Mathematics. It was her first semester in this program when the data collection took place. She audited UNIV 115 in order to continue improving her English writing skills.

Raul

Raul and his family came to the U.S. from Colombia in 1996 when the company he was working for in Colombia provided him funding to continue his education in the U.S. Unlike other participants, Raul started learning much later in his life and he was exposed to English for the first time in 1996 when he attended classes at the American Language Program. By the end of his first year at the American Language Program, he passed the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and entered a Master's program in Forest Management. He earned his Master's degree in 1998 and went back to work in Colombia for a few years before coming back to the U.S. to pursue a Doctoral degree. He was in his second year in the Ph.D. program in Forest Finance and Forest Business at the time of data collection.

The Instructor

The instructor of the course had a Ph.D. in English literature and had taught at several colleges and universities before joining the university where this study took place. Her early teaching was mainly in the areas of literature, composition and technical writing. For the past 13 years since she began teaching at the Division of Academic Enhancement at the university where this study took place, she had been teaching basic writing and, for approximately the last seven years, ESL writing and grammar. Although the instructor did not have formal training in ESL instruction, she kept herself well-informed by reading textbooks and journal articles relating to ESL instruction. She also audited two courses offered at the university where she was teaching. One of the courses that she audited focused on ESL error analysis, while the other focused on methods materials for ESL instruction.

CHAPTER 4

LAUGHTER IN PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Laughter is one of the features of human communication which serves many different functions in social interactions despite its common association with trivial matters or humor. As a social being, most of us have certainly been in situations where we laugh simply to maintain a positive social relationship with others despite the fact that we do not find a supposedly humorous story introduced by others to be funny. People sometimes laugh when they are nervous or when they talk about problems. It is not always easy to determine exactly why people laugh in certain situations. We sometimes do not pay much attention to laughter when it occurs in everyday interactions. Similarly, in most research on social interactions, researchers tend to describe the occurrence of laughter instead of transcribing it, as a result, obscuring interesting features of interactions (Jefferson, 1985). Contrary to this common trend in describing laughter, this chapter follows the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach that takes into account the specific placement of laughter in interactions in order to describe how laugher is organized and what participants accomplish through laughter in peer feedback activity.

The CA approach to laughter provides very useful tools that allow researchers to report the particulars of laughter and examine laughter as a methodic device that participants of social interactions employ in different situations for a variety of purposes. Laughter, as an acoustic construction, conveys its meaning by means of referencing talk or an activity that precedes it. As such, a detailed analysis of laughter focuses on the sequential placement of laughter in interactions, particularly how laughter coordinates with speech and with laughter produced by other participants in the interactions. Such an approach reveals how laughter, which is a non-linguistic construction, contributes to meanings created through other linguistic features in the

interactions. In the following section, I review some of the issues introduced by several

researchers based on their systematic observation of laughter in different environments. These

issues include how participants invite laughter, how participants respond to laughter initiated by

others, and most importantly, what this type of observation tells us about what people

accomplish through laughter in the course of the interactions, whether it is a construction of

social identity, a maintenance of social relationship and group affiliation, an alignment of

perspectives, or a form of resistance.

Inviting and Responding to Laughter in Interaction

Gail Jefferson has paved the way for a systematic study of laughter that occurs during

interactions in her work on transcription procedures and notational system. In addition to her

pioneering work on transcription conventions, Jefferson describes several ways in which

participants may invite laughter and how co-participants may accept or decline the invitation. To

invite laughter, Jefferson (1979) explained that the speaker could start laughing first as a way to

indicate to the co-participant that laughter was an appropriate response to the speaker's

preceding utterance. Alternatively, the speaker might choose not to start laughing but insert

particles of "within-speech laughter" into her/his speech.

(In Jefferson, 1979, p. 83)

```
1      B:      Dju watch by any chance Miss international Showcase las'night?
2      E:      N:no I didn' [I wz reading my-
3      B:                   [You missed a really great pro(H)[
4      E:                                                    [O (hh) h i(h)t wah
5              (hh)s?=
6      E:      =ehh heh heh heh
```

The particle of "within-speech laughter" was inserted at the end of B's turn on line 3. Jefferson

explained that "within-speech laughter" provided a laugh recognition point for the co-participant,

who recognized a candidate laughable utterance and accepted the laugh invitation on line 4. Since the speaker did not actually start laughing first, Jefferson stated that laughter, in this case, was produced on a voluntary basis by the co-participant.

Upon the completion of a candidate laughable utterance, the co-participant may decline to laugh by remaining silent. However, silence alone did not necessarily prevent the speaker from pursuing laughter further. The speaker might have interpreted silence as a sign that the co-participant was waiting for the speaker's invitation to laugh. Also, the co-participant might have been uncertain of whether or not the speaker's utterance was laughable, and as a result, chose to remain silent, waiting for the speaker to start laughing as a warrant that laughter was in fact appropriate. To decline the laugh invitation completely, the co-participant had to terminate the relevance of laughter. One way to do so was to start talking at the point where she/he might have started laughing or awaited further laugh invitation from the speaker.

Another situation where the co-participant might refuse to laugh was a troubles-telling. Jefferson (1984) stated that a troubles-teller might laugh when reporting troubles, but a troubles-recipient would normally produce a serious response instead of laughing along with the trouble-teller. This situation was slightly different than the ones described above in that the rejection of laugh invitation seemed to be a preferred response. In other words, in most situations other than a troubles-telling, the co-participant was expected to display affiliation with the prior speaker by accepting a laugh invitation. However, in a troubles-telling, the co-participant was expected to align her/himself as a troubles-recipient and refrain from laughing in order to display troubles-receptiveness or to show that she/he took what the troubles-teller had said seriously. One way to align oneself as a troubles-recipient was to first, refuse to laugh along with the troubles-teller and then start talking to the prior utterance or responding to the trouble reported.

(In Jefferson, 1984, p. 347)

    C: We:ll I : :. heard about your accident I'm sorry to hear that.

    L: Oh : : : tha:nk you it's sure been the most painful (.) of all my li:fe put

             together

→   a::ll my: pain does not compa:re to this foo:t [eh heh-heh,]

→   C: [C a n you]=

→   L: =ha [(ha)

→   C: [Can you wa:lk good now?

Laughing *at* and Laughing *with*

Laughing together was a result of various methodic procedures that showed participants'

attentiveness to the content of the talk, and laughter, in some occasions, occurred as an accessory

activity used to achieve a certain outcome (Jefferson et al, 1987). This means that when we

observe the occurrence of laughing-together, we must look at how participants coordinate a non-

speech sound of laugher with prior utterances and how the placement of laughter affects the

upcoming course of actions. One way to look at the impact of laughter in conversation is by

examining how it contributes to the participants' displays of affiliation with and disaffiliation

from each other. Glenn (1991/1992) explained the variations in the status of laughter in

conversations by making a distinction between laughing "at" and laughing "with." While

laughing "at" tended to promote distancing, or the feeling of superiority for the laugh initiator,

laughing "with" created bonding and affiliation. Glenn provided four keys that helped

distinguish laughing "at" from laughing "with." These keys included laughable, first laugh,

possible second laugh, and subsequent activities. Laughable referred to utterances, actions,

gestures or anything that served as a reference to laughter. Laughing "at" became a relevant

interpretation when laughable appointed or nominated any other co-participant as an object of

ridiculing or teasing. In other words, laughable was directed toward that participant who was

then appointed as the butt. Following laughable, first laugh and second laugh initiated by

someone other than the butt would likely make laughing "at" environment relevant. In addition, laughing "at" was usually not shared by the butt. As such, a two-party shared laughter would likely be interpreted as laughing "with."

(In Glenn, 1995, p. 45)

```
1      Shawn:        'Ts got there's still ice on it.
2                    (1.3)
3      Vicki:        I:[ce:?
4      Shawn:         [kheh-heh-heh-h  [eh
5      Vicki:                          [They weren' even frozen
```

In the example above, the couples were getting ready to have dinner. Shawn commented on the chicken that Vicki had prepared, jokingly suggesting that the chicken was not fully cooked. Shawn's laughter on line 4 was in reference to his laughable comment on line 1 and nominated Vicki as the butt. The laughter here could be interpreted as Shawn laughing at Vicki since Vicki did not join in laughing.

The final characteristic that distinguished laughing "at" from laughing "with" was the nature of activities or talk that followed laughter. When the butt did not join in laughing but attempted to extend talk on the topic that was in reference to the laughable utterance, the situation could possibly be identified as laughing "at". Looking back at the example of the talk between Shawn and Vicki above, Vicki's turn on line 5 confirmed that Shawn's laughter was "at" her as she did not join in laughing but extended the talk about the food that she had prepared.

Thus far, the discussion has focused on identifying the status of laughter; however, it is also important to recognize that participants' alignment displayed through laughter is not always static, meaning that participants sometimes transform laughing "with" to laughing "at" or vice versa. For instance, Glenn (1995) explained that in a situation like joke-telling where the joke-

teller normally set out to create a laughing "with" environment, there was a possibility that the

joke-teller failed to deliver the joke or that the co-participants did not understand the joke. In the

latter situation, the joke-teller could turn the co-participant's failure to understand the joke into a

laughable, nominating the co-participant as butt. The laughing "with" environment would be

converted to laughing "at."

On the other hand, the participant who was laughed at could also try to turn the situation

around by shifting the alignment to laughing "with." Glenn (1995) provided the following

example of a telephone conversation of three college students in order to show how participant

alignment could be negotiated.

(In Glenn, 1995, pp 51-52)

1	Stanley:	But deeming that a young ↑lady's on the phone wu'we
2		woh' discuss none u'thet
3	Jeffrey:	Deeming. Now↑wha'does↓deeming mean [ma::n
4	Stanley:	[eh Deeming
5		↑I don't[know ma:n ↑is jus 'as jus uh c:atchy wo:rd man
6	Jeffrey:	[↑hih-huh hu↑AH! Huh-hah!
7	Rhonda:	°↑hih [heh°
8	Stanley:	[It don't fit shit.
9	Rhonda:	ih[h huh huh h:::]h
10	Jeffrey:	[Wu'I tell you what m[a:]:::n.
11	Stanley:	[My English teachuh be exin
12		my ass on that. ↑Ev'ry time.

Jeffrey's laughter on line 6 could be interpreted as laughing at considering the nature of

the laughable which was in reference to the fact that Stanley was caught using the word not

knowing what it meant. There was also a second laugh from Rhonda who was not the butt, and

this confirmed the status of her laughter as "at" Stanley. However, Glenn further explained that

Stanley's turn on line 8 which was a laughable referring to his own error when using the word

"deeming" served to turn the laughing at into laughing with since this turn was responded by

laughter from Rhonda and by appreciative talk from Jeffrey. By making fun of his own mistake,

Stanley managed to turn the situation around, and his co-participants no longer laughed "at" him but "with" him.

Laughter in Male-Female Interaction

Gender is sometimes invoked as an explanation for the differences between the way in which males and females interact with each other. However, for CA analysts, gender is not viewed as an analytic category in its biological sense but rather as a construct, behaviors or something that participants "do" or "accomplish" in their interactions. Jefferson (2004) made several observations about laughter in interactions between males and females. She stated that when a male laughed, a female frequently joined in laughing although she may not find anything to laugh about. The reverse was generally not true for a male who would not join a female's laughter if he did not find anything to laugh about. However, there were environments in which exceptions to these regularities were permitted. A female would not join a male's laughter if something was at stake or when a male was being difficult. This included such situations as ones in which a male disagreed with a female, or ones where a male was being uncooperative.

Another set of exceptions to the regularities involves troubles-talk. Jefferson (2004) used the notions of "receptiveness" and "resistance" to characterize a troubles-teller and a troubles-recipient. The female troubles-recipient would not join the male's laughter if it occurred during his troubles-telling. In this situation, the female could be characterized as being troubles-receptive and laugh-resistant. The male troubles-teller, on the other hand, displayed his troubles-resistance via laughter which suggested that he was in a position to take the trouble lightly or that he was handling the trouble well. As a troubles-recipient, the male also exhibited troubles-resistance and laugh-receptiveness when he joined the female's laughter that occurred in the course of her troubles-telling. Jefferson concluded that a female interacting with a male when

nothing particularly antagonistic was going on would generally exhibit receptiveness by joining a male's laughter, but would refrain from laughing only when doing so exhibited receptiveness of a higher order: troubles-receptiveness. A male interacting with a female, on the other hand, would exhibit laugh-resistance, except when joining would exhibit troubles-resistance. These phenomena suggested that there was "a hierarchical ordering of activity types" (Jefferson, 2004, p. 125) in which laughter was lower in the ranks than was troubles-telling.

Laughter in Peer Response Activity

In the following section, I will discuss various roles of laughter in peer interactions in one ESL writing classroom. The analyses focus on sequential organization of laughter which includes such features as who initiates laughter, and how it is taken by other participants in the interactions. I will also address the issue of laughter in interactions between male and female participants.

Excerpt 1: A peer feedback session of Jun and Miki

```
1      J:      "I liked listening to music" (reads the paragraph aloud)
2      M:      Sounds XXX  heh heh heh=
3      J:      Yeah. It's kind of weird.
4      M:      Um
5      J:      It should be like "I have free time" (.)
6              "when I have free time I like I like to listen to [music]
7      M:                                            [So    ] now she doesn't
8              like listening music hehehe
9      J:      Huh "I liked listening to music"
(2.0)
10     J:      And this should be comma
(J writes a comma on the paper and continues reading the essay)
```

In the above sequence, Jun and Miki were editing a paragraph written by another student, Lua, who was not present at this peer feedback session (see Appendix C). Miki had read the paragraph and written down her comments before she discussed them with Jun. At the beginning of the sequence, Jun read aloud the problematic part of the paragraph. Miki then made a

comment about it, and this was followed with laughter. Jun stated that he agreed with Miki's comment as evident in his response "yeah" on line 3; however, he did not laugh along with Miki but continued with his comments on lines 5 and 6. Refraining from laughing along with Miki suggested that Miki's laughter was not a reason for him to laugh along. Miki's turn on line 7 could be understood as a critique of the author. Her turn aligned with Jun's critique on line 3, expanding it by questioning the author's use of the past form of the verb "liked" instead of the present form "like" as suggested by Jun. Her turn again ended with laughter which was not responded to with laughter from Jun.

We have observed that laughter is noticeably absent on Jun's part. He did not laugh along with either incident where Miki initiated laughter. One possible explanation for the absence of laughter from Jun may lie in the differences in the way males and females respond to laugher. Jefferson (1984) stated that in male-female interactions, males would not join in laughing when females initiated laughter. This appears to be consistent with what happened in excerpt 1 in which Jun, the male, did not laugh along with laughter initiated by Miki, the female. In doing so, Jun exhibited what Jefferson (2004) called "laugh resistance."

A different pattern was found for laughter initiated by Jun in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 2: A peer feedback session of Jun and Miki

1	M:	U::m. Don't you use "slopes"?
2	J:	No. heh heh
3	M:	heh heh hehe
4	J:	Like (.) Slope's for like (.) mathematical stuff.
5	M:	A::h like function
6	J:	Yeah. The graph
7	M:	A::h XXX I see (writes Jun's comments on her paper)
8	J:	A::nd (.) you could change this to "hill" too (refers to another place in
9		M's paper where she uses the word "slope" incorrectly)

In this excerpt Jun and Miki were editing Miki's paragraph entitled "What I Dislike the Most about *Name of School*" (see Appendix D). Jun had written down his suggestions for revision on Miki's paper and returned it to her. He then asked if she needed any further explanations regarding the comments that he had made. In this particular sequence, Jun and Miki were discussing the use of the word "slope" in the paragraph in which Miki wrote "I dislike the scale of *Name of School*. It's too big! Moreover there are many and big slopes." Jun suggested that Miki replace the word "slope" with the word "hill."

The sequence began with Miki's question about a particular comment that Jun had written on her paper. Jun responded to Miki's question on line 2 with the utterance "no" followed by laughter. Miki joined in laughing on line 3. Notice that when Jun initiated laughter, Miki laughed along with him. In a situation where participants laugh along with each other, the first laugh functions as an invitation for another participant to join in. When another participant accepts the invitation, he/she acknowledges the laughable nature of the on-going talk. The first laugh from Jun suggests that he treated Miki's question at the beginning of this sequence as laughable. In addition, he seemed to be laughing "at" Miki. What makes this interpretation relevant is the fact that the first laugh, following a laughable that nominates the co-present as the butt, comes from someone other than the butt (Glenn, 2003). In other words, Jun's first laugh nominates Miki as the butt, the person who is laughed at. Although Miki accepted Jun's invitation on line 2 and joined in laughing on line 3, what happened in the following turns seemed to suggest that at first, she did not seem to recognize the laughable nature of her question. This is evident on lines 5 and 7 where she uttered "ah" at the beginning of both turns after Jun had provided further explanations of his comments on her misuse of the word "slopes."

The utterance "ah" here could be described as a token of recognition that indicated Miki's new-found understanding of how to use the word "slopes."

In this excerpt, Miki seemed to laugh along with Jun more than he did when she initiated laughter. What could we infer about the nature of their interactions? It has been suggested that there is a tendency for women to do more "conversation maintenance" than do men (Wood, 1996). In general, women more frequently exhibit behaviors that indicate their interest and involvement in the on-going talk. For Miki, her laughter following that of Jun could be interpreted as a way of maintaining her involvement in the talk. This interpretation is also consistent with Jefferson's (2004) observation that females would join in male's laughter although she may not find anything to laugh about.

Another plausible interpretation could be based on the phenomenon Glenn (2003) called "transforming laughing at to laughing with." Glenn explained that the butt, someone who was laughed at, may attempt to shift her/his alignment from being laughed at to laughing along with other participants. This realignment could be accomplished by a display of the butt's willingness to laugh along with the other participant who has initiated laughter. In this case, Miki turned the laughing at situation into shared laugher. According to Glenn, participants could employ this shift of alignment in order to promote group affiliation.

Excerpt 3: A peer feedback of Jun and Miki

```
1      J:     What do you mean "we can run on the road for pedestrian"
2      M:     There're two roads. (starts drawing). This (.) this is
3             road (refers to her drawing)
4      J:     Okay
5      M:     And
(2.0)
6      M:     ca::r (.) runs here (1.0) and walk::ers=
7      J:     =Oh the [sidewalk?]
8      M:             [run      ]Yeah, sidewalk
```

9	J:	Like [what
10	M:	[I mean=
11	J:	=what does this mean? This sentence=
12	M:	=Ah
13	J:	"We can run on the road for pedestrian" (refers to a sentence in Miki's paper)
14	M:	In America I saw the bicycle runs here (points at her drawing)
15	J:	Huh?
16	M:	Bicycles
(2.0)		
17	M:	People who ride on the bike (.). They (.) they use this road
18		for cars
19	J:	Oh you mean like (.) cars go this way and bikes go this way
20	M:	Yeah, bikes go this way in the U.S. (.) I think.
(2.0)		
21	J:	Huh (.) not really (smiles)
22	M:	Hehehe
23	J:	Hehehe
24	M:	But I saw here hehehe
25	J:	Oh this is campus. On campus they do, but like not in highway
26	M:	A:::h
27	J:	Hehe
28	M:	(smiles)

Jun and Miki's peer feedback session of continued in excerpt 3 above where the role taken by Jun changed slightly from what we have observed in excerpt 2. Instead of letting Miki ask questions about the comments that he had written down on her paragraph, he began asking her to explain the meaning of what she had written. At the beginning of the sequence, Jun asked Miki to explain the meaning of the sentence "we can run on the road for pedestrian." Lines 2 to 18 showed a series of turns in which Jun and Miki tried to negotiate the meaning of this sentence. Miki seemed to have a hard time communicating her idea, so at one point, she drew a picture on a piece of a paper to help explain her idea to Jun. This negotiation of meaning ended after line 20 where there was a two-second pause preceding Jun's turn in which he indicated his disagreement with Miki's explanation.

What is important here is the smile that follows Jun's turn on line 21 which leads to a series of laughs from Miki and Jun himself. Visual features such as smiling, crinkling of eyes, or

eye gaze were indicators of how people began laughing together (Glenn 2003). In particular,

Jun's smile following his turn on line 21 signaled some acknowledgement of amusement, and

this invited the first laugh from Miki. The "laughing at" interpretation could be relevant here

although Jun did not actually laugh at Miki. I propose that this phenomenon be called a weak

form of "laughing at." It is weak in a sense that there was no audible laughter from the initiator,

yet it still nominated Miki as the butt. Miki accepted the invitation to laugh as she began

laughing following his smile on line 21. The weak form of laughing at was then turned to a

laughing together situation on lines 22-23.

Excerpt 4: From a peer feedback session of Jun and Eva

1	J:	An::d. I don't understand like (.) "she's more special than *Name*. I don't
2		know (.) other woman?
3	E:	U::h (1.0) no. I (.) I know this is probably a wrong word. I looked it up in
4		a dictionary.
5	J:	Oh
6	E:	She's more my (.) you know my (.) friend which (.)I tell um about my
7		feeling
8	J:	Oh okay okay=
9	E:	=Which I which I
10	J:	huh I don't I don't know how to describe that one=
11	E:	=No [no
12	J:	[huh huh=
13	E:	=I don't know either so I have to look it up in the dictionary and I got
14		this XXX word.
15	J:	I think you should ask her about this (refers to the instructor)
16	E:	Yeah (1.0) Okay

(2.0)

17	J:	It's a pretty good essay.
18	E:	huh heh heh No. I (.) I wrote it in a hurry
19	J:	Mine. (smiley voice) I wrote it in thirty minutes=
20	E:	=yeah=
21	J:	=And it's like [heh heh (acts as if typing in front of a computer)
22	E:	[Yeah me too.

Excerpt 4 was taken from a peer feedback session of Jun and Eva where they were

discussing the essay entitled "My Two Closest Friends" which Eva had written (see Appendix

E). The purpose of this essay was to compare and contrast the relationships that Eva had with her two close friends. At the beginning of the sequence, Jun referred to the sentence in her essay "*Name* is my more privileged friend because I have known her for so long time," asking if Eva thought that one friend was more special than the other. Jun did not appear to know the meaning of the word "privileged" that Eva used in this sentence. Eva admitted that she was not certain that it was the right word to describe what she meant. On line 8, Jun acknowledged that he understood what Eva tried to explain to him. Then on line 10, he laughed and admitted that he did not know the right word to describe Eva's feeling. Eva did not laugh along with Jun and stated for the second time that she had looked up the word in a dictionary. Jun then suggested that Eva consult the instructor. After a short period of silence following Eva's acceptance of Jun's suggestion, Jun complimented Eva. The compliment was responded with laughter from Eva who seemed slightly reluctant to accept the compliment and stated that she could not spend much time writing the essay. Jun aligned himself with Eva when stating that he did not spend much time writing his own essay either.

This excerpt presents an interesting contrast to Jun's peer feedback sessions with Miki discussed earlier. In his interactions with Eva, Jun did not appear to laugh at Eva although he was the one who initiated laughter twice on lines 10 and 12, and in both incidents, Eva did not join in laughing. It seemed as though he was laughing at himself possibly because he did not know the meaning of the word "privileged" and was unable to help Eva. This interpretation was confirmed on line 10 where he admitted that he did not know the appropriate word that Eva could use in this context and on line 14 where he suggested that Eva talk to the instructor about this problem. Up to this point in the interaction, Eva seemed to be taking the editing task more seriously than Jun did as she did not laugh along with Jun even after his second attempt to

initiate laughter, which she responded to by pursuing a serious topic (i.e., explaining how she dealt with a problem that she faced when writing this essay). However, this was about to change.

The short pause following Eva's turn on line 16 appeared to mark the end of the first phase of this sequence as both Jun and Eva agreed that consulting with the instructor would be the solution to the problem they had been discussing. The second phase of this sequence began when Jun paid Eva a compliment with which Eva humbly disagreed stating that she only wrote the essay in a hurry. According to Pomerantz (1984), Eva's disagreement is to be expected since it is a preferred response in this situation. Notice that she prefaced her turn with laughter which suggested a less serious stance. Jun did not actually laugh out loud in response to Eva's laughter on line 18; however, he aligned himself with Eva's stance when he stated in a smiling voice that he did not spend much time writing his essay either. The gesture that accompanied his turn on line 19 also indicated a less serious stance toward the topic. At the end of the sequence, both Eva and Jun appeared to be at the same page in regard to their stance towards the writing task. They both constructed themselves as ones who did not take the writing task very seriously. Laughter that occurred in the second phase of this sequence was reciprocal and seemed to create affiliation.

It is interesting to observe the different ways that Jun interacted with Miki and Eva. In his interactions with Miki, most of the occurrences of laughter seemed to be along the same line with Jefferson's observations regarding laughter in male-female interactions. Jun could be described as being laugh-resistant whenever Miki initiated laughter. Miki, on the other hand was quite receptive as she frequently laughed along with Jun even when he seemed to be laughing at her. Although this laughing along phenomenon created affiliation between Jun and Miki, it seemed to come at Miki's expense.

Jun's interaction with Eva was different and consistent with Jefferson's observation. Jefferson stated that a female participant might refrain from laughing along with a male participant if something was at stake. It was plausible to assume that Eva did not join in laughing because she attempted to explain to Jun why she had chosen to use the word "privileged" in her sentence. This might have been what was at stake at that particular moment. But how would we explain the shift of her stance towards the writing task during the second phase of excerpt 4? As discussed earlier, the shift of Eva's stance occurred after she and Jun agreed on the solution to the problem they had been discussing. This marked the end of the "serious" part of their task. The fact that this excerpt was taken from the very end of their peer feedback session supported the interpretation that what occurred during the second phase did not have much stake for Eva, and as a result, she seemed to take a less serious stance.

Considering Jefferson's observation regarding certain situations where a female may refrain from laughing along with a male, this observation seems inconsistent with what happened in Jun's interactions with Miki. In other words, we could not completely rule out the possibility that something was still at stake in Miki's interactions with Jun. She obviously tried to explain herself and seemed to take the task seriously. However, Miki appeared to be laugh-receptive while Eva seemed to be resistant to joining in Jun's laughter.

In addition to gender, I suggest that we look at the status that each participant created for him or herself and how the other participant contributed to this in the course of the interactions. Participants' status in the context of this study seems to be associated with differing levels of linguistic and cultural knowledge that made their comments legitimate or convincing, thus putting some participants in a somewhat superior position in the interactions. For example, Miki's laughter frequently occurred when she voiced her opinions about another student's

writing (in excerpt 1) and about her own writing (in excerpts 2 and 3). It was possible to interpret her laughter as a kind of buffer that protected her against what she might have perceived to be her incompetence or the feeling of inferiority in relation to her co-participant. This interpretation was shown to be relevant when we looked at what usually happened after Miki expressed her opinions. Jun frequently disproved Miki's points of view, and in doing so, put himself in a position of an expert who knew how to solve the problems in Miki's writing. Jun's superior position in his interactions with Miki was partly a result of his knowledge of normative things such as how traffic worked in the U.S. The status that Jun had created for himself coupled with the fact that Miki's English was not as good as Jun's, might have perpetuated Miki's inferior status in their interactions. It was possible to infer that her inferior status might have contributed to Miki's laugh-receptiveness.

Interestingly, Jun's status in his interactions with Eva was quite similar to Miki's in her interactions with Jun. Jun seemed to use laughter to downplay the fact that he did not know how to help Eva deal with the problem that she had in her writing. He was no longer an expert in this peer feedback session. Eva was also a more competent writer than Jun based on the grades that she received from the instructor. All these factors might have relegated Jun to the lower position in relation to Eva, and as a result, he became less resistant to joining Eva's laughter. These data therefore suggest that regardless of gender, the participant with inferior status might exhibit laugh-receptiveness, while the one with superior status might display laugh-resistance.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Laughter has been one of the focal areas of CA researchers (Jefferson, 1979; 1984; 1985; Jefferson et al, 1987). The findings of this study suggest that laughter serves especially important functions in the realm of communication involving criticism and face issues. I have presented the

analysis of the interactions between two pairs of participants and discussed some similarities and differences in the occurrences of laughter in these two peer feedback sessions. I examined how laughter was initiated and a response given, which enabled me to identify if one participant was laughing at the other or if they were laughing together. The distinction between laughing "at" and laughing "with" was useful as it was one of the indicators of group affiliation. It was found that one of the participants was frequently laughed at but managed to turn laughing "at" into laughing "with" by laughing along with the co-participant. The willingness to join in laughing, although at one's own expense, showed that the participant aligned herself with her co-participant, creating a sense of affiliation within a group.

The occurrences of laughter in the data were also examined within Jefferson's framework of laughter in male-female interactions. The findings complicate some existing assumptions regarding male-female interactions which describe females as being laugh receptive and males as being laugh resistant. The data came from two peer feedback pairs each consisting of a male and a female participant. The same male participant paired up with two different female participants. The male participant interacted differently with each female participant; he was very resistant with one participant but quite receptive with the other. I propose that the different ways in which he interacted with the two female participants could be attributed to his position in relation to each of the female participants in regard to language proficiency. It was found that when he interacted with the female participant whose writing proficiency was somewhat below his, he seemed resistant to join in laughing when she initiated laughter. In addition, when he initiated laughter, most of the occurrences of laughter could be described as laughing "at," suggesting that he found what she had said to be laughable. Given that these laughing at incidents were located following the female participant's turns where she raised questions about his comments on the

mistakes that she had made in her writing, his laughter suggested that he treated her questions as something that he did not take very seriously. In a way, he seemed to place himself above the other participant, making this laughing incident slightly demeaning to her.

On the other hand, when interacting with the other female participant who was a more accomplished writer in the class, he laughed along with her when she initiated laughter. When he initiated laughter, this female participant did not join in laughing. The transcript illustrated that he initiated laughter in the turn in which he admitted that he was not able to help her with the problem that she had in her writing. Laughter seemed to be used to downplay the fact that he himself did not know how to deal with the problem. In this context laughter served to lighten the situation that placed him below his co-participant.

The findings indicate that a factor other than gender contributes to laugh resistance or receptiveness. The male participant was found to shift his stance depending on the extent to which he could help his partners deal with particulars problems in their writings. The positioning of laughter in his talk suggests that he oriented towards his ability to deal with the problem at hand as well as the ability of his partner. Based on this observation, it is plausible to infer that his perceived proficiency in relation to that of his partner is a likely indicator of his laugh resistance or receptiveness. In a situation where participants orient to perceived level of proficiency or expertise of each other, participants who perceive themselves as being inferior to others may be inclined to employ laughter as a defense mechanism that serves to mask their inferiority. The participants in the superior position can resist laughter, and in doing so, they reaffirm their superiority.

This close look at the occurrence of laughter in peer feedback interaction has illustrated that there might be several other factors that affect the way people use laughter in their talk.

Jefferson's model is a very helpful starting point as it gives analysts tools to describe and understand how and possibly why people laugh. However, Jefferson's model alone does not completely explain the way some of the participants in this study used laughter. We have observed that the participant's status in relation to the co-participant might have some impact on how and why they laugh. Other macro contextual factors such as participants' cultural backgrounds might have some impacts on why they initiated laughter and how they responded to laughter initiated by others.

The findings of this study also inform second language writing instructors about how peer response activity could be utilized in their classrooms. In a classroom context where students' English language proficiency differs greatly, it is important that the instructor understand how differences in students' backgrounds may influence the way they interact with one another. Take the participants in this study, for example. Some of the participants were freshmen who first came to the U.S. to attend middle schools. Some of them were international students who came to the U.S. through a one-year exchange program. There were also graduate students who enrolled in the course in order to improve their English proficiency. Interactional and interview data corroborate the conclusion that some of the participants, when making assessments of peer writing, relied on their perceived level of expertise that they claimed as someone who had stayed in the U.S. for a longer period of time than their peers. Some participants used this "old-timer" identity to refute their peers' ideas. This kind of positioning came with some consequences. One of the participants expressed a somewhat negative attitude toward her peer who positioned himself as an expert and disagreed with and rejected her ideas. Some of the "old timers" also mentioned that they did not greatly benefit from peer feedback. Recognizing students' backgrounds and their levels of language proficiency will enable the

instructor to group students appropriately and avoid situations where students are embarrassed by their group members or develop negative attitudes toward one another.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPANTS' ROLES IN PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Collaborative learning activities have been incorporated in language classrooms for several reasons. Students' participation in small-group or pair-work activities is linked to their learning outcomes, cognitive development, and development of positive social behaviors (Cohen, 1994; Storch, 2001). Peer response activity in particular has gained an increasing popularity in second language classrooms owing to a number of research findings that suggest a possible relationship between peer interactions and different aspects of second language learning (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; 2000; Ohta, 1995; 2000; Storch, 2001; 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Swain et al., 2002).

Using Conversation Analysis (CA), I will present analyses of peer response activity in one ESL classroom. The analyses focus specifically on participants' roles in the interactions and how these roles emerge in the interactions. I will also discuss how participants' roles might affect the nature of their interactions. I will first review existing research studies relating to different aspects of peer interactions in collaborative classroom activities. I will then present analytic tools provided by CA and discuss how these tools might be useful in examining participants' interactions in peer response activity.

Peer Interactions in ESL Classrooms

One of the determining factors for the effectiveness of collaborative learning activities is the way in which students interact with one another while completing a task. Researchers have examined how students interacted with one another and described the nature of interactions and the conditions under which this type of classroom activities would likely yield positive results. In peer response activity in which students provide comments on one another's writings, students

who are assigned a role of a reader or a reviewer of peers' essays normally play a significant role which affects the success of the activity. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) described various scaffolding behaviors on the reader's part that required a high degree of sensitivity to cognitive and affective needs of the author. The researchers concluded that effective readers had to be able to adjust their level of control over the task. In other words, the readers had to encourage the author to clarify or elaborate on certain ideas that were not presented clearly. At the same time, the readers had to know when to stop pursuing responses from the author especially when the author felt uneasy or overwhelmed. Along the same line, Lockhart and Ng (1995) focused on readers' stances that influenced what they perceived to be the purpose of the task. Readers' stances were found to affect the types of comments they provided and how they delivered those comments. Lockhart and Ng identified four readers' stances including "authoritative," "interpretive," "probing," and "collaborative." The authoritative and interpretive readers tended to perceive the purpose of peer response sessions as evaluations of the writers' texts, and as such, were likely to dominate the conversations. On the contrary, probing and collaborative readers viewed peer response sessions as an opportunity to discover meanings within the writers' texts or to work with the writers in order to build on ideas presented in the texts. These readers' attitudes towards the task resulted in differing opportunities for the authors to express their ideas, or to respond to the readers' feedback.

Researchers also suggested that the writer played an equally important part in peer feedback activity. The writer who displayed a positive attitude towards the task and was open to suggestions from the reader would generally encourage constructive feedback from the reader (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Lockhart & Ng, 1995). In other words, the reader and the author

could work together successfully when they respected each other's opinions and acknowledged the role that each of them played in the editing task.

In order to determine how well the reader and the author worked together, Storch (2001; 2002) examined the behaviors that ESL students exhibited in different collaborative language learning tasks. She identified three main features of students' talk that were indicative of the degree of collaboration including linguistic features, text construction behaviors, and metalinguistic discussion about grammar and word choices. Using these features, she further identified four patterns of interactions. The collaborative pattern and the expert/novice pattern were found to be more effective in creating opportunities for learners to scaffold each other's performance than the dominant/dominant or the dominant/passive patterns. In the collaborative pattern, students alternated their role as an expert or a novice based on the expertise or resources that each of them held and on who could most effectively resolve the problems at hand. In the expert/novice pattern, the student who assumed an expert role would take a lead but would still actively encourage her/his partner to participate in the task. In the collaborative pattern and the dominant/dominant pattern, both students had equal control over the direction of a task. However, the dominant/dominant pattern was less conducive to collaborative interactions as students would usually be unwilling or unable to consider each other's contributions, leading to disagreement and a lack of consensus between them. The dominant/passive pattern was the least productive for language learning due to an excessive control from the dominant member and a low degree of involvement and contributions from the more passive member.

Another line of research focused on identifying the role of relationships that were created by the reader and the author in their interactions and examining how these roles might have affected students' perceptions of one another and their views on the usefulness of peer feedback

activities. Researchers examined these roles as they emerged in students' interactions and retroactively in an interview where students reflected on their experience working with peers. Research findings suggested both positive and negative impacts of these roles on opportunities for second language learning and on students' perceptions of themselves and of others. Students' perceptions of peers' behaviors in peer response activity partially determined students' acceptance of peer suggestions (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Nelson & Murphy, 1993). Students' perceptions of their partner's language proficiency could create either a symmetrical or an asymmetrical relationship (Amores, 1997). These two types of relationships differed in terms of the level of control that one student exerted over another. An asymmetrical relationship resembling that of a teacher and a student was created when one student allowed the other who was perceived as a "better" student to take control over the discussion. While this type of relationship could serve to reaffirm one student's status as a good student, it could possibly make the other feel frustrated and incompetent. Nelson and Murphy (1992) reported a similar finding regarding students' self perceptions but emphasized that these perceptions did not necessarily coincide with their actual language proficiency. According to Amores, in a symmetrical relationship, both students would maintain an equal status and neither of them would assume the role of an expert or a teacher. They were shown to use a variety of politeness strategies in order to avoid giving each other direct negative feedback.

Nelson and Carson (1995) related students' patterns of interactions to their cultural backgrounds. The researchers concluded that students' cultural background, especially what they perceived to be the purpose of peer response groups, strongly influenced their behaviors in the group. In particular, the Chinese students tended to behave in ways that they believed would maintain group harmony; thus, they often avoided initiating negative comments or criticizing

their peers' essays. They sometimes completely avoided initiating any comments if they believed that their comments might be invalid or ineffectual. When responding to comments from peers, the Chinese students also avoided disagreeing with peers for the sake of preserving group harmony.

Conversation Analysis and Peer Response Activity

In analyzing learners' interactions, some researchers typically employed a componential analysis of the talk to identify contents, salient themes, recurring patterns or certain characteristics of the talk. The unit of analysis normally included only the utterances but not other prosodic (e.g. stress, intonation pattern, volume) and paralinguistic (e.g. gaps, pauses) features. Furthermore, the unit of analysis usually consisted of isolated sentences or independent clauses produced by each speaker. Other non-verbal features of talk that would help explain how stances or role relationships between the students evolve in each turn of talk were sometimes excluded from this kind of analysis. These contextualization cues which operated at various levels of speech production played an important role in identifying how semantic content was to be understood (Gumperz, 1992). Although researchers sometimes made references to these features in their analyses, they generally did not include prosodic, paralinguistic and other non-verbal features in the transcripts. In this kind of analysis, readers lacked information on how these features contributed to the emergence of participants' roles in the interactions.

CA allows for an analysis of a sequential organization of talk which describes how people take turns in their conversation, negotiate overlaps and interruptions, and deal with various kinds of failure in interactions (Heritage, 1997). In their landmark essay, the three major CA scholars, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, described various characteristics of turn-taking organization which were fundamental to naturally occurring

conversations (Sacks et al., 1974). Among some of these fundamental features was the turn-constructional component which described the various unit-types that the speaker employed to construct a turn. A single turn could consist of a single word or larger units such as a phrase, a clause or a sentence. A possible completion of each turn was marked as a transition-relevance place where a transfer from the current speaker to the next would take place. At this point, the current speaker could select the next speaker or, the next speaker could self-select herself/himself. These two types of turn allocation facilitated the one-speaker-at-a-time feature; however, occurrences of more than one speaker at a time were quite common.

The empirical method of CA revealed the social assumptions underlying the verbal communication by focusing on actors' use of speech to interact, i.e., to create and maintain social meanings (Gumperz & Herasimchuk, 1975). The ways that speakers designed their turns of talk often indexed the positions they took, the attitude towards the subject matter under discussion and towards other speakers, and also their orientation to social relations. Turn designs included speakers' decisions of lexical choices and the manner in which their speech is delivered. The same sentences could be interpreted differently depending on factors such as where in the sentences the speakers chose to stress or gestures that accompanied the speech. Speakers could also design their turns in ways that evoked, suggested or imposed certain expectations on other participants (Duranti, 1997). At the same time, the recipient might choose to go along with the flow of talk or resist what had been imposed upon her or him.

CA as developed by Harvey Sacks and his collaborators and students can be described as pure science that aims at providing organization of talk-in-interaction without its relationship to the setting (ten Have, 1999). The main focus of early CA work was ordinary conversations. However, CA concepts and methods have increasingly been used to analyze talk in institutional

settings such as courtrooms, medical consultations, interviews and classrooms (Hester & Francis, 2002). This latter strand of CA focuses on illustrating how institutional realities are evoked in an interaction (Heritage, 1997). This approach focuses on "the possibility of showing how conversational resources themselves may be deployed within a wider interactional context that may have consequences for both the distribution and deployment of those resources" (Hutchby, 1999, p. 89). This type of CA work also entails an application of CA findings in recommending how people or organizations may handle certain communicative problems so that they may facilitate smooth and effective practice in the future (ten Have, 2001). Such an application of CA findings has been realized in some classroom-based research studies that examine interactions among L2 learners.

Carroll (2000) examined the turn taking organization of interactions between Japanese learners of English and reported that these L2 learners were capable of precisely timing their entry into talk and appeared to orient to the same level of conversational details as the so called "native speakers" (p. 99). Along the same line, Mori (2002) employed the concept of the sequential development of talk-in-interaction to analyze a small group activity in a Japanese Language classroom. The analysis revealed that students' interaction with native speakers of Japanese deviated from characteristics of a natural and coherent discussion expected for the task. Mori suggested that teachers could potentially facilitate a natural and coherent interaction by raising students' awareness of the contingent nature of talk by explicitly teaching students the procedures they could follow to accomplish certain social actions as well as the ability to adjust their plan of actions.

In the following section, I will present several excerpts from the participants' peer feedback sessions. I will then discuss participants' roles that emerged in the course of the interactions and how their roles impact group dynamics.

Participants' Roles in Peer Response Activity

The following excerpts were taken from three different peer feedback sessions to illustrate the roles that the participants took when engaging in the task of editing peers' essays and how these roles emerged in the interactions. Each peer feedback group consisted of three members. At the beginning of a peer feedback session, group members exchanged their writing assignments so that each member of the group was primarily responsible for providing feedback for another member in the group. The participants normally decided among themselves whose essay each of them would critique. The instructor provided the peer feedback sheets which contained guiding questions for giving feedback on different aspects of the essay (see Appendix K), and the participants were asked to write down their comments on peer feedback sheets. After each member had read and written their comments on their peer's essay, each of them took turns discussing their comments with the author. The third group member who was not the author of the essay participated in the discussion as well, although to a different degree.

The analyses focused on how roles that the participants took while engaging in peer feedback sessions affected the way that they responded to certain problems in their interactions. Such problems included disagreement regarding how certain ideas were to be presented in the essays or how the essays were to be revised. In addition, there were also problems in communicating their ideas and understanding one another.

Excerpt 1 was taken from a peer feedback session of Miki, Lua and Eva. This writing assignment required that students write a paragraph about their first impression of the university

that they were then attending. They had just finished giving feedback on Lua's paragraph and

were about to start discussing Eva's paragraph (see Appendix F). Miki had read a paragraph

written by Eva and had a few comments about the way Eva presented her ideas. At the beginning

of the following sequence Lua gazed at Miki signaling that it was Miki's turn to give feedback

on Eva's paragraph. Later in the excerpt, Miki had trouble explaining her comments to Eva.

Recognizing communication breakdowns between the two participants, Lua tried to help Miki

explain her comments to Eva.

Excerpt 1: Peer Feedback Session 1: Lua, Miki and Eva

```
1     L:      (looks at Miki)
2     M:      Oh (.) um you (.) you have a controlling i (.) controlling idea in this
3             paragraph but there's no topic sentence.
4     E:      No (.) No
5     M:      Yeah. But [I   ]
6     L:                [No ] what (.) Topic [sentence?
7     M:                                     [Topic sentence. There's no topic
8             sentence but I but I (.) I think you have um said you write (.) about your
9             feeling?=
10    E:      =Yeah=
11    M:      = I (.) I (.) I (.) can understand what you you think (.) um about (*name of
12            the University*) from before you come to here now (.) um (.) you change
13            (.)your feeling is changing right? (.) u::h before you
14            came here (.) to (1.0) hh now
15    E:      (looks at Lua)
16    L:      if if if
17    M:      [hehehe]
18    E:      [hehehe]
19    L:      If her feeling=
20    M:      =yeah=
21    L:      =had changed?=
22    M:      =Yeah yeah a little (.) different. You have um fear (.) to. Right? Huh?
23    E:      huh? (looks at Lua) what (.) what (.) I (.) I don't unders[tand
24    M:                                                               [hehehe=
25    L:      =She's asking you if if if you now (.) y:ou (.)you think different you
26    M:      =[yeah]
27    L:       [this ] this is the idea. If (.) you have changed (.)you have changed your (.) your
28            impressions.
29    E:      u:m (.) yeah changed my idea [of   ]
30    L:                                   [Your] first impression
```

```
31      E:      u::::m (1.0) No (.)  I don't think so I [I    ]
32      L:                                       [you] stick with the same idea
33      E:      Yeah. I think so. I have done the same as you u:m I look in the Internet and=
34      L:      =You you did the same
35      E:      So I had (.) um (.) a picture in my mind
```

From lines 2-14, Miki tried to explain to Eva why she thought that Eva's paragraph did not have a topic sentence. Miki stated that she understood what Eva meant in the paragraph but still wanted to know whether Eva's impression of the university was different than what it was before she came to the U.S. On line 13, Miki asked "your feeling is changing right?" but Eva did not answer the question right away. Instead, Eva looked at Lua, possibly seeking help. Lua attempted to paraphrase what Miki had said earlier, and on line 22, Miki confirmed Lua's interpretation and continued asking Eva for clarification of meanings. This time, however, Eva explicitly stated that she still did not understand the question. Note that Eva actually looked at Lua instead of Miki when she stated that she did not understand Miki's question. Her gesture seemed to suggest once again that she was seeking help from Lua. On lines 25-28, Lua paraphrased Miki's question.

We can see that Lua played an important role as a negotiator of meaning between Miki and Eva. Her attentiveness to both verbal and nonverbal interactions enabled Lua to pick up Eva's signal seeking help. This allowed the group to move on to the next part of the task. Later in this peer feedback session, Lua played the same role again.

With Lua's help in clarifying the meaning of Miki's question, Eva eventually responded to the questions by stating that her idea of the university did not change once she arrived in the U.S. Miki then made another comment about the last sentence in Eva's paragraph which she wrote, "It's still hard that I can't express myself as I want to and understand everything, but I think it will be much easier when I learn the English better." Miki did not agree with Eva's use

of the word "when" in the clause "But I think it will be much easier when I learn the English

better" and tried to explain why she thought that the word "after" would have been more

appropriate in this context.

Excerpt 2: Peer Feedback Session 1: Lua, Miki and Eva

```
36      M:      U::m But °no° I don't (.) I don't I don't want to say (.) such things u::h
37              you have some
(3.0)
38      M:      u:h hehe just a moment hehe
(2.0)
39      M:      um I can understand what you're thinking (.) and you you you write about your
40              feeling?
41      E:      Yeah=
42      M:      =XXX and the (1.0) order i::s logical I think because it's (.) um time time order.
43              It 's about the time order (.) so I can understand that.
(4.0)
44      M:      But I don't (.) I don't (.) I didn't understand the last sentence hehe
45      E:      U:m
46      M:      What do you (.) mean
47      E:      yeah um I'm just saying that um (.)I think it's hard to be here because (1.0)
48              um for the first week because=
49      M:      =Um hm
50      E:      I (.) don't understand everything (.) and I can't expre:ss (.) myself  at ↑all
51              but I think when I learn English better then then  [it will be easier   ]
52      L:                                                         [It will be °easier°]
53      M:      A:::h
54      E:      You know to express yourself (.) to speak [and     ]
55      M:                                                [↑Really] I think it is better
56              that you use (.) that you should use "after" (.) not "when"
```

Miki struggled to get her ideas across as she paused in the middle of the turn between

lines 37 and 38 and hesitated slightly before she resumed. On line 38, she uttered "just a

moment" and then paused briefly again before she continued explaining her comments to Eva.

Although Lua was not as much of a negotiator of meaning as she was in Excerpt 1, it was

obvious that she paid attention to what was going on between Eva and Miki. This was evident on

line 52 where her turn overlapped with Eva's turn on line 51. In addition, her utterances were

exactly the same as those of Eva's, referring to the same part in Eva's essay. Miki disagreed with

both Eva and Lua and suggested that Eva use the word "after" instead of "when." Her

suggestion led to a series of turns as shown in the following excerpt in which Miki tried to

explain to both Eva and Lua why "after" rather than "when" would be a better choice of word in

this context. Lua played a more active role as a negotiator of meaning in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 3: Peer Feedback Session 1: Lua, Miki and Eva

```
54      E:      You know (.) to express yourself (.) to speak [and     ]
55      M:                                              [↑Really] I think it is better
56              that you use (.) that you should use "after"(.) not "when"
57      E:      What?
58      M:      You use "when"?
59      E:      U::h (1.0) [°yeah°
60      M:                 [You didn't (.) learn (.) English at heh heh huh
61              (touches her forehead and puts her face in her hands) heh heh heh hhh
                (Lua pats Miki on the shoulder)
(3.0)
62      E:      [Um (points at her paragraph)
63      M:      [You just (.)you (.)you (.) you (.) you mean you just start learn the
64              English and you don't XXX heh heh
65      E:      Yeah (.) okay
66      M:      And I (.)I want to say
67      E:      I wanna learn learn the English better
68      M:      Uh huh
69      E:      Then I think it will be easier=
70      M:      =It sounds like you don't you don't learn English better now
71      E:      What?
72      M:      You (.) you now (.) do you learn English better?
73      E:      Um (.) no [hehehe]
74      M:                [hehehe]
75      L:      But XX You do (.) you do
76      M:      Yeah
77      L:      It will be so much easier.
78      E:      Yeah
79      L:      She's saying that in the future=
80      E :     =May (.) maybe after a few weeks
81      L:      when I learn
82      E:      And
```

Once again, Miki and Eva had trouble communicating with each other. Eva's response

"what?" on line 57 was a repair initiation that functioned as a request for clarification. The

question led to a repair in a form of a question "You use "when"?" on line 58. Eva paused briefly before uttering "yeah" in almost a whispering manner. Miki took Eva's response to her question as a clarification request rather than an answer to her question as she continued with an attempt to explain her comments. Miki's gestures suggested that she was struggling to communicate her ideas; she laughed nervously and put her face in her hands. Lua appeared to be sympathetic to Miki's struggle when she patted Miki on the shoulder. There was a long pause before Miki continued with several unsuccessful attempts to explain her ideas. Lua allowed both Miki and Eva to try to resolve their problem first and did not intervene until line 75 where she objected to Eva's answer to Miki's question. The timing of her objection showed that she closely monitored the interactions between Eva and Miki although she did not participate in their interactions verbally. Lua intervened at the point where it was clear that Eva misunderstood Miki's question. She then helped Eva explain to Miki why it was appropriate to use "when" in the phrase "when I learn the English better." This attempt continued in the following excerpt in which both Eva and Lua tried to convince Miki that the word "when" was used correctly in Eva's essay.

Excerpt 4: Peer Feedback Session1: Lua, Miki and Eva

```
83    L:    You're (.) you're questioning the expression here (points at the essay)
84    M:    Yes yes yes
85    L:    I know what the question is but this is a form (.) of of this this I I learn this
86          that. This is a form for saying that once you (1.0) you change something
87          (. ) you will=
88    E:    =Yeah=
89    L:    =do or feel or something else
90    E:    Yeah
91    L:    But even (.) even though the expression. I think it's not like (.) she learn
92          she learn she learns now or she's learning now. It's that. I think that it's the
93          the how the sentences are connected. A rule, grammatical rule
94    M:    A::h
95    E:    Yeah
96    L:    [This is the way I learn]
97    E:    [Ma may may         ] yeah
```

98	L:	I think I will (.) I will write it down in the same way
99	E:	Maybe it's not grammatical correct (.) you know but do you [do you]
100	M:	[It sounds]
101		like strange for me=
102	E:	=Do you understand?
103	M:	Uh I understand what you want to say but
104	E:	Yeah
105	M:	but it sounds like strange for me because you it (.)I saw this sentence
106		(.)You don't learn English better now (.) at all
107	L:	[you you]
108	M:	[you you] will start learn English later
109	L:	so [in the future]
110	M:	[in the future] hehehe
111	L:	Yeah (.) But this is a form to say this
112	E:	Yeah [hehehe]
113	M:	[hehehe]
114	L:	This is a grammatical form.
115	M:	A::h
116	L:	I 'm not hundred percent sure but I think (looks at the instructor)
117	I:	XXXX
118	L:	I think (1.0) You can you can put also "as soon as"
119	E:	Yeah (.) Yeah
120	L:	And this case you can use both in the future
121	E:	Maybe it's not grammatical correct [I don't know]
122	L:	[No, I think] I think [it's correct
123	M:	[I'm sorry
124	E:	Okay.

At the beginning of excerpt 4, Lua asked if Miki's comments were related to the grammatical aspect of the sentence, and Miki answered "yes" three times in a row. The manner in which Miki answered Lua's question seemed to indicate that Lua had asked the "right" question, possibly something that Miki herself was not able to communicate earlier in this peer feedback session. It was possible to infer that the problem that Miki and Eva had encountered early on was caused by their different views on the use of the word "when" in the sentence in question. In other words, Miki's comment was based on the grammatical aspect of the sentence, while Eva took Miki's comment to be about the content or the meaning of the sentence. This interpretation was plausible as illustrated in the transcript where Eva tried to explain the meaning

of the sentence in question several times but did not refer to any grammatical rule in her explanation. Lua played an important role in mediating between Eva and Miki. She pointed out that Eva's sentence was grammatically correct and that she would have written the sentence the same way as Eva had done. She also suggested "as soon as" as another alternative. Notice that Miki appeared to be more receptive to Lua's comments than those of Eva. At the beginning of the excerpt, Miki responded to Lua's turn with multiple yes's, then on lines 94 and 115, she uttered "a::h" in response to Lua's explanations. The way she uttered "a::h" seemed to indicate that she understood and agreed with Lua's comments. However, when Eva incorporated parts of Lua's comments in her turn on lines 99 and then asked if Miki understood the sentence even though it might not have been grammatically correct, Miki responded by saying that she thought the sentence sounded strange to her. This suggested that she disagreed with Eva's idea although she had already agreed with the similar idea from Lua on line 94 after Lua explained to her why the sentence was grammatically correct. Miki appeared to be less receptive of Eva's ideas, and this might have been why Lua became more engaged in this part of their peer feedback session than she was early on in the session. Lua's participation in this excerpt was significant as she was able to convince Miki to accept the way the sentence was originally written by Eva, and this enabled the group to come to the same conclusion and complete the task.

We have observed the role of the participant who was highly active in the peer feedback session. Although Lua was not the one who was directly responsible for critiquing the paragraph, her participation was crucial to the success of this peer feedback session as she constantly negotiated meanings and helped resolve misunderstandings between the other two participants. The interactions might have broken down completely if Lua had not paid close attention to the verbal and non-verbal signs that seemed to signal confusion or problems between the other two

group members. What we learn from these examples is the significant role of the "third" person in the peer feedback session. Although this third person did not directly benefit from peer comments, she was willing to collaborate and contribute to the discussion. Her contribution enabled the group to complete the task.

Let us look at another peer feedback session of Eva, Hanako and Sumi. The three participants were discussing the paragraph written by Eva, and the title of the paragraph was "What I Miss Most about My Native Country" (see Appendix G). Hanako was primarily responsible for providing feedback on the paragraph.

Excerpt 5: Peer Feedback Session 2: Eva, Hanako and Sumi

```
1       H:      I didn't find a lot of mistakes.
(8.0)   (Everyone looks at the text)
2       H:      Oh (.) here my family and friends you don't have=
3       E:       =No no (.) yeah=
4       H:      =to have the colon
5       E:      =Yeah [yeah]
6       H:            [You] just [XXX
7       E:                      [Yeah (.) yeah
(3.0)
8       S:      Ah (.) here (.) I find one (1.0) you have to have the "the" here.
9       H:      Yeah (.) the most
10      E:      Yeah yeah
11      H:      The most because XX (.) um (.) you want to say we are like very close
12              friends or just friends (.) because your family=
13      E:      =Yeah=
14      H:      =Your mother are your family so you are never be (.) friends so I think
15              you need here (.) we are (.) we are (.) [like or
16      S:                                             [um (.) wouldn't it be better for her
17              (.) to say 'we used (1.0) to be like um best friends"
18      H:      And not anymore? heh [heh heh heh
19      S:                          [No (.) I mean like you can't be there anymore
20      H:      Uh huh=
21      S:      =Or or you can say (1.0) we are like the closest friend
22      H:      hehe
23      E:      Yeah u:m
24      H:      What do you prefer? We are (.) [like   ] close friend
25      S:                                    [Yeah ] which one (.) so
```

```
26     E:      Okay [okay
27     S:           ['Cause you're not really a friend with her. You're like the friend (.)
28             [so
29     E:      [Yeah (.) yeah
```

Hanako started off with a statement which could be taken as a compliment for Eva before

she proceeded with her first comment on the use of a punctuation mark in the first sentence of

the paragraph (I miss my home in Iceland a lot, especially my family and friends, who I think

about every day). Here, the compliment was strategically used to preface a negative comment.

The way that Eva responded to Hanako's comments indicated that she was very receptive of the

comments as she did not let Hanako finish her turn but interrupted on line 3 to show that she

agreed with the comments. The next comment came from Sumi whose choice of word and

timing of her turn suggested that she was being collaborative. Notice that there was a three-

second pause before Sumi's turn on line 8. The pause marked the transition-relevance place

where a transfer of speakership could take place (Sacks et al., 1974). Sumi selected herself as the

next speaker after the pause that indicated that the previous speaker had finished talking. She

prefaced her comments with the phrase "I find one." The use of the word "find" echoed

Hanako's turn at the beginning of this sequence where she said "I didn't find a lot of mistakes."

The way that this talk unfolded created a sense of collaboration where all members of the group

worked together to complete the task. It seemed as though Sumi pointed out something that

Hanako had missed in her comments. Sumi did the same thing on lines 16 and 21 where she

provided more alternatives for Eva.

Excerpt 6: Peer Feedback Session 2: Eva, Hanako and Sumi

```
30     H:      Does she need (.) "the"? (refers to the part in the text "and I miss a lot of
31             some Icelandic food, especially the fish)
32     S:      I don't know I can't really tell like what can
33             she heh [heh
34     H:           [heh [heh
```

35	E:	[No no I didn't know (.) so
36	H:	hehe I didn't XX hehe so just circle (circles parts of the text)
37	E:	Okay

In this excerpt, Hanako referred to the sentence in Eva's paragraph "..and I miss a lot of some Icelandic food, especially the fish," and questioned if the article "the" was used correctly in this sentence. Given the pronoun "she" used in her question, it was clear that the question was addressed to Sumi. This questioning technique illustrated that Hanako attempted to engage Sumi in the task. Although they did not come up with the answer or the solution to the problem, Hanako exhibited an important characteristic of a group member when she showed that she was open to an opinion from another group member who was not primarily responsible for giving comments. Again, this might have helped created the sense of collaboration among the group members.

Excerpt 7 below illustrated different ways in which Hanako engaged the other two group members in the talk. The focus of the talk was the sentence "I miss that also, to express myself, as I want to and to hang out with my friends in the evenings."

Excerpt 7: Peer Feedback Session 2: Eva, Hanako and Sumi

74	H:	How how can (.) can I correct this sentence? I miss
(2.0)		
75	H:	"that" is XXX=
75	E:	Miss XXXXX
76	S:	I don't (.) get that. I don't I don't know why this is here in the first place.
(2.0)		
77	H:	U::m
78	S:	I don't think you need to say that at all.
79	H:	U::m
……..		
108	C:	Um, what are we gonna do wi:th "as I want to hang out with my friends in
109		the evening". How can we connect the sentence.
110	E:	"I miss expressing my feelings to other people". Yeah (.) okay. And I can
112		say and "to hang out with my friends in the evening"
113	S:	And <u>I want to</u> should be here.
(2.0)		

```
114    S:      Yeah so
(2.0)
115    S:      "expressing myself and I want to hang out with my friend in the evening"
116    E:      Can I not have just um XXX 'cause there's some connection in this
```

Notice the way in which Hanako phrased her questions on lines 74 and 108. Her question

online 74 could be interpreted as a request for help from other group members. Instead of having

to point out what was wrong with this sentence by herself, she was able to illicit responses and

opinions from both Eva and Sumi. Her next question on line 108 took a slightly different stance.

Using the pronoun *we*, she treated the problem as something that all the group members could

solve together.

We have observed how Hanako, who was primarily responsible for providing feedback

for Eva's paragraph, managed to engage Sumi and Eva herself in the editing task. In the

following section, we will take a look at Sumi's role in this peer feedback session.

Excerpt 8: Peer Feedback Session 2: Eva, Hanako and Sumi

```
38     H:      "I miss my bed also a lot" "I have queen [size
39     S:                                          [But um "also" will be here
40             I also mis:::s my [bed a lot
(Sumi draws an arrow on the text showing the correct word order in the sentence)
41     E:                       [Yeah yeah yeah (1.0) yeah`
```

At the beginning of this excerpt, Hanako was reading one of the sentences in Eva's

paragraph when Sumi interrupted on line 39 to point out the problem with a word order in Eva's

sentence. It is plausible that the overlap took place because Hanako did not identify word order

as a problem. Sumi corrected the sentence out loud and drew an arrow in the text to show Eva

the correct word order. Eva accepted the comments in the middle of Sumi's turn on line 40. The

overlap showed that Eva was receptive of the comments since she responded with multiple

yeah's in her turn. As for Sumi, she again showed her commitment as a collaborative group

member. What she did in this excerpt was similar to what happened at the beginning of excerpt 5

in that Sumi picked up on what Hanako had not identified as a problem or a mistake in Eva's

paragraph. In the excerpt that follows, Sumi initiated comments that led to a series of turns

involving a negotiation of meanings among the three participants.

Excerpt 9: Peer Feedback Session 2: Eva, Hanako and Sumi

80	S:	XXX So is "that" mean that you're missing the ↑bed (.) o::r=
81	E:	=No no
82	H:	You miss
83	E:	I (.) I miss (.) I miss um (.) to express myself and=
84	H:	=Ah okay. You used to express yourself [in]your country
85	E:	[Yeah]
86	S:	A::h=
87	H:	=Your [country] but here
88	E:	[yeah yeah]
89	S:	Why don't you say (.) 'I mi::ssed myself (.) expressing my feelings to
90		other people
91	E:	Oh (1.0) I miss (.) hehehe
92	S:	So (1.0) I miss (.) [myself
93	H:	[expressing myself
94	S:	I miss myself expressing my feelings to (1.0) other people
95	E:	↑N:: o I don't think that's correct. I miss [myself]
96	H:	[I miss] (.) I miss expressing
97		myself? (looks at E)
98	E:	Yeah Yeah
99	H:	Expressing myself
100	E:	XXXX
101	S:	But you don't just express <u>your</u>self. You're expressing your feelings
102	E:	Yeah
103	S:	So you can't say you're expressing yourself. You have to say the feeling.
104	E:	Yeah okay
105	S:	I miss myself expressing (.) myself to other people
106	E:	Can I not say I miss (.) I miss expressing my feeling=
107	S:	=to other people↑ Yeah (.) that works too

Sumi played a very active part in the excerpt above as she initiated comments regarding

the word "that" in the sentence, "I miss that also, to express myself, as I want to and to hang out

with my friends in the evenings." Sumi asked Eva if the word "that" referred to the bed which

Eva had discussed in the preceding sentence (I miss my bed also a lot, but I have a queen size

bed in Iceland and I love to lie there and watch TV). Sumi's question prompted Eva to clarify the

meaning of this sentence; this enabled both Sumi and Hanako to help Eva revise this sentence. On line 89, Sumi suggested a different way to convey Eva's idea. The suggestion was first met with disagreement from Eva; however, the three participants engaged in a series of turns where they negotiated a solution to this problem and were able to finally reach the consensus regarding how this sentence could be revised.

This peer feedback involved active participation from all members of the group. Sumi who was considered the third person in this interaction played an important role in helping Hanako point out parts of the paragraph that needed revisions. Her engagement could be observed at the very beginning of this sequence and remained at the same level throughout the discussion. Sumi's role as the "third person" was slightly different than that of Lua in the first example shown above. For the most part, Lua tended to play a role of a mediator between the other two participants in the group who had difficulty communicating with each other. As a result, what she mostly did was ask for clarification from Miki and paraphrased certain utterances for Eva. Sumi did not have to play a role of a mediator since the other two participants did not have a problem understanding each other. This enabled her to take part in critiquing Eva's paragraph and be an almost equally active participant as Hanako, who was primarily responsible for giving feedback on Eva's paragraph. Although the third person's roles in these two examples seemed to vary depending on the problem that the groups were facing, what they had in common was that their roles in the interactions enabled the group to function effectively and to complete the task at hand.

Let us look at different roles that the participants play and how they impact the dynamic of a peer feedback session. In the excerpt that follows, the participants, Lua, Sumi and Raul were discussing Sumi's essay entitled "The Differences of Raising Children in U.S. and South Korea"

(see Appendix H). The focus of this session was to give feedback on the content and

organizational aspects of the essay, and the instructor specifically asked the participants not to

pay attention to grammar errors.

The following sequence began with Sumi's request for the group to share their feedback

on her essay. The interactions lasted for approximately 8 minutes and consisted mainly of the

interchange of ideas between Lua and Sumi. Raul participated minimally at the beginning and

again at the very end of the session. The transcript was formatted in a way that showed the verbal

interactions in the left-hand column. The right hand-column contained descriptions of Raul's

actions while he was not participating in the discussion verbally.

Excerpt 10: Peer Feedback Session 3: Lua, Raul and Sumi

1.	S:	Can (.) can we work on mine (.) 'cause I have to	
2.		leave pretty soon (looks at her watch)	
3.	L:	[What	
4.	R:	[Yours?	
5.	S:	Yeah	
6.	L:	Okay	
7.	R:	Okay	
8.	L:	I think the topic is well presented and the rest of	
9.		your context for the comparison the comparison	
10.		(1.0) (To R) did you (.) have the XXX for her?	
11.	R:	XXXX Nah no	R: looks at the piece of
12.	L:	I think it's well presented because (2.0) here you put	paper in front of
13.		the context that you are you are an immigrant from	him
14.		South ↑Korea and that you you saw you see	
15.		difference (.)↑differences And you point out that	
16.		the most the most important differences for you is	
17.		(.) how children grow (.) grow ↑up And that's what	
18.		(.) that you develop develop. So (1.0) it is well	
19.		presented. an::d and I think that the comparison	
20.		contrast is ↑ clear and yo::ur your method is	
21.		a point by ↑ point (1.0) An::d well the only thing that	
22.		I found was that XX	R: continues looking at
			the piece of paper in
		(The instructor comes to ask whether she accidentally left another	front of him
		student's essay with the participants)	

23. L: Um the only thing that I would like (.) is (.) to see in
24.   in the introduction. I think it could be better (.) to
25.   point out more (.) more ↑clear (.) what you will
26.   talk about at the same time
27. S: That's my thesis statement right there. The many,
28.   how the parents teach. That's that's my education
29.   was the first paragraph. That's my second and that's
30.   my third paragraph=
31. L: =Yeah and <u>then</u> pointed out the difference in
32.   element that you (2.0) you XXX (.)
33.   It's the the [same.
34. S: [Would it be (.) [that'll be in the
35. L: [For example
36. S: conclusion though 'cause I'll fully explain what the
37.   differences in the paragraph and at the en:d I can
38.   like (.) you know sum it up what the difference like
39.   the elements were=
40. L: =Yeah yeah yeah. No I I I think (.) that's why I I told
41.   ↓you (.) for this is correct (.) as it is (1.0) If (.) the
42.   only thing that I (.) I (.) can advise

43.   or say [XX   R: folds his arms and
44. S: [°Okay° °okay°   put them on the
45. L: Maybe (.) maybe you could or (.) or not I mean   desk. Continues
46.   as you want but u:m point out the specific u:m point reading what was on
47.   that you will develop because (.) the the way of   the piece of paper in
48.   raising a child (.) is a <u>lot</u> of points.   front of him.
49. S: (nods)   R: unfolds his arms and
    L: You know what I mean?   sits back in his chair
50. S: Uh hm   R: looks at S
51. L: You can talk (.) for hours about different aspects
52.   psychological I mean difference. You chose (1.0)   R: looks around briefly
53.   three (.) main topics that are very important. Maybe and then looks at the
54.   you you could (.) might do that (.) here. Like (.) for piece of paper in
55.   example (.) ↑education (.) the the participation of   front of him
56.   the ↑parents, an::d the level the freedom given for I
57.   don't ↓know but I think it's (.) it's still be correct (.)
58.   as it is.
(2.0)
59. S: (looks at her watch)
60. L: And maybe the ↑order (.) because you put for first
61.   ↑education then grow ↑up ↑parents then   R: looks briefly at L
62.   XXX I think it's ↑good (1.0) The controlling idea   and then continues
63.   idea is clear ↑enough   looking at the piece
(2.0)   of paper in front of
64. L: [Maybe this para↑graph (points at the essay)   him
        (S zips her pencil case close and looks at her watch)

65. R: [°It's okay°
66. L: This paragraph (.) I will put (.) I don't know some
67.   some some XXX
(2.0)
68. S: You will put some huh?   R: looks briefly at S
69. L: No (.) I will put some XXX and different order in   and then at L, folds
70.   the sentence XX.   his arms, puts them
(3.0)   on the desk and
71. S: I can XX[X   continues looking at
72. L: [Because. Ye::ah, I don't know. The   the piece of paper in
73.   education (.) because you talk XXX the education   front of him
74.   system is different. Then you talk about parents.
75.   (.) how parents (.) [U:m
76. S: ['Cause that's that's when the
77.   child like children were [young
78. L: [what what about these   R: looks briefly at L
79.   ideas (.) first you talk about the education system,
80.   and the parents, and then you (.) you come back to   R: looks briefly at S
81.   the America (.) a:nd (1.0) the American school(.)   R: looks briefly at L
82.   You know?   and then continues
83. S: So I::I explain about how the Korean parents are   looking at the paper
84.   able to teach to give the education to the children R: looks at L
85.   and I compare I explain about the South Korea and
86.   America so that's comparison=
87. L: =Yeah yeah an:[:d um   R: looks at L and then
88. S: [But you would do it ↑differently (.)   at S
89.   like how differently
90. L: Yeah (.) °for example° (.) here the education   R: looks at L and then
91.   ↑system (.) has more to ↑do (.) with the American   at S
92.   school↓ You ↑know (.) so maybe (.) after that (.)
93.   you can put first this (.) American school blah blah
94.   blah blah blah (.) and then parents (.) because in this
95.   case, you put education system [that
96. S: [uh
97. L: Directly connect you with schools
98. S: That that makes sense too (.) but I explain from
99.   when they are young to when they grow up so that's
100.   when they are in the like not even in the elementary
101.   school (.) like (.) just th:e little education they get
102.   when they are really [young
103. L: [Yeah
104. S: And when they're like babies (.) and then they grow
105.   up and they go to school and that's how I
106.   explain by year by year (2.0) as as they get older
107. L: Okay but here here you you don't realize a lot (.)that
108.   you are talking [about °little children°   R: looks briefly at L

109.S: [okay (looks at her watch)
110.L: °You know what I mean° (.) °because I never (.) I
111.   didn't know that you were talking about little
112.   children°
113.S: Okay
114.L: About babies or about elementary school and here
115.   schools (2.0) This is not (2.0) I mean (.) °I I it's
116.   okay (.) but maybe the order (.) somehow°=
117.S: =Okay
118.L: And that's all=
119.R: =For me (.) this is very well (.) developed source (.)
120.   it's com (.) comparison (.) it's very (.) I I (.) I like
121.   it
122.S: I I (.)have to add some more things=
123.R: =For me (1.0)
124.S: Yeah
125.R: Good enough (1.0) very clear (.) very
126.   organized. It has some kind o:f (1.0) e::h sequence
127.   (.)↑time talking about each ↑stage an:d it's=
128.S: =Does anything like (.)confuses you?
129.   [Or
130.R: [Na::h (.) it's clear enough for me (.) you know
131.   e::h simple [mista::ke
132.S: [XX yeah
133.R: but but simple (.) it's typing o::r
134.S: Okay
135.R: A::nd. (.) but this is yeah th:e the (.) the idea
136.   is [totally controlled]
137.L: [very clear   ] yeah
138.R: Good ↑examples (.) good contrast
139.C: Yeah
140.R: Good sources (.) good good language source
141.S: Heh heh heh
142.C: Yeah I agree with that (.) totally. I think it's (.) I
143.   mean the only thing that that I tell you I told you (.)
144.   ju:st a little point (.) you know but I told you before
145.   all that
146.S: Okay

The transcript was divided into two columns in order to show each participant's level of

engagement in the task. People have different ways of showing their engagement in a

conversation. A level of engagement can be determined by a participant's verbal contributions to

the talk as well as non-verbal ones. Numbers of turns of talk, the length of each turn and its

content can give us an idea of the extent to which a person is engaged in a conversation. We are inclined to think that one is engaged in the ongoing conversation when he/she contributes ideas or responds to questions asked. Some people might choose to show their engagement through non-verbal signs such as a nod or an eye gaze.

As illustrated in the transcript, most of the verbal interactions occurred between Lua who was the primary reviewer and Sumi who was the author of the essay. Raul took a passive role in this peer feedback session as he rarely participated in the discussion. In addition, his gestures indicated a low level of engagement in the activity. He rarely made eye contact with the other two participants. He sometimes sat back on his chair instead of leaning forward toward the other two participants. He often kept his head down and appeared to be reading or looking at a piece of paper in front of him. Toward the end of the session when Lua said, "And that's all" (line 118), indicating that she had finished giving feedback for Sumi, Raul then provided brief positive comments on Sumi's essay.

The gestures and body language displayed in this peer response group seem to suggest a low level of collaboration among group members. When comparing the participants' body language to that of a more collaborative group, the difference was pronounced. In a collaborative group, the participants sat close to one another and often hunched over to look at the paragraph or the essay that they were discussing. Group members often made eye contact with one another as a way to seek help when there was a problem in the interactions and to engage other group members in the conversation. These characteristics were not present in the peer response session of Sumi, Lua and Raul.

A close look at the turn-taking organization and turn allocation in this peer feedback session revealed different group dynamics than what we have observed in other peer feedback

sessions discussed above. Sumi and Lua had different ideas about how to organize and present ideas in the essay and did not appear to reach a consensus at the end of the session. While they were exchanging their ideas, they interrupted each other quite frequently. By looking at the sequential organization of the talk, some of the overlaps indicated disagreement. For instance, on lines 33 to 35, Sumi interrupted Lua when she was suggesting a different way to organize one of the paragraphs. Sumi's turn on lines 34 and 36 indicated that she disagreed with Lua's suggestion. Lua did not give in easily as she tried to bid for a turn and her turn on line 35 overlapped with Sumi's on line 36. More incidents of disagreement were found between line 64 and 118 in which Lua and Sumi engaged in a lengthy discussion following the comment initiated by Lua on line 64. Sumi and Lua expressed their different opinions on the order in which the ideas should be presented in the second paragraph of the essay which focused on the differences in the education systems in South Korea and that in the U.S. Both Sumi and Lua first insisted on their ideas, but in the end after a series of turns Sumi seemed to give in when she interrupted Lua's turn on line 109 and said "okay." Although the utterance "okay" could have been literally taken as an agreement, its positioning and the accompanying gesture seemed to suggest that it was used to end the discussion rather than to actually agree with Lua's idea. Sumi interrupted Lua's turn and then looked at her watch. Looking back at the beginning of this sequence when Sumi asked that the group start discussing her essay as she had to leave the class early that day, such an interpretation became relevant.

Was there anything that Raul might have done to change the dynamics of this peer feedback session? His disengagement in the activity impacted the group dynamics in a number of ways. His minimal participation in the activity left the other two group members to do all the work of trying to resolve the conflict they had regarding the organization of the essay. Instead of

stating at the end of the session that he did not have any problem with the way Sumi organized her essay, he could have expressed such comments and possibly elaborated on them while Sumi and Lua were still discussing the essay. Doing so might have helped mediate the conflict of ideas and enabled the group to possibly achieve a consensus about the best way for Sumi to structure her essay.

The next relevant question would be whether there was something that the other group members might have done to engage Raul more in the conversation. The transcript illustrated that both Lua and Sumi did not do much during their talk to invite Raul to participate in the discussion. Lau and Sumi allocated a turn to Raul only two times throughout this peer feedback session. Lua addressed her questions directly to Raul on line 10 at the beginning of the sequence, while Sumi did so toward the end of the sequence on line 128. Besides these two occasions, Lua and Sumi rarely made eye contact with Raul. When considering Lua's role as the primary reviewer of the essay, it seemed that her role in the group was different than that of Hanako who acted more as a collaborator and was quite effective in engaging the other group members in the editing process.

Interview data helped provide valuable insights into potential causes of Raul's disengagement in the activity. When asked about his level of interest and satisfaction with peer feedback activity, Raul expressed that he did not find the activity helpful because he had no interest in the types of writing assignments and the topics about which he was asked to write. As a doctoral student, he was interested in writing research articles, getting his work published, writing a letter of application for a job and creating a resume. Obviously the class did not meet his expectations as it was designed primarily for undergraduate freshmen who usually did not have such needs. As a result, the class and the work it required might not have been his priority.

Raul also missed more class meetings than any other students in the class did because he had to attend several conferences and present his research. Considering all these factors, we could infer that his low investment in this course might have had an impact on the level of engagement in the peer feedback activity.

Raul also mentioned in the interview that he generally preferred feedback from the instructor, and this might have been another reason why he sometimes did not participate very actively in peer response activity. This participant's preference for teacher feedback might have related to the perceived credibility of the feedback. In other words, he might have valued feedback from the instructor more than peer feedback. This brought up another important issue regarding linguistic and cultural repertoire required in order to warrant one's comments as legitimate or convincing. The instructor obviously possessed the linguistic and cultural repertoire that gave credibility to her feedback. The students, however, did not always have what it took to convince their peers to take their comments or suggestions. Looking back at the peer feedback session of Eva, Miki and Lua, we can see that some comments seemed to be more legitimate than others. In excerpt 4 where the participants were debating whether Eva (the author of the essay) should use the word "when" or "after," Miki mentioned that the use of the word "when" made the sentence sounded strange to her. Her actual comments "It sounds like strange to me" (lines 100-101) were not taken up by her group members. Lua, on the other hand, made a reference to grammatical rules when arguing for the use of "when," and in the end, her comments were accepted by the group.

Summary of Findings and Implications for L2 Writing Classrooms

Most peer feedback sessions consisted of two members, each taking a turn assuming a role of a reviewer. In the peer feedback sessions presented in this chapter, three participants

made up a peer feedback group. Unlike a peer response pair, a group consists of three members who rotate their turns in providing feedback and each time, two group members take a role of a reviewer. The instructor assigned students into groups but did not explicitly instruct the participants how they would organize their discussion. The participants normally negotiated their roles among themselves at the beginning of their peer response session, and each of them would be designated as a primary reviewer for each piece of writing. This group configuration presents different dynamics since it involves an interaction between the author and the primary reviewer, that between the author and the secondary reviewer, and finally that between the primary reviewer and the secondary reviewer. In general, the primary reviewer whose responsibility was to lead the group in providing feedback to the author normally had the first turn that opened a discussion on each piece of writing. The primary reviewer also engaged the author in the process of peer feedback. The other member of the group assumed a role of a secondary reviewer who followed up on the primary reviewer's comments, provided additional comments or mediated any communication problems between the primary reviewer and the author.

The analyses illustrated that these three main roles were played out differently by each participant. As the primary reviewer, Hanako was able to engage both Eva, the author, and Sumi, the secondary reviewer, in the editing process. Her turns were designed in ways that created a sense of collaboration, enabling the other two participants to contribute to the discussion. When Lua was the primary reviewer, she seemed very committed to giving Sumi, the author of the essay, constructive feedback. Both of them had very different ideas regarding how to structure one of the paragraphs, and spent a good amount of time explaining their ideas to each other. This might have been the reason why Lua did not engage, Raul, the secondary reviewer, in the conversation as much as she could have. Miki appeared to have the toughest time being the

primary reviewer. She was not able to convey her ideas to the author very clearly, leading to the intervention from the secondary reviewer.

Although the primary reviewers assumed most of the responsibility in providing feedback to the author, they also played a significant role in engaging the author and the secondary reviewer in the editing task. Each participant who took a role of a primary reviewer differed in the strategies they used to solicit responses or additional comments from other group members. For the group whose members appeared to be the most collaborative, the primary reviewer used questioning strategies that encouraged the secondary reviewer to express opinions or provide additional comments to the author. Some participants displayed different behaviors when they took a role of a primary reviewer, and their behaviors sometimes led to somewhat less successful interactions. In particular, one of the participants did not engage the secondary reviewer in the discussion, resulting in interactions that resembled what normally might occur in a peer response pair rather than what would occur in a group. As a result, the author did not benefit from additional comments that could have been provided by the secondary reviewer

Although the primary reviewer's role in the group often has a significant impact on the success of the task, the secondary reviewer sometimes plays an equally important role, especially in a situation where the primary reviewers fails to perform their task because of a lack of sufficient oral communication skills. In this situation, a secondary reviewer intervenes in order to mediate a communication problem between the other two group members. The secondary reviewer should also intervene when the group members encounter conflicts or are unable to reach a consensus.

The analysis shows that the secondary reviewer can play a very important role in peer response activity. Yet research has not examined how the role of this third member of the peer

response group affects the dynamics of group interaction. Lua's role as the secondary reviewer in peer feedback session 1 proved necessary for the success of the communication between the other members in this peer feedback session. When it was obvious that Eva was not able to understand Miki's comments, Lua intervened and mediated the communication breakdown, enabling the group to complete the task. Sumi did not have to deal with a communication breakdown in peer feedback session 2, but she contributed to the group discussion almost as much as the primary reviewer. Sumi allowed the primary reviewer to lead a discussion but intervened to provide alternative comments to those given by the primary reviewer or to identify certain problems in the essay that the primary reviewer had not brought up. Sumi's intervention provided more options to the author in regard to how to deal with problems in her writing and allowed the group to discuss these options with the author. As a secondary reviewer, Raul was far less active than Lua and Hanako. Since collaboration from each participant was proven to be an essential component in other feedback sessions, particularly when disagreement or miscommunication arose in their interactions, Raul's minimal participation did not allow the other group members to benefit from his insights, which might have helped reconcile their different points of views.

In the analyses of three different peer response groups presented in this chapter, I have discussed the relationship between participants' roles and degrees of collaboration among the group members. Collaborative peer feedback groups were described in terms of members' active participation in a discussion and the extent to which the groups were able to reach a consensus as to how to solve any revision problems. A degree of collaboration among group members is generally regarded as one of the contributing factors of successful peer response activity (cf. De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Storch, 2001; 2002). However, this

characteristic of group interactions may not necessarily facilitate the goal of peer response activity, especially when the goal is to allow students to receive comments from peers in order to improve their writing assignments. Consider a scenario described in Nelson and Carson's (1995) study in which one of the participants avoided disagreeing with peers in an attempt to maintain group harmony. A similar scenario may have existed in the present study, and participants may not have received as much feedback as they could have if their group members were concerned with reaching a consensus, and as a result, avoided disagreeing with one another. This issue has a significant impact on how peer feedback activity is to be used in a classroom. Classroom teachers may need to discuss the goals of peer response activity with students, and possibly emphasize that students may not always reach a consensus whenever they engage in a collaborative group activity.

In addition to students' differing level of language proficiency, their academic writing needs and expectations of the course affect their engagement in peer response activity. The participants in this study were in different stages in their education career, and their needs varied. The graduate students expressed that the course did not serve their academic writing needs and that they preferred feedback from the instructor rather than peer feedback. Such perceptions were consistent with minimal engagement in peer response activity from one of the graduate students. Although the course was designed specifically to prepare freshmen for their future academic writing demands, some of the freshmen did not take the class very seriously possibly because it was not a credit bearing course. One of the freshmen mentioned in the interview that the writing assignments she did in this course did not help prepare her for the kinds of writing required in her disciplinary area. The exchange students enrolled in this class because they had to fulfill a certain number of credit hours while staying in the U.S. Another reason that they enrolled in this

course was that they believed that they would do well in this course since it was designed for non-native speakers of English. The potential drawback of having students with different needs and expectations in the same class is that it becomes even more difficult for the instructor to fulfill the students' needs. If the instructor is to incorporate peer response activity in this classroom context, students with similar needs should be assigned to work with one another occasionally on a writing assignment that reflects their needs. The instructor could allow students to bring in writing assignments that they do in other classes and exchange them for peer feedback. This, however, does not mean that only students with similar needs can be assigned to a peer response pair or group, or that these other writing assignments would completely replace the assignments students are normally required to do in the writing class. Students should still have an opportunity to work with various peer group members so that they get to know about how other students write, how they approach certain writing topics, or how they deal with particular problems in the writing. In fact, several of the research participants mentioned some of these aforementioned factors as benefits of engaging in peer response activity. Ultimately, it is important for the instructor to find a good balance and create an atmosphere in which per feedback is meaningful and students can best benefit from this activity.

ESL instructors who wish to include peer response activity in their writing classes should bear in mind some of the difficulties their students could face when engaging in this task. One of the factors that instructors should carefully consider is how they assign students to a peer response group. Although the norm is to divide students into pairs and let students take turns providing feedback to their partners, the findings suggest that in certain circumstances, it might also be a good idea to assign students to a peer response group. In peer response groups, the role of a secondary reviewer is created. As we have observed, secondary reviewers could have a

significant impact on the completion of the activity. If the instructor anticipates that certain students have difficulty communicating their ideas to group members, these students could be assigned into a group of three where the third person in the group could take a role of a mediator who helps handle potential communication breakdowns between the other two group members.

In addition to group configuration, the instructor might consider providing a training session for students prior to assigning students to work in a group on their own. A number of researchers have already suggested incorporating a training session for peer response activity (cf. Berg, 1999; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995). In a training session, students were shown the types of feedback that could be provided to their peers whether it was on the content, grammar or organizational aspects of peers' writings. The findings from this study suggest that students might also benefit from the kind of training that focuses on the face-threatening nature of this type of activity and introduces different politeness strategies that students could use to mitigate the threats caused by negative comments or incidents of disagreements.

Instructors might also consider replicating this research in their own classrooms. Recording students' peer feedback sessions and examining behaviors that students exhibit when taking different roles in this activity might help the instructor assign students to a group in a way that creates group dynamics that are most conducive to successful peer response sessions. In the peer response sessions presented in this research, the participants were told at the beginning of each session to focus their comments on either the grammatical or the organizational aspect of peers' writing. In other writing classrooms similar to the one described in this study, the instructor could compare and contrast students' interactions in peer feedback sessions that focus on each of the two aspects of the writing. Doing so might enable the instructor to identify the kinds of problems that students experience in their peer feedback sessions, and the extent to

which the group could resolve these problems. This way, the instructor might be able to determine when it is most beneficial to incorporate this activity in their class.

Other communicative contexts such as workplace or other classroom settings that employ a similar type of group interaction can benefit from the insights provided by the findings of this study. In particular, future researchers could examine how group dynamics can be influenced by each member's role in the group. In a workplace setting that requires collaboration among members of a team, the effectiveness of the team can be judged by the extent to which all the team members can work through a problem with one another. Each member's role in the team can be analyzed in order to identify the extent to which their behaviors contribute or obstruct the success of the team. Student interactions in other classroom settings can be examined in a similar fashion.

It is evident that interactions in peer response activity are more complex than we might have imagined. Assigning students to work together in a pair or a small group does not necessarily guarantee that students would be able to fulfill the goal of the activity. Students might not interact in ways that maximize their opportunity to improve their writings. The effectiveness of peer response activity depends on a host of factors, such as participants' language proficiency, roles taken by each participant, and their attitudes towards the activity and their peers. By utilizing CA, researchers can develop a finer-grained understanding of how these variables and factors affect student to student interaction and how these interactions either facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of the learning environment.

CHAPTER 6

MANAGEMENT OF CRITICISMS IN PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITY

> *Researcher:*   *How do you take critical feedback, like when somebody said something not so good about your paper?*
> *Participant:*   *I honestly don't feel good about it. So I'm like when it's a good way to tell me, you know. 'I think *name* this wouldn't make sense'. 'I think this would be better'. Then I'm like 'oh really? Thank you', you know. If it's someone too competitive, they'll all like almost laughing at it, like oh*
> *Researcher:*   *Oh really?*
> *Participant:*   *No. 'Yeah this isn't right'. Then I'm like 'okay'. That's it. I don't say anything. And I go home and look over it and see if this isn't really right. Like, I don't do anything at that moment. I don't want to you know hear other bad stuff about my paper. I mean 'cause I work hard on it. They can be nice about it even if it's not right. But they don't have to be like, you know bitch about it, you know what I mean?*

> From an interview with one of the participants

Feedback is an essential component of second language writing instruction. In most second language classrooms, different types of feedback on students' writings are provided mainly by the instructors; however, peer feedback has been incorporated into classroom activities in an attempt to encourage a more active role on the part of students. A number of researchers have investigated the effectiveness of peer interactions in second language writing classrooms. One of the criteria employed to judge the effectiveness of the activity is the quantity and the quality of the interactions. Some researchers have examined students' interactions in peer feedback groups as a way to determine the level of collaboration among group members (Amores, 1997; Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Nelson & Carson, 1995; Nelson & Murphy, 1992, 1992/1993, 1993; Storch, 2001). Their findings suggest that the ways students interact with one another during peer feedback

activity seems to have an impact on language learning and students' attitudes towards one another. One of the objectives of peer feedback activity is for students to provide one another with constructive feedback on their writing; however, this task requires both linguistic knowledge and an awareness of the pragmatic force of one's comments. An excerpt from an interview with one of the research participants shown on the previous page is an example of how important it is for a peer reviewer to be sensitive to a writer's face.

This chapter focuses on the issue of how participants of peer response activity manage criticisms of each other's writings. Drawing on CA concepts linguistic politeness, I will first discuss various conversational and linguistic resources that can be employed to maintain a positive social relationship in communicative situations that can potentially be face-threatening to the participants. I will then present excerpts from the participants' peer response sessions in order to illustrate the ways that participants interact when providing feedback on one another's writings. In particular, I will focus on how constructive or negative feedback is delivered, and the extent to which a positive social relationship is maintained through the use of various conversational resources and politeness strategies. I will present two sets of analyses of the data, one based on CA concepts and the other on linguistic politeness concepts.

Conversation Analysis: Preference Organization

In Sacks' (1992/1964) early lecture, he states that one of the fundamental aspects of conversational exchanges is that they occur as units, in which the current turn of talk projects a relevant next turn. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) later call these recognizable pairs of actions "adjacency pairs," which describe a sequence of two utterances that are adjacent and produced by different speakers. Adjacency pairs consist of a sequence of the first pair part and the second pair part. The assumption is that a turn of talk is understood as a response to an immediately

prior turn unless the speaker does something to suggest otherwise (Sacks et al., 1974). As such, this pair structure is a product of shared orientations and expectations of speakers, ultimately playing an important role in maintaining intersubjective understandings between participants of a conversation (Heritage, 1984).

The concept of preference in CA has been used to characterize one aspect of the sequential organization of talk, the relationship of the second pair part of an adjacency pair to the first pair part (Bilmes, 1988). In responding to the first pair part, participants usually choose from alternatives available for them. Sacks (1987) explains that these alternatives are not equivalent, meaning that participants' choice could be considered as either a preferred or a dispreferred course of action. Participants' selection of their actions reflects institutionalized ranking or status of the action (Atkinson & Heritage, 1987). In particular, a preferred course of action is generally associated with the maintenance of social solidarity. For example, a preferred course of action in responding to an invitation would be to accept it. Preferences for agreement are common in most conversational events except for the one where the speaker makes self deprecating remarks, in which case, disagreement would be a preferred response (Pomerantz, 1984). Participants' orientation to the preference organization in conversations or the recognition of the institutionalized status of their chosen course of action might, as well, represent their orientation to politeness. In other words, the institutionalized ranking or status of certain actions may define what most people consider polite behaviors.

While a preferred course of action is generally supportive of social solidarity, participants may find themselves in situations that require a dispreferred course of action. When put in these situations, participants normally employ certain conversational resources to counter the disaffiliated effect of their action. An example of a conversational resource is a token agreement

used to avoid showing direct disagreement with others. One form of a token agreement is a "yes, but…" pattern of response. The speaker may be able to soften disagreement by prefacing it with a statement that seemingly agrees with the preceding utterances.

Another example of the concept of preference is found in the organization of repair in conversation where there is a preference for self-initiated repair and self correction. When other corrections are done, they are often modulated or downgraded by using uncertainty markers or jokes suggesting that corrections are not seriously proposed (Schegloff, et al, 1990).

Linguistic Politeness

What is politeness? When this question is asked, people generally resort to giving examples of behaviors or actions that they consider to be polite (Watts, 2003). They may also refer to the use of polite language that is associated with those polite behaviors. This typical response seems to suggest that most people have intuitive knowledge of what might constitute polite language and behaviors, but they may be unable to provide an exact definition of the concept. The notion of politeness may have been interpreted in different ways; however, one of the most influential approaches to linguistic politeness was introduced in 1978 by Brown and Levinson. Since then, their conceptualization of politeness, commonly known as Politeness Theory, has been widely used in examining different types of discourse.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) description of politeness in social interactions is based on Goffman's notion of "face" which is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 66). Participants of social interactions employ various strategies and forms of language usage to save "face" or to maintain positive public self-image. These face-saving strategies are also integral to maintaining interpersonal relationships. The assumption is that participants of social interactions consider consequences of their behaviors and anticipate

actions of others. In other words, positive social relationships among participants are managed through a display and recognition of polite behaviors.

The face-saving or politeness strategies can be further distinguished by participants' orientation to the two aspects of face or the two basic wants or desires. A negative face refers to participants' desire for freedom of action and from imposition by others, while a positive face includes participants' desire for their self-image to be appreciated. In this regard, certain acts could be identified as threats to either the positive or negative face. According to Brown and Levinson, certain acts of a speaker could threaten an addressee's negative face in three ways. Firstly, when the speaker predicates future acts of an addressee, the speaker impedes the addressee's freedom of action by putting pressure on the addressee to do or refrain from doing certain actions. Some examples of these face-threatening acts include orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminding, threats, warnings or dares. Secondly, the speaker could threaten the addressee's negative face by pressuring the addressee to accept or reject the speaker's predication of her/his future actions that might incur a debt on the part of the addressee. For instance, when the speaker promises or offers to do something for the addressee, even though such an act would normally be considered a favor, the speaker would still impinge upon the addressee's freedom of action as an offer or a promise would put the addressee in a position where he/she has to reject or accept it. Finally, the addressee's negative face could be threatened when the speaker expresses certain desires toward the addressee or toward things that belonged to the addressee. For example, a compliment might be taken as an indication of the speaker's desire for the addressee's object or belonging. The expression of such a desire might make the addressee feel obliged to give the speaker the object of his/her desire. The speaker's expression of strong negative emotions toward the addressee also falls in this category of threat to the

addressee's face. In particular, hatred or anger expressed towards the addressee might suggest the speaker's desire to harm the addressee. The addressee's positive face could be threatened when the speaker suggested that he/she does not care about the addressee's feeling. In this respect, negative comments, disapproval or disagreements expressed by the speaker would constitute a threat to the addressee's positive face.

The characteristics of different types of face threatening acts described above can be helpful in analyzing students' interactions in peer feedback activity. In general, peer feedback activity involves types of interactions that could potentially present a threat to participants' face. For example, when a student makes suggestions or gives advice to another student regarding how her/his writings should be revised, the person giving suggestions runs a risk of threatening another student's negative face since her/his suggestions could be seen as an imposition of the other students' freedom to write in a certain way. In addition, negative evaluations or criticism of one's writing could be considered a threat to the writer's positive face. In peer feedback activity where an exchange of ideas is a common feature, disagreements are likely to occur when students have different views on how certain parts of an essay should be revised. This type of situation presents a threat to students' positive face.

Brown and Levinson (1978) argue that human beings who are "rational face-bearing agents" (p. 63) attempt to avoid threats to face, or if threats could not be avoided, a rational agent generally tries to minimize those threats. Strategies that people employ to minimize the potential face damage are described as politeness strategies and categorized by the types of face to which they are oriented. Positive politeness attends to the addressee's positive face, while negative politeness is directed toward the addressee's negative face. Negative politeness is based on the speaker's realization of an addressee's negative face want or a desire for freedom of action. As a

result, the speaker would indicate her/his intention to avoid infringing upon the addressee's freedom of action through various linguistic means such as hedges or apologies for interfering with the addressee's freedom of action.

Unlike negative politeness which is based on avoidance, positive politeness is not intended to directly counteract potential damage to face caused by imposition of one's freedom of action. Positive politeness is generally expressions of common interests or shared wants between the speaker and the addressee. To establish a common ground between the speaker and the addressee, the speaker could employ various positive politeness strategies such as using in-group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, using joke, and expressing exaggerated interest, approval or sympathy with the addressee.

Based on the two types of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) further explain characteristics of different politeness strategies and how they help maintain a positive relationship between the speaker and the addressee. Some of these strategies are particularly relevant to an analysis of students' interactions in peer feedback activity. In the following section, I will discuss the characteristics of some of these politeness strategies. I will present Grice's Cooperative Principle which helps explain how participants convey politeness and how politeness is understood among participants.

Positive Politeness Strategies

Among the strategies that participants of peer feedback activity tend to use quite frequently in their interactions are seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement. Brown and Levinson state that these two strategies are used in order to claim a common ground among participants. Orienting to the addressee's positive face, the speaker could establish a sense of

shared interest and approval of each other's point of view by agreeing or appearing to agree with the addressee's point of view.

In addition to the use of token agreement, the speakers could disguise their disagreement by making their response safely vague. Brown and Levinson states that this politeness strategy could be accomplished through the use of such hedges as "sort of," "kind of," "like,", or "I don't know." The following example of Californian English is given by Brown and Levinson to illustrate how disagreement could be hidden behind hedges:

"I don't know, like I think people have a right to their own opinions."

By saying "I don't know" at the beginning of the turn, the speaker managed to avoid communicating her/his opinion precisely. In this case, the real opinion of the speaker was that people should have a right to their own opinions. Hedges allow the speaker to appear less forceful or less direct in a situation in which her/his real opinion might offend the addressee.

Another example of hedges is "You really should sort of try harder." Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that "sort of" is a marker of metaphor, indicating that whatever it modifies should be treated as a metaphor by the addressee. In other words, the addressee is free to figure out how to interpret it. In this case, the phrase "sort of" softens the effect of the real message, a suggestion that the addressee try harder. Although hedges are generally associated with negative politeness, they could serve as a positive politeness strategy as well. Brown and Levinson state that when the speaker hedges a suggestion, she/he assumes a certain degree of common ground between her/himself and the addressee since the speaker calls upon the addressee's common knowledge in order to figure out the speaker's attitude, opinion or intent.

Hedges and token agreement are among some of the strategies that participants of peer feedback activity could use to avoid disagreement, disguise opinions or soften the effect of a

criticism. In order to show that the speaker does care about the addressee's positive face, or the desire to be liked or admired, the speaker could incorporate token agreement or hedges into their speech.

Negative Politeness Strategies

As discussed earlier, negative politeness strategies are directed toward the addressee's negative face or the desire that her/his actions not be impeded. Negative politeness might be easier to recognize than positive politeness since it is usually associated with behaviors that most people perceive as polite behaviors. Brown and Levinson outline a number of negative politeness strategies that could be used to manage threats to the addressee negative face. In the following section, I will discuss some of these strategies that are likely to be used in the context of peer feedback activity.

Negative politeness is based on the speaker's attempt to minimize the imposition of the addressee's freedom of action caused by the speaker's speech. One way to show that the speaker recognizes the threat to the addressee's face and attempts to minimize it is by indicating that the threat or the imposition itself is not great or serious. Brown and Levinson (1987) provide the following examples to show how the speaker could manage to make the imposition seem less serious:

> I *just* want to ask you if I can borrow a *tiny bit* of paper.
> I *just* dropped by *for a minute* to ask if you…

In the above examples, *just* is added to the speaker's requests to make them appear less of a trouble for the addressee. In addition, such exaggerated expressions as "a tiny bit" and "a minute" serve to downplay the seriousness of the requests.

Asking for help or a favor is another typical example of a face-threatening behavior. In these situations, the speaker risks threatening the addressee's negative face because a request for

help could potentially put the addressee in a position where she/he has to do something for the speaker. And as such, the speaker impedes the addressee's freedom of action. Realizing a potential threat of the request, the speaker normally adopts politeness strategies to indicate that she/he regrets or is reluctant to do so. According to Brown and Levinson, some of the strategies that the speaker could use to show regret or reluctance included admitting the impingement, begging the addressee's forgiveness, and giving overwhelming reasons for doing a face-threatening act. The following examples are taken from Brown and Levinson (1987):

1) I'm sure you must be very busy, but …
2) I don't want to bother/interrupt you, but …
3) I can think of nobody else who could…
4) I can't understand a word of this language; do you know where the American Express office is?

Example 1 shows how the speaker could simply admit impinging on the addressee's face, while in example 2, the speaker attempts to indicate reluctance to do a face-threatening act. In examples 3 and 4, the speakers give reasons for doing a face-threatening act. The last two examples are quite interesting in that the speakers claim their own inability to do certain things as compelling reasons for doing a face-threatening act.

Grice's Cooperative Principle and Linguistic Politeness

In addition to Goffman's notion of face, Brown and Levinson rely on Grice's Cooperative Principle in describing how politeness is understood between the speaker and the addressee. Grice (1999) argues that participants of a conversation assume a certain degree of cooperative effort and expect each other to recognize a common purpose or a direction of a conversation. With this recognition, participants would exclude certain conversation moves as unsuitable. This general principle in which participants are expected to observe when carrying on a conversation is called the Cooperative Principle which consists of four conversational maxims:

Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. The maxim of Quantity entails that participants'

contribute as much information as required by the purpose of a conversation. Simply put,

participants would neither give too much nor too little information than necessary. The maxim of

Quality requires that participants will not contribute what they believe to be false information.

The maxim of Relation requires that participants make their contribution relevant to the purpose

or direction of a conversation. The maxim of Manner relates to how participants make their

contributions. In other words, observing the maxim of Manner entails participants' attempt to

make their contributions comprehensible by avoiding being obscure or ambiguous, but being

brief and orderly.

As stated earlier, the Cooperative Principle is based on the assumption that participants

would observe the four conversational maxims in their interactions. However, there are often

situations where participants may choose not to observe one or more of these maxims. A

violation of any of the maxims would prompt co-participants to think of plausible reasons why

the speaker chooses to do so. In other words, co-participants would need to figure out what the

speaker implies or suggests through such a violation. Grice introduces the concept of

conversational implicature in order to explain the dual levels of meaning, one being the

denotative and possibly connotative meaning of utterances, and the other being the speaker's

intentions in making those utterances (Watts, 2003).

Relating Grice's Cooperative Principle to Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies,

conversational implicature is considered as a tool that the speaker could use to avoid committing

face threatening acts. The speaker could use a conversational implicature to give the addressee a

hint of the actual meaning of the speaker's utterances. The addressee would then have to

interpret the speaker's intent based on relevant contextual cues. For instance, if the speaker said

"It's rather hot in here," the addressee could interpret the speaker's utterances as a request to turn on the air conditioner, given that the air conditioner is turned off at that moment. In this case, the speaker would violate the Maxim of Relevance when making an indirect request.

As each of Grice's Maxims is often violated in everyday conversation, participants count on other co-participants' ability to figure out the underlying meaning of utterances. The violation of the Maxims and conversational implicatures provide a basis by which positive social relationships are maintained among the participants. In other words, participants could purposefully violate the Maxims in order to avoid threatening each other's positive or negative face.

Brown and Levinson discuss different ways in which the speaker could convey her/his real intention of utterances by inviting conversational implicatures from the addressee. One way to invite the addressee to make inferences is to violate the Maxim of Quantity by saying less or different than what the speaker intends to say. This type of violation is accomplished through the use of an understatement. To construct understatements, Brown and Levinson explain that the speaker would need to pick a point or a value on a scale of descriptions that is below the actual state of affairs. As such, a teenage girl who said "He's all right" could have understated her actual criticism of "I think he's awful." At the same time, the girl could have also understated a possible alternate compliment of "I think he's fabulous" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Alternatively, the speaker could construct understatements by hedging a higher point and by doing so, implies the lower actual state of affairs. Consider the following scenario that may take place in peer feedback session:

A: What do you think of the introduction of my essay?
B: I think it's okay.

B in fact criticizes the introduction of A's essay but chooses to understate his criticism by avoiding the lower point of the scale (i.e. I think the introduction of your essay was not good, or I don't like it very much, etc.). In other words, by hedging on some good attribute, B also implies that she does not think that the introduction of A's essay is good. On the other hand, the speaker could also hedge on some bad attribute to implicate that something is very bad. For example, when saying "I was pretty scared," the speaker might have attempted to downplay her/his actual feeling by understating it. Brown and Levinson give a few examples of understatements used in different situations:

Accepting a compliment:

    A: What a marvelous place you have here.
    B: *Oh I don't know, it's a place.*

Insults:

    Boswell: I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it…
    Johnson: That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your country men
                   cannot help.

The Maxim of Quantity could also be violated when the speaker says more than what is necessary. By exaggerating the actual state of affairs, the speaker constructs an overstatement which in turn generates a conversational implicature. An example that Brown and Levinson give is *"I tried to call a hundred times, but there was never any answer"* which could have been inferred as an apology for not keeping in touch with the addressee.

Management of Criticisms in Peer Response Activity

In order for peer feedback activity to be beneficial for the writer, the reviewer would have to be able to identify problems in the writer's text and then provide suggestions for revisions (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Criticisms, however, can be face-threatening to the author since they seem to call into question the author's language proficiency as well as her/his ability to write or present

ideas. To maintain a positive social relationship among members of peer feedback group in this

sensitive situation, participants need to carefully design their critiques to minimize the threat to

the author's face. In the following section, I will present excerpts from peer feedback sessions in

the ESL writing classroom and discuss how the research participants launched criticisms on

peers' writings, focusing specifically on conversational resources and strategies they used to

reduce the negative pragmatic force of their criticisms.

Excerpt 1: Peer feedback session of Hanako, Sumi and Eva

```
1    H:    Yeah (.) the most
2    E:    Yeah yeah
3    H:    The most because XX (.) Um (.) you want to say we are like very close
4          friends or just friends (.) because your family=
5    E:    =Yeah=
6    H:    =Your mother are your family so you are never be (.) friends so I think
7          you need here (.) we are (.) we are (.) [like or
8    S:                                           [Um (.) wouldn't it be better for her
9          (.) to say we used (1.0) to be like um best friends"
10   H:    And not anymore? heh [heh heh heh
11   S:                        [No (.) I mean like you can't be there anymore
12   H:    Uh huh=
13   S:    =Or or you can say (1.0) we are like the closest friend
14   H:    hehe
15   E:    heh heh °yeah° u:m
16   H:    What do you prefer? We are (.) [like   ] close friend
17   S:                                  [Yeah ] which one (.) so
18   E:    Okay [okay
19   S:         ['Cause you're not really a friend with her. You're like the friend (.)
20         [so
21   E:    [Yeah (.) yeah
```

In except 1 Hanako and Sumi were giving feedback on Eva's paragraph entitled "What I

miss most about my native country" (see Appendix G). This particular sequence focused on one

of the sentences in the paragraph, "I think I miss my mother most, because we are very close

friends and I can talk to her about everything." Hanako initiated a comment on Eva's use of the

phrase "we are very close friends" and suggested that Eva added the word "like", arguing that

Eva and her mother could not really be friends since they were family. Sumi then made an alternative suggestion of changing the verb form from "we are" to "we used to be." On line 10, Hanako seemed to disagree with Sumi's suggestion, and her turn prompted Sumi to give an account of her comment and then made another suggestion for revision. At the end of this sequence, the participants seemed to agree on Hanako's suggestion of adding the word "like" to the phrase.

From a CA perspective, this excerpt shows the participants' orientation to the preference for agreement in a conversation. Hanako's turn on line 10 could be understood as an expression of disagreement with Sumi's suggestion in the prior turn. However, disagreement which is considered as a dispreferred course of action was done in a seemingly joking manner. The laugh tokens following Hanako's turn on line 10 appeared to support this interpretation.

Considering Sumi's turn on line 11, Hanako's disagreement turn could also be interpreted as repair initiation. Hanako's utterances "And not anymore?" seemed to suggest a problem in understanding the preceding talk. This repair initiation prompted Sumi to provide an account for the suggestion she had made earlier on lines 8-9. In a way, Sumi's turn could be considered as self-correction. Hanako's repair initiation, although a dispreferred course of action, led to self-correction, which was a preferred one.

What Hanako did in this excerpt was quite similar to what a classroom teacher would do when signaling a problem with a learner's utterance and encouraging self-correction. Several studies on the organization of repair in a second language classroom have suggested that teachers often use other-initiated repair and avoid unmodulated corrections of learners' errors by using a rising intonation contour to signal a need for repair (cf. Jung, 1999; Seedhouse, 1997) or a specially designed turn constructional unit to illicit self-correction of students' errors (cf. Koshik,

2002). The repair organization illustrated in this excerpt indicates that the task the participants were required to perform in the peer response activity forced them to assume a role similar to that of a classroom teacher.

Another interesting aspect of this excerpt is the different ways in which Eva responded to the suggestions from the two reviewers. On line 15, Eva's response to Sumi's suggestion appeared to be a token agreement since she prefaced it with laugh tokens. In addition, the utterance "yeah" was spoken with a slightly decreased volume, possibly suggesting uncertainty. On the contrary, when she responded to Hanako's turn on lines 18 and 21, she did not laugh. These different responses suggest that Eva agreed with Hanako's suggestion more so than she did Sumi's. At the end of this sequence, the group decided to take Hanako's initial suggestion of adding the word "like" to the sentence. This delicate maneuvering on Eva's part seems to indicate the preference for agreement. In other words, a dispreferred course of action, disagreement, was mitigated.

Now let us examine this excerpt through different analytical lens. Notice the "indirect" ways in which Hanako and Sumi designed their turns when giving negative feedback on Eva's writing. Both Hanako's and Sumi's comments were in a form of an alternative which provided the author with a sense of freedom in deciding whether or not to accept the comments. Based on Brown and Levinson's model, this indirect way of giving feedback could be labeled as a negative politeness strategy since it was intended to minimize the face threat caused by imposition upon Eva's freedom of action. This type of turn design could be found on line 8 "Or, wouldn't it be better…" and line 16 "what do you prefer." Another type of indirect comment could be found in Hanako's turn on lines 6-7 where she said "I think you need…." Here, "I think" could be considered a form of a hedge marking a tentative stance of Hanako's suggestion.

Note that there seemed to be instances of disagreement between the two group members as to how the author could revise the sentence. Not only were the two group members sensitive to the author's face, they also seemed to be aware of the threat to each other's face as a result of the different ways they thought the sentence could be revised. Sumi's turn on line 8 could be understood as a response to the suggestion that Hanako had made at the beginning of this sequence. The phrase "Um wouldn't it be…" was in fact an indirect disagreement that led to another instance of indirect disagreement in the form of a clarification request from Hanako on line 10. Hanako's question "And not anymore?" prompted Sumi to produce an account of her suggestion on line 11 and then provide another way to revise the sentence, which was slightly different than what Hanako had suggested earlier. Sumi's alternative suggestion on line 13 "Or (.) or you can say we are like the closest friends" might appear to address to Eva, the author of the paragraph; however, it could also be interpreted as Sumi's response to Hanako's question on line 10. The use of the word "or" at the beginning of the turn on line 13 was Sumi's way of giving both Eva and Hanako a choice of whether or not to take her suggestion.

What is also interesting in this excerpt is Hanako's strategic use of a questioning technique that allows her to convince the group to accept her suggestion. First, the question "And not anymore?" on line 10 allowed Hanako to politely disagree with Sumi without having to explicitly state her reason for disagreement. According to Grice's Cooperative Principle, Hanako's turn on line 10 violated the Maxim of Relation as she did not really respond to Sumi's preceding turn. A more directly relevant response would have been "No, it wouldn't be better." However, such a response would have been very threatening to Sumi's face. The question "And not anymore?" functioned as a conversational implicature as it suggested disagreement, by relying on Sumi's ability to interpret it as such. Sumi's turn on lines 11-12 seemed to suggest

that this politeness strategy was effective as she tried to account for her suggestions. In addition to the use of conversational implicature, Hanako appeared to create a sense of choice by asking the question "what do you prefer" on line 16. However, the way this turn was designed seemed to suggest otherwise. The close proximity of the utterances "we are like close friends" to the question "what do you prefer" seemed to limit the choice to the one that Hanako had initially suggested and excluded the alternative suggested earlier by Sumi. This was a successful strategy as both Eva and Sumi accepted Hanako's suggestion at the end of this sequence.

Excerpt 2: From a peer feedback session of Lua and Hanako

1	L:	About your your introduction, I think that is very clear.
2	H:	Uh huh
3	L:	The topic sentence and also the thesis that is introduced so it's clear.
4		Maybe some grammar um but it's not the case now so I think it's very
5		very good.
6	H:	Um what do you think because I didn't include um XXX I'm XXX I'm
7		gonna be talking about in the essay in the essay here in the introduction I
8		mean I'm I'm talking about in this essay about about the cycle of seasons
9		and the nature
10	L:	the nature yeah
11	H:	But here
12	L	[XXX
13	H:	[in the introduction. I didn't=
14	L:	=yeah=
15	H:	=conclude I didn't include
16	L:	The nature
17	H:	The nature
18	L:	Yeah. I real I realize that but on the other hand you're speaking of the
19		nature but always related with XXXX so I was about to write in this the
20		same thing that you that you pointed but then I realize that even though it's
21		not um it not espe especially I mean especially clear huh write these in the
22		introduction. It's not presented in the introduction, these topics are very
23		connected with the holidays. That is the main (.) the main topic
24	H:	Yeah the main topic
25	L:	Yeah
26	H:	Yeah
27	L:	But maybe maybe
28	H:	maybe
29	L:	if you want, you you can introduce this here

30	H:	Yeah
31	L:	A little word but it's still be good. Then each paragraph I think has a
32		controlling idea
33	H:	Uh huh
34	L:	And (.) um maybe the only one I (.) I can say something was the third one
35		that also has a (.) a controlling idea
36	H:	Uh huh
37	L:	That is the most important
38	H:	Uh huh
39	L:	But maybe could be a little more developed (.) developed
40	H:	Oh yeah

In excerpt 2 Lua and Hanako were discussing Hanako's essay entitled "Japanese Holidays" (see Appendix I). At the beginning of the sequence, Lua complimented the introduction of Hanako's essay, stating that it was very clear. Hanako, however, had a concern regarding the details that she discussed in the body of the essay which she did not include in her introduction. She mentioned that the essay discussed two main characteristics associated with Japanese holidays including the cycle of seasons and nature. The former was stated in the introduction while the latter was not. Hanako then asked for Lua's input on whether or not this was problematic for the introduction part of the essay. Lua responded to Hanako's concern and then provided suggestions for revision.

From a CA perspective, Lua's response on lines 18-23 following Hanako's negative self assessment on lines 6-9 showed Lua's orientation to the preference organization in conversations. Lua responded to Hanako's negative self assessment with a token agreement in a "yeah….but" format. Despite its appearance as an agreement, Lua actually disagreed with Hanako's negative self assessment. According to Pomerantz (1984), disagreement in this particular situation is a preferred course of action. Lua's disagreement turn from line 18 to 23 started off by acknowledging Hanako's self assessment, but ended up being a positive comment. This turn also falls within Sacks' (1987) description of a general preference for agreement in

conversation, which asserts that an agreeing response usually occurs contiguously, while a disagreeing response is generally located deep into the turn.

We have observed that the reviewer in this excerpt did not provide negative comments on the author's work. There are two possible explanations for this situation. The reviewer might have purposefully avoided the dispreferred course of action or simply did not find this aspect of the author's work problematic in the first place. What is interesting here is the author's initiation of negative self-assessment of her own work that occurred after the reviewer's turn on line 5. The reviewer ended her turn with a positive comment, suggesting a closing of the topic. However, the author continued to pursue this topic, leading to a series of turns in which the reviewer ended up having to provide an account of why she did not provide negative comments in the first place. What happened in this excerpt suggests that in certain cases, it may be left up to the author's responsibility to probe for negative comments from the reviewer, since there is always a possibility that the reviewer may choose to avoid a disperferred course of action.

Based on the framework of linguistic politeness, this excerpt could be characterized by a high degree of collaboration between the participants and by the reader's sensitivity to the author's face. Lua employed similar politeness strategies as those discussed in excerpt 1. The use of the phrase "if you want" on line 29 was an example of a negative politeness strategy that helped minimize the imposition upon the author's freedom of action as a result of the suggestions "you can introduce this here." Lua's use of the utterance "maybe" showed the tentativeness of her comments and could be found through out this sequence. Hanako was also receptive to Lua's comments as evident throughout the excerpt in her use of such response tokens as "uh huh" or "oh yeah."

The distinctive feature of this sequence was found at the beginning of the sequence on line 6 where Hanako brought up a rather negative assessment of her own writing. Brown and Levinson list several acts that could directly damage the speaker's positive face, none of which would directly describe Hanako's negative self assessment. However, what occurred in this turn is somewhat comparable to Brown and Levinson's description of a situation where the speaker confesses or admits to guilt or responsibility for having done or not done an act. Hanako expressed that she had not done what she thought she should have done in the introduction of her essay. Although this turn would be considered a threat to the speaker's face, it also had some effect on the addressee. When the author was the one who first initiated a negative assessment of her own writing and invited constructive criticism from the reader, it seemed as though the author had opened herself up and welcomed face-threatening comments from the reader. This might have helped lessen the severity of a threat resulting from the reader's upcoming comments.

Excerpt 3: From a peer feedback session of Lua, Eva and Miki

```
1     E:    Um
2           (2.0)
3     E:    I don't think um paragraph has controlling idea
4     L:    You don't think hehe
5     E:    No [heh heh
6     L:        [heh heh heh
7     M:        [heh heh
8     L:    No
9     E:    Um (.) and there's no topic sentence. I mean
10    L:    Huh?
11    E:    There's no topic sentence (points at the paper)
12    L:    Topic sentence. Okay
13    E:    Um but I think it's XXX logical order. I think it's well organized
14    L:    Yeah. Okay
15    E:    I think so. You (.) you (.) the sentences in logi logical order. I think so
16          and
17          (2.0)
18    E:    maybe you can support your examples more. You know um um
```

19		how they help you
20	L:	O::h okay
21	E:	And why do you think the dorms are so neat. And yeah last (.) I just want
22		to know (.) do you like *name of school*? Or do you like it? Or
23	L:	Yeah
24	E:	Yeah. Oh okay
25	L:	But you don't understand this by reading paragraph if I like or if I don't
26		like *name of school*?
27	E:	Yeah, um (.) um (.) I didn't know if you like
28	L:	So you didn't know
29	E:	No
30	L:	Okay
31	E:	hehe
32	L:	Okay (puts her head on the table)
33	E:	[heh heh heh
34	M:	[heh heh
35	L:	Thank you
36	E:	Okay. So yeah, I think it's good
37	L:	I think with the part of the examples .Yes I know that I should have put
38		more examples
39	E:	Yeah, maybe. But it's good.
40	L:	Thank you. Thank you

Excerpt 4 was taken from a peer feedback session of Lua, Eva and Miki. The participants were discussing Lua's writing assignment entitled "My first impressions of *Name of School*" (see Appendix J). Eva was primarily responsible for providing comments on Lua's essay. She had finished reading Lua's paragraph and at the beginning of this sequence, she offered her comments to Lua.

This excerpt is noticeably different than what I have presented thus far in this chapter because there are quite a few instances of negative comments. However, we can still observe the workings of preference organization. At the beginning of this sequence, Eva provided negative comments, although they were prefaced with the utterance "um" and followed by a short pause, showing that she hesitated slightly before delivering the comment. A delay like this is a typical way in which a speaker could design a dispreferred turn (Heritage, 1984), which in this case was a negative assessment of another participant. Notice also, that within her turn on line 3, there was

a delay marked by the utterance "um." All these seemed to suggest that Eva recognized the unaffiliated effect of this dispreferred course of action and attempted to mitigate it by using a delay prior to and within the turn. A similar conversational resource was used again on line 9 when she provided negative comments on Lua's writing, and on line 27 when she responded to Lua's question.

This excerpt can also be characterized by the frequent use of repair by the author after receiving comments from the reviewer. The other-initiated repair sequence can be described as follows:

Turn 1:   Reviewer provides comments

Turn 2:   Author initiates repair of trouble source (i.e. the reviewer's comments)

Turn 3:   Reviewer repairs trouble source

Turn 4:   Author acknowledges repair (i.e. repair outcome)

This recurring pattern can be found on lines 3-5, 9-12 and 27-30. These repair initiations by the author could indicate the possibilities of the author's trouble in either hearing the comments or understanding them. Regardless of the cause, this repair sequence appears to be one way in which the author handled negative comments from the reviewer, particularly in asking the reviewer to confirm the comments. Lua's gesture on line 32 when she put her head down on the table after she had received a series of negative comments from Eva seems to confirm that repair initiations served such a purpose. This type of gesture is generally associated with an expression of disappointment or a feeling of despair. These negative comments were similar to bad news, and Lua's gesture here were somewhat comparable to someone who had just received and confirmed bad news.

I will now focus on the linguistic resources that the participants used in managing the negative comments found in this excerpt. At the beginning of the sequence, Eva stated that Lua's paragraph did not have a controlling idea. The comment was quite critical; however, by prefacing it with "I don't think," the degree of the threat was somewhat reduced because of the tentativeness of the phrase. Brown and Levinson explained that the use of hedges like the one found in Eva's turn above related to Grice's Maxim of Quality. By violating this maxim, the speaker might have suggested that she did not take full responsibility for the truth of her utterance. The Quality hedge allowed Eva to commit a face threatening act and relied on Lua's ability to figure out the underlying message.

In the following turns, however, Eva opted for a more direct approach possibly because Lau had asked her to confirm her comment on line 4. Eva responded with an unmitigated "no." Her next comment on line 9 "…um (.) and there's no topic sentence" was also more direct than what happened at the beginning of the sequence. It is important to note that her direct negative comments were followed by positive comments on line 13. Brown and Levinson distinguish two types of on record face threatening acts by the speaker's use of redressive actions or a lack thereof. Redressive actions are different types of politeness strategies that the speaker employs in an attempt to minimize the potential face damage. Redressive actions indicate that the speaker anticipates face damage to the addressee and employs certain kinds of modifications to her/his utterances. Brown and Levinson's taxonomy does not directly discuss the situation like the one found in this excerpt where the speaker first committed a bald on record face threatening act and then attempted a redressive action afterwards in a later turn. However, it might be possible to interpret this situation as a type of delayed redressive action that was done after a face threatening act had been committed in an attempt to repair damage to a social relationship.

On lines 15-19, Eva offered a suggestion for revision but did so in a manner that was very similar to what was discussed in excerpts 1 and 2. In other words, the use of the word "maybe" prefacing the comments did not imply an obligation on the part of the author to accept the comments given. Another politeness strategy was the use of the phase "you know" on line 18 when Eva was offering suggestions on how Lua could provide more supporting details in her paragraph. The phrase "you know" could be labeled as a positive politeness strategy oriented toward the speaker's face as it presupposed shared knowledge between the participants (Holmes, 1995). By using "you know" Eva signaled that she and Lau had mutual knowledge. In doing so, Eva appealed to Lau for an indication of understanding. Toward the end of the sequence on lines 36 and 39, Eva added a positive comment "I think it's good" as well as "but it's good" as a closure for this sequence, which possibly served as an attempt to mitigate previous threats to Lua's face. These utterances could also be interpreted as an understatement that generated implicatures by violating Grice's Maxim of Quality or saying something less than or something different than what the speaker had intended to convey. Given the positioning of these phrases following some prior negative comments, it was possible to infer that they served as an understated criticism.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

In this chapter, I have presented two sets of analyses for each excerpt of peer response session using CA approach and Brown and Levinson's Linguistic Politeness Theory. These two theoretical perspectives center on a similar issue: the choices that people make in their social interactions. However, they differ in the ways each of them describe how people make these choices. Linguistic politeness theory focuses specifically on the speakers' choices when they say or do certain acts that could threaten the addressee's face, assuming that the speaker's decision is

governed by an attempt to save the addressee's face. In other words, linguistic politeness focuses on the speaker's motive as it is assumed that a speaker would normally avoid committing face threatening acts. If these threats cannot be avoided, the speaker is expected to employ a variety of politeness strategies to minimize the threats to the addressee's face. Brown and Levinson's theory does not necessarily take into account the effect of these mitigation strategies on the addressee, or how the speaker's utterances are taken up by the addressee.

The CA approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the co-construction of talk between the speaker and the addressee and generally discourages any reference to the speaker's motivation unless such a reference can be supported by empirical evidence in the talk. CA's focus on examining the sequential organization of talk allows analysts to see how turns are connected to one another. In essence, CA takes into account how all parties in the interactions make sense of each other's conduct, and how each turn responds to the previous one. Choices that people make in their social interactions are described within the framework of preference organization. This framework is based on the idea that utterances always come in pairs and for each first pair part, there is a second part that is either a preferred course of action or a dispreferred course of action. And when the participant is in a situation where they have to choose a dispreferred course of action, they generally design a turn in ways that indicate to the co-participants that it is a dispreferred course of action.

The CA analyses presented in this chapter focus on the sequential organization of peer feedback talk. I have discussed the extent to which the participants oriented to the preference organization when providing negative comments to others as well as when responding to comments given by others. Participants generally exhibited preference for agreement and employed various conversational resources such as delay or token agreement when they

expressed disagreement. Some of the conversational resources employed by the participants when giving negative comments were similar to what a classroom teacher would use in this particular situation. Repair mechanisms were found to be used in handling negative comments, particularly confirming the comments with the reviewer.

I also employ the framework of linguistic politeness to examine how participants handled face-threatening situations in peer feedback talk. When launching negative assessments of other participants' writings, the participants tended to employ negative politeness strategies that helped minimize the threats to the authors' face by designing their comments or suggestions in a form of an alternative. This turn design implied that the reader gave the author a freedom to choose whether or not to accept such suggestions. In addition to minimizing the imposition upon the author's freedom of action, the participants frequently mitigated their negative assessments or comments by using hedges and other modals that suggested their tentative stance of the comments. The use of these politeness strategies violated Grice's Cooperative Principle as the participants avoided stating their negative comments directly and at the same time, avoided committing themselves to the truth of their utterances. However, such a violation might have been necessary in order to maintain positive social relationship among the participants.

Most of the politeness phenomena found in the participants' interactions could be characterized by their indirect nature; however, direct negative comments were occasionally used. Brown and Levinson stated that the speaker could opt for a bald on-record face threatening act when the speaker was not concerned about reprisal from the addressee. Certain circumstances that permitted this kind of face threatening act included for example, ones where both the speaker and the addressee agreed that there were other things such as safety, urgency or efficiency that outweighed the interest for face. Other circumstances were ones in which the

threat to the addressee's face was very minimal or ones where the speaker was superior to the addressee. None of these circumstances would directly describe the nature of the interactions in this classroom peer feedback activity. In addition, there was evidence that the participant did recognize the threat as she attempted a redressive action towards the end of the sequence. The question then, is why did the participant commit a face threatening act baldly without any redressive action within the same turn?

One possible explanation might lie in the characteristics of "lingua franca" communication, which describes a situation where a chosen language is used as a means of communication among speakers who do not share the native languages. Meierkord (2000) explained that lingua franca communication between ESL learners who were not highly proficient in English tended to be characterized by pauses, hesitation, restarts, all of which suggested that learners faced production problems and needed to re-plan their utterances. This perspective focused primarily on re-planning that occurred within the turn. However, I propose that we extend this concept of re-planning to include how learners, or in this case, the participants of peer feedback activity, might have modified their utterances as well as points of view over the sequence of talk. In other words, re-planning could be viewed not only as a modification of the participant's utterances within the turn but also those that occurred beyond the turn. Excerpt 3 is an example of this kind of re-planning where the participant who had initiated negative assessments came around towards the end of the sequence and gave a positive assessment as sort of a concluding remark. A delayed modification such as this might have resulted from the fact that the participant was a language learner whose somewhat limited language proficiency might have made it challenging to simultaneously maintain a good balance between the need to communicate her thoughts and the need to mitigate the threat to the

addressee's face. At that particular moment in their interactions, the need to communicate her points of view might have outweighed the threat to the other participant's face. This, in no way, meant that the speaker did not recognize the potential damage to the addressee's face as she did try to counteract the threat at the end of the sequence with a positive assessment. Relating to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, this type of re-planning could possibly be interpreted as a delayed redressive action since the speaker did not mitigate direct negative comments right when the threat occurred. This view was slightly different than that of Brown and Levinson who viewed that the speaker's choice of whether or not to use a redressive action would be made before the speaker committed the face threatening act. In lingua franca communication, however, the speaker might have faced problems such as a lack of necessary vocabulary words or sentence structures or other problems that less competent non-native speakers normally encounter in their interactions. These problems might have contributed to the delay of the use of a redressive action.

Such an interpretation resonates with a functionally oriented view which conceptualizes a lingua franca as an effective means of communication for specific purposes among speakers who do not share the same native language (Meierkord, 2002). This view of lingua franca is based on the observation that it was traditionally used for restricted purposes by traders, businessmen or politicians. Participants of lingua franca communication learn to use the language up to a certain level, and their knowledge of the language can vary from very limited to complete. Insufficient knowledge of the language such as a limited vocabulary or a lack of socially shared representations can lead to problems in communications. However, researchers have also reported that participants in lingua franca interactions exhibit a unique communication style that

indicates their collaborative attempt to deal with problems, leading to successful communications (Firth, 1990; 1996; Meierkord 1998; 2000).

The participants' interactions in this study can be characterized as a lingua franca communication since they did not share a common native language, and they used English to carry on the task. Given that they were language learners, they were likely to encounter difficulty in their interactions because of their developing knowledge of English. The difficulty may even be more pronounced for some of the participants who could be described as being at the beginning stage of their oral communication development. Difficulty may lie in the delicate maneuvering required when delivering negative assessments of peers' writing. With the main objective of peer response activity, face-threatening comments are considered as an effective means of communication. At a particular point in the peer feedback sessions, participants might choose to be straightforward and give unmitigated negative comments in order to fulfill the objective of the task at hand. The demands of providing assessments on peers' writing and simultaneously mitigating a potential threat in their utterances could be quite overwhelming for some participants. As a result, the participants might put a priority on getting their message across, resulting in a delay of a redressive action. At times, they may appear to disregard the threats to other participants' face; however, when considering how the interactions unfolded, it was evident that they did try to maintain a positive relationship with their group members.

A kind of analysis that singles out particular utterances and interprets them without considering how these utterances connect with preceding and subsequent utterances may automatically associate face-threatening comments with participants' lack of concern for peers' face. Previous research has not utilized the CA approach which has shown to be particularly useful in examining how participants handle criticisms or negative comments in peer response

activity. CA approach allows researchers to examine how talk is sequentially organized and how utterances should be interpreted by the way that they respond to previous or following utterances.

The findings of this research have, in this case, broadened our understanding of the nature of lingua franca interactions in other contexts. The CA approach has enabled me to illustrate another unique characteristic of lingua franca communication, specifically in the way the participants might deal with face damage. Since participants in lingua franca communication use languages that are not their mother tongues, there is a possibility that their limited language proficiency might cause difficulty in communicating with others. However, it is important that we avoid labeling lingua franca interactions as "deficient" based what we saw or heard in their interactions. The findings from this study support previous research on lingua franca interactions which claimed that participants could complete the linguistic task competently. They just took a different route.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL REMARKS

The findings from this study lead us to reconsider the issue of how feedback is provided to students in a second language writing classroom. A number of second language writing researchers have suggested multiple ways in which feedback on writing can be given to students and different conditions under which each type of feedback can best be provided (cf. Caulk, 1994; Ferris, et al, 1997; Hyland, 1998; 2000; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Jacobs, et al 1998; Stanley, 1992). In general, students receive feedback on their writing primarily from their instructor and sometimes from their peers. Given what was illustrated in the analyses, it becomes clear that peer feedback requires delicate and careful maneuvering, and there are several factors that lead to successful interactions. Since this task forces students to assume the role of a teacher without actually having the authority that normally comes with such a role, students have to recognize potential threats to their peers' face resulting from negative comments or assessment of peers' writing and have to employ politeness strategies to mitigate the threats. Successful interactions also depend very much on a degree of collaboration among group members, which can be determined by their engagement in a discussion, their attention to any problem that the group may be facing at a particular moment, and their attempt to solve such a problem. If these conditions cannot be met, it is less likely that students will fully benefit from their participation in peer response activity. In such a case, it may be wise to rely mainly on teacher feedback and use peer feedback only minimally.

One way to determine success or usefulness of peer response activity is by examining students' perceptions of the usefulness of the activity. Numerous research studies have explored the issue of students' perceptions of different aspects of a writing class by employing interview

and/or questionnaire data as bases for the analysis. Participants' accounts of their experiences, although valid, should still be triangulated with an observation of their actual interactions in peer response activity. Triangulation of data is important since it allows researchers to compare different sets of data and identify any discrepancy between what participants say they do and what they actually do in the interactions.

The findings discussed throughout this dissertation shed light on the way future researchers might examine student interactions in peer response activity as well as other types of collaborative classroom activity. Unfortunately, second language writing researchers have yet to fully utilize the analytical tools provided by CA. The analysis of student interactions in this study has illustrated that second language classroom research has much to benefit from paying attention to fine details of both verbal and non-verbal interactions. The CA style transcription allows researchers to capture features of talk that can be used to support researchers' interpretations of talk or justify any claims they make about the participants.

This study has illustrated the complexity of interactions among ESL students in peer response activity. A detailed analysis facilitated by the CA approach enabled me to explore how students formulated assessments of peers' writing and the different ways they oriented to politeness phenomena in their interactions. Attention to both verbal and non-verbal interactions has proven essential in understanding the meaning that is emergent in a particular context. In particular, the placement of laughter and the occurrences of eye contact and gestures can reveal participants' roles in the interactions, their attitudes towards one another and the task, and the social relationships constructed in the interactions. These fine details, which are sometimes overlooked in research studies in similar ESL contexts, are shown to be a significant indicator of group dynamics and ultimately influence other contextual factors such as student identity and

students' perceptions of the course. As I have demonstrated, students did not always interact with one another in ways that best facilitated opportunities for language learning. However, this is not a reason to avoid incorporating this kind of collaborative learning activity in a classroom.

More research studies in ESL classroom contexts that adopt an analytical approach similar to that employed in this study are needed in order to determine some other factors that could impact student interactions. Future research might focus specifically on such factors as cultural backgrounds, gender, or differing levels of second language proficiency. Researchers may also examine student interactions in other types of classroom activity to determine whether the nature of the task affects the way students interact with one another. When ESL instructors apply the results of this study in the classroom, as well as incorporating findings from future research, they will be able to come up with a configuration of students who compliment each other rather than inhibit the learning process due to discordant personalities and learning styles. While matching students based on temperament and character is no easy task, it is one that is necessary, and this process will ensure one more step towards creating an atmosphere that is conducive to language learning for all the students in the classroom.

NOTES

1. Freshmen enrolled in the course under the ACAE 0098, while upper classmen and graduate students enrolled under UNIV 1117.

2. Jane agreed to participate in the study but dropped out of the course half way through the semester.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amores, J. M. (1997). A new perspective on peer-editing. *Foreign Language Annals, 30(4),* 513-522.

Antón, M. & DiCamilla, F. (1998). Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 53(3),* 314-339.

Atkinson, M. & Heritage, J. (1987). Preference organization. In M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social actions* (pp. 53-56). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, C.D. (1997). Transcription and presentation in literacy research. In J. Flood, S. B. Heath, & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts* (pp. 110-120). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Berg, E.C. (1999). The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8(3),* 215-241.

Bilmes, J. (1988). The concept of preference in conversation analysis. *Language in Society, 17*, 161-181.

Blaikie, N. (1993). *Approaches to social enquiry*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E.N. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness: strategies in social interactions* (pp. 56-289). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Carroll, D. (2000). Precision timing in novice-to-novice L2 conversations. *Applied Linguistics, 11(1)*, 67-110.

Caulk, N. (1994). Comparing teacher and student responses to written work. *TESOL Quarterly, 28(1)*, pp. 181-188.

Cohen, E.G. (1994). Restructuring the classroom: Conditions for productive small groups. *Review of Educational Research, 64(1),* 1-35.

Connor, U., & Asenavange, K. (1994). Peer response groups in ESL writing classes: How much impact on revision? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 3(3)*, 256-276.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

De Guerrero, M.C.M. & Villamil, O.S. (1994). Social-cognitive dimensions of interaction in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 78(4),* 484-496.

De Guerrero, M.C.M & Villamil, O.S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 84(1),* 51-68.

DiCamilla, F.J. & Antón, M. (1997). Repetition in the collaborative discourse of L2 learners: A Vygotskian perspective. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 53*, 609-633.

Drew, P. (2005). Conversation analysis. In K. L. Fitch, & R.E. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbooks of language and social interaction* (pp. 71-102). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Drew, P. & Heritage, J. (1992). Analyzing talk at work: An introduction. In P. Drew, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings* (pp. 470-520). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Duranti, A. (1997). *Linguistic anthropology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ferris, D. R., Pezone, S., Tade, C. R., & Tinti, S. (1997). Teacher commentary on student writing: descriptions and implications. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 6(2)*, 155-182.

Firth, A. (1990). 'Lingua franca' negotiations: Toward an interactional approach. *World Englishes, 9(3),* 269-280.

Firth, A. (1996). The discursive accomplishment of normality: On "lingua franca" English and conversation analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics, 26,* 237-259.

Firth, A. & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts of SLA research. *The Modern Language Journal, 81(3),* 285-300.

Giddens, A. (1976). *New rules of sociological method: A positive critique of interpretative sociologies*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Glenn, P. J. (1991/1992). Current speaker initiation of two-party shared laughter. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 25,* 139–162.

Glenn, P. J. (1995). Laughing at and laughing with: negotiation of participant alignments through conversational laughter. In P. ten Have, & G. Psathas (Eds.), *Situated order: Studies in the social organization of talk and embodied activities* (pp. 43–56). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Glenn, P. J. (2003). *Laughter in interaction*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Goldberg, C. (1991). Instructional conversations and their classroom application. Santa Cruz: CA. National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language.

Goodwin, C. & Duranti, A. (1992). Rethinking context: An introduction. In A. Duranti, & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon* (pp. 1-42). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Grice, H.P. (1999). Logic and conversation. In A. Jaworski, & N. Coupland (Eds.), *The discourse reader* (pp. 76-88). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gumperz, J.J. (1986). *The social construction of literacy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J.J. (1992). Contextualization revisited. In P. Auer, & A. Di Luzio (Eds.), *The contextualization of language* (pp. 39-53). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gumperz, J.J. & Herasimchuk, E. (1975). The conversational analysis of social meaning: A study of classroom interaction. In M. Sanches, & B.G. Blount (Eds.), *Sociocultural dimensions of language use* (pp.81-115). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Gutiérrez, K.D., Banquedano-Lopez, P., & Tejeda, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture and Activity, 6,* 286-303.

Hall, J.K. (1998). Differential teacher attention to student utterances: The construction of different opportunities for learning in IRF. *Linguistics and Education 9,* 287-311.

Heller, M. (1999). *Linguistic minorities and modernity: A sociolinguistic ethnography.* New York, NY: Longman.

Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Heritage, J. (1997). Conversation analysis and institutional talk: Analysing data. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research:Theory, method, and practice* (pp. 161-182). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Heritage, J. (2005). Conversation analysis and institutional talk. In K. L. Fitch, & R.E. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of language and social interaction* (pp. 71-102). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hester, S., & Francis, D. (2002). Is institutional talk a phenomenon? Reflections on ethnomethodology and applied conversation analysis. In A. McHoul, & M. Rapley (Eds). *How to analyze talk in institutional settings: A casebook of methods* (pp. 206-217). New York, NY: Continuum.

Hicks, D. (1995/1996). Discourse, learning and teaching. *Review of Research in Education, 21,* 49-95.

Hruby, G.G. (2001). Sociological, postmodern, and new realism perspective in social constructionism: Implications for literacy research. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36(1),* 48-62.

Hutchby, I. (1999). Beyond Agnosticism?: Conversation analysis and the social agenda. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 32(1&2),* 85-93.

Hyland, F. (1998). The impact of teacher-written feedback on individual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *7(3)*, 255-286.

Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research, 4(1)*, pp. 33-54.

Hyland, F., & Hyland, K. (2001). Sugaring the pill: Praise and criticism in written feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 185-212.

Jacobs, G. M., Curtis, A., Braine, G., & Huang, S. (1998). Feedback on student writing: Taking the middle path. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 7(3),* 307-317.

Jefferson, G. (1979). A technique for inviting laughter and its subsequent acceptance declination. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp.79-96). New York, NY: Irvington.

Jefferson, G. (1984). On the organization of laughter in talk about troubles. In M. J. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social Action: Studies in conversation analysis (*pp. 346-369). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Jefferson, G. (1985). An exercise in the transcription and analysis of laughter. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Handbook of discourse analysis, volume 3:Discourse and dialogue* (pp. 25-34). London: Academic Press.

Jefferson, G. (2004). A note on laughter in 'male-female' interaction. *Discourse Studies, 6(1),* 117-133.

Jefferson, G., Sacks, H. & Schegloff, E. (1987). Notes on laughter in the pursuit of intimacy. In G. Button, & J.R.E. Lee (Eds.), *Talk and social organisation* (pp. 152–205). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Jung, E. H. (1999). The organization of second language classroom repair. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 10 (2),* 153-171.

Kidwell, M. (2000). Common ground in cross-cultural communication: Sequential and institutional contexts in front desk service encounters. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 11(1),* 17-37.

Koshik, I. (2002). Designedly incomplete utterances: a pedagogical practice for eliciting knowledge displays in error correction sequences. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 35(3),* 277-309.

Lee, C.D. & Smagorinsky, P. (2000). *Vygoskian perspective on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaboration.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lightbown, P.M. & Spada, N. (1999). *How languages are learned.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Liu, J. & Hansen, J.G. (2002). *Peer response in second language writing classrooms*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Lockhart, C. & Ng, P. (1995). Analyzing talk in ESL peer response groups: Stances, functions and content. *Language Learning 45(4),* 605-655.

Long, M.H. (1983a). Linguistic and conversational adjustment to nonnative speakers. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 5*, 177-194.

Long, M.H. (1983b). Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input. *Applied Linguistics 4,* 126-141.

Long, M.H. (1985). Input and second language acquisition theory. In S.M. Gass, & C.G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 377-393). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Long, M.H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W.C. Ritchie, & T.K. Bhatia (Eds*.), Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp 413-468). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Mackey, A. & Philp, J. (1998). Conversational interaction and second language development: Recasts, responses and red herrings? *Modern Language Journal, 82(3),* 338-356.

Mangelsdorf, K. (1992). Peer reviews in the ESL composition classroom: What do the students think? *ELT Journal, 46(3),* 274-284.

Markee, N. (1994). Toward and ethnomethodological respecification of second language acquisition studies. In E. Tarone, S.M. Gass, & A. Cohen (Eds.), *Research methodology in second language acquisition* (pp. 89-116). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

Markee, N. (2000). *Conversation analysis.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McCormick, D. E., & Donato, R. (2000). Teacher questions as scaffolded assistance in an ESL classroom. In J. K. Hall, & L. S. Verplatse (Eds.), *The development of second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction* (pp. 183-202). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McGroarty, M.E. & Zhu, W. (1997). Triangulation in classroom research: A study of peer revision. *Language Learning, 47(1)*, 1-43.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Meierkord, C. (1998). Lingua franca English: characteristics of successful non-native/non-native speaker discourse. *Erfurt Electronic Studies in English, 7/98.* (http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/eese.html).

Meierkord, C. (2000). Interpreting successful lingua franca interaction: an analysis of non-native/non-native small talk conversations in English. *Linguistik Online 5(1/00).* (http://www.linguistik-online.de/1_00/MEIERKOR.HTM).

Meierkord, C. (2002). 'Language stripped bare' or 'linguistic masala'? Culture in lingua franca communication. In K. Knapp, & C. Meierkord (Eds.), *Lingua franca communication* (pp. 109-133). New York, NY: Peter Lang

Mori, J. (2002).Task design, plan and development of talk-in-interaction: an analysis of a small group activity in a Japanese language classroom. *Applied Linguistics 23,* 323-347.

Nassaji, H. & Wells, G. (2000). What's the use of 'triadic dialogue'?: An investigation of teacher-student interaction. *Applied linguistics 21(3),* 376-406.

Nelson, G.L. & Carson, J.G. (1995). Social dimension of second-language writing instruction: Peer response groups as cultural context. In D.L. Rubin (Ed.), *Composing social identity in written language* (pp. 89-109). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbuam Associates.

Nelson, G.L. & Murphy, J.M. (1992). An L2 writing group: Task and social dimension. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *1*, 171-193.

Nelson, G.L. & Murphy, J.M. (1992/1993). Writing groups and the less proficient ESL student. *TESOL Journal Winter 1992/1993*, 23-26.

Nelson, G.L. & Murphy, J.M. (1993). Peer response groups: Do L2 writers use peer comments in revising their drafts? *TESOL Quarterly, 27*, 135-141.

Nystrand, M. (1997). *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of languageand learning in the English classroom.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Ochs, E. (1999). Transcription as theory. In A. Jaworski, & N. Coupland (Eds.), *The discourse reader* (pp. 167-182). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ohta, A.S. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to an analysis of learner discourse: Learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 6,* 93-121.

Ohta, A.S. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: Developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition of L2 grammar. In. J. P. Lantolf. (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 51-78). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Olsher, D. (2000). Introduction: Nonnative discourse. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 11,* 5-16.

Patthey-Chavez, G.G., Clare, L., & Gallimore, R. (1995). Creating a community of scholarship with instructional conversations in a transitional bilingual classroom. *Educational Practice Report, No. 15*. Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Pica, T. (2002). Subject-matter content: How does it assist the interactional and linguistic needs of classroom language learners? *The Modern Language Journal, 86(1),* 1-19.

Polio, C. & Gass, S. (1998). The effect of interaction on the comprehension of nonnative speakers. *Modern Language Journal, 82,* 308-319.

Pomerantz, A. (1984). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: some features found in preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J.M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. 57-101). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Pomerantz, A., & Fehr, B.J. (1997). Conversation analysis: An approach to the study of social action as sense making practices. In T.A.van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 64-91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Poole, D. (1992). Language socialization in the second language classroom. *Language learning, 42*, 593-616.

Prater, D.L. & Bermúdez, A.B. (1993). Using peer response groups with limited English proficient writers. *Bilingual Research Journal, 17(1&2),* 99-109.

Romney, J.C. (1997). Collaborative learning in a translation course. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 54(1)*, 48-67.

Sacks, H. (1987). On the preferences for agreement and contiguity in sequences in conversation. In G. Button, & J.R.E. Lee, (Eds.), *Talk and social organization* (pp. 54-69). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Sacks, H. (1992/1964). Lecture 1: Rules of conversational sequence. In G. Jefferson, & E.A. Schefloff, (Eds.), *Lectures on Conversation, Volume I* (pp. 3-11). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language, 50(4),* 698-735.

Sanders, R.E. (2005). Preface to Section II: Conversation Analysis. In K. L. Fitch, & R.E. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of language and social interaction* (pp. 67-69). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schegloff, E.A. (1991). Reflections on talk and social structure. In D. Boden, & D.H. Zimmermann (Eds.), *Talk and social structure: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis* (pp. 44-70). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Schegloff, E. A. (1992). On talk and its institutional settings. In P. Drew, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings* (pp. 101-134). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Schegloff, E.A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1990). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Interaction competence* (pp.31-61). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Schegloff, E.A. & Sacks, H. (1973). Opening up closing. *Semiotica, 7,* 289-327.

Seedhouse, P. (1997). The case of the missing "no": The relationship between pedagogy and interaction. *Language Learning, 47(3),* 547-583.

Stanley, J. (1992). Coaching student writers to become effective peer evaluators. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 1,* 217-233.

Storch, N. (2001). How collaborative is pair work? ESL tertiary students composing in pairs. *Language Teaching Research, 5(1),* 29-53.

Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning, 52(1),* 119-158.

Swain, M. (2001). Integrating language and content teaching through collaborative tasks. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 58*, 44-63.

Swain, M., Brooks, L., & Tocalli-Beller, A. (2002). Peer-peer dialogue as a means of second language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 22*, 171-185.

Swain, M. & Lapkin, S. (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two adolescent French immersion students working together. *The Modern Language Journal, 82(3)*, 320-337.

ten Have, P. (1999). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide*. London, UK: Sage.

ten Have, P. (2001). Applied conversation analysis. In A. McHoul, & M. Rapley (Eds.), *How to analyse talk in institutional settings: A casebook of methods* (pp. 1-11). New York, NY: Continuum.

Verplaetse, L.S. (2000). Mr. Wonder-ful: Portrait of a dialogic teacher. In J.K. Hall, & L.S. Verplaetse (Eds), *The development of second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction* (pp. 221-242). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wagner, J. (1996). Foreign language acquisition through interaction-A critical review of research on conversation adjustments. *Journal of Pragmatics. 26,* 215-235.

Watts, R. (2003). *Politeness.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, G. (1993). Reevaluating the IRF sequence: A proposal for the articulations of theories of activity and discourse for the analysis of teaching and learning in the classroom. *Linguistics and Education, 5*, 1-37.

Wong, J. (2000a). Delayed next turn repair initiation in native/nonnative speaker English conversation. *Applied Linguistics, 21,* 274-297.

Wong, J. (2000b). The token 'yeah' in nonnative speaker English conversation. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 33,* 39-67.

Wood, J.T. (1996). She says/he says: communication, caring, and conflict in heterosexual relationship. In J.T. Wood (Ed.), *Gendered relationships* (pp. 149-162). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Zhu, W. (1995). Effects of training for peer response on students' comments and interaction. *Written Communication, 12,* 492-528.

APPENDIX A

Transcription Conventions

[	A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.
]	A single right bracket indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance-part terminates vis-à-vis another.
=	Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no "gap" between the two lines.
(0.0)	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicates a tiny 'gap' within or between utterances.
<u>Word</u>	Underscoring indicates some form of stress.
::	Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound
.	A period indicates a stopping fall in tone.
?	A question mark indicates a rising intonation
↑↓	Arrows indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow.
XX	indicates the transcriber's inability to hear what was said
( )	Parentheses contain transcriber's descriptions rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions.
Italic	*Italic indicates* utterances in Korean that were translated into English
°Word°	Degree signs indicate decreased volume
"Word"	Quotation marks set off utterances that participants quote from the text or writing assignments
heh	indicates laughter tokens

APPENDIX B

Interview Guides

1. What did you start learning English?

2. Tell me about how you learned English

3. What was an English classroom like in *Participant's native country*?

4. When did you come to the U.S.?

5. Why did you come to the U.S.? (Why did you choose *School*?)

6. Why did you take this course?

7. What other courses did you take this semester?

8. What did you expect to learn in this course?

9. What do you think about classroom activities?

10. What do you think about the writing assignments?

11. What do you think about working with other students in the class (group work)?

12. What do you think about peer feedback?

APPENDIX C

What I Do With My Free Time

What I do with my free time

When I have free time, I liked listening to music. I lie down on my bed and I am quiet for long time listening and enjoying it. I prefer quiet music. My favorites are Jazz, Reggae and Bossa Nova, but actually I listen to a wide range of music styles. I try to know about different music from all around the world. Moreover, as my boyfriend is musician, I also listen to music with him. It's a very nice and funny activity that we do together. We discuss our tastes and opinions about his music as well as about other musicians' music. We share different music knowledge and we have great time.

APPENDIX D

What I Dislike the most about *School*

What I dislike the most about U

I dislike the scale of U   It's too big! Moreover, there are ~~many~~ (too) ~~and big slopes~~ (hills). So I

cannot move easily without bus. I think we definitely need ~~cars~~ (a car) to live here, because

there is no bus on Sunday's and sometimes bus is not useful. In my university in Japan,

we use bicycles to move around ~~there~~ (hill). There is no ~~slope~~ at all. Many people use bicycles

as their transportations, so we can ~~run~~ (paddle) on the road for pedestrians (sidewalk). In other words,

bicycles are treated as pedestrians, not cars (but legally they are treated as cars). I

think this is a big difference between US and Japan. If I try to ride a bicycle here, I will

be so scary. Because I will have to ~~run~~ (paddle) on the road for cars and run as fast as cars (faster than cars). So I

~~cannot~~ (Could catch up with cars). I have another problem. It is that I don't have a driver license. As I said, we

don't need cars in my hometown. So I don't have it. Even if I (do) have it, it is too expensive

for exchange students to buy a car. In conclusion, I have to be patient. I decide to regard

walking as a good exercise.
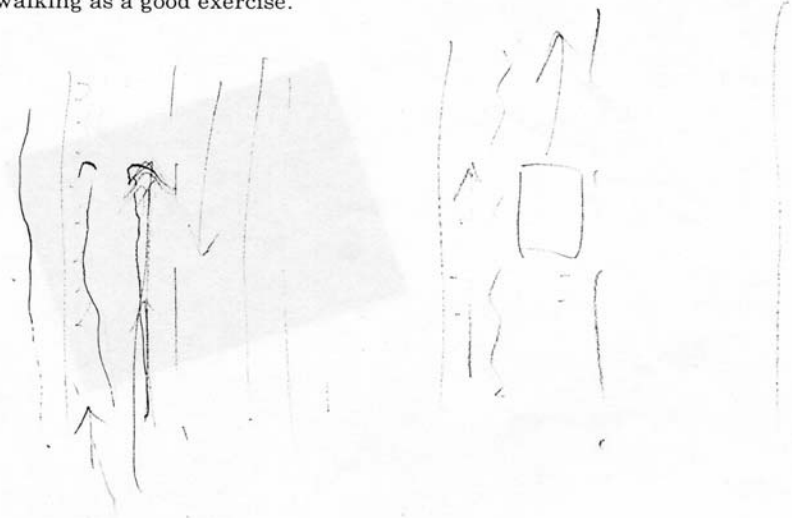
APPENDIX E

My Two Closest Friends

My Two Closest Friends,

Friendship is one of the most important things in life. It's important for everyone to have close friends, who they can rely on and entrust their deepest feelings. I want to compare the relationship between me and my two closest friends, Thorhildur and Elin. I consider them to be my closest friends because I can always rely on them when I am in trouble and entrust them everything. I think that both of them have a great personalities, and it's always fun to be with them.

Thorhildur is much taller than I am. She is also very thin and has blonde , short hair. Elin and I look much more similar. We are the same weight and height and she has as long hair as I have. Thorhildur and Elin have very different personalities and I don't behave in the same way in their presence. Thorhildur is a very independent person and she always does what she wants to do; she never let other people tell her what to do. She is one of the most determined persons that I know, and it's always hard to argue about something with her. She is a very calm person and doesn't go out very often. She is sometimes a little bit shy when there are a lot of people around and she usually prefer to be around a few people, who she knows well. Thorhildur is a very organized person and she has planned everything about her future. Elin is a very open-minded and outgoing person, She likes to be around a lot of people and to get some attention. She has a great sense of humor and she is very active, She always needs to do something and she likes to participate in social activities. Elin is very determined person and she will never relinquish her opinions about various things. My friends have also different interests. Thorhildur often seems to be older than she is. She recently bought her own apartment with her boyfriend and her main interest is to be with him and buy some new stuff for their apartment and make it prettier. She also loves to cook good food and just relax in the evening. Elin is very interested in sports. She has practiced gymnastics for more than ten years and she also loves to dance. She has participated in a few plays where she dances, and she has also worked a lot with dancing. She really likes to go out on weekends and have fun.

~~I and~~ Thorhildur have been best friends for our whole life, or approximately 20 years. She lived in the house in front of mine~~'s~~, and we began to play even before we could walk or talk. Because I have known her for so long time, I know everything about her and I also know her family very well. We have gone through good and bad times together and shared both joy and sorrow. Our relationship is based on a mutual trust and honesty. I can always talk to her about my feelings and entrust her my innermost secrets. In the last years, we have not met each other as ~~many times~~ as before because I moved to another town and we went to a different high school. ~~I even think that it~~ just made our relationship stronger and I know that we will be best friends forever. When we meet each other, we often go out to eat, go to the movies, or just talk. I first met Elin for four years ago when I started high school. We soon became best friends because we have much in common. We have almost the same opinion about everything, music, food, clothes etc.We often go out on weekends and enjoy ourselves and have fun. I can always rely on Elin, but our relationship is more based on enjoying ourselves and doing some fun things together.

Now I have described my two closest friends, Thorhildur and Elin. They have both great, but very different personalities. Thorhilfur is my more privileged friend because I have known her for so long time. Elin and I have many things in common and we spend more time together. I am very grateful and proud to have them for friends and I hope that these relationships will last forever.

APPENDIX F

My First Impression of *School*

My first impression of U

I have been here in A for two weeks. I was very excited, but still a little bit nervous to come here because I didn't know what to expect and I didn't know anybody. Even if I miss my home I think I will like it here. Everybody is so friendly and ready to help me. I like the classes, which I'm taking and find it very good to take only 13 hours per week this semester. I know some people here now, most of them are in the track team, and they are all so nice. The main reason why I decided to come here was because of the track and I like the practices here a lot. I think the campus life will be fun and I like it so much how popular athletics are here and I really want to see a football game here. It's still hard that I can't express myself as I want to and understand everything, but I think it will be much easier when I learn the English better.

APPENDIX G

What I Miss Most about My Native Country

What I miss most about my native country.

I miss my home in Iceland a lot, especially my family and friends, who I think about every day. I think I miss my mother most, because we are very close friends and I can talk to her about everything. She also cooks very good food, and I miss a lot of some "Icelandic food", especially the fish. I miss my bed also a lot, but I have a queen size bed in Iceland and I love to lie there and watch TV. I miss that also, to express myself, as I want to and to hang out with my friends in the evenings. I think everything is so confusing here, to travel between places and to know the way etc. As Iceland is a very small country, I know about everything and it doesn't take me long time to drive between places. I miss my car a lot, but I think it's very comfortable to drive anywhere when I want to.

I think it will just take me determined time to adjust these new situations here in the States.

APPENDIX H

The Differences of Raising Children in U.S. and South Korea

The Differences of Raising Children in U.S and South Korea

As an immigrant from South Korea to United States, I have faced many different ways of one's way of thinking between two different countries. There are lots of reasons to this difference but most of all I think that the different difficulty from different country comes from their childhood, how they were raised. In my case, I have seen many differences between the educations, how the parents teach their children at home, and different ways while the children's are going through little baby to become an adult.

First of all, the education system in South Korea and U.S is very different. In South Korea, the parents are really eager to give their children the best education. Most of the parents spend a big amount of money for children's tutoring or the musical lessons. It doesn't matter if their child is talented or interested, Korean parents still give them the educations they want, not what children wants. In America, the parents are willing to find what their child is talented of, in their young ages. American schools teach children how to study and encourage children to participate in several clubs, and volunteer for the social works. They really don't have much pressure on studying till they graduate from high school. However in Korea, the students are required to study really hard on their youth life. In their middle, and high school, they have to study more than fifteen hours to get into college.

In America, both of the parents have their role and responsibility of raising their children. They confer with each other, and share information about their child also cooperates. However in Korea, moms have more responsibility of raising children than dads. Most of the men works and earn money for their family and the women take care of housework and raising a child. Moms in Korea take care of raising children almost by themselves instead of cooperating and confirming with their husband.

As they raise children in America, the independence is emphasized compared to Korea. When American children become eighteen years old, the parents automatically think that they are old enough to move out. Most of American children go to the college when they are eighteen; therefore they move out to dorms or even to their own apartment. In Korea, they don't move out till they get married and have an ability to make a living. The Korean children depend on their parents too much. While parents in America give their children to make a choice and support them, Korean parents have a hue effect on their children's life such as deciding their major in college and the types of job they get.

America and South Korea is two different countries. The ways of raising children is also different and that makes a huge difference in one's way of thinking. The ways of educations are very different, but if everyone could learn good things from each country, I think the children could get a better education. The concept of independence is stringer in America than a Korea. The roles and the responsibility of each parent are different too. However, there are always things I learn from both bad and good side of everything. So if people try to get and learn the good things out of all these differences, then they would raise their children even better.

APPENDIX I

Japanese Holidays

There are 1 5 national holidays a year in Japan. As those of the United States, each of them has own meaning of being celebrated and being holiday. I would like to discuss about two main characters which compose the Japanese holidays. One specialty is that many of holidays in Japan are related to the cycle of the seasons in Buddhism like the vernal equinox day and the autumn equinox day. The other characteristic is their deep relationship with nature which can be seen in such as marine day and greenery day. Both of these characters come from people's keen sense of the seasons and the nature in relation to Japanese early life with agriculture and fishing; that has influenced our aesthetic senses and make such national holidays.

To describe how the holidays are related to cycle of seasons in Buddihism, I'd like to take two examples here. The vernal equinox day and the autumn equinox dav. The vernal equinox day occurs on about March 21, the day when the sun reaches the vernal equinox, and the length of day and night is equal. In Japan, it is designated as a national holiday for venerating nature and cherishing all kinds of life. The seven-day period, including the three days immediately before and after the vernal equinox day, is called the spring equinoctial week. In Buddhism, this week indicates "the next world" or "paradise", and during this time even those who are not Buddhist believers visit graves. They clean up the gravesites, offer flowers and incense, and mourn for the spirits of the dead. The autumn equinox day occurs around September 23 and is also a national holiday. The week in which the autumn equinox day is the middle day is called the autumn equinoctial week, during which memorial services take place at temples and people visit graves to comfort the spirits of their ancestors. On this day, like on the Vernal Equinox Day, the length of day and night is the same. This period is a boundary marking the end of the summer heat and the coming of fall.

As I mentioned in the first paragraph, Japanese holidays are also related to the nature very deeply. Especially the marine day is a special day for Japanese. As you see in the world map, Japan has been gifted from the see, which surrounds the islands. On the Pacific side, the warm Black Current flows from the south and the Kurile Current comes down from the north, meeting almost at the center of the archipelago, forming the world's three "big catch" fishing spots. And it has enrich our diet life by providing

see foods. Therefore on marine day we celebrate for the sea, and show our appreciations.

Our ancestors used to live with the gifts from the earth and the sea which has deeply related to the seasons. The climate in Japan clearly distinguishes seasons and has the highest precipitation rate even among the other temperate zone countries. With the characteristics of the seasons and the great nature, the Japanese, who are an agricultural, fishing people, have developed a keen sense of the seasons in relation to nature. And it still remains in our mind and make such national holidays.

APPENDIX J

My First Impression of *School*

My first impressions of U

When I arrived at U   , on August 2003, even with all the expectation I had, I was very well impressed about U   . I couldn't imagine there were so many trees and I was waiting for a much more cold university; no so many fountains, no hills, no stairs nor little corners. I also found very nice people who helped me a lot: classmates, teachers, leaders, U   workers, that explained me with patience where things were, what buss I should take, which documents I needed and a lot of very useful living-on-campus tips. Furthermore, as my first encounter with Residences was with the Reed Hall (during a transitory living in an orientation week), I was also very positively surprised about how neat and new were the dorms (idea that changed some week later though, when I moved to my permanent dorm on Morris Hall!). Summarizing, my first sight of U   was very positive.

APPENDIX K

Peer Feedback Sheets

Feedback on First Drafts of Comparison-Contrast Essays

NOTE: Do not pay attention to grammar errors on first drafts. Try to ignore these errors. At this stage, you just give feedback on the content and organization of the essay.

After reading your group member's draft, please write answers to the following questions, keeping in mind that the purpose of peer response is to help each other to write better. You may write on the back of the sheets if there's not enough room on the front. After you have finished writing answers, share your feedback orally with the author.

1. Does the essay's introduction clearly introduce the two things or two people that are going to be compared and/or contrasted? Does the introduction indicate whether similarities or differences or both will be focused on in the essay? Does the introduction give some sort of context for the comparison-contrast (i.e., make the reader realize *why* the two things/people are being compared and/or contrasted)?

2. Does the body of the essay have a clear comparison-contrast organization? Does it use either the block method (subject-by-subject) or the point-by-point method? If not, does it use some other overall organizational method that is effective and logical? If the organization does not have a clear comparison-contrast organization, point this out to the author. Or if it uses one method, such as block, and you think it would be more effective if it was organized using the other method (point-by-point), point this out to the author.

3. If the essay is organized using the block method, are the same points covered and in the same order within each block? If not, point these problems out to the author.

4. Are the points of comparison or contrast sequenced in a logical order? Or is there a different order you think would be more logical or more effective?

5. Are there any points of comparison or contrast that you think should not be included because they are not as important as the others or very different from the other kinds of points?

6. Is there coherence between paragraphs? Point out paragraphs that need transitions at the beginning.

7. Does each body paragraph indicate its controlling idea in the topic sentence? If not, is the controlling idea implied clearly enough in the paragraph? Tell the author what you think the controlling idea of each body paragraph is. If it's not clear what the controlling idea is, point this problem out to the author.

8. Is each body paragraph fully enough developed, with enough specific details, facts, and examples? Point out to the author any paragraphs that need further development.

9. Are there places in any paragraphs where the paragraph loses coherence or gets off the topic? Point these out.

10. Point out any places in the essay that are confusing.

11. Does the essay have a conclusion? Is it a logical conclusion, which relates to what the essay has been about? Does it make clear what the purpose of the comparison and/or contrast was (such as the insight or evaluation the author arrived at as a result of comparing and/or contrasting the two things/people)?

Stage One Feedback Sheet
(for paragraphs)

Does the paragraph have a controlling idea?

If it does, what is the controlling idea?

If the controlling idea is stated in a topic sentence, underline that sentence with a double line.

Does the author stick to the controlling idea throughout the paragraph?

If the author does not stick to the controlling idea, underline the sentences (with a single line) that do not relate to the topic.

Are the points in the paragraph organized in a logical order?

If not, can you suggest a more logical order?

Are there any generalizations that need be supporting details or examples?

If there are, what are these generalizations? Can you suggest ways the author could support them more fully?

Are there generalizations that have good support (details and examples that make the generalization more concrete)? Which ones are these?