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PEER INTERACTION DURING COLLABORATIVE WRITING AT THE 4TH/5TH GRADE LEVEL

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1984

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PEER INTERACTION DURING COLLABORATIVE WRITING AT
THE 4TH/5TH GRADE LEVEL

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

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To my beloved parents,

Cynthia and Joseph Gaeta
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The present study is concerned with oral language used by fourth and fifth grade peers in a collaborative writing setting. Any research which focuses on meaning contained in naturalistic language must consider the role of context, the set of circumstances surrounding linguistic production. According to Halliday (1973), there are three environmental determinants of text: (1) field (the subject matter and purpose); (2) tenor (the relationship between or among participants); and (3) mode (the channel of communication, oral or written). Halliday defines text as "the language people produce and react to, what they say and write, and read and listen to, in the course of daily life ... any instance of language that is operational as distinct from citational" (p. 123).

Although there are significant differences in formality and style between speech and writing, the two are interrelated in complex ways. In this regard, it is helpful to consider three functional components of the semantic system general to all contexts which Halliday terms interpersonal, ideational, and textual. The interpersonal component is the participatory function of language
wherein the speaker acts as a partaker in doing something. The ideational component is the content function of language wherein the speaker acts as an observer about something. The textual component is the potential for the creation of text; it operationalizes meanings derived from the other two functional components. Although Halliday suggests that spoken language is primarily interpersonal and written language is primarily ideational, there can be an overlap between the two functions.

A number of authorities (Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1970) espouse the view that an adequate oral language base is a prerequisite of the ability to produce written discourse. Furthermore, there is mounting evidence supporting the value of talk relative to the process of writing (Graves, 1973, 1983; Mallett and Newsome, 1977).

In the words of Britton:

The relationship of talk to writing is central to the writing process.... It is probable that of all the `things teachers are now doing to make their pupils' approach to writing more stimulating, and the writing itself seem a more integral part of the manifold activities of the classroom, it is the encouragement of different kinds of talk which is the commonest and most productive factor. (1975, p. 29)

Although there is a growing awareness of the importance of oral language in relation to the writing process, very few studies have focused directly on this area (Graves, 1973, 1981; Dyson and
Genishi, 1982; Dyson, 1983). Furthermore, the research conducted so far has been concerned mainly with children at the primary level. More needs to be known about the role of talk relative to writing at the intermediate level and whether ideational language in the oral mode can provide insights into the composing process itself. Accordingly, the present study was designed to investigate oral language use by selected fourth and fifth grade dyads while they carried out three different written assignments in a collaborative setting.

**Theoretical Framework**

Oral language is more context-bound than written language, which must be explicit to convey meaning over time and distance. Since people do not have identical past experience, and since they do not always enter into conversation with the same expectations, negotiation of meaning is necessary as participants engage in conversational turn-taking. Wells (1981) uses the term "intersubjectivity" to refer to the mutual frame of reference which must exist between speakers for meaningful communication to take place. To illustrate his point, he uses a tennis game metaphor in which each player must continually adjust strategies in relation to those of an opponent. According to Wells, the communication triad (the speaker, the sender, and the message) is vitally important because it forms the essential matrix for nearly all early learning.
Negotiation of meaning occurs even before speech is developed. In fact, Snow (1977) and Bruner (1978) have observed that mothers exhibit chains of behaviors in response to early involuntary gestures of their newborn infants. Later, when a baby's initiations do become intentional, two-way communication, termed "proto-conversation", occurs. Eventually, the triangle of communication becomes complete when both the parent and the child mutually attend to a shared object such as a toy. It appears that early social exchange games such as "peekaboo" (Ratner & Bruner, 1978) and picture-book reading (Ninio and Bruner, 1978) serve to teach infants about the reciprocity of communication and the significance of words as markers of intended meaning. Both Shugar (1978) and Wells (1981) point out that, although beginning conversations are constructed jointly, the adult must assume the responsibility for promoting interaction and elaborating on the child's responses.

Negotiation of meaning with conversational partners is a life-long activity that speakers engage in on a daily basis. However, the concept can be expanded to involve more than merely establishing a mutual frame of reference and exchanging information. According to Bruner (Bode Lecture, 1982): "Language not only transmits, it creates or constitutes knowledge of 'reality'." He went on to say: "... Social realities are not bricks that we trip over or bruise ourselves on when we kick at them, but the meanings that we achieve by
the sharing of human cognitions." Thus, in his view, much of what we know is an abstract mental construct of reality which we have shaped as a result of interaction with others.

Martin, et al. (1976), in their book entitled Understanding Children Talking, put it this way:

As individuals we have to assimilate our experiences and build them into our continuing picture of the world; as social beings we need to legitimate the world picture we are continuously constructing and maintaining. So we hold out to others -- in talk -- our observations, discoveries, reflections, opinions, attitudes, and values, and the responses we receive in the course of these conversations profoundly affect both the world picture we are creating and our view of ourselves. Seen thus, all talk is significant and is the chief means by which we develop as individual and social beings. (p. 15)

Negotiation of meaning is a concept which has far-reaching implications for education. Implicit in this view is the idea that interactive language is essential to learning and that teachers, rather than being merely dispensers of factual information, should be facilitators of learning by allowing children to exercise their minds and voice their opinions. Barnes (1976) says that talk is important because "it is a major means by which learners explore the relationship between what they already know and new observations or interpretations which they meet" (p. 81). In his opinion, "The more a learner controls his own language strategies and the more he is
enabled to think aloud, the more he can take responsibility for forming explanatory hypotheses and evaluating them" (p. 29).

Another concept relative to conversational learning is "scaffolding". This term was first used by Bruner (1975) in describing how parents intentionally create temporary verbal structures to facilitate meaning for their children. As a child becomes able to participate more fully in social exchange, the need for this support diminishes. Gradually, initial parental structures self-destruct, thus making way for more elaborate ones. Cazden (in press) has described how interactional learning can take place through "vertical constructions," in which an adult asks a child for additional new information in each utterance. This particular type of scaffolding has what Bruner calls a "ratchet-like" quality. The adult's role is to focus attention on each previous utterance while encouraging the child to say more.

Bruner's idea of scaffolding is closely allied to Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" which the latter defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with peers" (p. 86). The educational significance of this concept is, again in Vygotsky's words: "What the child can
do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore, the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it: it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions" (p. 104).

The old adage that "two heads are better than one" seems to be substantiated in research findings that support peer interaction as a means to problem solving and learning (Johnson, 1981; Slavin, 1981). In discussing the results of a recent study of 4th and 5th graders, Forman and Cazden (in press) conclude:

In tasks where experimental evidence was being generated and where managerial skills were required, by assuming complementary problem-solving roles, peers could perform tasks together before they could perform them alone. The peer observer seemed to provide some kinds of "scaffolding" assistance that others have attributed to the adults in teaching contexts. (p. 36)

In sum, the value of oral language in general and peer interaction in particular have important implications for education. Language use can exert a powerful influence on what kind of learning takes place in the classroom (Olson, 1977; Mehan, 1979).

As stated previously, the present study is concerned specifically with peer interaction in a collaborative writing setting. In order to provide necessary background, relevant aspects of research in written composition will now be presented.
In recent years there has been burgeoning interest in writing due to increasing demands for literacy, on one hand, and concern over students' ability to write, on the other. The National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (1975) indicated a marked decline in writing skills between 1969 and 1974. Students' difficulty was not associated with mechanics such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but rather with producing well-formed sentences and coherent paragraphs. According to The New York Times (September 10, 1977), the New York State Board of Regents announced that four out of five eighth, ninth, and tenth graders failed or nearly failed a writing competency test which merely required them to write a simple business letter and a 150-word composition. At the college level, there has been a dramatic rise in the need for remediation in written composition. According to Wheeler (1979), nearly half the incoming freshmen at the University of California, Berkley, are required to take remedial writing courses. At The Ohio State University, the figure is between 20 and 25 percent. The concern over writing has been so widespread that even the popular press has run such articles as "Why Kids Can't Write" (Reader's Digest, April, 1981).

A number of reasons have been suggested to explain the apparent decline of writing ability in U.S. schools. Among them are: the
testing movement with its reliance on multiple-choice questions; the increased use of textbooks which de-emphasize the subject; and lack of adequate teacher training (Whiteman, 1980). In addition to these reasons, there exists the question of whether students in classrooms across the country are being given ample opportunity to write coherent, connected discourse. Graves (1978), in his Ford Foundation Study, observed that very little holistic writing was being done in schools; children were being taught about writing rather than being allowed to engage in the process. At the secondary level, Applebee (1980) concluded that only three percent of students' time was spent in the generation of extended written discourse.

The value of writing goes beyond the fact that it is a more-or-less permanent form of communication. The very act of composing itself can be beneficial to the writer by helping to bring about self-awareness and discovery of thought. The writing process requires a person to reflect upon what is stored in memory, to select and re-organize information, and to formulate, or possibly reformulate ideas; it entails taking a stance. In the words of Frank Smith (1982), "We find out what we think when we write, and in the process put thinking to work -- and increase its possibilities" (p. 35).

Moffett (1979) has cautioned that the word "writing" carries with it ambiguous meaning. At one extreme, it can merely refer to
drawing and handwriting, while at the other, it can denote the verbal manifestation of highly abstract thought. Moffett's view that students should be encouraged to develop greater originality in composition concurs with the N.A.E.P. Report entitled "Reading, Thinking, and Writing" (1981) which was based on the written productions of 100,000 nine, thirteen, and seventeen year olds. The subjects were asked to read a literary passage, answer multiple-choice items, and then write responses to either an open-ended or focused question. Langer (1982) summarizes the results as follows:

The National Assessment findings indicated that while students of all ages were able, by and large, to comprehend a wide range of passages, could form their own judgments about the work (whether it was good or bad), and could make superficial literary references to such things as the character's motivations or behavior, they appeared, across all ages, to have difficulty examining, elaborating, or explaining their ideas. (p. 337)

Although the amount of research in writing has mushroomed of late, there is still much that remains to be explored. In reviewing the literature, Staton (1981) remarks that findings to date

(have) told us far more about the expectations and constraints created by the schools than about the nature and development of writing. We know what young writers do
under typical composition-writing circumstances, but we do not know much about what they can do, nor about the strategies and constraints inherent in the act of composing written text. (p. v)

Prior to Emig's (1971) study, research in writing concentrated on product rather than process. Using a case study approach, she elicited data about writing behaviors of selected 12th grade students by asking them to compose aloud. Upon analysis of her findings, Emig concluded that her subjects engaged in two separate modes of composing: reflexive (self-sponsored) and extensive (school-sponsored), which differed in function and intended audience. In reviewing the literature, students' writing autobiographies, and results of a questionnaire sent to professional writers, she ascertained that a disparity existed between how writing was being taught in schools and how the process actually took place. Good writing, then was not simply a matter of following guidelines in a textbook.

Britton et al. (1975) studied the writing of 11-18 year olds in England. Their major concern was with function of language and sense of audience. On the basis of data gathered in the writing project, Britton was able to delineate a model of language functions which included three basic categories: expressive, transactional, and poetic. The investigators in this study view the development of children's writing as a process of differentiation through which the ability to handle a variety of written tasks increased over time. Largely due to constraints in the classroom, they found that students were not engaging in the full range of writing options open to them.
Britton et al. describe the writing process as occurring in three stages. The first stage, conception, encompasses making the decision to write and, basically, what to write about; the second stage, incubation, involves the development of ideas; finally, the third stage, production, entails the actual writing of words on paper. In practice, however, it is difficult to separate these three activities, as the writing process is recursive in nature.

While Britton's work was being conducted in England, Graves (1973) completed a dissertation investigating the written composition processes of seven year olds, thereby expanding the scope of research to include the primary level. This was an important study because it was the first to investigate what second graders actually did when they wrote. Using a case study approach, Graves was able to shed light on the relevance of context in writing. He found that, if given the opportunity, young children were capable of expressing themselves in written form even without knowing all the conventions of handwriting, spelling, and punctuation. Graves describes three phases in a single writing episode as follows: prewriting (period preceding actual writing); composing (period beginning and ending with writing of the message); and postwriting (period encompassing behaviors following the initial completion of the message). From his data, he was able to identify two distinct types of writers: reactive (children who showed erratic problem-solving strategies and needed oral rehearsal in order to write) and reflective (children who required little oral rehearsal and who had a growing sense
of audience). Later, in a greatly expanded study (N.I.E., 1981), Graves observed subjects in five primary classrooms. In his words, "The writing process in this study was defined as a series of operations leading to the solution of a problem. The process begins when the writer consciously or unconsciously starts a topic and is finished when the written piece is published. One of his major conclusions was that the writing process "is highly idiosyncratic and varies within the writer from day to day" (p. 6). In his estimation, the best way for a teacher to help pupils is through the "scaffolding-conference" approach wherein temporary, structured guidance is given where needed throughout the three phases of the writing episode.

Both Moffett (1968) and Britton (1970) concur that the ability to sustain oral language is a necessary antecedent of producing written discourse. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1980), who have been concerned with the cognitive demands of writing in their research, agree. They have found that one of the biggest obstacles that beginning writers must overcome is sustaining discourse without the aid of a conversational partner. It is not that children lack words or knowledge of the world, but rather that they can not make use of an executive function in conducting metamemorial search, in planning, and in revising when engaged in writing as a solitary activity.

Graves' observations have provided ample evidence of the importance of oral language relative to the writing process. Not only is teacher-student interaction significant, but peer talk can be beneficial to the development of writing abilities as well.
Graves (1982) was able to cite many examples of how primary children helped one another in all three phases of the composing process. The idea of using a teacher-directed conference approach can be extended successfully to include peer conferencing, especially when pupils are trained to respond appropriately to other students' oral and written language. Crowhurst (1979) reported positive results from using this technique at the fifth grade level.

Moffett and Wagner (1976) not only advocate the concept of peer conferencing in response to individually written compositions (they use the term "writing workshop"), but they argue in favor of collective writing which is accomplished when a small group of students work together to produce a single piece of writing. In their words, "it is an appropriate process from the early years of schooling right up through secondary school" (p. 153). It provides a context for students to share perceptions, feelings, and ideas while working on a common writing task as well as a means of getting immediate feedback.

Dyson and Genishi (1982) found that children's interaction had positive effects on ability to write at the first grade level. When a six-year-old boy was asked whether he liked writing alone, he replied, "I'd rather write with the other kids 'cause I get sort of lonely" (p. 128). Much of the cited peer interaction in this study revolved around how to spell words that were needed by the children in their writing.

Kamler (1980), after observing in one of Graves' classrooms, reported an example of how a seven-year-old girl was helped with
the revision of her writing by the mere presence of a student partner. While reading her piece aloud to the pupil beside her, she was able to develop a sense of audience which hitherto had been lacking. Subsequently, she was able to rewrite her composition with the reader in mind.

That children are capable of helping one another underscores their role as active learners and their value as classroom resources. However, this is not to minimize the crucial role of the teacher, who establishes the atmosphere for learning and who serves as both the facilitator and the role model.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study was to investigate oral language used by 4th and 5th grade dyads in a collaborative writing setting.

Specific questions under investigation were as follows:
1. What is the role of talk during collaborative writing?
2. How does the nature of the writing assignment affect the oral language that is produced?
3. When a distinction is made between more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers on the basis of their written productions, is there a corresponding difference in their use of oral language?
4. How are boys and girls similar/different in their production of oral and written language?
Definition of Terms Used in This Study

A Collaborative Writing Setting. A situation in which subjects are free to interact while carrying out a written assignment, either jointly or singly. All of the oral language transcripts in this study were derived from collaborative writing settings.

Collective Writing. This term is used by Wagner and Moffett (1976) to describe written discourse which is constructed jointly (two pupils produce one text between them).

Parallel Writing. Written discourse which evolves singly after joint conversation (two pupils produce two individual texts on the same subject).

Procedures of the Study

Following a pilot study, five pairs of selected fourth and fifth graders in an informal school were audio tape recorded while they were carrying out each of three different writing tasks in a collaborative setting outside their classroom. A brief description of the assignments appears below:

Task #1: Ending sentence (collective writing). Subjects were asked to compose jointly a beginning to a story which had the following ending: "Vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle, where he lived happily ever after."
Task #2: Free Choice (collective writing). Subjects were asked to select a topic of mutual interest and discuss it before jointly constructing one written text. Genre was not specified in the assignment.

Task #3: Response to Literature (parallel writing). Subjects were asked to select a book they had mutually enjoyed and to discuss it before writing individual responses. Type of response was determined by the writer.

Following the assigned writing tasks, dyads were given the opportunity to reread their products and make any improvements they thought necessary. At a later time, the researcher informally interviewed each of the dyads to better understand subjects' general perceptions of writing. After the audio tapes were transcribed, qualitative analysis relating oral language to written productions was conducted.

Limitations of the Study

This study is exploratory in nature. There have been no similar examples of research from which to draw. Limitations include the following:

1. The small population sample (n = 10) does not support generalizability.

2. Writing did not occur in the natural context of the classroom.
3. The range of writing is limited to the three assignments given.

4. Since only audio tape recordings were made, some significant nonverbal behavior may have been lost.

5. The validity of the analysis was dependent upon the ability of the researcher to understand the context in which utterances were produced.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Due to the complex interrelatedness of language, thought and learning, this chapter has been divided into sections for organizational clarity. First, consideration will be given to the role of language in thought and learning. Next, the nature of language and its acquisition will be discussed to provide background since oral language is the antecedent of writing. Research in sociolinguistics and cooperative learning will follow. Finally, the transition from oral to written language will be presented prior to a section on research in writing.

**Language in Relation to Thought and Learning**

Language is not only a means of communication, but it is a valuable tool of thought. According to Britton (1970), "Language serves to reduce to order the multiplicity and variousness of human experience" (p. 204). Language enables the mind to classify and organize experiential representation. In Britton's words, "The primary task for speech is to symbolize reality: we symbolize in order to handle it" (p. 20).

The relationship of thought and language has been the subject of intellectual conjecture for a long time. To Watson (1924), speaking and thinking aloud were synonymous. This idea was based on his
observations of the way people, including children, verbalized their thoughts. Whorf, together with Sapir, formed a hypothesis of linguistic relativity. They theorized that language determines how speakers view the world and that it is responsible for shaping experiences, emotions, and thoughts. According to Whorf (1956):

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flex of impressions which has to be organized by our minds--and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way--an agreement that holds through our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. (pp. 213-214)

Piaget (1967) was convinced that the rudiments of intelligent behavior begin to appear before language develops. In his words:

Intelligence actually appears well before language, that is to say, well before internal thought, which presupposes the use of verbal signs (internalized language). It is an entirely practical intelligence based on the manipulation of objects; in place of words and concepts it uses percepts and movements organized into "action schema." For example, to grab a stick in order to draw up a remote object is an act of intelligence (and a late developing one at that: about eighteen months). Here an instrument, the means to an end, is coordinated with a preestablished goal.... Many other examples could be cited. (p. 11)

In Piaget's view, then, conceptual development in children comes about as a result of sensory experience and increasing maturity. Language,
however, serves to increase the range and rapidity of thought.

Vygotsky (1962) puts forth the theory that speaking and thinking develop as two separate or parallel processes which later become interrelated. According to him, early speech is not rational, and early thinking is not verbal. Later, when the relationship of words to things is internalized, convergence between thought and language takes place. Piaget and Vygotsky differ in their appraisal of egocentric speech. Piaget was of the opinion that there is a progression from autistic to socialized speech. According to him, egocentric speech serves no immediate purpose and eventually atrophies. Vygotsky, on the other hand, found evidence that egocentric speech takes on a directing, planning function in raising acts to a level of purposeful behavior. To him, egocentric speech is a transitional stage in the evolution from vocal to inner speech. He posits that it does not disappear, but rather that it goes "underground". According to him, the early speech of a child is social; at first it is global and then later, it becomes differentiated. Egocentric speech splinters off from social speech and leads to inner speech, which serves both autistic and logical thinking. In Vygotsky's view, inner speech, which works on semantics, not phonetics, is thinking in pure meanings. Thought must pass through meanings and then through words. From his perspective:

Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by
the sociocultural experience of the child.... The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language. (p. 51)

Bruner (1964) conceptualizes thinking as the ability to process and integrate information. Processing occurs through three systems: action (enactive representation), imagery, and language. Action provides the foundation for imagery which, in turn, lays the groundwork for language or symbolic representation. How information from representation is organized and integrated affects how one thinks. Mosenthal (1975) succinctly summarizes this process as follows:

In brief, when a person actively constructs or thinks, he or she does so by relating incoming information to a previously acquired psychological frame of reference. This frame of reference gives meaning and organization to the regularities in experience and enables the individual to go beyond the information given. While this psychological frame of reference largely dictates how one's symbolic representation is structured, one's culture and its structuring by its symbolic representation do influence the form this frame of reference assumes. As each individual has a unique set of experiences, each person has a personal frame of reference for thinking about the world. Because each culture has its own way of symbolically representing reality, each culture shares a common frame of reference for thinking about reality. Thus, this approach constitutes a synthesis between those who hold that speaking dictates thinking and those who claim that thinking dictates speaking. (p. 310)

In his book, From Communication to Curriculum, Douglas Barnes (1976) makes the following distinction:
There is an important difference between arguing that the development of cognition depends on the development of language—an assertion which Piaget has firmly rejected—and arguing that speech enables us to control thought. It is the second of these which is at the heart of this book. Sapir, Vygotsky, and Bruner hold this in common: they all see language both as a means by which we learn to take part in the life of the communities we belong to, and a means by which we can actively reinterpret the world about us, including that life itself. Through language we both receive a meaningful world from others and at the same time make meanings by re-interpreting that world to our own ends. (p. 101)

Tough (1976) points out that although Piaget's and Vygotsky's views are often presented in opposition, they can be seen in the light of compatibility. She agrees with Piaget that the child's experiences can provide a basis for language development. She also accepts Vygotsky's idea that as adults use language with children, they influence both actions and values. Tough explains that when an adult draws a child's attention to something, the language used serves both to impart a particular perspective and to encourage alertness.

To extend this line of thinking further, Bruner (Bode Lecture, 1982) observed that language, the medium of exchange in which education is conducted, can never be neutral. In his opinion, it not only imposes a perspective in which things are viewed, but a stance toward what is viewed. He suggested that most of our encounters with the world are not direct, but highly symbolic. In his view,
the meaning of social concepts lies in interpersonal negotiation. Thus, culture is dynamic rather than static because, in his words, "it is constantly in the process of being created and recreated as it is interpreted and renegotiated by its members." His belief that education should include negotiating and recreating meaning runs counter to the philosophy that the sole purpose of education is the transmission of knowledge.

Mowat (1977) extols the value of talk from the standpoint of expanding and organizing thought. He was one of the authors of the Language in the Classroom Project at the University of Calgary, which was an attempt to bridge theory and practice. Mowat argues that through talk we help one another think. By exchanging ideas, we can broaden our perspectives and make more connections in ordering our personal understanding of the world.

Talk also serves as a means of clarifying one's own thinking. In the words of Britton (1982):

To embark on a conversational utterance is to take on a certain responsibility to stake a claim that calls for justification; and perhaps it is the social pressure on the speaker to justify his claim that gives talk an edge over silent brooding as a problem-solving procedure. (p. 139)

According to Barnes (1976), the principal means by which children formulate knowledge and relate it to their lives is through speech and writing. He points out that language is important
because it makes thought processes available for introspection and revision. Barnes cautions, however, that this type of learning cannot take place in a "silent classroom" where the teacher does all the talking and the students are regarded as passive recipients of information. Children need time to relate new input to that which they already have in memory.

To summarize this section, language is an important tool of thought. Interaction with others both through speech and writing helps us to construct our individual versions of reality and to better understand our role in the world. In regard to education, how both oral and written language are used in the classroom can have a profound impact on what is learned by students.

The Nature of Language and Its Acquisition

The pervasiveness of language in daily living is often overlooked. In an address at the Language in Education Conference at The Ohio State University, Shuy (1982) said the following:

Often the things closest to us are the most invisible. Virtually every activity of life is conducted in language, yet we seldom recognize language as an important medium for delivering service in department stores or dry cleaning establishments, for delivering medical care in hospitals or doctors' offices, for determining justice in the courts, or, sadly enough, for educating our children. In these and in all other activities of life, language is the essential foundation for exchanging information, offering opinions or advice, determining the facts upon which decisions are made, requesting the unknown, and even reasoning through personal or abstract problems.
Shuy, further along in his talk, characterized language as being a holistic, constructivist, functional, natural, self-generated, and context-relevant activity. In support of this long string of adjectives, research has firmly established the fact that by the time children enter school, they are competent language users in their own speech community, having tacitly internalized most of the underlying grammatical and social rules in the first five years of their lives. Language learning cannot be attributed to imitation alone for the reasons that children are capable of uttering sentences that they have never before heard and that, in their development, they typically overgeneralize. An example of the latter would be a child's use of "goed" to represent the past tense of "go", a form not used by adults.

Oral language is learned through use in context, and it is only in light of context that it can be fully understood. As long ago as 1923, Malinowski, an anthropologist studying the Trobriand Islanders in Melanesia, wrote:

> the conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile. A statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered... Utterances and situation are bound up inextricably with each other, and the context of situation is indispensible for the understanding of words. (p. 467)
That Malinowski was ahead of his time is evidenced by the fact that the study of pragmatics, or functions of language, did not become popular until nearly half a century later.

Halliday (1975), after observing the linguistic development of his own son, identified seven functions of language which are inherent in the process of learning how to mean. They are as follows: (1) instrumental language (to satisfy material needs); (2) regulatory language (to control the behavior of others); (3) interactional language (to get along with others); (4) personal language (to give expression of the self); (5) imaginative language (to pretend); (6) heuristic language (to learn about and explore the natural world); and (7) informative language (to tell others what one knows).

In order to become effective communicators in conversation, children must also internalize underlying social rules. Grice (1975) has identified four maxims of conversational implicature which are as follows: (1) quantity: say only as much as is necessary for understanding the communication; (2) quality: say only what is true; (3) relevance: say only what is relevant; (4) clarity: be clear.

Mastery of a language entails knowing proper usage in a wide range of social settings along the formality to informality continuum (Joos, 1967). "Register switching," or changing the way one speaks according to the circumstances, is considered a language
universal. As mentioned earlier, appropriate use is determined by the intersection of field, tenor, and mode. An example of register switching would be the difference between the way a student would address a university president and a peer. In the former instance, much more formal language would be expected. Hymes (1972) coined the term "communicative competence" which refers to the ability to use language appropriately in differing situations. It is important to note that appropriate language use can vary from culture to culture. As in the case of language functions, children need experience in a variety of settings in order to develop a repertoire of usage.

Sociolinguistic Research at Home and at School

The current wave of sociolinguistic research had its beginnings in the 1970's when interest focused on children's language at home and at school. A number of studies have been relative to infants and their mothers. For example, Snow (1977) found that mothers adopted a conversational model in interacting face-to-face with their three-to-eighteen-month-old babies. Even though the infants were incapable of carrying on a conversation per se, the mothers behaved as if they were, often adjusting their speech according to specific circumstances. For example, Snow observed that maternal utterances diminished when babies were feeding, a time when they, as potential conversational partners, couldn't naturally respond.
Bruner (1978) found significance in the language which accompanied "ritualized or routine transactions" involving parents and infants. In a game involving a pop-up clown, for instance, he was able to identify a meaningful, repetitive structure: (1) show, (2) disappear, (3) reappear, and (4) Isn't that fun? Once the sequence was established, words were added to mark stages of the pattern. Eventually, the child was able to initiate the game himself. Bruner argues that such social exchange games help to teach infants about the give and take of communication and to make them attend to words as markers of intended meaning.

The importance of the adult's role in augmenting the child's language and learning has been espoused by Wells (1981) who conducted a longitudinal study of young children in their homes and at school. Upon analysis of his data, he found a relationship between the extent to which parents accepted and extended a child's language and his/her subsequent level of linguistic development at the time of school entrance. Wells determined that children varied in their rate of development, but not in the order in which they acquired linguistic systems and sub-systems. The most important influence on rate of language development was quality, not quantity of conversation that the child experienced. Parents of the fast developers more frequently acknowledged their children's remarks, extended meanings, and directed behavior through speech. On the basis of his findings,
Wells concludes that the most helpful preschool language curriculum is one which fosters child-initiated conversation arising from practical activity. On the basis of her research, Tough (1974) also emphasizes the significance of the adult role in providing children with "an invitation to talk" in order to foster their language and learning. These studies exemplify the importance of negotiating meaning and scaffolding, which were described earlier, in helping children to learn.

More sociolinguistic studies conducted in schools have focused on teacher-student interaction than student-student interaction. This is understandable in light of the fact that the teacher controls what goes on in the learning environment particularly in a traditional setting. Mehan et al. (1976) analyzed the structure of teacher-child interaction and found a recurrent sequential pattern: (1) teacher's initiation; (2) child's reply; and (3) teacher's evaluation. He observed that in a traditional classroom lessons are made up of these sequences linked together by a common instructional topic. Furthermore, Mehan has found evidence of the collaborative nature of teaching and learning. He points out that both the teacher and the children interpret classroom events from their own viewpoints. DeStefano, Pepinsky and Sanders (1982) call this process the "social construction of reality": 
In this view of things, students and teacher come to the classroom with prior intentions and expectations. Through their use of language, they signal their expectations, influence one another reciprocally, and establish ground rules that define social policies to guide them further in their interactions. Ideally in the process, they attain a common knowledge and understanding that enable them to work together to minimize perceived discrepancies between actual and desired states-of-affairs. (p. 103)

In their analysis of oral language interaction in a first grade classroom, however, these researchers found evidence that the teacher provided very few open bids (where anyone could respond) for initiating pupils' talk. Consequently, the subjects had relatively little to say to her. In their whispering to one another, however, peers spoke at greater length and in a more complicated manner. In his study, Wells (1981) also found that children rarely initiate conversation at school, although they often do so at home.

Rosen and Rosen (1973) believe that much can be learned from monitoring children's talk. In their words:

> We have learnt that we must be listening posts, if for no other reason than that there is no other way of tuning in to what children make of their world, of us and of each other. We cannot care for children and not care about and cherish their most human quality. (p. 42)

There is growing curiosity in child-child interaction, although it is more difficult to study because predictable role structure is
lacking. Despite the fact that preschool children are usually considered to be largely egocentric in their speech, Arnold (1980) writes, "It is clear that parents, educators, and researchers have underestimated both the skills young children have for communicating with each other, and their interest in doing so" (p. 213).

On the basis of two studies contrasting the language of three and four year olds in a supermarket and a classroom setting, Dore (1978) concluded that differences in conversational features could be explained by situational variations. Such factors as status and number of participants, adult-child ratio, and nature of task affected language use. Dore observed that child-child interactions were not as complex as teacher-child communication. However, Corsaro (1978) found evidence in her study that young children may perceive social situations differently from adults and act accordingly. Thus, communication between and among young peers may be more complex than previously presumed.

Insofar as older children are concerned, it has been found that peer interaction provides a rich opportunity for developing communicative strategies. The following studies are examples of recent research in this area.

Wilkinson and Dollaghan (1979) investigated peer communication in first grade reading groups to learn about the communicative
processes by which children pursue their academic tasks and regulate their interpersonal behavior. In their words:

The data from the peer group contexts discussed in this report clearly demonstrate that children are engaged in trying and discarding a variety of strategies to meet communicative goals. Dyadic interactions with the teacher rarely provide such concentrated practice or opportunities for experimentation. (p. 274)

Peer interaction can contribute to cognitive growth even in the care of very young children. However, their behaviors don't always match adult expectations.

In her study of children between three and five, Cooper (1980) was able to document a significant increase in the productiveness of peer interaction for problem-solving. She found that the key to more successful collaboration was adequate vocabulary, both for labeling objects and for relational concepts. However, Cooper also discovered that the children's use of language did not always correspond to adult referential meanings. For instance, some subjects designated blocks of identical size as "big" and "little."

That young children can influence one another's thinking is demonstrated by yet another study. Copple et al. (1981) examined interactions which took place while preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade children were drawing. She was able to identify four types of peer interaction that influenced drawing behavior. On the
basis of her data, she posits that peer questions and critiques may promote a tendency in some children to take a reflective stance toward their drawings. It appears that how peers relate to one another varies according to grade level and individual differences.

Cooper, Marquis and Ayers-Lopez (1982) monitored peer learning in two open classrooms, one at kindergarten and the other at second grade level. They conclude that the younger children had more ready access to others in their class in contrast to the older subjects who remained in a network of close relationships. More significant, however was the variation among individuals:

... admission to peer learning exchanges is not as automatic as we might suppose. Children are involved to widely varying degrees in this giving and receiving process as it occurs within the complex stream of classroom interaction. These differences in how children bridge the gap from the individual tasks of mastery to participation in the interpersonal life of the classroom can be seen as some children only bemoan to themselves their frustrations and failures, whereas others advertise their new insights, offer unsolicited corrections, and coordinate apprenticeships, partnerships, or arguments. (p. 79)

How peers perform in teaching roles was the subject of the following investigation. Cazden et al. (1979) examined instructional chains wherein one child taught another child or group of children a task designated by an adult teacher. The subjects were from a first-second-third grade classroom of black and Chicano children. The researchers focused on how the tutors presented
information and how they were able to deal with interpersonal relationships. Analysis of speech and nonverbal behavior revealed that subjects negotiated their roles as teachers, although they didn't always have the same notion of the teaching function as adults.

Cazden (1979) has argued in favor of the educational significance of scaffolding which usually involves an adult assisting a child. However, in a theoretical paper she wrote with Forman (in press), evidence is cited that fourth and fifth graders were capable of providing scaffolds for one another while working on science-related problem-solving tasks. Peers were able to perform successfully in pairs before they were able to do so alone. Although curricular teaching must ultimately be grounded in adult-child interactions, the role of the peer in learning should not be underestimated. Drawing on Vygotskyian perspectives, Forman and Cazden (in press) write: "... peer (and cross-age) relationships can function as intermediate transforming contexts between social and external adult-child interactions and the individual child's inner speech" (p. 38). In contrasting one-on-one learning situations in the home and what typically takes place in classrooms, they explain:

In school lessons, teachers ask questions and children answer them, frequently with only a word or a phrase. Most importantly, these roles are not reversible, at least not within the context of teacher-child interactions. Children
never give directions to teachers, and questions addressed to teachers are rare except for asking permission. The only context in which children can reverse interactional roles with the same intellectual content, giving directions as well as following them, and asking questions as well as answering them, is with their peers. (in press, p. 38)

Levin and Feldman (1979) conducted a study of peer interaction at the fifth grade level relative to Piaget's concept of equilibration in the development of map drawing ability. (Equilibration is defined as an internal self-regulating system that functions to reconcile the roles of maturation, experience, and social interaction.) In the words of Levin and Feldman:

Peer interaction seems to be well suited for the study of equilibration. Children's discussions as they work on a cooperative activity can provide information about the kinds of cognitive confusions and dilemmas which may then lead to advances in performance. In addition, there is some evidence that situations which encourage confrontations between a subject's own stage and information representing more advanced stages are more likely to facilitate advance than other more passive forms of exposure. As partners work cooperatively on a problem which requires agreement, less advanced children may be required to accommodate to the more advanced techniques their partners are using. (p. 2)
Peer interaction is not only suitable for problem-solving, but for socialization as well.

Barnes and Todd (1977) studied adolescent peer interaction during assigned discussions of school topics. The subjects not only engaged in successful collaborative learning, but they occasionally displayed impressive cognitive and social abilities as well. Barnes and Todd argue that "to place responsibility in the learners' hands changes the nature of that learning by requiring them to negotiate their own criteria of relevance and truth" (p. 127).

Research on Cooperative Learning

Slavin (1981) has written an extensive synthesis of research on cooperative learning. There are not only cognitive, but affective advantages as well. In his words:

The positive outcomes discussed earlier on student learning, intergroup relations, mainstreaming, and self-esteem have been studied most extensively in the cooperative learning research because they are highly important outcomes of schooling. However, there is a wide range of other outcomes that have also been studied in this research. Not surprisingly, most evaluations of cooperative learning have found that students who work
together like school more than those who are not allowed to do so. They also like other students more. Students who have worked cooperatively are more likely to be altruistic and to believe that cooperation is good. They are also likely to say they want their classmates to do well in school and that they feel their classmates want them to do well. (p. 659)

To conclude this section by way of a general summary, Johnson (1981) lists the following reasons in support of student-student interaction:

1. Peer relationships influence educational aspirations and achievement.

2. Peer relationships contribute to the socialization of values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving the world.

3. Peer relationships are prognostic indicators of future psychological health.

4. It is within peer relationships that students learn the social competencies necessary to reduce social isolation.

5. Peer relationships influence the occurrence or non-occurrence of potential problem behaviors in adolescence such as the use of illegal drugs.
6. Peer relationships provide a context in which children learn to master aggressive impulses.

7. Peer relationships contribute to the development of sex-role identity.

8. Peer relationships contribute to the emergence of perspective taking abilities.

9. Peer relationships influence attitudes toward school. (pp. 5-6)

**The Transition from Oral to Written Language**

Historically, there have been differing views concerning the interrelationship of oral and written language. Bloomfield (1933), a spokesman of American structuralism in linguistics, wrote: "Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks" (p. 21). Vygotsky (1962), on the other hand, saw speaking and writing as separate functions:

Our investigation has shown that the development of writing does not repeat the developmental history of speaking. Written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction. It is speech in thought and image only, lacking the musical, expressive, intonational qualities of oral speech. In learning to write, the child must disengage himself from the sensory aspect of speech and replace words by images of words. Speech that is merely imagined and that requires symbolization of the sound image in written signs (i.e., a second degree of symbolization) naturally must be as much harder than oral speech for the child as algebra is harder than arithmetic. (pp. 98-99)
Currently, there is general agreement with Vygotsky that although speaking and writing are interrelated, they are two separate modes of discourse in which different linguistic and stylistic conventions are observed. Basically, talk relies on paralinguistic cueing and features of the immediate context to convey meaning, whereas writing must be relatively context-free to remain comprehensible to others at a different time and in another place. Speech is fleeting and perishable, but writing, which is of a more permanent nature, can be scrutinized and revised.

Although early writing resembles "speech written down", more advanced written discourse is distinct from oral language. Making the transition from speech to writing is often difficult for beginning writers. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) argue that "the oral language production system cannot be carried over intact into written composition, that it must, in some way, be reconstructed to function autonomously instead of interactively" (p. 2).

According to Olson and Torrance (1981), there are two major factors in the transition from oral to written language. The first is relative to the realignment of functions: "The plurifunctionality of oral language--the conflation of interpersonal and ideational functions in speech may be contrasted with the differentiation and specialization of those functions in writing" (p. 235). The second factor is the relation between what was said and what was intended:
"Whereas in oral language, the former is one among several transparent clues to the latter, in writing it comes to be an autonomous and explicit and opaque meaning in its own right which may or may not be an adequate representation of an intention" (p. 235).

According to Collins (1981), weak writers characteristically produce writing through the mediation of spoken language. In addition, since they have not yet mastered making meaning explicit in text, their written productions are frequently context bound. In contrast, Green and Morgan (1981) describe a good writer as "one who is aware of the reader's disadvantage in not being able to interrupt and let the writer know that the exposition isn't being followed, and who is able to take compensating adjustments in presentation." (p. 187)

Moffett (1968) and Britton (1970) concur that the first step in learning to write is to be able to sustain discourse without the aid of a conversational partner. The former writes that in moving from dialogue to monologue, the speaker must begin "to enchain his utterances according to some logic" (p. 85).

Relative to logical considerations, Olson (1977) makes the
following distinction between "utterances" which are informal oral language statements, and "texts" which he defines as explicit prose statements. Whereas an utterance may be considered true if it seems reasonable, truth of a text rests in its internal relations. In his words:

Conventional utterances appeal for their meaning to shared experiences and interpretations, that is, to a common intuition based on shared common-sense knowledge... prose text, on the other hand, appeals to premises and rules of logic for deriving implications. Whether or not the premise corresponds to common sense is irrelevant. All that is critical is that the premises are explicit and the inferences correctly drawn. The appeal is formal rather than intuitive. (p. 104)

Olson argues that both on the individual and cultural levels, there has been a development from language as utterance to language as text. According to him, written texts in a literate society carry great authority and serve an important archival function in preserving societal knowledge, that from which the rules of thought and action can be derived.

Stubbs (1980) acknowledges the chronological priority of spoken language, but he goes on to point out the social priority of written language:

It is clear, then, that we have to distinguish between social and chronological priorities in order to recognize that once a written language has developed in a community, it characteristic­ally takes on something of a life of its own,
and characteristically is regarded by its users as important and often superior as a form of language. (p. 30)

Relative to the consequences of literacy in society, there is a body of literature (Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt, 1978; Cazden, 1974; Cook-Gumperz, 1977) which supports the view that being able to read and write augments metalinguistic awareness, that is, the ability to distance oneself from language in order to scrutinize it objectively. Cook-Gumperz (1977) suggests that there is a shift from dependence on "situated meanings" to the use of semantic and syntactic foregrounding in communicating more explicit messages. Other scholars link literacy with formal logical reasoning and abstract thought (Greenfield & Bruner, 1966; Luria, 1971, and Olson, 1977). However, on the basis of their research, Scribner & Cole (1978) caution against generalizing the effects of literacy. In their words:

The results of our research among the Vai present us with two apparently contrasting conclusions about the effects of literacy. The literacy as [general cognitive] development view would have us believe that literacy, in combination with schooling, produces generalized changes in the way people think. Our functional perspective suggests that the effects of literacy, and perhaps of schooling as well, are restricted--perhaps to the practice actually engaged in or generalized only to closely related practices. (p. 457)

Although there are many unanswered questions concerning the extent to which literacy affects how a society thinks in general,
this does not negate the value of reading and writing to foster learning. According to Graves (1978), a disproportionate amount of attention has been given to reading, while writing has been relatively ignored in American schools. He argues that writing is important "as a contribution to the development of a person, no matter what that person's background and talents" (p. 30). In addition, he claims that writing enhances intelligence, initiative, and even courage. Graves also points to the value of writing as an aid to reading (Durkin, 1966; Chomsky, 1972).

Frank Smith (1982) also views writing as a vehicle of learning. Aside from allowing communication to take place over time and distance, it enables the writer to examine his or her own ideas objectively.

Although few would argue against the importance of writing in education, the process is highly complex and not well understood by many teachers. Some of these complexities of writing can be illuminated by examining the theories of Moffett (Teaching the Universe of Discourse, 1968, 1983) and Britton (language functions, 1971).

Central to Moffett's theoretical construct is the triangle of communication: I (the sender), you (the receiver), and it (the subject). The I-it relation concerns referential information abstracted from raw phenomena, whereas the I-you relation has to do
with information abstracted for an audience. Abstraction includes not only a hierarchy of classes and subclasses, but, in addition, the process of selection, whereby certain features are chosen and others are ignored. Variation in discourse is largely dependent upon time and space relative to the triangle of communication. Moffett arrays activities in order of increasing distance between speaker and audience (and between first and second person) as follows:

- **Reflection** - Intrapersonal communication between two parts of one nervous system.
- **Conversation** - Interpersonal communication between two people in vocal range.
- **Correspondence** - Interpersonal communication between remote individuals or small groups with some personal knowledge of each other.
- **Publication** - Impersonal communication to a large anonymous group extended over space and/or time. (p. 33)

Moffett has drawn on the work of Piaget, especially insofar as his concept of decentering is concerned. As can be seen in the chart above, thought proceeds from egocentrism to concern with the outside world. Moffett also cited Bernstein's distinction between restricted and elaborated codes in his theoretical framework. Language proceeds from being implicit to being explicit. As the distance between the speaker and the subject increases, the following occurs:
What is happening—drama—recording
What happened—narrative—reporting
What happens—exposition—generalizing
What may happen—logical argumentation (p. 35)

Logical thinking proceeds from chronology, to analogy, to tautology. Coding proceeds from experience into thought, to thought into speech, to speech into print. A distinction must be made between literal and conceptual levels. The mechanical skills of decoding and transcribing do not require the higher thinking that is needed for comprehension and composition. In sum, Moffett's theory of discourse is both developmental and hierarchical.

Using data gathered in a writing project and some of Moffett's ideas concerning the hierarchy of discourse, Britton (1971) was able to delineate a model of language functions which included three basic categories: expressive, transactional, and poetic. The expressive function (language close to the speaker) serves as the matrix through which the transactional function (language used to get things done in the real world) or the poetic function (language used for its own sake) can be attained. In Britton's model, the transactional function is associated with the participant role, whereas the poetic function is associated with the spectator role. The transactional function, which includes both the informative and conative subcategories, is explicit and referential. It excludes personal self-revealing features
that could possibly interfere with the job of getting things done. At the other end of the continuum, however, the poetic function gives resonance to inner experience; it produces a verbal object in which forms of language are important. Thus, Britton's theory explicates the qualitative changes that take place as the purpose for writing varies. On the basis of data gathered in their study, he and his colleagues determined that most of the writing children do in school is transactional in nature; furthermore, the intended audience is almost always the teacher. It seems that children are not encouraged to use the full range of writing options that are available.

Selected Research Studies in Writing

Historically speaking, initial research efforts in writing centered on product rather than process for the simple reason that it was much easier to study tangible symbols on paper than overt or even covert behavior of individuals. Vocabulary studies (Horn, 1926; Rinsland, 1945; and Fitzgerald, 1951) were followed by syntactic studies (Hunt, 1965; O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris, 1967; Mellon, 1969; O'Hare, 1973; and Loban, 1976).

As mentioned earlier, Emig's study (1971) was a departure from previously conducted research because she focused on the composing processes of her subjects, eight 12th grade students. In some ways, her work paralleled that of Britton, especially in regard to function
and audience. She found significant differences between reflexive (self-sponsored) and extensive (school-sponsored) writing. Reflexive writing, which is of a committed, but exploratory nature, often occurs as poetry. It draws on a wide range of stimuli from all fields of discourse and often relates to self and human relations. Reflexive writing is intended for oneself or, occasionally, a trusted peer. In contrast, extensive writing, which is usually based on literature or impersonal, abstract topics, occurs mainly as prose. Typified as being detached and reportorial, it is usually intended for adults, usually the teacher. The implications of Emig's study cast doubt on the traditional unimodal approach to teaching composition. She, therefore, encouraged teachers to provide their students with a wider range of purposes for writing. Emig's study paved the way for a substantial body of subsequent research on the composing process (Nold, 1979; Applebee, 1979; Krashen, 1980; Perl, 1979; Flower and Hayes, 1980).

Graves' dissertation (1973), based on the writing processes of seven year olds in a New England school, revealed some important findings. He observed that informal environments give greater choice to children and that when pupils are allowed to make decisions for themselves regarding writing, their productions are of greater length. Based on quantity of writing, formal environments seem to be more favorable to girls, whereas informal environments are more favorable
to boys. Girls have a tendency to write more about primary territory (that related to home and school); boys, on the other hand, are interested in writing about secondary/extended geographical territory. This research also demonstrated that the developmental level of the child relative to written discourse is more influential on writing process behaviors than environment, materials, or methodologies.

In Graves' N.I.E. study (1981) which spanned two years, he and two assistants observed a total of 16 children in five primary classrooms in a small rural-suburban school. Their main purpose was to document what primary children did when they wrote and how they changed over time. Graves and his associates were able to amass an enormous amount of data from video and audio recordings, direct observation, analysis of written products, and information from interviews/conferences. The researchers monitored changes in writers' behaviors by paying particular attention to the following sequences: (1) subjects' use of time and space; (2) the progression of writing from a highly external event to more of an internal one; (3) the progression of writing from an egocentric activity to one of a more sociocentric nature; (4) the progression of language from the use of prosodies (oral features) to the more precise, sophisticated use of words; and, finally, (5) the development of writing as problem-solving (including revision). Graves' conclusions have powerful implications for teaching. In his view, children learn to write by writing, a process which takes
years. Teachers should set aside time for this purpose on a daily basis because, when students know they are going to write and what they are going to write about, they are able to rehearse beforehand. Children should be allowed to chose the majority of their topics because this responsibility helps them with voice, semantic domain, focussing, and basic decision-making. Since the writing process is highly idiosyncratic, the developing writer can be helped most effectively by the "scaffolding-conference" approach, wherein the teacher provides temporary support as it is needed. Finally, Graves believes that skills are most meaningfully taught within the context of children's own writing. With experience in the writing process, children begin to see the need for conventions of print.

Viewing writing as a developmental, evolving process is quite a departure from the traditional approach of assigning a topic and then criticizing the final product in relation to some preconceived model of perfection. Shaughnessy (1977) writes: "English teachers have been trained to look for and at the end product (the completed theme) without questioning the writer's way of composing it" (p. 81).

Undoubtedly, negative feedback while on the quest for some vague idea of writing perfection has discouraged many. Elbow (1973) says: "Most people's relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness. First, they can't write satisfactorily or even at all. Worse yet, their efforts to improve don't seem to help" (p. 12).
He uses the metaphors of growing and cooking to describe the writing process: "Think of writing then not as a way to transmit a message, but as a way to grow and cook a message. Writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking." He continues: "Writing is, in fact, a transaction with words whereby you free yourself from what you presently think, feel, and perceive" (p. 15).

The preceding references have been cited to show the complexity and variability of the writing process. Not only are there variations according to function, audience, level of skill development, and general circumstances in which writing takes place, but there are individual performance fluctuations as well.

The earliest beginnings of writing development have been studied in different ways. Some researchers have focused on growth through experimentation with paper and pencil. Hildreth (1936), for example, identified stages through which very young children progress from aimless scribbling to purposeful strokes similar to letters. Wheeler (1971) observed the natural progression of pupils in a kindergarten where writing stimuli and encouragement were available but no formal instruction was offered. Subjects progressed from designs, to pictures, to letters, to words in isolation, to connected words, to symbols. According to Wheeler, self-correction, and self-motivation were key elements in the process. Marie Clay (1975), in
studying the writing of New Zealand five year olds, found that children internalize the sign and message concepts quite early. They learn that symbols convey meaning and that messages can be written as well as spoken. As children gain experience writing, they learn to copy and experiment with letter formation and placement. Clay was able to identify a number of principles which typify early writing and to show how children in essence "reinvent" the conventions of print for themselves.

Research in spelling provides additional evidence that the child is not a passive learner by any means. Studies (Read, 1971, 1975; Beers and Henderson, 1977; Zutell, 1979) have demonstrated that children, through their invented spellings, use reasonable and developmentally predictable strategies in internalizing the English orthographic system.

According to Vygotsky (1978) meaning is central to writing from the very beginning. In his words: "The gesture is the initial visual sign that contains the child's future writing as an acorn contains a future oak. Gestures, it has been correctly said, are writing in air, and written signs frequently are simply gestures that have been fixed" (p. 107). Vygotsky is convinced that writing develops by way of the shift from drawings of things (first-order symbolism) to drawing of words (second-order symbolism).
Dyson's recent study (1983) relative to the role of oral language in early writing processes appears to concur with Vygotsky's view. Her data, which were collected in a kindergarten writing center, consisted of audio recordings, written products, and interviews. Dyson found evidence that writing develops from a form of drawing (graphic representation) to a form of language (orthographic representation). According to her:

... children's first representational writing serves to label (organize) their world. Talk surrounds this early writing, investing the labels with meaning. Eventually talk permeates the process, providing both meaning (representational function) and the means (directive function) for getting that meaning on paper. (p. 22)

Although children can be very resourceful, they are somewhat impeded in their writing until they have mastered the basics of handwriting, spelling, and punctuation. Beyond that, however, they face another obstacle: sustaining discourse without the aid of a conversational partner. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981) have been conducting research relative to the cognitive demands of writing. In their view, children lack neither language nor knowledge of the world in order to write. However, young writers have difficulty in accessing and ordering what they know already. Unlike adults, they don't have an executive function for retrieving information from memory, planning, or revising. In their research, Bereiter and Scardamalia have been seeking means for procedural facilitation. They have conducted a
series of experiments to identify intervention techniques which could help alleviate problems in learning to generate text without a respondent, problems in active memory search for content, problems in shifting from local to whole-text planning, and problems in going beyond the text as written.

According to King and Rentel (1979), there are three important keys to motivating and sustaining writing by children which include story structure, cohesion, and context. In regard to the first, researchers have demonstrated that the internalization of story structure serves as an aid to memory (Rumelhart, 1975; Mandler and Johnson, 1977). The development of a sense of story—the knowledge that traditional tales have a beginning, a middle, and an ending—helps children to sustain discourse because it provides a built-in guide as to what should come next.

The second key that King and Rentel refer to is cohesion. What makes a text hang together as opposed to a set of unrelated sentences. Halliday and Hasan (1976) have identified five ways in which this can occur: (1) reference; (2) substitution; (3) omission; (4) conjunction; and (5) lexical cohesion. On the basis of their empirical study, King and Rentel (1981) found a significant decrease in exophoric reference and a marked increase in lexical cohesion in the writing development of their primary subjects.
A third important key to how children learn to sustain discourse is context. It has already been explained that how language is dependent upon field, tenor, and mode (Halliday, 1973). What is important at this time is to acknowledge that a linguistic context is always a part of a larger social system. For example, studies of children's classroom writing (Graves, 1973, 1981; Rosen & Rosen, 1973; Mallett and Newsome, 1977) reveal that influences from the total school environment and even the community at large are present. In summary, King and Rentel (1979) have expressed it in this way:

The social situation—the activity, purpose, participants and role relationships, as acted upon and interpreted by the language user—determine the 'text' spoken or written including the form, theme and selection of cohesive patterns employed. An understanding of the development of children's written texts, thus requires an examination of the context in which they are produced. (p. 249)

Cazden (1981) also espouses the view that the context for writing must be considered in understanding development. Her claim that children's writing is a social activity has been supported by the research of Lamme and Childers (1983) who investigated the composing behaviors of three subjects who were between the ages of 2 and 4 at the outset of the study. That the children exhibited a great amount of verbal and social behavior is evidenced by this quotation:

The children were constantly commenting upon each other's compositions and sharing their work with each other. The immediate feedback
and positive reinforcement from peers was a great stimulant to further work. (p. 47)

In this study, the subjects engaged in writing, dictating, and drawing activities that spanned development from scribbling to independent writing. The researchers observed a marked contrast in the children's composing behaviors when they created personal letters and when they wrote books. More sophisticated written productions occurred in sessions where there was an immediate audience for personal communication.

There is a growing body of literature which supports the view that students of all ages can benefit from peer interaction during the writing process (Graves, 1973, 1981; Dyson and Genishi, 1982; Kamler, 1980; Crowhurst, 1979; O'Donnell, 1980; Roth, 1980; Gwyn and Swanson-Owens, 1980). Although some teachers focus on the value of peer interaction in regard to response and evaluation, Gebhardt (1979) argues that collaboration reduces students' isolation, and provides moral support as well as additional perspectives throughout the entire writing process, from prewriting through final editing.
In reviewing recent literature, Haley-James (1982) writes that the interaction of thinking, writing, reading, and learning is most likely to occur when students:

- decide what to write about
- talk as a part of writing
- view writing as a process
- have their own reasons for writing
- write frequently

(pp. 727-28).

In order for this to come about, the role of the teacher is critical. Children need to be provided with a rich background for writing in the way of direct experiences, exposure to literature, and discussions with adults and peers alike to facilitate choice making. They should be encouraged to express themselves in writing with the knowledge that perfection is not characteristic of a first draft. Students should have genuine purposes for writing, and, lastly, they should be given the opportunity to write often.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to touch on relevant aspects of the intricate interrelationship of language, thought, and learning. It has been argued that language is a vital tool of thought and a facilitator of learning. Evidence was presented to support the value of not only adult-child interaction but peer interaction as well, in both the cognitive and affective domains. It was
pointed out that although oral language is the antecedent of written discourse, important differences can exist between the two modes. Finally, the idea was developed that current research focusing on process rather than product has far-reaching implications for classroom practice.
CHAPTER III

Introduction to the Present Study

The study of children's naturally occurring oral language is problematic. On one hand, if the observer is present, talk may be altered, but on the other hand, if the observer is absent, interpretation may be hampered because the total context of the situation cannot be taken into account. In addition, the presence of recording equipment and/or the location of recording sessions can drastically affect how children use language. Although the classroom is a more natural setting in which to monitor peer interaction than, say, a conference room, background noise and other distractions can interfere with data collection.

Cazden (1975) has written about the difficulties of naturalistic observations and their limitations. She has advocated the use of simulated situations which she calls "concentrated encounters" as a means of supplemental assessment, since more information can be obtained in less time.

Due to the exploratory nature of the present research, a pilot study was conducted in December, 1982, to determine feasibility and optimal procedures for collecting data on peer interaction during collaborative writing at the 4th/5th grade level. A complete description appears later in this chapter.
Another source of valuable information concerning problems associated with audio tape recording peer interaction was a study by Barnes and Todd (1977) relative to monitoring discussions of 13 year olds in response to assigned task cards. Selected insights drawn from the experience of these researchers are pertinent to the present study. First of all, Barnes and Todd found it helpful for teachers to explain purposes and procedures of the proposed research to subjects beforehand. Thus, students had a good idea of why they were being involved and what was expected of them. The researchers rationalized removing subjects from the natural context of their classroom environment on the basis of practicality---less background interference would be encountered. Furthermore, they anticipated the difficulty of capturing naturally occurring small group interaction. Barnes and Todd thought it useful to acquaint subjects with recording equipment before any attempt was made at data collection. To minimize microphone shyness, they purposely talked with students and then played back their voices. Frequently, subjects expressed curiosity as to why differences in voice quality were perceived. On the basis of their experience, Barnes and Todd suggested that if students were not used to tape recording and/or small group interaction, that single-sex, self-selected groups would probably alleviate problems of a social nature. Relative to the discussions in their study, it is important to note that subjects were not asked to talk about topics unfamiliar to them. The task
cards to which they responded were intentionally correlated to on-going work in the classroom.

In summary, methodology for the present research was determined on the basis of a pilot study and the experience of other researchers in the area of oral language. Problems were minimized in this manner.

**Description of the Classroom from which Subjects Came**

Considering the nature of this study, it was decided that it would be optimal for data collection to select an informal classroom where peer interaction during the writing process occurred regularly. Fourth/fifth grade level was targeted because, by that time in schooling, students have generally mastered the basics of handwriting and spelling. In addition, by that approximate grade level, syntactic complexity in writing begins to approach that of oral language (O'Donnell, Griffin and Norris, 1967). Once the specific site was chosen and permission was obtained, the researcher made a number of visits to learn more about the situation. The class, composed of 28 fourth and fifth graders, was a part of the same informal school where the pilot study had been conducted. The building, a modern, well-maintained structure, was located in a predominately middle-class neighborhood near a large midwestern city. Whenever the researcher visited the school, she was struck by the quantity and quality of children's work on display in hallways and classrooms. It not only represented a great amount of students' time and careful
effort, but it made manifest the teachers' approach to learning through life experiences.

The classroom from which subjects were selected for the study was fully carpeted and had windows along one wall. The layout included an area left open for whole-class instruction and numerous work areas that were interspersed with desks. The teacher, who had seven years of experience, was well-known in the community for the quality of her teaching. She had given workshops, had her classroom used in research projects, and had made university presentations prior to this study. The teacher had developed excellent rapport with students and interacted with them in a pleasant, soft-spoken, but firm manner. During whole-class sessions in the open area, she held pupils' undivided attention, but once the group dispersed, individuals often talked with one another in a quiet, purposeful way as they went about their assignments. In the opinion of the researcher, the class was a positive example of informal education in practice. Students were both interested and serious in their work. They largely ignored frequent visitors to the class, but they would gladly explain what they were doing if asked.

At the time of the researcher's visitations, the teacher was completing a unit of study relating to books by William Steig. Many of the pupils had elected to do literature extension projects
in response to Abel's Island, one of their favorite books. Examples of their choices were: meticulously painted watercolors, enormous stuffed paper figures of characters from the book, dioramas, a gameboard, and a variety of written compositions. Some of the projects were collective efforts; others were accomplished by individuals. The teacher encouraged the students to engage in decision making by providing them with alternatives. Often pairs or small groups could be heard discussing how best to proceed with a particular project. Under the teacher's guidance, writing was a natural part of ongoing studies and reflected a strong background in literature. For instance, written compositions displayed around the room contained rich descriptive phrases reminiscent of Steig. Students made entries in journals on a regular basis, and, occasionally, they would engage in jotting down thought ramblings, a spontaneous, personal type of writing. Once again, after watching pupils work, it became obvious that quality composition usually evolved over time and after thoughtful revision. It must be emphasized that the teacher played a key role in this entire process.

Description of the Subjects in This Study

Five subjects from the 4th/5th grade classroom described above were chosen by their teacher on the basis of ability and willingness to write. These students, with the knowledge they were
about to participate in a research project, individually selected a partner with whom to collaborate. It was thought by the researcher that being able to choose a partner would enhance conversation and cooperation. Since paired activity often took place in the classroom normally, the procedure went smoothly. Four out of five of the children were able to work with their first choice of partner. One boy had to pair up with his second choice due to duplication of preferences, but he did not seem disappointed.

All ten of the subjects were white and came from middle-class homes. Most of them lived in a housing development within walking distance of the school. The majority had attended that particular elementary building since entering kindergarten. Academically, all were considered above average by their teacher. Of the ten subjects, there were six boys and four girls. Three of the boys were fourth graders; the remainder of the sample consisted of fifth graders. A breakdown of the five dyads follows:

- Dyad #1: two fourth grade boys
- Dyad #2: one fourth grade boy and one fifth grade boy
- Dyad #3: two fifth grade boys
- Dyad #4: two fifth grade girls
- Dyad #5: two fifth grade girls
To protect the privacy of individuals, no actual names have been used in this study or in the pilot study.

**Procedures**

**Scheduling**

After written permission was obtained from parents (see Appendix A for a copy of the letter that had been sent home), scheduling was set up according to the teacher's convenience. All data were collected during afternoons in April and May of 1983.

**Location of Writing Episodes**

To minimize background noise and distraction, it was decided by the researcher to conduct recording sessions outside of the regular classroom. A small conference room which had a window facing the school parking lot was reserved for this purpose. Subjects did their writing at a round table in view of the recording equipment. The researcher, who tried to be as unobtrusive as possible, sat in a corner, ostensibly writing a "report". In actuality, however, she was verifying the context of the utterances and keeping an eye on the recording meters.
Equipment

The researcher used a sophisticated set of Wollensak wireless microphones which subjects wore suspended from their necks. The accompanying components, including individual Marantz cassette recorders, were housed in a heavy metal-clad case which was exceedingly cumbersome to transport. However, the use of such high-quality equipment resulted in excellent recordings which contained soft vocalizations that otherwise would have been lost. That the subjects were relatively uninhibited by the recording apparatus was evidenced by their almost continuous talk throughout all the writing sessions. This was probably due to prior experiences with "intervening" adults generally and numbers of visitors to the school building over the years.

Tasks

The following assignments were given in random order on separate occasions to each of the individual dyads. Tasks were devised to elicit variability in writing, yet correlate with on-going objectives in the classroom.

Task #1. Ending sentence (collective): Subjects were asked to write a beginning to a story which ended: "Vowing that he would
never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle where he lived happily ever after. In order to complete this assignment adequately, students had to recognize the genre (traditional tale) and develop the cue that a mistake had been made. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981), the technique of using ending sentences is a viable way of exploring how children go about means-end planning, although it is often difficult to distinguish between problems relative to world knowledge and those pertaining to text. From research data reported by them, it appears that elementary students most commonly engage in the solution of one problem at a time in a serial manner when writing. However, instances have been recorded wherein pupils were able to do simultaneous (global) problem solving. The particular ending sentence used in the present research was previously tried out in the pilot study and was found to be adequate.

Task #2. Free choice (collective): Subjects were asked to select their own theme and genre in this purposely unstructured, open-ended assignment. According to Graves (1973, 1981) and many other authorities on children's writing, it is important for students to make the necessary decisions about what it is they are going to write whenever possible. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981) have pointed out that beginning writers in a solitary situation often have trouble accessing what they already know. The present study
made the assumption that a conversational partner could be an asset in sustaining connected written discourse.

Task #3. Response to literature (parallel): Subjects were asked to select a book with which they were mutually familiar and to discuss it before writing singly. Since the students' teacher emphasized literary appreciation and often read books aloud to the class, it was thought that this assignment would not pose a problem for the subjects. This task was purposely designed to require parallel writing to allow for individual response. Rosenblatt (1978) has written about the two-way "transactional" relationship that a reader has with a text. In this view, one's response to a book is highly personal. For this reason, it was thought best not to force the subjects to negotiate what was written.

It was estimated that each of the writing tasks would take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete. In three separate instances, however, the children chose to write for a longer period of time, necessitating carryover to the next day.

In a session following the writing assignments, students were given the opportunity to reread and to revise their work if they chose to do so. In addition, the researcher conducted an informal interview with individual dyads to find out more about their perceptions relative to writing. The following questions were asked:

1. What type of writing do you like to do most?
2. What is the hardest part of writing?
3. In what ways do you use writing in your school work?
4. Do you ever write stories for your own enjoyment when you are at home?
5. Do you find it helpful to be able to talk with others when you are writing?
6. Where do you get most of the ideas that you use in your writing?
7. Are spelling and punctuation important to you in your writing?
8. What makes the difference between a poor piece of writing and a really good piece of writing?

**Transcription of Tapes**

Altogether, there were over fifteen hours of audio tapes and 20 written productions (10 collective, 10 parallel) collected in this study. The researcher did all of the transcription herself within three weeks of the final recording session. Since she had heard utterances before and could refer to contextual data recorded during the sessions, she could understand the language more completely.

**Analysis**

Considering the purpose of this study and the nature of the data that were collected, it was necessary to analyze the relationship between oral language that was used by partners and their
resulting written texts wherever possible. Fortunately, subjects talked almost continuously throughout their writing episodes, thus yielding a running record of their composing processes. In analyzing transcripts of the two collective tasks (ending sentence and free choice), it was possible to account for what was said by individuals as they jointly constructed text, sentence by sentence. Therefore, the two collective assignments could be readily compared and contrasted.

It was not possible to document the parallel task (response to literature) in this way, since subjects did not always allude to where they were in their individually written texts at the time of utterance. For this reason, content of oral language had to be considered apart from the two compositions that were authored by individual subjects.

The oral language transcripts in their entirety were difficult to read because they were lengthy and fragmented. To make the raw data more manageable, it was decided to condense meaningful content of what was said and map that in relation to the subjects' written texts in the collective tasks. In this way, it was possible to see how the texts evolved in a collaborative setting. In the case of the parallel task (response to literature), it was useful to condense content and then consider the texts that were written singly.
Examples of these two types of analysis will appear on the following pages. First, attention will be given to the relationship between oral and written language in the collective assignments.

**Collective Writing**

Columns are set up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This column contains a condensed account of oral language that was used by individuals during the composing process.</td>
<td>This column contains the jointly constructed written text. An attempt has been made insofar as possible to map this written text in relation to when the oral language was produced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A relatively simple example appears on the following pages. It represents the language production of two fourth grade boys in response to the ending sentence task.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. &amp; B. argue about who will write.</td>
<td>(C. writes) Once upon a time ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. questions &quot;What did he (meaning the prince) find?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. replies, &quot;He didn't find anything. He made a mistake.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. dictates written text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. uses regulatory language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. dictates written text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. &amp; C. both use regulatory language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. dictates written text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. expresses eagerness to hear name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. dictates &quot;Steve Blake.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. protests choice of name; says he is going to put Steven Blake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. &amp; C. negotiate whether prince was in school; decide prince was older.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. suggests prince did something wrong and lied to the king (the mistake).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. suggests prince stole money to buy his white horse.

B. & C. both use regulatory language.

B. composes orally.

B. continues to compose orally.

B. & C. engage in unintelligible digression.

B. composes aloud.

B. uses regulatory language.

B. asks researcher if he could reword ending.

B. tells C. to continue writing.

C. uses regulatory language.

C. questions how to spell "vow".

B. attempts to help with spelling.

C. questions how to spell "mounted".

B. says, "m-o-u-n-t-e-d".

C. clears throat and reads story.

(B. starts to write) and one day he stold some...money to buy a white horse that he saw before but the king found out that his son stold his money so he had to vow that he would never make that mistake again. The prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle where he lived happily ever after.
In perusing the preceding example, it becomes apparent that this means of analysis not only reveals information about the writing process but about role relationships as well. For instance, it can be seen that B. and C. spent considerable time keeping one another in line through the use of regulatory language. However, although they had a short attention span and exhibited restlessness, they were successful in jointly constructing text.

On close scrutiny, it becomes evident that their entire story consisted of only two sentences. Initially, B. dictated in segments: Once upon a time / there lived a prince / named / , and so forth. This strategy allowed him time to think of what was going to occur next and enabled C. to transcribe what was dictated. There was little evidence that any long-range planning or deliberation was taking place. The plot, which is also embodied in the first sentence, represents a fusion of both boys' ideas. It was C.'s suggestion that the prince's mistake could be doing something wrong and subsequently lying to the king. B. refined the idea by suggesting that the prince stole money to buy his white horse. The fact that the boys changed the syntax of the ending revealed a certain knowledge of how the English language works. It will be recalled that the original ending was given as follows: "Vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle, where he lived happily ever after." The boys changed the wording to: "... but the king found out that
his son stold his money so he had to vow that he would never make that mistake again. The prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle where he lived happily ever after."

To show how this means of analysis illuminated differences between the performance of dyads, another, more complex example will appear on the next several pages. This analysis represents the oral and written language production of two fifth grade girls.
Dyad #4 - Ending Sentence (Collective Writing)

Content of Oral Language

J. & B. discuss whether story should be about a prince or a princess.

J. says, "I think I know what might happen. Oh, well, we'll wait." (chuckles)

J. remarks about handwriting.

J. asks B. whether she put princess or prince.

B. replies, "Prince."

J. answers, "Good."

B. asks what name of prince should be.

J. suggests Prince Andrew III.

J. suggests that prince lived in a beautiful castle with his parents.

B. suggests with his sister.

J. & B. negotiate family members.

J. suggests sister be named "Caribbean."

B. says, "No, let's leave it sister."

Written Text

(J. & B. regularly alternated transcribing lines. Initials refer to the partner who was writing at the time.)

(J) Once upon a time there lived a

(B) young prince

(B) his name was prince

(J) Andrew the third.

(J) He lived in a

(B) large castle with his parents

(B) the king and queen
Dyad #4 - Ending Sentence (Collective Writing) (continued)

Content of Oral Language

J. suggests that the family lived in a wealthy castle. (laughs)

B. says "a large castle."

J. remarks about being scared because of a thunderstorm taking place.

J. suggests plot of story: a young girl comes to the door carrying a box which must never be opened. The prince makes the mistake of doing so.

B. says, "That's good."

B. suggests that the girl be dressed in rags like Cinderella.

J. suggests that the prince's family lived peacefully until one day somebody knocked at their door.

B. reads ending sentence.

J. says, "Put it somewhere else. Oh, we'll find it out."

B. asks how to spell until.

J. replies u-n-t-i-1-1, I think.

Written Text

(J) they were a very 
(B) peaceful family ...

(B) untill one day
Content of Oral Language

J. remarks about dreary weather.

J. refers to word usage: "I liked the one about wealthy and shrieked. That story was about gymnastics, wasn't it, B.?

J. suggests a soft, splendid knock at the door (twice)

J. tells B. how to spell "their."

J. laughs at the idea of the prince opening the door and finding a "raggy" sight.

B. & J. negotiate wording of sentence

B. tells J. where to put commas.

J. mentions quotations.

J. refers to weather as "total drear".

J. & B. discuss proper location of quotation marks.

J. jokes: "May I come in?"--No. (laughs)

Written Text

they heard a soft knock at their door.

The prince walk to the door opened it and there before his eyes was a beautiful girl that was dressed in rags head to foot.

"hello" said the prince puzzled.

"May I help you?" asked the prince.
Dyad #4 - Ending Sentence (Collective Writing) (continued)

**Content of Oral Language**

J. mentions she has rings around her eyes twice.

J. uses shrieked inappropriately 4 times (laughs).

J. jokingly suggests: "Sure shrieked the prince." (laughs)

J. says, "We can skip ahead until the middle of the night so that we can get down to the point where we just drag it out so long. O.K. No, I want to skip ahead."

B. says, "She carried a box."

J. replies, "Oh, yeah. May I help you with your bags?"

B. questions what should be in box.

J. says jokingly, "May I help you with the rags, I mean bags?" (laughs)

B. & J. negotiate appropriate response of girl.

J. remarks about the rain.

J. composes orally.

**Written Text**

(J) "Oh I was just (B) looking for a place to stay for (J) the night may I please come in asked (B) the girl?"

(B) Yes you may said the (J) prince.

(J) May I help you with the bags?

(B) "no" I mean that I can carry (J) them myself thank you anyway.

(B) I'll show you up to your room (J) said the prince.
Dyad #4 - Ending Sentence (Collective Writing) (continued)

Content of Oral Language

J. asks if meanwhile is one word. (no reply)

B. suggests that girl should sneak out of bed and hide the box down in the well.

J. adds "Down the road 'cause he's going to get on his horse to go back for it.

J. & B. negotiate sentence.

J. & B. jointly compose sentence.

J. says, "Pretend on the front of it, it says 'Please do not open'".

B. asks if footsteps is one word.

J. replies, "It doesn't matter."

J. suggests title: The Prince and the Young Girl. (They omitted a title)

B. asks whether dropped has 2 p's.

J. replies, "I don't know".

Written Text

(J) Meanwhile late at night
(B) while everybody was sound asleep

(J) the girl got up and took the box and
(B) took it outside by the well.

(J) and when she reached the well she
(B) heard footsteps she dropped the
(J) box and ran into her room.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. suggests that the prince saw her walk out and decided to investigate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. asks, &quot;Do you want to put that happily ever after thing down?&quot; (no response)</td>
<td>(J) It was (B) the prince who had walked (J) out to investigate what he had saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. questions what is in box.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. says they'll write it at the end.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. suggests that the prince picked up the brown box and opened it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. insists &quot;It's got to say on the front that no one's to touch.&quot;</td>
<td>(B) He picked up the brown box (J) and opened it and saw a spirit rise (B) from it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. says, &quot;No, we would do that anyways. He opened and saw.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. explains how interdiction came about.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. asks whether disappear has two p's.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content of Oral Language

J. replies in the affirmative.

J. orally composes the ending which appears.

B. remarks after the completion of the story: "She heard footsteps that was like he got off of his horse, and then ... I don't know.

Written Text

(B) It said "you shall never
(J) open this box again for now the
(B) young girl will disappear forever
(J) the prince shut the box vowing that
(B) he would never make that mistake
(J) again. The prince mounted his
(B) white horse and lived happily
(J) ever after.

(B) The End.
In contrasting the preceding example with the one before it, a number of differences are evident. First, the girls in Dyad #4 produced more oral and written language than the boys in Dyad #3. In regard to role relationships, the girls totally abstained from the use of regulatory language. Unlike the boys, the girls did show some overt evidence of long-term planning and deliberation. They engaged in more negotiation and experimentation of ideas, while still showing a concern for the logical outcome of their story. It is evident that not all of what the girls discussed orally later appeared in their writing. For instance, although J. brought up the background of the interdiction in conversation, it was not explicitly stated in the written text. Consequently, the reader is left to infer circumstances surrounding what was taking place in the story. Finally, the girls' analysis contains examples of metalinguistic awareness and word play (e.g., the dialog between the prince and the girl) which were totally absent in the boys' language productions.

In summary, this type of analysis takes into account what was said, who said it, and when it was said during the composing process. Thus, information is revealed not only about how subjects performed in the writing tasks, but how they maintained role relationships as well. Specifically, use of language, overt planning, composing strategies, concerns, and the relative contributions of each partner can be considered from the use of this format. The purpose of this
means of analysis was to organize voluminous data into a manageable form. It must be stressed that interpretation was largely dependent upon understanding the total context in which utterances were made, as would be the case with studies using ethnographic techniques. Thus, the researcher frequently had to scrutinize entire transcripts and rely on notes made during the recording sessions. A complete oral language transcript, together with the resulting written production, appears in Appendix B.

Attention will now be focused on analysis of parallel writing. Condensed content of oral language will be followed by the individually written texts.

**Parallel Writing**

The following is a condensed account of oral language used during parallel writing (response to literature) by Dyad #1. The complete transcript appears in Appendix B. The boy's choice of book was The Westing Game, a clue-packed mystery by Ellen Raskin.

**Dyad #1 - Response to Literature**

**Content of Oral Language**

C. & B. discuss what they are going to write about.

C. questions how to spell "characters".

B. attempts to help C.

B. questions how to start and whether he wants to write about Sam Westing.

C. reads beginning of his composition, "Sam Westing played a lot of characters."

C. asks about other characters played by Sam Westing.

B. & C. try to recall character's name in the book.
C. comments on the progress of his own writing.
B. asks how to spell "July".
C. replies, "J-u-l-y".
B. reads what he has written.
C. asks how to spell "shin".
B. attempts to help C.
B. asks how to spell "uncle".
C. attempts to help.
B. & C. discuss upcoming school festival.
B. remarks that he spelled "display" wrong.
C. asks about name of character in book.
B. attempts to help.
B. composes orally.
B. reads aloud what he has written.
C. announces he is finished.
C. questions how much more B. is going to write.
B. asks how to spell "accident".
C. says he doesn't know.
C. remarks that he probably could write more, but he doesn't know what. (no reply)
C. (out of boredom) starts to sing; then he gives an imitation of the student teacher.
C. questions how much more B. is going to write.
B. says, "I want to make this a good story for Miss C. (teacher)".
B. uses regulatory language.

B. questions how to spell "hospital".

C. replies, "h-o-s-p-i-t-a-l".

C. imitates little brother.

B. continues to compose orally.

B. uses regulatory language.

B. announces he has completed his story.

Following are the boys' individual written texts:

C.'s response to The Westing Game

Sam Westing played lots of characters like Sandy the door man. Turtle liked to kick people in the shins and her hair was a mess all the time. Chris Theodorkas was a bird watcher and he is in a wheelchair. And Matt his brother was a sports player.

B.'s response to The Westing Game

Sam Westing was a nice man and every fourth of July he would dress up as Uncle Sam and would set off a big firework display for everyone. Then one day he got in a car accident and everyone thought he was dead. But he wasn't dead. He just got his nose smashed so he went into the Hospital and got his face changed to look like Sandy the door man. And one time he made himself look like the apartment man.

In the preceding example of analysis, the sequence of oral language content is given (who said what), but it cannot be continuously mapped to the individually written texts (when utterances were made relative to the composing process). Once again, restlessness on the part of the fourth-grade boys was evidenced by the use
of regulatory language and off-task verbal behavior. After C. completed his brief piece of writing, he fidgeted until his partner was finished also. It is obvious from the analysis that the boys used oral language primarily for the purposes of recalling information from the book and helping one another with spelling.

Thus, the foregoing type of analysis summarizes what took place during the parallel writing sessions. The parallel task yielded considerably less interactive language, but partners served to supply information and moral support.

The Distinction Between More Sophisticated Writers and Less Sophisticated Writers

While analyzing data collected in this study, it became obvious to the researcher that Dyad #1 performed differently than Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5. The fourth-grade boys in Dyad #1 had less of an attention span as evidenced by their relatively short oral and written language productions; they were typically impulsive in writing down the first thing that came to mind (in other words, they didn't deliberate); and, lastly, they did not distance themselves from language in order to talk about it (exhibit metalinguistic awareness). In the opinion of the researcher and the classroom teacher, the written productions of Dyad #1 were less sophisticated than those of Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5. In order to verify these opinions, two independent raters judged all of the written productions
using the Diederich Scale (1974) which takes into account both general merit (ideas, organization, wording, and flavor) and mechanics (usage, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting). Both of the raters were Ph.D. students with classroom experience who had studied the writing process. Interrater reliability was +.90. Among the independent raters, the classroom teacher, and the researcher, there was unanimous agreement that Dyad #1 produced the least sophisticated written productions in both the collective and the parallel assignments. Therefore, a distinction could be made between less sophisticated and more sophisticated writers in this study.

The Pilot Study

The exploratory nature of the present research necessitated a pilot study which was conducted in December, 1982. Permission was obtained for the researcher to use subjects from a 4/5 grade classroom which was part of an informal elementary school located in a predominately middle-class neighborhood outside a large mid-western city. It was an environment in which both literary appreciation and writing were fostered by the teacher. Collaborative projects were occurring naturally in the classroom. Subjects were chosen to participate in the pilot study by the classroom teacher on the basis of their ability and interest in written composition. Due to the nature of the assigned writing tasks, it was decided to use a vacant conference room for the purposes of recording rather than the regular
classroom environment. By making use of a room divider and two tape recorders, it was possible to collect data from two sets of subjects concurrently. This proved to be efficient use of time as one of the purposes of the study was to determine whether it would be preferable to use dyads (pairs) or triads (trios) in analyzing interaction. Following is a description of what occurred during the recording sessions.

**Recording Session #1**

Early in the school day, a total of five subjects accompanied the researcher to the conference room where materials had been set out in advance. In plain view were two boxed, commercially manufactured toys, a Fisher-Price "message center", which was intended for young children, and a "Miss Piggy" handpuppet. The message center had been selected by the researcher because it was an educational toy designed to promote early literacy. Made of plastic, it contained a telephone that had a moveable numbered dial, a chalkboard, a box of chalk with letters printed on it, and a foam-type eraser. The "Miss Piggy" handpuppet was a replica of the one on television, complete with blond curly hair and mascara-lined eyes. It had been chosen by the researcher as a possible means of sparking conversation, since it was a part of the popular culture. Subjects were asked to pretend that they had been hired by
a toy company to write an advertisement to sell one of the products. Students were given a choice about which toy to write and also about whether they wanted to compose singly or collectively. Materials such as construction paper, scissors, glue, tape, crayons and markers were made available to the subjects in case they wanted to design a layout. Shortly after instructions were given, a dyad and a triad settled down to work on either side of the partitioned room in the presence of a cassette tape recorder.

Dyad #A-1 was made up of a fourth grade boy and a fifth grade boy who chose to write about "Miss Piggy". For the duration of the 45-minute tape, the boys made virtually no attempt to work together, and they hardly interacted with one another at all. Nearly everything that was uttered was in the form of parallel speech, what Piaget called "collective monologue". However, there was a wide range of audible behavior in the form of laughing, singing, sound effects, and imitative role playing with the puppet. One significant incident occurred relative to sense of audience. Before the fifth grader started to write his ad, he jokingly addressed the tape recorder in the following manner,
"Hi, all you little people out there!" Then he said, "Yeah, that's a pretty good idea ... Hey, all you little people out there, you know that Christmas is coming ... that's what I would write."

The subject's finished ad appeared as follows:

Hi all you parents Christmas is coming, here is a great present for your boy or girl the Miss Piggy hand puppet from the Jim Henson collection there are other puppets like Kermet, Gonzo, Rowlf, and others." And it's non toxic too!

The "Miss Piggy" puppet had come in a box with Jim Henson's name on it, but there was no reference to other puppets or toxicity. These features seemingly came from the boy's background knowledge. The fourth grader's production was very short:

Miss Piggy Doll fun for people of all ages. Looks and feels the real miss piggy

Both members of the dyad wrote their ads first and then spent the remainder of their time individually depicting Miss Piggy and Kermet in artwork. No visible attempt was made at making a layout per se; rather, the artwork was just meant to accompany the writing. During the last few minutes of the
session, the boys asked if they could read their advertisements on the tape recorder. The fifth grader read his in a notably low, professional announcer's voice. To what he had written, he added, "and it's sold in fine stores everywhere."

Triad #A-1 was composed of two fifth grade girls and one fourth grade boy who had elected to write an ad for the message center. This group was more behaviorally mature than the dyad just described. The triad exhibited a cooperative effort, a good example of three-way interaction. They started to compose the ad singly but then pooled their ideas to form a collective text. Content of their interaction centered on durability and safety aspects of the toy; no attention was paid to the potential educational value of the product. Their text evolved as follows:

A unique Fisher Price phone and message center. A perfect gift for a child you love. Unbreakable plastic for all kind of drops. Contains: 3 pieces of non toxic chalk, chalkboard and a foam eraser. For ages 3-6
It should be noted that both "non toxic" and "ages 3-6" appeared on the box in which the toy was packaged. A scribe, who was chosen by the children on the basis of her good handwriting, carefully copied the text on pink construction paper. These three students cooperated fully in doing what was asked of them in an adult-like way. It was clear that their limited focus of both oral and written language was relative to the nature of the assignment.

In sum, the task of writing an advertisement was carried out in different ways by the participating subjects. Commonalities included their sense of audience (the adult purchaser) and their ability to use the abbreviated advertising register appropriately. Triad #A-1 provided a useful example of peer interaction during collaborative writing.

Recording Session #2

On this morning, five different subjects were given instructions before breaking into sets. They were asked to write a beginning to a story which had the following ending: "Vowing never to make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle where he lived happily ever after." The purpose of this assignment was to see whether students could recognize the fairy tale structure and complete the story by working backwards (This technique
is described by Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1980). To be successful, subjects had to pick up on the cue that a mistake had been made.

Dyad #2-A was composed of a fifth grade boy and a fifth grade girl. The 45-minute tape turned out to be a running record of how they were able to construct a story together, sentence by sentence. After agreeing on what to say next, they would write down the identical text individually. Their dialogue was very revealing because, in addition to carrying out the task of writing a story jointly, they were maintaining role relationships as well. They alternated serving as a "built-in" audience for one another's ideas. Occasionally, the pair disagreed on choice of character names, a matter involving the plot, or points of grammar. Then it was necessary to resolve the conflict before progressing onward. Dogmatic insistence and justification were two means of doing this.

Triad #2-A was made up of a fourth grade girl, a fifth grade girl, and a fifth grade boy. Although their collective writing evolved out of a cooperative effort, very little oral interaction took place. Students chose to take turns writing sections of the story on a single piece of paper. When an individual was finished with a part, he or she would slide it on to the next person in the manner of a chain letter. There was little evidence of long-term planning; the last student to write, who happened to be the boy, was charged with the responsibility of making the jointly-constructed story "fit" with the ending.
In summarizing Recording Session #2, the interaction of Dyad #2-A was much more revealing than that of Triad #2-A because subjects verbalized their thought processes in constructing text. The transcript provided further evidence that it was feasible to analyze oral language produced in a collaborative writing setting.

Recording Session #3

The researcher had hoped to have some of the same subjects revise earlier writing during this session, but it was not possible due to absenteeism and the impending Christmas holidays. On this occasion, four subjects, who later separated into two dyads, were asked to complete a story which began as follows: "Once upon a time, on a cold, wintry night in a dreary castle..." Although this assignment again involved the fairy tale structure, it was much more open-ended because subjects did not have to work within the constraints of a specified ending. They could take the story wherever they thought best.

Dyad #3-A was composed of two fifth grade girls who chose to write independently. One appeared to be much more fluent than the other. With little apparent difficulty, she wrote a two-part story which included both a letter and a poem in the narrative. Her partner, who seemed to be less confident, was unable to finish her story in the allotted time. Several times during their writing, the girls stopped and read one another their stories, seemingly looking for approval and encouragement.
Dyad #3-B was made up of a fifth grade girl and a fifth grade boy. They became so involved in constructing a story together that they, too, were unable to complete it in the time available. The tape contains a rich record of how their collaborative thoughts were shaped. They discussed temporal considerations at length. At one point, the girl remarked, "This is beginning to sound like a play." Then she turned to the researcher and asked if they could write one. Unfortunately, before their creative ideas could reach fruition, they were summoned to participate in a holiday program rehearsal. Although the subjects were forced to abandon their single page of written text, the pair exhibited noteworthy commitment and enthusiasm.

In sum, Recording Session #3 yielded a worthwhile example of peer interaction in both parallel and collective writing. The open-endedness of the assignment allowed for a greater range of responses, both oral and written.

Overall Results of the Pilot Study

Altogether, the researcher was able to collect six tape recordings, each of 45-minute duration. In general, dyads were easier to hear than triads because subjects had been closer to the microphone. In addition, dyads appeared to be more useful than triads for a study of this nature due to the alternate give-and-take of conversation. In a triad, it was possible for a third member not to participate at all. Overall, there was abundant oral language, similar to
that which typically went on in the classroom, despite the fact that
the researcher was a virtual stranger and the presence of the tape
recorder was somewhat inhibiting to certain individuals.

From the experience of the pilot study, it was determined
that it was possible to monitor constructive language use during
the process of written composition. Furthermore, it was found that
4th/5th graders in a collaborative writing session were capable of:

1. composing jointly
2. using a wide range of strategies in composition
3. remaining on task nearly 100% of the time
4. using language appropriately in differing situations
5. writing without being unduly hampered by mechanics
6. considering the reader in the composing process.

Although all of the students had the ability to compose inde­
dependently, there were many instances where interaction caused indi­
viduals to stop and think about what it was they were attempting to
express. It appeared that this instant feedback was a source of
increased awareness and learning.

Furthermore, it was obvious that the nature of the assignment
influenced the language use of behaviorally mature subjects. For
instance, the task of writing an advertisement elicited a very
limited range of both oral and written language in the case of
Triad #A-1. This is understandable when one considers that economy
of words is valued in the field of advertising. In contrast, Dyad
#3-B responded with more abundant and more varied language with both modes when given a more open-ended assignment. In sum, it appeared the more open-ended the task, the more varied the language productions became. This influenced choice of assignment in the actual study.

To complement information gleaned in the recording sessions, the researcher spent considerable time observing students in their regular classroom. It was evident that much of the quality writing evolved through repeated attempts over time. Often, drawing or construction projects preceded written composition, as, for instance, when students worked on book extensions. A trio of boys elected to draw cartoons in response to Betsy Byer's *The Cartoonist*. They sat at desks which were clustered together and discussed their work as they drew. Elsewhere in the classroom a pair of girls diligently created a painting together which depicted a character from Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess*. At first, all their efforts were focused on artistic considerations, but later, after their portrait was completed and put on display, they started to write. Interestingly enough, the descriptions that they wrote individually were strikingly similar. Realizing this, the girls voluntarily decided to write a single piece collectively. The incident is related here to substantiate the fact that collective
writing can occur naturally in classroom environments where children are encouraged to interact and explore their thoughts.

After visiting the class on numerous occasions, the researcher was convinced that it would be extraordinarily difficult to capture meaningful interaction on tape in a naturalistic setting due to the mobility of students, the fragmentation of their conversations, and the lengthy time span involved. It was decided, therefore, for the purposes of the present study, to use a more focused approach such as the procedure followed in the pilot study just described even though the advantages of a naturalistic setting would be lost.
CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

In analyzing what subjects did in this study, it is necessary to consider the inherent interpersonal and cognitive demands of the situation in which they were placed. To begin with, the very nature of a collaborative writing setting required a certain amount of cooperation between partners, more so in the collective tasks than in the parallel assignments. Joint construction of text necessitated not only negotiation of meaning and wording, but compromise as well. To be successful, subjects had to be flexible within the dynamic give-and-take of the situation. Often, individuals were in the position of either having to defend their own ideas or at least partially accept the contributions put forth by a partner. Thus, the maintenance of interpersonal relationships played a key role in the writing episodes described in this study.

A second important consideration is relative to the cognitive demands inherent in each of the three writing tasks. The assignments were intentionally designed to evoke varied written responses from the subjects.

As previously described, the ending sentence assignment, which was highly structured, required a certain amount of preplanning in
order to reconcile the beginning of the story with the ending. It is likely that individual subjects gave more thought to this problem than was evidenced by overt verbal behavior.

The free choice task, which was completely unstructured, required problem identification as well as problem solution. Although it allowed the subjects to pursue avenues that were of interest to them, it entailed total responsibility for making choices, including that of genre.

Concerning the response to literature assignment, it must be pointed out that the children were writing about books they had been exposed to weeks or even months before. Consequently, one of the cognitive demands in this task was to activate long-term memory. As can be seen from the written products, this assignment was open-ended from the standpoint that subjects could respond to the particular book in any way they chose to do so.

After the completion of their three assignments, subjects were given the opportunity on another occasion to revise what they had written. Not surprisingly in light of Graves' research (1981), the few changes that were made related to editing concerns such as capitalization and spelling, not content. When one
considers that the children wrote in compliance to a request from an outsider, it is clear that there was little intrinsic motivation for revision. This probably would not have been the case if subjects had been readying texts for publication (e.g., display, books for the classroom or school library, or student collections of writings to be duplicated).

The Role of Talk in a Collaborative Writing Setting

Careful scrutiny of oral language transcripts revealed that talk played a significant role in four major areas, each of which will be described in the following sections. Data consisting of dialogue taken from the collaborative sessions has been included to clarify and illustrate the generalizations of the role of language.

1. Maintenance of Interpersonal Relationships

On the surface level, peer groups in both the pilot study and the present study cooperated well in carrying out writing assignments which were given to them. In the pilot study, there was not as high a degree of compatibility between and
among subjects because these pupils did not have the opportunity to choose partners with whom to work. This may indicate the influence of social (interaction) dynamism on the language produced, its role and amount.

For example, a fifth grade boy, Mark, was arbitrarily paired with a fifth grade girl named Jeannie (Pilot Study Dyad 2A). In response to the ending sentence assignment, they jointly wrote a story about an errant prince named Zodak. In the following excerpts, it will be noticed that an undercurrent of tension and competitiveness existed between them. Right from the beginning, Mark and Jeannie were critical of one another's ideas.

M: Now you write down what I write down, O.K.?

J: O.K.

M: One day ... one day ... No, once upon a time ... 

J: There was what? There was ...

M: a prince ... there was a prince named Mike, no ... Zodak.
J: Zodak?
M: No, Christopher.
J: How about Timothy?
M: Prince Charming.
J: That sounds strange ... I mean...
M: ... a prince named Zodak.
J: Zodak? I'd never name my kid Zodak!
M: Back then they had strange names.

As their writing episode progressed, Mark forcefully delineated the plot and effectively prevented Jeannie from making much of a contribution. Sensing this, she outright asked permission.

J: Then what? Can I think of it now?
M: Wait. The interesting part is coming up, O.K.?

Later, Jeannie tried again:

J: Can I think of some now? Zodak ran away to the village of ... ran away to the village of...

M: Neptune.

In the foregoing excerpts, it can be seen that Mark's greater spontaneity enhanced the power of his role in collective writing. Later in their story, Jeannie attempted to contribute once again. In the following excerpt, they are concerned with syntax as well as plot:

J: I had a good idea.
M: What?
J: O.K. Months passed and he (Zodak) ran out of money ...

M: It's better to say days, weeks, and months.

J: ... passed ... days, then months, then weeks passed...

M: It's days, weeks, and months...

J: ... passed and Zodak ran out of money and went to the castle, and the king asked him if he had killed the dragon, and he told him, "No." and that's how he got in trouble...

M: No. (laughs) No. O.K. Write this down.

The competitiveness of their relationship can be seen in the following fragment of conversation:

J: How can you write so small?

M: It's easy, easy. It's better than yours!

J: I'll tell you what, M! (uses threatening tone)

M: Don't! O.K. now. Zodak...

Finally, Mark's feeling of authorship was revealed in the following excerpt:

M: I've created a good story. I've made all this up.

J: Not all of it!

In summary, although Mark was primarily responsible for the storyline, Jeannie provided input from the standpoint of being a built-in audience. Often, he would be compelled to justify a choice, as, for instance, when he defended the name Zodak by saying, "Back then they had strange names." This justification also revealed metalinguistic awareness.
In the present study, there were no examples of this type of interpersonal competitiveness. By and large, peer-selected partners were more supportive of one another's contributions. However, there was a range of behavioral maturity. Dyad #1, made up of two fourth grade boys, clearly behaved differently from the other subjects from whom data were collected in this study. This pair of fourth graders named Billy and Clyde had a shorter attention span than the others. Consequently, their oral and written productions were not as lengthy. Furthermore, they had to resort to frequent use of regulatory language to control one another's restless behavior. An example follows:

B: (dictates) ... there lived a prince ...
C: (repeats as he transcribes) ... there lived a prince ...
B: You're making me hyper. Come on! Quit tapping on it! (the table) ... there lived a prince ... Quit tapping on the desk!
C: You're doin' it!
B: O.K. Let's go. (Dyad #1, ending sentence)

Unlike the other dyads, this pair of boys argued about who would perform such tasks as transcribing and reading aloud. Consider the following example of a standoff:

C: All right. Me and B. will do it. I'll do the writing this time.
B: I'll do the writing!
C: You did it last time.
During another writing session, Clyde and Bobby argued over who would read what they had collectively written:

C: I get to read it out loud since you did all the writing.
B: You told me what to write.
C: I know, but I get to read it now, O.K.?
B: No.
C: Yeah ... (sound of rustling paper) I want to read it out.
B: (laughingly) O.K. Here it is ... 
C: Let me read it! (Said with irritation)
B: (begins to read) The story about Scooby Doo ...
C: (with annoyance) Come on, B.! Let me read it!
B: (continues to tease) The story about Scooby Doo. One day Scooby went with ... (laughs, finally lets C. read) 

In contrast to the preceding example, a more behaviorally mature dyad composed of two fifth grade boys negotiated how they would write collectively:

W: I'll write a few sentences, and you write a few sentences, O.K.?
M: Two, two. You write two sentences.
W: No. How about five sentences each?
M: Five sentences!
When it came time for these fifth graders to read what they had written, they took turns reading alternate portions of their story and even read successfully in unison. There was a tendency for the more behaviorally mature subjects to use language more subtly in maintaining their interpersonal relationships. Rather than quibble over who was going to transcribe or read aloud, they automatically took turns. Sometimes they overtly discussed how they were going to divide up tasks; other times, they silently took cues from one another, thereby sharing responsibility. In addition, the more behaviorally mature subjects spent a longer period of time deliberating about possibilities relative to their writing. Frequently, their suggestions were couched in tentativeness, as, for example, when they would say, "How about ..." or "What if ..." Typically, they were more sensitive toward one another's thoughts and feelings. An illustration follows:

J: ... if you don't like something, just tell me, O.K.?

(Dyad #2, free choice)

More unusual than instances of mere cooperation were deliberate attempts by one partner to involve the other. Dyad #2 was made up of a quick-thinking fourth grader named Jimmy, who had an unusual ability to generate ideas in rapid succession, and a fifth grader named Sam, who was more pensive and conservative. Although Jimmy quickly became the more dominant member of the dyad in carrying out
the writing tasks, he created opportunities for his partner to contribute also, as can be seen in the following excerpts.

J: O.K. I want you to make up the place they're going up, the Dark Tower or something.
S: What do you mean, what they're going to raid?
J: Yeah.
S: They're going to raid King What's His Face ... um ...
J: How about (you) name the castle, and I'll name the warriors, the kind of people ...

(Dyad #2, free choice)

In a second example, Jimmy made another deliberate attempt to allow Sam the chance to come up with ideas. In this exchange, the boys were trying to decide on what type of beverage the prince was going to be served in the ending sentence assignment:

J: What should we make it?
S: A glass of Florida orange juice.
J: What kind of drink?
S: English grape juice.
J: No. Think of one. I could think of one, but I want you to start thinking for a change.
S: Um ...
J: Scotch ... What is it like? What kind of juice is it?
J: Is it cola, or ...
S: It's cola.
J: Pepsi, Tab?
S: It's real gross.
J: Tang?
S: No, that's powder.
J: Yeah.
S: Grape juice.
J: A glass of my favorite juice, grape juice. This is supposed to be wine. (Dyad #2, ending sentence)

From the examples given, it can be seen that behavioral maturity was not simply correlated with grade level. The fourth grader in Dyad #2 behaved very much like the older fifth graders from the standpoint that he was able to sustain his attention for relatively long periods of time and that he was able to use a wide range of interpersonal communication strategies.

In the present study, role relationships remained fairly stable over the three writing episodes. It is important to note that three of the five dyads normally worked together in their regular classroom. Within each dyad, one partner clearly emerged as the predominant provider of ideas in both collective writing tasks. Interestingly enough, this subject was not always the more proficient writer as judged by the teacher.

In addition to augmenting the working relationship between partners, oral language provided a channel for momentum and moral support during the writing tasks. For instance, in the following excerpt, Billy and Clyde (Dyad #1) seem to spur one another along
in carrying out their response to literature assignment. (The
Westing Game is a clue-packed mystery by Ellen Raskin.)

C: I don't know. What are you going to write about?

B: The Westing Game.

C: That's what I'm going to write about.

B: What should I write about? There are a lot of good parts in it. I might write about what happened with Sam Westing. He got his nose smashed in the car accident and everybody thought he was dead.

C: Yeah, I'm going to write about how ... all the characters he played.

B: O.K. (Dyad #1, response to literature)

In the following excerpt two fifth grade girls, Judy and Barbara, (Dyad #4) also helped one another in writing their parallel responses to Anastasia Krupnik, a humorous story by Lois Lowry concerning a girl about their age.

J: I can't think of any more that happens.

B: Then stop there.

J: Should I? It's not that long, but ...

B: You don't have to make it a whole page.

J: (referring to her written text) Starting from "anyway" is all about her green notebook. And this just tells about her mom getting pregnant. Did she (Anastasia) hope for a boy or a girl?
B: She doesn't want a baby.

J: Oh, that's right. She sort of so-so about this whole thing.

Period of silence.

B: I don't know what to write.

J: Write about her grandmother.

B: Oh, yeah.

J: I don't mind.

B: Was it on Thanksgiving that she came over?

(Dyad #4, response to literature)

Throughout the pilot study and the present study, it was common for subjects to read aloud what they had written singly or collectively. This helped them to maintain their train of thought and often provided an opportunity for partner input. In Pilot Study Dyad #3A, two fifth grade girls delighted in reading one another segments of their respective written texts. Positive partner feedback provided moral support and thereby encouraged the girls to continue writing.
Oral language served yet another role in the present study. Although subjects remained on task a high percentage of the time, occasionally, they would digress in their conversations. These digressions, especially in the writing episodes that stretched over two or three sessions, served to reduce tension and sustain interest. Following are three excerpts of oral language produced by Dyad #2 while they were working on the response to literature assignment. Jimmy and Sam chose to write about *A Stranger Came Ashore*, a story by Molly Hunter based on a legend from the Shetland Islands. They became so engrossed in their writing that they needed an extra session to complete their work. Digressions sometimes related to what was going on in school. For example:

J: You did your math already?

S: Yeah, it was easy, just division.

J: You're lucky, man. I've got multiplication. Lucky you got division. I can do about five division problems in five minutes.
S: Yeah, they're easy.
J: Yeah.
S: ... with the two digits? Two numbers and then the three numbers on the inside? That's simple.
J: That's hard to me, but never mind, oh, well ...

(Dyad #2, response to literature)

In comprehending this excerpt, it is helpful to remember that Jimmy was a fourth grader, and Sam was a fifth grader. The hierarchy is evident.

Digressions sometimes related to personal experiences, as in, for example, the following excerpt.

J: Oh, I got a mosquito bite ...
S: Probably from outside.
J: It's not from outside. It's from last night. I wore shorts to bed.
S: So did I, but I had to sleep on the floor. The floor is pure cement with a little thin rug like that ...
J: Froze to death, didn't you?
S: Yeah, I was in my shorts, and I went to the bathroom about midnight, and I went in my room 'cause I had to sleep out there 'cause my sister was sleeping in there. I got my brother's coat -- I didn't know what coat it was -- I just put it on. It was funny 'cause I was wearing the thing. It was so long. (Dyad #2, response to literature)
The foregoing excerpt is noteworthy because of Jimmy's sophisticated, empathetic response. In addition, it is an example of how context-bound conversations are in general.

In the following exchange, which took place during the response to literature task, Jimmy brings up something he learned about on television.

J: You know, this lady failed as an actress so she jumped off the "H" that spelled Hollywood on the big mountain.

S: Who did?

J: I don't know, but you know how they have the sign ... says "Hollywood" in white letters?

S: Yeah.

J: She jumped off that.

S: Just because she didn't make it as an actor or an actress?

J: Yeah. She said she was a failure, so she jumped off. She killed herself. Fifty feet high.

S: That's it? That's all?

J: She jumped fifty feet from the ground.

S: Oh, gross! (Dyad #2, response to literature)

Although the foregoing excerpt does not appear to relate to what the subjects were writing about, the book they chose, A Stranger
Came Ashore, did touch on the subject of death. Here the boys appeared to be grappling with the harshness of reality.

To summarize this section, oral language played a key role in maintaining interpersonal relationships during the writing episodes in this study. Talk was used to divide task responsibility, to directly or indirectly control the behavior of partners, to provide momentum in writing, to give moral support, and to sustain interest over prolonged sessions.

Although oral language was pervasive in maintaining interpersonal relationships throughout all of the writing episodes in this study, a more important role was problem solving relative to the composing process.

2. Problem Solving Relative to the Writing Task

In the present study, subjects used oral language primarily to help determine what to say and how to say it in their writing assignments. Although many authorities such as Graves (1981) equate the writing process with problem solving, Flower and Hayes (1980) have written: "People only solve the problems they represent to themselves" (p. 30). In other words, writing requires what these researchers call "problem finding" as well as problem
solving. In their studies of mature adult writers, Flower and Hayes identified four facets of problem finding which are listed below:

1. the effect writer wants to have on reader
2. the relationship with reader (personal)
3. the creation of meaning
4. the formal or conventional features of written text (format appropriate to genre). (pp. 27-28)

Subjects in the present study focused on creation of meaning and largely ignored the other facets identified above. Most writers were not overly concerned with the reader. Aside from their limited experience with rhetoric, this may have been partially due to the fact that they were responding to assigned tasks given by the researcher, who made no reference to a real or imagined audience. Only one subject, a fourth grade boy, identified for whom he was writing when he remarked to his partner that he wanted to write a good story for his teacher (Dyad #1, response to literature). In several instances, fifth grade girls in Dyads #4 and #5 expressed direct or indirect
concern that "they" (referring to the audience) would not understand intended meaning unless it were explicitly stated in the text.

More common was the practice of writing what Flower (1979) calls "writer based prose," wherein the reader was ignored. For instance, Dyad #3 jointly constructed a text in response to the ending sentence assignment which contained a glaring example of exophoric reference (i.e., reference to something outside the text). The boys referred to "the valley girls" shouting advice to Prince Hound Dog and his henchmen. It was the first and last time they mentioned these characters in their story. (See Appendix for complete written text.) The only reason that Dyad #3 included this reference was that it evoked hearty laughter in their joint composing session. Thus, coherence was sacrificed for the sake of humor with the result that the reader cannot fully fathom what is going on in the text.

Dyads differed in how they went about solving the problems of what to say and how to say it. In the case of Dyad #1, for example, Billy and Clyde were quite impulsive in their writing. Often they would put down the first thing that
came to mind. In the following excerpt of conversation, they briefly negotiate topic in the free choice assignment:

C: Oh, I know what we can write about ...
B: What?
C: What's your favorite cartoon?
B: What's yours?
C: Scooby Doo
B: Mine too.
C: Well, do you want to write about him?
B: Sure, why not?
C: O.K. Ready? (Dyad #1, free choice)

Their subsequently written composition was constructed by stringing together a series of events in chronological order. (See Appendix C for text.)

In contrast to Dyad #1, Dyad #5, composed of two fifth grade girls, June and Leslie, considered a range of possibilities relative to both topic and genre in the free choice assignment. The reasoning behind their eventual choice is evident in their deliberation. The following is an excerpt from the beginning of their writing episode.

L: I don't know what we should do it on.
J: I can't think of anything. Let me see. What's something ... dancing? O.K., what kind of dancing?
L: Well, you can write something about that.

L: What kind of story?

J: Um ... I don't know .. how about something like one of our Japanese folktales ... or a folktale?

L: O.K. Let's see ... Japanese-American ...

J: How about ... oh, I can't think of anything. Japanese, maybe? Might be a little different. (chuckles)

L: Um ... a Japanese folktale. How about a Greek myth?

J: Oh, yes. I like that. It's better. O.K. Do you want to start?

L: How? I mean what are we going to write about?

J: O.K. We'll make it about ... do you want to make up our own god, or ...

L: Yeah, that sounds ...

J: or any other names or ...

L: Let's see. O.K. So what is it going to be about?

J: Once ... how should we start it?

L: I don't know. Let's see ...

J: Should we say one, one ... once upon a ... What do they usually say in the beginning? One, one ... How about one ... one ... one fresh morning or ...

L: One fresh morning?

J: (laughs) One bright morning ...

L: How about ...

J: I think the language of a Greek myth might be difficult.

J: You know how they said different words?
L: Couldn't you just say things like "thy" and that stuff?
J: Let's make a story like we did.

(Dyad #5, free choice)

From this excerpt, it is obvious that the girls had been exposed to literature. Although they attempted to draw on their past experiences in reading and writing, they came to the realization that some of their ideas might be difficult to implement. Metalinguistic awareness was apparent in the latter part of this excerpt.

After a short digression, the girls again turned attention to the topic of dancing, an extra-curricular activity of theirs.

J: Do you want to do one on dancing?
L: No, 'cause what would we write?
J: Oh, about a girl who was going traveling, or something like that.
L: Oh, I got it!
J: What do you want her name to be? One day ...
L: How about two girls? One day, two girls ...
J: (says their names and laughs)
L: I guess.
J: O.K.
L: Is it going to be in America?
J: Yeah.
L: You don't want it to be in Greece or in Japan?

(Dyad #5, free choice)
Thus, the girls finally arrived at the decision to write about that with which they were familiar. (See Appendix C for written text.) The foregoing excerpts illustrate Britton’s first two stages of the writing process, conception and incubation.

Like Dyad #5, Dyad #3, composed of two fifth grade boys named Walter and Mike, also wrote collaboratively on a regular basis in the classroom. They developed action-packed scripts relative to a variety of mutual interests stimulated not only by reading, but by television, the movies, and even games. Following is an excerpt from the beginning of their writing episode in response to the free choice assignment:

W: Here we go. O.K.? What do we do now?
M: Want to make it about like a ...
W: Like these knights or somethin'? 
M: How about mercenaries?
W: Mercenaries? That's too hard to write!
M: No, it isn't.
W: (referring to the microphone) Hook it on your shirt.
M: How about like the ... maybe like the Russians are after this, this new jet we got.
W: "Firefox"?
M: Something like that.
W: Um ... I'm thinking of doing one on knights.
M: All right.
W: ... a story about knights.
M: We already did one on knights.
W: I know, but that was a goofy one. I want somethin' about knights.
M: All right.
W: Like we played this afternoon? (reference to a sociodramatic game acted out during recess)
M: Yeah.
W: What do we call it?
M: Let me write this here a second ... let me write the ...
W: Title. But, what do we call it?
M: "Dragonriders".
W: We did that before ...
M: That's "Dragonriders".
W: They don't ride dragons, do they?

From the above conversation, it can be seen that the boys had a reservoir of ideas within their shared context. Reference
to a sociodramatic type of game played at recess was significant because such activities oftentimes provide rehearsal for writing.

Typically, dyads required little time to determine what it was they were going to write about. Possibly, this was because they were accustomed to producing written discourse. The development of their ideas, however, took the bulk of their writing episodes. All dyads in this study demonstrated an ability to negotiate meaning and compromise at least to some degree. In the following excerpt, Billy and Clyde (Dyad #1, ending sentence) discuss the status of the prince in their story:

C: O.K. You can write. One day he (the prince) was at school ...
B: No, not at school.
C: Why?
B: He's a prince.
C: So? Princes have to learn.
B: We can't make him in school.
C: Why not? They have to learn too.
B: I know, but he already learned. He's about 20.

C: 25, 26 ... O.K.

Later in their writing episode, these two boys were able to jointly construct the kernel idea for their plot:

C: Oh, let's say he (the prince) done something wrong, and he lied to the king about it. He was real bad and didn't want to get in trouble about it.

B: O.K.

C: Let's say he stole some jewelry or some of the king's treasure.

B: No, stole some money ... to buy, to buy his white horse.

C: O.K., O.K. Put that down.

(Dyad #1, ending sentence)

Thus, although a minimum of deliberation was involved, the boys succeeded in carrying out their task jointly.

In addition to instances of negotiating meaning and comparing in this study, there was one unique example of "scaffolding". (It will be recalled that this was Bruner's term to describe how an adult or peer will sometimes provide a verbal structure to enhance a child's understanding.) Data revealed that a subject helped her partner in the parallel assignment (response to
literature) by providing a framework for writing. Dyad #5 was composed of two fifth grade girls named June and Leslie who were both avid readers and able writers. On the afternoon that they were asked to write individually in response to a book they had mutually enjoyed, they had no difficulty in selecting a title, Ellen Raskin's mystery, The Westing Game. After this choice was made, June started to write immediately, but Leslie had trouble thinking of what to put down. Part of her problem may have been due to the fact that the content of the book was no longer fresh in her mind. For whatever reason, she seemed to be struggling with what is sometimes referred to as "writer's block". (As mentioned earlier, Graves has documented evidence relative to the idiosyncratic nature of the writing process and the variability of writers from day to day.) After a long silence the following exchange occurred between the two girls:

J: (reads her own writing aloud) Boom! It was so frightening; Sandy the doorman told the wide-eyed children about how the two teenagers snuck into the Westing House ...

L: What should I write?

J: Um ... O.K. The Westing Game was a very good book. It was about a guy, Sam Westing, who lived a very strange life, changing disguises and all that.

L: I forget the story.

J: (helps her recollect) Remember about all the clues and all the people in the story? Just think, now there was the girl with the crutch ... What was the main character's name with the braid?
L: "Turtle".

J: Turtle, yeah, and Track Star, the Hoo kid ... what was his name, John Hoo, or ...?

L: The only one I remember is Turtle.

J: Well ... (continues to write her own text silently)

Sometime later, Leslie again reached an impasse.

L: I don't know what to write.

J: Don't tell them names of the people, but tell how they were.

L: I don't remember them.

J: Like the jock star, er ... the track star was always running up and down the halls, going in and out of elevators, and about how Turtle kicked everyone that touched her braid and Turtle's mother, Turtle's mother who paid more attention to Turtle's beautiful sister ... um, the one that ... 

L: Angela.

J: Yeah, Angela, the one that was pushed into getting married, and don't ... and see, just write that. You don't have to tell their names ... 'cause if you say like one day when Turtle had woken up, she had walked out the door to go down to Hoo, to the Hoo's restaurant for breakfast, and she saw the Hoo's son running up and down the hall and in and out of the elevator which he was always doing, and then on her way down to the cafe, she met um ... met the strange girl who always had a crutch to match her outfit. (fumbles with microphone) What happened? (refers to equipment) You get the idea? Just write about the people.

(Diad #5, response to literature)

It is apparent from the preceding excerpts that June was attempting to help Leslie cue in on plot structure (the nature of Sam Westing's disguises) and the rich diversity of characters (e.g., Turtle, a girl
who kicked anyone who touched her braid). It was a means of accessing information already stored in memory and providing concrete suggestions for writing. June's point about describing people, rather than pinpointing their exact names seemed to be an attempt to alleviate the constraint posed by the inability to recall information.

After a period of silence, June read their individual texts aloud:

J: Let me read yours. (Reads what L. has written) "The Westing Game was a very good book. It was about a guy, Sam Westing, who lived a strange life. And he had greedy relatives. Turtle had long hair that she always put in braids, and if anyone pulled them, she would kick them with full force at their shins." That's good! I'll read mine: "Boom! It was so frightening! Sandy the doorman told the wide-eyed children about how the two teenagers snuck into the Westing house and when they came out one of them ran so fast he ran completely off the cliffs right after you ended Sam Westing's yard. 'Ouch' Someone had broken the silence. 'She kicked me,' one of the kids yelled. 'Well, make him stop pulling my braid,' Turtle had yelled back."

This was the only writing episode in which a subject asked to read a partner's independently written text. June's comment, "That's good!" served to encourage Leslie to go on. From this short segment of Leslie's text, it is obvious that she had heeded June's suggestions. However, in scrutinizing even these short excerpts of writing, it can be seen that Leslie's work was less context-bound than June's. The latter wrote in a fast-paced, free-moving style reminiscent of Ellen Raskin, but she neglected to provide adequate background
information for the reader. For example, in June's first sentence, she made reference to characters and events in *The Westing Game*, but she did not explain their significance in relation to the plot. Thus, her meaning is not conveyed clearly to the reader. Quite possibly, June's own writing may have suffered at the expense of helping her partner. (See Appendix C for complete texts.)

In several other instances in this writing episode, Leslie asked June for help in determining what to write. On the surface level, it appeared that the former was somewhat dependent upon her partner. However, on the basis of year-long classroom work, the teacher was of the opinion that Leslie was the stronger writer. It seems probable that the girl was unmotivated and disinterested in the assigned task on that particular day. That Leslie was dissatisfied with her writing was evidenced by her remark, "I don't like this story. I don't remember hardly anything about *Westing Game*."

In addition to determining what to say, subjects had to decide how to say it. Often oral language served as a means of rehearsal for writing.

In the following excerpt, wording evolves as two fifth grade boys, Walter and Mike (Dyad #3) jointly construct text of their free-choice fantasy entitled "The Satyr".

**W:** Tuscans are coming!

**M:** Or you could say, right after you say "Tuscans are coming" you could say "Terror ... uh ... shined all over the country, uh ... all over the mountainside."
W: Yeah, and Tuscans rode their Bonthas.

M: And the Tuscans rode their ... uh ...

W: Their Bonthas.

M: What were them creatures that we made up today?

W: What?

M: Rodins.

W: Rodins are rock creatures.

M: Yeah, like they ride the Rodins.

W: They stand on two feet.

M: Rodins do?

W: Yeah, that's what Drowls ride.

M: Oh, yeah.

W: We'll call them Bonthas. So like ... Terror fled through the countryside as Tuscan Raiders rode their Bonthas.

M: Yeah.

W: The small town.

M: Yeah. The small town.

(long pause)

W: Let's see, Terror raged over the land as the Tuscans and their Bonthas rode ...

M: rode ...

W: Let's see here ... ran down the mountainside to the helpless town.

M: Yeah.
Thus, their written text finally read: "Terror raged over the land as Tuskins and their Banthas ran down the mountain side to the helpless little town." It is apparent from the preceding excerpt that the boys had a fairly well-developed shared context insofar as their fantasy was concerned. The example illustrates how subjects were able to create ideas and determine choice of wording concurrently.

Deliberation relative to just wording is evidenced in the following excerpt also involving Dyad #3. In this instance, Mike debates how best to describe a character's condition in Susan Cooper's fantasy, *The Dark is Rising*. In this example, both boys are composing their independent texts concurrently:

M: See, I want him (the character) to be real scared, but I don't want to put it that way.

W: He got ... he was deadly cold?

M: Yeah.

W: (composes his own text aloud) next ...

M: He was in a cold sweat.

W: (continues to compose his own text aloud) to ... (responds to his partner) Yeah ... that's the way to say it. (continues to compose his own text aloud) ... in the snow next to the church ...

M: ... and he became overcome with fear (chuckles). Does that sound right?

When Mike reread his sentence aloud, he disclosed his uncertainty about correct usage: "... began, bugun, begun, began, begun trying
to overcome his fear." Then Mike asked his partner how to spell begun. His final written text was as follows: "He was in a cold sweat. Be begun trieing to overcome his fear."

Thus, it can be seen that subjects also concerned themselves with the mechanics of writing in their conversations. In fourteen out of the fifteen writing episodes in the present study, at least one member of a dyad mentioned spelling. Very frequently, subjects were able to help one another spell words that were needed in their written productions. Sometimes a partner responded without qualification, as in the following example:

B: How do you spell favorite?
J: Huh?
B: How do you spell favorite?
J: f-a-v-o-r-i-t-e. (Dyad #4, response to literature)

Other times, a peer was more cautious:

B: How do you spell hospital?
C: I don't know ... I think it's h-o-s-p-i-t-a-l. I don't know. (Dyad #1, response to literature)

Occasionally, a subject would want to verify the spelling of a word:

B: Is Thanksgiving a whole word, or is Thanksgiving Day?
J: I think it's a whole word.
B: Look how long it is.
J: Maybe you should put Thanksgiving and Day separate.

B: O.K.

J: 'Cause I don't think Thanksgiving Day goes together, probably not. I don't know. Put whatever you want.

(Dayd #4, response to literature)

Subjects were not always successful in helping one another with spelling, as can be seen in the following example.

B: ... How do you spell uncle? U-n-c-k-l-y. Is that right?

C: Huh?

B: How do you spell uncle?

C: u-n ..., no. U-n-c-u-l, I think.

B: U-n-c ... I think it's l-y. I don't care. (continues writing.)

(Dyad #1, response to literature)

The fact that B. made an effort to spell the word correctly shows that he did indeed care. Remarks such as "I don't care" or "Who cares?" in regard to spelling were common in this study. No mention was ever made of consulting a dictionary. It appears that, as a group, the subjects thought it was natural to have some misspelled words in a first draft. During the interview session at the conclusion of the study, however, they were in total agreement as to the importance of correct spelling in the final product.

In addition to determining how to spell words, subjects discussed handwriting, punctuation, and even the use of paper, as can be seen in the following excerpt:
J: You can't write on the back of the paper?
S: No, I feel funny.
J: Why?
S: I don't know.
J: That's why you write on one paper (one side) in your notebook journal.
S: Yeah. I'm on the 10th page really, but when I write on the back, I'm only on the 5th.

This short segment of conversation not only exhibits J.'s concern for conservation, but his cognizance of his partner's writing in the classroom as well.

To summarize what has been discussed in this section, dyads used oral language primarily to determine what to say and how to say it in written form. Considering the nature of the collaborative writing assignments, this was to be expected. However, in analyzing transcripts of conversations, it became evident that the writing sessions also provided an opportunity to do the following:
- explore language and new ideas
- examine ideas critically

Hence, a section devoted to each of these areas will follow.

3. Exploration of Language and New Ideas

In a number of instances, subjects in this study attempted to write unique responses to the assignments given. For example, Jimmy and Sam (Dyad #2, ending sentence task) jointly constructed
a tale about a prince who was served vile food in a restaurant. Even at the very beginning of their writing episode, they seemed to be searching for the unusual.

J: What do you want to call it? (reference is to the ending sentence story)

S: I don't know. "Mr. Mistake"? (chuckles)

J: Why don't we say "The Knights of the Octagon Table"?

S: Yeah! (with enthusiasm)

J: Want to do that?

S: Yeah!

J: How should we write it, (the title) make in into an octagon?

S: Yeah.

Thus, by substitution, the familiar "Knights of the Round Table" was changed to "Knights of the Octagon Table". Later, the boys brainstormed as to what the protagonist's name should be:

M: What who should this knight be?

J: Sir Lancelot, Sir Hilt-a-lot.

M: Sir Landscape.

J: Sir Pole-Vault-a-lot. Sir Pole Vault. Want to write that down?

M: Yeah.

J: O.K. at a quarter to twelve, Sir Pole Vault took his lance and pole vaulted off the horse into the dining room.
Further on in their writing episode, the protagonist's name was mentioned again. This time, opposites were juxtaposed (Prince Charming and Prince Uncharming) for a comical effect.

In this story, Prince Polevault's mistake was eating the bad food at the restaurant. The boys discussed where the prince could dispose of what had been served to him. This prompted Jimmy to come up with an unexpected solution:

J: We have to have ... What's that thing they have in the news that they dump wastes in? That thing that they're filling up?

M: I don't know.

J: There're these trucks, tanks, these big tank trucks come along.

M: What do they do?

J: They have some kind of radiation or something.

M: I don't know.

J: What do they call that kind of radiation? It starts with a "t" ... Toxic, don't they?

M: Yeah.

J: How about you have a toxic waste dump. "Do you have a toxic waste dump for this gloop, I mean this so-called food?" (both laugh)

In this example, Jimmy not only makes an unusual association, but he divulges from where his idea came (the news on television).

In the response to literature assignment, these same subjects (Dyad #2) talked about a superstition mentioned in Molly Hunter's
A Stranger Came Ashore. This led them to discussing the one about whoever catches a bouquet at a wedding is the next to get married.

Here the boys let their imaginations take over:

J: When they throw the bouquet, and they catch it ... oh, what if a little kid caught it? A little baby was on her mom's lap, and they go (makes sound), and the baby catches it? The baby's going to be married next? Hot dog! What if the dog caught it?

S: Dog? (laughs)

J: No, what if Garfield caught it? (sound effects) Yeah, he said, "Ohhhh, flowers!" (sound effects and laughter)

Exploration of language and ideas was often prompted by humorous intent. The following segment of conversation occurred just after June had made the suggestion that the name of a ballet in their story be called "The Dying Swan":

L: How about "The Dying Duck?" (laughs)

J: "The Dying Duck"? (laughs) Just put "The Dying Swam".

L: How about "The Living Swan"?

J: Just put "The Dying Swan" ... let's not ...

(Dyad #5, free choice)

Frequently, deliberate facetiousness such as exhibited in the example above did not appear in the subsequently written text. Most of the subjects had a good idea of what was appropriate and what was not.

Inappropriate usage was sometimes suggested for humorous effect. For example, in the free choice assignment, Judy and
Barbara (Dyad #4) repeatedly laughed over the idea of using the word "shrieked" in their dialogue. However, they never included it in their written text. In a subsequent writing episode (the ending sentence task), Judy chuckled over using the word "wealthy" to describe the royal castle. Later, she remarked, "First it was 'shrieked', and now it's 'wealthy'." Further on in the writing episode, she again made reference to the use of these words for comical effect. She said, "I liked the one about 'wealthy' and 'shrieked'. That story was about gymnastics, wasn't it, B.?

Judy's play with language appeared to serve a mnemonic function in addition to releasing tension and sustaining interest. These examples are given because they reflect linguistic sophistication and they point to the fact that children develop a reservoir of writing experiences from which they may later draw ideas.

Inappropriate usage relative to facetiousness also revealed something about Judy's communicative competence. For instance, when she and Barbara were working on the dialogue between the prince and the girl in ragged clothing (ending sentence task), Judy role played the following exchange: "May I come in?" (girl's request) "No!" (prince's reply) This unexpected response evoked laughter. Judy also experimented with volume in the same segment of dialogue. "I am Princess Sophia," the ragged girl shrieked ... SOPHIA (says loudly). Further on, she imitated the prince when he
was ushering the ragged girl into the castle: "May I help you with the rags, I mean bags?" This suggestion brought about more laughter. However, the eventual written text contained a more conventional use of language:

Prince: May I help you with the bags?

Girl: No, I mean that I can carry them myself. Thank you anyway.

Of the two girls in this dyad, Judy seemed to engage in more exploration of language than Barbara, who appeared to be more conservative. For instance, Judy's suggestions that the Prince's sister be named "Caribbean" and that a knock on the door be described as "splendid" were both rejected. In the following excerpt from the free choice writing episode, the girls are concerned with the location of their story:

J: B. and J. were at the natatorium.

B: Natatorium?

J: Yeah, it's by my great-grandma's house. It's called a natatorium. It has seven swimming pools.

B: Um.

J: B. and J. were at the natatorium taking gymnastic lessons.

B: I thought you said gymnaisium.

J: All right, gymnaisium.

It seems that Judy was absorbing new vocabulary rapidly and looking for ways to use it. Her partner's conversation may have helped her to focus on appropriateness and preciseness of usage.
Judy and Barbara also engaged in word play. For instance, in the free choice writing episode, Judy said the following as she wrote the word "gymnastics": "Tics ... there are ticks in your hair." Barbara giggled when she suggested that the buzzer "rang-tang". Neither of these asides appeared in written form, however.

Writing assignments provided subjects with an opportunity to explore ideas as well as language use. In the brief excerpt which follows, Jimmy and Sam (Dyad #2) focus on the time of their narrative (free choice task):

J: Where is this in? We don't want it to be Medieval -- we want it to be before that, before kings.

S: What's before that? (laughs)

J: Beats me. (muffled utterance) Conan the Barbarian.

In another example, Walter and Mike (Dyad #3) begin to conceptualize their fantasy entitled "The Satyr" (free choice assignment):

W: Start in the afternoon.

M: All right.

W: We would be able to see.

M: Well, how about ... snowy?

W: (chuckles) Snowy?

M: Take place in the winter, then we could have more creatures.

W: What creatures?

M: Like snow creatures, wampas.
W: Wampas? Those are on a different planet.
M: Is this on a different planet?
W: Yeah.
M: All right.
W: It looks a little bit like a ... let's see ... 
M: But it's cold-like.
W: One rainy afternoon.
M: Yeah.
W: Like it's having a thunderstorm ... one rocky afternoon ...
M: They're having a rock storm or something like that. A meteor storm.

(long pause)
W: Drowls were living there.
M: Yeah, they were beaten. Beaten by the rocks and stuff. Lightening flashed, cause the Drowls were everywhere in their caves ... and like these guys are trying to take over the town and kill the Drowls.

Thus, the boys explored ideas and negotiated meaning within their shared context. That their thinking was stimulated by their background of experience is evident in the following list of references that were made during their three-part writing episode which resulted in "The Satyr".

1. "Foxfire" - a movie shown on cable television
2. previous writing that they had done: "Dragonraiders"
3. sociodramatic game played at recess
4. "Buck Rogers" - television
5. "Dark Crystal" - a movie
6. "Rocky" - a movie (also shown on television)
7. Mt. St. Helens - current news
8. "Flash Dance" - a movie
9. "Dungeons and Dragons" - a reading game
10. "Tales of the Gold Monkey" - a television show
11. comic books
12. "Return of the Jedi" - a movie
13. "Star Wars" - a movie (also shown on television)
14. "Raiders of the Lost Ark" - a movie

This list shows the strong influence of mass media. It should be mentioned that both boys had cable television in their homes and admitted spending many hours watching it.

In summary, the writing episodes in this study gave rise to exploration of language and ideas. Often what was bantered back and forth orally did not appear in subsequently written text. This is evidence that subjects had the capability of register switching and that they were aware that there are subtle differences between the oral and the written mode. In the next section, a look will be taken at how writers examined their ideas critically.
4. Critical Examination of Ideas

As mentioned earlier, the writing process itself often brings about self-awareness and learning. This appeared to be the case when June and Leslie (Dyad #5) were writing about themselves as sixteen-year-old dancers in the free-choice assignment. In their story, both girls, who were roommates, auditioned for a part in "The Dying Swan", but only one was chosen. In the following excerpt, the girls discuss how this turn of events affected their friendship and concern themselves with the appropriateness of the characters' feelings:

J: ... as Jack Simmon was announcing who had got the parts, L. was relieved to hear she had gotten one of the leading parts. J. waited nervously, but her name was never called. Instantly, she broke out into tears. When they returned to their apartment, J. didn't say a word. L. had practice two times a day, and J. really ... J. really ... how does it go?

L: We have to fix this.

J: J. really ... how does it go?

L: I don't think ... it isn't supposed to be "really", is it?

J: J. didn't talk, and J. and L. never really talked ... or I don't know.

L: How about ... J. um ...

J: (laughs) We can't think of anything.

L: J.

J: What?

L: Julia didn't say much when ...
J: L. was around. J. didn't say much when L. was around and found new friends, I guess ... when L. was around and found new friends, and she found new friends. O.K. We almost have two pages. One day Laura finally said, "I'm going to quit".

L: If we don't be friends or what? "I'm going to quit if we will be friends.

J: O.K. Let me write some. "If we can't be friends," J. yelled ... J. yelled back.

L: J. yelled, and J. yelled back?

J: No. J. yelled and said ... I don't know (laughs).

L: J. yelled and said, "I don't know?"

J: J. yelled and said, "No, I can't do that." It sounds like corn. O.K. No, no, we ... I have been not talking, so I have been quiet because I was jealous, I don't know ... I have been ... no, the only reason I was quiet was because I was jealous. That's it. (writes) The only reason I was so quiet ...

L: J., don't you know how to spell? You spell r-e-a-s-o-n.

J: Quiet ... oh, the only reason, the only reason I was so quiet is because, is because I was jealous. You shouldn't quit because of me.

L: Friends are more important than a stupid play.

J: You shouldn't quit because of me, but L. said, "Friends are more important than a stupid play." O.K.

L: I can't think of anything.

J: More important than a play.

L: Do you want to write more, or do you want to end?

J: No, we've got to end it somehow. Um ... friends are more important than a play. J. ... the next day,
L: What about the rest of the conversation?

J: The next day ... Oh, J., J. walked out, slamming the door.

L: Why? She's not supposed to be slamming around. She should be happy.

(erasing sound)

J: Oh, I don't know.

L: How about J. turned away?

J: J.

L: and walked into her bedroom.

J: Yeah. J. turned away ... 

L: Just put "the next day". Who cares if we don't finish?

J: The next day, Laura returned from another practice.

L: No ...

J: The next day, L. returned from another practice ...

L: play practice

J: and she had quit. When L. told J., J., she made L. made L. go back and finish the play ... went back and finished the play ... and when it ends, it has to be enjoyment to see the play, like, and L. didn't want to ... no.

L: How about the other leading persons, or the persons got sick and you had to take their place?

J: No. 'Cause if I was any good, my name would have been called for one of the smaller parts. I didn't ...

L: They didn't play smaller parts.

J: Yes, they did.

L: Just tryouts for the big parts.
J: (laughs) I don't know.

L: I was there, remember?

J: Well, I just want to make it ... finish the play. On opening night, on the night of L.'s play, on the night of L.'s play, she got a standing ...

L: I got a standing?

J: standing ovation ... and J. was so proud. How's that?

L: Why would you be proud?

J: Because I was happy for you ... was very ...

L: happy, then.

J: Happy for ... what? That's wasting paper. (refers to offer of another sheet of paper) Man, that's using the last thing (refers to squeezing the remaining words on the bottom of the page). For Laura, period. O.K. Let's read it.

Thus, the girls projected how they would feel in a hypothetical situation. Despite the complexity of their emotions, Leslie realized that under the circumstances her friend wouldn't show anger by slamming a door, but rather would be happy that their friendship was more important than a part in a play. At the end of the excerpt, however, she seemed to misunderstand June's use of the word "proud". Hence, they changed it to "happy". It appears that this writing episode provided both real-life and vicarious experience in human relations.

Sometimes contradictions were discovered during the composing process, in which case ideas could be reworked. In two instances,
subjects realized a problem with content when they reread their completed writing on a separate occasion. For example, June and Leslie (Dyad #5) became aware of the fact that they had not fully reconciled the ending sentence that was supplied with the story they had written. In their narrative, the action took place in the cellar of the castle. From there, the prince could not have possibly mounted his white horse.

In another example, Jimmy (Dyad #2) noticed that it didn't make sense to say soldiers captured the Black Tower when it had previously exploded. No attempt was made by subjects to revise the content of their writing, as was mentioned earlier. The point that is being made here is that there were many instances in which subjects were able to examine their ideas critically in the collaborative setting. Partners often served as "built-in" audiences for one another's suggestions.

There are some examples in the written texts of where meaning was not made explicit. For instance, in the ending sentence assignment, Judy and Barbara (Dyad #4) discussed the interdiction relative to the box, but they failed to include it in their writing. Negotiation with a partner in regard to content may have distracted individuals from focusing on the necessity of producing context-free texts in some cases.
To recapitulate what has been presented in this section, talk in a collaborative writing setting was used for the following purposes in this study:

- maintenance of interpersonal relationships
- problem solving relative to the writing task
- exploration of language and new ideas
- critical evaluation of written text.

In the next section, attention will be addressed to how the nature of the writing assignment affected language that was produced by the subjects.

**The Nature of Writing Assignments and Its Effect on Oral Language Produced**

A quantitative indicator of subjects' responses to writing assignments was the amount of time they devoted to carrying out the three tasks. In a number of instances, dyads voluntarily elected to write for more than one writing session, which typically lasted for an average of 45 minutes. As can be seen from the chart below, there was a tendency for dyads to spend a longer period of time on the free choice and response to literature assignments than on the ending sentence task.
Number of Writing Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Dyad #1</th>
<th>Dyad #2</th>
<th>Dyad #3</th>
<th>Dyad #4</th>
<th>Dyad #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ending sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response to literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be noted that Dyad #3 wrote over the greatest number of sessions. Accordingly, their free choice writing episode yielded by far the longest oral language transcript and the longest written production. The fact that the two fifth grade boys spend approximately two hours creating a story is evidence that they were engrossed in what they were doing and that they were fairly oblivious to the artificiality of the data collecting procedures employed in this study. It appeared to both the researcher and the subjects' teacher that linguistic performance in this writing episode closely approximated that which would be expected in the more natural context of the classroom setting.

From a qualitative standpoint, many differences in oral language usage were observed among the three writing assignments. For the purposes of clarity, each of the tasks will be discussed in turn.
1. Ending Sentence Assignment

In order to carry out this task successfully, subjects had to do a certain amount of advance planning. They had to cue in on information given in the ending sentence supplied: "Vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle, where he lived happily ever after". In some instances, subjects verbalized this recognition. For example, Mark (Pilot Study, Dyad #2A) muttered, "I wonder what mistake? Wow! Interesting ..." at the outset of the writing episode. However, Mike and most other subjects started their stories first and worried about reconciling the beginning with the ending at a later time. As an example, members of Dyad #2 had already described Prince Polevault's unusual entrance into the dining hall before they came up with the idea that his mistake could be ordering food there.

Typically, problem solving took place one step at a time. Consider the beginning of this writing episode (Pilot Study, Dyad #2A):

One day, no, once upon a time ... (traditional beginning)  
there was ... (There was what?)  
a prince ... (What about the prince?)  
named ... (What was his name?)
Thus, it can be seen that sometimes there were a number of decision-making junctures within a single sentence.

In only one out of the fifteen writing episodes in the present study did subjects delineate their plot before starting to write. Although June and Leslie (Dyad #5) didn't articulate their ideas clearly, they did establish how they were going to proceed in their writing:

J: How about something like Castle Lear?
L: I read it.
J: (with surprise) You mean it's an actual book?
L: Oh, I just mean ... How about Castle Graystone, something like that. Castle Graystone.
J: Castle Graystone? Castle Black ..., Castle Black ...
L: Let's don't make up a title now.
J: O.K. Let's make it like, I don't know ... a prince figured out, figured out in his own castle ... all these sisters, I don't know ... maybe had this curse on them from a long time ago, and he found a chest, and his, like his father's ghost that was already killed by the curse said not to open it, and um ... and um ... out of curiosity, he did. And vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode ...
L: No, not a chest. That is what was in our last ...
J: I know. How about a vase? (She pronounced it vass.)
L: A vass?
J: A vase, whatever, vass.
L: How about a genie lamp, like?

J: (chuckles) A genie lamp?

L: You know bottles ... like on those cartoons before? On the bottle it said not to open it?

J: Till X-mas? Christmas?

L: No. But when they opened it, there was this genie, and he did bad things, like.

J: Wasn't it on the cartoon, "Donald Duck"? No, the duck and he turns into a real shrimp?

L: No, it was on "Scooby Doo". (reference is to another television cartoon show)

J: Oh, I saw that. L., genies weren't back then, I don't think. You know? Let's make something like never move the rock, er the sword from the stone. (laughs) Never pick a rose from the ancient ...

L: He made a mistake. What is the mistake he made?

J: He was too curious.

L: He was too curious?

J: He was, he was.

L: But what did he do that was so curious?

J: Well, his father that was killed by a curse .. he could start out long, long ago in a little town, a witch, you know, was getting ready to be executed ... no, a young girl was being um ...

L: No, listen, listen, and they thought she was a witch, and she was, and the person that was going to kill her, er ... was going to execute her, was an ancestor of the prince's, and she put a curse on all the rest of the family. Every day when, every day that the oldest boy becomes a prince ... no. Whenever, whenever the oldest prince, every other generation ... whenever the oldest boy becomes a prince,
then he's cursed ... that he will ... I don't know ... that, that the only girl he'll marry will die or some-
thing like that.

L: Yeah, but what is the mistake? There has to be ...

J: Oh, his father's spirit came back and said you must not
open, you must not ...

L: You must not do something, but ... he gives them a
jewelry box.

J: And you must not open it until ...

L: Or ...

J: Until ...

L: Or you will be executed.

J: No, or you will die from the curse.

L: No, see ... yeah ... no ...

J: Yeah.

L: How about ... no, he has ... forget that witch.

J: I like that.

L: How about like he found this old box lying ...

J: Um hum ... let's start writing it. (starts to write)
Long, long ...

The significant degree to which the girls' ideas were incorporated
into their written text can be seen by referring to their finished
product in the Appendix C. June and Leslie did not engage in as much
preplanning in either the free choice or the response to literature
assignments. While responding to the former task, the girls made
the initial decision to write about themselves as 16-year old dancers. From then on, their story slowly evolved sentence by sentence. The theme of that particular composition (friendship is more important than a part in a play) did not surface until the latter part of their writing episode. In the response to literature assignment, June provided Leslie with ideas for writing through scaffolding as was described elsewhere. Here again, detailed preplanning was not evident. It would appear, therefore, that the nature of the ending sentence assignment caused the girls to think ahead so that the reconciliation of story parts could take place. This ties in with the findings of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981).

Also in regard to the preceding excerpt, it is apparent that the subjects' experiential background included a blend of literature, television and the movies. Although reference was made to cartoons (i.e., "Donald Duck" and "Scooby Doo"), the girls wrote their story in a serious vein.

In contrast to the approach used by Dyad 3, two pairs of boys (Dyads #2 and #3) wrote humorous compositions in response to the ending sentence assignment. For both dyads, it was their first writing episode. As explained elsewhere, the order of assignments was varied so that results would not be influenced by a learning effect. Perhaps the boys resorted to humor as a means of reducing the stress of a novel situation. Quite possibly, the fairy tale
theme no longer interested them. (Favat, 1977, found the peak interest in this genre to be between the ages of 6 and 8.) For whatever reason or combination of reasons, Dyad #3 decided early in their writing episode to write a "goofy" story. Members of Dyad #2 bantered back and forth in a jocular way before committing themselves to writing a humorous composition. In the following jovial manner they brainstormed possible names for the king in their story:

J: King ... Sir George, Sir Bubblehead, King Fonziarelli, no, Arthur Fonziarelli. (reference is to an actor on television).

S: King Georgette. (both laugh)

J: King Arthur and the knights of the octagon table. How's that?

The latter suggestion was adopted as the first title for the story. Later Dyad #2 changed it to "Sir Gloop's Resterant".

Subsequently, the boys talked about the prince's mistake:

J: What should the mistake be, though?

S: Killing the wrong person?

J: Nah, that's too violent.

S: Hiring the wrong king?

J: Hiring the wrong king? (laughs) How about inventing the electric chair before its time?

S: Yeah. (both laugh)
As the latter suggestion was not implemented, the problem of determining the prince's mistake was postponed.

A short while later, the boys discussed where their story would take place. Humorous carryover can be seen in this exchange:

J: Where should this be, though? We don't want to make it in England. Where was King Arthur at?
S: Camelot.
J: (Asks researcher directly) England?
S: Guam.
J: Russia. They used to call Russia "Yuckestuck", I think.
S: They did?
J: That's what they have on my "Risk" game. They have all these old countries. King Arthur rode into Yuckestruck. (laughs)
S: Yuckestuck, no, in Buffalo. (laughs)
J: This is supposed to be a comedy special, right?
S: I don't know what it should be or shouldn't be.
J: Let's write it, and then we'll find out.

Like other subjects in this study, Jimmy and Sam sought new and different ideas. Although they brainstormed possible geographic locations for their story, none subsequently appeared in their written text. The first few minutes of the tape recording reveal from where some of Jimmy's ideas came - literature, television, and even a commercial game, which he cited as a reputable source of
information. In regard to whether or not they should be writing a humorous piece, Jimmy's suggestion, "Let's write it, and then we'll find out" is reminiscent of Peter Elbow's advice to writers:

> Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning into language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning - before you know your meaning at all - and encourage your words gradually to change and devolve. Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you want to say it with (1973, p. 15).

Before leaving this particular writing episode involving Dyad #2, another observation must be made pertaining to the ending sentence assignment. It was the only instance in which subjects expressed dissatisfaction regarding the task itself. The following exchange attests to this:

J: I hate these ones (writing assignments) you have to do the ending.

S: They get boring.

J: Yeah.

The boys' remarks are significant in that of all the writing tasks, this was the most contrived and the most devoid of inherent personal meaning. The ending sentence assignment did evoke the only example of detailed advanced planning, however. In addition, this particular writing task prompted the only two humorously written compositions in the study.
2. Free Choice Assignment

Of the three writing tasks, the free choice assignment gave subjects the greatest latitude in deciding what to say and how to say it. They were not required to write about a prince's mistake as was the case in the ending sentence task, nor did they have to restrict themselves to writing in reference to a book as they did in the response to literature assignment.

The oral language transcript of Dyad #2 is a running record of what concerned Jimmy and Sam as they took on the total responsibility for jointly constructing a narrative about an attack on a tower. (The complete transcript, together with the resulting written text, appears in Appendix B.)

At the outset of the free choice writing episode, the boys decided to write a story similar to one composed by a classmate which was based on a popular movie entitled "Raiders of the Lost Ark". At first, it appeared to the researcher that the boys were merely going to attempt a duplication of their friend's written production because they started out by using his original title, "Raiders of the Styx". However, it soon became evident that, although they were working according to a predetermined script (an attack on a tower), they were engaged in problem identification as well as problem solution. For instance, once they decided to
predate medieval times, they had to concern themselves with what kinds of boats were being used during that era of history, as illustrated by the following excerpt:

J: ... what kind of boats did they have then?
S: I don't know.
J: boarded a ...
S: What are they like?
J: A canoe would be too small. (digression about microphone)
J: They had like ... boarded their schooner.
S: Scooter?
J: Schooner. That's s-c-h-o-o-n-e-r. Boarded their schooner.

Much of the boys' conversation during this writing episode centered on the logistics of actions in their story. Even though they were composing within a shared context, they had to give careful thought to what was occurring and where it was happening before they could adequately describe it. In the following excerpt, Jimmy and Sam grapple with just how the raiders are going to make their way to the Black Tower:

J: They entered the harbor disguised as ... what kind of boat?
S: As merchandizers.
J: Yeah, merchants. Merchandizers (giggles at his partner's word choice). They entered the harbor disguised as merchants. They went into the countryside. No, Where would this be? Right in the middle of Egypt, right?

S: Yeah.

J: Middle of the desert. They went into the countryside.

S: They would take the long way, wouldn't they?

J: What?

S: You'd say they wanted to take the long way, so you'd go through the desert.

J: They entered the desert on ... in how many days, in how many days after they came into the harbor? Oh, how about they buy their supplies now?

S: They went to local merchants. That's what my guess would be (chuckles).

J: They buy. They bought, they bought their supplies, Sam supplies (chuckles) ... no, at nearby merchants or ...

S: Nearby merchants.

J: Merchants. How many days after they sailed in the harbor?

S: Well, two.

J: (writes) two days after sailing ... if you don't like something, just tell me, O.K.?

S: Yeah.

J: the ... are you sure they want to go through the desert?

S: Well, if they're disguised as merchants, they wouldn't have to.

J: Hold it. They were disguised as merchants to get in there, 'cause if they wore warrior clothes, they wouldn't get in there.
S: Yeah, if they still didn't have their merchant stuff on, they'd have to take the long way.

J: Hold it. Let's say the long way's through a forest, or something.

S: All right, cause through the desert, they'd die.

J: Yeah.

S: They'd have ta'.

In the preceding segment of conversation, it is apparent that the boys wanted their story to make sense. Thus, they had to take both geographical and temporal aspects into consideration when describing the raiders' journey. In this excerpt, the boys discussed choice of route (whether the men were going across a desert or through a forest), the problem of obtaining supplies, and the use of disguise as a military tactic.

The following conversation is also relative to the logistics of the attack, but in this case, the subjects focus on a mathematical problem: how to divide the soldiers among three leaders.
If Jimmy had known his math facts, he would have realized early on that sixty divided by twelve is five, an uneven number. His ultimate solution, however, serves his purpose.

J: ... Hold it, what's 60 ... How many 12's would go into 60?
S: 12's into 60?
J: Yeah.
S: I don't know.
J: Want to find out? I don't know how to do this kind good, so you do it.
S: Oh, that's easy.
J: I can only do it with one digit outside.
S: 6, 6, 12 ...
J: That's two. 12, 1. Here, let me write it ... Can't you write the other ... times? You mean, that's division.
S: I know. It's a different way. I mean ...
J: Hold it, hold it, hold it.
S: You can't do that.
J: 6, 12 into 60.
S: Wait a minute. How many twelves are in 60? How many one's are in 6, that's six ... How many 6's are in ...
J: Wait a minute. What are you doing? How many one's are in 6? Right?
S: That's not going to give you anything, cause ...

J: You're right.

S: How many one's are in six?

J: Six.

S: Sixty times 12.

J: Noooo.

S: So we'll just leave that. What did you need it for?

J: Well, they usually counted their knights in dozens. They say we have two dozen men attacking. Hold it. I have an idea we're doing it the wrong way ...

S: You're doing it the wrong way.

J: We both are doing it the wrong way. Let's see now. 12 plus 12 is 24. O.K. 24 times 3, 12. Hold it. They have 72 men. That will give them two dozen each. This guy will get two dozen men, this guy will get two dozen men, and that guy will get two dozen men.

Thus, by increasing the number of soldiers, an even distribution among the leaders could be made. This excerpt also illustrates how interpersonal relationships and the task at hand are intricately bound in a collaborative-type setting. Barnes and Todd (1977) made a reference to this in their study of
adolescent group discussions. In analyzing their data, they came to the conclusion that every utterance has both an interpersonal frame of reference and a content frame of reference. By looking at conversational language in this way, they were able to account for the ebb and flow of meaning within the framework of differing interpretations.

Some of the other problem solving strategies employed by Dyad #2 are worth noting. In the following two conversations, the boys were concerned with names of characters in their story.

J: The wizard is like in Crunshire, no, in the Black Tower. What should his name be, though?

S: What should it be?

J: A wizard named, a wizard in the Black Tower named ... A wizard in the Black Tower named ... what?

S: Um ...

J: Names give us a real problem.
S: Yeah (laughs)

J: Think of something like ... have you ever seen any shows about stuff like that?

S: Merlin (chuckles)

J: Merlin. (also chuckles)

S: Vector.

J: Vector? Named Vector? How do you spell that?

S: V-e-c-t-o-r.

J: A wizard named Vector saw them, saw them. A wizard in the Black Tower named Vector saw them.

Thus, in this instance, television was used as a resource for ideas.

In the following excerpt reference is made to Sam's previous writing, as the boys try to figure out names for the three leaders who are about to spearhead the attack on the Black Tower:

J: Plans for attacking the Dark Tower or something ... the Black Tower ... I mean ... here's where we have to get their names.

S: Why, why do we have to have names?

J: 'Cause we want to know their names when they're talking' and everything, get it?

S: You can have ... like ... names like Eric.

J: How about Elerick?

S: Elerick and ...
J: Why don't we use yours, the names you put in your book?

S: I don't have that many. I only have Hector, which is Vector, Prince Cooper. I have Matt, who's his servant, and Black --, the evil one. That's all I have. Why don't you write names, and I'll get a new piece of paper?

This segment of conversation contains both a good rationale for using names and a strategy for doing so. Sam's prior experience as a writer was tapped as a possible source of ideas. Hence, these youngsters revealed and shared a conscious knowledge about story writing.

Yet another composing strategy was used by the boys as they neared completion of their story. At this point, they had been working collaboratively for nearly 45 minutes. Sensing that it was time to conclude their tale, they worked out the ending as follows:

J: Now, we'll go back to that other guy, Vector, Vector. Vector prepared his defenses, how about that?

S: Yeah.

J: Say he didn't use the army because he thought he could defeat them himself with his wizardry, wizardtry ... but he wasn't listening to them when they discussed the plan. O.K.?

S: Yeah.

J: Say he did not use the army because he didn't ... he did not use the army because he did not listen to their plan ... this tape's almost over.
S: It is?

J: Yeah. Use the army.

S: Why don't we just say ... they attacked and they caught him.

J: No, it's too short. That would be too short. All right.

S: They attacked. That will be about like down to here (refers to place on paper). They caught him. That will be about down to here. And then they go back, and that will be about down to there.

J: O.K. So they all got lined up. Over the ridge. How about this: over the ridge they saw the Black Tower ...

Thus, by deliberately mapping out the ending, the boys avoided abruptly truncating their story. The actual conclusion of their writing episode lasted an additional ten minutes, during which time they made decisions concerning the type of weapons used and delineated events leading up to the final destruction of the tower.

Whereas Dyad #2 wrote a fantasy, the subjects in Dyad #4 chose to write about themselves. Judy and Barbara jointly constructed a text on the subject of gymnastics, a personal interest of theirs. This assignment was the only one in which these two girls questioned genre. Although they didn't directly answer one another's questions, there is evidence that they were aware that a choice had to be made:
B: How do you want to start? Do you want to tell about, like, you know, how you do it, or do you want to tell why we like it, or what you do, and all that stuff, or what?

J: Is this a story or informational?

They ultimately wrote a story which evolved as they went along. There was very little evidence of advanced planning in this story. As an illustration of this statement, they had already written the first two sentences before they delineated the plot.

Even though the girls were writing fiction, authenticity appeared to be important to them. When Judy suggested that in their story Barbara could be working on the vault, the latter said, "I don't do the vault." Their discussion of gymnastics brought out additional terms: parallel bars, high balance beam, trippling, backhand springs, and uneven parallel bars. From their talk, it seems that Judy was more knowledgeable about the subject of gymnastics because she had taken lessons.
Barbara asked her several questions to authenticate what they were including in their story:

B: What's the hardest thing? (meaning activity)

B: What do you use? (meaning type of gymnastic equipment)

B: Have you ever used those on the parallel bars? (meaning gym gloves)

B: When you take gymnastics, what are you? (answer: a gymnast)

In reference to the last question, it is interesting to observe that Barbara had used the term "gymnasticer" incorrectly earlier in their discussion. It appears that she thought it important to use the proper form in writing. In this example and in the one cited earlier about the use of "natatorium", it is clear that peer interaction was contributing to vocabulary expansion.

The free choice assignment was the only one in which subjects defined new words for their partners. In addition to those examples already cited, it is significant to mention that after Dyad #3
had committed to writing a story about a satyr, Mike had to ask Walter to define the word on two separate occasions. An illustration appears below:

M: What's a Satyr?
W: It's like umm ..., it's got the top of a man and the legs of a goat or deer.

In sum, the free choice assignment allowed for the greatest range of possibilities. Without exception, all five dyads produced their longest written productions in response to this task. Among the more behaviorally mature subjects, there appeared to be earnest involvement and commitment. Although topics differed, there seemed to be a high degree of personal relevance ranging from a sense of accomplishment in writing a good story to exploration of individual values. The free choice assignment also evoked the only instances in which subjects defined new words for partners thereby contributing to vocabulary expansion.

3. Response to Literature Assignment

As expected, the response to literature assignment prompted discussion about books with which the subjects were familiar. In the following excerpt, Jimmy and Sam (Dyad #2) are in the process of choosing a title about which to write.

J: Do you want to talk about The Westing Game?
S: I don't know. I didn't understand it that good.
J: You didn't understand that?
S: Na, not really.
J: Oh, well. What did we read before Stranger Came Ashore?
S: Tuck Everlasting.
J: (groans) Oh.
S: Didn't you like that book?
J: Kinda.
S: Kinda boring.
J: I missed a lot of it because I go to enrichment a day out of every week. They started it, and I wasn't there. That's why I didn't like it. I wasn't there, and I didn't know who anybody was. What did we read before that?
S: Abel's (starts to say Abel's Island), I mean Westing Game.
J: Then we read Abel's Island.
S: That was the first book we read.

The foregoing segment of conversation illustrates how responses to literature can vary. The boys were explicit in communicating why they did not enjoy specific titles. All of the books mentioned above were ones the teacher had read aloud to the class and thus served as a common shared experience. It should be mentioned that both subjects were capable independent readers themselves, however. For example, at the time of the present study, Jimmy was reading 2001: A Space Odyssey by Arthur C. Clarke, a challenge to many adult readers.
In contrast to Dyad #2, Dyad #3 did not limit discussion to books read by the teacher. In the following excerpt, Mike and Walter reflect on some of their past reading experiences:

M: I think *The Dark is Rising* is about one of my favorite books.

W: I liked *Silver on the Tree*. It's real good.

M: ... Susan Cooper. She won Newbery Award for *The Grey King*. The only two stories I need to get from *The Dark is Rising* sequence is *The Dark is Rising* and *The Grey King*.

W: Well, you can go to the library and get 'em.

M: Yeah. I finished *Over Sea Under Stone*, *Green Witch*, and *Silver on the Tree*.

Talk of books caused Walter to relate one of his experiences. In this excerpt he is referring to an audio tape recording of one of Susan Cooper's fantasies entitled *The Dark is Rising*:

W: I like to play *The Dark is Rising* before it snows in winter ... when it's Christmas. I remember, I remember when we were putting up the Christmas tree, I was listening to my tape of *The Dark is Rising*. I got it taped. I was listening to it when we were putting up the Christmas tree. My dad said, "Turn on somepen else. I don't want to hear something creepy!" Especially hearing, especially hearing the voice of the dark.

Walter shared this with his partner in a very pensive manner. It seemed as though he were reliving the mood created in the book. Despite the richness of his personal reverie, this is all Walter wrote individually that day:
The Dark is Rising

My favorite part of the story is when the snow gets deeper and deeper and when Will found the Walker in the snow next to the church. And the Walker turns suddenly to evil. Then the Stantons had to move the Walker to the Greythorne Manner.

In contrast to the enormous amount of effort he and his partner put into the writing of "The Satyr", this was a surprisingly shallow individually written response. It underscores Graves' conclusion that the writing process is highly idiosyncratic. Walter was a capable writer who appeared interested in his topic. This raises the question of why he performed in this manner. One possible reason is that he chose to write a report rather than tell a story. Once he identified his favorite part, he had difficulty expanding upon it. Another possible reason is that he did not totally comprehend the level of abstraction in the book. An additional consideration is relative to the total context of the situation. On that day, a substitute had taken the place of his regular classroom teacher. She had mentioned to the researcher that she had assigned extra work to keep the students busy. Concern over assignments waiting back in the classroom may have deterred his interest in writing that day. Just as Walter left the writing session in the conference room he remarked, "I think I'll go back and do my math".
Oral language during the response to literature assignment frequently related to information retrieval and clarification in regard to subjects' chosen titles. It was common across all five dyads for one partner to ask another about what happened in a particular book. Since, in most cases, subjects were trying to remember what had been read weeks or even months earlier, this is quite understandable.

Furthermore, in the response to literature task, there was less of a tendency for subjects to talk about language in its own right. For the most part, they retold portions of stories, sometimes reflecting the original author's style and choice of words, but rarely creating anything new.

Perhaps because subjects were writing in parallel during this assignment, there was mention of quantity written in every session. Subjects seemed interested in monitoring one another's progress as they wrote singly. Being in the proximity of a partner who was engaged in a similar activity may have alleviated the sense of isolation that beginning writers sometimes experience.

The response to literature assignment was the only one in which punctuation usage was not mentioned by any of the dyads. Probably, individuals were satisfied with what they were writing and did not perceive a need to ask the advice of their partner.
In summary, subjects in the present study responded to the cognitive demands inherent in each of the three writing tasks through differential language use. The ending sentence assignment evoked the only example of detailed advanced planning. It was structured in such a way that it was necessary to think ahead in order to reconcile the beginning of the story with the ending given. This task was the only one in which subjects tried deliberate humor in their writing. Also it was the only one in which partners expressed dissatisfaction with the assignment itself.

The free choice task allowed subjects the greatest latitude in oral and written expression. Although all dyads chose to write narratives, the form with which they were most familiar, there was a range of response. For instance, Dyad #2 was concerned with the logistics of an attack on a castle; Dyad #3 created a fantasy world inhabited by unusual characters; Dyad #4 focused on authenticity in writing about gymnastic competition; and Dyad #5 explored personal values. Among the more behaviorally mature subjects, there was general concern as to whether what was being written made sense. Also, there were a number of examples illustrating how peer interaction contributed to vocabulary expansion. In several instances, one partner defined a new word for the other. Finally, it is significant to note that the free choice assignment yielded the longest written productions across all five dyads.
The response to literature task evoked talk about books with which the subjects were familiar. Frequently, conversations centered on information retrieval and clarification relative to a specific title. There was a tendency to focus on content of a book rather than to think divergently. Also, there was less of an inclination to talk about language in its own right. Although subjects who were writing individually sometimes reflected an original author's style or choice of words, they did not explore new possibilities. Finally, no mention was made of punctuation usage by any of the five dyads in the response to literature assignment.

Attention will now shift from how the nature of the writing task affected language that was produced to a discussion of differences in oral language use between subjects identified as more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers. It was explained in Chapter 3 that independent raters using the Diederich Scale unanimously agreed that qualitative differences existed between written productions by two sets of subjects. Without exception, the raters judged the work of
Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5 (both collective and parallel compositions) to be more sophisticated than that by Dyad #1. Thus, it was possible to make the distinction between more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers and to investigate whether differences in oral language usage existed between them. Findings will be discussed in the next section.

**Differences in Oral Language Use by More Sophisticated and Less Sophisticated Writers**

Analysis of oral language transcripts in this study revealed that Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5 exhibited behavior quite different from Dyad #1. To begin with, more sophisticated writers tended to be more behaviorally mature than less sophisticated writers. They were able to sustain attention for long periods of time and maintain their interpersonal relationships in skillful, often subtle ways. In contrast, members of Dyad #1 had a short attention span and often engaged in regulatory language to control one another's behavior. For example, in the following excerpt, from the response to literature assignment, Clyde
fidgets about while waiting for Billy to complete his independently written text:

C: I think there's some other stuff I could write about, but I don't know what.

B: (transcribes aloud: ... HE WAS DEAD)

C: That's a good sentence (laughs). Do you know this song? (sings) 3-2-1, 3-2-1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 2, 1.

B: Yeah, "Hot Cross Buns." (sings) "Hot Cross Buns." O.K.

C: What else are you going to write? Guess who this is an imitation of?

B: I don't know. (transcribes aloud: BUT HE WASN'T DEAD) Who's that, Miss H? (reference is to the student teacher)

C: Yeah, it's pretty funny. She just does it to make us laugh.

B: (transcribes aloud: HIS NOSE N-O-S-E SMASHED)

C: Is that all you're going to write?

B: No.

C: Why?

B: Because I want to make this a good story for Miss C. (reference is to their classroom teacher) Quit blowing bubbles in my ear!
C: I wasn't.

B: Listen. (reads: He just got his nose smashed so ...)

C: Come on, man. We don't want to be here all day.

B: (transcribes: HE WENT INTO THE HOS, H-) How do you spell hospital?

C: I don't know. I think it's h-o-s-p-i-t-a-l. I don't know.

B: Hospital, hospital, hospital ...

C: You know what my little brother does all the time? He goes (makes noise). Stupid.

B: You don't have a little brother.

C: Yes, I do.

B: No, you don't. That's your big brother.

C: Well, I'm taller than him. I'm sorry.

B: No, you're not. (transcribes orally: AND GOT HIS FACE CHANGED TO LOOK LIKE SANDY ... SANDY, THE DOOR ...)

C: Hey, Mr. B. (pretends to call the principal out in the hallway)

B: (transcribes orally: MAN)

C: Are you writing anything else?

B: Uh, huh.

C: What?

B: (transcribes orally: SELF, S-E-L-, SELF)

C: B.'s making me laugh. Now what are you going to write?

B: Quit tapping on the table!
B: I've got a stuffed-up nose and a cold. (sneezes, laughs) Mike (refers to microphone), would you get out of here! (transcribes orally: ... LOOK LIKE THE APARTMENT MAN.) O.K. I'm done.

In the foregoing excerpt, Clyde's behavior was quite distracting. It was rather amazing that Billy was able to finish his story under such circumstances. In the oral language transcripts of Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5, there were no examples wherein one subject interfered with another's writing in this way. However, taken as a whole, the foregoing excerpt is an example of what Halliday (1975) calls interactional language, wherein the speaker establishes social relationships and enters into the give-and-take of conversation. Nearly half of the language recorded in Pinnell's (1975) study of primary children in family-grouped classrooms was classified as interactional. From a theoretical standpoint, Halliday has written that interactional language splits into interpersonal and ideational functions.

In contrast to more sophisticated writers, less sophisticated writers appeared to regard writing as simply talk written down. Their behavior was reminiscent of Britton's observation
that young children rely upon speech for communication and often view writing as a "construct" or a "performance" (1970, p. 164). In the following excerpt, members of Dyad #1 are engaged in the free choice assignment. Clyde is dictating to Billy about "Scooby Doo," a great Dane cartoon character on television who typically becomes involved in madcap mystery adventures. When Billy attempts to write down Clyde's words verbatim, he encounters problems:

C: One day, Scooby Doo ...
B: Wait a minute. (hurries to transcribe)
C: ... is a dog.
B: One day, Scooby Doo is a dog ... yeah! (said with sarcasm)
C: One day Scooby Doo went with Fred and all them other people to the beach. (coughs) Man, I'm getting a cold. (continues to dictate) Bobby and Shaggy ...
B: No, you said "and all them other people."

Billy's sarcastic "Yeah!" was an indication that he realized "One day Scooby Doo is a dog" wasn't acceptable. When Clyde subsequently reconstructed the beginning sentence, he completely omitted any explanation relative to the main character.
Further on in the writing episode, the following exchange took place:

B: Now what do you want me to write?

C: Um ... and they went to a big castle in the woods. (short digression)

B: Yeah? Wait a minute ... then what?

C: They found out what kind of monster it was. They found out what kind of ghost it was.

B: (deliberately runs the sentences together) They found out what kind of monster it was they found out what kind of ghost it was. (laughs)

C: Funny! (said with sarcasm)

In transcribing this contradictory information, Billy wrote "monster" although the previous referent had been "ghost". Apparently, Clyde was thinking of a nebulous composite of the two as evidenced by his statement: "cause you know how them characters in those things are ... ghost monsters". (Here the reference is to cartoon shows on television.) More than a week later, in rereading their story which appears below, Billy remarked, "Where did that monster come from?", apparently noting the exophoric (outside of text) reference.
The Story About Scoby Doo

One day scoby Doo went with fred and all them other people to the beach. And then they saw a gost. So they ran to the mystery machine and went to a big castel in the woods. they found out what kind of gost it was so they went out to the water to find the monster and take him to jail. and they would take his mask off and then scoby doo would go home and eat supper.

The substance of this narrative is a series of actions, with no particular importance given to any one. No consideration is given to whether or not the reader is familiar with this particular TV cartoon. Of all the collective writing episodes, this contained the least amount of joint construction of text, since it was mainly dictated by one partner.

In contrast to more sophisticated writers, less sophisticated writers spent little time deliberating about what to say or how to say it. Dyad #1 consistently yielded the shortest oral and written productions in the study. In addition, whereas more sophisticated writers frequently engaged in word play and exhibited other evidence of metalinguistic awareness, less sophisticated writers did not. Cazden (1974) has written about the significance of this type of behavior:

Metalinguistic awareness, the ability to make language forms opaque and attend to them in and for themselves, is a special kind of language performance, one which makes special cognitive demands, and seems to be less easily and less universally acquired than the language performances of speaking and listening. Our
concern as educators with this particular kind of language performance comes from increasing arguments that it is at least very helpful—and maybe critically important—not so much in the primary processes of speaking and hearing as in what may be considered the derived or secondary processes of reading and writing (p. 29).

Illustrations of word play and other types of metalinguistic awareness by more sophisticated writers have been cited earlier. Two additional examples will be mentioned here. In the following excerpt from the ending sentence assignment, June and Leslie (Dyad #5) are trying to describe a frightening scene in the cellar of a castle:

L: Led down to a dark, musty room.
J: Dark, horrible room. (makes sound effects)
L: O.K. led down a long flight of stairs, steps ... 
J: ... him and his bride ...
L: Led down to a dark, dusty, musty ... (laughs)
J: Dusty, musty ... (laughs also) ... dark and eerie room.
L: Eerie. I can't think of anything. What's in this room? It's a dark, dusty, musty ...
J: Did you put that?
L: No.
J: A dark, dusty, and very eerie room. Over on a thick wooden table, over on a thick old ancient ... over on an ancient table, he saw a note written on a scroll, and it read ...
This example of word play is interesting because both "dusty" and "musty" were appropriate to the setting the girls were attempting to describe. Although the partners appeared to be amused by the rhyming sounds, they deliberately omitted the inclusion of both words in their written text. In so doing, the girls exhibited control of language as well as an awareness of differences in usage between the oral and written mode.

Two related instances of metalinguistic awareness occurred when Dyad #4 was responding to the free choice assignment. Judy used the word "practicing" in their story about gymnastics. Then she remarked, "Practicing" is one of our spelling bee words." Later, she noticed the word "practicing" again and said, "I guess I like that word."

To summarize this section, there were qualitative differences between oral language used by more sophisticated writers in Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5 and oral language used by less sophisticated writers in Dyad #1. More sophisticated writers were able to sustain attention longer and maintain interpersonal relationships more skillfully. In contrast, less sophisticated writers, who typically exhibited a shorter attention span, sometimes argued over tasks and had to resort to regulatory language in controlling one another's actions. More sophisticated writers
took a longer period of time to deliberate about what to say and how to say it. Less sophisticated writers were impulsive, usually writing down whatever came to mind. It appeared that Dyad #1 viewed writing primarily as a process of converting speech into written form. Finally, whereas more sophisticated writers frequently engaged in word play and other forms of metalinguistic awareness, less sophisticated writers did not.

Vygotsky (1962) has written that inner speech is thinking in pure meanings. Thought must pass through meanings and then through words. In this study, verbalization of thinking processes was forced by the demands of collaboration and served as the basis for writing.

Similarities/Differences in Language Use Between Boys and Girls

Boys and girls of comparable competence in writing exhibited some similarities. Both the males in Dyads #2 and #3 and the females in Dyads #4 and #5 were able to establish a good working relationship. All of the subjects in those dyads deliberated about what to say and how to say it. Moreover, all of them could distance themselves from the writing process and from language itself in order to talk about it.

However, there were differences as well. For instance, in the free choice assignment, girls elected to write about primary
territory (specifically, themselves), whereas boys wrote about secondary or extended territory (fantasy). This coincides with findings in Graves' 1973 study. Girls appeared to be more concerned with feelings and personal values than boys who were interested in action-packed plots. (See free-choice written texts for Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5 which appear in Appendix C.)

Girls frequently focused attention on families of characters, whether they were important to the plot or not, whereas boys refrained from doing so. For example, in the ending sentence assignment, the following conversation occurred between Judy and Barbara (Dyad #4).

J: ... Prince Andrew the third. All right. Now what? He lived in a beautiful castle with his mom and dad, the king and queen.

B: Sister.

J: His mom and dad, the king and queen?

B: Sister.

J: His sister? Sister? (laughs) O.K. now, Andrew the third. He lived in a large castle with his mother and father, the king and queen, and his younger sister, Carribean, or something like that. (laughs)

B: No, let's leave it sister.

J: O.K.
Although the family wasn't essential to the subsequent plot, the girls elected to mention individual members. In like manner, Dyad #5 was concerned about family relationships. Early in their writing episode, June mentioned that the prince had "all these sisters," but none were spoken of thereafter.

Girls also tended to mention females more frequently than boys. Whereas girls portrayed males and females in equally important roles, boys favored males as powerful characters.

In addition, there was a tendency for girls to talk about handwriting more often than boys, as can be seen in the frequency count below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Instances in Which Handwriting Was Discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ending sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for boys = 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls showed repeated interest in the formation of letters and in comparing one another's cursive writing.
In summary, although there were some similarities in language use among boys and girls who were considered to be comparable writers, there were some differences as well. In the free choice assignment, girls wrote about primary territory (specifically, themselves). In addition, girls often included family members who were incidental to the plot in their stories. In contrast, boys chose to write about secondary or extended territory in the free choice assignment (in these instances, fantasy). Whereas girls tended to be more concerned with emotions, feelings, and personal values, boys focussed on action in their stories. Furthermore, girls gave equal importance to males and females in their writing; however boys favored males. Finally, girls paid more attention to handwriting in this study than did boys.

To conclude this chapter, the role of talk in a collaborative writing setting relative to the following areas was addressed:

1. maintenance of interpersonal relationships
2. problem solving relative to the writing task
3. exploration of language and new ideas
4. critical evaluation of written text.

The nature of writing assignments and its effect on oral language produced was then discussed. This section was followed
by one which focused on differences in oral language use by more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers. Finally, discussion centered on similarities/differences in language use between boys and girls.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to investigate oral language used by 4th and 5th grade dyads in a collaborative writing setting. This research was based on a theoretical framework which drew heavily on the writings of both Vygotsky and Bruner and which emphasized the interrelatedness of thought, language, and learning. More specifically, the study bridged research in both oral language and written composition. In concurrence with the work of Moffett and Britton, the view was taken that the ability to sustain speech is a necessary antecedent of writing and that peer interaction is a valuable aid to learning. The present research differed from previous studies in that it involved a detailed qualitative analysis of oral language used by five pairs of 4th and 5th graders while they were carrying out each of three writing assignments. In this study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the role of talk during collaborative writing?
2. How does the nature of the writing assignment affect the oral language that is produced?
3. When a distinction is made between more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers on the basis of their written productions, is there a corresponding difference in their use of oral language?

4. How are boys and girls similar/different in their production of oral and written language?

Procedures

A pilot study was conducted in December, 1982, to ascertain whether a project of this nature was feasible and to determine what procedures were optimal. The subjects in the pilot study were from the same elementary school where the present study was later carried out. From this exploratory investigation, it was learned that productive interaction can occur during different types of assignments given in a collaborative writing setting and that some tasks were more productive than others.

In the present study, the teacher of an informal 4th/5th grade class chose five students on the basis of their ability and willingness to write. Each of these subjects, in turn, was asked to choose a partner with whom to collaborate in a research project. This procedure was used because it was thought that peer choice would put subjects at ease and thereby augment conversation. The composition of the resulting five dyads was as follows:
Dyad #1: two fourth grade boys
Dyad #2: one fourth grade boy and one fifth grade boy
Dyad #3: two fifth grade boys
Dyad #4: two fifth grade girls
Dyad #5: two fifth grade girls

Each of the five dyads was given three different writing assignments in random order on separate occasions in April and May, 1983. The researcher individually audio tape recorded each of the sessions, all of which were held in a school conference room. Writing assignments were carefully designed to allow for varied responses. A description of each task follows:

#1: Ending Sentence Assignment

Dyads were asked to jointly compose a story which concluded thusly: "vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince mounted his white horse and rode back to the castle where he lived happily ever after." In order to carry out this task successfully, subjects had to take note that a mistake had been made and create a story in such a way that the beginning made sense with the ending given.

#2: Free Choice Assignment

Dyads were instructed to choose a topic of mutual interest and then jointly construct a single text. This task was completely
unstructured in that there were no restrictions regarding topic or
genre. All decision making was left entirely up to the subjects.

#3: Response to Literature Assignment

Dyads were asked to choose a book they had mutually enjoyed
and discuss it before writing individual responses. Whereas in
the first two tasks dyads wrote collectively, in this assignment
they wrote singly.

Following the writing episodes, subjects were given the
opportunity to reread and possibly revise their compositions if
they chose to do so. The researcher transcribed all audio tapes
herself before conducting an analysis of oral and written language
produced.

Findings

The Role of Talk in a Collaborative Setting

In answer to the first question posed in this study, it was
determined that oral language played an important role in the
following areas:

- maintenance of interpersonal relationships
- problem solving relative to the writing task
- exploration of language and of new ideas
- critical examination of existing ideas

For organizational clarity, each of these areas will be summarized
in turn.
Maintenance of Interpersonal Relationships

In regard to interpersonal relationships, an interesting discovery was that it made a difference whether or not subjects were allowed to choose their writing partners. In the pilot study, no provision was made for peer preference; the composition of dyads and triads was largely arbitrary. To the contrary, in the actual study, subjects were given the opportunity to select a partner with whom to write. It was found that, in the latter case, greater compatibility and less competitiveness was exhibited by peers.

Another important variable relative to interpersonal relationships was level of behavioral maturity. Less behaviorally mature subjects engaged in more regulatory language and more frequently argued over the division of transcription and reading tasks. More behaviorally mature subjects, on the other hand, used greater subtlety in maintaining their interpersonal relationships by negotiating differences of opinion and exhibiting greater sensitivity toward their partners' feelings. In other words, the more behaviorally mature subjects handled the give-and-take of the collaborative writing setting in a more verbally sophisticated manner. They used interactive language constructively to maintain an ongoing relationship which held the two in contact.
even when ideational language was not being used to further create the next.

Overall, role relationships between partners remained fairly stable throughout the three writing episodes. Although one partner in each dyad clearly emerged as the more dominant of the two, there was significant interactive participation in every composing session. Interestingly, the conversational leader in each dyad was not necessarily the stronger writer as judged by the classroom teacher.

Sometimes partners did more than merely maintain a cooperative relationship; they attempted to engage one another more deeply in the task. For example, in the case of Dyad #2, there were several instances in which the more spontaneous partner deliberately tried to involve his peer by providing opportunities for active participation.

Oral language frequently served as a vehicle for momentum and moral support during writing sessions. Subjects often sparked one another's ideas, thereby accessing possibilities. Reading aloud sometimes helped partners maintain their train of thought when composing jointly. In other instances, reading aloud was a means by which one partner could elicit comments from another. Positive responses provided encouragement to go further in writing.
Digressions played an important role as well. They served to reduce tension and sustain interest during lengthy writing sessions. The subjects took "breathers" and then returned to the writing task.

**Problem Solving Relative to the Writing Task**

Subjects in this study used language primarily for problem solving relative to their writing tasks, that is, in determining what to say and how to say it. This finding could be considered as confirming Vygotsky's theory that inner speech serves as an organizer for writing. The situation forced inner speech to be realized verbally and thus be observable.

The subjects in the present study were mainly concerned with creation of meaning; they evidenced little overt attention to the reader and to decisions regarding choice of genre or style. Subjects typically selected a topic in a relatively short period of time and then spent the remainder of the writing episode developing their ideas. Joint construction of text required negotiation of meaning and compromise, both of which were successfully carried out by all of the participants in the study. In one case, that of Dyad #5, a subject provided a writing framework for her partner who was having trouble thinking of what to write. This was cited as an example of "scaffolding", a term originated by Bruner to
mean the act of building supports for meaning which continue to grow and deepen. Subjects also deliberated about choice of wording and the mechanics of writing such as spelling. Oftentimes, a partner was able to provide a peer with assistance as problems arose in the writing session.

**Exploration of Language and of New Ideas**

Although subjects heavily relied on their background of experience in writing, they often tried to seek new variations on familiar themes. For instance, Dyad #2 initially entitled a story "Knights of the Octagon Table" instead of "Knights of the Round Table". Word play, especially in conjunction with deliberate facetiousness, was common. Inappropriate usage for humorous intent was also evidenced. It is significant to note that often such exploration of language and new ideas did not find its way into the eventual written text. Generally, subjects demonstrated that they had a sense of what was appropriate and what was not in the written mode. Aside from conventions of usage, this behavior may also be related to Loban's (1976) finding that skill in language use is typified by both control and flexibility.

**Critical Examination of Existing Ideas**

Oral language played an important role in the critical examination of existing ideas as well. For example, a criticism posed
by one of the members of Dyad #5 during the free choice assignment resulted in a lengthy discussion of how a character would feel in a particular set of circumstances. Out of the girls' introspection came the underlying meaning of their story. In other instances cited in this study, subjects noted discrepancies in their compositions after they had finished writing. This awareness was important because it could have been the basis for later revision if it had been pursued.

**Effect of Writing Assignment on Oral Language Use**

The nature of the writing assignments did affect the oral language that was produced by the subjects in this study. The ending sentence task evoked the only example of detailed pre-planning. Reconciling the beginning of a story with the ending that was given forced subjects to think ahead. This finding was in concurrence with research by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981). In other writing assignments, dyads typically delineated their plots as they went along.

The free choice task, which allowed the greatest latitude in decision making, yielded the longest compositions. This relates to Graves' (1973) research in which unassigned compositions were lengthier than assigned ones. In addition, in the free choice task, more behaviorally mature subjects were involved in problem
finding as well as problem solving. As an example, Dyad #2 members stopped to figure out the logistics of battle before they attempted to describe what happened.

The response to literature assignment evoked discussions about books. Partners often used oral language to help one another recall and clarify the contents of specific titles. Possibly since there was a tendency for subjects to focus on the book itself rather than to think divergently, less exploration of language occurred in the response to literature task than in the other two assignments.

Differences in Oral Language Use by More Sophisticated and Less Sophisticated Writers

During the course of data gathering, it became evident that Dyad #1 behaved differently than Dyads #2, #3, #4, and #5. Independent raters using the Diederich Scale unanimously agreed that written productions (both those constructed collectively and singly) by Dyad #1 were less sophisticated than those by the other dyads in the study. Hence, a distinction could be made between the two sets of subjects according to level of sophistication in writing. Data collected in this study revealed differences in oral language use as well. Less sophisticated writers tended to be less behaviorally mature as evidenced by a short attention span and frequent use of regulatory language in controlling one another's
actions. Less sophisticated writers were less deliberative about what to say and how to say it. They were inclined to be impulsive and typically wrote down whatever came to mind first. Lastly, they did not evidence frequent word play and other forms of metalinguistic awareness as did more sophisticated writers.

**Sex Differences in Oral Language Use**

In this study, there were both similarities and differences between the sexes in regard to language use. Since half of the more sophisticated writers were girls and half were boys, there were commonalities insofar as level of behavioral maturity, amount of deliberation in writing, and extent of observable metalinguistic awareness were concerned. However, differences appeared as well. For example, in the free choice assignment, girls wrote about themselves (primary territory), whereas boys wrote fantasies (secondary territory). This was in keeping with Graves' (1973) research. Girls were concerned with feelings and personal values in their writing, but boys focused on high-powered action. Characters' family members who were extraneous to the plot were more frequently mentioned by girls than boys. Whereas girls portrayed both males and females in equally important roles, boys' writing was male dominated. Finally, girls mentioned handwriting, both formation of letters and general appearance, more often than boys.
Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that monitoring peer interaction during collaborative writing is a viable way of gaining insight into subjects' use of oral and written language. Furthermore, the approach affords a figurative "window" on the composing process, although the claim cannot be made that writing with a partner is necessarily the same as writing alone. One task, that of parallel writing, did approximate common classroom occurrences for these subjects. When taken together, oral language transcripts and written productions give a fairly complete picture of writing as a "social event". Writers' verbalization of concerns and strategies illuminates what otherwise would be essentially covert behavior. Insights can be gained not only into how subjects perceive their task, but into associations they make during the writing process as well.

The selection of subjects in this study was optimal for eliciting written production. First, the children came from a classroom where writing was a common task; second, one member of each dyad was selected by the teacher on the basis of ability and willingness to write. Students exhibited minimal microphone shyness and little behavior which could be construed as an artifact of the recording session. They were somewhat atypical
when compared to pupils from a traditional classroom because they were accustomed to interacting with one another while working on assignments given by their teacher. Furthermore, they were not disturbed by the presence of the researcher because visitors to the school were commonplace. During the nearly fifteen hours of oral language tapes, subjects repeatedly evidenced creativity and familiarity with literacy. It was obvious that they had been exposed to quality literature and had been given ample opportunities to express themselves in writing prior to the study.

Although the recording sessions physically took place outside the classroom, the children brought the sum of their feelings, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, knowledge, and experiential backgrounds with them each time they sat down to write. Consequently, the context of the collaborative writing setting in this study went far beyond the four walls of the conference room. The pervasive influence of the classroom teacher was readily apparent in the subjects' open approach to writing and in their relationships with one another. They were not afraid to experiment with new ideas or to make a mistake. (It should be noted, however, that they limited their type of writing to that with which they were most familiar.) In addition, the subjects exhibited not only an ability to assist one another, but a willingness
to do so as well. In the absence of their teacher or a helping adult (the researcher tried her best to be unobtrusive), the students remained on-task a high percentage of the time and showed resourcefulness. Although they, of course, did not have the knowledge and experience to cope with all the writing problems that came up, they did what they could under the circumstances and completed all tasks that were assigned. Peers were significantly helpful to one another in the areas of idea generation, mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and so forth), and motivation.

Subjects regularly referred to writing done earlier by themselves or others. Their experiential reservoir was the product of meaningful opportunities to write and to share work with classmates.

It was apparent that behaviorally mature subjects contributed to one another's growth in oral and written language. There was ample evidence of peer guidance in vocabulary development and appropriate usage. Although the less behaviorally mature students occasionally interfered with one another, the collective writing setting provided an opportunity for exercising cooperation and compromise. The situation also gave subjects a chance to verbalize about writing, thereby augmenting personal awareness of the composing process. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the overall
interest of subjects would have been sustained as long if the assignments had been given to individuals to carry out alone.

Monitoring oral language also yielded information about sources of ideas. It was evident that the influence of television had permeated the students' lives. As a group, they were quite knowledgeable about happenings in the world, ranging from current events to manifestations of popular culture. Frequently, they would cite a TV show to establish a mutual frame of reference. It is probable that some of their exploration of language and ideas was the direct result of modeling on television. Anyone who has watched Saturday morning children's shows knows that it is common for script writers to play on words and use variations of traditional themes. Interestingly, however, when interviewed, most of the subjects failed to mention television as a source of ideas for writing. It appears that they were unaware of this influence.

As was observed by Graves (1981), there was variability among and within writers from session to session. Such factors as how a subject felt on a particular day, how an assignment was perceived, or what was going on back in the classroom very definitely affected language production. For example, Leslie (Dyad #5), a competent writer as judged by her teacher, behaved quite differently in two
situations. In the free choice assignment, she made a strong contribution to the story she wrote jointly with her partner. However, in the response to literature task, she was at a loss for words on that particular day. Consequently, she relied heavily upon suggestions made by her partner.

The nature of the writing task was another important variable. As the cognitive demands changed, so did the language that was used. The longest written productions across all five dyads were in response to the free choice assignment, wherein subjects had the greatest latitude in deciding what to write and how to write it. Among the more behaviorally mature students, the task evoked evidence of personal meaning, ranging from pride in accomplishment to scrutiny of individual values.

The subjects in this study were in varying stages of learning how to make the transition from oral to written language. Less sophisticated writers were at the level where merely writing down what was said posed a challenge. In contrast, more sophisticated writers evidenced increasing awareness of the special demands of writing connected discourse. While attempting to make sense in the written mode, they were beginning to be cognizant of the need for explicitness and internal logic. Typically, more sophisticated writers deliberately altered their language when switching
from one mode to another. It will be remembered that many examples of facetiousness in oral language did not carry over into written text. Since talk was more malleable, it was preferred for exploration and rehearsal by the subjects. It is important to point out that oral language served both an interpersonal function and an ideational one as well. Interactional language functioned as a "glue" to keep members of each dyad together while their thinking progressed independently. In other words, talk helped to establish a mutual frame of reference, what Wells (1981) termed "intersubjectivity", from which writing could develop.

Although oral language enhanced collaborative writing most of the time, there were rare instances in which talk distracted a subject who was in the act of transcribing. This is understandable in light of the fact that it is next to impossible to be actively listening to another person and writing at the same time. Sometimes such interruptions in thought interfered with transition of explicit meaning from the oral to the written mode.

**Implications for Education**

Even without the intervention of a teacher, peers at 4th/5th grade level are capable of learning from and actively helping one another in a collaborative writing setting. Partners can provide general information, ideas, instant feedback, and moral support.
Hence, they are a potential resource in the classroom. In order to optimize learning from peer interaction in a collaborative writing setting, however, teachers first need to provide students with meaningful opportunities for small group involvement. Pupils must gain some experience with the give-and-take of collective problem solving before they can write together in an effective manner. This is not to say that all writing should be of a collaborative nature. Students need a wide variety of purposeful experiences in learning to write. Since the type of task can affect both thinking and language use, teachers should choose assignments with care.

It is important for students to be aware of one another's work, both that which is in progress and that which has been completed. Writing then becomes a common experience which can be shared and talked about by everyone in the classroom. The possibility of eventual publication in various forms affords a natural necessity for revision. When interviewed, all of the subjects in this study concurred that it was essential to display written work in the best possible form; otherwise readers might either misunderstand the intended message or not bother to read it at all. No one seemed to mind the idea of correcting spelling or copying over work when a real audience was involved.
Due to the integral relationship of reading and writing, exposure to quality literature should be part of a developing writer's background. The work of polished authors can serve as a useful model. Frank Smith (1981) makes the claim that one learns to write by reading. In his words, "The only source of knowledge sufficiently rich and reliable for learning about written language is the writing already done by others" (p. 795). Moreover, when a teacher reads aloud to a class, a shared context is created which can be the basis for discussion and subsequent writing.

Since television is a pervasive influence in many children's lives today, it is a natural stimulus for writing. Teachers need to be aware of what their students are viewing outside of school hours so that they can better understand children's ideas within the context of learning how to write.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The present study shed light on the richness of peer interaction which can take place in a collaborative writing setting. Since a small population sample (n=10) had to be used due to the painstaking demands of transcription and analysis, the results are not generalizable. Therefore, similar descriptive studies would be useful for comparison and validation. Specific recommendations are as follows:
1. A larger population sample would provide a stronger comparison study.

2. Recording students at different intervals during the school year would probably yield information about how language use changes over time and how it aids in collaborative situations.

3. Allowing a subject to choose more than one partner might reveal a broader range of interpersonal and content-related strategies.

4. For purposes of comparison, it would most likely be fruitful to use different grade levels and to vary the nature of the writing tasks.

5. Finally, the use of videotaping equipment would allow for analysis of significant nonverbal behavior, a feature not focussed upon in the present study.
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APPENDIX A

PARENTAL PERMISSION LETTER
April 1983

Dear ____________________:

I am a doctoral student at The Ohio State University conducting research on children's writing. Specifically, I am interested in how elementary pupils use oral language to help them write.

During the school year, with the permission of Mr. ___________ , the principal, and classroom teachers, I have spent considerable time at ______________ Elementary. ______________ has helped me to select ten children in her class to participate in my study. Your child was chosen because of his/her ability to write and to interact effectively with other children. I plan to give pairs of students three writing assignments and then tape record their conversations as they write. Names of the pupils will not be used in my study, and all recording sessions will be conducted at the school when it is convenient for the teacher.

If you give your permission for your child to participate in this educational research, please fill out the form below and return it to ___________. Should you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them (Office phone: 422-0895; Home phone: 1-524-2798).

Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Grace G. Nunn

-----------------------------------------------------------

I give my permission for __________________________ to
(Name of child)

participate in Mrs. Nunn's writing study.

(Signature of parent or guardian)

(Date)
APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF ORAL LANGUAGE TRANSCRIPTS
Example of a Complete Oral Language Transcript

Dyad #1: Parallel Response to Literature 4/22/83

C: I don't know. What are you going to write about?
B: The Westing Game.
C: That's what I'm going to write about.
B: What should I write about? There are a lot of good parts in it. It might write about what happened with Sam Westing. He got his nose smashed in the car accident and everybody thought he was dead.
C: Yeah, I'm going to write about how all the characters he played.
B: O.K.
C: How do you spell this word?
B: (whispers) What?
C: How do you spell this word?
B: Which word?
C: Characters.
B: Characters, um ... c-a-r um ... I forget.
C: C-a-r? C-a-r um ... Boy, it's a hard word.
B: I know. I don't know if it's right. How should I start it out? I don't know if I'm going to write about Sam Westing ... um ...
C: I am.
B: Oh, I guess I will. Sam Westing (whoops, I made an M) was a nice man.
C: Who else did Sam Westing act like?
B: He acted like ... You got so far.
C: Yeah, and what was his name?
B: I forget. Let's see.

C: What was his name?

B: I know he played a lot of people. I think he played that hotel guy, the guy who had the hotel.

C: That's Sandy.

B: No, no, no, not Sandy. You know the guy that got everybody hotels in that hotel ... where all the characters lived, like everybody lived? I think he played him, too. That guy who sold everybody the

C: I'm done writing about Sam Westing. Now, I'm going to write about some of the other characters like Turtle.

B: How do you spell July? Huh?

C: J-u-l-y.

C: How do you spell shin?

B: Chin? Like Chin Who?

C: No, shin.

B: S-h-i-n, I think. S-h-i-n-e, I think. I don't know. I'm pretty sure it's that. I have a cold ... How do you spell uncle? U-n-c-k-l-y. Is that right? Huh?

C: Huh?

B: How do you spell uncle?

C: U-n, no. U-n-c-u-l, I think.

B: U-n-c I think it's l-y. I don't care.

C: Man, we've got two soccer games Saturday and Sunday. I'm going to be wore out.

B: I know. Are you going to the Spring Festival?

C: Maybe.

B: I am ... probably, 'cause ...
C: Did you buy your tickets yet?
B: No, I'm just going to buy them at the thing.
C: I don't know if you can.
B: Yeah, they sell them there.
C: I might come there about one.
B: I spelled display wrong. (laughs) display.
C: What was Chris Theodorkus' brother's name?
B: Chris Theodorkus or
C: What was his name?
B: I don't know. Chris Theodorkus and ...
C: I'll just say Matt, Matt Theodorkus.
B: No, that doesn't sound right.
C: So I'm just going to write Matt, his brother.
B: This is what I got...
C: There, I'm done. Are you done, B?
B: Nope. Then ...
C: Do you need any help?
B: Not yet.
C: How much more are you going to write?
B: I'm going to write about his wreck.
C: How much is that going to be?
B: (writing) How do you spell accident?
C: I don't know. Accident? Let's see.
B: I got it.
C: Did you get it right?
B: Yeah, I'm pretty sure.
C: Well, that's good. I wouldn't want to see any misspelled letters in your writing.
B: Yeah, I know. (both laugh)
B: (writing)
C: I think there's some other stuff I could write about, but I don't know what.
B: ...
C: That's a good sentence (laughs) Do you know this song? 3-2-1, 3-2-1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1.
B: Yeah, "Hot Cross Buns." (sings) Hot Cross Buns. O.K.
C: What else are you going to write? Guess who this is an imitation of?
B: I don't know. Who's that, Miss H.?
C: Yeah, it's pretty funny. She just does it to make us laugh.
B: He just got ...
C: Got in a car wreck.
C: Is that all you're going to write?
B: No
C: Why?
B: Because I want to make this a good story for Miss C. Quit blowing bubbles in my ear!
C: I wasn't.
B: Listen.
C: Come on, man. We don't want to be here all day.
B: How do you spell hospital?

C: I don't know. I think it's h-o-s-p-i-t-a-l. I don't know.

C: You know what my little brother does all the time? He goes (noise). Stupid.

B: You don't have a little brother.

C: Yes, I do.

B: No, you don't. That's your big brother.

C: Well, I'm taller than him. I'm sorry.

B: No, you're not.

C: Hey, Mr. B.

C: Are you writing anything else?

B: Uh, huh.

C: What?

C: Hurry up, man.

B: self s-e-l

C: B's making me laugh. Now what are you going to write?

B: Quit tapping on the table.

C: I'm not.

B: I've got a stuffed-up nose and a cold. (sneezes, laughs) Mike, would you get out of here.... O.K. I'm done.
Example of a Complete Oral Language Transcript
Together with Resulting Written Text

Dyad #2 - Free Choice Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: Do you want to make it something like (name of classmates) book, Raiders of the Lost Stick? Raiders of the Styx?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: No. (pause) I guess.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: How about I write this time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: O.K. Let me write the title.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: You can write those.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Raiders of ... What was W's?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: I don't know.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Raiders of the Styx, something.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Yeah, that was Raiders of the Styx.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: S-t-y-x. That's how you spell that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: I think there's a &quot;t&quot; on the end.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: That's Styx-t (pronounced t on the end.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Where is this in? We don't want it to be Medieval -- we want it to be before that, before kings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oral Language  Written Text
S: What's before that? (laughs)
J: Beats me. (muffled) Conan the barbarian.
S: All right.
J: What day and where? Do you want a pencil that has an eraser?
S: It might be nice.
J: One day in ... what should the kingdom be called?
S: like ...
J: Dunchester (laughs)
S: Do you want to write it? I mean ... write a ...
J: a band of knights rode across the sand towards their ship. Say they're like going to another country to raid part of another country or something.
S: Is that all you have to write?
J: across the sand.
S: No, toward their boat ...
J: boarded ... what kind of boats did they have then?
S: I don't know.
J: boarded a
S: What are they like?
J: A canoe would be too small. I bet it's still picking up stuff.

S: What is?

J: That microphone.

S: Yeah.

J: They had like ... boarded their schooner.

S: boarded their schooner

S: Scooter?

J: Schooner. That's s-c-h-o-o-n-e-r. Boarded their schooner. What should the lake be called?

S: Lake?

J: The Dead Sea, the Sick Sea. It's a long time ago. It's the Sick Sea.

S: The Sicksea? (runs it togehter)

J: The Six Sea, (distinctly) the Sick Sea. They're at the Dead Sea. Should have brought a globe with us.

S: at the Dead Sea us.

S: Yeah. Period.

J: O.K. Where should they be sailing to?

S: Britton?

J: Yeah.

S: Britton was an association (unclear)
Oral Language

J: Hold it, kingdom.

S: Their destination was the Kingdom of ...

J: Connery?

S: I guess.

J: C-

S: If I'm lucky, I'll miss a den meeting.

J: If we're both lucky, we'll miss (inaudible) laughs ... destination was ... What was it?

J: Crunshire?

S: Crunshire.

J: How do you spell that? C-r (capital c) Whoops-i-daisy. Sounds like a new thing that came in the path, you know? Crunshire, cereal called Crunchy...

S: Yeah.

J: Kingdom of Crunshire. (spells) r-u-n-ch-ch--i-e-r (laughs) in Egypt. That's close to the desert. That's what we want. Raiders of the Styx. O.K. I want to make up the place they're going up, the dark tower, or something.

S: What do you mean, what they're going to raid?
Oral Language

J: Yeah.

S: They're going to raid King
What's His Face ... um

J: How about name the castle, and
I'll name the warriors, the
kind of people ...

S: garble Who was that, who was
that ...

S: The Black Tower.

J: I guess.

S: The Bright Tower (laughs) No.

J: Say they're going after the
Brigands.

S: What's that? (laughs)

J: That's the people in the king-
dom they're going after. The
Brigands.

S: Are they going to attempt or
are they going to do it?

J: They're going to destroy ...
They're going to attempt to
J: They were going to
destroy it, yeah. Can I write
more, some? Raiders of the Lost
Styx ... (writes) destroy the
Black Tower. All right, period.
They entered the harbor disguised
as ... what kind of boat?

S: as merchandizers.
J: Yeah, merchants. (laughs) merchandizers. (writes) they entered the harbor disguised as merchants. They went into the countryside. No. Where would this be? Right in the middle of Egypt, right?

S: Yeah.

J: Middle of the desert. They went into the countryside.

S: They would take the long way, wouldn't they?

J: What?

S: You'd say they wanted to take the long way so you'd go through the desert.

J: They entered the desert on ... in how many days, in how many days after they came into the harbor? Oh, how about they buy their supplies now?

S: They went to local merchants. That's what my guess would be (laughs)

J: They buy. They bought, their supplies, Sam supplies ... No. at nearby merchants?

S: Nearby merchants.

J: They bought their supply's from nearby merchants.

J: merchants. How many days after they sailed in the harbor?
S: Well, two.

J: (writes) two days after sailing ... if you don't like something, just tell me, O.K.?

J: Two days after sailing into the harbor

S: Yeah.

J: the ... Are you sure they want to go through the desert?

S: Well, if they're disguised as merchants, they wouldn't have to.

J: Hold it. They were disguised as merchants to get in their 'cause if they wore warrior clothes, they wouldn't get in there.

S: Yeah, if they still didn't have their merchant stuff on, they'd have to take the long way.

J: Hold it. Let's say the long way's through a forest, or something.

S: All right, cause through the desert, they'd die.

J: Yeah.

S: They'd have ta'.

J: they entered

J: What, what should I call the forest?

J: The forest.

S: Of uh, uh, I don't know.

J: What's like a dangerous word? Something dangerous.
S: Spook's Forest. (laughs)

J: Dangerous.

S: Spooksville.

J: Wait a moment ...

S: Clobbercliff.

J: Clobbercliffs (laughs). Hold it. I can think of something. How about they entered the Forest of Death?

S: Yeah.

J: Forest of Death. Then what should they do?

S: They go through and about 50 of them get knocked off by like the king's men.

J: Hold it. The king didn't know they were there. Say a wizard finds out or something.

S: Yeah. Wait a minute. There's a wizard in the forest that's traveling.

J: The wizard is like in Crunshire, no, in the Black Tower. What should his name be, though?

S: What should it be?

J: A wizard named, a wizard in the Black Tower named, wizard in the Black Tower named ... what?
Oral Language

S: Um.

J: Names give us a real problem.

S: Yeah (laughs)

J: Think of something like ... have you ever seen any shows about stuff like that?

S: Merlin (laughs)

J: Merlin (laughs)

S: Vector

J: Vector? Named Vector? How do you spell that?

S: V-e-c-t-o-r

J: Vector saw them

S: Vector saw them, saw them. A wizard in the Black Tower named Vector saw them.

J: A wizard named Vector saw them, saw them. A wizard in the Black Tower named Vector saw them.

S: Wait a minute. Raiders of the Styx ... we should write ...

J: No, the Black Tower.

S: Yeah, Raiders of the Black Tower (erasing sound)

J: (Changes title to Raiders of the Black Tower.)

S: Yeah, I have to finish my ____.
J: Raiders. She asked if we wanted to come here.

S: I know.

J: Black Raiders of the Black Tower saw them.

S: Can I write some now?

J: Huh?

S: Can I write some now?

J: Yeah. What do you think he'd do?

S: He'd probably tell the king.

J: Let's not, let's not have him do that, 'cause he's still got an army. That's too boring.

S: Yeah.

J: That happens all the time. Want something real neat.

S: He goes out himself.

J: Nah, he stays in the tower.

S: He stays in the tower, and ...

J: There's still a way, I think. How about, he ... um

S: sends a spy?

J: He shoots. He deals with them from the tower with his wizard magic.
Oral Language

S: When they get near the tower, when they get near the tower, they'll, he'll put a spell on them or somethin'. At least he'll try.

J: Yeah. O.K. Make an indentation down here, right ... so let's start a new paragraph.

S: So they ... They didn't ...

J: This part they're like at a campfire, talking about things.

S: Yeah, they built a fire and talked.

J: O.K. Hold it, Indent it, remember?

S: Where will I put this? Over here?

J: Over here

S: O.K.

J: At nightfall ... do you think they should talk about attacking the Black Tower and their plan, or something?

S: Yeah.

J: You wrote it right.

S: No, I didn't. I wrote build.

J: Plans for attacking the Dark Tower or something. The Black Tower ... I mean ... here's where we have to get their names.

 Written Text

S: (indents) At nightfall they all built a campfire and talked about thier plan for attacking the Black Tower.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: Why, why do we have to have names?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: 'cause we want to know their names when they're talkin' and everything, get it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: You can have ... like names like Eric.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: How about Elerick?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Elerick and ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Why don't we use yours, the names you put in your book?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: I don't have that many. I only have Hector, which is Vector, Prince Cooper. I have Matt, who's his servant, and Black ---, the evil one. That's all I have. Why don't you write names, and I'll get a new piece of paper?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: The next piece of paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: I don't know whether we'll need it. Elerick.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: What are some of the knights of the Round Table?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Prince ... um ... Sir ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Heckenshire ... Sounds good, don't it? Should have used that as a name for one of our places. H-e-c-k-s-h-i-r-e (whoops, that's Heckshire) Heck-ann ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oral Language

S: a?

J: Yeah, Heckannshire

S: Sir Alex

J: Alex. Just put Alex. Don't put sir.

S: Do you have a watch on?

J: No. Ten more minutes until ... hold it ... 40 more minutes until clean-up, I think. I don't think we're going to be here that long. (laughs)

S: (inaudible)

J: Say, while the rest of the knights guarded the camp, Elerick and what's his name were talking about the plan and we'll make up some signs for the plan. Say there's like 60 men or something so that we can split 3 forces, one led by each guy, you know, and they can attack the tower from three different places.

S: Just say, while the troops trained, Sir Heckenshire ...

J: No ... while they guarded, o.k., while they trained ... Sir Elerick, Sir Heckanshire, and Alex ... How about ... Want to put Prince Alex or something like that? Does Sir Elerick sound good?

S: Yeah.
Oral Language

J:  Sir Elerick, Sir Heckenshire, and Prince Alex. Comma, how do you put a comma? O.K.

S:  Keep doin' that.

J:  What?

S:  Keep writin'

J:  Want to read through it when you finish that sentence?

S:  Yeah.

J:  Sir Graystone and Alex and Prince Alex discussed the plan discussed attacking the Black Tower. discussed the plan. Sir Heckenshire, Prince Alex discussed the plan. Raiders of the Black Tower. (Reads: One day in Dunchester, Forest of Death.) All right. A wizard named ... in the Black Tower named Vector. At night fall they all built a campfire and talked about their plan for attacking the Black Tower while the knights trained for the next day, for the next day, Sir Elerick, Sir Heckenshire, and Prince Alex discussed their plan. Can I write now?

S:  Yeah.

J:  Almost to the next page. Let's see. Here. Give me this piece of paper. I want 12. Hold it, what's 60? How many 12's would go into 60?
Oral Language

S: 12's into 60?

J: Yeah.

S: I don't know.

J: Want to find out? I don't know how to do this kind good, so you do it.

S: Oh, that's easy.

J: I can only do it with one digit outside.

S: 6, 6, 12

J: That's two. 12, 1. Here, let me write it ... Can't you write the other ... times? You mean, that's division.

S: I know. It's a different way. I mean ...

J: Hold it, hold it, hold it.

S: You can't do that.

J: 6, 12 into 60.

S: Wait a minute. How many twelves are in 60? How many one's are in 6, that's six. How many 6's are in ...

J: Wait a minute. What are you doing? How many one's are in 6? Right?

S: That's not going to give you anything, cause ...
Oral Language

J: You're right.

S: How many one's are in six?

J: Six.

S: Sixty x 12.

J: Noooo.

S: So we'll just leave that. What did you need it for?

J: Well, they usually counted their knights in dozens. They say we have 2 dozen men attacking. Hold it. I have an idea we're doing it the wrong way ....

S: You're doing it the wrong way.

J: We both are doing it the wrong way ... Let's see now. 12 plus 12 is 24. O.K. 24 times 3. Hold it, they have 72 men. That will give them two dozen each .... This guy will get 2 dozen men, this guy will get 2 dozen men, and that guy will get two dozen men. Each of us will get six. Print. Oh, well. Just print through there. Will get two dozen men to attack with. Sir Elerick. Do you want to go to the backside now?

S: Yeah. No, I don't think we should ...

(bell rings)
Oral Language

J: What's that for?
S: Two o'clock.
J: Oh, yeah, the kindergarteners. Sir Elerick said.
S: Let's use another sheet.
J: No, let's use the back.
S: O.K.
J: Sir Elerick said. Now what should he say?
S: Are you using the top?
J: Is it O.K. with you?
S: Yeah.
J: O.K. now. Sir Heckenshire, an-shire Heck an shire replied. We will (what will they need?) How about say we will need some magic against the wizard?
S: We will need some sorcery. (laughs)
J: We will need some sorcery against ...
S: They don't know the wizard's there.
J: against the (whispers) the wizard. Who should be the leader, though.
S: Prince Alex.

Written Text

J: "Each of us will get 2 dozen men to attack with," Sir Elerick said.
J: Sir Heckannshire replied, "We will need some sourcery against the wizard."
Oral Language

J: O.K.

S: 'cause he's a prince.

J: Do they already have one, or not?

S: Yawns. Who?

J: The enemy, the sorcerer, or the wizard.

S: Yeah, probably they would.

J: How about he says, "I've already taken care of that detail."

S: Yeah.

J: O.K. Prince said, I have already taken care of that detail ... Want to say they go to bed now?

S: (laughs) Yeah, they want to go to sleep. Now they go to sleep and then they wake up the next morning ... One of them says like Sir Elerick says "We better get some sleep so that we can attack. Wide awake.

J: O.K. We should get some sleep, for we have a big day tomorrow. I hope it's warm tomorrow. I mean Sunday.

S: Why?

J: We might get to go canoeing.
J: Have some sleep for we have a big day tomorrow. (sings) tomorrow. Sir Elerick said, O.K., you can write now.

S: Are we going to write what they're doing? I mean ...

J: Should they have horses or anything?

S: No. They don't take horses on missions.

J: Well, they probably would to carry all their stuff.

S: Yeah, but, I mean ...


S: Yeah, to carry all their stuff.

J: But now they aren't going to use their mules because they have to carry all their stuff and they're going to leave their camp set up.

S: So they woke up wide awake the next morning.

J: The next morning, and Prince Alex gave them the plan?

S: Yeah.

J: Prince Alex.

S: Oh, yeah.

J: Make a capital P.
J: Prince Alex told them the plan.

S: All right, I'll see you in the morning, prince. So they got to the, they surrounded ... 

J: How about we say they left their camp set up and, um, headed for the castle, headed for the tower, I mean. 

S: Yeah, return to the wizard. 

J: They left their camp set up and headed for the tower ... sings "The Funeral March". Exceptional children (notices professional journal in rack) (laughs) 

S: Is there anything wrong with real children? I mean ... 

J: Now, we'll go back to that other guy. Vector, Vector. Vector prepared his defences, how about that? 

S: Yeah. 

J: Say he didn't use the army because he thought he could defeat them himself with his wizardry, wizardtry. But he wasn't listening to them when they discussed the plan. O.K.? 

S: Yeah. 

J: Say he did not use the army because he didn't, he did not use the army because he did not listen to their plan ... This tape's almost over.
Oral Language

S: It is?

J: Yeah. Use the army.

S: Why don't we just say ... they attacked and they caught him.

J: No, it's too short. That would be too short. All right.

S: They attacked; that will be like about down to here; they caught him that will be about down to here. And they they go back and that will be about down to there.

J: O.K. So they all got lined up. Over the ridge. How about this: over the ridge they saw the Black Tower.

S: Oh, if they had a cannon with them, all they'd have to do is (makes sound).

J: Yeah. They didn't have cannons ...

S: I know. They only had one.

J: They saw the Black Tower. So Vector shot a couple of lightning bolts at them.

S: Yeah.

J: The brush caught on fire, or something like that. (laughs) No, let's not have him shoot lightning bolts.

Written Text

J: but he didn't use an army for he didn't hear the plan.

J: Over the ridge they saw the Black-Tower.
S: I know. They take, Sir Elerick takes him to the back, Sir Heckanshire takes him to both sides, and Prince Alex takes the front, and these two. He puts a spell on these two so their whole army's wiped out. Then he has most of the army.

J: Each of them have two dozen men, but he sent, Vector sent the army away, his army away, but Prince Alex, say, he had the sorcerer, that right?

S: Yeah.

S: (yawning) We don't even need to attack.

J: What?

S: We don't need to attack.

J: But they're going to anyway because they think there's going to be an army there.

S: Yeah.

J: Black Tower, um. (writes) J: Sir Elerick attacked Sir Elerick attacked from the back. Sir Heckannshire, Heckannshire, attacked, say the

S: They attacked.

J: Hold on ... Say the tower is like this: a triangle.
Oral Language

S: Yeah. Oh, so they only need three men.

J: only need three, yeah. He uses this thing right there.

S: Wait a minute. That's still. Wait a minute. We have three men, right? One, two, three (laughs) so it's like that, so it's Alex, Prince Heckanshire, and Prince Elerick.

S: They attached from the side and they found no enemy. Wait a minute. Sir Elerick and Sir Heckanshire they both attacked and found the ... Wait a minute!

J: Sir Heckannshire attacked from the side. They found no army but a mere wizard.

J: and found no army.

S: They found no army. Erase the period, but a mere ... 

J: but a mere wizard.

S: Vector put a spell over them so ...

J: Vector put a spell over them so they were killed.

J: Over them so ... so what?

S: So ... they couldn't ...

J: So ... they were killed?

S: Yeah.

S: All right.

J: Now comes the sorcerer.

S: Yeah, so the sorcerer ...
J: Hold it. How about so the Sorcerer advances, and in both of em couldn't find each other and Vector and the Sorcerer couldn't find each other.

S: Yeah. He sticks ... Alex stick his wizard up against Vector to see who can outdo each other. And he outdoes him.

J: Yeah, and there's lightning bolts and fire balls and everything.

S: Yeah.


J: We can't do the other side of this tape, cause it says (names of other subjects).

S: Yeah.

J: We're almost finished, anyway. O.K. To the researcher: Did you put any tapes in there? Are they running? They're running, those things over there are running? O.K.

S: How do you spell? Oh yeah. I forgot to spell Alex. (laughter)

J: (writes) Prince Alex sent his sorcerer against Vector. Fire balls and Lighting bolts Flew everywhere.

S: Why don't we write there was a mean fire bolt, fire bolt, bolts flying all over.

J: O.K.
Oral Language

S: Lightning bolts flying all over and there was a mean Vector dead.

J: (laughs) Fire balls and lightning bolts every what happens? O.K. Say the castle explodes when the um when Vector gets killed.

S: So both the sorcerers are dead?

J: They were fightin on the ground. They weren't fightin' on the thing.

S: Yeah, I know what you mean, so, so ... so Alex's sorcerer ...

J: Suddenly the tower exploded. Vector was killed.

S: They had the Black Tower.

J: There! Finished at last ... Look how I wrote it.

R: You certainly wrote a nice long story there.

J: Nothing compared to what W. would do. (reference is to classmate).
APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS
The Hunt Rides

One misty morning prince Hounddog and his henchmen were looking for the lost tooth fairy. Riding his pretened horse, he looked under a rock and found a tooth with four cavities. "Hey, I think we found a clue." "By George I think he's got it!" shouted one of the henchmen. "Oh grody, it's loose, and has got raibes." And there is a whole trail of them." They folloed the trail of teeth to a castle made of old bony teeth. Then one of the henchmen looked at the window and fell into the moat. "Put on your sunnies." "And what ever you do don't look at the window." Shouted one of the valley girls. They ran inside of the castle. "Some one has garick breath in here." Maybe it is the dragon of Italy. They ran up the tower and saw a delorian parked in the living room. The tooth fairy was sitting in the delorian with turbo sun glasses on. "There she is. Then they ran up and tore out her dentures. "Oh no, some one tore out my teech." Then the prince dropped them in the moat. "Oh, so sorry. Better luck next time." So the prince made a vow that he would never make that mistake again. the prince mounted his white pretend horse and rode back to the castle, where he lived happily ever after.
Long long ago in an ancient village stood a tall beautiful castle, castle Bleer in it lived the phonton king Nathanel Anthony Bleer the first. He made his village believe that a innocent girl Kiarana was a witch. She was not instead her mother was. On the day of Karana's execution her mother weeped in greef. As the king was going to kill her, her mother put a curse on him that would go on for centery's then her daughter was dead. Many years went by and soon the king died. But part of him was still alive in his handsome son Prince Adrian. Adrian grew up to be a hansome prince. Prince Adrian was going to be married on that day. He decided to take his soon-to-be-wife on a tour of the castle. He leaned against a wall. The wall opened! A long flight of steps led down to a dark, dusty, and very erie room. Over on a acient table there was a message from his father written on a scoll and it read: my son if you ever open this horrid box you and your wife will die. His soon-to-be-wife Mary Ann gasped in horror. Out of curiosity the young prince started to pry open the lock and Mary Ann screamed, No! But it was too late something rushed out and attaked his wife, with a mighty swing of Adrian's sword the demon screamed in pain. Adrian struggled to put him back in the box. Vowing that he would never make that mistake again, the prince and his wife mounted his white horse and road back to the castle, where they lived happily ever after.
The Satyr

One windy afternoon, Lightning flashed as Drowls ran every which way to get to their rocky homes. Terror raged over the land as Tuskins and their Banthas ran down the mountain side to the helpless little town. Children were grabbed by their parents and were pulled off into their homes. Then as the Tuskin raiders approached the border of the town, a scream echoed. "The Bunyip!" shouted the leading Tuskin. And then Tuskins rode off in scares faces. Then the drowls came out of their houses. The Bunyip is an evil god brought to life out of stone. Then the Knight Gelflings swooped down on their Baturs and landed at the town hall. "Did you see the Bunyip?" said one of the Drowls. There is no Bunyip. it was us," said the mayjor Gelf. "It is time for your tax collect." More lighting flashed and raindrops fell. "It is starting to rain," said a Drowl. "We will pay our taxes in the town hall." As the Drowls walked in, The rain started to fall harder. Then the Gelfs followed The Drowls in. The mayjor walked up. "Make a straight line!" Then the major walked down the line carrying a bag for taxes. As he was walking a crack of thunder rumbled the rocky house. Then an eerie green smoke filled the hall and a formation of a human appered below the smoke. It was somthing humanoid, he
was tall and wore a blue cloak, he had long fingers, and tan skin. "He is the wizard who own's the golden satyr" Said one of the gelflings. "So you reconose me," said the wizard. After a moment of silence, the wizard streached his boney hand and a lightning bolt shot out and hit the wall. The wall fell down and Tuskins ran for the ran for the building. Then a Gelfling pointed at the wall and yelled "Tuskins"! Gelfs jumped on their Batur's and the Gelfs took off in the sky. Then the major drew his sword and shouted: "CHARGE!" Gelfs flew low striking the Tuskins over their heads. Then the major swooped down to hit a Tuskin, but the Tuskin stabbed him before he could swing at him. He fell off his Batur in pain. Then one of the Gelflings came up and stabbed the Tuskin. A wet howl echoed through the country side. Drowls ran in their rocky houses and got all the wepons they could find. "Come, we shall fight with the Gelfs till the end of the Tuskin!" The wizard stood up tall untill he was 12 feet high. The little drowls ran to the wizard and knocked him down. Then they beat on his face with sticks and rocks." If you will let me go I will give you the golden Satyr" said the wizard. The drowls let go of him and the Satyr appered. A gelf ran to the Drowls and picked the Satyr. "Hey, kids, if you place a wish on it, it will grant you it in a matter of seconds." The kids wished for there favorite toys. "No
none of that stuff" I wish the Tuskins were gone forever" said one of the little drowls. And the Tuskins lungs tightened and shrivvled up. They fell to the ground in a crippled like way and melted away in mist. And the Drowls lived in peace for many years.

The End?
B. and J. were at the gymnazeom practicing for the gymnastic championship. There were 4 top contestants the other 2 girls were Kelly and Lisa. J. was practicing on the high balance beam and B. was on the mats doing backhand springs. Kelly and Lisa were on the other side of the gymnazeom working on the uneven parallel bars. They were with Lisas older sister witch won the olimpics 2 year ago. B. and J. were just about to walk out the door when J. relized she had left her gymbag in her locker. While still in the gymnazeom Kelly had just stolen J.'s gym gloves. J. walked in and opened her locker door and grabbed her bag and ran out the door. They walked home together and said good-by. The next morning was the big day. B. was rushing over to J.'s house when she rang the door bell her mother yelled coming! as she answered the door. Soon later they entered the gynaziom door. It was 6:00 in the morning. Hardly anybody was there eccept there onstructer plus Kelly and Lisa. Soon it was 3:00 ockock time for Grove Citys best 10 to 15 year old gymnists. The buzer rang it was time to compete. J. was on the bar when she reconized that her gloves were missing. She walked up to the judge and told him that she wouldn't be abl to partcapate. Then
it was time for Kelly to do her even then B. reconized that the gloves that Kelly had on were J.'s. B. and J. walk over to where Kelly was standing. B. said wait aren't those J.'s gloves? No there mine said Kelly. Wait they are because J. has her anishile on the front. Later after the contest was over Kelly and Lisa were out of the contest. So B. and J. were given 2 trvys and gold metals

The End
One bright morning J. woke up for school, she tip toed over to her roommate L. and shook her until she awakened and said "L. get up, it's 5:30." As they were getting dressed L. said are you going to the tryouts for the play The dying swan? J. replied saying, "Yes." When they arrived to their first class their teacher Beth Hally told them she would be moving them to a higher dance school after class was over. When they arrived to morlen building there were many other girls trying out for the two leading parts. J. had butterflye and L. was very calm. As Jack Simmon was announcing who had got the parts L. was relieved to hear she had gotten one of the leading parts. J. waited nervously but her name was never called. Instinctly she broke out into tears (boo hoo). When they returned to their apartment J. didn't say a word. L. had practice 2 times a day. And J. didn't say much when L. was around and she found new friends. One day L. finally said I'm going to quit if we can't be friends. No, the only reason I was so quiet is because I was jelllose of you, you shouldn't quit because of me. But L. said friends are more important than a play. J. turned away. The next day, L. returned from practice and she had quit. When L. told J. she made L. go back and finished the play. On the night of L.'s play, she got a standing ovation and J. was very happy for L.
Dyad #2, Response to Literature Assignment

A Stranger Came Ashore

One day in the Shetland islands at Black Ness there was a shipwreck. It was a stormy night and a stranger walked ashore. He knocked on the door and Peter got it. He said his name was Finn Learson. That night Robbie got out of bed and heard violin music. He peeked through the door. He saw Finn Learson playing the violin. Then their dog Tam started to bark. Finn Learson looked Tam in the eyes with a funny stare like a trance. Tam stopped barking.

Earlier Finn Learson said he was the only survivor of the shipwreck of the Burmingham. Elsbeth, Robbie's sister liked Finn Learson.

In the spring Robbie talked Olda into taking him to see the seilke pups. (seilkes are seals that have kids in the summer) In the voy he rowed small strokes so the seilke would come near the boat. Olda told Robbie stories of the great seilke. Every once in a while the great seikie would come to land and shed his skin and hide it. Then he would come and trick a girl with golden hair to marry him. Then he would take her to his underwater palace. When she wanted to see humans she was killed. He put her hair on his palace roof. But he could not go into the water without his skin.
Then Ol' da got sick. One day Robbie saw Ol' da. Ol' da said not to trust Finn Learson. There was another stranger that came ashore and carried a girl off. She was never heard from again.

Then Ol' da died. It was a superstition that if you burned a straw from the dead person's bead you had a footprint out of ash. If your footprint fit the ashes, you were the next to die.

Part: 2

Yarl Corbey (the schoolmaster) heard that Robbie didn't want Finn to take Elsbeth (heaven knows why) away. He helped him. On a certain holiday Nichol was a certain person he was supposed to have the power of a land god. But below the high water mark Finn Learson had power. After Nichol lost (below the high water mark) Robbie took Finn to a well leading to the sea. Then Corbey pecked out finn's eye as a bird and he fell in the well. He never bothered them agian.
Dyad #5, Response to Literature Assignment (June)

"Boom"! it was so frightening, Sandy the doorman told the wide
eyed children about how the two teenagers snuck into the westing
house and when they came out one of them ran so fast he ran
completely off the cliffs right after you end Sam Westings yard.
"Ouch"! someone had broken the silence "she kicked me" one of
the kids yelled, Well make him stop pulling my braid, turtle
had yelled back. Turtle was the daughter of Sam Westings niece
who liked turtles sister better than she did turtle. Angela
Turtles sister was being forced to marry a stubborn surgen who
made snabish cracks about everyone. Then, there was the strangest
person of all that was the young girl who had a crutch to match
every outfit she owned because she had broken her leg. And the
reason that they all were there is because Sam Westings will was
going to be read.

Before they all got there they were given a note that was
inviting them to come to stay in sunset Tower a Hotel that Sam
Westing owned. There were many clues and it was very confusing.
But in the end Sam Westing wasn't really dead. Before the will
was read they were all given clues to find out who killed him.
Sam Westing was also Barney Northroup, Sandy MacSouther and?
Eastmen which are North, South, East and West. But I think you
would like it better if you read it yourself.
The Westing Game was a very good book. It was about a guy Sam Westing who lived a strange life. And he had greedy relatives. Turtle had long hair that she always put in braids and if anyone pulled them she would kick them with full force at their chins. Her mother favored her older sister Angela and didn't care much for Turtle. Her sister Angela was very beautiful and was forced to marry a surgeon by her mother. Mr. Hoo owned a restaurant on the first floor of the building they all lived in Sunset Towers. His restaurant was called Hoo's on First. Mr. Hoo had a son his name was? he was a trac star. Mr. Hoo's wife was a quiet lady and couldn't speak much English. Cybil? was living in Sunset Towers. She had broken her leg and had crutches that matched every occasion and every outfit she had. Cris was disabled and had to sit in an wheelchair he liked to look at birds and I forget why but he stammered. There was also an black lady that was an judge. All these people and I think some more had all got an invitation from Barney something which later turtle found out was Sam Westing also later they found out that Sam Westing wasn't really dead but was Barney Northrup, Sandy the doorman, Something Eastman. Sam Westing had made out an will (when he pretended he died) and those people I mentioned had to figure out the mystery who killed him. etc.