

Self-expressions, Socialization and Learning in Dialogue Journals: Features of Beginner Writers in Second Language Writing

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Abstract

Collaborative learning involves learners working together as a group in maximizing their learning experience and in developing the learners' sense of belonging to the group. This paper discusses the features of a collaborative writing activity, the dialogue journal, that exist during a writing activity. The features were discussed based on literature and a case study on a group of second-year ESL learners of Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis, Malaysia. The selections of the students' dialogue journal writing were found to display features of the learners' self-expressions, learning and interactions among their classmates and teacher.

Keywords: Collaborative writing, Collaborative writing features, Second language writing, Dialogue journal, ESL class

1. Introduction

The ESL (English as a Second Language) students often times find it difficult to make use of the language skills outside of language classrooms as there are fewer opportunities to do so due to poor language environments or lack of students' motivation in utilizing the language. Some learners are reluctant to express their ideas in English through speaking as they may feel intimidated or worried that others may notice their lack of proficiency in communicating in the language. Furthermore, some learners often find writing a challenge as they have to incorporate their understanding of grammar and to use the correct sentence structures to express their ideas in words. Despite the students' lack of motivation or fear of expressing themselves in English, there is a need for

the English educators to ensure that the four language skills which are speaking, writing, listening and reading are integrated and used efficiently in the classroom and educators need to urge the learners to use these skills outside their language classrooms to maximize their proficiency in the language.

Harmer (1991) asserts that collaborative language learning provides maximum opportunities for students to interact and cooperate with one another as they work towards a common goal by using four language skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Dialogue journal writing is one of the many collaborative activities in the language classroom. A dialogue journal is a writing activity whereby learners write about a reading assignment, lecture, experience and any topic that may be related or not related to their classroom lessons. Then, the writing will be exchanged and read by others in the classroom. Dialogue journals have been defined as journals "in which each student carries on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time" (Staton, 1988 as cited in Garmon, 2001).

Using a dialogue journal in a language classroom is a way that can be chosen by the educators to integrate the language skills. According to Barkley, Cross and Major (2005), dialogue journals "offer a formal medium for students to record their thoughts, connect coursework to their personal lives, and ask each other questions" and that the effectiveness of the dialogue journal is determined "when writers know that someone who is also interested in the topic will read and respond to their entries." (p.236). When a learner writes in a journal, in a way, the learner is expressing his or her "spoken" viewpoints in writing. It can also minimize his anxiety in using the language as he has time to think and express his ideas in writing and it can indirectly encourage him to practise the language outside his classrooms.

This paper presents a study that aims at examining the university students' dialogue journal writing tasks to extract the significant features about the students' learning, self-expression and interactions in the language classroom from the journal entries that they wrote. It is important to know how the students use the journal writing as a means to express their thoughts and feelings via writing and for learning a language and also social skills.

2. Literature Review

In classes, students are instructed to write their essays for imagined audience. When they receive feedback from their teachers or peers on their writing through dialogue journal writing, they feel that they are writing for real audience. Peyton (2000) states that students enjoy dialogue journal writing as their teachers participate in authentic dialogues which improve communicative aspects of writing. Dialogue journal writing enables teachers and students to communicate more effectively and authentic feedback can be produced. Peyton (1993) added, "Dialogue journals not only open a new channel of communication, but they also provide another context for language and literacy development. Students have the opportunity to use English in a non-threatening atmosphere, in interaction with a proficient English speaker. Because the interaction is written, it allows students to use reading and writing in purposeful ways and provides a natural, comfortable bridge to other kinds of writing."

Morrel (2010) investigated the effectiveness of correcting written language errors of seven deaf and hard of hearing children from 7-11 years old using dialogue journals for ten weeks. The study finds that writing dialogue journals motivates them to write and to take risks in expressing themselves through writing. Dialogue journals correct errors of students who have higher literacy level and encourage the development of new language structure.

In addition, Van Horn and Freed (2008) in their study on 39 nursing students who worked in pairs and individually (in clinical setting which required the students to use dialogue journals to reflect on their clinical experiences for nine weeks) find that working in pairs enabled the students to learn more as they were able to reflect more and their problem solving skills were also enhanced. The study concludes that dialogue journals promote reflection and construction of new knowledge. Moreover, Lee (2007), in her study to 18 pre-service English teachers for two semesters, reveals that dialogue journals help students value communication in order to enhance their reflective and critical thinking skills.

In a study on dialogue journal through e-mail technology, Rafiza and Adelina (2004), find that e-mail dialogue journal can be used as a tool to develop students' writing abilities and at the same time initiating their communication skills. This kind of activity also proves to be interesting, motivating and meaningful as it expresses students' genuine discourse.

Besides, the use of dialogue journals in foreign language class can enhance both learners' writing and speaking skills (Barba, 1993 as cited in Gonzales-Bueno, 1998). In another study done by Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005) on 600 journal entries written by 30 high school students in Tehran reveal that dialogue journal writing improved the students' self-reflective writing ability.

In addition, dialogue journals encourage writers to be more proficient writers, readers and learners. A dialogue journal writing study was conducted on eighteen Year-10 students in New Zealand. The students were required to write their reflections on three literature texts they studied in their class (Denfort-Wood, 2003). At the end of 5 weeks, students showed that they became better readers as they were required to transact with the texts as they needed to write about the texts in the journals. Dialogue journal writing was able to help less proficient writers and proficient writers. In the beginning of the class, students were hostile towards the teacher, however, the usage of dialogue journal writing facilitated class engagement which encouraged positive learning perspectives. The students were enthusiastic and were motivated to write by comments by readers. By having written feedback from the teacher, it helped students to be better writers, readers and learners.

In order to implement dialogue journal writing activity, educators should consider the language proficiency and maturity level of the students. Holmes and Moulton (1995) in their ethnographic study, for example, examined the effectiveness of dialogue journal writing among adult ESL university students. It was found that one of the participants showed resistance towards informal dialogue journal writing although there were improvements in his writing. The study revealed that the subject was not satisfied with the communication, linguistic growth and non-correction in the dialogue journal writing. Therefore, teachers should be alert of the different proficiency and maturity levels of learners who come from different age and social backgrounds.

3. Materials and Method

The writings of a group of 22 Year-Two Universiti Teknologi MARA (Perlis) students were taken for this study. At the beginning of the semester, the students were asked to keep a journal to be written weekly for their language class (English for Academic Purposes, BEL311). The teacher emphasized that the journal was not part of the assessment for the course but as a regular writing task to improve the students' writing skills. A topic was assigned by the teacher to be written by the students at the end of each week. The topics were based on general and specific themes like travelling, learning and teaching, arts, money and friendships and some of them are related to their prescribed class text. At the end of each entry, the students had to write questions related to the topic or any questions that may be related to their academic and personal lives.

A student's journal was exchanged with another student in the class or was given to the teacher for a response. The student who received the peer's journal had to read and respond to the questions asked in the entry. The student's next journal entry would be exchanged with a different student. The process continued until the end of that semester. Therefore, by the end of the semester, each student had the opportunities to read and exchange their journal entries with other students in the class and his/her journal was read and responded by the teacher. The students' journal responses were then examined. Some excerpts from the students writing will be presented to show the features on self-expressions, learning and interactions and socialization that occurred in the writing tasks.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Self-Expressions (Table 1)

Dialogue journal can be regarded as one of the tools to express oneself. Lingley (2005) feels that journal writing is a worthwhile effort in expressing one's feelings and share meanings with others. Excerpts 9, 11 and 13 illustrate that the students are comfortable at expressing their feelings and sharing their feelings with their readers. The students develop self-confidence in expressing themselves when they are involved in journal writing. The students are comfortable sharing these feelings with their readers who may share the same ideas and feelings and who may care about what they wrote in the journals.

Excerpt 9: Another left money I will donate to the poor society or people in war such as Palestin. I hope when I get my first salary Palestin will peace without war.

Excerpt 11: When first time I looked to this picture, I fell in love with this picture. (*Sunflower by Van Gogh*). I think it represent about myself. I represent as the almost die flower. It is because when in public, I feel so unbeautiful compare with other. I feel very shy faces to the beautiful people and that why that picture make me think deeply.

Excerpt 13: My mom is the best mom in this entire world

Having known what the students have in common with other classmates such as sharing the same life experience, teachers and learning experience may promote a sense of belonging for the learners. During dialogue journal writing, they have developed camaraderie. They have learnt about each other's hopes and dreams as shown in excerpts 1,2,3,10,14 and 15.

Excerpt 1: I want to taste their food. I want to stay until Christmas Day. I want to feel how it is like celebrating Christmas in Europe

- Excerpt 2: I like to go to Australia because I love peaceful and beautiful place. Moreover, I like to learn about their culture.
- Excerpt 3: lastly, if ask me where I want to go, I will go to out from Malaysia because the longer our journey,
we will gain more experience. If I were given opportunity I will go to all small island around asia it is because I think in a small island it will give I more unic experience that I say just now, experience will never forgotten.
- Excerpt 10: I really amaze with all his painting (*Van Gogh's*) and I hope I can get a chance to get there (*art gallery*).
- Excerpt 14: Ha...I very excited to share my dream car. My dream car is BMW 3 Series coupe
- Excerpt 15: I will try my harder to make sure I can have Mini Cooper S one day. I'll prove it.
- In writing their dialogue journals, the students do share their disappointment and self-evaluations as illustrated in excerpts 5 and 11. This is because they are able to trust their supportive readers who are non-judgemental. Dialogue journal writing has become their sanctuary.
- Excerpt 5: He (*a friend's uncle*) shouldn't treat me like that even though he has a lot of money, and everything. He shouldn't judge me just by looking at my appearance.
- Excerpt 11: When first time I looked to this picture, I fell in love with this picture. (*Sunflower by Van Gogh*).
I think it represent about myself. I represent as the almost die flower. It is because when in public, I feel so unbeautiful compare with other. I feel very shy faces to the beautiful people and that why that picture make me think deeply.

In addition, the students write about their achievement (excerpt 19) and fear (excerpts 16,17 and 18) with their peers and teacher.

- Excerpt 19: For your information, I has present Bukit Mertajam to football tournament under 12 in the state
- Excerpt 16: The big thing that really interfere me right now is about my aunt's condition
- Excerpt 17: I will say my lazyness and my sleepyness right now that are the main reason that always interfering with my learning.
- Excerpt 18: If I not able to buy a book I have to borrow someone book. Sometime I got very embarrass with that.

Some students expressed hope to be able to travel to foreign countries and learn foreign cultures (excerpt 2). These hopes may also be shared by their classmates who have the desire to assimilate with the native speakers' cultures. Furthermore, the students also wish to be successful in the future and would like to possess wealth and money. These desires may be shared by their classmates too who may be motivated by the peers' writings.

- Excerpt 2: I like to go to Australia because I love peaceful and beautiful place. Moreover, I like to learn about their culture.

Another interesting finding is the students' writing (excerpts 4,12 and 13) indicate that the students hold high regards for their parents and peers. Knowing this fact may boost the peers' self-esteem.

- Excerpt 4: My late mother always remembering me about money isn't everything
- Excerpt 12: The most important thing is he (*a classmate*) is a good listener.
- Excerpt 13: My mom is the best mom in this entire world

Students also show that they are aware of what has been happening in their society and around the world. This is shown by excerpts 8 and 9.

- Excerpt 8: If we don't have an education, our society will look down to us. But nowadays its too many educated person. It's good for us to compete positively
- Excerpt 9: Another left money I will donate to the poor society or people in war such as Palestin. I hope when I get my first salary Palestin will peace without war.

4.2 Interactions and socialization (Table 2)

Interactions among the students and their teacher show the most prominent feature of the dialogue journal writing. Dialogue journal writing allows learners to socialize with their teachers because the journals that these students write serve as channels to express their ideas to their teachers (Peyton, 2000). There are many benefits that students can get from dialogue journal writing as it improves communicative aspect of writing. This is

because there will be interactions among readers and writers. The writers will be more critical in their writing since they know that there will be readers who will write comments and give their reflections on the journal. This activity involves participation from their teachers and peers. This is supported by Burton and Carrol (2001 as cited by Lingley 2005) who stress on the interactive aspects of journals like inherent conversational and social nature. Therefore, journal writing is an important channel to express our feelings and share meanings with others.

Numerous interactions occurred in dialogue journal writing between the writers and their peers. The interactions among them included giving feedback on the writers' feelings as in excerpts 3,6,11,12,15,16. The students wrote to get responses from their readers. They expect the readers to comment on what they wrote and share knowledge on the topic. Thus, journal writing provides excitements for them in terms of the anticipation of the responses made by the readers which sometimes are two ways as displayed by excerpt 3. Communication involved in the writing was natural and informal.

Excerpt 3: Wow! You have such a good attitude. You trained yourself to be discipline person. Keep up the good work girl! (peer's comment)

This topic is really interesting (theme 7). *You should check mine too!* (peer's comment)

Excerpt 6: How do you think about saving or investing a money? (writer's question)

As a 'money-maker', yes! I'll go for it. I just love what you wrote! (peer's comment)

Excerpt 11: Seems to be same with me Mira! I also learn most when I realize that I did mistakes. It just that how lucky we are cuz we still got chances to improve ourselves since there are still people out there who dun even want to accept their mistakes nor realize theirs. (peer's comment)

Excerpt 12: When you saw this painting, what do u feel? (Starry Night) Give me your opinion about this painting that I chose. (writer's question)

Looking at this painting makes me wonder about the colour that Vincent had chosen tells us a lot of things about life in the community. (peer's comment)

Excerpt 15: Can you see what I see in this painting? (writer's question)

I hope so. Only certain person would understand the painting. You are the choosen one. I feel like I want to go there as I read your journal. Amazing Amsterdam.. (peer's comment)

Excerpt 16: Where is location of Jeju Island? (writer's question)

Korea. I've read your journal and right after I finished it, I feels like I want to pack my belonging and fly to Jejudo... You've describe it well and makes me feel like it a place that I couldn't miss out in my life. (peer's comment)

The students also had a chance to share their experience based on the themes that they had to write in their journals (excerpts 1,2,3,8,9,10,13). At the same time, they are able to give emotional support, advice and encouragement to their peers (excerpts 1,2,3,10 and 13). The teacher could also learn about the students better and had the opportunities to motivate and advise the students on matters unrelated to their studies. In dialogue journal writing, the interactions among the writers, teachers and peers can be about anything. It does not mean that the interactions should be related to their lesson or academic life only. The writers are also able to share interests in something and hope the readers would be interested in it too and interested to know about it (excerpts 9 and 13).

Excerpt 1: Nim, I read. And I got my tears out. I'm sorry to hear about it. I'm glad that you finally can cope with it. You know what, you should think that Allah (God) have better plan for you. Not many can survive as you do after their beloved parents are gone. I'm so very proud of you dear friend. Carry on with your life. (peer's comment)

You're not alone in this beautiful world. You have lots of friends that so care for you. If I were you, it might takes more than 3 years go get over it. Plus, if I were at your age when I lost them, I dun think I am as strong as you Anim, I am so damn proud of you. (peer's comment)

Excerpt 2: I'm sorry to hear /know this (losing parents)!! (teacher's comment)

It used to be complicated but at the time I didn't think that much. The more you think, the more you feel that life is unfair to you...so, don't think! As a saying goes, "Take one day at a time." I'm sure one day you'll see a silver lining in the dark cloud. (teacher's comment)

Excerpt 3: Wow! You have such a good attitude. You trained yourself to be discipline person. Keep up the good work girl! (peer's comment)

- Excerpt 8: Seems to be same with me Mira! I also learn most when I realize that I did mistakes. It just that how lucky we are cuz we still got chances to improve ourselves since there are still people out there who dun even want to accept their mistakes nor realize theirs. (peer's comment)
- Excerpt 9: What do you feel in your first day in universities? (writer's question)
I feel like I'm the only one in a dark place. Nobody around me. Everything I have to do on my own. Waaaa!! I need my mom! So homesick! Grrr...!! (peer's comment)
!Extra information! Did u know, Kalumon is one of the type of Digimon generation! (peer's comment)
- Excerpt 10: The mirror may tell lies. To know the truth, ask your friends and loved ones. (teacher's comment in response to student's writing in Self-expression – excerpt 11)
Do you believe in inner beauty especially about your heart? (writer's question)
Sometimes the most beautiful person can be very ugly; ugly if she doesn't appreciate the value of being an honourable person; ugliness that is reflected from a bad heart is more obvious than physical ugliness. (teacher's comment)
- Excerpt 13: **Oh no, look at my letter "O" up there, it smears.**
You guys remember that day Puan Hafizah thought us to do the slide show...
Do you think I can play guitar well one day?
Well those who are putting efforts towards something, I guaranteed will achieve what they want some day...so do you...
I agree with you but not 100%
He he he ... I think when comes to the theory part, I always day dreaming and feels like in the other world (peer's comment)

Excerpts 4 and 17 show the feedback that the students received from their teacher and friends about the mistakes that they did in their writing. Even though dialogue journal writing does not require the teacher to correct the students' writing, some corrections are necessary to help the learners avoid the mistakes in their future writings. However, they should be done in a non-threatening manner. Sometimes, the peers can also guide the writer to understand the task given as shown by excerpt 17.

Excerpt 4: In formal writing, 'i' should be written in capital letter, I. (teacher's comment)

Excerpt 17: This journal is just about your life and your self. It is not about the power of money. From what I know, **money talks** (*theme 2*) is about the person that have a lot of money and have a power to do anything what they want. Still, it's just a wonderful dreams if one day you become a millionaire.

From the findings, we can conclude that that there is a vital relationship between language and its social context (Halliday 1989, cited in Lingley 2005). Besides, Halliday also keeps stressing on the fact that learning is 'a social process.' Therefore, dialogue journal writing has managed to provide a certain degree of socializing process in the classroom.

4.3 Learning (Table 3)

According to Peyton (2000), dialogue journal writing acts as an indispensable class management tool for large language classes. Dialogue journals help learners to spend more time with teachers especially in large classes without taking precious limited time available in the class. It caters for learners with varying language proficiency and interests. At the same time dialogue journal writing makes it possible for teachers to assess their learners' needs, cater to the needs and monitor progress which can facilitate language learning. In addition, dialogue journal writing helps second language listening and speaking. Dialogue journal writing increases language fluency of adult students (Alexander, 2003). The students document their reflections on communicative lessons conducted in the class and reflect about their listening and speaking strategies. Through the learner-teacher dialogue, learners are able to receive feedback and comments on their struggles in communicative activities. Dialogue journal writing facilitates students to participate in various communicative situations during classes as they have the support and a sense of purpose provided by dialogue journal writing.

The students' excerpts show that in their process of learning the language, they encounter certain obstacles that may demotivate them.

Excerpt 1: The best part of this course (BEL311) when the lecturer had asked us to make pair work in the class. The worst part of this course is grammar.

Excerpt 2: I will story about my problem I think. I got down to speak in English. I'm really afraid about what am I talking about. Actually, I got many ideas in my mind, but to explain it, I'm become speechless. I think it is cause of my language or communication skills. I m not really confident to speak in English. I'm afraid if my friends around me will laugh at me...anyway, I try my best to speak out...

Excerpt 3: I love to speak.
Whenever I speak in front of my friends, it help me to boost up my confident level.
At first, I feel shame but after the presentation I feel fun and enjoy.

Excerpt 4: If the learning purpose are related to the academic, I think the most suitable way is by following my heart. I learn when I'm eager to learn. I don't really care what will people say to me! I'm a person who dislike the subject which is rely too much on theory! To me English is a subject that gain my general knowledge.

A few learners stated that they found difficulties in communicating proficiently in the language and lack of knowledge in grammar is another hindrance to their success in learning the language. However, the students have come up with certain strategies to overcome the problems of learning the language. This gave them the chance to think more seriously about their study. Thus, dialogue journal writing promotes active learning.

Excerpt 5: I'm not a clever person and my English also very poor. Sometimes I need to read more than twice to understand it.

Excerpt 6: I learn most when I get experience in my life. I learn when I reading book, magazine and newspaper. I learn when my parents and teachers teach about something.

Excerpt 7: Nowadays, I have tried to improve my English by listening for English song and read the english dictionary.

When asked to write about how they would act if they had been their own teacher, the students came up with some characteristics that we can assume the ones that they desire in order to be able to learn in unthreatening and relaxed environment.

Excerpt 14: If I were my teacher I would treat me with full discipline but still teaching with a full love and caring.

Excerpt 15: I will also will be a funny teacher to make me enjoy my classes. If I am my teacher, I will fullfill the character above (intelligent, beautiful/handsome and 'stylo').

Excerpt 16: If I was a teacher, I will treat myself as a student like, I will make funny in class and be sporting as I can. I also will not be bayers. I will give my attention to all my students and will not give attention to clever students. I also will give present to student that can show a very good teamwork. I will help my students if they not understand. I also will join my student in discussion.

Excerpt 17: I don't want to be known as an angry teacher. Probably a good and kind person is better! This is because I want a good teacher to be my teacher.

Moreover, a few students found that keeping the journal has helped them to improve in certain language skills.

Excerpt 8: Firstly, by writing this journal, it is helping me in my writing skills. Because it is such writing an essay, so it really helps a lot.

Excerpt 9: When I writing a journal I can improve my spelling and my english word.

Excerpt 10: It helps me build my self-esteem when talking in front of other and give out my opinion and point of view. Making a journal teach me a lot how to create a short essay.

Excerpt 11: After I read a journal I found many expression such as Happy, sad, funny and many more.
Keeping a journal help me to improve my grammar, vocabulary and many more about English.

To some other students, the opportunity to read other classmates' journal entries allowed them to get to know their classmates, teacher and the world better. This shows that they were able to learn more academically and socially.

Excerpt 12: Another thing is, I can learn and know my class mates, what their feelings and experience because every week we must change our journal.

Keeping a journal also make me impress because I can know about world! Because when I read my friend journal, they are story about place in the world and it is very interesting. Sometimes if feel like so excited if I at the places!

Excerpt 13: By keeping this jurnal, i can know the readers comment and I can share the experience or information with them. I can know, they like what, who are their favourite teacher, what are their favourite subject and many more. Besides that, by wrote this jurnal, i can knew my classmates and teacher very well.

It is evident that students could reflect on their own learning preferences and experiences in their journal entries. This encourages them to be more aware, sensitive and responsible toward their own learning.

5. Conclusion

Dialogue journal writing (DJW) is not merely as a means to express the language learners' thoughts and feelings about their language course or their lessons, but it also acts as an indirect tool to share and express their feelings, opinions and problems with the people around them who may possess the same experiences. The interactions that they share with the readers reflect their earnest desire to communicate and share meaning with others as stressed by Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini (2009) who pointed out that the use of dialogue journals in a language class enables the students to view writing as a cognitive, personal and communicative process rather than writing as only a skill-based activity.

Dialogue journal writing is also hoped to create desire for language learners to continue their writing and learning of the language outside class lessons. The study has discovered that when the students write, they can actually be expressive, sociable and at the same time learn from each other. They do possess ability to interact using the second language if not verbally, through their writings which show that they do have the cognitive, communicative and social abilities to convey meanings with others. Their dialogue journals can further be used for research on language structures, common errors in grammar, etc.

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Table 1. Excerpts that indicate different students' self-expressions

No	Student	Excerpts
1	6	I want to taste their food. I want to stay until Christmas Day. I want to feel how it is like celebrating Christmas in Europe.
2	9	I like to go to Australia because I love peaceful and beautiful place. Moreover, I like to learn about their culture.
3	11	lastly, if ask me where I want to go, I will go to out from Malaysia because the longer our journey, we will gain more experience. If I were given opportunity I will go to all small island around asia it is because I think in a small island it will give I more unic experience that I say just now, experience will never forgotten.
4	1	My late mother always remembering me about money isn't everything
5	2	He (<i>a friend's uncle</i>) shouldn't treat me like that eventhough he has a lot of money, and everything . He shouldn't judge me just by looking at my appearance.
6	10	With a large amount of money people also became more greedy, mean and heartless when talking about money.
7	12	If one day, I become a millionaire and have a lot of money, I will try the best to use it.
8	14	If we don't have an education, our society will look down to us. But nowadays its too many educated person. It's good for us to compete positively.
9	10	Another left money I will donate to the poor society or people in war such as Palestin. I hope when I get my first salary Palestin will peace without war.
10	10	I really amaze with all his painting (<i>Van Gogh's</i>) and I hope I can get a chance to get there (<i>art gallery</i>).
11	11	When first time I looked to this picture, I fell in love with this picture.(<i>Sunflower by Van Gogh</i>). I think it represent about myself. I represent as the almost die flower. It is because when in public, I feel so unbeautiful compare with other. I feel very shy faces to the beautiful people and that why that picture make me think deeply.
12	13	The most important thing is he (<i>a classmate</i>) is a good listener.
13	2	My mom is the best mom in this entire world
14	8	Ha...I very excited to share my dream car. My dream car is BMW 3 Series coupe.
15	13	I will try my harder to make sure I can have Mini Cooper S one day. I'll prove it.
16	1	The big thing that really interfere me right now is about my aunt's condition.
17	11	I will say my lazyness and my sleepyness right now that are the main reason that always interfering with my learning.
18	13	If I not able to buy a book I have to borrow someone book. Sometime I got very embarrass with that.
19	7	For your information, I has present Bukit Mertajam to football tournament under 12 in the state level.

Table 2. Excerpts that indicate interactions and socialization among teacher and peers

No	Student	Excerpts
1	1	Nim, I read..And I got my tears out.I'm sorry to hear about it.I'm glad that you finally can cope with it.You know what, you should think that Allah have better plan for you.Not many can survive as you do after their beloved parents are gone.I'm so very proud of you dear friend.Carry on with your life. (peer's comment) You're not alone in this beautiful world.You have lots of friends that so care for you.If I were you, it might takes more than 3 years go get over it.Plus, if I were at your age when I lost them, I dun think I am as strong as you Anim,I am so damn proud of you. (peer's comment)
2	1	I'm sorry to hear /know this (losing parents)!! (teacher's comment) It used to be complicated but at the time I didn't think that much.The more you think, the more you feel that life is unfair to you...so, don't think!As a saying goes, "Take one day at a time." I'm sure one day you'll see a silver lining in the dark cloud. (teacher's comment)
3	2	Wow!You have such a good attitude.You trained yourself to be discipline person.Keep up the good work girl! (peer's comment) This topic are really interesting (theme 7).You should check mine too ! (peer's comment)
4	4	In formal writing, 'i' should be written in capital letter, I. (teacher's comment)
5	5	Learning sessions will end up as a valuable moment if your are enjoy it! So, find your own way to manage it and remember you are what you are! You don't have to do if you don't want to! (peer's comment)
6	10	How do you think about saving or investing a money? (writer's question) As a 'money-maker', yes! I'll go for it. I just love what you wrote! (peer's comment)
7	10	How interesting! Your perception (of National Service camp) has changed over time. (teacher's comment) Do you think that national service can improve or change our teenager? In term of behaviour. (writer's question) May be to a certain extend. Teenagers should be constantly reminded of their roles as citizens. I'm sure after the camp, most of the teenagers have renewed their hopes/dreams but tend to forget them later. So, programs like this should be continued to renew their spirit and motivation.(teacher's comment)
8	11	Seems to be same with me Mira! I also learn most when I realize that I did mistakes. It just that how lucky we are cuz we still got chances to improve ourselves since there are still people out there who dun even want to accept their mistakes nor realize theirs. (peer's comment)
9	11	What do you feel in your first day in universities? (writer's question) I feel like I'm the only one in a dark place. Nobody around me. Everything I have to do on my own. Waaaa!! I need my mom! So homesick! Grrr...!! (peer's comment) !Extra information! Did u know, Kalumon is one of the type of Digimon generation! (peer's comment)
10	11	The mirror may tell lies. To know the truth, ask your friends and loved ones. (teacher's comment in response to student's writing in Self-expression – excerpt 11) Do you believe in inner beauty especially about your heart? (writer's question) Sometimes the most beautiful person can be very ugly; ugly if she doesn't appreciate the value of being an honourable person; ugliness that is reflected from a bad heart is more obvious than physical ugliness. (teacher's comment)
11	13	You have the same interesting lecture with me. (peer's comment)
12	13	When you saw this painting, what do u feel? (Starry Night) Give me your opinion about this painting that I chose. (writer's question) Looking at this painting makes me wonder about the colour that Vincent had chosen tells us a lot of things about life in the community. (peer's comment)
13	15	Oh no, look at my letter "O" up there, it smears. You guys remember that day Puan Hafizah thought us to do the slide show... Do you think I can play guitar well one day? Well those who are putting efforts towards something , I guaranteed will achieve what they want some day...so do you... I agree with you but not 100% He he he ... I think when comes to the theory part, I always day dreaming and feels like in the other world (peer's comment)
14	16	Untill now, do you ever seen a counselor to story your problem and to get the way to solve your probs? (peer's comment/question)
15	17	Can you see what I see in this painting? (writer's question) I hope so. Only certain person would understand the painting. You are the choosen one.I feel like I want to go there as I read your journal. Amazing Amsterdam.. (peer's comment)

16	18	Where is location of Jeju Island? (writer's question) Korea. I've read your journal and right after I finished it, I feels like I want to pack my belonging and fly to Jejudo... You've describe it well and makes me feel like it a place that I couldn't miss out in my life. (peer's comment)
17	12	This journal is just about your life and your self. It is not about the power of money. From what I know, money talks (theme 2) is about the person that have a lot of money and have a power to do anything what they want. Still, it's just a wonderful dreams if one day you become a millionaire.

Table 3. Excerpts that indicate different students' learning experiences

No	Student	Excerpts
1	14	The best part of this course (BEL311) when the lecturer had asked us to make pair work in the class. The worst part of this course is grammar .
2	16	I will story about my problem I think. I got down to speak in English. I'm really afraid about what am I talking about. Actually, I got many ideas in my mind, but to explain it, I'm become speechless. I think it is cause of my language or communication skills. I m not really confident to speak in English. I'm afraid if my friends around me will laugh at me... anyway, I try my best to speak out ...
3	2	I love to speak. Whenever I speak infront of my friends, it help me to boost up my confident level. At first, I feel shame but after the presentation I feel fun and enjoy.
4	5	If the learning purpose are related to the academic, I think the most suitable way is by following my heart. I learn when I'm eager to learn. I don't really care what will people say to me! I'm a person who dislike the subject which is rely too much on theory! To me English is a subject that gain my general knowledge.
5	7	I'm not a clever person and my English also very poor. Sometimes I need to read more than twice to understand it.
6	9	I learn most when I get experience in my life. I learn when I reading book, magazine and newspaper. I learn when my parents and teachers teach me about something.
7	19	Nowadays, I have tried to improve my english by listening for English song and read the english dictionary.
8	5	Firstly, by writing this journal, it is helping me in my writing skills. Because it is such writing an essay, so it really helps a lot.
9	11	When I writing a journal I can improve my spelling and my english word
10	18	It helps me build my self-esteem when talking in front of other and give out my opinion and point of view. Making a journal teach me a lot how to create a short essay.
11	8	After I read a journal I found many expression such as Happy, sad, funny and many more. Keeping a journal help me to improve my grammar, vocabulary and many more about English.
12	9	Another thing is, I can learn and know my class mates, what their feelings and experience because every week we must change our journal. Keeping a journal also make me impress because I can know about world! Because when I read my friend journal, they are story about place in the world and it is very interesting. Sometimes if feel like so excited if I at the places!
13	19	By keeping this jurnal, i can know the readers comment and I can share the experience or information with them. I can know, they like what, who are their favourite teacher, what are their favourite subject and many more. Besides that, by wrote this jurnal, i can knew my classmates and teacher very well.
14	11	If I were my teacher I would treat me with full discipline but still teaching with a full love and caring.
15	13	I will also will be a funny teacher to make me enjoy my classes. If I am my teacher, I will fullfill the character above (intelligent, beautiful/handsome and 'stylo').
16	19	If I was a teacher, I will treat myself as a student like, I will make funny in class and be sporting as I can. I also will not be bayers. I will give my attention to all my students and will not give attention to clever students. I also will give present to student that can show a very good teamwork. I will help my students if they not understand. I also will join my student in discussion
17	6	I don't want to be known as an angry teacher. Probably a good and kind person is better! This is because I want a good teacher to be my teacher.