Mediational effects of desktop-videoconferencing telecollaborative exchanges on the intercultural communicative competence of students of French as a foreign language

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MEDIATIONAL EFFECTS OF DESKTOP-VIDEOCONFERENCING TELECOLLABORATIVE EXCHANGES ON THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OF FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

by

Véronique Martin

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Abstract

Since the early 2000s, foreign language practitioners and researchers have shown an increasing interest in exploring the affordances of multimodal telecollaborative environments for the linguistic and intercultural development of their students. Due in part to their inherent complexity, one-on-one desktop-videoconferencing contexts have not been widely explored. To this end, this study investigates if and how American students of French engaged in a telecollaborative exchange with a class of French students are able to develop their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) through online interaction and the completion of a collaborative task. Adopting a case study approach, the video-recorded sessions of three dyads are analyzed in conjunction with data from background surveys, autobiographies, journal entries, and email exchanges. To observe ICC development, we use a combination of a priori categories based on the « Attitude » component of Byram’s (1997) model and a set of emerging themes (Boyatzis, 1998) gathered from the data. This choice of methodology provides an in-depth picture of the participants’ production of Attitudes, that is, the willingness to show value to their partners or prioritize self over the course of the exchange. The results of the study indicate that one-on-one desktop-video conferencing can support the development of ICC and that task work bears upon the types and production of Attitudes. In addition, it is found that the production of Attitudes is not proficiency-dependent. The results also further suggest that there are differences in the way male and female participants engage in intercultural interaction.
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I am very thankful to the other members of my committee, Dr. Robert Summers and our Department Chair, Dr. Lotfi Sayahi, for reading my work and providing helpful suggestions and comments. Dr. Summers introduced me to the field of research on Sociocultural Theory which framed this study. In addition to setting up and running the language lab (CLIC), he provided me with valuable methodological guidance.

I am grateful for the valuable collaboration of my French colleague, Véronique Rahimi, during the past six years of regular telecollaborative exchanges. I am also indebted to the committed group of students who took part in the exchange in the fall of 2008. I truly appreciated the opportunity to witness their obvious enjoyment of this online learning experience.
Our lab technician, Frédéric Méni, was instrumental in helping me manage the video/audio files for the purpose of the analysis. His skilled technological support was essential during the online sessions.

The root of my interest in telecollaboration goes back to my own memorable class to class exchange in Germany as a French middle school student, which then fostered a passion for foreign languages leading me to England, Germany and finally the United States. Through this process I became a “sojourner” (Byram, 1997), and I am thankful to all the people whom I met on this path and who enriched my learning and teaching experiences.

For their unfailing patience and encouragement, I dedicate this work to my very supportive father and to my dear mother who would have loved to see it through its completion.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes an exploratory case study conducted in fall of 2008. A transatlantic class exchange was set up between a colleague’s class of first year, Masters’ level engineering students enrolled in an English conversation course at a French university, and my own class of sixth semester undergraduate students, primarily French majors, enrolled in a French conversation course at an American university. Following a pilot study completed the previous semester, our telecollaborative (Belz 2003) exchange was fully integrated into my French conversation course. Preparatory work and intercultural readings preceded the exchange of personal information between the students in both classes. The American students filled out an online background survey and were paired with French students according to their proficiency levels and topics of interest for task-related work (Nunan, 2004, O’Dowd and Waire, 2009). The two classes met online four times and three sessions were recorded per student. Through a process of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), three participants were selected for this study. In order to investigate whether one-on-one desktop-based telecollaborative exchanges leads to the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in foreign language learners, data from the three case studies were analyzed using a combination of a priori categories (Byram 1997) and categories from Boyatzis (1998) thematic approach. In addition to the visual/audio and written data collected from the recordings of their online sessions, students’ background surveys, autobiographies, emails and PowerPoint presentations as well as my researcher’s journal provided complementary sources of data that allowed for a thorough process of triangulation.
**Background of the Research**

The current study lies at the nexus of recent trends in foreign language educational theory and practice. On the heels of the implementation of new language policies and Foreign Language (FL) learning goals in Europe in the 1990s, American FL specialists slowly started to acknowledge the shortcomings of the most pervasive approach to integrating culture in FL courses. Foreign cultures were considered to be important parts of the curriculum, but they were introduced in class through sets of often disconnected topics that did not provide students the means to develop an open-mindedness toward or a critical understanding of cultural differences. This, in addition to the research exploring the interconnectivity of language and culture (Agar, 1994; Kramsch, 1993), the developments in the field of L2 pragmatics (Kasper and Rose, 2002), and the recognition that advanced FL speakers were not yet competent communicators, led researchers and practitioners to reassess FL curricular goals. These included redefining the main objective of FL teaching which was to produce learners who evidenced “native-speaker like” competence. The new objective was to train “intercultural speakers”, that is, speakers equipped with the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness (Byram, 1997) necessary to function in a foreign culture and in a foreign language. While in the ever-expanding multicultural and multilingual Europe, language policy makers and scholars were engaged in and developed new FLT guidelines and assessments (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR), and devised operational models of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), other avenues connected to the teaching of FL were being investigated in the United-States. In effect, the reorientation of FL teaching and learning was accompanied by two seemingly compatible developments: first, for many, a theoretical
reconceptualization of developmental and learning processes applied to the fields of FL and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and second, new technologies in the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and subsequently in Network-based Language Teaching, (NBLT) learning environments.

The current study adopts as its underlying theoretical framework the principles and main constructs of the Sociocultural Theory (SCT). SCT is a theory of the development of higher mental function, not of language acquisition but the significant role that language plays in it. Because it views learning as a process by which social interaction and cultural tool mediation lead to cognitive development, SCT lends itself to research on second language (L2) intercultural and technology-mediated development.

SCT originated in the works of Lev Semenovic Vygotsky (1987, 1986), a Russian psychologist, who within a span of ten years from 1924 to 1934, laid the foundation of a new theory of psychological development by proposing to conceptualize development as an intrinsically socially and culturally enabled process. His founding premise was that the psychological development of human beings occurred through the transformation of higher mental processes generated through the constant dialogical interaction, or what he called mediation of tools and that which the tools acted upon, the social and physical world, and the individual himself. The tools could be material (such as a computer, book etc.) or psychological (such as symbols, signs, art, numbers and language). Language is the main symbolic tool since it is the primary means through which an individual interacts with the world.

Tools are used to mediate one’s own mental processes, which ultimately become internalized as higher psychological functions such as “voluntary attention and memory,
planning, rational thinking, learning” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p. 18). This process, a core construct of the theory, is known as *internalization* which Vygotsky defined as “the internal reconstruction of an external operation” (1978, p. 56). As Lantolf explains, *internalization* involves the reconstruction in the inner, psychological plane, of socially mediated forms of goal-directed activities (2000, p. 13). When individuals-- for example children or language learners-- try to complete a task that they cannot accomplish on their own, they are first regulated by external objects, then with the guidance of a parent or a more expert individual, they are able to gain more control over this task. This stage of the developmental process is called *other-regulated*. In time, they learn to self-regulate and are able to complete the activity without requiring external mediation. This process is accompanied by specific uses of speech as a mediational tool. Besides the use of language as social mediational tool during the other-regulated phase, when running into a challenging activity, learners will often resort to a form of speech that is not other-oriented but self-directed, even in the presence of others. This is also referred to as *private speech* and often consists of partial utterances, questions and answers (Lantolf, 2000). This private speech functions as a tool that self-mediates and helps learners gain control over the activity. Then as the regulation process moves on and the cognitive process required by the activity is internalized, self-directed speech is not needed anymore and evolves into *inner speech*, which is not audible. Development is however not a guaranteed and even process. For example, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) provide an account of regression in L2 learners where learners had to revert to other-regulation in order to use forms (tenses) that had previously been self-regulated. Noting that regression is an integral part of a Vygotskyan view of mental process formation, the authors state
that “from a dialectical dynamic perspective, regression is not only a normal property of the genesis of mental systems, it is also an ordinary feature of the operation of these systems” (p. 631).

In addition to the core concepts of mediation, tool use, object-, other-, and self-regulation and internalization, Vygotsky proposed a new methodological approach, the ‘genetic’ (historical) approach, aimed at the study of developmental processes in four ‘genetic’ domains: the phylogenetic (evolution of humans), sociocultural (human culture), ontogenetic (life span) and microgenetic domain (moment by moment). While his own experimental work dealt with the observation of children’s developmental processes (ontogenetic domain), recent application of this method to the fields of SLA and L2 learning occurred in the moment-by-moment (microgenetic) observation of mediated developmental processes.

In 2009, Lantolf and Beckett conducted a review of research informed by SCT and found that in addition to the “general mediational framework”, most studies either made use of the theory as “a lens for interpreting data”, “an educational framework for promoting L2 development”, a focus on certain concepts of the theory (i.e. regulation, internalization, private speech etc.), and a focus on “explicating a concept or theoretical issue” (p. 459). In the current study, SCT is construed as an ‘educational framework’ for intercultural learning and that is why some of its central constructs (tools, mediation and regulation) will be referred to in the analysis since they are inherent to the learning process, but the ‘lens for interpreting data’ is essentially based on a model of ICC development (Byram, 1997).
As mentioned above, a second important development in the field of FL learning concerns the application of new technologies to CALL. Since the early 1990s, a growing body of research has been exploring how online technologies can be used to enhance and mediate language learning (see Thorne & Payne, 2005). Initially focused on linguistic outcomes and the use of asynchronous (that is time differed), usually written, media, interest then shifted to possible applications of networked media affordances in real-time -- beginning with the written mode and Instant Messaging (IM) and moving more recently to multimodal environments-- with the objective of understanding how these can foster the development of intercultural competence in FL learners. The sheer variety of combinations of online environments, course and task design and sequencing, and types of online exchanges, points to the many possible implementations in FL courses but also to the complexity and challenges of working with online mediated exchanges, since each option carries its own affordances and constraints for L2 and IC learning. A detailed review of the research pertaining to these online environments and some of the theoretical constructs underpinning their use is presented in the next chapter.

**Statement of the Problem**

While there is a growing consensus among FL researchers and foreign language policy makers\(^1\) about the critical need to integrate the development of ICC into FL curricula, little has been done in practice to do so in the American FL classroom. Given the nature of socially mediated learning and of this particular competence, the overall aim of which is to develop the ability to understand, relate to and interact with culturally different

\(^1\)See the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp) and the ACTFL 2010 Convention, “Developing Intercultural Competence: An Expanded Role for Foreign Language Educators” by Alvino Fantini (http://community.actfl.org/actfl_model/viewdocument?DocumentKey=1185c410-8df7-4ccd-a672-4b21c6edc305)
individuals, the selection of the learning environment and approach which together best foster ICC development is not obvious. Two essential questions are raised: what type of ICC principle and objectives, that is, ICC framework should be used and what learning environment can best support ICC development in an institutional setting? In the absence of face-to-face authentic interaction, practitioners and researchers have experimented with the implementation of various forms of telecollaboration in universities to provide learners with access to native speakers. Yet, while providing a valuable access and platform for authentic target language interaction, telecollaboration poses a plethora of technical and organizational challenges with respect to its practical implementation. Moreover, researchers have found that it does not automatically lead to ICC learning and has the potential to lead to failed communication and reinforcement of stereotypes (O’Dowd 2003). Many aspects of these telecollaborative exchanges can affect the way in which the participant engage in the exchange and synchronous, rather than asynchronous written telecollaborative environments have shown greater results in the way the participants use the technology to further identify or relate to their foreign partners, thereby increasing chances of developing factors of ICC (Li Jin & Erben, 2007). Yet, these modes are lacking verbal and visual cues and therefore are still far from mirroring authentic intercultural interaction.

To investigate ICC development, researchers have used several different frameworks and instruments for assessment (Byram’s ICC model, Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)). The issue then is the choice and implementation of a

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2 See Garrett-Rucks (2012) for a comparative study of IC development using both Byram’s ICC and Bennett’s DMIS models.
model of ICC best suited to frame online mediated and socially constructed exchanges for ICC development, and with the means to examine the results of the interactions to determine whether the chosen telecollaborative environment fostered ICC development or not.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if and how a multimodal environment in a telecollaborative exchange may contribute to the ICC development of intermediate-level American students of French and how the students make use of all the available modes of communication (audio/visual and written) to interact with their French partners and develop their ICC. Importantly, given the multifactorial aspect of intercultural communicative competence, I selected Byram’s 1997 model of ICC development as a framework for ICC development and a method of analysis to investigate the students’ interactions. I focus primarily on the students’ use of the “attitude” factor and its listed objectives as learning goals for this exploratory study. Byram’s model seems well suited for telecollaboration because it does not seek to quantify ICC development and concentrates on objectives and observable actions as evidence of development instead of on statements of learner self-evaluation to demonstrate learning. However, the learning objectives provided by Byram (1997) for the “attitude” factor were not elaborated with a telecollaborative environment in mind, since he referred only to “three broad and overlapping categories of location for acquiring intercultural competence: the classroom.”

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3 Explaining how students and teachers can work toward the various ICC objectives in a class setting, Byram (1997, p. 68) commented that “What a classroom cannot usually offer is the opportunity to develop the skills of interaction in real time.”
the pedagogically structured experience outside the classroom\(^4\), the independent experience\(^5\) (1997, p. 65), as possible learning environments in his work and how to work toward the objectives within each context. For this reason, I opted for a hybrid method of analysis to examine the data produced within this other learning environment. My method is comprised of Byram’s a priori list of attitudinal objectives as well as categories aligned with the goal of “relativizing self” and “valuing others” (Byram, 1997, p. 34), gathered through a process of emerging themes (Boyatzis 1998) based on the students’ recorded interactions. This methodological choice, which sets this study apart from others, was made in an effort to determine and clarify what may count as observable attributes of attitudes in this multimodal telecollaborative exchange and consequently to reflect more closely the actual mediated processes in the data with regard to the students’ ICC learning.

In order to minimize the possibility of failure while optimizing the potential for intercultural interaction between the students, I opted to use a multimodal environment that incorporates synchronous audio, visual and written modes. The intent was to provide students with an intercultural interactional experience as close as possible to authentic face-to-face interaction with native speakers and to provide them with multiple channels to support and facilitate the interaction. Further, this telecollaborative project was fully integrated into an intermediate-level French conversation course and therefore, access to

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\(^4\) According to Byram (1997, p. 68), “Fieldwork may be a short visit organized by a teacher for a group or learners, who continue to work as a class with their teacher. It can also be long-term period of residence organized for and by an individual learner who has limited or no contact with the teacher or other learners during the stay, but the fieldwork has nonetheless a prospective and retrospective relationship with the classroom.”

\(^5\) Byram explained that “independent learning is a factor in life-long learning and can be both subsequent to and simultaneous with classroom and fieldwork” (p. 69)
real-time audio/visual, paralinguistic and non-verbal cues to practice authentic
conversation was not only an objective for the course but was also in accordance with my
own epistemological stance on intercultural and interactional learning and development.

Based on previous research, steps were taken to minimize the risk of conversation
breakdown. One of the biggest pitfalls with this type of environment is the raised anxiety
level (see Kinginger, Gourvès-Hayward & Simpson, 1999) among the participants,
especially as the beginning of the exchange. To address this issue, I prepared the students
for the initial stage of the online exchange during the in-class preparatory work and
created a simple introductory task for the first session. In addition, the students had
exchanged personal information and thus had a sense of who their partner was. In
addition to the online recorded sessions, several other sources of data collection
(students’ background surveys, autobiographies, emails and PowerPoint presentations as
well as my researcher’s journal), were employed in order to triangulate data and
strengthen the case study analyses.

**Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to our understanding of the affordances of telecollaborative
environments for ICC learning and development in several unique ways. While other
researchers have, sometimes anecdotaly, looked at the production of “attitudes” either
alone or with all the other components of the ICC model in different telecollaborative
contexts and technological environments (O’Dowd, 2003; Vogt, 2006; Belz, 2003;
Audras and Chanier, 2008; Fuchs, 2007, Müller-Hartmann, 2006), this study provides
insight into the production of “attitudes” of ICC in the less investigated types of
intercultural mediations enabled in the one-on-one desktop videoconferencing
environment. O’Dowd (2006) provided a review of the limited literature in both one-on-one and group-based videoconferencing and while he recognizes that “the contribution of visual images to online communication and the immediacy of “live” face-to-face interaction seem to offer a much more authentic and personal side to long-distance telecollaboration” (pp. 92-93), he also expressed skepticism when he added that “it remains unclear, however, if videoconferencing can make a particular contribution to intercultural telecollaboration that other communication tools such as e-mail or chat cannot” (p. 94). Further, O’Dowd (2006) commented in the conclusion to his study that “the immediacy of the medium in conjunction with the visual cues meant that students were often unable to avoid or ignore awkward subjects and this, in turn, gave rise to misunderstandings and moments of tension between the two groups” (p. 116). While he chose to use a group-based form of videoconferencing, tensions were also likely to arise in the one-on-one format adopted in the current study. However, we do not share O’Dowd’s negative interpretation of tension in real time intercultural interaction. Rather, it is our view that tensions and miscommunications are part of natural conversation between speakers of the same language and that in the case of Native Speaker (NS) and Non-Native Speaker (NNS) real time interactions, these are normal, if more common occurrences, and should be perceived as valuable learning moments for FL learners. One benefit of this study is that it allows us to observe at a micro level the types of tensions and misunderstandings that can arise, whether and how these might affect the production of “attitudes” and how students choose to handle them through the mediational means available in this environment. Together, the use of multiple data collection sources and especially the audio/video recordings, the case study approach and analysis over multiple
sessions, and the adapted method of analysis of instances of ICC (i.e. attitudes) provide for a comprehensive and unique insight into the interplay of the mediated environment and the attitudes, behaviors, and motives of the participants.

**Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following overarching research question, that is, whether one-on-one desktop-based telecollaborative exchanges leads to the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence in foreign language learners. To this end, five sub-questions have been selected:

1. Do students engaged in a videoconference-based telecollaborative exchange relativize themselves and value others (Byram’s 1997 attitude factor)?
2. Does their use of attitudes change over the course of multiple telecollaborative sessions?
3. How does the production of attitudes differ from student to student?
4. Does language proficiency play a role in the production of attitudes?
5. What are the implications of the answers to these questions for the use of telecollaboration (desktop-videoconferencing) in FL teaching?

Question one aims to observe whether the chosen multimodal and task-based learning environment leads to the production or lack of production of instances attitudes based on Byram’s 1997 model, by the selected participants. Since this research project is integrated in a semester course and thus allows for several online synchronous meetings, the second question investigates whether the production of attitudes increases, decreases or whether the types of attitudes vary over the course of these meetings. Question three calls for a
cross-comparison of the production of attitudes among the participants and question four enquires whether the production of instances or types of instances of the attitude component of ICC is proficiency-dependent, again through a process of cross-comparative analyses. Finally, the last sub-question connects the answers and findings to the previous questions, that is, the learning affordances and constraints of the selected telecollaborative learning context, to possible applications and recommendations for future research.

Limitations

In this section, I wish to comment on the limitation I purposefully imposed on this study with respect to the actual objective of the research. Although there are several components to the model of ICC adopted, I chose to investigate solely the production of “attitudes” for several reasons. First, in addition to being an integral part of the model, “attitudes” are described also as the “pre-condition for successful intercultural interaction” (1997, p. 34) by the author and therefore it may be that instances of “attitudes” are more likely to be observed than instances of other factors in the case of a first exchange. Second, working with a group of students who had little to no experience with intercultural communication, no experience with online tellecollaborative exchanges or with the use of the primarily synchronous multimodal platform, there were already many variables at play, making this an especially challenging learning environment to work with. Third, there were ample sources of data to transcribe, verify, code and/or examine over the course of the analysis, with respect to the production of “attitudes” and the affordances of the chosen telecollaborative environment alone. It was thus judged
beneficial for the purpose of an in-depth analysis, to limit the number of ICC components under investigation and consequently the scope of the study.

**Summary and Organization of the Study**

This introductory chapter presented the general outline of the present study and an overview of the theoretical constructs and current trends that led to its development. Subsequent sections introduced and discussed the questions and issues investigated in this study and clarified in what way it contributes to the body of research already available. Next, the overarching research question and subsequent sub-questions were presented and finally the limitations pertaining to the chosen qualitative approach. The next chapter (2), the literature review, presents a more in depth contextualization and description of the theory and concepts employed in this study as well as a thorough discussion of recent publications in the field in order to lay the ground for the methodological choices presented in chapter 3. The methodology chapter (3) introduces the reader to the course and the selected technology, structure and content of the transatlantic telecollaborative exchange as well as to the participant sampling process. This chapter also provides a detailed explanation of the relevant data collection methods and the method of analysis. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the case analyses of the three selected participants respectively and Chapter (7) provides answers to the research questions through a comprehensive discussion of the findings. The concluding chapter (8) sums up the findings, addresses the limitations of the study, and suggests avenues for future research.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Indeed, it is the emphasis on language as a resource for building interpersonal relationships of significance, and not a focus on ‘language’ in the abstract sense of units within a linguistic system or prescriptivist representations of grammar, that is perhaps the most important single quality that differentiates online intercultural exchanges from other approaches to L2 classroom pedagogy. (Thorne, 2010, p. 141)

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, the affordances of new technology mediated environments in a Vygotskyan sense have provided researchers with unique venues for the study of the development of intercultural competence in foreign language learners. Concurrently, both proponents of a sociocultural view of FL learning such as Thorne (2006), and culture specialists such as Risager (2007) have been able to advocate for a reorientation of FL teaching practices toward intercultural objectives that are in line with language needs in the face of an increasingly globalized world and with practices favored by the digital natives\(^6\) that will inhabit it. This paradigm is grounded in a conception of a FL learner as a potential intercultural speaker and favors FL practices that foster active intercultural interaction. In the absence of full cultural immersion, telecollaboration, a form of networked-based language teaching (NBLT), is particularly well suited for this purpose. However, devising and implementing internet-mediated class to class exchanges has not been a seamless process. In this chapter, I will present the origins of the concepts of

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\(^6\) Term used by Prensky (2001), to refer to students, who have grown with digital technology and “are all ‘native speakers’ of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet”.
intercultural speaker and intercultural communicative competence. I will also examine how ICC development has thus far been researched through the lens of networked-based experimental designs, specifically by way of an overview of telecollaborative formats. A detailed analysis and discussion of the literature on ICC-based telecollaborative projects will clarify the current status, orientations and limitations of this line of inquiry. This review will provide the basis for the methodological choices described and discussed in chapter 3.

A New Objective for FL Teaching: Intercultural Communicative Competence Development

In a 2002 publication aimed at FL teachers, Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey listed the following objectives for “developing the intercultural dimension” in FL teaching:

(…) to give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience. (p. 10)

These goals are vastly different from those that underpin the traditional view of culture in FL teaching which focuses on the sole transmission of culture-specific information, such as school systems, food traditions, transportation, arts, political institutions, history, etc. They were drawn by field specialists for the Language Policy Division\(^7\) of the Council of Europe within the context of a European mandate to adapt the goals of FL teaching to the evolving needs of foreign language learners in Europe. This entity has been actively

\(^7\) See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/historique_EN.asp
involved in setting uniform language teaching guidelines and encouraging language teaching innovations in Europe since the late 1950s.

The impetus for this FL learning reorientation can therefore be understood within the context of the creation and evolution of a European community formed under the Council of Europe with the need to address FL policies across borders. However, the idea of reconceptualizing the teaching and learning of FL culture and learning and integrating intercultural development in the FL curricula was also brought to the fore by a combination of other factors: an awareness of students’ inability to adequately communicate with native speakers despite years of FL training, research developments in the fields of interlanguage pragmatics (Rose and Kasper), linguistic anthropology (Agar), SLA and culture (Kramsch), and culture pedagogy (Risager) and the emergence of increased access to new technology, particularly web-based technology. In fact, the concept of intercultural competence finds its roots in the 1990’s paradigmatic shift in foreign language learning and teaching, also termed ‘the intercultural turn’⁸. Scholars such as Sercu (2005) have considered this shift to be a change in perspective, from a national to an international, and from an intra-cultural to an intercultural stance, which underlines its scope and ramifications for national educational policies, research, institutions and classroom implementations.

More specifically, Intercultural Competence emerged in research following scholars’ recognition of the intrinsic connection between language and culture, and thus the necessity to go beyond the treatment of culture as a separate component in FL teaching. In 1993, Kramsch proposed to “redraw the boundaries of foreign language

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⁸ Term used by Thorne, in reference to the use of language in L2 education to build meaningful interpersonal relationships, particularly via the use of technology. (Telecollaboration 2.0, 2010).
study” and adopt “cultural context” at its core (p. 13, in italics in the text). Her call was for a pedagogy in which “learners can use the system for their own purposes, to create a culture of the third kind in which they can express their own meanings without being hostage to the meanings of either their own or the target speech communities” (pp. 13-14). This departure from the mainstream enabled her to introduce the now well-known concept of ‘third place’, a term she defined as a place “that grows in the interstices between the cultures the learner grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to” (p. 236). The rejection of the native-speaker’s norm as a target for FL learning achievement helped lead scholars toward a reconceptualization of the role of a FL learner.

In this vein, Byram and Zarate (1994) first proposed the term of ‘intercultural speaker’, (intermédiaire culturel in the original text) as a replacement for the model of the NS, while working on a project on Définitions, objectifs et évaluation de la compétence socioculturelle for the Council of Europe. They argued that the current reference model used in Europe to evaluate different Threshold levels (i.e. ‘levels of attainment’ of the Common European Framework of Reference published in 20019) was based on the native speaker’s norm and that it was not realistic to expect FL learners to reach this goal particularly with regards to sociocultural competence. They proposed to change the reference model and elaborate a new one based on the FL competence expected from a potential ‘intercultural speaker’ rather than a potential NS. In this model, FL learners would be evaluated according to the level of proficiency they had achieved as ‘intercultural speakers’ and not according to their native-like mastery of the language.

9 See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre_EN.asp?
In arguing for such a change, they were shifting the focus on linguistic competence to a focus on intercultural learning. Under the heading of objectives and types of socio-cultural competence, they then proposed a model of four objectives or competences including: *savoir-être* (attitudes and values), *savoir-apprendre*, *savoirs* (knowledge/knowing that) and *savoir-faire* (skills/knowing how) (p.12). Thus their quest to define socio-cultural competence in order to set up guidelines for the Language Policy Division seems to have redirected them toward an intercultural perspective (Risager, 2007) and to the proposal of ‘intercultural (sociocultural) competence’, a new FLT goal meeting the evolving geo-political and educational needs in Europe.

Byram and Zarate’s publication for the Council of Europe laid the foundation for Byram’s own framework of ICC. In *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Competence*, an influential monograph published in 1997, Byram reorganized and further elaborated on the four elements. He proposed a model of ICC\(^\text{11}\) comprised of five components or ‘factors’.

**Figure 1.** Factors in Intercultural Communication (Byram, 1997, p. 34)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interpret and relate <em>(savoir comprendre)</em></td>
<td>political education critical cultural awareness <em>(savoir s’engager)</em></td>
<td>relativising self valuing other <em>(savoir être)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) Although this work was done in 1994 (Risager, 2007), it is found in the Council of Europe’s 1997 publication. In his 1997 monograph, Byram acknowledged that his “Factors in intercultural communication” (p. 34), were strongly influenced by Byram & Zarate’s 1994 work.

\(^{11}\) ICC and IC: Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram 1997) refers to the qualities (knowledge, skills and attitudes) required of an intercultural speaker to function in a foreign culture and in a foreign language. Byram adds that he refers to IC (Intercultural Competence) when he wishes to emphasize the non-linguistic aspects of attitudes, skills and knowledge of ICC (p. 49.)

\(^{12}\) Byram adds in a note that his model “conserves the elegance of French terminology in which knowledge, skills and attitudes can be described as different *savoirs.*” (1997, p. 55)
As unveiled in 1997 and represented in this model, Byram’s view on foreign language learning and teaching is centered on the goals of understanding otherness, via a process of decentering\(^\text{13}\), and reconceptualizing communication not as a mere exchange of information but as a means to develop and keep relationships, which necessarily involves understanding the other’s perspective (1997, p. 3).

To illustrate and clarify these points, he presented the dichotomy of the *sojourner* and the *tourist* in the introduction to his framework: the *tourist* is described as a traveler who seeks to enrich his knowledge and personal experiences through his travels and encounters but without engaging in any reconceptualization of his own beliefs and habits. On the other hand, the *sojourner* will affect the culture he is in and be affected by his experiences which ultimately will lead him to question and alter his own behavior, and unconscious values and belief system (Byram, pp. 1-2). The *sojourner* becomes thus an intercultural speaker, he has acquired the knowledge, skills and abilities required to develop intercultural competence.

These skills or ‘savoir’ are presented in Byram’s model, which he defined as:

\[
(\ldots) \text{a description of the components which contribute to the ability to understand and relate to people from other countries, and is intended to be a comprehensive and rich description of what is required in the most complex and also the most favourable circumstances of intercultural communication. (p. 5)}
\]

\(^{13}\) An ability that Byram describes as taking up the other’s perspective (1997, pp. 3, 42)
For each one of the five components briefly presented below, the author gave a more refined definition with a list of specific objectives, which makes his model a very detailed and explicit one, and therefore appealing to IC researchers.

- **Attitudes:** often cited as the first component primarily because it is both a prerequisite of IC development and one of the abilities to master to become an intercultural speaker, developing *attitudes* towards people requires “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (p. 50). This essential component and its objectives will be presented in greater detail in the next chapter since this part of the model will be used as a method to investigate the participants’ mediated exchanges and to seek answers to the research questions.

- **Knowledge:** this component entails “knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interactions” (p. 51).

- **Skills of interpreting and relating:** the author defines this component as an “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own” (p.52).

- **Skills of discovery and interaction:** this refers to the “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (P. 52)."
- **Critical cultural awareness/political education**: this component targets “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (p. 53).

In spite of the seemingly unconnected way Byram presented these factors in his own chart, they are in reality interrelated. In particular, he notes how the attitude factor is interconnected with the others (pp. 34-35): since, for example, a lack of curiosity and openness may hamper the skills involved in discovery and real-time interaction, or not questioning one’s values and valuing others may lead to biased interpretation of other cultural documents or events. Byram’s work is also of interest because it is not limited to a presentation of these components. In addition, he proposed sets of objectives for institutional curricular use, with specific illustrations of what each objective might look like, and recommended ways of assessing them. This model, or part of it, serves as a method of inquiry or theoretical foundation for a number of ICC-based research projects that I will discuss in detail later in this chapter.

Today, reorienting FLT towards ICC development, as Byram advocates, entails a change of curriculum and adapted forms of instruction and assessment. This means, aside from actual immersion experiences, using new technology to provide sustained access to the target speakers’ *languacultures*\(^\text{15}\) and devising dialogic-based forms of instruction in a manner conducive to ICC development. Since the mid-1990s, instruction focused on the collaborative work of students located in distant geographical places has been facilitated by the increased access to the internet. Even though it has now been adapted by some

\(^{15}\) In 1994 Agar, a linguistic anthropologist coined the term *languaculture* to show the intrinsic indissociable nature of language and culture (p. 60). Each individual speaker has his/her own *languaculture* and misunderstandings may arise when two *languacultures* come into contact, particularly in intercultural communication.
researchers and practitioners to new technology-mediated environments, class to class exchange is not a new pedagogical practice. The underlying concept finds its source in Celestin Freinet’s 1920s pedagogy.

The Origins of Class to Class Exchanges: Interscholastic Exchanges

Celestin Freinet, a French school teacher critical of the traditional schooling methods used in the 1920s, developed an approach to teaching known as the Freinet pedagogy. Via the use of such techniques as cooperative (group projects, creation of a school newspaper), experiential and inquiry-grounded learning (field trips and research), that placed the focus on the children’s own learning interests and lives, Freinet put the child at the center of the learning process. His teaching principles are still advocated today by the ‘Institut Coopératif de l’Ecole Moderne’ (ICEM), a school founded in 1947. Freinet is one of the early proponents of the benefits of ‘Interscholastic Exchanges’, a form of class to class exchange based on meaningful projects meant to help students improve their writing skills while sharing information about themselves, their everyday life, and the life of their community. In a historical study of Freinet’s work, Victor Acker comments that because of his in-class use of communicative tools to work on written language skills and to encourage a desire for the acquisition of knowledge, “Freinet was the real father of today’s online teaching” (Acker, 2007, p. 85). His practices, which were not originally linked to FL learning, were not only used by French educators but were also adopted by proponents of his teaching philosophy worldwide. One cannot help but

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16 See [http://freinet.org](http://freinet.org)

17 Acker (2007) notes that Freinet’ concept of Interscholastic Exchanges was influenced by works and ideas from three other educators: Ferdinand Buisson (a former Minister of Education), Paul Robin (an orphanage director) and Ovide Decroly (a physician and psychiatrist who founded a school and developed his own pedagogical program around children’s needs and interests) (pp.23-30).
notice how some of his pedagogical tenets still coincide with current pedagogical practices.

Today, an update of Freinet’s practice of interscholastic exchanges, is well embedded in the French secondary educational system in the context of foreign language classes. In fact, class to class exchanges or twinnings are common practice throughout Western Europe. Many cities have at least one twin city and one strand of the exchanges supported by these cultural partnerships is educational. In France, middle school foreign language classes organize class exchanges with partner class in other European countries. It is an institutionally organized system, which provides the students with unparalleled opportunities to practice their language skills in a meaningful way but also to experience active and hands-on culture learning as they are usually hosted by their “twin” families and attend courses with their exchange partners in the host schools.

In the USA, on the other hand, twinning is practiced sporadically, usually as the result of a personal connection between foreign language teachers, rather than as the result of a larger, institutionalized partnership between cities. The limited number of high schools who encourage this form of exchange is dwindling in light of severe funding problems, and of safety concerns for the students. Those schools that have invested in well-equipped language or computer labs, allow access to foreign websites, and can procure necessary parental approvals, do have more options if they wish to support intercultural practices, but still have to establish appropriate online partnerships and may face practical issues with scheduling for example. For these reasons, web-based exchanges are rarely employed at the secondary school level. Similarly, their use at the
university level relies mainly on the skills and interests of a few instructors well versed in available technological platforms for these exchanges.

In Europe, technological innovations have expanded the form of basic twinnings by providing a new venue for intercultural interaction with the development of online-based twinnings, which allow web-based partner class exchanges (i.e. e-Twinnings). Students and instructors have thus the options of e-Twinning, such as the ‘eTwinning program’\textsuperscript{18}, which is a part of the European educational Comenius program, as well as mixed twinning formats such as the ‘Franco-German Tele-Tandem projects’\textsuperscript{19} which lead ultimately to actual physical class exchanges, and a host of other web-based types of exchanges, which I will further detail and discuss in the next section.

**A Potential Reconceptualization of CALL\textsuperscript{20}: Network-based Language Teaching and Telecollaboration for ICC Purposes**

Research on ICC development in FL learners has largely benefited from innovations in the fields of networked-based language teaching, a domain considered to be a form of CALL, albeit with a different pedagogical orientation. In 2000, Warschauer and Kern described CALL as “traditionally (...) associated with self-contained, programmed applications such as tutorials, drills, simulations, instructional games, tests and so on” whereas “NBLT represents a new and different side of CALL, where human-

\textsuperscript{18} See http://www.etwinning.fr

\textsuperscript{19} See http://www.tele-tandem.org/fr/

\textsuperscript{20} In a discussion of the connection between network-based learning and CALL, Chapelle (in Warschauer & Kern, 2000) concluded that “NBLT represents an expansion rather than a reconceptualization of CALL (p. 222). I would argue however that the learning objectives, the SCT theoretical framework and methodology adopted in this particular study and other telecollaborative environments do constitute a reconceptualization of the traditional practices of CALL.
to-human communication is the focus” (p. 1). Specialists in educational technology have defined NBLT as:

axis(…) the pedagogical use of computers connected in either local or global networks allowing one-to-one, one to many, and many-to-many communication. NBLT research explores what happens when learners are brought together with text, media, and other speakers of the language in computer-mediated contexts of interaction” (Kern, Ware, and Warschauer, 2008, p. 281).

NBLT has therefore widened the potential for FL practices, and particularly the mediated ones afforded by the latest generations of online technological tools. In an interesting review of networked technology use in the classroom, Thorne and Payne (2005) comment on the second generation of synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) tools, with the advent of instant messaging technology sometimes supplemented with audio and video devices, MOOs and other online systems. What is considered to be the first generation was mostly email-based, asynchronous, and thus privileged the written word in CMC-supported research. The first studies were language-oriented and focused on the amount and structure of target language use in face-to-face student discussions versus their output in CMC-facilitated written communication. Results of this research pointed toward the linguistic benefits (in amount of output and range of structures used) afforded by the use of technology. However, Thorne and Payne (2005) warned that close attention should be paid to all the “key pedagogical” aspects and “variables” (p. 374) involved in such cross-modal experiments in future research, implying that though these were valuable experiments, the research findings were not systematically generalizable when dealing with different modalities.
In truth, while NBLT offers new and interesting venues to explore FL learning, the sheer range of experimental set-ups available including any combination of technological tool use, task design, institutional contextual factors and actors (students, instructors/researchers), makes it a more complex environment to manipulate.

NBLT has thus, since the 1990’s, served as an umbrella term for a plethora of research projects supported by a wide range of networked technological formats. These projects have been framed with several research objectives: first, SLA-based experiments have researched the potential for FL learning (here linguistic competence) afforded by technology-mediated student interaction. Second, some studies have looked at ways in which networked-technologies foster cultural learning and ICC development. And third, a few researchers have examined medium effects on student language learning, on the premise that online communication involves different discourse features than face-to-face interaction. The latter two groups of studies follow a sociocultural or a sociocognitive view of FL development (Kern, Ware and Waschauer, 2008), and share a conception of NTLB as an environment providing students with venues in which new forms of socialization and mediated language learning are combined.

**Telecollaboration: an Institutional Digital Mediating Environment for the Development of Linguistic and Intercultural Competence**

Upon looking at the research on ICC development and medium effect on FL learners, one finds that there are differing views on how the concept of telecollaboration itself should be defined. On the one hand, Belz (2003) described telecollaboration as involving “the use of Internet communication tools by internationally dispersed students of language in institutionalized settings in order to promote the development of (a) foreign language (FL) linguistic competence and (b) intercultural competence” (p. 68).
On the other hand, in *Telecollaboration 2.0*, a recent publication edited by Sarah Guth and Francesca Helm, the editors propose a wider concept of telecollaboration encompassing additional and less traditional forms of networked-based exchanges, including tandems (Jane Woodin, 2001), asymmetrical exchanges (student/tutor or teacher trainee, e.g. ‘Le français en première ligne’\(^{21}\), Mangenot & Zourou, 2007), interactions with heritage speakers, and multilateral exchanges (with more than two groups of speakers, e.g. ‘The Tridem Project’ by Hauck and Lewis, 2007) which can also be monolingual or multilingual (2010, p. 15). The authors’ wish to enlarge the concept is in line with their goal of exploring newer forms of networked-based language interaction and new forms of ‘online literacies’, as they present their volume as “an enhancement of the practice of telecollaboration” (p.21). But most of the studies adopting these other formats, although involving valuable network-based set ups and objectives, belong to the wider concept of NBLT. While not taking away from the validity of exploring new online venues, the field is burgeoning with so much research on hybrid forms of online exchanges that this study will restrict itself to pursuing the notion of telecollaboration in the narrower sense. Another reason for this choice of definition and focus is that due to their institutional context, telecollaborative projects face specific types of challenges and advantages that are unique to this format and must be taken into account during the devising, planning and implementation phases.

In this context of online class-to-class exchanges for the purpose of FL linguistic and intercultural competence development, telecollaboration-focused research still involves a wide array of formats, which one could describe along three main axes:

\(^{21}\)See [http://w3.u-grenoble3.fr/fle-1-ligne/](http://w3.u-grenoble3.fr/fle-1-ligne/)
technological platform use (including mode(s) of communication), task(s) design and sequencing, and objectives.

**First axis: telecollaborative technological platforms**

The technological platform guides in part the structure of the exchange and the type of discourse used. As we have seen, logistic constraints led first to the use of the written format, mostly asynchronously with the exchange of emails, a format that is still abundantly used in telecollaboration. Synchronous environments, on the other hand, have the benefit of allowing real-time communication with native speakers, a long-time goal of FL teaching. Most studies, in fact, employ modes of communication that are divided into synchronous and asynchronous categories and written or audio/visual environments.

The following is an overview of online environments used in telecollaboration. It is meant to provide some clarification of the different venues available but does not provide an exhaustive list because there are a wide range of combinations possible particularly in multimodal spaces. These can sometimes combine pair and group, written and audio/oral/visual, asynchronous and synchronous use.

Table 1

*Telecollaborative Environments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Asynchronous</strong></th>
<th><strong>Synchronous</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written</strong></td>
<td>Email, post, blog, website</td>
<td>Wiki, website</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IM chat</td>
<td>MOO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral/aural</strong></td>
<td>Audio podcast</td>
<td>Voice chat</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visual/aural/oral</strong></td>
<td>Video podcast</td>
<td>Desktop Videoconference (DVC)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The asynchronous written mode of communication carries its own affordances and purposes. As Hauck and Lewis (2007) explain, referring in part to the use of blog and wikis, “asynchronous virtual spaces” (pp. 255-256) allow the students to work at their own pace, give them more time to process and reflect on their work when engaged in collaborative projects, are easier to use for students with different skill levels and do not require intensive sequencing and scheduling from the teachers (p.256).

Although asynchronous technological platforms set ups are less stress-inducing for the students, they can also lead to failed telecollaborative exchanges. For example, in Belz’s ICC email-based study (2003), German and American students’ misunderstandings of each other’s culturally-embedded discursive patterns led to conversation breakdowns. In her analysis of the reasons for the breakdown, Belz notes that “Crucially, the text-only medium of e-mail did not allow them [the students] access to additional non-verbal cues that might have aided them in the identification and interpretation of these same interactional conventions” (p. 90). Thus, aside from facing intercultural differences in use of discourses and registers, this mode also lacks all the visual, audio and/or oral cues, and repair strategies used in synchronous interaction.

With the advent of IM technology, researchers/practitioners started conducting studies of synchronous online chat which helped reveal discursive patterns and conventions specific to this medium. Depending on the structure of the task design, it is common in telecollaborative synchronous formats for students to start exchanging via

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multimodal</th>
<th>Lyceum’s use of blog</th>
<th>EVO* (Caltech), Skype Lyceum* (Open University)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*indicates specific online infrastructures
email in an initial introductory phase and then to move on to synchronous task-based work via chat or videoconferencing. Two well-known studies, Kinginger (1998) and Kinginger, Gourvès-Hayward & Simpson (1999), designed to develop student’s cross-cultural awareness, used group videoconferencing. In the first study, Kinginger set out to observe the discourse challenges faced by American FL learners when interacting with French native speakers. Her methodology included a mix of emailing, web page design and two group videoconferencing sessions set up to allow for collaborative task discussion and course material analysis. The study focused largely on the videoconferencing part of the exchange. The logistic constraint imposed by the videoconference set up affected the quality of the discussion (due in part to a time lag) and prompted the researcher to modify the planned task and have students write questions down and read them aloud. In addition, the face-to-face format appeared to have caused classroom anxiety among the American students who were not prepared to adjust to the structure and discourse features typical of spoken French employed by the native speakers. The author concluded by stressing the importance of developing students’ awareness of authentic language use (p. 511). It also appears that the task-design added to the stress of a first encounter with authentic language use and the group set up was not matching the students’ sociocultural and linguistic skills. This also speaks to the importance of pre-task work, and overall student preparation, whether through a mock trial, discussions, simulations etc. especially for real time exchanges. The choice of a synchronous format, which adds stress to the interaction because of the immediacy of the exchange, whether verbal or written, “puts the relevance [of the students’ learning] to the test in dynamic, immediate ways (Kinginger, 1998, p. 510). In a description of online
instructional environments, Meskill and Anthony (2010) found “oral synchronous environments” to be the “most robust” but also “the most demanding environment for instructors and students, as attention is simultaneously drawn to real-time speech, real-time visual information and synchronous written messages” (p. 10).

Lina Lee (2007) was able to take better advantage of the richness of videoconferencing in a short study involving desktop videoconferencing (DVC), a one-on-one audio/visual platform in which students’ feedback tells of a different interactive experience. She did not set up a typical class to class exchange but paired FL students of Spanish with NS of Spanish from an on campus ESL program and the community. The DVC exchange was an integral part of the course and the dyads engaged in a set of structured tasks. In addition, students kept a journal and wrote reflection entries each week. They were also interviewed individually by the instructor at the end of the project. The author commented that “the majority of the students enjoyed the experience and they were thrilled with the real time oral and visual interaction with the expert speakers” (p. 284). She did nonetheless report that the linguistically weaker students did not feel at ease directly interacting with native speakers and some encountered difficulties with listening comprehension. Additionally, some students reportedly did not feel like this set-up equated with direct face-to-face interaction, rather it was less personal because they did not have a full view of their conversational partners (p. 284). This point addresses the misleading idea that such dyadic audio/visual formats could be fully comparable to face to face interaction. NBLT environments should in fact not be construed as substitutes for real time interaction; they do nevertheless provide venues for authentic networked
intercultural conversation while answering to rules and functions that are specific to these mediums (see Thorne, 2000).

In recent years, telecollaborative specialists have been increasingly interested in multimodal-based research. Within a given study, several modes of communication may be employed sequentially (e.g. Kinginger’s 1998), or researchers may opt to use a single multimodal platform such as *Lyceum*. Defined as an “Internet-based audio-graphic tuition environment (…), which provides multiple synchronous audio channels as well as synchronous text chat and several shared graphical interfaces” (2008, p. 87), Hauck and Youngs used *Lyceum* to examine the effect of multimodal environments on task design and learner interaction. In their study, British and American students of French were put in groups with French NS to work on three synchronous audio and text chat-based tasks. In groups, they used blogs to get to know each other, discuss tasks and reflect on their experience. They were also encouraged to use the full range of communication modes available within *Lyceum*. The researchers’ overall objective which guided the choice of tasks was to support student interaction to facilitate the development of their ICC. Although they referred to Byram’s (1997) ICC model, they did not appear to use it themselves since there was no mention of the students’ knowledge, skills and attitude components in the reported findings. Nonetheless, the authors did make a few practical recommendations and comments. They considered that, while each mode provided for varying opportunities of meaning making, the written formats, especially the blogs, were favored by the students over the oral/aural synchronous mode and that smaller group work was more conducive to successful collaboration than full group sessions. They stressed that general findings cannot be transferred from one mode to another and that the
students’ multimodal communicative competence is an important factor affecting the outcome of the exchange. Additionally, the authors commented that “(…) unless there are well-constructed tasks, simply participating in a synchronous oral/aural exchange does not necessarily lead to effective and motivated language and intercultural learning” (pp. 104-105). This speaks to the paramount importance of the students’ media literacy and to careful task design in telecollaborative studies.

Second axis: task design and sequencing in telecollaboration

Since the late 80s, research on task-based language teaching (TBLT) has dealt with how to best characterize tasks, how to design them, and how to integrate them in a communicative curriculum designed for a traditional FL classroom. Although there is no consensus about a single way to define tasks, they may be described as being process-oriented, involving “a beginning, a middle and an end” (Nunan, 2004, p. 4), and are usually inscribed within a larger curriculum, including planning, sequencing and assessment. In addition, they support a multitude of combinations of variables (focus on specific skills, number of learners involved, one-way, two-way, length…) and are in nature flexible enough to fit the designer’s specific assumptions about language learning. This has made them a very popular construct among researchers and practitioners both. As Levy and Stockwell (2006) note, “The task construct is frequently used as a means of converting a language teaching approach, or a theory of language learning, into a practical activity for students to complete” (p.15).

Tasks in effect adapt well to the concept of telecollaborative learning and are clearly favored by NBLT experts who early on recognized that it was not enough to put FL students into contact with native speakers, they also needed a specific learning
agenda. In fact, these experts had to design tasks adapted to particular technological web-based environments (as different from the traditional in-class face-to-face environment), and take into account students’ proficiency level, technological literacy, and overall learning goals. Aside from the change in modes of communication, another important element, which sets telecollaborative task design apart, is that there are two designers, two groups of students, two different institutions and two course agendas involved in this process. Within this challenging context, several task-based formats have been implemented in an attempt to foster intercultural learning among exchange students. One, which was used in the Kinginger (1998) study and served as a base for others (Müller-Hartmann, 2000), is the use of parallel texts, where plays, novels, fairytales and even films from the two cultures are selected in order to allow for the discussion, and comparison of culturally embedded themes and variations. Another commonly used format, especially with synchronous tools, is the co-construction of websites or blogs through the discussion of mutually agreed-upon topics from everyday life. But perhaps the most developed format which has been successfully implemented is the Cultura project, a remarkable enterprise that began as an experiment in 1997 that was undertaken by a team of researchers at MIT (Furstenberg, Levet and Waryn) and focused on intercultural class exchanges between French and American students. The project has now largely been expanded to encompass other bilateral exchanges, while maintaining the complex infrastructure of online questionnaires, the comparison of FL films and their American remakes, of foreign and American print media documents and of works by French and American authors. All of these materials are carefully scrutinized for similarities and differences in order to generate discussions of “hidden” cultural
assumptions and differences. The objective is to uncover the values, beliefs and attitudes of the partner class’ culture. What also differentiates this structure from other ICC-focused ones is that it is based on the exploration of the target culture with the use of the target language only as a resource for cultural understanding. Participants use written asynchronous formats to exchange in their native language, the use of L2 is mostly limited to feedback, and in-class interaction. Bauer, deBenedette, Furstenberg, Levet and Waryn (2006, p. 33), justified this choice by citing failed telecollaborative CMC-based exchanges such as Belz 2003, and Kern and Warschauer’s 2000 caution that the use of technological tools does not automatically lead to increased learning (2006, p. 2).

Cultura’s heavy preparatory work and careful guidance seems to support the elusive uncovering of the ‘invisible’ beliefs, values and attitudes of the target culture but without a more constant use of the target language by the student in specific sociocultural contexts, one wonders whether they can reach the objective of the ‘sojourner’ as described in Byram (1997). The authors seem to think so as they conclude (2006, p. 57) that “(…) Cultura offers a way for students in a language/culture class to work at becoming what Byram calls ‘truly intercultural learners’” (1998, p. 61, as cited by Bauer & al.). However, they do not use Byram’s model nor provide a clearly defined assessment of the students’ intercultural competence to support this claim.

In sum, there is a variety of task designs used in ICC-based telecollaboration. O’Dowd and Waire (2009) reviewed existing task-based telecollaborative studies and identified three overarching categories of tasks: information exchange tasks, comparison and analysis tasks, and collaborative tasks. These tasks are embedded in the courses to various degrees and are often specific to the chosen or accessible mode(s) of
communication. When selecting a format, whether the use of parallel texts (comparative) or a discussion of chosen themes (information exchange and/or comparative) and the co-construction of a shared project (collaborative), it is important to acknowledge that the intrinsic characteristic of these CMC-based tasks, that is, the inclusion of a lot of variables, does not always guarantee the expected outcome and makes them thus also difficult to use in experimental studies. Indeed, in light of this complexity, Levy and Stockwell (2006) note that “however well theorized or designed the task may be, we do not know how the individual learner will respond to it” (p. 16).

**Third axis: a focus on intercultural competence development**

In 2003, Belz cited two main objectives as the goals of telecollaborative NBLT: FL linguistic competence and intercultural competence development. These objectives are interconnected as Byram explained when he wrote in 1997 that “Teaching for linguistic competence cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural competence” (p. 22). In telecollaboration, language itself is both a mediating tool used to achieve development, here intercultural development via an online socialization and collaboration process, and a part of the outcome of this development. Yet, telecollaborative research projects do not systematically lead to intercultural development and can on the contrary end up in misunderstandings and communication breakdowns even among students demonstrating a rather advanced level of linguistic competence (see Ware, 2005). Consequently, the following examination and discussion of the findings of studies seeking to reach these objectives is meant to identify factors and designs which best contribute to ICC development and show the state of the research to date.
ICC studies partially or fully using Byram’s model

In Telecollaboration 2.0, Guth and Helm point to limitations, but stress that “the completeness of Byram’s model and its use as a reference point for ICC in language learning and telecollaboration contexts … make it, in [our] view, the most suitable starting point for developing a framework for the multifarious goals of Telecollaboration 2.0” (p. 70). Because to date, this model provides the best framework for studying the development of ICC in FL learners, I will limit the scope of this review to studies which have fully or partially adopted the model. Since the researchers do not always share the same concept of ICC and teaching, or have the same objective in designing their studies, the use of the model can vary. In the following discussion, studies are sorted out according to the specific technological environment(s) or structure chosen for the exchanges.

Three studies (O’Dowd, 2003; Vogt, 2006; Belz, 2003) used email exchanges. O’Dowd 2003 reports on research that sought to ascertain whether there were specific features of email exchanges that might foster intercultural development. In this study, five dyads of British and Spanish students were able to use both their L1 and their L2 to complete a set of tasks. Targeting components of Byram’s model, the tasks dealt with images of home culture and target culture (cf. the Cultura Project). Several sources of data were triangulated to find emerging themes and each one of the partnerships was analyzed. Data from three out of the five dyads seemed to show a significant amount of change of perspective and attitudes on the part of the students involved.

In these partnerships, O’Dowd determined patterns in the emailing which seemed to lead to the development of successful intercultural exchanges. He noted that these
emails reflected awareness of the partner’s socio-pragmatic language rules, went beyond the simple transmission of information to include analysis and opinions, showed a desire for the partner’s feedback, were not limited to the task at hand but showed a desire to engage in a personal relationship and reacted to and were attuned to the partners’ interests (p. 138). In addition, one important point to note is that the author, who described his approach as ethnographic and strongly influenced by action research (p. 124), intervened in the exchange at times and advised his students on how to respond to their partner, once writing to one student “that the language [she] used for correcting was perhaps a little too direct and harsh for an English speaker” (p. 129). After the student adjusted her writing style, this particular partnership went well. Since cultural differences in the discourse genre used by the emailing partners have been shown to lead to misunderstanding and failure in the exchanges (i.e. Belz, 2003), it is likely that the author’s intervention contributed to the success of the dyad.

The second study that focused on emails was conducted by Karin Vogt, who looked only at the ‘affective component’ of intercultural learning in her 2006 study and focused specifically on Byram’s attitudinal component of ICC. The exchanges took place in English only between German, American and Japanese students. The author based her analysis on the triangulation of the data of three separate email projects and other data collection instruments such as interaction journals and reflection papers. In this study, Karin Vogt attempted to determine whether the attitudinal component of IC could be measured quantitatively. Interestingly, the analytic process, and particularly the use of the students’ interaction journals, provided her with valuable insights into the students’ intended meaning in the email exchanges. In some instances, it helped clarify the reasons
for the presence or absence of the development of attitudes, which she could not have deduced based on the data from the emails alone. She was thus able to pinpoint instances of Byram’s attitudinal objectives but was unable to conclude that they could be measured quantitatively with the instruments and the qualitative content analysis approach she used. While the objectives for each component enumerated in Byram’s framework provide for observable instances of IC development, attempts to precisely measure or quantify them, an approach Byram himself argued against (1997, p. 105), are unrealistic.

In this third study, Belz (2003) examined student’s email exchanges to observe the development (or absence) of intercultural competence, a competence which in her view lacked a more linguistic-oriented analytic approach. Interestingly, Belz attributed this lacuna to a persistent bias to separate language and culture, leading to the lack of recognition of the validity of the concept of IC in FL teaching, and in some cases to the vague formulation and confusion surrounding this concept. (2003, p. 69). To remedy what she saw as missing in the research, she presented a linguistically grounded analysis of the discourse used in the telecollaborative exchanges between German and American students. Belz framed her study to research IC development via a qualitative examination of Byram’s attitudinal component and a quantitative analysis of elements of appraisal\(^{22}\) theory (here, rates of positive and negative attitudinal appraisal, affect, judgment and appreciation) and epistemic modality (here, use of intensifiers and mitigators) in the students’ written data. Her quantitative analysis focused thus on the semantic resources utilized by the students to convey elements of attitudes and to express their point of view when discussing parallel texts. Belz chose to analyze a failed exchange, on the grounds

\(^{22}\) Belz defines appraisal as “the system of language used to evaluate and position oneself and others intersubjectively within a text” (2003, p. 73).
that the students’ “apparent miscommunications and misinterpretations, encoded in the text-only medium of e-mail, may be a window on the functioning of German-American telecollaboration in the development of IC” (p. 76). Findings from the discourse analysis of the data show that the German partners leaned toward the use of “negative appraisal, categorical assertion and intensification” (p. 91), which can be linked to German discursive patterns, whereas the American student use of “self-deprecating judgments, positive appreciation…” (p. 91), seem more representative of English use of language in interaction. In the qualitative section of the analysis based on Byram’s attitudinal objectives, Belz looked at linguistic patterns to address each objective and found that several of the five objectives were not reached by at least one, and sometimes both sides of the partnership. In fact, both sides’ lack of awareness of culture-bounded discursive patterns seems to have impeded IC development in this particular case study. In addition, the lack of access to cues usually available in face to face interaction might have also contributed to the failed communication23. In her concluding remark, Belz, like O’Dowd, observed that in internet-mediated FL teaching contexts, the role of the teacher is primordial and expands in such environments so that he/she has to compensate for the lack of cues available in traditional communicative contexts and to become both an acute observer of the dynamics of the dyads as well as an accurate cultural model or guide to the student (Belz, 2003). Belz’s study is sound and insightful in that through the careful analysis of reasons for the failed exchange, she suggests ways to address some of the shortcomings brought in by the use of this medium and the cultural set-up. It would have

23 This point is also brought up by Vogt in her email study, when she notes the lack of access to quick repair strategies which are used for clarification in situations involving misunderstandings (2006, p. 163)
been useful to compare and contrast the results of this particular partnership with those of one from the same research project that was deemed successful.

Ware 2005 is a fourth study that also used an asynchronous written format, in this case online postings, although it was not framed within a specific model of IC development. It is useful to look at nevertheless because of its analysis of factors affecting the quality of the exchange. In this study, Ware examined reasons for ‘missed communication’. Nine American students of German and twelve German students of English were put in groups of three to five members and asked to discuss texts over a period of three weeks. The author opted for a linguistically grounded analysis of the transcribed data, which was then combined with data from surveys and interviews to determine key factors in failed communications. Ware, who used student interviews and questionnaires to extract most of her analysis regarding tensions noticed differences in social (i.e. differences in how FLL is viewed in each culture) and institutional socialization factors (i.e. differences in the conception and value of course evaluation), and finally in students’ time investment, motivations and project involvement. Her findings corroborate results of Belz’s study in that she found corresponding sources of tension: differing expectations in terms of the purpose of the telecollaboration, differences in use of technology, differences in writing styles and use of written genres in emails (see Belz 2003). Additionally, in her analysis Ware addressed the fact that some of the tensions might have been caused by her choice of an asynchronous written medium, which was meant to provide more time for task processing and writing, and acknowledged that this mode might not have provided a good match between the way in which the different student groups value and manage their time on task (p.76).
The observation of email exchanges or online postings within the context of IC development brings thus to the fore weaknesses pertaining to this specific environment but also general recommendations for successful intercultural exchanges as enumerated in O’Dowd and Belz’ analyses. It is therefore interesting to examine whether these recommendations extend to other online telecollaborative environments.

Another group of notable IC studies make use of some or all of Byram’s model but do not fit a strict definition of institutional class to class telecollaborative exchanges. These include: asymmetrical formats (as different from the traditional class to use of dyads of FL learners), and student teacher set ups.

The first one, Li Jin and Erben 2007, took place in IM, a synchronous written environment. A group of seven American learners of Chinese volunteered to partner with Chinese NSs to complete a task received via email once a week for eight weeks. The partners were able to set their own schedule. The NSs’ main role was to be a source of information and they were not required to finish the tasks. Additionally, the FL students were not required to carry out the tasks in Chinese as they were not proficient enough in the language. In addition to examining the students’ response to the use of Instant Messaging (IM) environment for intercultural interaction, the authors also wanted to explore the validity of this environment for IC learning. They opted to do so with the use of a questionnaire adapted from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen and Starosta, 2000) which they compared and contrasted with the follow-up interviews and IM chat data. The students expressed that “the use of IM did not cause an extra burden to their regular language learning” (p. 303), and the participants overall enjoyed the IM chat experience. They commented that the immediacy of the exchange “made their
conversations more enjoyable” (p. 303), and made reference to developing friendships. Based on the intercultural sensitivity scale questionnaires and the follow-up interviews, the authors concluded that the students “went through a variable process of intercultural competence development but that they eventually developed their intercultural communication sensitivity” (p.304). In the case of this study, students’ positive attitudes toward the use of synchronous online written mode seemed to have supported the intercultural interaction and there was no mention of differences in discourse genre which could have led to conflicts. Moreover, three out of the seven FL students referred to a “relaxing atmosphere” in IM chat and the authors noted that the participants seemed more concerned to convey information than writing correct sentences (p.303). In spite of the differences in set up and framework used in this IC study, the students’ reactions to the use of this medium were noticeably more positive than the ones found in the studies discussed previously. The choice of technological environment appears therefore to have an impact on the students’ level of comfort and ultimately the quality of the exchange.

In another study, Audras and Chanier (2008) researched students’ IC development by looking at Byram’s ‘savoirs’ with the use of a multimodal tripartite model. In effect, they changed the traditional pairing format and coined the term ‘Tridem’ to refer to groups of three students from three different institutions, a British, an American and a French one. Each tridem was supervised by a tutor and engaged in an organized set of pedagogical asynchronous and synchronous tasks based on blogging and oral chat via their audio-graphic platform ‘Lyceum’. In Tridem06 (i.e. the 2006 version), groups of students moved through six steps, three of which were designed to address specific components of Byram’s ICC framework, over the course of ten weeks (plus three weeks
of preparatory work). In their article, the authors justified the choice of a ‘group’ of partners over a dyadic format, by claiming that in the later type of exchange, which they refer to as tandem, the ‘partner’ is de facto the only source of knowledge and reference for his/her culture; and this may contribute to the development of stereotypes (p. 178). They make an interesting point, but in the case of this study, although two of the groups were of English speaking origins, they spoke different varieties of the language and were culturally different. Consequently, they served as the only point of reference on their own culture. In addition, in comparison to dyads, group interaction in general has been shown to be difficult to set up and maintain thus making ICC development an even more challenging goal to attain. In fact, the authors mention that they had to modify the composition of some tridems during the preparatory work, and combine group blogs during the second step, due to the lack of participation of some students. Lastly, one might add that it is also the role of the researcher/practitioner to design preparatory work and class follow up discussions in a manner to address stereotyping and help the students build their ‘savoirs’. In this particular study, the level of students’ participation varied between the three institutions. This can be explained in part, as the authors note, by the participation of the British partners on a voluntary base only, whereas the exchange was fully integrated in the course in the other institutions. Nevertheless, the American partners still showed a noticeably lower level of participation, which the authors explain as the different status of the language course in the curriculum of the American engineering students. This difference in involvement of the students in the exchange has been observed in other research and was addressed at length in Ware’ 2005 study. Then, in order to assess the viability of their experimental set up, the authors searched the data
(questionnaires, messages, reports, posts, blogs and synchronous chats) for instances of Byram’s ‘savoir’ and found examples for all five of them. They observed that first, the number and type of observable instances appeared to be linked to the level of participation of the students. In other words, the students who were the least participatory did not show an extended use of components of the framework and produced mostly instances of ‘savoir être’ and ‘savoirs’. On the contrary, students who participated a lot more actively displayed more and in a few cases even all components in their production. Second, the authors also split the participants into two categories: novice learners with no prior participation into any ‘muticultural’ exchanges and expert learners with some type of ‘multicultural’ experience prior to this study. This grouping seemed to be reflected in the type of ‘savoir’ as the expert learners displayed more instances of other types of savoir besides ‘savoir-être’, with ‘savoir s’engager’ present only in the discourse of learners with intercultural experience. Even though the findings presented in this study constitute a partial analysis since the authors presented only the results of the tridems that focused on one of the three assigned themes, they provide valuable insight into the factors which might affect IC development and the frequency and types of ‘savoir’ used. The authors do not discuss the effects of specific technological environments on the students’ IC development and the choice of language use was apparently flexible. This study was not the first Tridem version and by referring to O’Dowd and Ritter’s 2006 article on failed communication, Audras and Chanier showed that they were fully aware of the types of potential pitfalls inherent in such complex set ups. In this sense, the Tridem06 version was most likely to result in significant IC development since potential sources of conflict had clearly been taken into account in the design (i.e. regrouping of
more active students, choice of themes, use of several modes of communication and inclusion of a tutor to monitor and support the exchanges).

Using different infrastructures for their respective studies, Fuchs (2007) and Müller-Hartmann (2006) shifted their attention to teachers and student teachers engaged in IC exchanges. They both worked with American and German participants but Müller-Hartmann’s study included students, student teachers and in-service teachers whereas Fuchs worked only with groups of student teachers. Compared to other ICC studies, their research objectives reflected the different student populations they were investigating, that is to say, primarily student teachers. Müller-Hartmann’s objective was twofold: to study how telecollaborative exchanges may contribute to develop both FL teachers’ ICC and critical media literacy. He argued that teachers could effectively develop their competence only through experiential learning and model teaching (p. 63). Fuchs’s primary objective was to observe how the participants collaborated and to examine their own reflections on these exchanges. But since she was also working with groups of student teachers, other less essential stated goals included familiarization with computer technology for teaching purposes and electronic literacy development. The two studies followed different set ups but shared comparable objectives, participant population, choice of mediums (email and chat) and analytical framework (Byram’s 1997 model), and therefore faced some similar challenges. Consequently, it is informative to compare and contrast their procedures and outcomes to understand why the overall differing results showed that one of the studies was ultimately much more effective at providing an ICC learning ground for the student teachers.
In her research, Fuchs focused only on one partnership of two US-based student teachers, (one American and another one from Oman) and three German student teachers of English. The presence of an Omani student teacher in the American group led the researcher to briefly note that Byram’s framework refers to a culture, as a national homogenous entity and therefore fails to acknowledge the multi-ethnic reality of today’s societies (Fuchs, 2007). This particular student teacher did not participate until the end of the study. The project spanned eight weeks, was integrated into courses on both sides and all work and discussions took place in English. Linguistic competence development was not part of the cited objectives. Three clearly defined phases (introduction and pairing, selection of topic for a website and sharing of task assignments and lastly reflection and feedback) yielded a lot of data. Aside from email and chat transcripts pulled from the task work, this project stood out because of the impressive number of data collection instruments built into the study, namely two questionnaires, interviews, student teachers’ logs, mid-project statements and one anonymous questionnaire. These data were collected mostly on the German side. In the discussion of the findings, the author showed that both groups started the collaboration, displaying positive attitudes towards each other, but that when the time came to discuss choice of topics and materials, the German group did not consult with their partners and this seemed to have led to frustration on the American side. On the other hand, the German group, in spite of one member showing awareness of differences in institutional functioning, displayed frustration at the perceived lack of active engagement from the American group. Based on this and other studies’ findings we’ve previously noted (Kinginger, 1998; Audras & Chanier, 2008), intercultural group work seems to pose more of a challenge for ICC exchanges. This
being said, two of the participants (an American and a German one) out of five, still appeared to have achieved a higher level of interaction and intercultural understanding, through the use of chat, which might have fostered more personal conversations and been a more efficient communicative tool for conflict resolutions. Interestingly, one also notices that pitfalls and miscommunications akin to the ones observed in student participant-only studies appear in intercultural student teacher exchanges as well. The author notes that it is not entirely surprising to observe these similarities, however she does not elaborate on this point. It might be the case that these student teachers had never had any intercultural training and as we have noted before, these skills do not appear to develop without proper guidance. Here lies a major difference between the designs of the two studies. In fact, some of Fuchs’ student teachers might still be considered *travelers* and not *sojourners* with regards to IC development in Byram’s view\(^\text{24}\), even though they are linguistically proficient and have experience of some sort with other cultures. Although the researcher seemed more surprised by the way her student teachers handled challenges during the collaboration and that they did not necessarily benefit more from this experience as a knowledge-building one for themselves as future teachers; she did however stress the learning potential created by the miscommunication\(^\text{25}\). In this study, a large portion of the results were based on student teacher reflections, which gave the researcher precious insight to analyze the multiple-layered interactions, but it might have

\(^{24}\) Fuchs (2007) does comment in her study that “spending time abroad does not necessarily imply that one has more intercultural encounters” and she suggests that “one can encounter intercultural experiences in one’s home country”.

\(^{25}\) Miscommunication may be perceived as a learning opportunity, much like Agar’s (1994) notion of rich points (which define conflicting moments between two languacultures), where speakers can choose to “ignore” them, see them as a “deficiency” of the other speaker or “wonder why you don’t understand, wonder if some other languaculture isn’t in play” (Agar, p.106). In doing so, one questions one’s own cultural belief system and one might ultimately reshape it, potentially leading to intercultural development.
been valuable to take a closer look at the data from the chats and emails to see if they corroborated the student teachers’ own feedback. In addition, this group was selected from a much larger pool of participants and it would therefore be interesting to compare this group’s collaborative practices with that of others from the same study to see if overall this larger experiential study was more formative for other groups of student teachers with regards to ICC development, group collaboration and the learning potential of experiencing internet-mediated technology in the FL classroom. The size of the sample was another important difference between the two studies as the second one dealt with a much larger pool of participants.

Müller-Hartmann’s study was more complex than Fuchs and required a high level of organization and coordination because it involved a total of four groups of students, student teachers and in-service teachers, enrolled in two German seminars, one American graduate seminar and one American undergraduate course of German language and culture. The purpose of such an infrastructure was to provide a set up for experiential learning and active observation. This meant that the undergraduate American course was paired with one of the German seminars to serve as a focus group for ICC-based telecollaborative partnership and as such be observed by participants in the two remaining German and American seminars. The communication between the members of the focus group (i.e. lower course) took place both in English and German while the upper participant-observant group communicated in English. The project lasted for two months (mid-October to mid-December). The two groups engaged in series of tasks: the focus one worked in a more traditional telecollaborative capacity and discussed parallel texts, while the participant-observant group was assigned a set of readings on CMC,
NBLT, and Byram’s framework and used these readings to discuss and analyze data from the focus group exchange. Unlike in Fuch’s study, expectations of the German students and of the student teachers also involved language proficiency. Data used for the analysis were drawn, like in the other study, primarily from the German side of the project. This was not the first version of this project, which might account for the noticeably smoother unfolding of the exchange, despite the selection of such a complex infrastructure. In general, the study’s findings and results based on the data from the exchange and reflections from the upper student teacher group, showed positive attitudes, a clear development of the knowledge factor and positive benefits for real-time interactional skills. Importantly, although some student teachers were somewhat deterred by the complexity and risk of tensions that they realized were inherent to telecollaborative exchanges, most of them gained precious intercultural experience, media literacy, and telecollaborative insight through both the hands-on involvement or the observational phase and the reflection phase for the seminar students. Müller-Hartmann noted the presence of conflicts and misunderstandings in the exchange. Although this discussion was lacking in detail, it did specify that differences in discursive pattern had been a source of tension, a point discussed in other studies (see Belz 2003). Like in Fuchs’s study, difficulties in settling on a choice of topic, frustration with different levels of participation, and differences in institutional calendars put pressure on the students and created tensions. But in general, this study’s student teachers’ ICC preparatory work proved to be fruitful as they were well aware of the possibilities for misunderstandings and put efforts into diffusing potential conflicts (p. 78). The article did not discuss feedback from the undergraduate American students because this was not a goal of this
study and because the data came mostly from the German side. However, being able to compare their take on the benefits and challenges of the exchange for their own ICC development, as well as their own reflections on the conflicts with the ones of the student teachers could have provided useful insight. Lastly, this research project was also innovative in that it incorporated two levels of observation and analysis: the one of the upper level student-teachers along the group of student teacher who directly participated in the study and the one of the researcher, who examined all four groups in action. From the results, it is clear that the student teachers’ reflective feedback and reactions concerning the use of technological tools and their own intercultural limitations and regarding whether they would feel comfortable implementing telecollaborative projects into their own teaching certainly provided the researcher with invaluable suggestions and ideas to fine tune the organization and infrastructure of the study.

In sum, a few remarks may be made with regards to the state of the research to date. First, the body of research includes vastly different study designs even though there is still an understandable preference for the asynchronous written environment (i.e. emails), which allows for time and scheduling flexibility, student reflection and importantly, is easier to keep record of. Still, as seen in these studies, the choice of environment is not insignificant for IC development since each one seems to engender specific students’ reactions and behaviors and certainly calls for different types of discourses (see for example the students’ responses and level of engagement in the IM study versus the written asynchronous ones). This might in part explain the emergence of very complex infrastructures with multimodal environments, which might be perceived as more effective for eliciting both a high level of participation and interpersonal interest,
and time of reflection on the complexities of IC’s cultural differences. Second, whereas on one hand, researchers devote a lot of time and space to justifying their choice of theory and on the clarification of the studies’ infrastructures and overall methodology, some studies fall short on the analysis of the findings. Indeed, a number of studies cite ICC development and particularly Byram’s framework and its ‘savoir-être’ component as at least one of the objectives of the exchange, but the subsequent analysis and discussion do not always refer back to the model. This is problematic since the very multifarious nature of these exchanges makes detailed qualitative analyses all the more important for an accurate understanding of what factors support or impede IC development. Third, newer forms of telecollaborative exchanges, such as asymmetrical ones, e-tandem, or multiple partners IC learning, seem to be increasingly appealing in IC research. In today’s digital world however, foreign languages are still by far learned within institutional settings in classroom environments, and it is certainly premature to move away from ‘traditional’ telecollaborative formats. Fourth, there remains a strong need for more inquiry into ‘traditional’ structures of telecollaboration, and particularly for longitudinal studies on the learning affordances of the less commonly researched environments, namely audio/visual ones. In their 2010 publication, Guth and Helm (2010) stress that the access to audio/video tools has widely improved and that the case study authors they present “report on the highly motivating effect of audio and video conferencing, and its effectiveness in establishing relationships between learners.” (p. 363). More studies need thus to investigate this specific research context and the IC learning possibilities it may offer. Lastly, another valuable point drawn from these studies is the extensive and multifaceted role of the teacher/researcher in internet-mediated IC
projects compared to his/her role in a traditional FL teaching environment. Some of the authors discussed chose an action research angle (O’Dowd, 2003; Fuchs, 2007) and adapted their role and study designs as the exchange unfolded; others, such as in the case of Tridem06 and Müller-Hartmann (2006) have clearly learned from and carefully built upon previous exchanges. The commonality in these exchanges from the teacher/researcher’s stance, is the complexity of the infrastructure, the heavy preparatory work and the amount of skills and insight needed to compensate for unforeseen pitfalls.

In the concluding remarks to her 2003 project, Belz made a special mention of the expanded role of the teacher in internet-mediated environments; a role paramount for the successful completion of the exchanges and the students’ IC learning process as conceived of in a socially mediated conception of learning, and which will be discussed at greater length in the methodology chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview of the relevant literature and concepts has helped frame and delineate the context of the study by means, first of a presentation of the paradigm shift of FLT towards a focus on the investigation and the teaching of ICC, second of the evolution in CALL towards the development of NBLT and specifically telecollaborative FL learning, a model involving authentic and meaningful human interaction well-suited to the implementation of research on ICC, and third of an overview of the forms and objectives of telecollaboration which has led to a discussion of the most relevant recent ICC telecollaborative studies and their validity for ICC development. In light of this review, the research questions and the overarching theoretical construct underlying this research, insights and considerations have been
drawn to guide the best methodological approach for the proposed study. Accordingly, the selected case study approach, telecollaborative set up, participants, researcher’s role, data collection instruments and also method of analysis will be described in detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This case study was carried out in the context of a French conversation course I have been teaching at least once a year at the university since the fall of 2004. Following a first trial and a pilot study, I was able to fully integrate a telecollaborative project to the curriculum of the course and to collect the data for the current project in the fall of 2008. In this chapter, I will describe the course and the procedures I adopted in order to gather data that would allow me to analyze the intercultural development of my students. First, I will describe the structure and the objectives of the course. Then, I will present the qualitative methods selected to generate, collect and treat the data obtained over the course of the semester. A description of the pilot study and of the organizational infrastructure of that particular session prefaces a discussion of the choice of data collection instruments, the participants and the participant selection process, as well as the data transcription, coding and analysis techniques. Lastly, I will discuss the steps I took to address issues of validity and reliability as they relate to this qualitative study.

Course Description and Telecollaborative Background

I have been teaching FRE 350Y, a “French conversation course” since the fall of 2004. Intended for students who have completed at least five semesters of college-level French, FRE 350Y fulfilled the University’s Oral Discourse General Education
requirement\textsuperscript{26}. It is an elective course and it is therefore not required for the major in French. Nevertheless, most of the students who enroll in the course are French majors. FRE 350Y also attracts some minors and a few others who take it for a variety of reasons. The class normally meets twice a week for eighty minutes in a classroom equipped with a computer with internet access, a projector and a screen, although this technology was not always available the first semesters I taught the course. Whereas the typical student population enrolling in the course has not changed, the curriculum has significantly evolved from its original design. At the outset, students learned strategies, vocabulary and structures that would help them participate more fluently and confidently in a variety of spoken contexts, both formal and informal. To this end, the course incorporated primarily content from a conversation textbook with texts recorded on a CD-ROM, alongside some videos to cover contemporary themes (i.e. life styles, work environment, media, environment, current events, etc.). In addition, students practiced speech acts and learned about differences between written and spoken French.

Over the course of several semesters, the challenges, limitations, and sometimes incongruity of teaching “contextualized French conversational skills” in a traditional classroom setting with at times limited online access to a group of students with varying FL skill levels became increasingly unsatisfactory. Furthermore, most of the students had never travelled to a French-speaking area and therefore could not relate to the

\textsuperscript{26} As part of the General Education program at the university, students were required to take courses that meet specific learning objectives. AFRE350Y fulfills the learning objectives of the Oral Discourse requirement (i.e. “communicate ideas (creative, expressive, intuitive, intellectual) according to a specific set of criteria; establish and maintain an appropriate performer/audience relationship in a given oral exercise, and actively engage with listeners/audience: respond to and, where appropriate, incorporate listener's comments and questions; critique, orally or in writing, an oral performance”, retrieved from http://www.albany.edu/gened/cr_oraldiscourse.shtml). As of Fall 2012, however, students no longer have to fulfill this requirement.
contextualized and cultural situations we were discussing in class. The conversation textbook did not help much either since, as is all too often the case, the situations and texts presented did not feel authentic\textsuperscript{27} and the audio tracks were not representative of natural speech patterns. Within the means at my disposal, I was not able to effectively prepare my students to converse with native speakers, much less give them the linguistic and intercultural tools and guidance they needed to become intercultural speakers. Consequently, I sought ways to modify the structure of the course and apply the principles of telecollaboration in accordance with my own paradigmatic approach to FL learning and teaching. In essence, my goal was to implement a class-to-class online exchange to provide these FL learners with the means to actively use the target language in a reciprocal, contextualized, and meaningful manner. Significantly, such an exchange would additionally afford unique opportunities to observe how students develop intercultural competence. At that point, I was already familiar with the learning potential of asynchronous written-medium telecollaboration because I had tried it in 1999 with a class of American middle school students engaged in an exchange with a French partner class. At that time the online exchange was useful as a successful vehicle for intercultural learning, more than as a significant support for target language practice because of the limited French skills of the students involved. But what had been achievable within a limited scope in a middle school was not yet feasible within my institutional teaching environment because I still needed 1) a French university partner class to develop an exchange with and 2) better access to online technology.

\textsuperscript{27}See Kinginger, 1998 for a discussion of the limitations of American French textbooks and the teaching of spoken French.
The transatlantic partnership.

Three years later, in the fall of 2007, I was introduced to my current French colleague through a French faculty member in my department. A colleague of hers had already experienced transatlantic class-to-class exchanges and she was seeking a partner to carry out a similar online collaboration. Significantly, she was teaching an English conversation course at the Université de Haute-Alsace (UHA), and parts of her thematic course curriculum matched my own. Her students, unlike most of mine, were not foreign language majors; they were Master’s students in Information Systems and Communication and thus English was not a priority in their curriculum but still apparently held a high status and was regarded as a language that they would likely have to use later on professionally or privately.

As my telecollaborative partner, my UHA colleague played a vital role for the positive outcome of our exchanges. Because of the need to align two institutional course schedules, timelines, curricula, etc., telecollaborative projects are intrinsically complex. Therefore, the quality of the instructor’s collaboration is essential to the success of the online exchange. Of particular importance is the fact that the partners-instructors must be flexible, responsive (particularly in corresponding) and share comparable pedagogical goals. My partner and I both understood that we each had to deal within our respective institutions with specific shortcomings, technological affordances and groups of students, so that we were flexible enough to adjust and accommodate to one another’s needs. In addition, it was beneficial that we shared a common cultural background because it made it easier for us to discuss and solve problems quickly, using a discursive and work style that was efficient and familiar to both of us.
Shortly after we were introduced, we discussed ways to conduct a short telecollaborative exchange that very semester and what the goal and task content of the sessions should be. We opted for a synchronous and audio/video-based format that ultimately proved to be a challenge to set up. In fact, differences in course schedules and computer access issues forced me to ask student volunteers from the FRE 350Y and another lower level section to meet outside of class time in the Teaching Assistant computer lab. These volunteers were paired with French students and engaged in conversations with the help of a questionnaire related to themes discussed in class. The first outcomes of this test, that is, the increased amount of target language use and the students’ positive feedback, encouraged my colleague and me to continue in this vein the following semester (Spring 2008). We planned to remedy first the course scheduling problem and second, student attendance issues, by integrating the exchange into our respective courses.

Luckily for us, the lingering issue of limited access to technological equipment suitable for the telecollaboration had finally been resolved at the end of the fall 2007 semester with the creation of the University’s Center for Language and International Communication (CLIC). The CLIC was established to function as a resource center and a computer lab for language learning. It is now run by the same lab technician who played an instrumental role during the telecollaborative exchanges described below, all of which took place in this facility.
The technology

At the outset of our collaboration, I was asked by my French colleague to use an online system called EVO (Enabling Virtual Organizations) which serves as a meeting site for online communities. Within this system, we had to enter into the RENATER (Réseau National de telecommunication pour la Technologie, l’Enseignement et la Recherche) community to conduct our transatlantic meetings. EVO is primarily a complex videoconferencing system that includes numerous features and is hosted at the California Institute of Technology (http://evo.caltech.edu/evoGate/). We limited our use of EVO to the advance booking of private meeting rooms for each dyad, as well as the audio/video, IM and meeting recorder features during each session. Students had to create their own accounts in EVO and log in at the beginning of their virtual meetings. They would then search for their assigned virtual room within the RENATER community and log in. Below is a screenshot of the EVO system once one logs in. One can see the online communities in the larger box and the IM chat feature in the box on the lower right hand side.

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28 http://evo.caltech.edu/evoGate/about.jsp “EVO is based on a new distributed architecture, leveraging the 10+ years of experience of developing and operating the large distributed VRVS collaboration system now in production. The primary objective of EVO is to provide an improved system and a service to the LHC and other major High Energy Physics programs that fully meet the requirements for usability, quality, scalability, adaptability to a wide range of working environments, reliability and cost. The EVO infrastructure automatically adapts to the prevailing network configuration and status, so as to ensure that the collaboration service runs without disruption.”

29 RENATER: National Telecommunication Network for Technology, Teaching and Research (my translation). This is a French research community network, which includes members such as various research centers and the Ministry of Education (see http://www.renater.fr/spip.php?page=sommaire)
Once students were logged in, our lab technician would activate the microphone, the webcam and then the recording feature. Students were seated in front of laptops and could hear their partners through their headsets. A divided screen as shown below in Images 2 and 3 permitted them to see both themselves and their partner during the session.
Figure 3. EVO Videoconference Feature with two Participants

Figure 4. Student engaged in a telecollaborative Exchange at the CLIC
The technology we used in this study and its affordances played a central role. In fact, its extended reach over the design, participants, and potential outcome necessitate some clarification. In NBLT contexts, and particularly telecollaboration, variations in the participants’ media literacy skills and culture of use are a concern (Belz, 2001). Consequently, at the outset of the project I wondered whether the students in the French partner class would display the same technological familiarity and similar stances towards the use of technology as my own students or, if not, to what extent and in what way this could affect the interaction within the dyads. In effect, this project required an extensive use of several types of online media and software (i.e., emailing, the complex EVO program and PowerPoint software) from both sides. Nevertheless, during the pilot study, which I will describe next, it became quickly obvious that the French students’ interest and skills in the use of computer-based technology contributed in part to the success of the exchange. The American students30 and their French partners alike were clearly accustomed to using online networked technology and the immediacy caused by the use of a synchronous audio/video recorded tool did not seem to raise any concerns or to hinder the interactions.

**Study Procedure**

**Spring 2008: pilot study**

With a better access to technology, I decided in the spring of 2008 to build on the first limited telecollaborative test (i.e. a mixed group of students and out-of-class-time online sessions), by planning a short pilot study with the students enrolled in FRE 350Y.

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30 See students’ online background questionnaires and Table 5 for more information on the American participants’ technological cultural of use.
The goal was to explore (a) ways to best integrate the telecollaboration to the course curriculum, (b) the students’ response to the telecollaborative exchange and, (c) data collection tools. Three telecollaborative sessions were scheduled in the CLIC. For each session, students received a questionnaire to be used as a guide for cross-cultural discussions. The themes were chosen in conjunction with my French colleague and were meant to facilitate students’ getting to know one another in the first session, and to allow them to discuss general interests, topics covered in class and current events (i.e. the elections) in the subsequent sessions. There was a limited amount of data collection and analysis, which included my observations of the sessions and the administration of a feedback questionnaire. Data collection methods for the audio/video recordings and study set up including considerable institutional limitations (time differences, different university calendars, differing constraints for technology use, etc.) were tested, as were patterns of student interaction.

The pilot study let me identify potential problematic areas. In this instance, these turned out to be primarily technological and required help from the lab technician to resolve. I was also able to observe students’ behavior as they engaged in the online discussions. Some dyads functioned better than others in terms of the length and the dynamics of the conversations, but there were no breakdowns in communication. Nonetheless, I realized the importance of selecting discussion topics that were interesting and meaningful to the students and of carefully pairing the students. I also understood that my own involvement as both a monitoring guide and language support provider had to be very active. This observational phase was fruitful and I was able to effectively adapt
the study design and data collection procedures in the final study, which started in the summer of 2008 with the planning phase.

**Fall 2008: present study**

FRE 350Y was scheduled to start on August 26th and to last for fourteen weeks, but the actual exchange could not begin before the last week of September (week 6) since the French university course would not begin until late that month. The study spanned the entire course and the first phase started at the beginning of the semester with in-class readings and discussions on the topic of intercultural differences in both countries, in particular as they pertain to conversational patterns, address forms and greetings. In addition, students were asked to write autobiographical essays and to submit a total of three different topics to be debated later on with their online partners. These documents were exchanged with the partner class in the following sequence: I forwarded my students’ topics and autobiographies to my French colleague via email. She shared them with her students and each one selected two potential American partners. The same day and in a similar manner, I received and shared the French students’ list of topics and autobiographies with my students and they each chose a couple partners as well. Finally, my colleague and I compiled two lists and emailed these to each other. We discussed the potential pairings, the interests of the students and their relative strengths prior to announcing the composition of the dyads in class.

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31 This type of task is not uncommon in telecollaborative research project design, as it is usually an effective tool to foster pair or group discussion. Nevertheless, instructors often impose specific themes or comparative readings for discussion, without taking into account the students’ own interests. However, the motivation and interest factors are essential to the success of such mediated exchanges and my colleague and I chose to allow for more flexibility and let the students be more involved in the task content decisions.
The project’s second phase, which started in week eight, included four scheduled online sessions. Each telecollaborative session lasted approximately seventy minutes during which students were expected to converse for half of the time in French and half of the time in English. This allowed them all to be by turns both novices and experts. The choice of language to start with was negotiated at the beginning of each session by each dyad; I monitored language use to make sure that they shared the time equally between the languages and that they were not mixing languages (i.e. when each partner expresses himself/herself in their native language only). In addition, students were encouraged to use the textbox feature, the IM chat tool, gestures, and any other resource available to them that might facilitate communication.

The goal of the first telecollaborative exchange was for students to get to know their partners and to settle on one debate topic. For this, they received a general information questionnaire (see Appendix A) that they could use in order to support their conversation. The three remaining telecollaborative sessions served two purposes. First, they were meant to provide a platform for the discussion and sharing of viewpoints. Second, they enabled students to create a PowerPoint presentation in French that would serve as the basis for an in-class debate. For example, one of the dyads interested in education chose to compare and contrast the organizational structures (primary, secondary and higher education) of the French and the American educational systems, as well as the benefits and advantages of each. The American and the French student were particularly interested in differences with regard to the cost of education. In addition to presenting facts in their PowerPoint presentations, the American students had been instructed to include slides reflecting their partner’s stance on the chosen debate.
questions. Therefore, in-between sessions, they would email the presentations to each other in order to receive feedback not just on their use of language but also with the content of their presentations.

The central task of the telecollaboration led to the third phase of this project: an in-class debate including an introduction to the topic with related vocabulary, a presentation of the French partner’s viewpoint, and three related questions addressed to the audience. The presenter was responsible for leading the debate and engaging every member of the class in a cross-cultural discussion. A common discursive practice among French people, this exercise (i.e. debate) was also designed as review and contextualized practice of the appropriate speech acts and grammatical structures commonly used to express personal opinions, agreement and disagreement in French. These structures had been studied in class prior to the debate sessions and while I did not intervene in the debate, I was sitting outside of the circle and grading students’ participation and language use.

The following table presents a chronological overview of the research process jointly with the course curriculum.

Table 2

Course and Study Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRE 350 course</th>
<th>Research project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td>Pilot study (3 online sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
<td>Project design</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Beginning of the course</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-IRB submission</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th</td>
<td>Weeks 1 to 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Intro to the course: readings on intercultural conversational differences and discussions of greetings and address forms. -Individual presentations and autobiographies.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-IRB approved -Research project briefing and discussion. Consent forms signed by all but one student -The students read the French students’ autobiographies in English and lists of topics for debates. They select partners. -Students fill out the online background survey</td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
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<td></td>
<td>-In class presentations (on content from the textbook) -Provisional list of dyads -Test of online software with lab technician -1st telecollaborative session at the CLIC</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Argumentative structures, expressions of opinion, opposition</td>
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<th>Week 10</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>-Spoken French vs. written French, idioms, argot -Students were asked to exchange presentation drafts prior to the 2nd session</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Checking of the first recording -2nd telecollaborative session at the CLIC</td>
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<th>Week 12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-In class presentations (giving instructions)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-In class presentations (giving instructions) -3rd telecollaborative session at the CLIC (Tuesday) – technical recording problems -Submission of PowerPoints</td>
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<th>Week 14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-In class student-led debates with PowerPoint presentations in French (Tuesday) -Submission of PowerPoints</td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Student debates and presentations -4th telecollaborative session at the CLIC (Tuesday) -Submission of PowerPoints -Final student journal collection</td>
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-End of the course
Telecollaborative challenges

In 2006 O’Dowd and Ritter attempted to summarize the factors that constitute potential causes for miscommunication in the form of an “Inventory of reasons for failed communication in telecollaborative projects” (p. 629). Based on their own research and on findings from existing studies, they placed these reasons in one of four categories: individual, classroom, socioinstitutional and interaction. I have adapted their ‘inventory’ into the following table format.

Table 3

O’Dowd and Ritter (2006), Inventory for failed Communication on telecollaborative Projects (adapted from Figure 1, p. 629).

| 1- Individual | • Learner’s current level of ICC |
|               | • Learner’s motivation and expectations |
| 2- Classroom  | • Teacher-teacher relationship |
|               | • Task design |
|               | • Learner-matching procedures |
|               | • Local group dynamics |
|               | • Pre-exchange briefing |
| 3- Socioinstitutional | • General organization of the students’ course of study |
O’Dowd and Ritter commented that with such a classification “educators can be better prepared for the challenges which await them in their online projects” but conceded that their inventory “does not provide a definitive number of reasons” for failed communication (2006, p. 628). Indeed, while this classification and the pertaining literature have certainly increased instructors/researchers’ understanding of the dynamics at play in telecollaborative exchanges, failed communications are however in most cases due to a unique and complex combination of factors and therefore not always avoidable. Although it is possible to anticipate and prevent some of these complications through an “in-house” experiment with the help of a well-designed pilot study; during the actual study, groups of participants change and the technology may be unevenly reliable.

In reality, whereas my colleague and I were able to juggle differing university calendars, course curricula (i.e. socioinstitutional level), time differences, and to agree on effective task design, we had no control over student enrollment, level of interest, or reliability (i.e. individual level). In fact, at the outset of the study, I had more students enrolled in my course than did my colleague. This proved to be a challenge for student

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32 O’Dowd and Ritter explained that this category concerns “…the misunderstandings and tension which arise from cultural differences in communicative style and behavior” (p. 634). They used Spencer-Oatey (2000) categories for cultural differences in face-to-face intercultural interaction and argued that these can apply to NBLT environments (p. 634). Tensions at this level have been documented in the work of Belz (2003) and Ware (2005).
pairing, debate selection and project design (i.e. classroom level). Some of my students ended up belonging to two dyads and had to share their time online and offline. Another student-related problem we faced concerned attendance. French students are required to be present in class and while I had a strict attendance policy stated on my course syllabus and presence in the CLIC during the telecollaborative sessions was mandatory, I had to explain to my colleague that American students’ class attendance practices are different from French ones.

In order to minimize chances of conversational breakdown, we did not solely rely on the student’s expressed areas of interest while forming the dyads. In fact, their proposed topics varied greatly and in a few cases there was no exact match. For instance, the three topics selected by one of my subjects, Mark were: gay marriage, the Iraq war, and the economy, but when he looked at the autobiographies and list of topics selected by the French students and was asked to choose two potential partners; he chose Luc and the topic of petrol (gas) and Van (the partner he ended up with) and the topic of “influence of USA civilization”. Due in part to such variation, my colleague and I opted thus to also take into account language proficiency levels, personality, and attitude toward the course (number of absences, preparedness, participation etc.) In general, the pairings seemed to function well throughout the study as there was no noticeable breakdown in communication during any of the sessions. This being said, effective pairing is only one of the factors that lead to a successful exchange.

33 Researcher journal note (Oct. 7th): when looking at the French student’s autobiographies and debate topics, one American student (Mark) remarks that the French student topics of interest are quite different from the American ones.

34 All of the participants have been assigned pseudonyms.
Two main remaining sources of problems appeared to be (a) lack of synchronization on the part of the students and (b) technological and software issues. The former problem refers to the fact that the students had to collaborate outside of class and were expected to exchange emails and review each other’s PowerPoint presentations ahead of the sessions in order to discuss them while they were online. In a few cases, they emailed their presentation drafts late and got thus a limited amount of feedback. This is reflected in the transcription of the sessions and the quality of the final version of the presentations. The latter problem manifested itself in sometimes poor audio quality and in lagging or full breakdowns of the online conversations. In fact, we were not able to properly record the third (November 18th) session as the system crashed repeatedly and the students got only a few minutes of conversation on that day. According to our lab technician, the failure was caused by a glitch in the software we were using, but my French colleague also noted that they were having problems with their server. We were aware of this issue with the technology and after our experience with the pilot study, we had asked her if we could use another program such as Skype instead, but they were not authorized to do so by the French Ministry of Education.

Data Collection Methods

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection for this study and I designed and/or selected every one of the data collection tools. Consequently, questions of validity and reliability pertaining to my role, the methodological choices I made, and the data I collected might arise and rightly so. Nonetheless, this line of questioning needs to be framed within the qualitative stance and goals of this research, and will be further explained in the “validity and reliability” section. The other data
collection instruments were determined and refined by taking into account the research questions and also the results of the pilot study, the selected telecollaborative tasks as well as technological and scheduling affordances. A detailed description of the data collection instruments I chose to employ follows.

**EVO recorded sessions**

Since the telecollaboration with its mediating potential is at the core of this study, the primary material source of data collection consisted of the audio/visual recordings of each session. I initially hoped to conduct five sessions but I had to scale it down to four due to my colleague’s course schedule and different institutional calendar. Yet, in fact, I was able to get data for only three recorded sessions per participant because of the software and server problems we encountered. Each session was recorded with the EVO recorder feature and saved onto the laptops at the CLIC. Most of the recorded sessions lasted for twenty to thirty minutes and there was one longer recording (about an hour) because the participant did not have to share his conversation time between two partners. At the end of the course, the audio/video files were then transferred to CD-ROMs, which I then used for the transcription phase. Because they were recorded in a proprietary format, I first had to access the online EVO player in order to open the files whenever I needed to watch the recordings.

**Other sources of data collection**

While devising the research procedure and with the feedback from the pilot study, I was keenly aware of the importance of carefully selecting several additional and complementary data collection instruments that had to be relevant to the purpose of the
study. To this end, I first planned a background survey to collect the information I needed on the participants’ a) prior coursework in French, b) FL language use, c) attitude toward and experience with intercultural communication and foreign travel, and d) experience with and attitude towards technology use for FL learning. This questionnaire was made available to the students online and was comprised of a mix of multiple choice, Likert scale and open-ended questions (see Appendix B). The participants completed it without additional prompting, a behavior that suggested to me that they were interested in the project. I intended to use this data to help determine units of study during the sampling process.

As the second supplementary data collection tool, students were asked to write autobiographies\(^{35}\). These served two goals, 1) to gather additional personal data and 2) to provide a first participant-centered introductory step to the main collaborative task. We gave them simple directions: to introduce themselves informally to age-peers describing their interests, level of studies, activities, and so forth. This exercise, carried out in the target language, gave our respective students more feedback on their potential partners’ interests and language skills, but also served as a rehearsal for when they would have to introduce themselves to one another orally during the first telecollaborative session.

A third additional source of data was the PowerPoint presentations that students created and completed with the help of their partners. In the last phase of the project, they were asked to email them to me after presenting and debating their topic in class. I expected the length, language use and content of these collections of slides to reflect the

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\(^{35}\) Emailed autobiographies or even online autobiographies (Belz, 2004; Müller-Hartmann, 2006) have been used as a tool for a first introductory step in online exchanges. It is thus not a new procedure in telecollaboration, but it is an effective one and in addition, we used this first written exchange to get the students’ input on the choice of task content they were going to have to work on (i.e. debate topics).
student’s own interest and involvement in the project as well as to some extent, the quality of the participants’ collaboration. As the final product of the dyads’ collaborative work and an important part of the coursework requirements, both the debates and the PowerPoints were graded. Except with respect to attendance and participation, the telecollaborative sessions themselves were not graded.

Journals or written feedback on the telecollaborative sessions provided the last source of data collected from the students. I had asked them to keep a journal of their own reflections throughout the exchange. Some students chose to email them to me after each session and others submitted them at the end of the course. The length of and thought put into these entries varies greatly, but they are all quite informative and constitute a valuable addition to the other data collected.

The data collection instruments that I used are summarized in Table 4. Aside from the dyadic telecollaborative exchanges, most of the data were collected on the American side only because I was conducting the research within the context of my own course. My colleague was very supportive, but did not intend to use the data for her own research purposes. I collected little to no additional data input from the French students except their emailed biographies and topic selections, which I shared with my students, and although I was aware that some of my students were emailing and using IM with their French partners outside of class and in addition to the regular email exchanges needed to collaborate on the presentations, I had no access to this data.
Table 4

Data Collection Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Timeline</th>
<th>Collection instruments</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Online background surveys</td>
<td>Online (SurveyMonkey.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Students autobiographies</td>
<td>Email (printed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 14 Nov. 4 Nov. 18 Dec. 2</td>
<td>Audio/video recordings of telecollaborative exchanges</td>
<td>Recorded on the EVO system (transcribed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. and Dec.</td>
<td>Students’ presentations</td>
<td>PowerPoint (emailed to the instructor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Students’ journals and feedback on the sessions</td>
<td>Word (emailed at the end of the class or after each session)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other sources of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of project</th>
<th>Researcher’s journal</th>
<th>Word (printed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-sessions-Dec.</td>
<td>Instructors’ emails exchange</td>
<td>(printed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring-Summer 2009</td>
<td>Researcher’s transcription notes</td>
<td>Word (printed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the instructor of the course and author of the study, I also produced several types of data. The first set revolved around study design. I had elaborated a timeline and planned a set of tasks prior to, during, and after the telecollaborative sessions. I scaled this part down as I adapted the design to my colleague’s schedule, my own students’ work and technological factors. Another source of data were the emails she and I exchanged to coordinate both sides of the project. I also kept a researcher’s journal throughout the study. The number and length of entries increased before and after the recordings, a time during which my role expanded as previously discussed. Lastly, I took
descriptive and reflective notes while working on each of the transcripts of the EVO recorded sessions.

**Participants and Sample Selection**

**Participants**

In the fall of 2008, ten students were enrolled in my FRE 350Y. As previously noted, this course is generally intended for students who have had five semesters of college level French, but they can also be admitted by permission of the instructor depending on their levels of oral proficiency and listening comprehension. For this reason, some of the students had had only four semesters of college French prior to beginning this course. In reality, their listening comprehension and speaking skills varied greatly among the members of the class. Six of the participants were French majors and two were minors. One was a non-matriculated foreign exchange student from Russia. Besides receiving the course syllabus and timetable at the beginning of the course, the students were also told that they would be asked to participate in a research study. They were told the objectives and steps of the study, and given an informed consent form (Appendix C). One registered student declined to participate in the study but continued in the intercultural exchange.

**Sample selection**

There are two levels of selection of participants in this case study. First, the pool of participants was determined by and limited to the students enrolled in FRE 350Y. In
this context, I explore what can be considered cases within a specific bounded system:

cases under study limited to an institutional environment with the pertaining rules and
constraints that govern it, and also representative of the teaching philosophy and course
enrollment requirements of the French Studies program. Thus initially, the first pool of
participants was naturally determined by the students enrolled in the American
conversation course who were paired with French students for the telecollaborative
exchanges.

Second, within this cohort of nine participants, units of study were selected
following a process of purposeful sampling. I followed the logic of the qualitative
approach to case study sampling, in which cases are chosen because “…they are
‘information rich’ and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the
phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not
empirical generalization from a sample to a population” (Patton, p. 40). In this instance, I
proceeded to sort out potential information-rich units, relying on the American
participants’ background information, online surveys, data from the recorded sessions,
and my own observations as the instructor of the course. I opted to use a mixed
purposeful sampling approach, using a typical case sampling strategy in a first step.
Patton (2002) explains this process noting that “Typical cases can be selected with the
cooperation of key informants…”, such as the instructor in this case or by “…using
survey data, a demographic analysis of averages, or other statistical data that provide a
normal distribution of characteristics from which to identify “average-like” cases (p.
236). He further notes that the objective of this type of case sampling “…is to describe

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36 Creswell (2007) equated a bounded system to “a setting, a context” (p. 73)
and illustrate what is typical to those unfamiliar with the setting-not to make generalized statements about the experiences of all the participants. The sample is illustrative not definitive” (P. 236). Given the large amount of variables already affecting the study design, I found it paramount to select a small sample of units sharing similarities and yet with enough variation to yield informative data for comparing and contrasting, which constitutes the second sampling step. There were participants enrolled in the course who were not typically representative of native English FL learners usually enrolled in this course because of their cultural background or bilingual language use. Therefore, three non-native English speaker cases, which presented additional characteristics likely to weigh on the outcome of this study, were weeded out. I also purposefully selected students majoring in French, reasoning that they might show a pattern of greater interest in the culture and/or the language and higher target language proficiency than students minoring in French\textsuperscript{37}. In the second step, I applied a criterion sampling strategy, and selected students who had no apparent prior IC experience. Therefore, after looking at the students’ pre-session self-reported online surveys, I opted to remove another participant from the remaining sample because she stated that she conversed with French friends and French relatives in France and traveled there frequently. Her proficiency level was much higher than the other students and she had most likely already developed IC skills during her previous multiple interactions with native speakers. Had there been at least another participant with comparative previous IC experience, it would have been interesting to compare these advanced IC participant’s data with others IC novice participants’ records, but the existing pool of participants did not allow for such a comparative case study. The

\textsuperscript{37} One of the two minoring students did show a low level of participation and missed class meetings. The other, although more active in class, also missed classes. This second student had a lower level of proficiency in French and struggled during the telecollaborative sessions.
The final sample size (see Figure 5) was thus reduced to three participants, namely Kathy, Robert and Mark, who reported no previous contact with native speakers other than course instructors. These remaining cases were still rich and diverse enough as data from their background survey shows in Table 5. Importantly, all three also displayed different levels of French language proficiency: Kathy (low), Mark (intermediate) and Robert (advanced). These designations were based on my assessment as the instructor of the course and were meant to situate these three participants’ proficiency levels in relation with each other for the purpose of this study. They do not reflect proficiency levels based on official testing. However from their participation in class and course assignments, I was able to determine that Kathy (low) was able to understand basic conversation with a limited amount of details. She had difficulties conjugating verbs and using correct tenses at times. Her French vocabulary was limited and she used simple sentence structures. In class, she was a quiet student who did not ask for clarification when she did not understand instructions or conversations. Although she came to class assiduously and prepared, she got the second to the lowest participation grade. Mark (intermediate) had a wider control of French vocabulary. He also tended to have difficulties with verb conjugation, tense use and pronunciation but was not hesitant to talk and participate actively. In fact he had the highest participation record of all. He was also able to express his opinion and use more argumentative structures. Mark was confident in class but misunderstood instructions at times without being aware of it. The third participant, Robert (advanced), was able to draw on a wide range of French vocabulary, expressions and complex sentence structures to express himself. He paid close attention to agreements, tense use and structures in general and showed excellent listening.

38 The participants’ names here have been changed to protect their anonymity.
comprehension skills. He had a very inquisitive mind and was eager to improve his French and communicate in a more idiomatic manner in French. His participation record was somewhat uneven: his active engagement was directly tied to his degree of interest in a particular topic.

Figure 5 below clarifies the selection process used to determine the sample of participants.

Figure 5. Participant Selection Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part. #1 bilingual</th>
<th>Part. #2 Major</th>
<th>Part. #3 Major</th>
<th>Part. #4 Minor</th>
<th>Part. #5 Major</th>
<th>Part. #6 Minor</th>
<th>Part. #7 foreign student</th>
<th>Part. #8 Major</th>
<th>Part. #9 visiting student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

↓ Typical case sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part. #2 Major</th>
<th>Part. #3 Major</th>
<th>Part. #4 Minor</th>
<th>Part. #5 Major</th>
<th>Part. #6 Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

↓ Typical case sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part. #2 Major Extensive contact with French NS</th>
<th>Part. #3 Major</th>
<th>Part. #5 Major</th>
<th>Part. #8 Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

↓ Criterion sampling

| Part. #3 (Kathy) Low | Part. #5 (Robert) Advanced | Part. #8 (Mark) Intermediate |

Table 5 displays the selected participants’ FL background information, interest in and comfort levels with the language and culture as well as their technological culture of use.
Table 5

Participants’ Background Information Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language and culture</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Robert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior study of French (equiv. to college semesters)</td>
<td>Four semesters&lt;sup&gt;39&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Five semesters</td>
<td>Four semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort level in speaking French</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in opportunity to speak with native French students</td>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to French-speaking areas</td>
<td>Paris-2/3 days</td>
<td>France-3 days</td>
<td>Quebec-1 week&lt;sup&gt;40&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quebec-2 days</td>
<td>Montréal-4 days</td>
<td>Quebec-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about francophone cultures</td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in learning more about francophone cultures</td>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences/similarities level between French and American cultures</td>
<td>Somewhat different</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and use of technology (D-daily, W-weekly, M-monthly)</td>
<td>IM-D Webcam-M</td>
<td>IM-D Voice chat-W Webcam-M</td>
<td>IM, voice chat-D Webcam-W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology previously used for FL learning</td>
<td>DVDs Internet search</td>
<td>DVDs Chat</td>
<td>Lang. software Internetsearch Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance toward using technology for FL learning</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Very useful</td>
<td>Useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>39</sup> This participant mentioned two other courses taken at another university (Advanced French grammar and Topics in French cinema)

<sup>40</sup> On the background survey, Robert answered ‘no’ to the question: have you spoken French with native speakers before (other than instructors)? But, in his first recorded telecollaborative session, he told his partner that he went to Quebec twice for French immersion camps.
Data Analysis

The open-ended nature of a telecollaborative exchange with a limited amount of task guidance presupposes that the data analysis process starts before all the data has been collected. As Patton (2002) comments “…the fluid and emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry makes the distinction between data gathering and analysis far less absolute” (p. 436) than in the case of data collected from “surveys, standardized tests, and experimental designs” (Patton, p. 436). In the present study, the lines between data collection and analysis are blurred as well. It is important to keep in mind that a lot of elements fed into the first stages of analysis even prior to employing actual analytical tools. Field and researcher notes were taken, observations arose and decisions were made continuously throughout the data collection phase.

Transcription of audio/visual recordings

With three exceptions, all of the data collected for this study were in written format and in English. The EVO sessions were bilingual and oral; the students wrote their autobiographies in French and I exchanged emails with my colleague in French. The EVO recordings required the elaboration of a transcription protocol adapted to this medium prior to careful transcription work. Since I was present in the CLIC and provided support to the participants during each recorded session, I had a first-hand understanding of the dynamics of the exchanges. I watched the videos several times and recorded my first impressions prior to starting the transcription process and again after completion of it. Several factors influenced the data transcription process. On the one hand, the visual recording feature provided cues that helped with the transcribing process, but was limited
to what visual information the webcam was able to capture. On the other hand, the audio quality, transmission problems, and some of the participants’ tendency to speak with a low voice rendered the transcription process at times more difficult.

Transcribing recorded data in general and audio/visual data in particular is neither a random process nor a minor endeavor. My goal was to convey as accurately and as clearly as possible the recorded bilingual interaction between the transatlantic partners. Yet, I did not aim to produce a transparent transcript since first, written codified conventions cannot accurately reflect all aspects of an intercultural conversation and second, transcripts of recorded data are intrinsically interpretive and constitute a step towards the analysis of the collected data. In fact, the selection of conventions represents the researcher’s own choices and specialists have found it to be “a process that is theoretical, selective, interpretive, and representational” (Davidson, 2009, p. 37). In this study, the recorded exchanges were intercultural, task-based, socially-situated, and supported by a multi-media program. In accordance with this complex context, I chose to apply a hybrid transcription protocol. Thus, the coding system includes conventions commonly adopted in transcription procedures (i.e. turn numbering, pauses, overlap), conventions meant to reflect the participants’ bilingual conversations (i.e. code switching in italics) and mentions of the use of meaning making events such as gestures and tools (i.e. the textbox feature). Also of importance was the participants’ use of the visual environment and paralinguistic cues in order to support the dialogic exchanges. Consequently, I added descriptive comments about visual and auditory cues within parenthesis to the transcription whenever they were deemed important to the understanding of the interaction. I purposefully chose to write out comments instead of to
encode them because I felt that they would not have been sufficiently explicit and would have impeded the understanding of the transcripts. This said, I am however aware of the limitations of this protocol which is included as Appendix D and note that the transcripts serve as summary renditions of the actual exchanges and as such must be used in conjunction with the recordings for analytic purposes.

Finally, I also took steps to address questions of validity and trustworthiness. The recordings were bilingual and a lot of code switching occurred during the interaction. I transcribed the first versions of these recordings but being a native French speaker, I was naturally more attuned to the French utterances –most particularly the colloquialisms and cultural references --produced during the exchange, than to the English ones. Therefore, in order to ensure that the transcripts reflected the recorded bilingual interaction as accurately as possible, they were proofread and checked by a native English speaker with transcription experience. This important second step strengthened the accuracy and validity of the final versions of the transcripts.

**Method of analysis**

Patton (2002) notes that “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings” (p. 432).

Although I originally intended to utilize only Byram’s list of attitudes in ICC for the purpose of this analysis, it became apparent that a complementary qualitative analytical tool was necessary to provide an in-depth analysis of the data. For this reason and in order to organize, classify and refine the various sets of data collected to extract observations and findings, I chose to employ a hybrid analytic approach by combining
the use of theory-driven a priori categories with a data-driven thematic and analytic approach. More specifically, I drew from 1) Byram’s taxonomy of factors of ICC, in particular the attitude factor’s objectives and 2) Boyatzis’s data-driven approach to determining emerging themes in qualitative data.

This pairing was well-suited for a study conducted within a socio-cultural theoretical framework which, in this instance, is concerned with the students’ mediated intercultural learning process, and where a methodology stressing observation, insight and inductive analysis (here analysis of emerging themes) is key. Furthermore, since I was researching features of ICC development, it was pertinent as a starting point, to use Byram’s list of ICC objectives as a priori categories. Byram’s conception of ICC learning is also a guided process which necessitates the development of a set of factors adapted to the learning and living context of the learners. It is facilitated by authentic contextualized and real time mediated interaction.

In Byram’s (1997) taxonomy, the learning objectives of the “attitudes” factor constitute an important part of ICC development and necessarily precede all other factors. For these reasons, they are the object of our analysis. Byram summed it up in a figure (see figure 2.1, 1997, p. 34) presenting attitudes as the ability to: relative self and value other (*savoir être*, in French and italics in the text). He further elaborated by stating that attitudes:

“…need to be not simply positive, since even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding. They need to be attitudes of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others’ meanings, beliefs and behaviours. There also needs to be a willingness to suspend belief in one’s own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging. This is an ability to ‘decentre’ which Kohlberg et al. (1983) have argued is an
advanced stage of psychological development and which Melde (1987) suggests is fundamental to understanding other cultures…” (Byram, 1997, p. 34).

Under the heading of “attitudes”, Byram then proposed a set of learning objectives. The data obtained from the telecollaborative sessions and other data collection instruments will therefore be combed for instances of the following objectives (1997, p.50):

- **willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; this should be distinguished from attitudes of seeking out the exotic or of seeking to profit from others;**

- **interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices;**

- **willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one’s own environment;**

- **readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence;**

- **readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction.**

This list of objectives is of use as an initial step for the coding and analysis of the recordings but it was not conceived specifically for the telecollaborative learning experience which is under study here. Merriam (2009) stresses that “Applying someone else’s scheme requires that the categories be compatible with the purpose and the theoretical framework of the study” (p. 185), and this is the case in the present study, but she also cautions again using borrowed classifications. As Boyatzis (1998) explains,
“theory-driven codes are developed “out of context” of the type of material to be coded. Therefore, the specifics of the operational code (i.e., the specifics of the code to be used on the source material) may be inappropriate to the material to be coded” (p. 35). For example, Byram’s taxonomy makes reference to attitudes observed during a stay in the target culture, which is not germane to a telecollaborative experience. However, that is not to say that FL learners engaged in consecutive synchronous audio/visual telecollaborative sessions will not also show readiness or lack of “readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation” (see Byram’s objective cited above. Byram, 1997) that potentially pertain to interaction with native speakers in this online learning context. In fact, Byram also stresses the idea that attainable objectives are dependent on the particular learning situations. Even though Byram’s set of objectives constituted important a priori categories for the analysis of the first stages of intercultural development, these were not sufficient to provide a thorough understanding of the data collected through the telecollaborative process. My goal was to observe and understand how the students of this case study may or may not have shown beliefs and behaviors such as the ones of attitudes described above, without limiting myself to only those attributes as Byram presented them. Furthermore, what behavior might account for which objectives is not clearly defined by the author. He does provide examples of, in his words “What might count as” (p. 57) but quickly adds that his suggestions are “irrespective of whether the answer is in terms of observational behaviors” (p. 57). Therefore, in order to determine and clarify what may counts as observable attributes of attitudes in this telecollaborative exchange and consequently reflect more closely the actual mediated

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41 Byram refers to this specific attitude when he recognizes that “some attitudes can only develop in fieldwork or independent learning locations” (1997, p.81).
processes in the data with regards to the students’ ICC learning, Byram’s set of objectives was supplemented with a more inductive approach, to identify themes or sub-categories emerging from the data. I have found Boyatzis’s approach to data-driven thematic analysis to be a sound complementary method for the development of a type of classification which will help make sense of the raw data.

Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis as a “process for encoding qualitative information” (p. 4). It involves the ability to see patterns relevant to the phenomenon under study in the data. The process of identifying an event in the data is characterized as “seeing”, and encoding it as “seeing as” something (Boyatzis, 1998, p.4). Through a lengthy and iterative process, lists of emerging themes are thus compiled and make up a code. A theme is defined as “a pattern found in the information that at a minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at a maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). These identified events are categorized, described and labeled, and end up forming a codebook.

Each code of this study’s codebook represented a way in which the participants expressed value of other or self relativization, and was identified by the following elements, which Boyatzis states as instrumental to “a good thematic code” (adapted from Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31):

a- A label (i.e., a name)

b- A definition of what the theme concerns

c- A description of how to know when the theme occurs
d- Indication of what might be excluded from the code

e- Data associated with this code. A positive example from the coded text and if necessary a negative one to avoid confusion.

But prior to taking the recommended steps for the thematic analysis of the data and the creation of the codebook, a first look at the data to obtain some insight about the content of the recorded sessions was necessary. With this in mind, and directly following the transcription of the first recordings, a preliminary review and encoding of the raw data of one unit of coding (i.e. the transcript of one recorded session) with Byram’s categories was completed and discussed with two co-raters. This provided me with valuable feedback with regards to the encoding process, and a verification that the use of these categories constituted a valid first step for the analysis of the data. The remainder of the recorded sessions was then transcribed and the units of coding were subjected to a comprehensive process of scrutiny and review, comprised of the following phases (adapted from Boyatzis, 1998, p. 44):

1) Reducing the raw information

4) Applying the a priori categories (Byram)

3) Further identification of themes (emergent themes) within the units of coding

4) Reviewing, refining the categories and finalizing the code

5) Determining the reliability of the code

The first phase of the code development involved the preparation of the raw data and close reading of text. To this end, I watched and took notes for each recording. I then
read the transcripts several times before summarizing and paraphrasing the raw text and the in-text descriptions of participants’ actions (see transcription protocol, Appendix D). This process enables to enter “the information into your unconscious, as well as consciously processing the information” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.45). I started to write an outline per transcript of all the paraphrased elements (i.e. key topics brought up by the participants, noted actions and behaviors).

In a second phase, I applied Byram’s categories to the data so as to identify corresponding events in each unit of coding. These segments of text were then color-coded per category. Significantly, I was not restricted by the a priori categories while completing this step. Rather, segments of text which constituted possible extensions of these categories as well as potential additional themes were also highlighted and annotated.

In a third phase, units of coding and outlines were closely scrutinized for meaning and emerging themes. All observable instances of what might correspond to the behavior and belief of valuing other and relativizing self, or lack of, were flagged in each Word document. I proceeded to list all these noted events, by session and then by participant. Noted themes were clustered together when there was an underlying common behavior or intent. This minute process constitutes an important step in sensing patterns. These emerging categories or codes were then sorted and verified for presence or absence in a sample of the data from all three participants.

In a fourth phase (reviewing and finalizing the code), in light of Byram’s overarching theme (attitudes of valuing other and relativizing self) and relevant
additional attitudes present in the data, a set of new codes (here subcategories) was added to complete the a priori categories. The final codebook was then finalized at the end of this phase. It is presented and discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The fifth phase was concerned with the determination of the reliability of the code. Reliability is conceived here as a “consistency of judgment that protects against or lessens the contamination of project” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 146). Attaining a high level of reliability is crucial in the sense that it bears upon the validity of the research findings. In fact, according to Boyatzis, “validity of findings cannot conceptually exceed the reliability of the judgments made in coding or processing the raw information” (1998, p. 144). Therefore, with the aim of checking for coding consistency and importantly assess the degree of reliability of the coding process, I applied Boyatzis’s percentage agreement method. This method measures the interrater reliability via the calculation of the “number of times of observation or coding in which the two coders agree divided by the number of possible observations, or instances of coding” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 154).

Figure 6. Percentage Agreement Calculation (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 154)

\[
\text{Percentage agreement} = \frac{\text{no. of times both coders agreed}}{\text{no. of times coding was possible}}
\]

A sufficient level of interrater reliability is estimated to be equivalent to or above a score of 70% of percentage agreement (Boyatzis, 1998, P. 156). For this study, an independent rater was provided with the code and asked to encode a section of the raw text, in this case one of the transcripts. Importantly, this second rater had previously watched the recordings and verified the transcripts, and as a result, she was already familiar with the content and context of the transcribed telecollaborative sessions. The
code was explained to her with matching examples from the raw data for each code and she started applying it to the data. After the first attempt, it appeared that there was some noticeable variation in the way she understood some of the categories. There was also some confusion about the context of the specific coded events. We were able to discuss these in detail and clarify which codes applied and I proceeded to make the relevant modifications to the code definitions and descriptions. The codes were thus further refined and we were able to reach a percentage agreement of 80% in a following attempt. I found it valuable to compare our own coding and consequently, we both coded each recording and discussed the results. As noted before, this second rater was a native English speaker, and this last step proved to be particularly useful for the interpretation of culture-specific attitudes.

**External and internal validity**

Throughout this chapter, I have described some of the steps taken to address the validity of the study. On one hand, issues of external validity were not central here as this study’s objective is to understand the behavioral and developmental processes at work during the telecollaboration, and is therefore not seeking the generalizability of the findings pertaining to a particular group of students in a specific class setting. I leave the task of drawing considerations in regard to the adaptability of the model employed and the use of the findings to the reader or telecollaborative practitioner. Viewed through this angle though, this *reader generalizability* (i.e. “the extent to which findings from an investigation can be applied to other situations is determined by the people in those situations” Merriam, 1995, p.58) may still be strengthened primarily, I believe, via a clear, reasoned and thorough description of the procedure, participants and setting. On
the other hand, from the beginning of the process on, I pondered various ways to increase internal validity. To this end, I adopted several measures starting with keeping a detailed record of my actions, in particular because this was a complex and lengthy process, and including the use of data triangulation, that is to say, the cross-checking of data sources. The latter measure refers to my efforts to employ multiple documents (see Table 4) to supplement the data garnered from the video recordings, in order to look at the phenomenon from different angles, pay attention to different voices (participants, colleague) aside from mine, and ultimately strengthen the internal validity. Validity was also addressed in the design of the study via the initial telecollaborative test, the pilot study and the semester-long study. The analysis of several sessions over a semester allows for cross-comparison and lowers the bearing of extraneous factors on the results of the analysis. Another step taken was the close description and identification of data. Special attention was paid during the coding process to stay as close in meaning and as truthful as possible to the wording used by the participants. This necessary caution was also reflected during the code elaboration phase through the inter-rater reliability calculation which heightened the validity of the code and of the chosen wording. Lastly, it is important to discuss the central role I played throughout the different phases of the study, and as a result of my own actions and decisions, possible consequences pertaining to issues of internal validity. All these steps are inherently reflective of my own paradigmatic views, and my beliefs shaped partly through my own experiences, about ICC development and FL learning and teaching. I carefully exposed in the previous chapters the theoretical foundation which frames this study and constitutes the lens I used to interpret the data. Qualitative researchers are not blank slates and evidently come to
their research with a set of beliefs and values. I paid careful attention to remain as objective as possible in my methodological choices and interpretive stance by using constant comparison, stressing consistency in my work, while staying open to contrary findings (Yin, 2009, p. 72) in order to limit possible biases.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented a review of the methodologies employed to devise and implement the present study. Integrating a complex transatlantic research project in a FL course necessitated careful consideration of all aspects of the course and of a sound case study design. Particular attention was paid to insuring the validity and reliability of the data collected. In addition, a detailed explanation of the analytical tools in line with the study’s underlying theory and most fitting qualitative rationale was provided. Lastly, I returned to my own role in the present study and the notion of researcher bias in qualitative methodology.
CHAPTER IV

CODEBOOK AND CASE STUDY I: KATHY

The Codebook

The codebook was elaborated with Byram’s 1997 a priori categories (A, A6, B, C, D and E) as well as the categories that emerged from the data as a result of the thematic analysis. Byram defined the first objective referred to as code A, as the “willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; this should be distinguished from attitudes of seeking out the exotic or seeking to profit from others” (p.50). When the preliminary survey of the data revealed a wide range of attitudes befitting this definition, this category was subdivided into a set of objectives emerging from the thematic analysis. These supplemental categories (A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5) are congruent with the overarching attitude objectives of “valuing other” and “relativizing self” presented by Byram. To clarify the structure and content of the codebook, all these categories are color-coded and presented in Table 6. Codes stemming from the a priori categories are fully highlighted and, for the emerging categories, the actual text is color-coded.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and Labels</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-Willingness to seek out opportunities/take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality</td>
<td>A1-Self-relativizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2-Providing language help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3-Providing information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following Boyatzis’s 1998 statement of elements essential to defining a code, each code (a priori and emerging ones) is labeled, described and complemented with illustrative examples (positive and/or negative.) A detailed description of each code is provided next.

A- Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; this should be distinguished from attitudes of seeking out the exotic or of seeking to profit from others. (Byram) No single instance was encoded A, rather these were classified as belonging to one of the following subcategories:

A1- Self-relativizing.

Willingness to show value of other through self-relativizing, asking for help, apologizing, hedging, or giving priority to partner. This includes consciously putting aside one’s own interest for the benefit of other

Ex: A⁴³: Je ne comprends ce mot je m’excuse {I do not understand this word I’m sorry⁴⁴}

⁴² The wording of the label is my own except for A. And for codes A6, B, C, D and E, the wording is based on the description of the objectives provided by Byram (1997).
This is an instance of A1 because the speaker is both asking for clarifications and apologizing.

**A2- Providing language help.**

Willingness to show value of other through clarifying self and providing language help and support to other in order to facilitate communication. This includes code switching and reformulation.

This encompasses code switching to clarify or support the conversation, providing a translation, rewording, paraphrasing etc.

*Ex: F: fifteen ok so you are the how do you say when you are the*

\[A: \text{oldest}\]

\[F: \text{you are the}\]

\[A: \text{the fils aîné right} \{\text{the oldest son}\}\]

This is an example of A2 because A is providing language support by both indicating the word in English that F is looking for, and translating it into French for clarification.

**A3- Providing Information.**

Willingness to show value of other through volunteering cultural information, external resources, and technological assistance to help with the task and interaction, distinct from using self (or personal experience) as cultural reference.

\[^{43}\] A indicates and American student and F indicates a French student. Although one of the conversational partners in France is Algerian, she is referred to as F here because she is enrolled in the same class at the French students. In cases where the example involves an exchange, the relevant portion is underlined.

\[^{44}\] A translation of any discourse in French is provided. The translated text appears in curly brackets.
This does not include exchanging information without showing value of other.

Ex: A: uh it means sick je sais pas (laughs) uh est-ce que tu as jamais utilisé cette uh site web-ci (typing)?

In this instance of A3, the speaker shows value of other because he is willing to share useful information to help his partner such as a website.

**A4- Seeking connection via shared commonalities.**

Willingness to connect with and relate to other through pointing out things in common, common interests, shared experiences, and seeking other’s opinion.

*This code refers to making personal connections.*

Ex: A: tu as tu parles arabe arabic

F: oui je parle arabe oui je parle arabe j’écris l’arabe je fais (laughs) tout en arabe donc uh

A: je voudrais uh uh je voudrais à parler arabe mais

F: vous

A: uh c’est très difficile oui oui

In this example, A’s statement is encoded A4 because this speaker seeks a connection by pointing at a common interest for the Arabic language after finding out that her partner speaks Arabic.

**A5- Providing encouragement.**

Willingness to show value of other through encouragement, reassurance.

Ex: F: my teacher will fight me after when she listens she fight me aye you can you can you can uhm uh delete?

A: no I can’t
F: [ah uh]

A: [bu]t it’s ok ‘cause you know we’re getting to know each other

This instance is coded A5 because the American student reassures his partner when this one shows concerns about a discussion he just had and which was recorded.

**A6- Interest in other’s daily life.**

The intercultural speaker is interested in the other’s experience of daily life in contexts not usually presented to outsiders through the media nor used to develop a commercial relationship with outsiders; interest in the daily experience of a range of social groups within a society and not only that represented in the dominant culture. (Byram)

*Here, this pertains only to personal (genuine interest) questions of other’s experience not directly specified in the questionnaire task (see coding notes).*

*Ex: A: uhm so what other classes are you taking?*

This question is coded A6 because it shows A’s genuine interest in finding out more about F’s daily life and it is not from the questionnaire.

*Ex (negative example):*

A: *how long does do you go to university for ... [one year]*

F: [how]

A: two years

F: *how long how long*

A: *how long in France*

F: yeah uh in general [or] for me
A: [yes] _in general and then for you (no follow up on the personal part of the question)_

This exchange initiated by the American speaker is not coded A6 because it does not reflect a personal interest in F’s daily life. When asked by F whether this is a personal or general question, A clearly indicates that he wants a general response first.

**B- Interest in other’s perspectives.**

Interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices (Byram)

The intercultural speaker does not assume that familiar phenomena -cultural practices or products common to themselves and the other-are understood by assimilating them to their own cultural phenomena; and is aware that they need to discover the other person’s understanding of these, and of phenomena in their own culture which are not familiar to the other person. (Byram)

_Ex: A: uh penses-tu que la religion avait une position dans cet argument ou ce débat ? {do you think that religion has a say on this question or in this debate}

In this instance coded B, the American speaker is directly asking for F’s opinion on whether or not religion should have a say in the discussion about abortion.

**C- Questioning values and presuppositions.**

Willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one’s own environment. (Byram)

The intercultural speaker actively seeks the other’s perspectives and evaluations of phenomena in the intercultural speaker’s environment which are taken for granted, and takes up the other’s perspectives in order to contrast and compare with the dominant evaluations in their own society. (Byram)
D- Readiness to adapt over time

Readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence (Byram)

Since we are not in an immersion context, this attitude might not be present in a telecollaborative exchange or might be expressed in a way befitting this specific set up.

E- Following other’s codes of communication.

Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction (Byram)

The intercultural speaker notes and adopts the behaviours specific to a social group in a way which they and the members of that group consider to be appropriate for an outsider; the intercultural speaker takes into consideration the expectations the others may have about appropriate behaviour from foreigners. (Byram)

In this study’s context, this covers primarily showing readiness to adopt behaviors, such as conventions and rites of communication that are appropriate to other. This code includes the use of appropriate address forms. Instances of E may take various forms in the text and may be encoded in several ways: as an entire unit, when the speaker initiates a greeting or leave-taking sequence, as an (explanatory) utterance where the speaker expresses awareness of the conventions, and as the production of a single expression or the use of subject pronouns and possessive adjectives.

Ex: A: *quoi de neuf* ?{what’s up}
This instance is coded E because the speaker is using the appropriate idiom in French in the context of the exchange.

*Ex:*  
*A: when I was emailing you I was trying to write I look forward to talking to you and it came out (typing)*

In this instance of code E, the American speaker shows readiness to engage with the conventions for closing phrases of formal letters or messages in French, as he was writing to his French partner.

While the presence of attitudes showing value of other and self-relativizing was identified and accordingly encoded, the absence of it or more to the point, the participants’ deliberate choice to verbalize a lack of value of other and relativize self, was also deemed meaningful and it was consequently encoded as follows:

*Attitudes showing a lack of self-relativizing or value of other are noted as “absence of” or “lack of”.*

*This code refers to the speaker’s deliberate choice to put his/her interest first at the disadvantage of their partner.*

*Ex:*  
*A: uhm we can start in English (...) (laughs) oui (laughs)*

This instance is coded “lack of” because the American speaker is not willing to relativize self and he overtly expresses his preference for starting the conversation in his L1.

Instances of “lack of” are not listed as a category in the codebook for they do not represent a learning objective. Nevertheless, the contexts in which these instances appear and the manner in which participants produce them, yield enough valuable information to
be included in this analysis. They are thus examined and discussed as they relate to the individual cases.

**Coding notes**

1- A list of questions was given to the participants at the beginning of the first session. The objective was to help them introduce themselves to their partners and to get to know them. When voiced by the participants, these questions were not encoded. Since they were handed out to them and meant to be used as conversation starters, they do not necessarily reflect a personal interest in the person. Questions from the questionnaire (see Appendix A) and questions closely resembling the ones from the questionnaire with some variation in formulation were not encoded as well (especially if they were asked during the first session of the exchange).

*Ex: A: *uh où est-ce que tu habites ? {uh where do you live} *(questionnaire)*

*Ex : A: et quelle est ton année ou niveau à l’université ?{and what year are you in at the university}* *(questionnaire)*

2- At times, an utterance or an entire sequence was encoded as a single instance if it was thought to be part of a unit of meaning.

3- It was possible to encode an instance twice. For example, if an instance was encoded C or B in the text and there was an instance of A2 in the same sequence or in the same utterance such as in the example below.

*Ex: A: c’est bon je ne peux parler en français [bon (laughs)] {It’s good I can’t speak French well}* *(A1, A5)*
This instance is coded both AI and A5 because the American speaker encourages and reassures the French speaker, and relativizes self by pointing at her language difficulties in French.

Case Study 1: Kathy

Before proceeding with the analysis of the recorded sessions, the participants are introduced to the reader with an overview and discussion of relevant information from several secondary data sources. Initial information is gathered by way of looking at their background surveys, biographies and topics of choice for the debates in addition to their reported reflections on the telecollaborative sessions. This brief presentation helps situate the participants as FL learners engaging in a telecollaborative experience for the first time. The background survey constitutes the initial source of data. In this online survey, Kathy, Mark and Robert reported on their a) prior coursework in French, b) FL language use, c) attitude toward and experience with intercultural communication and foreign travel, and d) experience with and attitude towards technology use for FL learning. These surveys present both facts (e.g. their prior coursework), but also personal statements about their interests, beliefs, values and practices, and lastly their own expectations about the telecollaborative exchange. This step is an important part of the case study analysis because it highlights selected features of the case that are valuable for the interpretation of the data.

A Portrait

Kathy is a twenty year old student from a small town in upstate New York. Her goal is to become a foreign language teacher and to this end she is majoring both in
French and Spanish. When she enrolled in the FRE 350Y, she was listed as a third year undergraduate student, but was in her first semester at this university. Her French coursework was unlike that of the students enrolled because she had transferred 300-level “Advanced French Grammar” and “Topics in French Cinema” from another university. Based on the data available, it cannot be ascertained whether transferring and thus following a somewhat different learning path bore on her comfort level and performance in class, but it is a possibility. In her background survey, she reported that she was also taking a French pronunciation course (AFRE 306 Composition and Pronunciation of French) required for the major. This was her first course with me. I recall her as a studious albeit quiet student. My impression was that she lacked the self-confidence to participate actively. When asked to rate how comfortable she was in speaking French, Kathy was the only student, who checked “uncomfortable” in her survey. Kathy’s answer is the only one represented by the orange column below.

Figure 7. Background Survey Question: Students’ Level of Comfort in speaking French
In general, Kathy did not initiate conversations or ask questions, but she seemed to do her best to answer when being asked a question in French and she was more comfortable participating in pair work. Class participation was graded after each class meeting, and hers clearly increased for the class right after the first webcasting session. Although she retained that level of increased participation for the remainder of the semester in all but one class meeting, her performance in this respect remained weaker than others in the class. All her class assignments were submitted on time and she had perfect class attendance. However, she received the third lowest participation grade in the course.

In the background survey, Kathy was one of four students who stated that they had never spoken French with a native speaker before. Her answers on the survey also suggest that this was not an activity that she showed a lot of interest in. Figure 8 shows
Kathy’s self-disclosed interest in speaking with native French students, in comparison with the answers of the other students. Her response is one of the two represented in the blue column.

Figure 8. Background Survey Question: Students’ Level of Interest in speaking with native French Students.

The portrait that can be drawn from these responses is at best blurry. In fact, they provide conflicting pieces of information. Kathy recognizes that she is “uncomfortable” speaking in French and answers that she expects “to become a better speaker and more comfortable while speaking French” when asked what she expects to get out of the telecollaboration. She is majoring in French and states that she likes French as one of the reasons for wanting to learn the language. Yet, she is only “somewhat” interested in
speaking with native French students. One plausible explanation for these seemingly diverging pieces of information is her awareness of her difficulties in speaking in French and of the possible ensuing discomfort at being paired for the first time with a native speaker to converse and complete a task in French. It is important to keep in mind that her in-class participation level was at its lowest at the time of the completion of this survey.

On the survey, the only question to which she declared herself “very interested” (like all the other students) inquired about traveling outside of the United States. When asked about her traveling experience to French speaking areas, she explained that she had made two short trips to Paris and Quebec (2 to 3 days each). She also stated as a response to why she had studied French and Spanish that she enjoyed knowing what people from different countries were saying and she liked the music and the culture. But yet again, Kathy was one of the only two students “somewhat curious” about French cultures (30% of the students were “curious” and 50% “very curious”) and also one of the only two students “somewhat interested” in knowing more about Francophone cultures (20% were “interested” and 60% “very interested). At first glance, these latter two results can appear contradictory and incongruous for someone who stated in her autobiography that she would like to teach a foreign language and who is very interested in traveling abroad, unless her understanding of the concept of culture is other than the one implied in these questions. By suggesting this, I am pointing at the answer Kathy provided for the following question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question: How much do you feel you know about Francophone cultures?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

110
**Please explain:** I only took one course on Francophone cultures

In her explanation, Kathy links her self-reported limited knowledge of Francophone cultures to her taking only one course, probably the FRE 320 Topics in French Cinema course she listed in the survey. Therefore, she seems to correlate her own knowledge of culture to taking a culture content area class like French cinema. She does not appear to acknowledge her own culture-rich travel experiences to French-speaking areas as actual culture learning opportunities. She clearly enjoyed and values these experiences but might not see them as a way of developing cultural knowledge the way she understands this concept.

Certainly the results of this survey highlight interesting points about Kathy and provide useful insight into her values and beliefs pre-webcasting, but they represent only one source of information. Still, these primary pieces of information help inform us about her perception of her abilities and interests, and they will help shed light on her choices, attitudes and behaviors during the analysis of the telecollaborative exchanges.

In her autobiography, Kathy included a descriptive text in French and three topics of her choice for the debate. She introduced herself, her family and explained that she was studying Spanish and French and that she wanted to teach foreign languages. She added that she went to Paris, Madrid and Barcelona when she was sixteen but could not communicate in the respective native languages. She stated in French: “in my mind, it is important to travel everywhere in the world” (my translation) before adding where else she wanted to travel. She then concluded her autobiography with a description of her hobbies. The entire paragraph on travelling supports her survey statement about her
interest in travelling outside of the US and seems to show a lot of curiosity for foreign cultures.

A few days after her selection of topics for the debate task was submitted along with the ones from the other students, Kathy was paired with Sophie\(^\text{45}\). Due to the differing number of participants on the two sides of the exchange (American and French), Kathy was asked to share her French partner with another classmate. The pairing process was a complex one and topics of interest were not the only factor taken into account. In reality, my colleague and I also paid close attention to L2 skill levels when forming the dyads and pairing Sophie with Kathy. Kathy’s initial topics of interest were abortion, assisted suicide and internet censorship. And while Sophie’s topics of interest (danger of internet on children, children and games, and the danger of television on children) matched the ones of her other American partner, they differed from Kathy’s. This mismatch with regards to the chosen topics must be kept in mind for the analysis as it gives important contextual information for some of the discussions within this dyad.

Kathy submitted her journal or reflection on the telecollaboration shortly after the first online session via email. She put more thought into this first entry which is longer than the second and third ones. Here is Kathy’s personal account:

I thought that the first session was really fun. We began the conversation by speaking in French. I am a little nervous about speaking French, but I tried to communicate as best as possible. At first it was a little difficult hearing her because it seemed like there was a lot of background noise. I adjusted to the noise because I couldn’t figure out how to fix it and continued with the conversation. My partner was very nice and said if I didn’t understand anything to just ask. Once we changed languages she seemed to be just as nervous speaking English as I was speaking French. The first thing that she said in French before we started talking in English was she wasn’t that good at speaking English, or something to

\(^{45}\) Recall that the names of the participants have been changed to protect their identity.
that extent. That comment made me feel better about speaking French because we were both in the same situation. I thought it was really neat how we were helping out each other.

This reflection concurs with some of the points made previously, namely that Kathy seemed to have reserves about this experience primarily because of her difficulties in expressing herself in French. This initial nervousness was in part overcome when her partner expressed similar difficulties, but also when she realized that she was the English expert and that the reciprocal nature of the rapport and task design evened out the challenges she faced, a sentiment she voices out in the last two sentences. This entry also reveals that despite her nervousness and the background noise which impeded the conversation, she was willing to adjust to the situation and “communicate as best as possible”. Interestingly, her anxiety, lack of confidence as well as her strong desire to converse with her partner are all part of the attitudes which are found throughout the transcript of this first session and which will be examined next.

Kathy’s First Telecollaborative Session

The first recording lasted for 26 minutes. Kathy and Sophie had not had any contact ahead of this session. The autobiographies and the selection of topics were the only pieces of information they had received about each other. In order to facilitate this “get to know one another” phase, I handed out a questionnaire (Appendix A) and explained its purpose to the students. I made it clear that they were not required to use it, and that it was up to them to use it or initiate the conversation differently. Kathy opted for the questionnaire and carefully followed its list of topics. For this reason, the content of the first session includes many of the topics that were listed and even though these related
questions might reflect genuine interest on the part of Kathy, they cannot be assumed to do so. Therefore, they have not been integrated into the coded portion of the analysis.

Kathy’s choice and careful use of the list indicates that she felt she needed it as an aid for the initial interaction and/or wished to follow instructions. In fact, in the course of the conversation, she returned to the topics of the questionnaire in a couple of instances, abruptly cutting the flow of the conversation while doing so:

126K: tu aimes beaucoup la France ? {do you like France a lot}

127 S: oui j’aime trop j’aime trop parce que je suis ici pour étudier donc c’est c’est que… (laughs) {yes, I really like it because I am here to study so it’s it’s}

128K: uh uh que faites-vous pour l’amusement ? {What do you do for fun}

129S: hein ?{what}

130K: l’amusement {fun}

131S: eh ben donc j’écoute beaucoup de musique {well so I listen to a lot of music}

Kathy’s sudden change of topic line 128 (what do you do for fun from the questionnaire) seemed to confuse her partner who showed flexibility and went along with “eh ben donc” after her initial surprise indicated in “hein?” In this telecollaborative session, Sophie followed Kathy’s lead throughout most of the conversation although she was the one who felt more at ease initiating the first questions (from the list), probably because the conversation started in French. Kathy followed suit while redirecting the conversation a few times. But after this initial phase (less than the first third of the recording), she took control of the flow of the conversation, in French. Then over half way through the interaction, she put the list aside and asked her partner if she wanted to talk about the
debate (line 196). Sophie explained that she had already chosen a topic with her second conversational partner and added what it is about. Kathy reacted by asking for a language switch (line 204):

196  K: uh tu veux parler uh de le de le uh débat {uh do you want to talk uh about the about the uh debate}

197  S: ben uh j’ai choisi avec votre collègue qui est D (another student) {well yes I chose with your colleague D}

198K: oui uh {yes uh}

199  S: la XX donc uh j’ai choisi avec elle le danger des medias [les] {the XX so uh I chose the danger of media the}

200K: [uh]

201  S: [les dangers] le danger des medias sur les jeunes {the dangers of media on young people}

202K: [uh] oui oui {uh yes yes}

203  S: donc uh c’est ça normalement j’ai choisi ce sujet uh je vais essayer de de travailler dessus {so uh that’s the plan right now I chose this topic uh I’m going to try to work on it}

204  K: oui et uh pour uh tu veux changer le langue uh en en anglais {yes and uh to uh do you want to switch to English}

It is likely that she felt that she had already conversed in French for a long while and she preferred to discuss the debate topic and task in English. Significantly, after requesting to switch languages, Kathy went back to asking both genuine questions (coded A6) and questions from the list, instead of continuing with the debate topic. Two plausible reasons are that she still had remaining questions from the list in mind or possibly that she preferred to start the English part of the exchange with simple questions, since Sophie had just voiced reserves about her own English skills. If the latter, this illustrates Kathy’s willingness to value her partner and show support.
Session 1: Attitudes

In order to carefully review Kathy’s expression of attitudes throughout the recording and examine which ones she produces, in what context they occur, with what frequency and how they evolve over the duration of the interaction, I will start with the opening sequence, namely the greeting sequence, encoded E and examine the other codes as they appear in the recording starting with the highest frequency. Kathy initiated the greeting sequence in French and chose the more formal greeting form “bonjour”, thus following conventions pertaining to French greetings in the context of an initial encounter. Kathy showed “Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction” (Byram). At the end of the interaction, Kathy was also the one who initiated the leave-taking sequence in English at first and then in French, showing value of her partner in doing so. But she misused the expression “enchánté” (line 344), which is normally a part of a formal greeting sequence. She demonstrated a desire to show value through the use of this expression but did not have a good understanding of the proper pragmatic function associated with it.

340 K: j’ai j’ai une classe de espagnol à à uh in dix minutes mais uh {I have I have a Spanish class at at uh in ten minutes but uh}

341 S: oui d’accord {yes ok}

342 K: it was nice meeting you though

343 S: uh so

344 K: enchanté {nice to meet you}

345 S: merci moi de même donc uh à la prochaine fois {thank you me too so uh until next time}

346 K: oui au revoir {yes goodbye}

347 S: ok au revoir {ok goodbye}
The use of appropriate forms of address is also considered a part of category (E), as these pertain to language conventions. In this first recording, there was an interesting “disconnect” between Sophie’s and Kathy’s use of French address forms. Sophie used the formal “vous” form (43 times) during the entire conversation when she addressed Kathy, except on three occasions, when she uses “tu” and “vous” in the same turns (lines 34 and 93) and “tu” line 248. The juxtaposed use of the informal and formal forms showed some indecision on the part of Sophie. It is possible that Kathy’s constant use of the informal “tu” is affecting Sophie’s choice. There might also be other possible reasons for Sophie’s constant use of “vous” throughout the recording and not initiating a request to use the informal “tu”. Sophie is Algerian and she started living in France not very long before this exchange. She might have been following slightly different conventions with regards to address forms. As for Kathy, inconsistent with her selection of a formal greeting expression, she used the informal subject pronoun (nine times) from the beginning of the conversation until the end. Kathy never adjusted to Sophie’s modeling of the address forms and did not show an understanding of the rules and conventions governing the use of address forms in French. On three occasions, she also used the formal subject pronoun “vous” when she phrased questions from the questionnaire:

126  K: tu aimes beaucoup la France ? {do you like France a lot}
127  S: oui j’aime trop j’aime trop parce que je suis ici pour étudier donc c’est c’est que… (laughs) {yes I really like I really like it because I am here to study so it’s it’s }
128K: uh uh que faites-vous pour l’amusement ? {uh uh what do you do for fun}

Interestingly, she used the possessive adjective “votre” twice and once she self-corrected after employing “son”: “son votre travail” but did not use “ton” except in one instance when she explained that she listens to music in her car “dans ton (sic) voiture” (line 144).
Figure 9 provides an overview of the attitudes relative to self-relativizing and valuing others coded in this first session along with the number of instances of each one.

Figure 9. Kathy Session 1- List of Codes

Note: The color coding used in this chart does not follow the colors assigned to the actual codes.

This chart reveals the prominence of the A1 code, which refers to Kathy’s inclination to self-relativize, apologize, give priority to her partner and use hedging as well. It is indicative of her nervousness and doubt in her ability to communicate in French. This code is particularly noticeable at the beginning of the session right after the
greeting sequence. The sequence of codes presented below gives a clearer picture of the frequency and order of occurrence of the A1 code as well as the others in the text.

Closely following the greeting sequence, Kathy displayed behaviors that reflected attitudes encoded A1, namely self-relativizing. Out of the ten instances of A1 present in this recording, eight occurred in the first half when the two partners conversed in French. The first two instances were noted when Kathy initiated the exchange in French and then the language choice discussion in French:

14 K : .....mh tu veux tu veux commencer en anglais ou en français {do you want to start in English or in French}

15S: uh c’est comme vous voulez parce que moi en anglais je suis nulle donc uh je sais pas (laughs) {as you wish (but) my English is really poor so uh I don’t know}

16K: uh hello uh

17 S: uh hello donc uh si vous voulez commencer en anglais ou en français c’est comme vous voulez (pause) vous m’avez compris {so uh if you want to start in English or in French it’s up to you (pause) did you understand me}

19 K: quand oui uh yeah uh j uh commencer en français c’est bon {when yes uh yeah uh j uh start in French it’s ok}

In this excerpt, Kathy relativized-self through giving priority to her partner. She let Sophie choose which language to start with, without even hinting at her own preference.

On the other hand, Sophie who at first appeared to act alike, responding “c’est comme vous voulez”, made her own preference known by commenting that her English was
really not good. Kathy understood the intention and suggested to start in French.

Although she did not push for the use of English, her lack of comfort was apparent seeing that the next three instances of A1 are all forms of apology and hedging about her level of proficiency in French.

Instance 1

21 K: **oui je m’excuse** {yes I’m sorry}  
(they speak simultaneously)

23 S: ok moi aussi uh {ok me too uh}

24 K: **je m’excuse je ne peux parler uh meilleur** {I’m sorry I can’t speak uh better}

Instance 2

33 K: **mais ne sais pas très** {but don’t know very}

34 S: uh tu ne sais pas très bien uh prononcer la langue française c’est ça mais vous comprenez vous arrivez à comprendre c’est ça {uh you don’t know very well uh how to pronounce French language that’s it but you understand you can understand that’s it}

Instance 3

52 K: **oui uhm comment uh je ne sais pas** (...) uh quel âge as as-tu {yes uhm how uh I don’t know … uh how old are are you}

There are two more instances of A1 concerning her French language skills in the data. On one occasion, she responded “c’est bon je ne peux parler français bon” {it’s ok I can’t speak French well} as a way to show support to her partner. Another interesting context, in which she markedly gave priority to her partner, is the debate topic. Kathy had already talked to Sophie about their debate and seemingly agreed to Sophie’s choice, “the
dangers of media on children. Yet, she tried to nudge her partner into reconsidering by asking:

283  K: **so do you do you like uhm you like that topic though**
284  S: uh yes this topic I wan I want to I think that it’s a better subject that XX
285  K: yeah that is a good subject
286  S: thank you

Kathy’s use of the adverb *though*, as a hedging device, emphasizes her conflicting opinion. Unsure about how to bring this up because they had already started discussing the topic, she rephrased her question. In this illocutionary act, Kathy’s intent is to state that her opinion differs, that she does not like that topic. However, Sophie’s reaction showed that she either was not able to infer Kathy’s intent or deliberately chose to avoid it and keep her own selection. The last instance of A1 takes place shortly before the end of the session when Kathy apologized for having to leave and go to another class.

In terms of attitudes, it seems appropriate to discuss A2 after A1 because it relates to the speakers’ language use and language skills as well. There are only 6 instances of A2 and they are solely present in the second half of the recording, when the discussion is in English. Kathy demonstrated A2 by providing language support to her partner in several ways. Per Sophie’s request, she translated words and sequences into English, and used the textbox tool to indicate the corresponding written forms (lines 216, 237, 247). She also supported the conversation and provided language help to Sophie through code-switching (line 259) and rephrasing her questions.

**Instance 1**
S: uh no before high school uh in uh XX je sais pas comment ça s’appelle uh in a second seconda (sic) {I don’t know how it’s called}

K: l’école secondaire uh non j yeah second secondary school

Instance 2

S: ma soeur my uh comment on dit ma petite soeur c’est uh my {my sister my uh how do you say my little sister}

K: your younger sister

Instance 3

S: dangers of media in m sur les jeunes comment on dit {on young people how does one say}

K: uhm dangers of the media on children les dangers de {le media sur le}

S: [tu peux l’écrire] en français {can you write it in French}

K: uh je n un moment (S is typing #dangers#) I can’t I can’t see when you type

Instance 4

K: uhm un moment {one moment}

S: ah ok ok ok attendez attendez je vais vous l’écrire parce que j’étais dans le mauvais {ah ok ok ok wait wait I’m going to write it to you because I was in the wrong}

K: uh je suis dans Chantilly {I am in Chantilly}

Once the conversation switched to English, Kathy seemed more confident and showed that she valued her partner through a combination of positive attitudes and self-relativizing in order support Sophie through the remaining part of the exchange.
The A6 code is one of the a priori codes, Byram defined it as: when a speaker shows interest “in the other’s experience of daily life in contexts” (1997, p. 57). A review of the content of this recording reveals that there are three main lines of discussion in addition to the topic of language use and language proficiency; 1) when the partners follow the questionnaire and any exchange related to the listed topics; 2) when they discuss the debate topic and content, and 3) when the conversation is neither guided by the questionnaire nor by the task and they ask each other questions showing genuine interest in one another. The latter category is the one Byram referred to, and is encoded A6. There are eight instances of this attitude in this recording. They are interspersed with references to the other lines of discussion, in particular questions from the list. Interestingly in most of the cases, questions based on genuine interest follow discussions on topics initiated by the questionnaire, and the debate in one instance. Furthermore, after the discussion on Sophie’s origins, Kathy quickly took over the control of the exchange, initiating virtually all the remaining questions based on the questionnaire and A6 ones, both in English and in French. Below are a couple of instances of A6:

Instance 1

107    K: mais je ne sais beaucoup de Algérie mais uh uhm s **tu vives en France**
**uh aujourd’hui** {do you live in France today}

Instance 2

324    K: I do I like uhm **do you know any uh American series**

325    S: uh One Tree Hill

326    K: uhm like Grey’s Anatomy they’re           (partial sequence)
The second sample is an illustration of how questions from the list can lead to discussions of genuine interest. In this instance, Kathy initially asked Sophie what type of movie she liked (questionnaire). A long exchange about movie genres and the correct translation for “séries” (series) ensued, and it was followed by a discussion of their favorite American series, which starts with the instance of A6 mentioned above.

Kathy also demonstrated sensitivity to her partner by providing a lot of encouragement (A5). There are five instances of A5 in the recording and four of them are found in the second half, after the language switch to English. Four of these show attitudes of encouragement and reassurance specifically with regards to lack of L2 proficiency (line 206). In three cases, Kathy provided encouragement by sharing that she experienced the same difficulty or problem, which explains why some of these sequences are encoded both A5 and A4 (seeking connection via shared commonalities) as in line 230 below. In instance 3, she also rephrases herself to make her encouragement more explicit.

Instance 1

206  K: c’est bon je ne peux parler en français [bon (laughs)] {it’s ok I can’t speak French well} (A5 and A2)

Instance 2

230  K: [uh it’s] the same for me with French (A4 & A5)

Instance 3

240  K: you’re doing good right now
Another way of showing value to one’s conversational partner is in making connection through pointing at things in common. There are 6 instances of A4 (seeking connections via shared commonalities). Once Kathy found out that her partner was Algerian, she used it as an opportunity to share her connection with this culture citing her Algerian friend and her interest in the Arabic language (instances 1 and 3). The partners also found commonalities and shared interest when discussing the questionnaire (instance 2) and daily life experiences (A6). These instances are spread throughout the recording.

Instance 1

79 K: mon uh mon amie est uh est d’Algérie {my uh my friend is uh is from Algeria}

Instance 2

138 K: uh j’aime la musique aussi uh j’aime la musique espagnole comme le reggeaton [et uh] {uh I like music too uh I like Spanish music like reggeaton}

Instance 3

175 K: je voudrais uh uh je voudrais à parler arabe mais {I would like uh uh I would like to speak Arabic but}

176 S: vous {you}

177 K: uh c’est très difficile oui oui {uh it’s very difficult yes}
S: oui c’est trop difficile mais bon mais si on on veut on peut {yes it’s really difficult but ok but when there is a will there is a way}

K: oui

There is only one instance of A3, when Kathy showed support to Sophie by providing resources for the debate. She asked Sophie if she was familiar with You Tube and added that this site was not censored a lot, as an example of the dangers of the media on children. In the same sequence, she also suggested other sites like My Space and Facebook, before asking her partner if she had an account.

K: [uh yes yes I can so uh have you seen you tube this site you [tube]

S: [uh you] tube yes uh

K: and that can a lot of times children watch those so that could be like a bad influence when you see violence

S: mhm

K: and it’s not censored a lot uhm a lot of the time they can see bad things on you tube and

S: mhm

K: and another site I’m trying to think of another site like My Space and Facebook

S: yes yes I know

This first session was rich in information relating to attitudes. In some instances, they were closely linked to the questionnaire task and in others, to specific moments of the exchange (ie. beginning, end, language switch). Several codes were not present, notably the a priori codes B and C. The tasks and discussion did not seem to lend themselves to the production of these codes by Kathy and we will see in the examination...
of the second session if she then showed interest in her partner’s perspective (B) and presuppositions (C). The work on the debate was limited to a brief discussion of the choice of topic and some limited information exchange. Significantly also, there was no noticeable instance of deliberate “lack of” self-relativizing or show of value on the behalf of Kathy, in spite of the nervousness she displayed prior to the session and at the beginning of the exchange. The types of attitudes and the sequence in which they occurred in this recording seem to confirm the information found in Kathy’s reflective journal entry.

**Kathy’s Second Telecollaborative Session**

The curricular objective of this second recording was a discussion and preparation of the debate. In addition to the sharing of facts and general information on their respective topic, each student was specifically asked to enquire about their partner’s own viewpoint. Therefore, for most of the dyads this second session was primarily centered on the debate with some variation depending on their interest in the task, as well as level of preparation and collaboration. In this second session, the dyad discussed primarily Kathy’s debate topic. Kathy was focused on the task and she brought up the debate right after the greeting sequence, by announcing “oui uh j’ai uh j’ai du fait mon propre sujet sujet uh” {yes uh I had uh I had to do my own topic uh} (line 9). By being this upfront from the start, she set a different tone from the previous session. She had a couple occasions to speak her mind about the choice of topics in the first session but chose not to do so. It appears that she changed her mind in-between the sessions and decided to ask for a discussion on abortion, a topic she had initially selected. Since Sophie shared a topic with another American student, Kathy had to pursue her own topic and discuss it with
Sophie. With regards to interaction and attitudes, her blunt statement (line 9) was coded as a “lack of” self-relativizing and value of other. Interestingly however, shortly after clearly stating that she had started work on her own topic, she sought Sophie’s approval “uh c’est uh c’est ça c’est bon sujet ou” (uh it is uh that’s it’s a good topic or). Sophie responded that it did not bother her to talk about this topic, thereby showing flexibility. Kathy then moved on right away to her debate questions. This second recording lasted for 31 minutes and for the first 20 minutes, the partners discussed Kathy’s abortion topic in French. Kathy experienced difficulties with her debate discussion and initiated the language switch at least in part in order to change topics. Most of the remaining discussion focused on their daily lives (A6).

Kathy’s reflection on this second session was submitted late, with the third one. It was very short and reflected some of the problems she encountered during the exchange.


Based on the content and the length of it, it is evident that she was frustrated and that she did not recall this as a positive experience. She felt like her partner was not interested in her topic. Kathy might have also been unhappy with the fact that she had to share her partner and as a result, Sophie was working on and probably interested in another topic. Both her frustration and her feeling that this topic was problematic for her partner are noticeable in the recording as well. Kathy experienced a lot of difficulties asking her questions in French but Sophie remained very patient and supportive during the interaction. She did not openly show any reluctance to answer Kathy’s questions and express her opinion. Sophie simply had difficulties understanding Kathy at times and
asked for clarifications and used strategies to provide language support (repetitions, reformulation, summarizing sentences) and verify that she understood the questions. Upon watching the recording, one does not get the feeling that she was uneasy or non-cooperative; however she curiously changed her choice of address forms in the middle of the discussion. On the other hand Kathy was not comfortable asking some personal questions and this nervousness might have influenced her own perception of the dynamic of the interaction. I will discuss this further as I examine the attitudes present in the recording.

The conversation started in French without any discussion of language use. Upon Kathy’s request, the partners switched to English at the end of the discussion on abortion. Sophie initially refused to move on to English, arguing twice that she did not feel like it “j’ai pas envie” (line 272 and 274). Despite Sophie’s lack of effort and obvious refusal to comply with the rules of the exchange after twenty minutes of a difficult conversation in French, Kathy remained calm. She simply replied that she was having a lot of problems that day with French “j’ai beaucoup de problèmes aujourd’hui avec uh le français” (lines 273 and 275). Sophie finally agreed to switch to English but did a lot of code-switching into French until Kathy announced that she had to leave to go to another class and the remaining part unfolded in French.

**Session 2: Attitudes**

Kathy initiated the greeting sequence in French with a formal “bonjour”, as well as the closing one with “au revoir”. In doing so, she displayed attitudes of E, thereby showing knowledge of conventions in French and a readiness to follow them. It should be noted that in the leave taking sequence, her partner responded with an informal “à la
prochaine” to which Kathy replied “à prochain”. Her response showed that she understood the function of this expression and that she was willing to adapt to Sophie’s conventions by using it. Still, Kathy did not have a full control of this form. In this recording, Sophie chose to address Kathy with the “tu” form at the beginning of the conversation but started to use “vous” during a difficult part of the debate.

S: [moi] je suis musulman uh musulmane donc uh (laughs) donc uh XX je sais pas donc pour moi c’est c’est X mais je sais pas peut-être que pour vous c’est pas la même chose {I am a muslim uh muslim so uh so uh XX I don’t know so for me it’s X but I don’t know maybe that for you it’s not the same thing}

K: (laughs)

S: je sais pas qu’est-ce que vous pensez de ça vous me dites {I don’t know what you think of this you tell me}

Kathy, who had been using “tu” up to that point, followed suit but apparently for a different reason. She asked “pensez pensez-vous que une femme uh oui non uh [huh] (laughs nervously)” {do you do you (formal) think that a woman uh yes or no} (line 218). In Kathy’s case, the switch was not triggered by the discussion but by her prepared list of questions. When she looked at her list, she asked questions using the formal form. She switched to “tu” for the next questions, but then she was looking directly at Sophie and not at her list. Kathy maintained the use of “tu” for the rest of the exchange.

The chart below provides an overview of the number and types of attitudes coded in this second session. Six out of the ten possible attitudes are present. As noted previously, there is an instance of “lack of” at the beginning. There are no instances of the a priori C and D codes, nor of providing information (A3) but this primarily has to do with the fact that Kathy is the one trying to get information from her partner. Interestingly
though, there are no instances of A5 (providing encouragement), which is not entirely surprising given the different dynamic of this exchange and the feelings Kathy disclosed in her reflection. One can note though that Sophie is the one providing encouragement in this exchange.

Figure 10. Kathy Session 2- List of Codes

![Chart showing the number of coding references for different codes.](chart.png)

Note: The color coding used in this chart does not follow the colors assigned to the actual codes.

I will examine the remaining codes in a chronological and associative manner. It seems logical to first look at the two attitudes most linked to the primary task, the debate topic. Given the nature of this task and the dynamic created by the partners in this exchange, there is a very high occurrence of A1 codes (self-relativizing) mixed with B ones (interest in other’s perspective). Similarly, there is a high incidence of collocation of codes A2 and
A6 in the second part of the recording. In that later part, the conversation takes place in English and the thematic content is based on daily life (A6 interest in other’s daily life).

Note: **LO** stands for “lack of”

The presence of the a priori code B in the second session is directly related to the debate task. It was designed with the aim to get students to exchange viewpoints and learn about their partners’ perspectives. Kathy shared her point of view and attempted to find out about Sophie’s opinion with regards to abortion and women’s rights. Kathy had prepared her questions ahead of time. Despite the fact that she had taken into account her partner’s origins as shown when she explained that she had found an article about abortion practices in Africa (sic), she did not adapt her questions at first (designed to obtain a French native’s viewpoint on a cultural topic), as seen in line 118, and she had to reword herself as observed in the following sequence:

118  K: j’ai uhm uh qu’est-ce que c’est le uh généra- le uhm l’avis de uh l’avis général de la France d’avortement {I have uhm uh what is the uh general opinion of France on abortion}

120  S: uh de l’avortement ça je sais pas puisque je ne suis pas d’origine française {uh on abortion that I don’t know because I am not of French origin}

121K: oui [uhm]

122S: [donc] uh je sais pas {so uh I don’t know}

123K: **dans l’Afrique du nord il y a** {in north Africa there is}
In fact Kathy encountered two unexpected hurdles, namely greater language difficulties than she had anticipated (she lacked vocabulary on the topic), and a partner with a different stand on the question. As a result, she tried to adapt her questions but still followed her beliefs on related practices in North Africa as the instance below suggests.

127K: [très très strict] {very very strict}

128 S: oui oui c’est pas strict c’est parce que c’est c uh la le nord d’Afrique c’est ce sont des pays musulmans donc uh donc chez nous uh là-bas c’est pas y a la femme ne doit pas c’est donc uh la femme ne soit pas avorter ne [doit] {yes yes it’s not strict it’s it’s because it’s it uh the north of Africa these are muslim countries so uh so at home uh there it’s not there is women should not it’s so uh women should not have an abortion should not}

131K: [oui] (partial sequence)

Her partner replied and tried to explain the different context in North Africa. In all six but one instances, Kathy was able to elicit a viewpoint from Sophie even with a lot of rephrasing, on abortion, abortion rights, religion and abortion, consequences of a ban on abortion for women etc. She also had no problem speaking her mind and clarifying her own position even if it was counter to that of her partner. She put a lot of efforts into this discussion and repeatedly tried to obtain answers from her partner, while at the same time struggling with the language and the directness and personal nature of the questions she was asking. This is demonstrated by the number of apology and hedging devices (coded A1) she employed in order to lessen the directness and content of her questions.

107 K: uh je pense que uh à mon avis le gouvernement gouvernement n’est pas uh ne devrait pas avoir le pouvoir pour contrôler le corps du des de des femmes

109S: d’accord mhm [ok]
110  K: tu tu me comprends mais je ne sais uh uh [uh] {you you understand me but I don’t know uh uh uh}

In line 110, Kathy uses a hedge (A1) after stating her own point of view (line 7), which she partly read from her notes. Her partner’s short response (line 109) might have triggered her choice to use this mitigating device and thus lower the impact of her statement. Kathy’s questions and statements which might have appeared too direct thus constituting a face-threatening act for Kathy since this was touching upon cultural and religious topics, probably did not carry the same face-threatening value for her partner who in general displayed less nervousness and willingness to respond and complete the task.

226  S: [ou] sur la vie ben uh d’après ce que j’ai vu oui ça a ça a des dangers pour la femme l’avortement ben d’après ce que j’ai vu j’ai vu à peu près parce que je crois qu’il y a des ça peut poser des problèmes pour quelques-unes et pour d’autres non mais ça dépend de la personne {or on the life so uh according to what I have seen yes it poses it poses dangers for women abortion so according to what I have seen I have seen about because I think that there are it can pose problems for some women and for others no be it depends on the person}

229  K: je pense que il il aurait des problèmes graves parce que les personnes avaient les uh l’avortements uh dangereux {I think that there would be big serious problems because people had (sic) dangerous abortions}

231S: mhm [ben XX]

232K: [et il] ne

233S: l’avortement {abortion}

234K: oui si si il devient illégal {yes if it becomes illegal}

235S: mhm mhm

236K: et uh je ne sais pas [uh] {and uh I don’t know}

237S: [uh tu sais pas ben] {you don’t know so}
238K: (laughs) *je m’excuse* {I’m sorry}

239 S: non je mais c’est normal moi aussi j’ai du mal avec l’anglais donc uh c’est pas grave

In this instance, Kathy’s attitude of self-relativizing (A1) may have been caused by a combination of language difficulties and because of her partner’s differing stance on the question. However, Sophie interpreted the apology as related solely to language problems and tried to reassure her by pointing at shared difficulties. In this session, Kathy demonstrated a lot of interest in her partner’s perspective (B) but the topic of her choice and the ensuing linguistic challenges it posed, led her to resort to a lot of self-relativizing (A1) as well. There are sixteen instances of the A1 code in this second recording. All but four took place during the debate task or are directly connected to it. Kathy said “je ne sais pas” or “I don’t know” ten times and apologized with “je m’excuse” four times. The high incidence of A1, in comparison to the other codes, suggests that she focused on relativizing attitudes during a large part of this recording. This dual inquisitive and apologetic behavior was counterbalanced to some extent when the conversation switched to English and she adopted a more positive and active stance as evidenced in the number of codes related to instances of showing interest in other (A6) and valuing other through language support (A2). The second part of the recording was a non-guided conversation in English and Kathy was still in control of the conversation, asking most of the questions and providing language help (seven out of nine instances of A2). She inquired about Sophie’s courses, exams, weekend activities, and questions about Halloween which she mistook as the French equivalent of “La Toussaint”. In this latter part of the exchange, there were several misunderstandings which went unnoticed by both parties (i.e. Halloween for La Toussaint and neige ‘snow’ for nuage ‘cloud’. Kathy was very attentive
to her partner and while she tried to sustain the conversation in English, she code
switched (A2) on several occasions to help Sophie. Kathy appeared a little more relaxed
in the second part of the session and after a few exchanges on personal topics, we see a
couple instances of A4 (seeking connections). In the first one, she asked Sophie if she
had exams coming up and then added that she was going to have a lot of exams the
following week as well. In the second instance, the partners connect via the topic of
shopping.

374 K: [did you] do anything fun over the week-end
375S: uh I had le shopping
376K: shopping? me too

Each of these instances followed questions about Sophie’s daily life (A6). Even though
she seemed to be looking for topics of conversation on a couple occasions as shown in
line 372 “[mh] ok what else”, Kathy was the one maintaining the conversation by
initiating personal questions and creating connections with her partner.

In this second recording, Kathy’s discomfort was noticeable (nervous laughs,
apologies, hesitations, hedging, rephrasing etc.) and it increased as the discussion
progressed. She seemed very tense but there were no break in the conversation. Despite
having significant difficulties to communicate in French on this more complex topic, she
put a lot of effort into sustaining the flow of the discussion. She did not switch languages
possibly because she was aware of Sophie’s weaker skills in English. Nor did she try to
use the textbox to write down her questions, which would have given her more time to
formulate them. Her desire to complete the task and/or a genuine interest in learning
more about her partner’s stance on abortion kept her focused on the debate. In her
reflection, Kathy’s expressed her feeling that her partner was not interested in the debate. Therefore, one would expect some reluctance or avoidance on the behalf of Sophie. Her use of facial gestures did suggest some discomfort at times as she was trying to explain her own cultural background and viewpoint. But her choice of words did not show reluctance to speak about it. Instead, she demonstrated open-mindedness with “tu dis ce que tu veux” {you say what you want to say} (line 268), reassured her partner “non mais c’est pas grave uh c’est mh tu tu non c’est pas grave” {no but it’s ok uh it’s mh you no it’s ok} (line 266) and provided encouragement and language support for Kathy. In addition, Sophie offered to research this topic and send documents to Kathy. She admitted that she had never been interested in it before but now indicated interest in finding more about it. In terms of attitudes, Kathy was able to adapt to her partner’s different cultural background and exhibited interest in gaining her perspective although it proved to be a challenging experience which pushed her to self-relativize a lot. Even though her written recollection of this exchange refers only to the debate task, in the second part of the exchange, the absence of A1 and the prominence of A2 and A6 support a change of dynamic and the return to a more casual type of conversation. Before leaving the telecollaborative session, Kathy showed that she remained focused on the task when she told Sophie that she was going to send her an email about the debate the same day. Willing to help, Sophie reiterated that she was going to do some research on the topic for her. She felt comfortable enough to also provide language correction. She modeled the proper possessive adjective form for Kathy, who had been using the wrong one up until that point:

464K: j’ai son X email {I have his email}
465S: hein {what}
466K: uh j’ai son email {uh I have his email}
467S: uh tu as mon email {uh you have my email}
468K: oui
469S: on dit uh j’ai ton email {one says uh I have your email}
470K: mhm ok j’ai ton email {mhm ok I have your email}
471S: son email c’est à lui {his email means it belongs to him}
472K: ok

In spite of the tension noticeable during this recording, it ended in a positive show of attitudes with Kathy initiating the leave taking sequence in French and Sophie also code-switching to English to take leave. The conscious efforts and the collaboration of the two partners demonstrated that they valued each other.

**Kathy’s Third Telecollaborative Session**

As a result of technological problems, the third scheduled telecollaborative session in the lab was cut short and Kathy’s dyad did not have a chance to talk. So this fourth scheduled session is in fact the third and last one for Kathy. This final exchange was shorter than the others; it lasted for just barely 20 minutes. The students were asked to complete their debate preparation and provided they were ready, they could use the remaining time to discuss any topic of their choosing. Given time constraints and different university calendars, some of the dyads had to present at the end of that session. For this reason, when Kathy mentioned the ongoing presentations, she also put an end to the discussion with her partner although they were free to continue until the end of the class meeting.
Kathy’s reflection on this last exchange reflected a positive outcome for her and an overall satisfaction with the telecollaborative experience.

La dernière télécollaboration était mon favori parce que nous avons parlées beaucoup. La conversation était intéressante par moi. Nous avons parlées de l’université et la fin de semestre. Je pense que si aurai d’autre télécollaboration je continuerais à parler mieux et sans la peur. En tout, j’aime beaucoup la télécollaboration. Je pense que la télécollaboration m’aide beaucoup.

Her comments on her language skills and comfort level reveal her own impression of improvement. She sounds more interested in the content of the exchange and this might be partly due to the less guided and more informal nature of this session.

Session 3: Attitudes

Kathy initiated the greeting sequence twice: in English at first, before being interrupted by her partner who transmitted a request for Kathy’s instructor. Upon the end of this short sequence unrelated to the dyad’s exchange, Kathy started over her greeting in French this time with an informal “salut” {hi}. Her partner responded with the corresponding level of informality. And somewhat unexpectedly, Kathy directly followed with a request for a language switch:

17S: S: tu vas [bien]
18 K:         [uh] tu veux commencer en anglais {do you want to start in English}
19S: uh si tu veux {if you want}
20K: oui have you done your presentation yet

The swift manner in which she made this request and switched to English indicated that she had resolved this in advance and that she was likely prepared to counter any reluctance from Sophie. As such, her attitude was encoded “lack of”, for asking to start in
English and thus putting her own interest first. There are other instances of “lack of” in this recording but they are not part of the opening sequence and will be closely examined as they appear in the text. The leave taking sequence was also initiated by Kathy in French and thus encoded E. In doing so, she produced an interesting form:

319K: merci uh bonne chanté {thank you uh good luck/delighted}
320S: au revoir
321K: merci
322S: uh bonne chance à toi aussi ok {uh good luck to you too}
323K: merci
324S: au revoir

In line 319, she appeared to confuse two forms: “bonne chance” and “enchanté”, thereby demonstrating that she was willing to use an appropriate leave taking expression (coded E) and provide encouragement in French, but she did not have a proper understanding of the forms and the conventions governing their use. “Enchanté” is used solely in formal greeting sequences. Kathy probably chose “bonne chance” to provide encouragement to Sophie for her own presentation. This was also what Sophie inferred as demonstrated in her response “uh bonne chance à toi aussi ok”.

The readiness to adopt the conventions and rites of communication of one’s partner (code E) encompasses choice of address forms. In this last session, K did not use “vous”. Sophie is the only one using this formal address forms, six times when she addressed Kathy, four at the beginning of the conversation shortly followed by another instance, and a switch to “tu” in the same sentence. She did use “tu” 27 times in the rest of the recording. Kathy used “tu” eleven times. She did not use “vous” but one finds two
instances of “votre” in the same sentence when she used the code B (interest in other’s perspectives) and asked Sophie about her opinion (line 70). But then she switched back to an informal form in line 72.

70 K: uh uh j’ai uh j’ai besoin de votre opinion uh avis votre avis (uh uh I have uh I need your opinion uh opinion your opinion)

71S: mhm

72K: et uh tu peux en envoyer (and uh you can send some (sic))

Curiously right before the closing sequence, she reiterated her request for Sophie’s opinion, but in this instance she used the appropriate possessive adjective “ton” twice. It is not clear what prompted her to select a more formal form in line 70 except that that sequence followed a pause in the conversation, during which unable to understand Kathy, Sophie asked for a classmate’s help. At that point, Kathy might have felt some frustration as she asked for a written response and initiated the discussion again with this request and then asked for a change of language.

Distinct from the more common production of E codes in opening and closing sequences, one also finds an interesting instance of E when appearing into the field of the webcam, one of Sophie’s French classmates interrupted the conversation. Prompting him to greet Kathy, Sophie suggested that he say “bonjour”. But Kathy was the one who greeted him in French with “bonsoir”, thereby adjusting to time differences and concordant greeting forms. Furthermore she pointed at the time difference to justify her use of “bonsoir” (line 120).

115 S: c’est un Chinois (S and him talk) elle veut te parler je te jure hein quoi viens si tu veux lui parler tu vas lui dire bonjour {he is a Chinese man she
wants to talk to you I swear what come if you want to talk to her you’re going to say hello}

117K: **bonsoir XX**

118S: **hein**

119K: **bonsoir oui uh auj auj uh ici here it’s in the morning but en France [it’s I]**

120 S: [ah] uh l’après-midi c’est la nuit c’est presque la nuit c’est le soir {ah uh afternoon it’s night it’s almost night it’s evening}

With regards to the other attitudes present in this third recording, a preliminary review of Figure 11 indicates that there is a high incidence of A2 (language help) and a lesser but still strong presence of the self-relativizing attitude (A1). All the remaining codes are present except for C, D and A3, but to a much lesser extent. There is only one instance of encouragement (A5), and 4 codes demonstrating seeking connections. The a priori codes A6, E and B, respectively “interest in other’s daily life”, “interest in other’s perspective” and “following other’s codes of communication” are all observable in the data.

Figure 11. Kathy Session 3- List of Codes
A look at the chronological order of Kathy’s display of attitudes through the recording exhibits the following pattern: an initial co-occurrence of A1 (self-relativizing) and B (interest in other’s perspective), followed by two instances of “lack of”, and a succession of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) interspaced with a lot of A2 (providing language help), a few A4 (seeking connection) and A1, primarily toward the end of the recording. One can note as well, the unexpected occurrence of two instances of E (following other’s codes of communication) in the midst of the recording, and therefore not reserved to the opening and closing sequences. I will now examine in what context these codes are produced and how they articulate with the topics covered and phases of the exchange.

Note: LO stands for “lack of”
Shortly after the opening sequence, the exchange focused on the task. Kathy was scheduled to present in class a few days following that session and she was not ready. She asked her partner about her own presentation and offered help. Then she asked Sophie if she had received her email. The discussion brought to light a couple of issues. First, Sophie could not/would not remain on task and interact in English. She code switched right away back to French, thus forcing Kathy to discuss her debate topic again in French. Then, from the exchange, it seemed that Sophie had not held onto her promise of providing information on abortion and Kathy was still seeking her partner’s opinion. Although Sophie had previously made it clear that she was Algerian and that therefore she was not familiar with French’s people stance on abortion, Kathy insisted on asking her about it.

37 S: c’est pas ça ok uh tu voulais parce que j’ai j’ai j’ai lu le message et j’ai compris que tu voulais mon avis sur l’avortement {that’s not it ok you wanted because I I read the message and I understood that you wanted my opinion on abortion}

39K: [oui]

40S: [c’est ça] {that’s it}

41K: oui

42 S: oui d’accord donc uh c’est tu vas le faire uh tu vas le mettre dans la la présentation {yes ok so uh it’s you’re going to do it uh you’re going to put it in the the presentation}

43K: uh j’ai besoin de faire uh jeudi {uh I I need to do uh Thursday}

44 S: ah tu tu vas faire la présentation le jeudi c’est [ça] {ah you you’re going to do the presentation on Thursday that’s it}

45 K: [oui uh] j’ai quelques problèmes avec le uhm l’avis de général de France {yes uh I have some problems with the uhm general opinion of France}
The directions for this assignment stipulated that the students were to inquire about their partner’s viewpoint and that implied asking for the opinion of a French age peer for most of the dyads. Even though her partner’s different origin has been discussed previously, Kathy remained unable to place her in a different context and adapt her own task and questions accordingly, as the following excerpt demonstrates. Kathy initiated her request (coded B) by stating her own belief and making a comparison with her viewpoint on the situation in the United States, “oui et uh je pense que um comme les Etats-Unis il y a uh beaucoup de beaucoup de gens qui pensent uh qui ils sont en faveur i oh wai contre et pour l’avortement oui” {yes and uh I think that um like the United States there are uh a lot of people who think uh that they are for I oh wai against and for abortion yes}. It seems that she already had formed an opinion on the situation in France, probably through her own research, but was asking for a confirmation prior to presenting it. Then she made another attempt at getting her partners’ perspective (a second instance of B) but modified her strategy this time:

70 K: uh uh j’ai uh j’ai besoin de votre opinion uh avis votre avis {uh uh I uh I need your opinion uh opinion your opinion}

71S: mhm

72K: et uh tu peux en envoyer {uh can you send}

73S: d’accord {ok}

74 K: puis je uh oui uh pour mon présentation [uh] {then I uh yes uh for my presentation}

75S: [ah d’accord] ok

76 K: uh je ne sais pas uh tu veux uh parler uh en anglais {uh I don’t know uh can you uh speak uh in English}
Unable to verbally obtain a clear response from her partner, Kathy asked her to send her a written answer via email in line 72. In line 76, her request to switch languages preceded by a hedge (A1) confirms that she was monitoring language use as she reiterated her initial request to converse in English. Sophie’s positive but hesitant response prompted Kathy to justify her request by pointing at Sophie’s lack of effort, thereby producing a couple of instances of “lack of” in a row in French.

Instance 1

80  K: tu veux tu veux chan tu as changé beaucoup à à la f {do you do you want to chan you changed a lot to to f}

81S: uh oui uh

82K: oui

83S: à à quoi {to what}

84K: à français quand nous parlons anglais {to French when we speak English}

85  S: oui direct (laughs) c’est pas ça c’est parce que j’arrive pas je sais pas j’arrive pas à parler anglais c’est ça {yes direct (laughs) it’s not it’s because I can’t I don’t know I don’t manage to speak English}

Instance 2

87  K: et tu uh tu parlais français uh français avec D tout le tout le temps ou non [oui] {and you uh you spoke French uh French with D all the time or not yes}

88  S: [n non] j on a même pas dix minutes {n no I we did not even then minutes}

89K: dix minutes [vraiment] {ten minutes really}

90  S: [même pas] dix minutes anglais {not even then minutes in English}

91  K: ah oui j je pense que tu mens mentir mentir c’est le {ah yes I I think that you are lying to lie to lie}
92S: oui oui [aie aie aie] d’accord {yes yes dear oh dear ok}

93K:  [uh] dix minutes parle anglais {uh ten minutes speak English}

94S: donc uh {so uh}

95K: do you have time off une vacation {coming up}

Kathy changed her tone to a more assertive one. There are no instances of self-relativizing (A1) in these two excerpts. She was less direct in her accusatory intent at first: “tu veux chan” {you want to chan} but then she quickly rephrased with “tu as changé beaucoup” {you changed a lot}. Since Sophie did not understand (line 83), Kathy felt compelled to clarify herself. Then Sophie responded by first acknowledging and then laughing before attempting to justify herself. Her light-hearted reaction and lack of honesty with “on a même pas dix minutes” {n no I we did not even ten minutes} forced Kathy to become even more assertive as she accused Sophie of lying in the second instance (line 91). If one examines this exchange by paying close attention solely to the wording encoded in the choice of vocabulary and grammar, it appears as a tense and conflictual interaction. But both participants’ facial gestures in addition to prosodic features such as their intonation tell otherwise. While showing a lot of resolve and uttering face threatening statements (i.e. accusation of lying), Kathy smiled throughout the exchange. She also laughed (line 91) without any indication of nervousness unlike her previous nervous laughs often combined with instances of A1. She remained calm and did not raise her voice, or show signs of discomfort and hesitation. There are no hedging devices and she was able to express herself clearly. Even though the content of her claims was serious, she delivered it in a playful teasing, which is reflective of a certain degree of closeness. In fact, while she has viewed herself as inferior until now as evidenced in her doubting her language skills, this change possibly substantiated that she now saw herself
as more of an equal. Another cue in the recording might support this interpretation, namely that ensuing this exchange, Kathy moved on right away into a friendly and supportive role, concurrently providing a high level of language support (instances of A2) and show of value (A5 and A4).

In order to bring the language use discussion to an end, Kathy code switched to English and asked a question to Sophie, thereby coercing her into switching to English (line 95). This marked the beginning of the second phase of this session, with several instances of A6 (interest is other’s daily life) and the return to an informal relaxed conversation guided by Kathy. One can observe a pattern of five instances of A6 including inquiries about vacation, final exams, snowboarding and handball. Each of these was followed by sets of two to four instances of A2, where Kathy provided language support to Sophie. She used paraphrases, translations, code switched to French, and finished her partner’s sentences. In doing so, Kathy put a lot of effort into maintaining the flow of the conversation in English despite Sophie’s repetitive code switching back to French. These language changes each triggered a couple instances of A1. Later on, a discussion of Kathy’s foreign language courses initiated a few more instances of self-relativizing as she mentioned her struggles with learning French and Spanish. When Sophie with a supportive intent, shared her own difficulties with the English language, Kathy also showed value in response via providing encouragement (A5) line 254:

250 S: non mais ça va ça va pour uh pour trois ans ça va c’est XX moi je fais de l’anglais ça fait huit ans aussi mais j’arrive pas j’arrive toujours pas parler (no but it’s fine it’s fine for uh for three years it’s fine it’s XX I have been learning English it has been eighth years but I can’t I still can’t speak)
252K: uh oui

253 S: contrairement à toi (unlike you)

254 K: mais uh tu as connais d’autres langues comme uh le arabic oui (yes but you have you have know other languages like uh the arabic yes)

Following this sequence, Kathy sought a connection (A4) by sharing that she knew a word in Arabic. But Sophie did not recognize the word, which prompted Kathy to produce a couple instances of A1 with hedging. In addition, she shared some information about her Algerian friend, again seeking connections (A4). These instances of encouragement and the shared desire to connect with her partner conferred a more natural, free flowing and friendly aspect to the end of the conversation.

This third session includes a high number of codes and in particular A2 codes, with an interesting occurrence of E and the lesser used code, in Kathy’s instance, of “lack of”. There are two distinct phases discernible in the recording, that is to say, a first one with a short interaction about task-related questions which led to a tense exchange. And then a decrease of the tension sustained by a more relaxed conversation on shared topics of interest. Interestingly, there was no mention of the language use conflict in Kathy’s reflection. In fact, quite the opposite, as she stated that this was her favorite session, which supports the idea that she did not perceive the incident as an open-conflict. It should be noted that the dissymmetry in the work on task in this dyad and therefore the differing speaker’s agendas, are reflected in the content and quality of the exchange. While Kathy’s observable goals are to complete the task and to practice her French skills, her partner’s reluctance to practice English and disinterest in discussing her own topic with a second partner, indicate that she does not share the same objectives. In this last recording,
the production of codes seemed to be in part tied to the on or off-task discussion and to the language in use at the time of the occurrences.

**Within Case Comparison of the Three Sessions**

The accounts of the three recorded sessions provide a detailed picture of Kathy’s attitudinal behavior at the beginning, the middle and the end of the telecollaborative exchange. Her reaction to the exchange as a whole and to the individual sessions evolved significantly over the course of this study. Pre-webcasting, her stated level of interest about the opportunity to speak with French students was very low. Yet, in her last reflection, she declared: “la conversation était intéressante par moi” {the conversation was interesting by (sic) me} and that it was her favorite session because she and her partner spoke a lot. Indeed, her comments support the idea that Sophie and she were able to connect through the difficulties they shared as L2 learners with similar interest in topics such as the university and end of the semester, which she mentioned in her last reflection. At the end of that same journal entry, Kathy seemed to draw her own conclusion on the whole telecollaborative process, thereby addressing once again her own nervousness and French skills, when she stated that: “Je pense que si aurai d’autre télécollaboration je continuerais à parler mieux et sans la peur. En tout, j’aime beaucoup la télécollaboration. Je pense que la télécollaboration m’aide beaucoup” {I think that if I have other telecollaborations I will continue to improve my speaking and without fear. In all, I like the telecollaboration a lot. I think that the telecollaboration helped me a lot}. While the autobiographies had to be submitted in French, the participants were free to choose the language of use for their journal. It is telling that Kathy’s first entry was written in English, but that she elected to write the second and the third ones in French,
thus showing an increase of comfort with expressing herself in French. Additionally, the second entry was very short and it reflected her frustration over the second session, but the third and last one was almost twice as long and revealed a much more positive experience. With regard to showing value of her partner and relativizing self, Kathy initially noted that her partner was nice and that they shared common struggles with the language. In the second entry, she expressed her feeling that her partner was not interested in her own topic and in the final entry, she noted that they talked a lot and that she found the conversation interesting. In all, there is not a large amount of focus on her partner in her comments, but they do reflect the evolution of the rapport and seemed aligned with Kathy’s use of attitudes during the sessions.

The initial session lasted for twenty-six minutes, the second one lasted for thirty one and the third one was shorter with a length of just under twenty minutes. It is notable that there was a high incidence of attitudes throughout with 38 instances for the first session, 39 for the second one and, despite its shorter length, 45 displays of attitudes in the third. Seven different types of attitudes were recorded in the first one, six in the second one and again seven in the last one. However, one cannot draw conclusions by solely comparing the number of instances of attitudes of one session with the other ones. Furthermore, the context of the occurrences needs to be taken into account, since the assigned tasks bear upon the production of attitudes. The language in use and familiarity with the use of this technology are among other factors which can also affect the presence and types of attitudes as I will discuss. Thus, taking multiple factors into consideration, it is possible to reflect on the richness (i.e. variety) and evolution of the different attitudes produced by the participants over the three recordings. Figure 12 below provides a
picture of the development or lack of, of Kathy’s production of attitudes over the three sessions. It gives a sense of a general pattern for each type of attitude which I will discuss along with the context of their occurrence.

Figure 12. Kathy: Evolution of Attitudes over the three Sessions

Starting with the a priori attitudes defined by Byram, Kathy produced instances of both A6 and E in all three recordings. Code E, referring to “Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction” (Byram), most noticeably appeared in all opening and closing sequences and in the choice of address forms in French. Significantly, Kathy adjusted her greetings to the evolving rapport with her partner. She used a more formal “bonjour” in both the first and second session and then opted for the informal “salut” in the last session, thereby using a greeting reflecting a closer connection. Apparently, she was keenly aware of the importance of greeting forms since she took control of this ritual-like phase of the
conversations and adapted it over the development of the mediated interaction. She struggled more with closing sequences: Kathy first misused “enchanté” {nice to meet you}, then she attempted to follow her partner’s lead and close with “à la prochaine” in the second session but showed instead that she did not have control of this form and finally, she ended the third session with “merci uh bonne chanté” {thank you uh good luck/delighted}, thereby mixing forms. In the last recording, there were two additional uses of the E attitude, when reacting to her partner’s confusion, she felt comfortable pointing out the appropriate greeting form to her, a reaction she might not have had during the first session. Her willingness to follow other’s codes of communication was thus significant and indicated a strong desire to adapt to her partner’s codes of communication and therefore a show of value of her partner. In the same category, Kathy’s use of address forms evolved as well over the three sessions. At the beginning, she opted for the informal “tu”, thus not following the conventions she had studied and not paying attention to the form modeled by her partner (i.e. “vous”). In the second session, while her partner felt comfortable enough switching to the informal address form, Kathy’s still did not have full control of this form as shown when she did not adapt the address forms from the questionnaire to address her partner. In this instance, she was possibly object-regulated (by the questionnaire). However, when she later looked at her partner to ask additional questions, she did switch back to “tu”. Finally, in the last session, Kathy did not use “vous” at all, but “votre” twice during her task, before correcting herself later on and using the correct possessive adjective “ton” twice. I should point out that she did not seem to have any control of this form in the first and second sessions where she used “son”. However, after Kathy used “son” another time at the end
of the second recording, her partner provided external mediation through explicit correction. And it is interesting to note that Kathy self-corrected and was able to gain some control of “ton” by the end of the third session.

In addition to the observable presence of E, the other types of attitudes described by Byram and produced by Kathy in these recordings were A6 (interest in other’s daily life) and B (interest in other’s perspectives). The a priori code A6 was recorded in all three sessions with the highest number of occurrences in the first one (eight instances), five instances in the second and five in the third. Its presence reflected at the same time Kathy’s level of interest in her partner and the tasks she was engaged in. In the first session, several instances were connected to the topics initiated through the use of the questionnaire. In this sense, this task, which was designed in part to support the production of this specific attitude, was fruitful for Kathy. In the subsequent sessions, her production of A6 was not task-related but a direct expression of her own interest in her partner. Therefore, the fact that this attitude was still present indicated a positive evolution of her display of value. It should also be noted that except for the initial three instances, Kathy produced all the others in English. In addition to wanting to find more about her partner’s daily life, both attitudes of A4 and A5 were tightly related to showing an interest in Sophie since they represented a desire to connect personally and show support, thus moving the focus away from herself. Instances of these attitudes were found especially in the first session with six instances of A4 and five of A5. In all but one, Kathy’s displays of encouragement and reassurance (A5) were connected to her partner’s expression of low self confidence in English. Still, the rich support she verbalized in the first session was absent from the second one and barely observable in the last one (just
one instance). A plausible explanation is that she experienced her partner’s lack of cooperation in the second and third sessions and therefore she might have been less willing to openly express encouragement. Some of these instances were combined with instances of A4 (seeking connection), which were present in all three recordings, again with the highest number spread out through the first session (six instances), only two in the casual conversation part of the second session and four in the English non-guided section of the last session. The nature of the A4 attitudes varied: in some cases she pointed at shared difficulties, in others at shared interests or hobbies and even made a connection with her partner’s Algerian origin. The language in use at the time did not seem to bear upon the production of A4, rather the type of interaction as they seemed to occur predominantly during non-guided talk.

There were no instances of B (interest in other’s perspectives) in the first recording, five in the second and two in the last. These attitudes were solely related to the debate task. In this sense, they remained a product of this task only, since there were no observable instances in the free-flowing portions of the exchange. Furthermore, they were surrounded by attitudes of self-relativizing, primarily hedges and apologies, which points to Kathy’s lack of comfort with asking for her partner’s perspective. In fact, she quickly understood that her partner did not share her point of view on a question which remains sensitive for a lot of people (i.e. abortion). Her willingness to avoid offending her partner and yet get answers was noticeable in the interaction. Nevertheless, while these instances were a result of Kathy’s following the task directives, they still, in her case, represented attitudes of genuine interest in finding out other’s perspectives on this topic. Likely, at this point of the exchange and with the language difficulty she was
experiencing, B was an attitude she might not have shown, or certainly not to that extent if it had not been supported by the debate task. This particular task was a challenging one for Kathy and it displayed her resourcefulness but also tried the connection she shared at that point with her partner. The appearance of attitudes of “lack of” was somehow connected to it: they were produced as a result of experiencing difficulties with the choice of topic and language difficulties intensified by the complexity of this task. The four recorded instances of “lack of” appeared in the second (one instance) and third sessions (three instances) only. The first two instances were produced at the beginning of these two sessions and they seemed to be premeditated, that is, deliberate choices that Kathy made prior to the start of the recordings. The last two were expressions of Kathy’s increasing frustration at her partner’s lack of willingness to converse in English. Nevertheless, she mitigated three of these instances, by asking for her partner’s feedback for the first one and offsetting the wording in the last two with a friendly tone and facial gestures. Significantly, some of this visual and auditory mitigation was thus afforded specifically by the desktop videoconferencing set up.

In this exchange, it is significant that the attitude with the highest number of codes is the one of self-relativizing. Ten instances of A1 were recorded in the first session, and its use peaked at sixteen in the second before decreasing to twelve in the last one, but the last session was at least ten minutes shorter than the other ones. The forms of self-relativizing Kathy produced included primarily forms of hedging and apologizing. She also gave priority to her partner in particular with regards to language choice, and expressed language help- and requests for opinion. The highest incidence of attitudes of self-relativizing was recorded (for the first and second sessions) while the dyad was
interacting in French and also when Kathy was engaged in the debate discussions, with twelve out of sixteen of these pertaining solely to the debate task during the second session. Unlike the first two recordings, the last one did not start with Kathy giving language priority to her partner. Nevertheless, it included many instances of self-relativizing, mostly in French, because of the short discussion on the debate task, but also after they had switched to English because her partner kept on code switching back to French. It is also interesting to note that this last session was the first one during which Kathy produced a greater number of instances of A2 than instances of A1, thus showing value increasingly through support instead of self-relativizing.

A2 (providing language help) was the next attitude with a strong presence throughout the exchange, with respectively six, nine and seventeen recorded instances. Kathy’s use of A2 was language-related, that is, it occurred almost uniquely (save for one instance in the second session) in the second phase of the exchanges once the partners had switched to English. The notable increase may be correlated with Kathy’s evolving level of comfort with her partner. Accordingly, she was less hesitant to provide language assistance to Sophie and put more effort toward the interaction. Unlike Sophie, Kathy did not code switch a lot when she was conversing in French. However, during the English portions of the exchange, she did resort to French at times a means of providing language help to her partner in the most efficient way. She also code switched to French to clarify what she was about to do, such as when she had to leave the lab to go to another class. In these instances, she was anticipating what her partner might not be able understand in English. In fact, Kathy used a range a variety of strategies on top of the visual and auditory channels and the textbox to convey meaning and clarify herself.
The codebook created for this study included a few attitudes which were barely represented in Kathy’s exchange; these were A3, C and D. The attitude of showing value through volunteering information or resources (A3) was recorded only during the first session with a single instance. At that moment, Kathy provided her partner with resources for a debate without being prompted. She did not repeat this attitude during the other sessions possibly because they ended up working solely on her own topic, and therefore she was seeking information from her partner as opposed to providing her with information. The a priori categories C (questioning values and presuppositions) and D (readiness to adapt overtime) were absent from the recordings. It is possible that the production of the C attitude required a more advanced level of decentering and higher degree of value of other. As for the one encoded D, at the scale of this telecollaborative exchange, there were no signs which could be interpreted as a form of willingness to “adapt over time” and “interact with another culture” during a certain period of time, outside of following course requirements. Even though Kathy did interact with her partner outside of class, it seemed to be limited to the sole and seemingly limited exchange of emails for the preparation of the PowerPoint.

Over the course of this exchange, the two main tasks played an important role for Kathy’s production of attitudes and the development of the connection within the dyad. Kathy carefully followed instructions and the first task functioned well in the sense that it supported the production of A6 among other attitudes as well as the interaction with free-flowing passages. The second task led to the production of another type of attitudes (i.e. B), but it was less successful in strengthening the rapport between the partners since it

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46 An ability that Byram describes as taking up the other’s perspective (1997, pp. 3, 42)
proved to be a problematic endeavor for this dyad. In effect, Sophie shared a debate topic with another American student and as a result, she was less interested in Kathy’s own topic and the completion of this debate task. Furthermore, the conversational exchanges on the complex topic of abortion required advanced language proficiency skills, and thus proved to be a real challenge for this dyad. Lastly, Sophie did not follow through on her promise to research this topic to help her partner. These differing levels of investments in the completion of a task which required collaboration became a source of frustration, which Kathy clearly expressed in her second set of personal reflections. It is unknown to what extent the dissymmetry in this task work affected the connection between the two participants. In fact, from the beginning of the exchange onward, it became clear that there was a certain lack of reciprocity between Kathy and her partner. Even though the students’ proficiency levels were taken into consideration during the pairing phase, it quickly became evident that Kathy, who was a quiet student in class, displayed higher oral proficiency skills and more willingness to practice her L2 than her partner did. Although she began the telecollaboration with the self-disclosed lowest level of comfort in speaking French of all the students, her confidence evolved over the course of the semester both during the sessions and also noticeably in class. Clearly, she took control of the interactions by initiating and closing them in French, as well as monitoring for language use, asking for language switches and initiating many of the questions.

Kathy’s partner was not French but Algerian and had been in France for less than a month prior to the exchange. This seemed to affect the interaction, but in a minor way. For example, Sophie’s use of address forms during the first exchange might have been different (more formal) than French age peers. Kathy also kept asking Sophie about
abortion in France instead of focusing on its status in her partner’s home country, even though she acknowledged having done some research herself on abortion in Africa. In fact, Sophie’s lower level of engagement in the sessions was probably not caused by her different ethnic origin or her level of familiarity with the technology, but in part by a lack of confidence in her English speaking ability and thus her avoidance of interaction in English. On several occasions she stated, “…on va essayer de parler français après on parle un tout petit peu anglais” {we’re going to speak French and then we’ll speak very little in French} (line 51, session 1) or “j’ai pas envie” {I don’t feel like it (to switch to English)} (line 272 session 2), and she code switched a lot back to French. One cannot just assume that because of her different origin and therefore schooling, she had had less opportunity to practice her English skills than her classmates. Indeed, during the first session, she explained that unlike her, her little sister spoke “English very well” (line 238). Still, her friendliness, enthusiasm, facial gestures and willingness to learn more about her partner contributed to Kathy’s increased level of comfort. Despite the challenge posed by the debate conversation and the appearance of attitudes of “lack of”, this dyad had already developed a connection strong enough to overcome this point of dissention and move on with a successful third session which included an increase of attitudes of value and was referred to by Kathy as her favorite session.
CHAPTER V
CASE STUDY II: MARK

A Portrait

Mark was a third year student majoring in French and minoring in education studies and sociology. At 27 years, he was the oldest student in the class. In his autobiography, he explained that he worked for eight years in the navy, which gave him an extensive travel experience. Like Kathy, his goal was to become a high school teacher of French. In his background survey, he reported that he was also taking three other 300-level French courses (FRE 306 Comprehension and Pronunciation of French, FRE 341Z Introduction to Global French Studies and FRE 360 Social and Cultural History of France). FRE 350 was his first course with me. In class, Mark had a friendly and approachable personality, and interacted easily in French with all his classmates. He was always prepared for class and very active in group discussions. His participation record remained high throughout the semester, with a noticeable increase following the second telecollaborative session. In fact, Mark had the highest participation grade of all the students in this class and he received an A as a final course grade.

In his background survey, Mark selected: “I like French”, “I think it is useful for professional purposes”, and “I have French ancestry”, as reasons for wanting to learn French. He did not talk about his family background but when asked about his level of familiarity with Francophone cultures, he checked “familiar” and further explained, “…my grandfather was Haitian, so I was exposed to a francophone culture during my adolescence.” In the survey, he declared himself “interested” and “curious” in knowing
more about Francophone cultures. However, if one compares his answers to those of the other participants as reported in Figure 13 below, he seemed less curious and interested in these cultures than the majority of the students who selected “very interested” as well as “very curious” in their surveys.

Figure 13. Background Survey Question: Students’ Level of Interest in knowing more about Francophone Cultures.

His more measured choice of responses seemed to contrast with the fact that he had declared himself “very interested” in traveling outside of the United States and with his stated goal of becoming a French teacher. Moreover, he had written in his autobiography: “j’espère un des ces jours avoir l’opportunité de passer le temps en France pour apprendre plus de la culture et le connaître de première main {I hope one of these days to
have the opportunity to spend time in France to learn more about the culture and know it first-hand), thereby expressing a strong interest in the French culture.

Interestingly as well, he was one of only two students who felt that American and French cultures were similar, while others ranked them “different” to “very different” as shown in Figure 14. It is unclear how much Mark knew about Francophone cultures, aside from the Haitian one, because his direct exposure to Francophone cultures was in fact limited to a three-day stay in Cannes and a four-day stay in Montreal. It is also possible that his answer was influenced by his coursework and his other extended travel experience, which perhaps gave him the sense that Francophone and American culture were closer than other cultures he had experienced during his time in the navy (i.e. Middle Eastern cultures). To explain his answer, he simply added: “I think the two cultures have had significant cross-cultural influence.”

Figure 14. Background Survey Question: Students’ Opinion on Level of Similitudes/Differences between French and American Cultures.
It is important to note that although Mark was exposed to Haitian culture he made no mention of Haitian Creole or of any early exposure to the French language. Actually, he stated on the survey that other than native instructors, he had never spoken French with native speakers before. However, he was very receptive to the opportunity provided by this study to interact with French students. Like 80 percent of the students in the class, he confirmed that he was “very interested” in the opportunity to speak with native French students. He also added “an opportunity to speak with native speakers” along with the opportunity to improve his French language skills in response to the question about what he expected to get out of the telecollaboration.

In all, Mark appeared to be motivated and interested in the telecollaboration, even showing a certain level of comfort and self-confidence in his own French skills. Indeed, Mark was one of three students who claimed that he was “comfortable” in speaking in French (the red column in Figure 15 below). Interestingly, the two other students had in fact had a lot more experience and practice than Mark: one had French family members in France and traveled there on a regular basis and the other had spent a year studying in France.

Figure 15. Background Survey Question: Students’ Level of Comfort in speaking in French.
In his autobiography, Mark described himself and stressed his traveling experience before expressing his enjoyment for the study of French and desire to spend time in France. Unlike Kathy, he did not mention his hobbies or likes and dislikes. His selection of topics included: gay marriage, the Iraq war, and the economy. A few days later, he was paired with Van, a student with a similar level of FL proficiency. Mark had expressed interest in being paired with him based on his autobiography and because he liked Van’s proposal for a debate topic: the influence of USA civilization. I found it noteworthy that despite his extensive experience with foreign cultures he chose a partner with a topic that was focused on American influence. I should add that although this was Mark’s initial choice, the dyad ended up working on a different topic later on. In fact, settling on a common topic seemed to be problematic for this dyad as the analysis will show. Again, due to the mismatch in the number of participants on both sides of the project, Van had to share his time between Mark and another American partner. In his autobiography, Van described himself as a French student but it should also be noted that
he was of Asian origin, a fact that Mark alluded to in his first reflection when he wrote that “English is a second or possible third language” for Van.

Mark submitted an extremely detailed journal. It was the most comprehensive of all the participants’ journals. In addition to providing his reflections on each session (including the third one which was not properly recorded and cut short due to technological problems), he added notes on his presentation and all email exchanges with his partner. He also attached copies of their email exchanges and of his PowerPoint presentation. Mark elected to write his messages to his French partner in French, including one written out in both English and French. Here are Mark’s comments on the first telecollaborative session:

There was a lot of initial nervousness, which was overcome by the fact that we started the session in English which is my native tongue. I imagine that it was difficult for my partner for whom English was a second or possible third language. After talking to Van for a few minutes I became more at ease. His English was very good, during the small talk he was able to get his point across, I helped him with phrases and words. We spent a good amount of time throughout the session using the type window writing words or expressions that might have been hard to hear and/or understand. The headsets that I used created an echo which was difficult to speak through and actually hurt me in speaking both English and French as it was a distractions (sic). We then discussed possible topics for our debate. After talking in English for about 15-20 minutes we switched and began talking in French. It was a little bit more difficult for me to formulate my thoughts and sentences in French, but Van was really good at understanding my broken French and helping me find the correct word or expression to explain what I was trying to say. After a few moments the tension eased and I was able to better explain myself. I think from some of the reactions of my partner that there were times when I completely butchered the language, but he was good about not making me feel stupid. By the end of the first session we had settled on a topic and were working towards coming up with some sub-questions.

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47 Some portions of this passage have been underlined to highlight them for the purpose of the analysis. The quoted passage has otherwise not been altered.

48 The name was changed.
Mark’s talk of nervousness and his “he was good about not making me feel stupid” comment highlight the initial stress of entering into such an experience and how self-conscious students may feel about their own language skills. In contrast with his previously stated level of confidence in his French language skills, Mark started his first entry admitting to experiencing a lot of nervousness, which he consciously and smartly managed to overcome by pushing for his language preference. Mark referred to the fact that this session started in English, which made it a lot easier for him to initiate an exchange with his partner, get to know him and take control of the session. The choice of language and negotiation process between the two partners proved to be an interesting and enlightening point about the rapport in this dyad and Mark’s value of his partner, and will be further discussed in the next section. This entry also reveals that Mark was very sensitive to his partner’s efforts and support. Mark’s comment about Van’s reactions points to the importance of the visual feed and the fact that Mark likely paid close attention to his partner’s wording but also probably his facial gestures and intonation.

**Mark’s First Telecollaborative Session**

This initial session lasted for 36 minutes. Apart from receiving each other’s autobiographies and list of topics, the two partners had not had any contact prior to this exchange. Mark was the one who initiated the conversation without introducing himself. His partner felt thus the need to confirm that he was looking at the right person by asking, “uhm you is my friend the web friend right?” (line 9). Van followed with a short exchange of personal information (age and major). However, after just a few minutes Mark abruptly cut this introductory phase short, and redirected the conversation, intentionally skipping the questionnaire which was not required but recommended. In his
first reflection, he referred to the pre-debate discussion as “small talk”. It seems that he did not value this step and did not recognize its linguistic and social functions. It is also possible that his choice to proceed without completing the questionnaire task affected his own display of attitudes.

In effect, from the beginning on Mark showed that he was almost exclusively focused on the debate task and consequently the first half of this exchange revolved around the discussion of a debate topic. On the video recording, he was fidgeting a lot and looking down, probably at his notes. He initiated this phase with the question: “so what subject would you like to do for our debate?” (line 63). This topic discussion lasted for almost fifteen minutes with two interruptions (Van’s questions and sound problems). Initially, Mark volunteered his own topics of interest (the influence of American culture, line 69, and important American people and their global ideas, line 102) but Van did not respond. It is clear that, unlike Mark, he did not know the directions for this task and this caused some confusion. Later on, when Van asked for his partner’s topics, Mark, who is homosexual, responded by proposing to discuss “les mariages homosexuels en France”. Van turned it down explaining that “this discussion about hard because it’s new for French the discussion is very new” (line 116) and “because I have not more uh plenty of idea about the subject this problem we can discuss but uh you but uh however you can get more information about that because I have not very information about that” (lines 119-121). Seeing this reaction, Mark showed a lot more flexibility and told his partner: “no any subject is fine” (line 118). Van’s lack of response finally prompted him to choose one from Van’s list. From then on, the remaining part of the exchange revolved around the discussion of “the life of students in American compared to the life of students in
France”. It is possible that Mark felt some frustration at his topics being turned down but he did not openly show it. This discussion in English was complicated by Van’s lack of understanding of the task and some sound problems. Throughout this phase, Marks’ attitude evolved from directing the conversation and supporting his own interest to showing greater flexibility towards his partner and greater use of the self-relativizing attitude (A1). At that point, the conversation started to flow better.

The choice of language discussion was resolved quickly at the very beginning of the recording. Mark, who greeted his partner in French, asked right away “parler en français ou anglais?” (line 4). In doing so, he appeared to show openness and value by letting his partner choose. Yet, as soon as Van, surprised, answered: “uhhh I don’t know you want to speak English or French” (line 5), Mark stated his preference for English. He referred to this episode later when conversing with one of his classmates; however his recollection differed from the way it really happened. Mark explained: “well I asked him I said commencer en anglais ou français he said English and I said ok” (line 136). In fact, his partner never stated a preference for English. By focusing on his best interest, that is to say, starting the conversation in his L1, Mark did not make it easy for Van and thus did not show a lot of value for his partner. Still, he declared in his journal: “I imagine that it was difficult for my partner for whom English was a second or possible third language”.

Mark was in fact very nervous at the idea of interacting in French. Shortly after the beginning of the session, he interrupted Van to ask him if he was nervous, thereby showing and sharing his own nervousness. His own facial gestures and laughs showed signs of nervousness. Later, while he was waiting for his partner to get back online, he
brought that up again and made the following comment to himself or to a classmate: “je suis trè- je suis très nerveux à parler en français” [I am very nervous to speak in French] (line 142). At this point, he had not started to converse in French yet. It is important to keep in mind that aside from in-class interaction with his instructor, it was his first experience talking with a native speaker. Mark asked to switch to French nineteen minutes into the recording when he was prompted to do so. He made the following request and comments to Van:

212 M: changer la langue oui parler en français maintenant {to change language yes speak in French now}

213V: ok donc on va [parler de] {ok so we’re going to}

214 M: [c’est] facile pour tu {it’s easy for you}

215V: bien sûr {of course}

216M: c’est difficile pour moi {it’s difficult for me}

Here again, Mark exhibited nervousness. He first stressed the fact that it would be easier for Van, without acknowledging Van’s effort up until that point, before admitting his own difficulties. The rest of the conversation remained in French apart from a couple sentences in English at the very end when Van code switched during the leave taking.

Session 1: Attitudes

Mark initiated the greeting in French with a formal “bonjour”, thus producing an instance of E. Still, he cut this sequence short, thus not letting his partner fully respond before moving on. The leave taking sequence was not encoded because it was initiated by Van in English. The use of address form is also part of the readiness to engage with and follow other’s codes of communication (E). Curiously, Mark used very few address
forms during this recording. There is only one instance of the informal form “tu” and one use of “votre”, prompted by the reading of a typed questionnaire sentence in French. Mark used “vous” once to refer to French students and “vous” at the end when he said to Van “pour parler avec lui uh avec vous” (line 414). In line 214, Mark also mistakenly used “tu” instead of “toi” (disjunctive pronoun), thereby also showing that he intended to use the less formal form. Van, on his end, used the informal “tu” throughout the recording. This interesting occurrence (i.e. use of mixed forms and scarcity of address pronouns) may be partly explained by the fact that, with few exceptions, Mark did not ask personal questions to his partner, and had a tendency to skip the use of subjects by using uninflected forms as in “parler en français ou en anglais” {speak in French or in English} (line 4) and “changer la langue oui parler en français maintenant” {change the language yes speak in French now} (line 212) when addressing a direct request to Van. In other parts of the recordings, he used other subject pronouns, so it is not clear what prompted this. In any case, the mixing of the formal and informal forms also showed that Mark did not have control of these forms yet.

With regard to the other attitudes present in this first session, the scarcity of instances reported in Figure 16 below is noticeable. There are only six types of attitudes present (A1, A2, LO, E, A4 and A5) and only one instance for three of these coded attitudes. Importantly, there are practically no a priori codes except for a short instance of E. This distribution cannot be attributed to the length of the recording which was in fact fairly long (36 minutes).

49 He also said “répétez” or “répéter” on several occasions and because of this pattern, it is not clear whether he was using the imperative with the polite form or just and infinitive verb form. This was a practice that he did not have in class or in writing, in the emails he submitted.
A look at the chronological order of Mark’s use of attitudes below shows a mix of different attitudes during the first part of the recording until the last instance of “lack of” which preceded the language switch. The second phase was in French and flowed better than the first half. The discussion revolved solely around the debate topic and there were only three more instances of A1.

In this recording, there were four noticeable incidences of “Lack of”. The first one was mentioned previously when I explained how while seemingly giving priority to his partner to choose the language to start with, Mark actually clearly stated his preference for English (instance 1). Instances 2 and 3 took place during the debate topic discussion. Again, Mark initially appeared to give priority to Van, but then proposed his own topic. Finally, the last instance noted below showed that while Mark was very prepared and organized for each step of the telecollaboration, he did not have his partner’s topics with him, and so had to ask for them. This also illustrates the idea that he did not expect to
have to discuss other topics than the one he had chosen. In all, these instances point at the lack of value and interest in his partner as well as the lack of self-relativizing displayed by Mark.

Instance 1

6  M: **uhm we can start in English** (…) (laughs) **oui** (laughs)

Instance 2

69  M: **ok uh I’m I’m ok with that uhm how about uhm the influence of American culture**

70  V: Ame influence of American culture

71  M: **oui** yes

72  V: for people right

73  M: **oui**

74  V: it’s just of people and uh for you

75  M: **uhm I like that topic**

Instance 3

102  M: uhm I can I can research… uhm (…) **I can do like important American people and and maybe look at their global ideas**

Instance 4

199  M: can I hold on one minute (talking to someone else) **can I get the email with his subjects**…I’m getting them

The code with the highest number of instances in this session is A1, with a total of ten instances. The first one corresponds to Mark giving priority to his partner when he asked Van which language he wanted to start with. Six out of the remaining instances are
solely related to the debate and appeared when Mark showed more flexibility and gave priority of choice to Van. One particularly long sequence illustrates Mark’s willingness to give priority to his partner:

173V: and about my subject
174M: **we can do whatever subject you want**
175  V: uhm the one here I don’t like and economy I don’t know and *mariages homosexuels* is not my favorite subject
177M: **ok so we don’t have to do one of the ones that I picked**
178V: uh wh [you want]
179M: **[what] subject [would] you like?**
180  V: [uh] uh… uh social maybe or life or anything
181M: **we can do social**
182V: yeah yeah more social
183M: **[ok]**
184V: [ or] technology [uh]
185M: **[we] can also do technology**
186V: yeah more technology
187M: so we have to figure out a question

As mentioned above, there are very few instances of A1 after the language switch (only three) and it is surprising that they are only two instances of request for language help or clarification such as, "(laughs) je ne comprends pas le mot horaire" {I don’t understand the word *horaire*} (line358), in the French portion of the exchange.

There are six instances of A2, all found while the discussion was carried out in English. Mark seemed attentive to Van’s effort in English and paid special attention to
expressing himself clearly. On two occasions, he slowed down his speech in English and enunciated clearly, for example with: “uhm I’ll wait to ask my questions in French so you can ask me questions in English (slowly)” (line 16). He also used code switching to clarify himself, checked his partner’s understanding “you understand?” (line 105), code switched to tell his partner that he could use French, “en français” (line 77), when this one did not find the right words. He also provided “s’inquiéter” {to worry} to explain “nerveux” {nervous} when Van did not understand what Mark was talking about.

There is one instance of A4, in which Mark inquired about his partner’s feelings while sharing his own nervousness. This was rare occasion in which Mark sought a connection with his partner and therefore this excerpt was encoded A4.

44 M: [are you] nervous
45 V: hein {what}
46 M: are you nervous nerveux nerveux {nervous nervous}
47 V: what nerveux nerveux what nerveux
48 M: uhm s’inquiéter {to worry}
49 V: you can write
50 M: oh where
51 V: if the vocabulary is very hard you can write me because uh it’s a little hard for me (read from the textbox) so ah nervous nerveux (read from the textbox)
53 M: me too11

Mark also exhibited value to his partner through reassurance, thereby producing one instance of A5. After catching a glimpse of one of Mark’s female classmates, Van made a comment before realizing that he was being recorded. He became quite concerned
about it, fearing his professor’s negative reaction. Mark responded in a supportive manner, telling him that it was ok at first (line 93) and then seeing Van’s concern increasing, he reiterated his support and reassurance (line 100).

93    M        [it’s] o it’s ok though
94    V: you’re serious
95    M: yeah
96    V: my teacher will fight me after when she listsens she fight me aye you can you can you can uhm uh delete?
98    M: no I can’t
99    V: [ah uh]
100   M: [bu]t it’s ok ‘cause you know we’re getting to know each other

To sum up, there is a very limited display of value of one’s partner via the use of A2, A4, A5 and E. It is telling that there are no instances of A6 (showing interest in other’s daily life) in this recording. In effect, Mark opted to skip the initial questionnaire task which lets the partners exchange personal information and often leads to the display of interest in one’s partner daily life and activities, and thus can foster an increased show of value. Mark asked only one question based on the questionnaire much later on in the conversation and it is not clear what prompted him to ask except that it was somehow linked to the debate topic. There was a very limited use of attitudes after the switch to French aside from three instances of A1 (one related to letting his partner choose and two instances of language help requests). Mark did show some self-relativizing with the use of A1 but these instances were primarily linked to the debate topic and were initially mitigated by the ensuing use of LO. They carry in this case a limited self-relativizing value. However, once his own efforts with regards to pushing for his own topic proved to
be fruitless, he showed a lot more flexibility and relinquished the choice of debate topic to his partner. In spite of the confusion surrounding the topic, primarily due to Van, Mark showed that he was focused and organized. He was on task throughout the session and was careful to follow the rules with his use of L1 and L2, but he did not engage in more personal type of discussion or show any specific interest in his partner. In fact, he did not ask questions outside of the scope of the debate task (except for the sound problems and the nervousness question). However, he did provide information about himself, in particular his studies and his trip to Montreal. Mark did not express judgment. When there was more potential for tension, particularly when Van rejected his topics, he remained patient and open without showing any sign of frustration. It is therefore possible to wonder if he was being somewhat guarded, especially since he was well aware that he was being recorded (i.e. recording comment made to Van).

Mark’s Second Telecollaborative Session

This second session lasted for 30 minutes and was thus almost as long as the first one. The recording started after the conversation had begun. For this reason, there was no greeting sequence. From the beginning on, the main topic was the debate; the conversation seemed to start from approximately where it had left off at the end of the previous session, with Van recalling their last conversation about weekly course schedules. This entire exchange was about the debate preparation. Mark came with a series of questions and kept bringing the conversation back to it when they started discussing other topics:

237  M: (laughs) so I spend about four hundred a month
238  V: four hundred
M: for gas … food … **ok so just to make sure I understand our sub-questions**

V: mhm

M: we want to talk about the im what is the impact of schedules on the social life

He was monitoring the conversation to make sure that they stayed focused on the debate and that he was able to gather all the information he needed to prepare his PowerPoint presentation. This choice of action prevented the conversation from departing from the debate discussion and turning more personal, in spite of Van’s attempt at finding more about his partner. Still, when they started comparing university degree systems in France and the US, and Van asked his partner what he planned to do, Mark had no problem conveying his plans for his future career. This initiated a more free-flowing discussion about popularity rankings of different foreign languages and their personal feelings towards the German language. This was probably the first time this exchange felt uncontrolled and more akin to a natural conversation. This interaction was however cut short by the need to end the session and change partners. Coming back to the task, Mark volunteered to summarize their discussion and made sure that they agreed to exchange emails before the exchange wrapped-up.

There were a couple misunderstandings during this recording. On one occasion, it went unnoticed by both Mark and Van, and the conversation moved on (i.e. lines 75 to 77). On another one, the misunderstanding arose when, as they talked about student accommodations, Van misunderstood what Mark meant by living with his partner (i.e. Mark meant his male partner), asking him twice if he was married. Mark code switched, apparently to clarify that he was not married. When he further added that they could not get married, Van replied “ah congratulations” (line 236). It is possible that he had not
heard the negation in Marks’ comment. It is also evident that Van had not realized that Mark was homosexual. Mark reacted to Van’s lack of understanding by quickly switching topics. He did not show any sign of frustration but it is possible that this type of personal misunderstanding affected the rapport with his partner. Strangely, this was one of the rare occasions when Mark disclosed something personal about himself aside from information directly related to the debate topic or his studies.

Along with the journal entries Mark submitted, there were some notes on his email correspondence with Van. Prior to this second session, Mark had contacted Van to hash out what they had to discuss. In doing so, he showed again that he took the task seriously and approached it methodically. Given the difficulties they had experienced in settling on a single shared debate topic, it is also possible that Mark wanted to clarify things in writing ahead of the discussion. His email was written out in French and Van replied in English proposing to discuss three problems French students commonly faced. This second session flowed more smoothly and below is Mark’s second reflection, which was much shorter than the first one:

Much easier this time to talk to Van. We began in French this time since we used English the first time. It was a little easier for me because there was more of a rapport between us and it was a little less awkward. We discuss (sic) our subject and I took a lot of notes so that I could prepare the presentation. The discussion was more an information gathering session than a debate over our ideas and opinions. I felt that it went much smoother than the first and I was excited for the next session.

In this entry, Mark made a couple of comparisons with the first session that shed some light on his personal impression of the previous recording. Although he did not mention it in the first entry, it seems like he felt that the first session did not run smoothly and that the interaction with his partner was “awkward”. Based on this reflection, it is also clear
that he still remained uncomfortable with the telecollaborative task, as shown by the use of the mitigating device “little” twice. Still, he noted some improvements over the first session, namely his increased ease with conversing with his partner and the general flow of the exchange. Lastly, his awareness of this exchange being more an “information gathering session than a debate over our ideas and opinions” is interesting. It shows that he was conscious of the lack of exchange of opinion, which was one of the stated objectives of this task. Indeed, there was no instance of B (interest in other’s perspectives), nor of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) in this recording. However, while he was aware of it, Mark did not ask his partner for his opinion. Instead, he kept himself to information-seeking questions. Perhaps he was too controlled by his prepared list of questions or did not feel comfortable yet directly asking for his partner’s opinion.

Since this recording started after the beginning of the conversation, it is not known whether the partner had discussed which language to use first. In his entry, Mark explained that they started in French because they had used English. The language switch was initiated more than halfway through the recording, when Mark heard a request to switch and said right away, “op! we have we have to change to English” (line 192). At that point, he seemed pleased to be able to speak English. Van noticed it and replied, “ok sure you’re now happy ok my first question is uh what is the first spend of money for the students American” (line 194). The dyad spoke English until the end of the session. Throughout the initial part in French, Mark monitored his speech and avoided code switching, except when he could not think of the French words. While speaking English, he briefly code switched on a few occasions, primarily to help his partner, for example”
“utilise utilise le mot en français” (line 324). In doing so, he displayed value and support for his partner.

**Session 2: Attitudes**

As noted previously, there is no greeting in this recording. Mark initiated a short closing sequence in English and it was therefore not encoded. In this session, his use of address forms in French was limited. There wasn’t any use of the formal “vous” address pronoun and Mark used the informal “tu” only three times in the entire French portion of the transcript. None of these were included in questions for the debate. Instead, he used the informal pronoun when checking his partner’s comprehension twice, “non tu comprends” {do you understand} (line 152 and 181), and “as-tu fini” {are you done} (line 372), which was addressed to a classmate. There was also one instance of the possessive adjective “ton”. On several occasions, he did not conjugate his verbs but aside from “répétez” or “répéter” {repeat or to repeat}, which is unclear, he did not use infinitive verb forms in this recording when addressing his partner. This is altogether very limited and the fact that Mark used the informal address forms with his partner only on two occasions illustrates the lack of direct and personal questions. In fact, an observation about his apparent limited amount of personal interest can also be made when looking at the total occurrence of attitudes over this entire session both in figure 17 below and in the chronology of attitudes.

Figure 17. Mark Session 2- List of Codes
The largest group of attitudes present in this recording was coded A2, which refers to the willingness to show value through providing language help. This was the most coded attitude in this exchange and the majority of instances of A2 were found after the language switch to English although there were a couple ones in the French section as well. Apart from A1, the other types of attitudes present, that is to say, A4 and “lack of” were found towards the end of the recording, in the English portion.

Mark produced 13 instances of A2. For five of them, he provided vocabulary verbally along with using the type box. In this session, after Van asked Mark to write down a name, Mark made a greater use of the type box almost exclusively to provide language help. He also resorted to code switching to French to help clarify himself, and provided French translation. He also used paraphrases and summary sentences in English as in the following instance:
V: yes on to one to three hundred (typing) no more it’s very cheap here because here the university is spent by the … the president

M: ok the government covers it

V: yeah yeah voilà {that’s it}

Similarly to A2, the highest incidence of A1 was also found in the French portion of the recording. There were eight instances of A1. The first five instances are all requests for words “et j’oublie le mot il y a beaucoup de lounges” {and I forgot the word there are a lot of lounges} (line 89), [oui quel] est le mot {yes what is the word} (line 134), or recognitions that he did not know words and needed to look for them. These last instances were coded A1 but they cannot be interpreted in the same way the others because instead of asking directly his partner for language help, Mark either used his own dictionary (instances 1 and 2) or even asked a classmate. In doing so, he self-relativized but did not show value of partner. It is possible that he is not comfortable admitting his own language weaknesses:

Instance 1

103 M: jouer dans la Fountain un moment je chercher le mot {to play in the Fountain one moment I to look for the word}

104 V: mhm

105 M: (looking it up in the dictionary)…fontaine (laugh) c’est près de le mot en anglais dans le jour de fontaine c’est une grande fête et les étudiants jouer dans le fontaine [jouer les frisbees] {fountain (laugh) it’s it’s close to the English word in English Fountain day it’s a big party and the students to play in the Foutain [to play Frisbees]}

Instance 2

115 M: il y a beaucoup de clubs ici pour pour les étudiants à joindre gather … uh j’ai un dictionnaire (laughs) (he looks up the word in the
Mark showed some signs of frustration with the language that became even more evident in the following exchange (line 190):

187 M: d’acc- oui ici l’horaire pour les athletes est très rigide parce que les athletes à pratiquer beaucoup de temps beaucoup d’heures… oui c’mais j je sais quoi uh j- {ok- yes here the schedule for the athletes is very rigid because athletes practice a lot many hours…yes it but I I (don’t) know what uh I}

189 V: mais {but}

190 M: mais mais uhm je ne sais je sais pas quoi je sais pas (typing) mhm oof ok (laughs) {but but uhm I don’t know I don’t know what I don’t know mhm oof ok}

191 V: et

192 M: pour pourquoi pour (sigh) j’oublie mon question non … op! we have we have to change to English {wh why wh (sigh) I forgot my question no…}

194 V: ok sure you’re now happy ok my first question is uh what is the first spend of money for the students American

In the excerpt above, Mark could not find his words and did not finish his sentence. He tried to move on, stating that he could not remember his questions. He displayed verbal signs of frustration as well as visual ones (laugh and gestures). Right after, Mark expressed relief at the change of language. He was not the one who initiated the language switch although he could have. It is unclear why he did not express a desire
to switch languages as he was increasingly struggling with conversing in French. Actually, a look at the exchange prior to this last exchange showed that the conversation was unfolding rather normally. One possible explanation is that Mark had high expectations for the content of this conversation and that he was not able to formulate questions or lead the conversation in the way he wanted. Once the exchange switched to English, the instances of A1 diminished. The two remaining ones were in fact reformulations aimed at clarification. Mark simply wanted to make sure that he understood his partner’s questions. Mark’s use of self-relativizing was primarily for the purpose of supporting the discussion around the debate task. He did not use hedging, nor apologies.

There are two instances of “lack of” towards the end of the session. It is representative of the apparent lack of interest of Mark in his partner. When Mark asked the question in line 259, Van was unsure whether his partner wanted to know how long students went to the university in general or whether the inquiry was about him specifically. Displaying a clear lack of value of his partner, Mark responded that he wanted to know “in general” first and probably feeling that it would be rude to openly show a lack of interest, he added “and then for you” (line 265). Furthermore, after Van answered, Mark did not follow up on the personal question but he did not seem to have any problem sharing the same information about himself when Van later asked.

Instance 1

259 M: how long does do you go to university for … [one year]
260 V: [how]
261 M: two years
 Instance 2

356 M: uhmm I'll send the email to you in English
357 V: yeah
358 M: and [you] can send [the] email to me in French
359 V: [no] [no you] you send me in French
360 M: ok
361 V: I correct for you and I send it in English and you correct for me
362 M: ok
363 V: right

The second instance above was coded “lack of” because of Mark’s wish to send his email in English instead of making the effort to write in French to his partner. Van corrected him and suggested that he sent it in French, adding that he would correct it for him. Mark had made efforts to send everything in French up to that point. It is possible that he was tired by the end of the session and/or wished to move on with the task and thus thought that this would speed up and clarify the exchange of emails. As his reflection showed, at the end of this session, he was aware that they had only exchanged information and not shared their own opinions yet.

There is one instance of A4, in which Marks expressed his agreement and shared feeling with Van about the German language, adding to his partner’s comment:
V: [yeah most] student think German is ugly language XX
M: oh I agree I absolutely agree
V: yes you too
M: it’s ve it’s very guttural in the throat (makes noises with throat)
V: yeah yeah yeah yeah nobody like that yeah
M: yeah yeah

The limited amount and the type of attitudes, the limited use of personal address forms all point at the relative lack of value observable in this exchange. Both Figure 17 and the chronology of attitudes evidenced a general lack of use of attitudes during this session. With the more commonly found A1 and A2, there are merely two instances of LO and one of A4. There are no instances of the a priori Byram codes (A6, B, C, D and E). Mark’s preparedness and focus on task indicated that he valued the exercise. Nevertheless, his behavior did not express much curiosity about his partner. For him, the value of the task seemed much greater than developing a connection. The data seem to indicate that he was not seeking any special connection with his partner. In fact, Mark appeared more interested in the debate preparation and the language learning opportunities than getting to know a French student and his surrounding environment. This was evidenced by the tendency he had to return to the debate task when he judged that they were off topic and the lack of personal questions. Still, he felt that “there was more of a rapport between us”, as he noted in his reflection. So the notion of a rapport between him and Van was something he was somehow thinking of. In class, Mark worked well in groups and he was someone who would communicate easily with other
people, but that did not necessarily mean connecting with them or being willing to share personal information.

**Mark’s Third Telecollaborative Session**

There was a third session but no third recording for this dyad. As previously explained, technological difficulties cut the third session short and there was no available recording for that one. This said, Mark’s careful journaling still provided some limited data about this third exchange. This entry presents interesting observations that can be noted but cannot be corroborated by other sources of data. Prior to that session, Mark had emailed his notes to Van to get his feedback. He also noticed that he was missing some pieces of information that he intended to ask his partner for during the next session. In the session’s reflection, Mark noted:

> We began in French once again because I was feeling more comfortable and I wanted the practice and experience of speaking French. We discussed the last couple of points that I needed clarification on, and I made sure that I had all the information to complete the information portion of the presentation. We then moved to discussing our opinions on the differences in our educational systems. This I found much more interesting because I got the opportunity to understand more of the daily life of my partner. It was interesting especially because it not only highlighted out differences but also showed ways in which we were similar, at least in our goals and ideas. We switched to English and then there were some technical difficulties on their end which cut short our session.

In this entry there are no references as to who asked to start in French but Mark’s initial comment highlighted his increased comfort with interacting in French and his awareness of this practice opportunity. Mark was still task-oriented as he made sure to obtain the information he was missing from his partner. The most significant comment referred to the partners sharing opinions on the debate topic, something they had not done up to that point (see Mark’s second reflection). Mark’s comment about getting the opportunity to understand more of the life of his partner is the first mention of any interest in Van’s
daily life and habits. If Mark had initiated the corresponding questions, they would have
been coded A6, one of the a priori codes and an important show of value. Any mention of
interest in other’s perspective, a possible occurrence in a discussion of opinions, would
have also constituted another important show of value. However, in spite of these
important observations, the lack of trace of this exchange does not allow for conclusions
as to the actual production of these attitudes. While it is true that they discussed opinions
with regards to this topic, since there are included in the PowerPoint, it is not known
whether Mark initiated these questions or if Van volunteered his personal information as
he tended to do. Moreover, Van’s comments about a new change of topics in the last
recording and Mark’s lack of interest in Van’s personal information in the last session,
again hint at a general lack of value outside of the scope of the task.
Ahead of the last recorded session, Mark had created a draft of his PowerPoint, with his
notes and discussed ideas and opinions, and emailed it to his partner. Van returned it with
his corrections soon after, which allowed Mark to work on the final version. He was able
to present in class before the last session. In his journal, Mark noted that “there were
moments where I recalled sections of our conversation and it made it much easier for me
to discuss the subject” and that “they were some very good questions posed by the class
that I will ask of my partner during the last session”. In these entries, he sounded pleased
with the debate. His comments and the notes on the email exchange pointed at a well-
functioning dyad. He valued the feedback of his partner and planned to ask him for
additional information.
Mark’s Fourth Telecollaborative Session

Mark received an email with Van’s presentation before the last telecollaborative session. In his journal, he expressed his confusion, “Van sent me the copy of his presentation for correction. I discovered that the topic he chose was different from mine, which sparked quite a few questions in my mind. I made the corrections and returned them.” Indeed, Mark asked his partner about this change of topics during the final session and Van defended his decision. It is not known why he had not mentioned anything about it before sending his presentation directly to Mark, an attitude which Mark possibly construed as certainly confusing and possibly unfriendly as they were supposed to share a common topic. Nonetheless, Mark seemingly kept it to himself and did not make any comment with regards to this matter in his entry. In his fourth and last reflection, he finally expressed more personal feelings about his partner:

I let S (Van’s second partner) talk to Van first so that he could get any last minute corrections on his presentation. When I spoke to Van we began in French and it was truly interesting because it was like talking to a friend. We jumped straight into conversation about his topic, which was a good one dealing with car traffic in major cities and whether or not it should be regulated. This is something that I am very familiar with so the conversation went smoothly. I still made a few errors but Van was good about correcting them and I think the mistakes that were small and didn’t hurt his comprehension he may have overlooked. I noticed that sometimes I overlooked his mistakes for the sake of the conversation. The conversation in French was actually more animated then the portion in English which for me is odd since English is my native tongue. The thing I like the most was that at the end we both agreed to stay in contact via email and I feel like I’ve made a new friend.

Again, this reflection is positive. Mark avoided any comment about the change of topic and instead stressed that he was interested in the new one. He added that the “conversation went smoothly”, which is noticeable in the recording. This and his observations about errors and corrections highlight the fact that he was very aware of the
flow of the conversation and his own errors and progress. Mark also brought up the rapport between him and his partner, starting with “it was like talking to a friend” and ending the reflection with “I feel like I’ve made a new friend”. The evolution of the rapport is manifest in this last exchange, yet some signs but also lack of signs point at some discrepancy between Mark’s strong comment and his verbal behavior during the exchange.

In this last entry, Mark made no mention that this last session was much shorter than the two previous ones and lasted for fourteen minutes only. It was somewhat abruptly brought to an end by the presentations and debates going on in the lab. Mark first lowered his voice, explained that another student was presenting and added that he was likely the only student left still conversing with his partner. Van noted that it was the same on his end and initiated the leave taking sequence. This less than ideal end to the telecollaboration was representative of problems caused by conflicting institutional calendars. In this case, the American course was ending much sooner than the French one. For this reason, American students were asked to finish preparing their debates and present earlier than their counterparts. As the discussion in this last session illustrated, Mark had already finished his debate task and he was still helping his partner with his presentation. One interesting outcome of this situation was that since at that point one member of the dyad had completed his task, the initial reciprocity found in the necessity to help each other complete one’s assignment was not there anymore. It was therefore interesting to see whether the dynamic of the exchange and in particular the way in which participants supported each other would be affected.
At the beginning of the session, the dyad discussed the email they had exchanged and Mark’s presentation. He was disappointed with it, commenting “je pourrais faire mieux” {I could have done better} (line 20), apparently because he did not have enough time to finish it, a feeling he had not mentioned in his reflection. Then Van explained that his own debate was not due before two weeks and they discussed presentations before Mark finally brought up a question he had in mind. Indeed, Mark had noticed that Van had changed topic and he was confused about it. Van had initially agreed about their shared topic and never expressed any reserve about it. However, when Mark asked him why he changed topics, Van explained:

57 V: c’est parce que ça sera pl il y aura plus de détails à expliquer en fait {it’s because It will be m there will be more details to explain in fact}

58M: [oui]

59V: [il y] aurait plus de débat il y aura un sujet de {there will be more debate}

60M: oui

61 V: c’est parce que il y aura pour et contre parce que le sujet qu’on a pris on pourrait on pourrait pas avoir un sujet de débat à la fin mais un sujet de débat concret ce sera que de la présentation les les opinions {it’s because there will be for and against because the subject we chose we could we could not have a debate topic at the end but a concrete debate topic it will be only presentation the the opinions}

64M: oui

65 V: pour et contre c’est pour ça en fait c’est juste pour ça {for and against it’s for that in fact it’s only for that}

This excerpt shows that first Van ultimately had a better grasp of the task. Second, if Van wished to change topics in order to develop a real debate, it suggests that he felt that they never had an exchange of opinions about the previous topic, thereby contradicting Mark’s
third reflection. Nevertheless, Mark seemed interested in this new topic and willing to help Van. Most of the rest of the conversation focused on city traffic and related problems until they noticed that the session was coming to an end.

This last exchange started in French with Mark, while Van replied and asked questions in English up to line 7, when he asked if they could start in French. Mark accepted right away and the conversation unfolded in French up to four minutes before the end, when Mark noticed that one of his classmates had started his debate. Conscious that there was little time left for the exchange and that they had not conversed in English yet, Mark initiated the language switch by suggesting “je pense que nous devons parler en anglais” (I think that we should speak English) (165). The remaining part of the exchange took place in English without any code-switching in-between the two partners.

Session 4: Attitudes

There is one instance of the E code at the beginning of the recording when Mark initiated the greeting sequence in French with “bonjour oui bonjour ça va” (hello yes hello how are you) (line 1). Shortly after, Mark displayed value again through readiness to “follow other’s codes of communication” when he replied with “de rien” (you’re welcome) (line 16) after Van thanked him. Mark did not initiate the leave taking sequence, which was entirely in English. Although it does not include any code, it should be discussed as it is revealing of the dynamic between the two partners. This sequence was particularly long probably because it pointed to the end of the telecollaborative exchange and it was initiated and led by Van. Van first thanked his partner for the corrections and expressed his appreciation of the exchange before suggesting staying in touch via email. Mark’s seemed responsive and his facial gestures showed enthusiasm as
he voiced his agreement. Van offered to keep on helping Mark, even telling him that he
would be welcome in France (line 204). Yet, Mark limited his responses to showing
appreciation and thanking him (lines 199, 201, 203 and 206). In fact, he seemed no longer
focused on the conversation and more concerned with what was going on around him,
even reiterating that they were done (line 208).

196  V: yeah ok so thank you for your correction and I’m happy to talk to you
during the

197M: mhm

198V: during the three months two months

199M: yeah

200V: so I’m very happy to talk to you

201M: me too it was really good I enjoyed it

202  V: yeah me too uh so if you want to talk carry on to talk in by email or
you’re welcome

203M: oh yeah abso[lutely]

204  V:  [yeah] you have any question in French or if you come in France you
can totally or you’re very welcome here

206M: oh yeah thanks thanks

207V: (laughs)

208M: ok so I think we’re about finished

209V: yeah

210M: (laughs)

211V: so I told you goodbye and

212M: ok bye

213V: and see you maybe

214M: yeah we’ll talk email
215V: yeah bye

216M: bye

While Van clearly exhibited an attitude of value towards Mark, Mark was not as open or effusive. Mark quickly added that they would talk but not quite convincingly. It is possible that culture or personality differences were at play and that the exchange and the relationship developed might resound differently with one and the other. It could also be the case that since a presentation was going on in the class and everybody was expected to participate; Mark wanted to end the session quickly and participate in the debate, independent of how he felt about this being the last session.

Mark’s used the informal “tu” to address his partner on only two occasions, “tu es prêt” {are you ready} (line 35) and “oui oui pourquoi choisis-tu le sujet de les voitures dans la ville” {yes yes why do you choose the topic of cars in the city} (line 56). He used “ton” once, “j’ai reçu ton [courriel]” {I received your email} (line 10), and “ta” once, “et ta présentation est très bien {and your presentation is very good} (line 14). Mark’s use of these forms was limited but consistent and indicated that he had control of the correct address form.
The list of code and the chronology display a very short list of attitudes. This is certainly due in part to the shorter duration of this last session (half of the previous ones), but not only. In fact, the portion in French is not shorter than the ones of the other sessions.

The only instance of A2 (showing value through providing language help) appears after the language switch to English. At that point, the conversation was coming to a close and Mark offered to help, probably offering language help to his partner:

190M: **uhm so do you have any questions for me about your presentation**

191V: ok

192M: **anything you want to ask**

The video got cut off which prevented Van to respond and when the visual feed came back Van initiated the long leave sequence, by first thanking Mark for his corrections. The limited production of A2 was perhaps in part caused by the reduced amount of
interaction in English, since these are instances that tend to be more present in the English portions of the recordings.

There are four instances of A1. The first one occurred when Mark initiated the exchange in French and the second when replied “oui en français” {yes in French} (line 8) to Van’s request to start the exchange in French. This type of interaction was normally interpreted as Mark giving priority to his partner by letting him choose his native tongue. This was coded A1 and it is an instance of self-relativizing. Nevertheless, in Mark’s case, the use of French was also clearly considered as an opportunity since at that point of the exchange, he felt a lot more at ease functioning in his L2 and appeared to be seeking practice opportunities. The two remaining instances of A1 were language help requests. In the first one, Mark asked Van for the French word for “traffic” and in the second one below, he asked for the French equivalent of “carpooling”. It is interesting to observe that for the first time he started with “je ne sais pas le mot en français” {I don’t know the word in English} in both instances, without preceding the request with a nervous laugh. Thus, it seems that he felt more comfortable admitting not knowing something.

89  V: les les voitures privées voitures [privées]

90  M: oui je ne sais pas le mot en français pour carpooling {yes yes I don’t know the French word for carpooling}

91  V: pour {for}

92  M: carpooling

93  V: uh uh
Although Mark expressed few requests for language help in this last session, he did not use his dictionary to try to figure out the words by himself. Instead, he favored asking his partner for help, thereby showing self-relativizing and value.

Both instances of A5 (showing value through providing encouragement) are connected to Van’s presentation and debate topic:

Instance 1

14 M: et ta présentation est très bien {and your presentation is very good}

Instance 2

69 M: trafic oui et je pense c’est un très bon sujet {traffic yes and I think it’s a very good topic}

These two instances are particularly interesting in this session because Mark did not normally openly express his opinion nor verbalize much support for his partner.

In this last session, there are very few recorded instances representative of attitudes of self-relativizing or showing value. The only a priori codes present are the two instances of E. Mark did not ask questions about his partner’s daily life, interests or habits. He stayed focused on the task and practically all the coded instances were in some
way related to the debate task. Aside from the word requests and offers of help with the presentation, Mark asked only two questions to Van during the entire recording and they were both related to the task:

35M: tu es prêt?

56M: oui oui pourquoi choisis-tu le sujet de les voitures dans la ville?

Mark mentioned in his last reflection that he enjoyed the “car traffic in major cities” topic and found that the conversation went smoothly. The conversation on cars and driving felt more personal and animated because they were both interested in the topic and compared the systems and their opinions. Mark volunteered information to help his partner with his debate and Van asked all the questions, both personal and general information ones as well. Since Mark was clearly enjoying this discussion, one can wonder why he did not ask Van any questions. He never picked up on Van’s statements to seek further information about practices in France or even ask Van’s opinion, thereby showing a clear lack of interest in his partner. It is true that because of their shared interest in the topic, the conversation ran smoothly. In fact, Mark’s increased level of comfort in speaking French was also noticeable. There were fewer pauses, he did not resort to the dictionary, and he looked at the type box only once when Van provided him with a new word. The flow of the conversation and abundant use of gestures gave the impression that there was more of a rapport between the partners. Mark’s use of A5 at the beginning of the conversation also seemed to support this idea, and Van’s concluding remarks certainly hinted that he thought so as well. Yet, in this last session, while the interaction was friendly, there was an imbalance between the roles of the two partners. Mark’s lack of request for information about his partner and general behavior at the end of the session
did not fully support his final reflection comment: “the thing I like the most was that at the end we both agreed to stay in contact via email and I feel like I’ve made a new friend”.

**Within Case Comparison of the Three Recorded Sessions**

Taken together, the analysis of each session triangulated with other sources of data allow us to assess the development of Mark’s own stated interest in his partner. In effect, Mark’s second reflection was the first one in which he made a more personal, albeit short comment about “a rapport” with his partner Van as opposed to mentioning him solely in relation to their linguistic interaction. This limited written show of value increased in the third reflection with Mark’s only comment about his interest in finding out about Van’s daily life. The fourth and last reflection appeared to be by far the most revealing and open one since he stated in it that the conversation was “truly interesting because it was like talking to a friend” and “the thing I like the most was that at the end we both agreed to stay in contact via email and I feel like I’ve made a new friend.” It is true that having “an opportunity to speak with native speakers” was one of the two things Mark expected to obtain from the telecollaborative exchange (cf. background survey). Therefore, if these declarations constituted the sole source of data, it would seem logical to deduce that Mark had probably displayed an increasingly high level of personal interest in Van via initiating numerous personal questions and asking him for his perspective on a variety of topics, a clear display of value. Yet, a close look at each recorded session did not substantiate this. There was in fact no observable instance of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) or B (interest in other’s perspectives) in any of the transcribed sessions. In addition, while Mark’s reflections described in detail the
linguistic exchanges and language support the two partners provided one another, there was no mention of any tension and confusion or frustration during the exchange although Mark was surprised at Van’s sudden and late change of topic and most likely experienced some uneasiness when Van rejected his own debate topics in the first session. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to wonder to what extent Mark was upfront in his reflections and whether his full awareness that these were addressed to me and his own idea of what I could be expecting influenced his writing process.

A closer look at Figure 19 along with Mark’s use and lack of use of attitudes over the three recorded sessions further shed light on the factors which bore upon his choice of behavior and ultimately the outcome of this exchange. There were a total of nineteen coded attitudes produced in the course of the first session, twenty-two in the second session and nine in the last recording and fourth session. It should be noted that even though the first two recording were similar in length (thirty-six and thirty minutes respectively), the last one was about half as long with a duration of just fourteen minutes. As a consequence, any discussion of attitudes present in or absent from the last recording will be made with this differing parameter in mind. Figure 19 below, indicates first that the attitudes A3, A6, B, C and D were absent from the entire exchange. In addition, some attitudes, that is A4, A5 and E were scarce. The curves for A5 and E are barely distinguishable since they follow the exact same pattern (i.e. 1-0-2 instances) and as a result, they overlap. The two attitudes which display a pattern distinctly different from all the others with a higher incidence are A1 and A2.
*With a length of only fourteen minutes, the 3rd session was half as long as the other two.

Mark showed a willingness to follow French conventions when he initiated the first and the last greeting sequences in French with a formal “bonjour” (the second one did not have a greeting sequence). But there was no instance of E at the end of the recordings because he did not initiate any closing sequence in French. In fact, his partner initiated two out of three of these and Mark did one which was in English. There was a third instance of E coded in the last recording when Mark followed French conventions and uttered “de rien”. All in all, these instances of E were limited and there was no adjustment to a more familiar greeting form following the initial exchange nor were there other signs of willingness to follow conventions aside from “de rien”. Mark’s use of address forms throughout the exchange was particularly revealing as well of his level of engagement and attitude towards his partner. When addressing Van directly, he mixed
forms in the first recording, with one single instance of “tu”, another one of “tu” used in
place of the disjunctive pronoun “toi”, one of “vous” and one use of the possessive
adjective “votre” (but here he was likely directly reading from the questionnaire and did
not think of adjusting the adjective accordingly.) In the second and third recordings, he
no longer mixed formal and informal forms. He used “tu” twice and “ton” once with Van
in the second recording and again “tu” twice, “ton” once and “ta” once too in the third
recording. Of all these, only one instance was included in a question pertaining to the
debate topic (i.e. “ton” université). All the others were produced to check on his partner’s
comprehension, to ask him if he was ready, to give him feedback on his presentation etc.
Although he was able to show that he had gained control over these forms, Mark’s very
scant use of address pronouns and the absence of an increase of use over the sessions
illustrated that he was perhaps reluctant and remained reluctant to engage his partner
directly in conversation. To further substantiate this latter observation, I point at his use
of uninflected verbs in the first recording and his overall very limited use of personal
questions.

Further, the total absence from the exchange of the attitude displaying an interest
in one’s partner’s daily life (A6), an important a priori category, was initially surprising
even if Mark’s choice to skip the questionnaire task limited the likelihood of finding a
high incidence of this attitude in the first recording. The fact that he entirely opted out of
this non mandatory activity made of a list of personal questions indicated that he did not
value it and signaled a disinterest in getting to know more about his partner. In fact, the
rare questions he addressed directly to his partner were related to the exchange or the task
work. Again, this behavior seemed to be at odds with his stated interest in having “an
opportunity to talk with a native speaker”, unless he construed this opportunity as simply and only an authentic language practice opportunity.

From very early on in the first session and unlike the questionnaire task, Mark appeared to be very prepared and focused on the debate task. In this case, his choices proved to be counter to the objectives of the task. First, in a show of self-prioritizing, he selected topics which were either very personal (gay marriages) or oriented towards the American culture (i.e. “the influence of American culture” or “important American people…their global ideas”). Second the topic he finally ended up working on was not formulated in a way conducive to a debate, a problem his partner was fully aware of when he explained his reason for switching topics, “c’est parce que il y aura pour et contre parce que le sujet qu’on a pris on pourrait on pourrait pas avoir un sujet de débat à la fin…” {it’s because there will be pros and cons because the topic we picked we could we could not have a debate at the end} (line 61, third recording). In effect, the debate activity turned out to be a simple exchange of information about university lives. It gave Mark the opportunity to ask Van general questions about the French higher education system and student life. Mark also provided his partner with a lot of information about the American system and life on campus, something he seemed to be keen to do. Interestingly, he seemed comfortable volunteering a little bit of his own personal information. However, he did not show value through inquiring for this partner’s perspective on matters of campus life and there was thus no production of the B attitude. In this context of an apparent lack of value, it was therefore not surprising to see that there was no attitude of C (questioning values and presuppositions) and no sign of “readiness to adapt over time” (D). In addition, there was a somewhat strong incidence of
attitudes of “lack of”, with four instances in the first recording and two in the second. It is interesting that in the first and second instances found in the exchange, he appeared to initially show openness by asking for his partner’s preference but then quickly followed up by making his own preference very clear. In another show of self-prioritizing, Mark who was usually very prepared and organized indicated that he did not have the list of Van’s topics with him during the session, a sign that he did not believe that he was going to need them for the discussion. Probably the most overt “lack of value”, was found in the second recording. When Mark was asked to clarify if he wanted to find out about French course/length of study in a general sense or his partner’s own course of study, Mark answered in “general” first, thereby clearly voicing his priority. He then added that he wanted to find out about his partner too but this was probably a simple show of politeness and not interest because he did not follow up on it. All of these instances of “lack of” pertained to the debate task, or language use and I should note that they did not apparently lead to increased tension. There was no observable instance of “lack of” in the last recording. Because the recording was much shorter, one should be cautious about concluding that there was a lessening of his behavior pertaining to “lack of”. Still, it could be said that Mark in effect appeared to be less forthright in pushing for his own interest in the second and particularly the third session, but at that point his task was completed.

Mark did show value to his partner by producing attitudes of A4, A5 and especially A1 and A2. He pointing out commonalities (A4), albeit on two rare occasions and these connections were not about personal life or shared interests. The first one was recorded at the beginning of the first session when he asked Van if he was nervous and
shared that he felt the same. This display was followed a few minutes later by a show of support and reassurance (A5) to Van. There was one more instance of A4 at the end of the second recording and two of A5 in the last recording, where he expressed support first about Van’s presentation and then about his topic. In light of the presence, albeit limited, of these attitudes it cannot be said that Mark displayed a total lack of value of his partner.

Further, the higher incidence of attitudes of A1 and of A2 illustrated his care for providing language support to Van and in some more limited cases asking for his partner’s assistance as the L2 expert. As a whole, there was a strong variation in the number of total occurrences of A2 produced over the entire exchange and to a lesser extent of A1 (even if the last session was half as long) but this alone is not indicative of the actual patterns present in the data. These attitudes were in effect often connected to the language in use. This means that they were produced with a higher frequency depending on whether the speaker functioned in his L1 or L2. But especially in Mark’s case, they also reflected how he was going about completing his own task. A look at the last recording which was cut short showed that there was a single instance of A2, at the very end when Mark offered to help with Van’s presentation. The others were all instances of A1 which had a notably higher incidence when the dyad functioned in French. There were two instances in which Mark gave priority of language use to his partner and two requests for language help. The first and the second recordings included respectively ten and eight instances of A1, and six and thirteen instances of A2. Mark displayed willingness to provide his partner with language help (A2) and he used a variety of strategies to do so with a notable preference for the use of the textbox. There was also a prevalence of the occurrence of A2 when the dyad was functioning in English.
As for the production of A1, Mark used this attitude predominantly to give priority of choice of topic and of language use to his partner in the first recording. In fact, he made only two requests for language help once the exchange switched to French. We can see some changes in the second recording where he initiated a lot more self-relativizing connected to language questions in the French part but interestingly for some of these instances, he seemed to only rely on himself to find the missing words by looking them up in a dictionary instead of asking his partner for help. In addition, his willingness to start the exchanges in French in the second and third recordings, an attitude normally coded A1, could in his case be interpreted as a wish to prioritize his own L2 practice opportunity.

Although he was of Francophone extraction (i.e. Haitian), a fact he had not shared before the background survey was administered, Mark’s recorded answers suggested that the cultural and personal aspects of this experience might not have been his primary interests. A close examination of his display of attitudes throughout the exchange corroborates this observation. This was however not a likely conclusion at the start of the sessions. In effect, while I was monitoring and helping students during the interactions, I assumed based on visual cues and brief excerpts of conversation that Mark’s dyad maintained a successful connection and an equally rich task work. He was indeed very vocal about this experience and voiced out his enthusiasm along with corresponding laughs and facial gestures. I was therefore somewhat taken by surprise when I noticed the presence of several instances of “lack of”, the absence of questions indicating an interest in his partner, the scant presence of a priori codes and overall very limited production of
attitudes. Indeed, these at first seemed to go counter to his written reflections\textsuperscript{50}, his apparent focus and interest in the exchange and finally his overall behavior during the sessions. One question which came to mind was whether he thought that I had specific expectations and thus was being mindful of them as he expressed himself verbally and in writing in a certain way. But too many factors pointed in the same direction, namely that he was focused and invested but not in the opportunity to develop a personal rapport with his partner, as a representative of the French culture\textsuperscript{51}. The limited presence of attitudes of value other than the ones directly connected to language use (instances of A2 and some of A1), suggest that he valued his partner as an expert speaker of French and a learner of English but did not seem to really consider him independently from his language skills. Mark was not able to effectively engage in a process of decentering (Byram) because his objectives were the completion of the task (viewed solely as an exchange of information) and the language practice opportunity only, although the limited use of instances of A4, A5, E, A2 and A1 indicate that he did develop some level of interactional skills since he was able to function under the constraints pertaining to real-time verbal interaction and mediate some potentially tense exchanges.

\textsuperscript{50} In his last reflection, Mark commented, “The thing I like the most was that at the end we both agreed to stay in contact via email and I feel like I’ve made a new friend.”

\textsuperscript{51} Van was of Asian descent and it is not known whether he spoke another language fluently. However, his French was native-like and his ethnic background did not appear to bear upon the exchange between him and Mark.
CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY III: ROBERT

A Portrait

Robert was a student from a large city in upstate New York. At eighteen years old, he was in his first year at the university and planned on majoring in French. He had completed the equivalent of the French intermediate sequence in high school, and displayed strong French skills. In fact, in his autobiography, he explained that he had already studied French for six years prior to this course. For this reason, he was allowed to enroll concurrently in FRE 301 (Structural Review of French), a course required for majors and normally a pre-requisite for FRE 350Y, and in FRE 350Y. He was also enrolled in the Honors College, a fact that he mentioned to his French partner during the first exchange. Robert’s participation in class was uneven at the beginning of the semester. He might have needed some time to adjust to a University course and to his new classmates. In group discussions, he seemed curious, open-minded, and expressed himself with ease. He also had strong ideas that he had no difficulty voicing. Robert became more talkative in class as the semester progressed, with a first observable increase following the initial telecollaborative session and another one following the second session. He received an A at the end of this course.

Most of the answers Robert provided on the survey were consistent with those of the majority of the students. Like sixty percent of class, he indicated that he was “somewhat comfortable” in speaking French. He was also among the 80% of students who responded that they were “very interested” in the opportunity to speak with native speakers. On the
survey, he stated that he had no prior experience speaking with a native speaker aside from his instructors. Yet, Robert also declared that he had been to the province of Quebec twice, the first time for a week and the second for two weeks, to study. It is possible therefore that he did considered that these two experiences did not provide him with occasions to speak with native speakers other than the instructors he interacted with during his stays. In fact, the opportunity to practice with native speakers of a similar age seemed to be something he was especially interested in. When asked about what he expected to get out of the telecollaboration, he responded, “a better understanding of French as it is spoken by people my age”.

Robert considered that he knew Francophone cultures fairly well (i.e. “familiar”), like 60% of the class. However, the only questions where his responses diverged from the majority of the students were actually related to culture. Unlike most of the other students who selected “somewhat different” and “very different”, he found that the French and American cultures were “similar”, adding that they were both “wealthy democracies” to justify his answer. Robert also declared himself less curious (i.e. just “curious”) about Francophone cultures than the majority of the students (i.e. “very curious”) and just “interested” in knowing more about Francophone cultures, while 60% were “very interested”. It is not clear why he seemed to be more moderate with regards to his interest in the culture and yet expressed a strong interest in speaking with native speakers and traveling.
In fact, when asked why he wanted to learn French, he chose “I like French”, “I think it is useful for professional purposes”, and “I like to travel”. Like all of the other students, he also responded that he was “very interested” in traveling outside of the US. He brought the travel theme up again in his autobiography, when he mentioned his career plans and explained, “…je vais sûrement faire quelque chose qui me permettra d’aller en Europe. Je n’ai jamais voyagé plus loin qu’au Canada et je veux vraiment étudier à l’étranger” {I will most likely do something that will enable me to go to Europe. I have never traveled further than Canada and I really want to study abroad}.

Before sharing a final draft of his autobiography with the French students, Robert sent it to me with the following message:
Je vous l’ai envoyé tôt pour que vous puissiez avoir assez du temps pour corriger mes fautes. Je ne veux pas offenser mon partenaire avec une phrase trop familier donc j’ai essayé d’être très propre. (I sent it to you earlier so that you could have enough time to correct my mistakes. I don’t want to offend my partner with a too familiar sentence so I tried to be very clean (he meant proper))
Merci!

This email highlighted Robert’s preparedness and awareness of language registers. But more importantly, it revealed his concern about addressing his partner appropriately in French (E code). Robert displayed thus a lot of consideration and value for his partner prior to the start of the videoconferencing, as well as a desire to get a good start on the exchange. I responded and suggested that the autobiography be forwarded as is. The long introduction that was finally sent to the French students, was written out as a letter directly addressed to a potential partner. Robert chose to use the formal address forms “vous” and “votre” (E code), thus showing value to this yet unknown individual. In the letter, he introduced himself and described his hobbies. He expressed his fondness for the study of French, stressed his lack of foreign travel experience and his strong desire to study abroad. He also explained that he had no previous experience speaking with a same-age peer from France and showed a keen interest in finding about his partner’s opinion on various topics. In addition, he was outspoken in sharing and arguing for his topics of interest for the debate:

Il y a des tas de sujets que je aimerais discuter avec vous, mais celle la plus importante c’est l’élection du Président ici aux États-Unis. Je sais que c’est un sujet dont tout le monde a une opinion, et car nous vivons dans un marché mondiale, c’est un sujet qui affectera les Européens aussi. Je voudrais également discuter les stéréotypes pour les Européens et les Américains, parce que j’ai trouvé qu’ils ne sont pas bons et je voudrais les changer! Et bien sur que nous pourrons discuter des choses moins sérieuses aussi, comme la vie quotidienne et l’école.
There are a lot of topics I would like to discuss with you but the most important one is the presidential election here in the United States. I know that this is a topic everybody has an opinion on and because we live in a global market, this will affect Europeans as well. I would like also to talk about stereotypes about Europeans and Americans because I found that they are not good and I want to change them! And of course we can also talk about less serious things such as everyday life and school.

This paragraph illustrated Robert’s direct style, and indicated that he had a clear agenda with regards to the content of the discussions. Following the sharing of students’ autobiographies on both sides of the project, Robert was paired with Jean. Jean was initially more inclined to talk about alternative sources of energy and the dangers and benefits of GMOs and was not Robert’s first choice. Still, Jean had written Robert’s name down as a potential partner along with three other American students, and both Jean and Robert shared a more advanced language proficiency level. They were consequently asked to work together. This dyad benefited from extended discussion times since they did not have other partners, an advantage Robert acknowledged when he remarked, “I was lucky” in his first journal entry. The long paragraph below, Robert’s initial reflection, provided a depiction of the first encounter through his eyes:

Before this session I was a little nervous. I knew that for the most part, Europeans are much more adept at foreign languages than Americans and didn’t want to reinforce that assumption. Other people in the class seemed nervous too, but I’m not sure if it was for the same reason. I had some technical difficulties when I tried to connect (username and password didn’t work) but I eventually got to speak with my partner, Jean (name changed). I was lucky because I was the only one in the class who got to talk for the entire class, whereas other students were in pairs of two, splitting the class in half as to who would talk to the French partner. Once we started talking, I found that his accent was easy to understand despite the background noise. We filled out the basic information sheet and discussed possible topics for debate. He wanted to discuss alternative energy, but both of us acknowledged the difficulty of the vocabulary of that subject. So we discussed stereotypes. When I asked him what his picture would look like if I asked him to draw an American, he described an overweight man in a plaid shirt driving a
pickup truck. When I imagined a French person, I described a stuck-up, beret wearing, baguette-eating, smelly man with a moustache and silly accent. We both agreed that both stereotypes had some truth but are mainly based off false perceptions of the dumbest parts of both of our cultures. After this session, I think we both felt more at ease talking.

Robert initially appeared self-conscious about his French skills ("I didn’t want to reinforce that assumption"), a feeling that was also discernible to some extent in his survey answers (i.e. only “somewhat comfortable” in speaking French). Just like Kathy and Mark, he spoke of nervousness but he felt that his level of comfort in speaking increased after this session as he briefly commented at the end of the reflection. Another interesting piece of information gathered from this paragraph is his comment about the debate task topic, a part of the interaction he was evidently more interested in since he addressed it in greater length. While Robert recognized that his partner had a different topic in mind, he was not accurate when adding that “both of us acknowledged the difficulty of the vocabulary of that subject”. In effect, the two partners had no discussion prior to the start of this session and there was no actual discussion about which topic to choose or the “difficulty of the vocabulary” pertaining to alternative energies, during the recording. Therefore, it is possible to infer that his comment reflected his own personal feeling about it and that perhaps he did not recall that portion of the exchange correctly.

**Robert’s First Telecollaborative Session**

Robert and Jean’s exchange lasted for a little over an hour and it was by far the longest of all the first recorded sessions. However, for technological reasons only, this exchange had a difficult start. Poor sound quality and connection problems generated some stress. Robert, in particular, expressed his frustration "ah il faut commencer quand même" (ah we should still go ahead and start) (line 12), while Jean remained calmer and
exhibited understanding and flexibility "uh huh c’est pas grave c’est pas no problem" {uh
huh it's ok it's no problem} (line 108), two personality traits he displayed throughout the
recording. It is true that he spoke naturally with a low voice which did not help his
partner. Perhaps on account of these sound-related difficulties, the dyad skipped the
greeting sequence. Robert did try to introduce himself (E) at the beginning but Jean most
likely did not hear him and did not introduce himself. Robert also verified that he was
talking to the right partner. These short introductory sequences were interspersed with
sound-related discussions and feedback from the technician.

In the recording, the conversation was initiated in French by Robert with ‘enfin’
‘at last’, while Jean started talking in English but quickly switched back to French.
Interestingly, the partners appeared to have two different understandings of how to
proceed. Jean tried to initiate the language choice discussion twice, but his requests
remained unanswered. In the first instance, Robert did not respond because he did not
hear him and in the second one “d’accord uh tu veux commencer en français” {ok uh you
want to start in French} (line 55), he did not pay attention to Jean’s question. It seemed as
though he took the language choice for granted and assumed that they were starting with
French, a possible show of value to his partner. Yet, it is also conceivable that his
behavior was motivated by the wish to practice and start with his task in French first. In
that sense, Robert took control of the conversation early on. The first language switch to
English occurred when Robert was done with his questionnaire and asked Jean if he
wanted to ask his own questions in English. The language of use changed again when
Robert initiated the debate task discussion in French. In that instance, he had
misunderstood the language use rules and was asked to keep on conversing in French.
Finally, Jean, who was monitoring language use, requested a second switch to English towards the end of the conversation when they started discussing his own topic of ecology. He code-switched and had to make the request twice to get Robert to pay attention. Overall, the partners spent a lot more time conversing in French than in English. In fact, they spoke French for forty-two minutes of the one hour and two minute long exchange.

The first part of this recording revolved around the optional task, that is to say the list of personal questions. The two partners were focused on this activity and took turns to complete it. Nevertheless, while this task was designed to foster genuine conversation, Robert carried it out in a methodical almost mechanical fashion, with eleven questions asked in a row. He took notes and wrote all the answers down explaining, «ici il faut créer une présentation de PowerPoint après avoir parlé avec toi donc il faut que j’écrive tout ce que tu dis … uh et est-ce que tu as des activités ou des sports » {here we have to create a PowerPoint after talking with you so I have to write down everything you say} (line 65). In truth, keeping a precise record of his partner’s answers was not a requirement of this task nor was it mandatory to include these pieces of information into the PowerPoint which was designed as a separate task with a different objective and doing so impeded the flow of the conversation at times. Although Robert appeared to care for following directions, he actually was unaware of the correct ones or chose to adapt them. Robert waited until the eleventh question to show more personal interest (A6) when he asked Jean if he had traveled to the United States. That was his sole use of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) during his portion of the task. It is clear that he did not use the questionnaire as a way to gather more information about his partner. One can
wonder why he did not show more curiosity and interest in Jean, and expand on some of the personal questions from the list. When Jean had control of that task, there were more non-guided discussions because he let Robert talk more freely about his own interests.

Since both Robert and Jean did not have to switch partners in the middle of the recording, they were able to complete the first task (questionnaire) and start the debate task. This new focus of the exchange was also initiated by Robert when he interrupted his partner to ask “[do we] have the time to discuss our topic” (line 457). This occurred as the other participants were moving around the lab to change partners which may explain its abruptness. Robert wondered if he had to change partners, too, and following a brief exchange with his instructor, he was told that he could keep on conversing with Jean. He then initiated the debate task by asking directly: “uh les stéréotypes pour les Américains uh tu as joué sur l’Xbox en ligne n’est-ce pas” {uh stereotypes for Americans uh you’ve played the Xbox on line have you} (line 483). In doing so, he skipped any discussion about the choice of a debate topic and moved on with a story about stereotypes. His partner seemed at first confused but went along with the change of topic. It is not clear why Robert seemed to naturally want to lead the task without consulting his partner. He later on did show some more flexibility and value of partner when he offered to talk about Jean’s other topics of interest, “oh j’ai su que tu as voulu discuter des autres sujets et je les ai écrits mais je les ai perdus” {oh I knew that you wanted to discuss other topics and I wrote them down but I lost them} (line 755), but he could not find these topics.

**Session 1: Attitudes**

As noted previously, the exchange started with a discussion of the sound problems and there was no greeting sequence, but Robert did start the exchange in
French, which was code A1. The leave taking sequence was initiated by Robert, albeit in English because the conversation was carried out in English at that point. Still, at the very end, he code-switched just to say “au revoir”, thus following French codes of conversation and showing value to his partner (coded E and A1). In commenting on Robert’s initial message, I remarked that he was very conscious of language registers and intent on addressing his partner culturally appropriately. There were two other instances of E, pertaining specifically to the use of address forms and corresponding possessive adjectives, and they will be discussed next.

From the beginning of the conversation on, Jean used the informal “tu” address form to address his partner, which is common in France among young age peers even though they had not been in contact prior to this session. In doing so, he chose to show equal standing and a friendly attitude, thereby limiting the amount of formality and distance between them. He did use “vous”, but only in plural form. For his part, Robert followed more formal, but also accepted conventions learned in French courses, by using the formal “vous”. It is interesting to note that, while each of their respective choices reflected personal choices they made to position themselves in relation to their partner, Jean followed current sociocultural conventions and Robert followed French language textbook ones. In this sense, this difference of usage also reflects a disconnect between textbook-taught use of address forms and current practices by French native speakers. Still, shortly after the start of the conversation, Robert showed attitude of awareness and readiness to follow French conventions (E), and quickly initiated the address form discussion by mentioning the absence of distinction between the formal and informal
address forms in English and asking Jean (coded A1), the native speaker, to decide over address form use, to choose between forms (line 46):

46 R: [uh] pour commencer comme je suis américain nous n’avons pas de distinction entre tu et vous uh c’est à vous de choisir si on va tutoyer ou vouvoyer (laugh) (A1) {to start since I am American we don’t have any distinction between tu and vous uh it’s up to you to choose if we’re going to use tu or vous}

49J: on va se tutoyer ce sera plus simple {we’re going to use tu it will be easier}

50R: ah d’accord {ah ok}

Following Jean’s suggestion to use the informal address form, Robert switched right away “j’ai une liste de questions qu’il faut te demander” {I have a list of questions to ask you} (line 55). Robert remained consistent with his use of the informal form until, as he was reading a question from the questionnaire, he forgot to change the possessive adjective “votre”:

263 R: uh et ce que tu n’aimes pas sur votre uh c’est écrit votre {uh and what you don’t like on your uh it’s written your}

264J : XX (inaudible)

265 R : mais il faut que je la change à ton (laughs) sur le campus? {but I have to change it to your (laugh) on the campus}

In adjusting the forms, he showed his awareness and readiness to follow other’s codes of communication (E). Robert monitored his use of address forms and possessive adjective throughout the rest of the session.
There is a total of 43 coded attitudes in this recording. This might seem like a high incidence of display of attitudes but it is important to keep in mind that this session lasted for slightly over an hour, about double the average length of the other dyad’s exchanges. Three attitudes are absent from this session, namely C, D, and A3. There was one single instance of A5, when Robert told Jean, “uh there is nothing wrong with your English it’s just hard to understand you” (line 314). This utterance was initially not coded since it was prompted by sound problems, but upon watching it again, I decided to code it as A5, since Robert was reassuring his partner about his language skills and thus showing value, when he could have simply explained that he did not hear him. Still, one could have expected to observe a larger display of open support in a first session. Hence, this lack of attitudes relative to providing encouragement is notable. For his part, Jean did provide a limited amount of reassurance and encouragement to his partner. It is however possible that the higher skill level of the partners and thus the lesser amount of language difficulty they encountered bore upon the production of this attitude as well. There is a
variety of other attitudes present in this session, in addition to the more common A1 and A2. The sequence of codes presented below gives a clearer picture of the distribution of the most coded attitude of “self-relativizing” as well as the others in the recording.

There are five instances of A6. They all reflect an interest in Jean’s daily life or experiences. The first three were produced during the questionnaire tasks (both Robert and Jean’s questionnaires) and the last two during the debate one. The first use of A6 “uh est-ce que tu as jamais voyagé aux Etats-Unis?” {Have you ever traveled to the United States?} (line 175) initiated a short exchange of statements on New York City, Quebec and Robert’s interest in spending time in France. Yet, he seemed focused on sharing his own experience and interests rather than finding more about his partner since he quickly turned the conversation back towards himself. In fact, he did not let Jean speak despite the latter’s wishing to ask questions. It was an interesting example of differences in discursive patterns in French and English as Jean made attempts (line 178 with “[et j’ai]”, line 191 with “oui et en quel” and line 195 with “[et]”) to regain the floor and Robert seemed oblivious to these and kept it. Upon looking at the video feed, it is apparent that Robert moved his head a lot more than Jean, who kept his eyes on his screen. At that point, Robert was controlled by his task by looking sideways at his notes and looking up, a gesture, which helped him focus and formulate his sentences. He was therefore a lot less attentive to his partner’s facial gestures and his prompts signaling that he wanted to speak. For the last two instances of A6, Robert asked personal questions to Jean about
topics he was also interested in, “oh how long how long did you spend in Québec city?” (line 299) and “do you play warcraft?” (line 355), followed by another questions about online games and one related to Jean’s Quebec stay. Overall, Robert’s display of interest in his partner’s life and experiences was limited.

While there was a somewhat unexpected small number of A6 in this first recording, the presence of five instances of B was more surprising, although again the length of the session allowed for more discussion time spent on the debate topic, a task designed in part to support the production of attitude showing interest in other’s perspectives. The five instances were all produced during the debate discussion part of the session. For the first one, following a comment about British people not getting along with Americans, Robert asked Jean if it was the same with French people: “est-ce que c’est la même chose avec les Français?” (line 505). Next, he enquired about what French people thought of Americans: “ouais mhm est-ce que tu peux me dire quelque chose uh uh … de ce que les Français pensent des Américains?” (538). Much later on in the discussion, he came back to the same topic, asking Jean to draw a picture of an American this time: “et si tu as besoin de dessiner un Américain qu’est-ce que tu dessinerais?” {and if you need to draw an American what would you draw?} (730), after volunteering to draw a Frenchman first. For the last two instances, he sought his partner’s perspective on other topics being discussed, such as housing and his understanding of the reasons why most French people live in apartments (634) and ecology-related issues such as oil drilling in Alaska, “how would you feel about that?” (824). All of these displays of interest in Jean’s opinion and perspective on these topics suggested that Robert valued his
partner’s insight. They also reflected a strong desire in gaining a better understanding of French cultural perceptions and beliefs and their views on Americans in particular.

Of interest in this session was therefore the higher incidence of the a priori code B (interest in other’s perspectives), but also the stronger presence of the attitude of “seeking connection via shared commonalities” (A4), with a total of seven instances. These attitudes are spread out through the recording and Robert seemingly wished to connect with his partner. While these instances are coded A4, it should be noted that in some cases, Robert briefly pointed at shared commonalities by way of a simple comment without elaborating on them. This was the case when he shared that he was eighteen as well, after Jean disclosed that he had an eighteen year old sister. On other occasions, Robert seized topics Jean had just mentioned, to share his own related information (instances 1 and 2).

Instance 1

176 J: uh oui j’ai passé trois jours à New York {uh yes I spent three days in New York city}

177 R: ahh New York (laugh)

178 J: [et j’ai] {and I}

179 R: [j’habite] dans l’état de New York mais je ne suis pas allé à la ville que uh trois fois {I live in New York state but I went to the city only three times}

Instance 2

186 J: [et] je retournais à Québec {and I was going back to Quebec}

187 R: je suis allé au Québec deux fois pour un camp d’immersion en français et je l’ai vraiment aimé mais il faut aussi que je que j’aïlle en
Acknowledging a connection with his partner, Robert pointed to shared difficulties with learning a foreign language. He also shared a similar taste for British humor (i.e. a scene from a Monty Python movie) and music. Finally, the last topic on which he shared a connection with his partner was a discussion on energy resources. In general, these instances did highlight commonalities and showed that Robert could relate to his partner.

The attitude with the highest number of coded instances is the one of self-relativizing (A1). The distribution of instances encompasses the first phase with six instances noted during the initial discussion and the questionnaire task, and the second phase, with eight instances found throughout the debate discussions and closing sequence. It is noteworthy that the forms of self-relativizing that Robert produced did not include apologies or the use of hedging devices. There were only two hedges which were produced in the context of sound problems, not related to content or use of language and they were therefore not coded. The first and second instances were coded when Robert initiated the interaction in French and then asked his partner to choose how they would address each other. The last instance corresponded to Robert’s code-switch to French to take leave as the dyad was interacting in English. In all three cases, he self-relativized and gave priority to his partner. There was also one occasion coded A1, in which he asked his partner if he wanted to switch to English to carry out his questionnaire task.

Aside from these instances related to language choice and conventions, he produced attitudes of self-relativizing when looking for words or asking confirmation such as in the case of instances 1 and 2. But he also clearly stated that he did not know the appropriate words, thereby requesting language help with “…je ne sais pas le mot…je ne sais pas”
(line 642) or “j’oublie le mot pour le chapeau” (line 772). In one notable instance of A1 (instance 3) he specifically asked Jean to correct him.

Instance 1

431 R: the fils aîné right {oldest son}

Instance 2

662 R: [moi non] plus mais je prends des cours d en économie d'économie uh? {me neither but I take courses of in economics of economics ?}

Instance 3

160 R: aussi si je fais des fautes il faut que tu me les corriges {if I make mistakes you must correct me}

161 J: bah pour le moment tu parles très bien {well for now you’re speaking very well}

With only eight instances over such a long exchange, the production of attitudes of A2 remained limited. They all took place while the dyad was interacting in English, first while Jean was completing his questionnaire and then as soon as the partners code-switched back to English again to discuss Jean’s other topic of interest, ecology. Robert showed value to his partner by providing him with language help in several ways. It mostly took the form of suggesting a word in English (instance 3) or its equivalent in French for clarification purposes. In some cases he acted upon Jean’s request and in others, he volunteered the words, sometimes even finishing Jean’s sentences (instance 2). Robert corrected his partner’s pronunciation as well and offered extra explanations when he was using a word he thought his partner might not understand such as in instance 1.

Instance 1
R: [well a lot] of stuff at the university but uh I used to row crew I don’t it’s like rowing (it looks like he is doing the gesture for rowing but the gesture is outside of the scope of the webcam) in a boat I don’t know how to explain it most people here in the United States don’t even know what it is but there’s a lot of rivers here so boating is big.

Instance 2

J: yes I think uh I want to speak about the … why why did we use the only the the petrol or the car for the?

R: and not other sources of energy?

Instance 3

J: what the the name for the éoliennes wind

R: oh wind[mill]

J: [wind] windmill yeah windmill Moulin … yea uh I saw some project of windmill at the top of uh some uh hill or mountain and I think it’s very uh bad for the landscape

To conclude, in spite of a difficult start, this dyad functioned well during the first session.

There was a varied display of value from Robert and no notable instance of “lack of”.

There was no sign of frustration or particular difficulties with language, aside from some episodes of poor sound quality causing listening comprehension problems. Robert seemed focused and comfortable enough to start with a joke as the lab technician was commenting in French that “the problem never comes from the US”, Robert replied with a quick-witted, “ça c’est une stéréotype américain qu’on va discuter” {this is an American stereotype which we’re going to discuss}, followed by a laugh. If he did experience some nervousness, it did not prevent him from starting the exchange in French and expressing himself with ease. He used a variety of strategies to sustain the interaction.
with his partner: translation, reformulation, gestures, use of the textbox etc. This said, Robert’s behavior in relation with the questionnaire task and the way he initiated the following one, point at his primary focus and interest lying in the debate discussion and his own topic of interest. This way, though perhaps unconsciously, he undermined his partner. Robert valued his partner but did not always give him priority. Both tasks presented some problems: first the questionnaire did not sustain much free flowing conversation and led to a relatively low number of A6 and second, the way the debate question was formulated was not in fact conducive to a debate. In this respect again, he had either not paid close attention to the directions or opted to do it his way. Still, the conversation strayed from the main topic on several occasions, which led to a more natural interaction and widened the discussion. Robert apparently had no difficulty engaging in an hour-long interaction with someone he was meeting for the first time and he even was so involved in the discussion that he did not notice that the session was coming to a close and all the participants were leaving, “…pourquoi est-ce que tout le monde part…” {why is everybody leaving} (line 831). Lastly, it should be noted that his partner’s flexible ways, mild mannerism and English skill level certainly contributed to the positive outcome of this first session.

Robert’s Second Telecollaborative Session

There was no record of the second session (due to a problem with the recording feature) and the only information available stems from the reflection Robert submitted. In it, Robert provided a summary of the topics that were brought up during the interaction and some of the viewpoints his partner shared on alternative energy, abortion, gay marriage, US 2008 presidential elections and the candidates. Lastly they discussed
French and American slang, and taught each other some expressions. Two comments stood out from his narrative. First, he explained: “This time around, we tried to discuss our main topics: alternative energy and the 2008 presidential election, two topics which actually overlap”, which is puzzling since they spent the major part of the first session discussing stereotypes as the topic of their debate and he had found alternative energy to require too much complex vocabulary. Second, towards the end of the reflection, he mentioned:

By the end of this session I was much more confident in my speaking, even though I made plenty of errors. However, Jean (name changed) preferred that we speak French; he also didn’t correct my errors. Next time, I intend to tell him I won’t be offended if he points out my mistakes.

Robert was still concerned about his errors wishing that his partner would provide more correction. His observations show that he was focused on the content of the exchange and his own language skills but aside from speaking of his partner’s opinion and lack of correction, he did not share his own feelings about the session and/or Jean. One does not sense a connection with his partner as an individual as distinct from a language and cultural information provider.

**Robert’s Third Telecollaborative Session**

The third session and the second available recording for this dyad lasted for almost twenty minutes. It was cut short due to technological issues: a glitch in the software we were using and server problems on the French side caused a breakdown of all the online conversations. Robert submitted the following entry, which highlights his impression of this session:
This session was cut a bit short due to technical difficulties in France. This was probably for the better, as I ran to be on time to class and could barely remember how to say hello. For the short while we spoke, we discussed our presentations (at this point mine was almost done and he had not yet started his). We also spoke a little about slang. I also had enough time to tell him that I wouldn’t be offended if he corrected me a lot, and although he didn’t correct me much during this session, he would get better about it as time went on, both during the sessions and in external conversation.

The two partners had the opportunity to converse and exchange French and American slang expressions. But unlike Robert’s recollection of this exchange, there was no discussion of their presentations and any other topic aside from slang-related discussions and a quick exchange about IM. The two partners were apparently trying to meet on line and chat outside of class time but Jean had run into difficulties trying to use the French version of IM. Based on Robert’s last comment, they were later on able to engage in “external conversation”, although what they discussed and how often they chatted thereafter is unknown. Once again, Robert brought up the topic of correction and although he ended his entry on a positive note, he did express some disappointment at Jean’s limited amount of correction.

In this recording, there was no leave taking sequence due to the abrupt interruption of the session; there was no greeting sequence either. The recording started when the lab technician activated the recording feature in EVO and Robert went straight into the discussion topic. It is not known whether greetings were exchanged prior to the actual start of the video recording. Upon the start of the conversation, Robert made the following request: “uh parce que nous avons déjà parlé des politiques des énergies douces et tout ça est-ce qu’on va parler uh de l’argot seulement aujourd’hui” {uh because we’ve already talked about politics alternative energies and all that are we going to talk uh only about slang today} (line 1). Here again, Robert selected the topic of discussion arguing
further, “je suppose qu’il y a des nouvelles choses que je peux apprendre de toi” {I
suppose there are things I can learn from you} (line 6). In doing so, he both indicated
value for his partner as a source or knowledge about the language and culture, but also
implicitly displayed a lack of value as he did not enquire about Jean’s own interest, thus
not giving him priority. In fact, Jean’s flexibility but also his shared interest in finding
more about familiar American expressions and idioms, helped sustain this exchange.

The entire session took place in French. There was no recorded language choice
discussion and the exchange was cut short before the partners initiated a language switch.
In fact, there was a very limited use of English. Jean code-switched to English a couple of
times and used some English when he was trying to clarify a French word or expression.
And there was a punctual use of single words, idioms and short explanations in English
as Robert was trying to share some American slang and its context of use. To this end,
both partners also made an extensive use of the textbox, which was useful for spelling
purposes and providing examples. Here is a list of words they discussed, both English
and French ones: maille, carotter, Chelou, louche, « izzle », meuf, taf, mythonner, there’s,
sick, impressive. Jean had even prepared a list for Robert, which he retrieved online
while they were conversing. It is clear that Robert and Jean both enjoyed learning new
words and expressions, and teaching new ones to each other. Not unlike the nature and
purpose of slang itself, this activity had taken a game-like turn for them, as they smiled,
laughed and showed camaraderie.

Session 3: Attitudes

Robert used the informal address form “tu” from the beginning of the conversation on.
He was therefore consistent in following French conventions. In addition to the correct
use of address forms, there was one instance of E. Robert displayed awareness and willingness to follow French conventions/codes of communication in the following excerpt:

121 J: oui là je vois tu viens d’utiliser un mot d’argot aussi uh quand tu écris meuf c’est pas un mot de français en fait {yes here I see you just used a a slang word as well uh when you write « meuf » it’s not a French word in fact}

123 R: oui

124 J: XXX (overlap)

125 R: uh c’est à cause du fait que (typing the word) et c’est un mot d’argot américain que tu il faut que tu n’utilises pas {uh it’s because (typing the word) and it’s an American slang word that you should not use}

127 J: oui je le connais (laughs) je le connais {yes I know it I know it}

128 R: (laughs) donc {so}

129 J: faut pas l’utiliser {one should not use it}

130 R: je n’ai pas voulu le traduire à femme uh je crains que tu vas utiliser comme si ça veut dire femme et uh {I did not want to translate it to woman uh I fear that you are going to use it as if it means woman and uh}

132 J: non non non non t’en fais t’en fais pas je le connais (laughs) {no no no don’t worry about it I know it}

133 R: d’accord (laughs) {ok}

Jean first pointed out that Robert had just used a French slang word, “meuf” (line 121) in the textbox. When Robert replied, he explained that he had done it intentionally so as to indicate the register of an English word he did not want to pronounce, hence the pause he made in the sentence between “it’s because” and “and it’s an American slang” (line 125). Not only did he show value through the careful use of the correct register but he also stated his value and concern for his partner in French with “I fear that you are going to use it as if it means woman” (line 130).
With a total of sixteen coded attitudes, primarily A1 and A2, but also a mix of A3, A6, B and E, this session presents a display of varied attitudes, in spite of the absence of a specific guided task during the interaction. There is a higher incidence of A1, which is not surprising given the fact this entire exchange took place in French, a context in which Robert was more likely to self-relativize and ask for language help (coded A1).

The conversation started in French and this was coded A1 as a show of value to Jean. Yet there was no observable language choice discussion therefore I am not sure of how they settled on French and what was the implicit agreement in-between the partners. In this study, initiating the exchange in French meant letting one’s partner start with their native language and was therefore a sign of giving them priority and self-relativizing. Yet, while it was evidently more difficult for Robert to interact in his L2 than his L1, he seemed to seek out every opportunity to practice his French. In this sense, it was not always clear what his primary motive for initiating an interaction in French was: self-relativizing or pursuing his own objective. He did mention in his second reflection that

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his partner preferred that they speak French, but no element in the first or second recording corroborated this note. Shortly after he started the conversation in French, Robert produced an instance of self-relativizing and value of his partner when he made the following indirect request: “je suppose qu’il y a des nouvelles choses que je peux apprendre de toi” {I guess that there are new things that I can learn from you} (line 6). The other instances of A1 included four requests for language help, more specifically word explanations and clarifications. Robert sometimes just stated that he did not understand, “je ne comprends pas bien le sens” {I don’t really understand the meaning}, “non ça je ne comprends pas” {no that I don’t understand} or “je ne l’ai jamais vu” {I have never seen it}, and sometimes he elaborated on his request, specifically asking for examples, “est-ce que tu utiliser dans une phrase” {can you use in a sentence}, or trying to incorporate the word in his own sentences, “comme uh j’ai beaucoup de taf à faire après l’école?” {like uh I have a lot of work to do after school}. He also asked for help with spelling and made explicit requests, arguing that he wanted to be able to understand these words if he heard them in France:

26 R: je veux comprendre des mots uh si si je vais en France je vais les entendre et je veux les comprendre {I want to understand words uh if I go to France I am going to hear them and I want to understand them}

It is evident that Robert had no difficulty showing self-relativizing especially with regards to language learning. Yet, this seemed to take precedence over other possible contexts of self-relativizing since all these instances are related to French language use.

The production of A2 might have been affected by the lack of interaction in English but the nature of the discussion still lent itself to Robert’s interest in providing his partner with language help. All instances of A2 are found in segments when Robert
was presenting examples of American slang. There is a long one about the use of “-IZZLE”, where Robert used the textbox a lot to provide examples of words formed with this suffix. In another instance of A2, Robert made sure that Jean understood that he should refrain from using a pejorative word (used to designated women), by commenting that he did not use it often. The following coded excerpt illustrates the strategies he used (in particular the extensive use of the textbox), and the effort he put into providing explanations:

190 R: oh duh il y a un mot que j’utilise chaque jour et je l’ai complètement uh oublié on peut dire (he types it) mais ça veut uh ça ça ne signifie pas malade c’est comme uh (he types) {there is a word that I use every day and I totally uh forgot it we can say…but it means uh it does not mean sick it’s like uh}

192 J: X

193 R: or on peut dire (he is typing) {or one can say}

194 J: (reading) ah oui he is good at

195 R: mhm ça signifie uh … c’est comme bon doué {mhm it means uh…it’s like good gifted}

196 J: oui just je j’ai compris oui ça j’aurais pas compris uh si je l’avais {oui just I I understood yes that I would not have understood uh if I had}

197 R: est-ce que tu l’as jamais vu avant? {had you ever seen it before}

198 J: non jamais vu non {no never seen no}

199 R: mh uh ou on peut dire simplement (typing) which is uh {mh uh or we can simply say}

200 J: (reading) X c’est vraiment ah d’accord {it’s really ah ok}

201 R: comme ça et c’est une chose qui utilise chaque jour c’est assez courant {like that and it’s a thing that is used every day it’s fairly common}

202 J: (looking at his screen) d’accord attends est-ce que je pourrais encore avoir des exemples {ok wait could I still get examples}
There was one instance of the a priori code B (showing interest in other’s perspectives) in this recording. It was prompted by a discussion on the use of slang in France. Robert wanted to find out more the context of use of slang words and he asked for his partner’s feedback:

71 J: qui fait le verlan en fait voilà et le verlan c’est juste ça c’est des mots mais tu les prononces uh uh à l’envers ben verlan c’est l’envers {that makes verlan in fact that’s it and verlan that’s just it it’s words but you pronounce them uh uh by inverting the syllables so this slang it’s like inverting}

72 R: est-ce qu’il est normal d’entendre les mots de verlan uh à l’université ou est-ce qu’il {it is common to hear slang words uh at the university or is it}

73 J: non

74 R: est-ce qu’il est plus utilisé par les jeunes au lycée? {it is more commonly used by young people in high school}

75 J: ben on va dire par les jeunes au lycée c’est c’est vraiment uh oui c’est vraiment par les par les jeunes je sais pas moi si X (overlap)

Then Robert tried to find out about his partner’s own use of slang, thereby producing an instance of A6. In this case, he was interested in his partner’s language use and wanted to find out if he used “verlan” or not:

77 R: donc tu ne l’utilises pas? {so you don’t use it}
78 J: ça m’arrive rarement {I rarely do}
79 R: huh
80 J: uh ça dépend aussi j’ai j’ai très peu l’habitude d’utiliser des des mots comme ça donc uh j’ai jamais vraiment eu l’habitude de les utiliser mais uh s des fois je les utilise mais dans un langage courant même comme ça c’est c’est rare {uh it depends also I I rarely use words like that so uh I have I have really never used them but uh sometimes I use them but in spoken French even like this it’s rare}

The last attitude noted in this recording is A3 (providing information). Robert indicated that he valued his partner by providing him with an online resource, The WordReference website, and detailing its features:

214 R: uh it means sick je sais pas (laughs) uh est-ce que tu as jamais utilisé cette uh site web-ci (typing)? {uh have you ever used this uh website here}
216 J: (reading aloud) word reference non je vais voir si je peux l’ouvrir ok {word reference no I’m going to see if I can open it ok}
217 R: c’est vraiment utile et il y a des dictionnaires anglais-français anglais-espagnol français-espagnol et si on recherche uh si on fait un recherche on a tous les définitions uh des exemples et uh aussi uh des membres du site peuvent t’aider avec le mot si tu ne comprends pas {it’s really useful and there are dictionaries English-French English-Spanish and if one looks uh if one makes a search one gets all the definitions uh examples and uh also uh members of this site can help you with the word if you don’t understand}

In this second recording, there is a majority of instances of A1 spread throughout the recording except the end when Robert moved on to providing more support with informal and slang words in English. He also expanded his language use questions to enquiring about his partner’s practices (A6) and perspective (B), thus displaying other types of interest and value. He also included his own implicit reflection on the importance of appropriate conventions and register (E) when he adapted his French
explanation to include a slang word in order to convey the correct register to his partner for fear that this one would use it in the wrong context (a clear show of value and consideration for Jean). There was no use of the attitude of seeking connection via shared commonalities (A4) and the attitude of providing encouragement (A5) in this recording. The use of A4 seems to arise especially when partners discuss personal likes and experiences, which was not the case during this exchange. Still, Robert did not point at shared language experience (A4) nor did he provide encouragement (A5) to his partner, but again the session was cut short before the dyad switched to English, a context more likely to bring up displays of support. This recording presented a more natural discursive style within the constraints of the telecollaborative context because the interaction was not guided by an assigned task. In fact, the participants and primarily Robert, had seemingly decided to not work on the debates. He pointed out in his reflection entry that his presentation was almost done, unlike his partner’s. Thus he could have at least offered to help him with it. Robert behaved as if he had already moved on from the debate to another topic of his interest. But Jean seemed to like that topic too. In fact, he had come to the session with a list of words intended for Robert. In the recording, he also mentioned: “tu sais j’ai j’ai essayé de penser tu sais je je pensais des fois X au au quand j’étais dans le tram j’écoutais un peu là pour aller en cours j’écoutais ce que disaient les gens pour en pour en retenir…” {you know I I tried to think you know I I though sometimes X to to when I was in the tramway I listened a little there to go to class I listened to what the people were saying to to remember some of it} (line 151). Jean’s attitude indicated a lot of value and consideration for his partner. Furthermore, as Robert mentioned in his reflection, they were both trying to meet online outside of class, which
supported the idea that the connection this dyad had formed had solidified enough to expand beyond the limits of the telecollaboration and language lab even if for now it seemed to be primarily based on mutual language help. Finally, a point that needs to be made in connection with this session is that some of the content of Robert’s reflection is not corroborated by the data from the recording, and for this reason it is necessary to be especially cautious in using this information in the analysis.

**Robert’s Fourth Telecollaborative Session**

The third recording and last telecollaborative session lasted for 33 minutes. The leave taking sequence was initiated after Robert talked to his instructor and was asked to let another student have a discussion with Jean. At that point, Jean, who was in the middle of a story replied, “je te raconterai la suite sur uh IM si tu veux” {I’ll tell you the rest on IM if you want} (line 454), thus referring to their connection outside of class. The use of IM and the exchange of email were also brought up by Robert in his last reflection below. The two partners seemed to have kept in touch a lot through this collaborative project and apparently planned to keep on doing so.

Because I didn’t have to “share” my partner, by this time we were both basically done with any work we had to do. He had the rough draft of his powerpoint done, which we discussed. We also talked more about slang and words we might run into in everyday life. This time, he corrected many of my mistakes (many of which were anglicisms). Among them was the use of “actuellement” rather than “en fait” and “issu” rather than “problème.” I should also note that we spoke a lot via email and instant messaging and still do. I hope that I’ll be able to keep up my French by talking to him and that he will come to me with any English problems.

In this reflection, Robert commented as well on the progress of their presentations and PowerPoints, explaining that they were both practically done. He added that they talked about Jean’s PowerPoint, which they did at the beginning of the session, albeit very briefly. If anything, they discussed his own presentation because Jean wished to offer
more help, which Robert indirectly refused (lines 39, 41 and 43), thereby leading to some confusion:

37 J: mardi prochain d’accord et est-ce que il y a encore des choses que tu voulais savoir pour ça ou? {next Tuesday ok and are there still things that you wanted to know for that or}

39R: [je sais pas] {I don’t know}

40J: [ça ira] {you’ll be ok}

41 R: je pense que nous avons déjà parlé plus que tous les autres groupes {I think that we’ve already spoken more than the other groups}

42J: (laughs)

43R: nous a j’ai fini mon présentation {we ha I finished my presentation}

It is evident that Robert wanted to move on. He considered the task completed and was avoiding Jean’s question. But his partner, who perhaps put more value into this task and providing help, did not understand Robert’s intent and further suggested “mais peut-être je sais pas des des phrases que tu as envie de redire à l’oral ou que tu es pas sûr de comment le dire ou” {but maybe I don’t know sentences you want to practice orally or that you’re not sure how to say it or} (line 44). Given that Jean was still insisting, Robert finally explained that he intended to read parts of his presentation and he possibly meant to say that he planned to “make up” some of it since he asked Jean for a French equivalent. An awkward exchange ensued during which Jean tried to understand the context to determine a French corresponding expression and Robert did not want to acknowledge why he was looking for this expression. Significantly, this initial part of the session included several misunderstandings and potential sources of tension. These were primarily caused by Robert and remained unnoticed by Jean. In these exchanges, Robert’s attitude could have been coded “lack of” if his lack of honesty with his partner
could have been corroborated. For instance, when Jean first asked him if he had received his email, Robert replied that he had not checked his mail. Then as Jean added that he had sent the message two days earlier, Robert responded unconvincingly that perhaps he had not received it. Therefore, it seems that Robert did not want to take responsibility for what he did not do, that is read Jean’s message. When Jean later noted that the email was waiting for an answer, Robert responded in a defensive manner, trying to justify himself and moving the responsibility away from himself. Furthermore, in the case of the discussion of “make up”, there was a possible “lack of” value when, unwilling to state what he needed this expression for, Robert finally commented, “maintenant j’ai oublié le premier exemple la raison pour laquelle j’ai voulu savoir ce mot” {now I forgot the the first example the reason why I wanted to know this word} (line 86). However, it seems more likely that he was simply not telling the truth. In fact, he tried to protect himself and save face.

This last telecollaborative session was initiated by Robert in French without any sign of a discussion about language use within the dyad. After twenty-one minutes, they switched to English upon Jean’s request. There was some code-switching, primarily initiated by Jean when he could not express what he wanted in English. Robert did code-switch a little but he tried to monitor his language use and even apologized “oh and I started to speak French again sorry” (line 397). The rest of the exchange flowed without tension and focused on the exchange of vocabulary words and expressions. They strayed from this topic on two rare occasions to discuss weather conditions (i.e. snow) and Jean’s trip to Quebec. In these instances, the conversation became more personal and led to a few instances of A6 (interest in other’s daily life).
Session 4: Attitudes

There were three instances of the E code in this recording and the first one was produced at the very beginning. Robert initially briefly explained that the exchange was being recorded and then he added, “qu’est-ce qui se passe?” [What is happening] as a conversation opener. The following exchange coded E ensued:

3R: qu’est-ce [qui se passe]? [what’s happening]
4J: [ben uh] chez toi? [well uh with you]
5R: pou pour nous {fo for us}
6J: je comprends pas {I don’t understand}
7 R: qu’est-ce qui se passe ? uh c’est une expression anglais comme what’s up peut-être que je ne l’ai pas utilisée [correctement] {what’s happening uh it’s an English expression like what’s up may be I did not use it correctly}
9 J: [ah] d’accord uh on dit plutôt comment ça va? {ah ok uh we say how are you}
10R: quoi de neuf ? {what’s new}
11J: voilà [quoi de neuf] oui {that’s it what’s new yes}
12R: [comme ça] {like that}
13 J: oui ça c’est uh quoi de neuf uh des cours des TP et des devoirs est-ce que tu as reçu ma présentation ? {yes, that’s uh what’s new uh classes labs and homework did you get my presentation}

In this excerpt, Robert intended to use a French greeting form which would be suitable between friends. He tried to find an equivalent to the expression “what’s up?”, but in fact he did not perform an appropriate speech act in this context. This confusion of codes led to Jean’s response lines four and six, which elicited confusion and lack of understanding. Line 7, Robert’s quick reaction and comment “peut-être que je ne l’ai pas utilisée [correctement]” indicated that he had noticed the source of the misunderstanding. Then
he was able to self-correct by suggesting a speech act that had a similar function in French. In doing so, he showed that he was willing and ready to engage with the French conventions of interaction (E code). In a second instance of E, later in the recording, Robert noted:

422  R: when I was emailing you I was trying to write I look forward to talking to you and it came out (typing)

In this statement, he displayed readiness to follow French conventions (E) and self-relativizing because he was requesting his partner’s feedback at the same time. It also alluded to the fact that he must have been following these conventions in the written interaction as well. The last instance of E noted in this session occurred in the closing sequence when Robert cut the conversation short and signaled the end with “au revoir” (line 479). Interestingly, although he had adopted a rather informal stance as he initially addressed his partner with the familiar “quoi de neuf” expression, he concluded the exchange with a more formal address term, unlike his partner who chose the less formal leave-taking term: “salut” (line 480).

Robert used the informal address form “tu” with Jean throughout the session. He switched to a more formal “vous” form when he asked a question to his instructor in French, thereby showing awareness of the conventions governing forms of address in French. Although he was consistent in his use of the subject pronoun “tu” just like his partner, it is interesting to note that Jean used “tu” thirty times, almost twice the number of times Robert used it, with only sixteen instances.
In this third session, the attitudes produced are limited to only four different types, namely A1, A2, A6 and E. These are however not limited in number with 35 instances of coded attitudes over a recording of slightly over half an hour. Instances of A1 and A2 present the highest frequency and are spread through the entire recording regardless of the language in use at the time.

There are four instances of A6 (interest in other’s daily life), three of which appeared in the second half of the recording while the dyad was interacting in English. These instances are not connected to a specific task. The first one was produced while Robert and Jean were discussing snow and Robert asked Jean if this was something he was accustomed to. The other three are all related to Jean’s Trip to Quebec such as “[so] what are you doing in Quebec in December?” (line 401) and “how did you meet a Canadian girlfriend? That’s pretty far away from France” (line 452). These instances do
constitute an interest and show of value in his partner and his partner’s life experiences, something Robert did not seem to ask a lot about.

The highest number of attitudes coded belongs to the self-relativizing category. The first instance occurred when Robert initiated the exchange in French, and all the others but one directly relate to requests for language help. The remaining one is still connected to language use because it is an apology Robert uttered when he noticed that he had switched back to French “oh and I started to speak French again sorry” and “I spoke French with the teacher and I forgot we were speaking English” (lines 397 and 399). It is interesting to note that he did not overtly apologize in general but in this case, he seemed to attach a lot of importance to remaining with one code and respecting his partner’s turn. Robert also reiterated his request for correction with “aussi il faut que tu me corriges chaque fois que je fais une erreur une faute je sais” {also you need to correct me each time I make an error a mistake I know} (line 310). The majority of the instances of self-relativizing included Robert expressing his own difficulties with language such as forgetting a word or translating directly from English to French. He also asked for correction with gender agreement and word clarification. In all, he did not hesitate asking his partner for help, thereby self-relativizing and valuing his partner’s feedback.

In-between displays of self-relativizing, Robert also demonstrated value through providing language help, an attitude he was comfortable with and that was observed throughout the session. He used a variety of techniques such as translating, providing words in a written form with the textbox, giving examples and clarifications. Once the dyad switched to English, he was very attentive to Jean’s speech and finished his
sentence when his partner could not find the correct word or corrected him, even code-switching to clarify, in the following instance:

407J: uh I’m very uh ah (he is typing) I search the word I’m very uh uh pressed no uh

408R: **uh stressed**

409J: not stressed uh [I want uh]

410R: **[tu penses] à pressé** {you’re thinking of pressé}

411J: **pressé oui** {in a hurry yes}

412R: **it’s stressed or in a hurry or uh anxious for**

413J: mm I I think uh in a hurry to go to go there because it made uh

Just like he cared about receiving language help, Robert seemed to care as much about helping his partner improve his English skills and especially speak in a more native-like manner as evidenced when he asked himself, thinking aloud “*[any] words I can teach you that I use a lot*”(line 328).

This last session faced a difficult start, not so much because of Robert’s choice of a conversation opener as because of his ensuing lack of cooperation. His refusal to state clearly that he did not read Jean’s message or that he was not interested in spending any more time on the task, confused his partner who did not seem to suspect that Robert was not being upfront with him. Cultural differences in what may constitute a face threatening act in one culture and not in another, and how to react to it were at play in the first part of this exchange, without one partner or the other noticing them. Yet, once Robert managed to overturn the flow of the conversation and redirect it toward a “safer” topic, that is to say a discussion of vocabulary, there were no more signs of avoidance and tension. Robert displayed signs of value through the production of instances of A1

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and A2. He also began to show more interest in his partner’s life as evidenced in the four instances of A6. And he demonstrated his wish to respect French conventions with two attitudes of E at the start and the end of the conversation, in addition to a more unusual but interesting occurrence in the midst of the recording. There was no guiding task for this session and the conversation flowed naturally according to Jean and Robert’s own interests. They both asked questions and provided language help in a reciprocal and evened out interaction, with an extensive use of the textbox feature. The two partners undoubtedly shared the same desire to practice. In fact, Jean, who let Robert take the lead in French at the start of the conversation, was also eager to converse in English and he had to request a language switch several times before they actually moved on to English. The instructor’s request and the leave taking sequence brought this last session to an end somewhat abruptly. At the end, Robert mentioned that he was going to check his email upon getting home and the feeling that the exchange was not over was reinforced by Jean’s mention of a follow-up chat via IM. Although their topics of discussion outside of class were unknown, it is telling that in his last reflection Robert stressed his hope to keep up his French through talking with Jean and likewise his wish to help his partner out with his English. Therefore, he demonstrated a desire to maintain this connection, viewing it as reciprocal but also possibly still confined within the context of language help.

**Within Case Comparison of the Three Sessions**

Despite Robert’s milder level of comfort in speaking French reported in the background survey (i.e. “somewhat comfortable”), he expressed a strong interest in conversing with a French partner from the beginning of the exchange. He had had some experience talking to native speakers in Quebec, albeit not native age-peers, and had had
no prior telecollaborative experience. As his early correspondence and the beginning of the first online meeting indicate, he was prepared, had set objectives and has a clear idea of how to proceed. His behavior therefore suggested that he valued this experience.

Based on his answers in the survey, Robert appeared to have a stronger interest in the language practice opportunity than learning more about the French culture, possibly in part because he found it “similar” to the American culture. In effect, in the first email he sent me prior to sending in his autobiography, as well as in three of his reflections, he talked about his “errors” and his need for language correction. His comments gradually evolved from mentioning that his partner did not correct him (second reflection), to his partner did not correct him “a lot” (third reflection) to “he corrected many of my mistakes” (fourth reflection). This seemed to be in fact a primary focus of these exchanges for him and it showed value for his partner’s feedback and language expertise.

Robert was self-conscious about his French language skills as he mentioned in the first reflection, “Before this session I was a little nervous. I knew that for the most part, Europeans are much more adept at foreign languages than Americans and didn’t want to reinforce that assumption” and he expressed some nervousness which diminished as the first session progressed and ended with “I think we both felt more at ease talking”. By the end of the second session, he had overcome it as he commented that he “was much more confident in [his] speaking”, and never mentioned his comfort level afterwards. Apart from these comments, he talked about the content of the interactions, mainly his partner’s and his viewpoints on several topics and the exchange of slang words and expressions, but he did not make personal comments about his partner nor did he reflect on the telecollaboration.
Robert produced forty-three instances of several types of attitudes during the first recording, sixteen during the second and thirty-five during the third. Figure 24 below shows a pattern with a notable decrease of the number of attitudes during the second recording. This reflects in part the difficulties experienced with this exchange, which was cut short and had no opening or closing sequence. Furthermore, the partners did not get a change to switch languages. The interaction took place entirely in French with some occasional code switching and there was no task work. The problems caused by a technological failure evidently affected Robert’s use of attitudes but it might not have been the sole factor. In addition, Robert did not seem to be ready and perhaps even content with this exchange as he commented in his reflection, “This session was cut a bit short due to technical difficulties in France. This was probably for the better, as I ran to be on time to class and could barely remember how to say hello.” Still, there was some variety in his use of attitudes even during this session with a lower count but still six different types of attitudes produced. The first and the third recording varied greatly in length as well (102 minutes for the first and 33 for the third) because Robert had to share his partner for the last recording but not for the first one. Therefore, rather than looking at number of instances, it is more indicative to look at presence versus absence of attitudes as well as attitudes in relation to what type of activity and whether the manner in which Robert produced specific attitudes evolved. Still, one can at least take note of the high count in the third recording (thirty-five instances) in spite of it being half as long as the first session. The two attitudes with the highest number of instances, respectively attitudes of A1 and A2, remained consistent over the three recordings. There were no instances of C (questioning values and presuppositions) and importantly, there were no
verified instances of “lack of”. That is not to say that Robert never appeared to prioritize himself but he never made any clear statement showing self-prioritizing and therefore there was no coding of “lack of”. All other attitudes, both a priori and emerging ones (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, B and E) were coded in at least one of the three recordings.

Figure 24. Robert: Evolution of Attitudes over the three Sessions

The attitude coded E (willingness to follow other’s codes of communication) was first observed in Robert’s autobiography and it was therefore not included in the figure 24 above. This autobiography followed the format of a letter and was directly addressed to his future partner. In it, Robert used the formal address form “vous” and he attempted to follow French codes for writing letters. Once the online webcasting session started, Robert displayed attitudes of E in all three recordings, albeit with only one single instance in the second one. This attitude (E) is often first recorded in the ritualized parts of the exchange, that is to say, the opening and the closing sequences and the second
recording did not contain these sections. The first and the third recorded sessions included a closing sequence during which Robert took leave in French with “au revoir” (he also code switched in the first one), while his partner felt it appropriate to close with an informal “salut” (third recording). It is interesting that whereas Robert remained more formal in these instances, he initiated the last recording with a rather informal form in an attempt to use a French equivalent to “What’s up”. In addition to these uses of the E attitude, Robert displayed some unexpected forms of E in each of the recordings, by openly pointing at his attempts to follow French conventions (first and third recordings) or signaling differences of register (second recording). All of these suggest that Robert’s use of E was not limited to ritualized conversational sequences but extended to a full awareness of variation of codes of communication. He clearly stated his desire to respect these codes and address his partner in a culturally appropriate manner. Additionally, he demonstrated that he had full control of the correct address forms. In effect, he used the formal “vous” form at the beginning of the first session until he was able to ask his partner to choose the proper address form in this context. Jean, who unlike Robert had been using “tu” from the start, suggested right away that they use “tu”, a normal practice among young people in France. Robert complied and adjusted his use of address forms right away. His use of the informal form remained consistent until the end.

Two other types of a priori attitudes (Byram) were recorded during these exchanges. Robert produced instances of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) in all three recordings and instances of B in the first and second one. The presence of A6 was not extensive with five instances in the first hour-long recording, one in the second one and four in the last recording. The first three instances of A6 were follow-up sequences brought about by
questions from the questionnaire task (one from Robert’s task and two from Jean’s task). This was rather limited and for this dyad therefore, the questionnaire did not entirely fulfill its purpose. The remaining two instances were connected to the debate and Jean’s experience in Quebec, more specifically with Quebecois pronunciation. The sole instance of A6 in the second recording was also related to language with a question pertaining to Jean’s use of French slang. Only in the third recordings were the four instances of A6 not related to language or task, with questions displaying a more genuine personal interest. While this last episode may be perceived as a small progression towards an increase in show of personal interest, it still remains very limited especially given the length of the exchange, Robert’s familiarity with his partner and the ease of communication between the two. The attitude of showing an interest in other’s perspective (B) was in general less expected during the first session but in Robert’s case this exchange was particularly long and since he had completed the questionnaire task rather quickly without using it to generate much non-guided interaction, there was a lot of time left for the debate discussion. Three of the five instances of B found there were therefore directly linked to the task and discussion of stereotypes, where Robert enquired about Jean’s perspective. The two remaining ones were connected to other topics which came up in the conversation about living habits in France and environmental issues (Jean’s debate topic). The last instance was produced during the second recording when Robert asked for Jean’s feedback concerning the use of slang. It is interesting that there was no instance of B in the last recording which did not involve any task and was probably a reflection of Robert’s focus on exchanging vocabulary and expressions instead of using this session for a discussion of cultural and contemporary topics. It is interesting to note that the only
time Robert strayed from the language discussion in that last recording, was when he produced instances of A6. In Robert’s case, the initial debate topic (stereotypes) was somewhat effective in leading to the production of attitudes of B, but he was quick to revert to his preferred topic and did not remain on task very long.

Robert produced seven instances of A4 and a single one of A5 in the first recording only. There were no other displays of value through seeking connection (A4) and providing encouragement (A5) in the remaining recordings. The only instance of A5 was found when Jean seemed to doubt his English and Robert reacted by assuring him that his English was fine and that his lack of understanding was due to sound problems. This was rather limited and it seemed in fact that Robert was not keen on showing value with displaying support or encouragement. But it should be noted that these two partners who shared higher proficiency levels did not use devices such as hedging which often prompt a verbalized show of support. Robert was more comfortable, at least in the beginning, in sharing connections although these were at times limited to simply pointing out at things in common “in passing” with no follow-up sequence. Robert tried to connect with his partner by reacting to some of Jean’s statements and experiences and sharing his own related information (New York State, Quebec City etc.) Interestingly, however, he stopped using this practice and type of show of value afterwards. The low count of A5 and the absence of these two attitudes in the other recordings were surprising given the extensive exchange these two partners seemed to have shared outside of class in addition to the telecollaborative exchanges.

There was one single instance of A3 (providing information) at the end of the second recording when Robert displayed value to his partner by providing him with a
useful online resource commonly used by American students. By sharing a link for online 
language dictionaries and forums, he also indicated his willingness to help Jean with his 
language skills.

The two coded attitudes with the highest frequency were attitudes of A1 and A2. 
As figure 24 shows, there were consistently more instances of A1 produced than of A2, 
with a smaller gap observed during the last recording, and several factors bore upon the 
production of one or the other attitude. For instance, in the first recording the dyad started 
in French and switched languages three times. Following the two switches to English, 
there was a notable increase of the use of attitudes of A2 (providing language help) and 
similarly, a clear increase of A1 (relativizing-self) was observed at the start and after the 
switch to French. The second recording was conducted entirely in French and there was a 
higher count of A1 but since the focus of the interaction revolved primarily around the 
exchange of new words and expressions, Robert was also able to provide language help 
(A2) to his partner on several occasions. The last recording was a lot more mixed with 
regards to the production of A1 and A2, with fifteen instances of A1 and thirteen of A2. 
In this case, the two coded attitudes alternated, often in sequences of two, three or four 
instances throughout the interaction and apparently regardless of which language the 
dyad was functioning in. Therefore, the use of attitudes initially strongly influenced by 
the language in use (first recording), evolved to being connected essentially to the objects 
of the interaction in-between the partners of this dyad, that is to say the new words they 
were exchanging. The high incidence of A1 was also linked to the personal objective 
Robert stated on several occasions in his reflections -to improve his French skills and 
benefit from his partner’s linguistic feedback- which fostered his production of A1.
Interestingly, the reciprocal nature of the exchange led him to provide Jean with a similar level of language support, thereby increasing his production of attitudes of A2.

Over the course of the telecollaboration, Robert showed value to his partner through the use of a variety of coded attitudes. The longer initial recording included the task work and displayed a wider range of attitudes than the other two both in numbers and types. Several attitudes such as “showing value through providing encouragement” (A5) or “pointing at shared connections”, which were primarily linked to the questionnaire task and the getting to know one another phase (A4) were absent from the other two recordings. This hints at an overall limited amount of expressed value for Jean. But the absence of instances of lack of and the presence of B, E, and especially A6 toward the end of the last recording, three important a priori codes, indicate that Robert maintained a manifest interest in this interaction. This was also evidenced by the way in which he engaged in the exchanges. In effect, he seemed to control the interaction within the dyad by initiating task work, discussion topics and language use (French in all three recording). In fact, the dyad spent more time interacting in French than in English although Jean was as willing to practice his English as Robert was eager to practice his French. Additionally, the two partners’ shared interest led them to extend their telecollaborative sessions to IM sessions outside of the institutional boundaries. In this sense, the dyad functioned well since they had developed a rapport strong enough that we could see the premises of the attitudes of D (readiness to adapt overtime) as the rapport was evolving outside of the classroom environment and beyond the timeframe of the telecollaboration. In his last reflection, Robert concluded, “I hope that I’ll be able to keep up my French by talking to him and that he will come to me with any English problems.”
Still, as this last statement indicated, on his part the rapport apparently continued to be bound to language needs.

In fact, Robert’s goal with the telecollaborative experience was summarized in a statement he made towards the beginning of the second recording, “je veux comprendre des mots uh si si je vais en France je vais les entendre et je veux les comprendre” {I want to understand some words uh if if I go to France I am going to hear them and I want to understand them} (line 26). He had started this session by brushing aside the previous discussion topics (renewable energies and politics) and made an indirect request to now focus on slang only (line 1). Robert justified himself further by saying that he assumed that there were new things he could learn from Jean (line 6). From that point on, the remaining discussion time was used to fulfill his objective. Furthermore, he indirectly refused his partner’s offer for help with his remaining task work, that is to say his presentation, which led to a miscommunication at the beginning of the last session. His PowerPoint presentation was most likely quickly prepared, something he hinted at during the third recording and which led to a discussion of the expression “made it up”. He was probably not very interested in this part of the experience since he seemed to primarily value the conversational aspect of the exchange. The topic of the PowerPoint itself, “L’élection présidentielle des Etats-Unis” {US presidential elections}, although a current topic at that time also in the French news, showed a lack of interest in his partner’s culture even if he did value and include his partner’s point of view. Although he clearly enjoyed the debate talks, Robert who was intent on seeking opportunities to practice his French and learn new words and idiomatic expressions, did not show the same focus in
learning about the target culture, thereby suggesting a conception of French language learning as perhaps distinct from French culture learning.
CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION

Introduction

To investigate the mediational effect of desktop-videoconferencing in a telecollaborative exchange for the purpose of intercultural learning, I employed the attitude factor from Byram’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence and searched the participants’ discourse for instances of the attitudes compiled for the codebook of a priori and emerging codes. By observing the context of use of each of these attitudes and how they evolved over the course of the exchange, I presented a detailed analysis of the data collected for three students of varying proficiency levels: Kathy (low), Mark (intermediate) and Robert (advanced). A triangulation of these three analyses with data from the background surveys, the students’ personal reflections, email exchanges and autobiographies and my researcher’s notes provided me with insight into what factors affected the evolution of the production, that is to say, the presence or absence and increased or decreased use of specific attitudes and allowed me to answer the following research questions:

- Do students engaged in a videoconference-based telecollaborative exchange relativize themselves and value others (Byram’s 1997 attitude factor)?

- Does their use of attitudes change over the course of multiple telecollaborative sessions?

- How does the production of attitudes differ from student to student?
- Does language proficiency play a role in the production of attitudes?

- What are the implications of the answers to these questions for the use of telecollaboration (desktop-videoconferencing) in FL teaching?

In the present chapter, following a short review of the results of each separate case, a cross-comparative discussion of the three case studies will further expose differences between the participants and how the various ways in which they engaged with their partners, the technology, and the assignments resulted in different intercultural learning outcomes.

**Summary of the Three Cases**

The results of Kathy’s case analysis indicated that her interest in this online authentic linguistic and cultural experience, and her comfort level clearly increased throughout the sessions. Similarly, her use of attitudes increased with a higher number of occurrences in the last session in spite of its shorter duration. Importantly, she used eight out of the ten different types of attitudes (both a priori and emerging codes) present in the codebook and maintained this varied use throughout the sessions. The attitudes she did not use were C and D: C (questioning values and presuppositions) likely required a higher level of decentering and D (readiness to adapt over time), an a priori category indicative of a fuller engagement with a partner beyond the in-class exchange, was a less likely occurrence for a first time telecollaborative experience limited to a single semester. Kathy did produce four instances of “lack of”, which were potential signs of tension and discontent, in the second (one instance) and in the third session (three instances). In her case however, these behaviors seemed to also signal an increase in her comfort level with
the exchange and her partner. In effect, a close look at their context of use indicates that by the second session, Kathy was sufficiently at ease to be more assertive and state that she had chosen her own topic, and by the third session, she openly called on her partner’s unwillingness to converse in English, while using all the mitigating devices afforded by the use of the videoconferencing format (both auditory and visual channels). There were also potential causes for failed communication. The debate task work was in fact the low point of this experience for Kathy and a possible breaking point. This was primarily the result of individual factors, such as her partner’s lower English proficiency and seemingly lesser level of motivation for this task work, and Kathy’s own language difficulties when discussing a complex topic. Yet, Kathy’s resolve in seeing the task through, possibly her attitude of openness and curiosity towards her partner, and finally the mediating affordances of the technological environment helped her sustain the flow of the conversation.

In the course of these three recorded sessions, the types of attitudes Kathy produced reflected her own learning development and acculturation into this new learning environment. The first session was marked by a high level of self-relativizing (A1) with a lot of hedging and apologizing, combined with a strong inclination to show value by giving priority to her partner. The second one was also marked by a heightened occurrence of A1 directly connected to the difficulties she experienced with the task work. These eased in the third session where for the first time she produced more instances of A2 (value through language support) than of A1. Interestingly, despite her own language doubts, especially at the onset of the exchange, Kathy became the language facilitator in this dyad, thus employing a wide range of strategies to provide support to
her partner and to facilitate the interaction. Certainly, she played the main role in maintaining the flow of communication and sustaining the exchange. Other illustrations of this role are found in her production of the important attitudes of A4 (seeking connections) and A5 (providing encouragement) especially during the first session, but also in the occurrence of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) throughout the exchange. While the first instances of A6 were in part tied to the initial questionnaire task, her steady use of the A6 a priori code in the two remaining sessions was not supported by task work. In other words, she maintained her interest until the end and these attitudes were no longer task-regulated. The instances of B found in the data were, however, all task-regulated since they were solely produced in connection to the debate. Finally, Kathy’s use of different forms of the attitude of E also evolved positively through the exchange. In addition to using context appropriate greeting forms in French which she adapted to reflect the development of the relationship she shared with her partner, she produced two additional instances of E in the last session outside of the opening and closing sequences. The mediational effect of the exchange for the development of her use of E was clearly displayed when she tried to follow her partner’s guidance in uttering a greeting form obviously new to her, without quite gaining full control of this form, and also when she exhibited an increasingly steadier control of address forms and possessive adjectives following the explicit mediation of her partner for the latter. In sum, while there was an overall increase of attitudes, Kathy’s higher production of some attitudes and lesser production of others over the course of the exchange appeared to align with her task work, her adaptation to the telecollaborative environment, and her evolving relationship with Sophie as the primary factors.
The analysis of Mark’s experience with the telecollaboration yielded a markedly different picture than the one that initially emerged from my field notes. The data gathered from the survey, Mark’s verbal comments and written reflections as well as my observations of the sessions, suggested that he was eager to participate, improve his language skills, and have a French discussion partner. As a serious student and experienced traveler, he struck me as the participant who was most poised to take advantage of the intercultural learning environment. Yet, the combing of the recorded sessions for displays of attitudes of curiosity and openness through self-relativizing and valuing others (Byram) as first steps towards decentering, indicated otherwise. Mark produced nineteen attitudes in the first session, twenty-two in the second, and nine in the last session. Since the last session was only half as long as the first two, the overall count of attitudes per length of sessions is comparable. Significantly, there was a very limited variation in Mark’s production of different types of attitudes with only five of the ten coded categories present in his discourse, three of which had no more than two observable instances in the course of one session. None of the a priori codes were present except for E with, however, a very low incidence. By far, A1 and A2 were the two attitudes with the strongest presence and they were related mainly to language use. One can say, in Mark’s case, that the incidence of A1, the attitude pertaining to self-relativizing, was counterbalanced in part by his strong tendency to self-prioritize, especially in the first two recordings (with a higher presence of “lack of”). The task work did not fulfill its mediational function, in the sense that Mark did not produce any of the attitudes which were specifically targeted. It is telling that he chose to skip the initial task which was not mandatory but still strongly recommended. Even though I had explained its relationship-building function, it seemed
that Mark perceived it as a simple basic information gathering assignment about his
partner, something he was not especially interested in. By not carrying out the second
task in the way it was intended, he ended up not producing any instances of B, turning
this task instead into a simple exchange of information to the point where his partner
chose to change topics. In the much shorter third session, there was no notable change in
his low production of attitudes, but he was done with his task work at that point and the
interaction was perhaps more free-flowing without signs of self-prioritizing. Even though
he managed to avoid any questions about his partner’s daily life (A6) over the entire
exchange, it cannot be said that Mark expressed a total lack of value for his partner. In
fact, the scant presence of A4 and A5 with the higher presence of A2, do suggest that
there was a limited amount of interest. Nevertheless, this limited show of value was
aimed predominantly at supporting his partner’s task work and discourse in English, not
at seeking opportunities to engage with his partner on a personal level. Due to his overall
lack of display of interest in his partner’s opinion and daily life in the recording, the last
comment recorded in his journal in which he expressed that they planned to stay in
contact and that he felt he had made a friend is surprising. Mark’s partner was the one
who suggested staying in contact and told Mark that he should feel free to ask him any
question about French, even telling him that if he came to France, he would be welcome.
But, in spite of this positive end initiated by Van, it is difficult to imagine that they really
stayed in contact after the end of the telecollaboration. Regardless of Mark’s personal
feelings towards his partner, the general evolution of the exchange did not show
significant signs of development in Mark’s ability to show openness and curiosity
towards his partner or a greater ability to relate to him as person as opposed to a task
partner. His ability to converse with a native speaker under real-time constraints, however, did significantly improve.

Robert was the participant who interacted the most with his partner outside of the on-line sessions, and not only to exchange information about his presentation. He conversed with him through the use of IM and expressed a clear desire to stay in touch beyond the end of the telecollaboration albeit for the stated purpose of “keeping up” his French. In this sense, his behavior and comment stayed true to his answer from the background survey, namely that his goal with the telecollaboration was to get “a better understanding of French as it is spoken by people (his) age.” Robert’s general behavior, task work, discussion topics and display of attitudes throughout the sessions confirmed this agenda. His case analysis indicated that he used a wide range of attitudes over the course of the telecollaboration (eight different attitudes) including three a priori codes (A6, B and E). Robert’s sessions can be characterized in two ways. Organizational issues on one hand and technological failures on the other affected the length of the sessions and, in some cases, the task work involved. However, Robert’s own agency also affected the way he conducted the task work and ultimately the production of attitudes. Robert produced the attitude of A6 initially in connection with the introductory task, but then produced it outside of task-based work which was more reflective of a non-directed genuine interest in his partner. That was especially evident in the last session. However, this attitude was relatively limited overall. Similarly, instances of B were observed initially and primarily in connection to the debate task, with three of the total tokens produced in the first session. There was only one instance in the second session and none in the last, probably because their production was mainly tied to non-language related
topics, and Robert had turned the conversation back to his preferred topic of language in the last recording. Robert used the attitude of seeking connection (A4) only in the first recording and without any follow-up. In line with his preferred discussion topics, he had no difficulty seeking help and showing value for his partner’s language expertise as the number and types of A1 demonstrate. He was also willing to show value to his partner by providing language help, thus producing many instances of A2 as well. Robert did demonstrate that he valued his partner as an expert speaker and was particularly interested in his knowledge of pragmatics of the French language, which indicates that he was strongly aware that meaning conveyed via language is ingrained in culture. Yet, he showed a limited interest in his partner as a culture expert aside from his ability to provide language-related information. His overall production of attitudes was concentrated in the first session, and although it showed some variety in use, it appears surprisingly limited given his comfort level, his fluency in French, and his stated interest in a variety of topics. Increasing his cultural knowledge and developing a friendship were not Robert’s goal with the telecollaboration, he merely wanted a conversational partner for his own language needs.

Cross-comparison of the Three Cases and Findings

Kathy, Mark and Robert were selected for this study through a purposeful sampling process. The intent was to determine information-rich units of study that would at the same time be representative of typical students enrolled in this course (see typical case sampling strategy in Chapter 3) and yet potentially interesting and distinct enough to let us gain enough insight about the development of intercultural competence in intermediate-level students. They were representative in the sense that they were all
French majors with no apparent prior IC experience or interaction with French native speakers, but they also differed in their respective levels of proficiency in French. The intent was to examine whether L2 proficiency would be a significant factor for the success of intercultural development. In addition to age, gender, and L2 learning background, other variables distinguished these three participants, as showed in Table 7.

Table 7

**Participants’ Survey Responses related to Language Use and Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language/culture</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Robert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort level in speaking French</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in opportunity to speak with native French students</td>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in learning more about francophone cultures</td>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about francophone cultures</td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences/similarities level between French and American cultures</td>
<td>Somewhat different</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to French-speaking areas</td>
<td>Paris-2/3 days Quebec-2 days</td>
<td>France-3 days Montréal-4 days</td>
<td>Quebec-1 week(^{52}) Quebec-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers from the background survey represent the participants’ perception of themselves, viewpoints and experience at the beginning of the study. For cross-comparison purposes, the most informative responses are highlighted and thus one can

\(^{52}\) On the background survey, Robert answered ‘no’ to the question: have you spoken French with native speakers before (other than instructors)? And he did not answer any of the four additional questions related to this conversational experience. But, in his first recorded telecollaborative session, he told his partner that he went to Quebec twice for French immersion camps.
observe a sharp difference between Kathy and the other two respondents’ answers for most questions. Her responses reflect a notably lower level of interest, comfort, and perceived knowledge. Further, while Mark and Robert are more alike in their responses, it is interesting that Robert, the most proficient of the three, responded that he was only “somewhat comfortable” in speaking French, while Mark (intermediate level) displayed the highest level of self-confidence. In light of the information gleaned from the case studies, Robert’s milder level of comfort can be seen as indicative of his self-consciousness towards his French skills, an attitude observed especially at the beginning but also on numerous occasions during the online sessions and in his writings. Mark’s initial level of self-confidence, which might have been grounded partly in his high level of participation and comfort in class, was very quickly tested at the beginning of the first recording, which put him for the first time in a less protected and familiar environment for language practice than the regular classroom. The contrast in Mark and Robert’s stated higher level of interest in “opportunity to speak with native French students” than in “learning more about francophone cultures” corresponds to their respective behaviors with regard to language practice and cultural learning during the course of the exchange. In Kathy’s case, in accordance with her behavior in the first session, her answers indicate a lower level of self-confidence. Significantly though, her interest with respect to the interaction with her partner and the cultural learning aspect of the exchange seemed to increase quickly over the sessions. Both Kathy and Mark had minimal travel experiences in francophone area which did not appear to directly bear effect upon the sessions. Kathy made a quick mention of her short visit at the beginning of the first session, simply adding that she was fifteen and did not speak French. Mark made no reference to his
travel, nor did he make any mention of his Haitian origins to his partner. Robert briefly talked about his two immersion stays in Quebec commenting that he liked this experience a lot. However, he stated on the survey that he had never spoken French with native speakers (other than instructors). Does this mean that he did not consider Quebecois to be native speakers of French or simply that he thought only of native speakers in France when he answered, even though this was not specified in the question? While it is not possible to ascertain why he responded in this manner, it is likely that his experiences in Quebec helped prepare him to interact with native speakers.

This preliminary information was useful to first situate the participants. It is important to keep in mind that this was the first telecollaborative experience for these learners and it is likely that they had never been asked these very questions or similar ones. Therefore, these self-assessments are based on the students’ values and beliefs, preconceived ideas and perhaps even their wish to portray themselves in a certain way. Yet, interestingly, after analyzing the production of attitudes for each case study, we can still see a divide between Kathy’s choices and behavior and the ones of her two classmates. To clarify the differences in production and intercultural development between the three participants, I will further compare their use or lack of use of attitudes and discuss the interplay between participant-related factors and aspects of the telecollaborative environment which may account for the results of these case studies.

In the course of the exchange, Kathy produced 122 attitudes, Mark 50 and Robert 94. In order to make sense of Robert’s number, it is important to remember that he did not have to share his time with another partner during the first session and that there is a total of 155 minutes of recording available for him. Kathy and Mark’s overall recording
time is more comparable with respectively 77 and 80 minutes. At a minimum, this emphasizes Kathy’s much richer use of attitudes. In addition, both Kathy and Robert produced eight out of the ten coded attitudes, whereas Mark used only five.

Figure 25. Participants ‘Production of Attitudes of A1, A2, A4 and A5

The two attitudes which carry the strongest incidence in all three sessions are the ones of self-relativizing (A1) and showing value through providing language help (A2). They both have the highest number of incidence of all attitudes for each of the participants for each session, except for the production of A6 compared to the one of A2 during Kathy’s first session. Kathy, Mark and Robert all produced more instances of self-relativizing (A1) than any other attitude during the first recording, which suggests that their comfort level was the lowest then and that they were willing to give priority to their partner. The production of the attitudes of A1 and A2 was affected by the learners’ comfort levels, the language in use at the time (primarily French for the use of A1 and
English for the use of A2, but not always) and individual preferences. These evolved over the course of the exchange. Kathy’s trend inversed and resulted in a higher production of A2 during the third session, once her debate task which generated a lot of A1 was completed. Mark’s overall production was lower than Kathy’s although he provided a little more language help in the second recording. Robert’s production of both attitudes fluctuated in the second, but remained high in the third session and was primarily language focused. In fact, Kathy, Mark and Robert, each displayed preferences towards certain forms of self-relativizing which is also revealing of their level of openness in this exchange: Kathy employed a lot of hedging devices and apologies, while Mark and Robert did not use hedges or apologies. Mark’s instances of A1 were initially primarily connected to giving priority during the negotiation of topic for the debate and then to requests for language help. It should be noted that he appeared at times reluctant to directly ask for language help and often tried to respond to his verbalized language enquiries by himself. This indicates that he was not quite comfortable with asking for help and likely wished to save face, yet he seemed to open up more during the shorter last session. Robert, on the contrary, did not hesitate to ask for language help or to provide it. All three students were very willing to show value through providing language help (A2) and used a wide range of linguistic and verbal strategies afforded by the multimodal platform to do so. At times, they even resorted to the simultaneous use of two different strategies (i.e. the use of the textbox and oral translation). In all, Kathy produced notably more instances of both A1 and A2 than Mark and Robert despite the fact that Robert’s overall length of recording was almost double Kathy’s. Significantly, it is evident that Kathy’s lower proficiency level and comfort level supported her production of A1 and
her partner’s low level of L2 pushed Kathy to provide a lot of language support, but these were not the only factors accounting for her display of these attitudes.

The attitudes of A4 and A5 are based on the emerging themes. They were observed throughout the exchange albeit in much smaller numbers than A1 and A2, and primarily during the first session. They both display value of other through seeking connection via shared commonalities for A4 and through encouragement and reassurance for A5. A4 involves a desire to relate and share personal information, while A5 requires a personal show of care, something normally not expected without a certain level of familiarity with one’s interlocutor. Yet, Kathy provided encouragement to her partner through the use of A5 in several instances during the first session, and once in the last session. These were almost all related to language use. Through her own difficulties interacting in French, Kathy was able to relate to her partner’s expressed frustration with conversing in English. Thus, Kathy did not hesitate to comfort her by sometimes pointing to her own similar struggle. Robert produced only one instance during the entire exchange and Mark produced two only at the very end to provide his partner encouragement with his debate topic and presentation. Therefore, Kathy is the one who showed a desire to connect with her partner with a clear display of empathy from the beginning, although it should be noted that Mark’s and Robert’s partners did not express frustration or struggle with the interaction in English. Overall, there was a notably higher production of A4, especially again, from Kathy. Because the majority of the instances were produced during the first session during the questionnaire task, it seemed that this activity successfully supported the use of this expression of value. In this context, Mark’s low number may be partly explained by the fact that he simply skipped this task entirely.
Still, without the guided help of the task, Kathy was the only one who maintained the production of A4 in the last session.

The remaining three attitudes (A6, B, and E) are all a priori codes (Byram). The E attitude entails a “readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction” (Byram). Instances of this attitude required an awareness and willingness to take into account the situation and social context and the ability to make appropriate pragmatic choices when interacting with a partner. It was hoped that the amount of real time interaction with one or more native speakers of French, supported by the paralinguistic cues accessible through the audio/visual medium and the situated collaborative activities would lead to observable instances of E and pragmatic development. In the compiled data, these took various forms primarily discerned in the opening and closing sequences of the exchanges, but also in the participants’ consciously expressed wish to be mindful of these distinct conventions, and in the use of address forms (while instances of the latter were analyzed, they were not encoded). The acquisition of the sociopragmatics of address pronouns has been one focus of telecollaborative research and scholars have investigated their use especially in synchronous online chat environments. In an analysis of two case studies, Belz and Kinginger (2002) found that the telecollaborative environment (synchronous and asynchronous) helps support the development of the acquisition of the “tu” form for the expression of solidarity in both French and German (p. 210) concluding that “telecollaborative language study provides opportunities for social interaction which differ from those typically presented in the traditional classroom and which speak for a greater variety of contexts for authentic T/V use” (p. 211).
In the study, Kathy had the highest number of coded attitudes. They were produced primarily in conjunction with the opening and closing sequences. They also indicated that she was attentive to and tried to mirror her partner’s use of “à la prochaine”, an expression, she most probably had not been exposed to prior to the exchange. Her lack of control of address forms was evident at the beginning of the first session. Yet, she probably displayed the strongest growth with respect to the use of informal address forms and related possessive adjectives (with the explicit assistance of her partner). Mark’s production of coded instances of E remained minimal even if there was no opening and closing sequence in the second session. Unlike Kathy and Robert, he seemed less inclined to make an effort to code switch to initiate a closing sequence in French and instead let his partner do so on two occasions, although he did greet his partner in French in the first and in the last session. His mixed use of “tu” and “vous” during the first session indicated that he had not grasped the social and contextual cues pertaining to their use. Still, he displayed an increased control during the second and third session, albeit with an overall very limited total use of address forms. Along with his equally limited use of personal questions and his use of uninflected verbs, Mark’s behavior indicated that he was willing to engage with the conventions to some degree if they remained within a limited scope of socialization since, for example, the use of “’tu” connotes informality but also closeness and connection. In all, both Kathy and Mark were able to gain control of the tu/vous distinction and correctly situate themselves in relation with their partners, even if Mark’s overall use of address pronouns remained very limited. However, while we were able to observe how the telecollaboration provided a positive
ground for the development of this form, we do not know if the students were able to retain control of these forms in the longer term.

Due to sound and other technical problems, we were not able to observe Robert’s use of greetings in the first two opening sessions. He did attempt to use a more complex idiomatic expression in the third one and produced an instance of E in both the first and third closing sequences, even code switching to French to do so (in the first session). In fact, Robert’s use and types of attitudes of E showed a higher level of awareness of conventions than both Kathy’s and Mark’s. Importantly, he showed signs of E prior to the start of the online exchange, when he sent me a request for correction of his autobiography with the following explanation: “Je ne veux pas offenser mon partenaire avec une phrase trop familier donc j’ai essayé d’être très propre” {I don’t want to offend my partner with a too familiar sentence so I tried to be very clean (he meant proper)}. He also put special care into trying to follow conventions in a first letter exchange (i.e. autobiography). Further, Robert is the only one who mentioned his awareness of registers and showed willingness to help his partner with registers in American English: « uh c’est à cause du fait que … et c’est un mot d’argot américain que tu il faut que tu n’utilises pas » {uh it’s because of the fact that (typed the word) and it is a American slang that you you should not use}. Moreover, he showed full control of the use of address forms, starting with the more formal “vous” thus following conventions he had learned in class and switching to the informal “tu” only after getting his partner’s approval. Although we lack information about the type of instruction and interaction Robert was exposed to during his immersion programs in Quebec, it is possible that these experiences helped him increase his intercultural awareness with regard to pragmatics and overall
interactional conventions, and may explain his higher level of attention to elements of French pragmatics, language registers and control of address pronouns forms than his two classmates. Still, it is interesting to note the dichotomy between his textbook-based understanding of the conventions governing the use of address pronouns in French and his partner’s personal preference for the use of the informal « tu » address form at the start of the first session. This discrepancy between native speaker’s practices and class-acquired rules, was noted in one of the first group-based and bilingual video-conferencing studies, when Kinginger (1998) commented on the mismatch between the « sentence-based model of standard written French » presented in American textbook (p. 508) and the spoken French in use during the exchange by the native speakers, which she described as one of the reasons for the interactional challenges in her study. To sum up, both Kathy and Mark’s production indicated that they increased their understanding of the sociopragmatic knowledge associated with the use of address forms in these dyadic online exchanges. Kathy showed an increased awareness and an effort to engage with her partner according to the latter’s conventions. Robert’s production of attitudes of E illustrated a more advanced grasp of these conventions and was strongly connected to an acute awareness of and constant attempt to engage with the proper conventions and registers in order to not offend his partner.

**Task work and learner’s agency (A6 and B attitudes)**

In the current study, the online mediated tasks work, an intrinsic component of telecollaborative learning environments, was carried primarily synchronously during the scheduled sessions but also asynchronously when the students emailed each other. This represented only a portion of the sequence of task work planned in connection with the
exchange. In fact, the work started in class prior to the beginning of the online exchange, with assigned pre-task work such as class readings and discussions on intercultural variation, as well as extensive conversational practice and presentations aimed at preparing the students and raising their comfort levels. Of the two online collaborative tasks developed for the exchange, one was introductory and elective, albeit strongly recommended (the questionnaire task), while the other (the debate task) was required and spanned a part of the first session (settling on a topic) as well as most of the remaining sessions depending on the progress and choices of the students. The first task targeted specifically the production of attitudes of A6 (interest in other’s daily life) and the second, the production of attitudes of B (interest in other’s perspectives). And in effect, these two attitudes were produced initially and almost exclusively (in the case of attitude B for Kathy) in conjunction with the respective work on task.

Figure 26. Participants ‘Production of Attitudes of A6 and B
During the first session, the majority of Kathy and Robert’s instances of A6 followed questions from the questionnaire task. While in Robert’s case, they followed primarily from his partner’s questionnaire task. They maintained these displays of interest in their partners’ daily lives and experiences during free conversation in the second and third sessions, albeit in smaller number (see Figure 26). Significantly, Kathy’s overall production of A6 was higher than Robert’s, especially considering that her total recording time was half of his. Moreover, her questions displayed a higher level of curiosity in her partner than Robert’s which tended to relate to himself and to his interests. Therefore, in Kathy’s case, it can be said that the mediated questionnaire task fulfilled its intended function, that is to say, it fostered her engagement in a meaningful interaction, and supported her “willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with [her partner] in a relationship of equality” (Byram, p. 50). While working on the debate task, Kathy did produce instances of B in the second and in the third session, but these remained strictly connected to the task. In fact, whereas her task work was successful in supporting her display of interest in her partner’s perspective (B), she clearly found it difficult to elicit meaningful answers from her partner due mainly to her partner’s lack of cooperation and low proficiency level as well as Kathy’s own low level of proficiency. That is, she did not extend the use of this attitude (B) beyond the scope of the debate to other discussion topics, and resorted instead to questions supporting the use of A6, which required simpler structures and vocabulary. In Robert’s case, his level of proficiency was not a factor which affected his production of attitudes of B. He was the only one who produced instances of B during the first session because he had completed his questionnaire task and already moved on to the debate discussion. He enquired about his
partner’s perspective on the mutually agreed debate topic on several occasions, then on another topic later on in the session and once more in the second session. He was able to produce two instances which were outside of the scope of his debate task which suggested that, unlike Kathy, he was not solely guided by the task for the production of B, but his overall production was very limited given his levels of comfort and proficiency. In fact, Robert’s low production of these two a priori attitudes (A6 and B) were not a result of difficulties with language use or lack of collaboration with his partner but more likely a reflection of his different personal agenda with the tasks and the telecollaborative exchange as a whole. In a similar, but more striking way, Mark did not produce any attitude of A6 and B during the entire exchange (see Figure 26). He let his partner initiate a couple of questions from his questionnaire and then abruptly cut this activity short to initiate a discussion on the choice of debate topic, thereby not only rejecting his partner’s remaining questions but also intentionally skipping his own questionnaire task. This way, he did not get an opportunity to get to know more about his partner’s daily life and interests in order to develop a stronger connection, nor did he attempt to do so during the rest of the exchange, hence the total absence of instances of A6. Moreover, the debate task also failed to lead to the production of instances of B since although he spent a large part of the first session and the entire second session on this collaborative task, at no point did he enquire about his partner’s perspective on the debate topic. One reason was that, by flouting guidelines and directions, the task was conducted as a simple exchange of cultural information rather than of opinions and perspectives in preparation for a debate as it was intended to be. His French partner was aware of this issue and he referred to it, when he abruptly and single-handedly changed topics before
the last session explaining that: “c’est parce que il y aura pour et contre parce que le sujet qu’on a pris on pourrait on pourrait pas avoir un sujet de débat à la fin mais un sujet de débat concret ce sera que de la présentation les les opinions” {it’s because there will be for and against because the topic we chose we could we could not have a debate at the end but a concrete debate topic it will be only presentation the the opinions}. Consequently, Mark’s personal choices on how to engage with the two tasks accounted at least in part for the absence of these two significant a priori attitudes illustrative of a desire to engage in intercultural interaction.

In this study, it is evident that the three participants approached the tasks in considerably different ways, by either choosing to follow (Kathy), choosing to skip (Mark) or flouting guidelines (Mark and Robert). These choices affected the production of attitudes and the development of their intercultural competence. In reality, tasks which are designed by the instructors in function of a set of criteria, constraints and learning goals pertaining to the telecollaborative environments do not, however, necessarily take into account the students’ personal interests and experiences or their own motives and goals for engaging in the tasks. Yet, these personal agencies affect the learning situation and the outcome of the tasks. While analyzing student agency and how two groups of students reinterpreted assigned tasks in an ESL study, Donato (2000) concluded that “tasks do not manipulate learners to act in certain ways because participants invest their own goals, actions, cultural background, and beliefs (i.e. their agency) into tasks and, thus, transform them” (p. 44). Kathy was the only one who engaged in the tasks and worked towards the objectives as they were intended. Mark and Robert’s choices illustrated the importance and the effect of learners’ agencies in a given learning
context, as they engaged with these tasks with different goals and motives which resulted in different learning experiences.

**Telecollaboration: cultural differences in objectives**

Müller-Hartmann and Schocker-v. Dirtfurth argued that “Telecollaborative environments are particularly prone to divergent goals or motives because more learners with different cultural identities participate” (2010, p.30). Focusing primarily on one side of the exchange, we have discussed how participants (Kathy, Mark and Robert) followed different goals and motives when engaged in task work and how this led to different learning experiences. It is therefore relevant to observe how the motives and goals of the French participants aligned or differed from their American partners and how these similarities or differences manifested themselves during the exchange. Culturally-embedded differences in the way members of two partner groups interact with each other have been reported particularly in discursive practices but also in learning goals and objectives for the exchanges. Ware (2005, p.71) noted differences in “interactional purposes”, citing a German student who wanted to develop a personal connection whereas an American student planned to use the exchange to work on his German skills and obtain feedback. Without undermining the importance of students’ personal agencies, a close comparison of the way in which, Kathy, Mark, Robert and their three French-speaking partners participated in the three sessions including how they collaborated on the tasks reveals interesting patterns and similarities among the classmates on each side of the exchange. First, a survey of conversation starters, language choice and language switch negotiation, topic and debate initiation and negotiation, decision-making strategies, and leave-taking procedures indicate that the American participants took
control of the organizational part of the exchanges, and singe-handedly initiated and made most of the decisions throughout the exchange. In fact, Kathy, initiated greetings (in French), leave-takings (in French), and language switches in all three sessions, as well as led topic discussions, and directed the debate talk which was her own topic. Mark behaved in like manner, with regards to greetings, language switches and significantly all work on the debate task, initiating topic discussions and keeping his partner on task. Overall, his partner just initiated two out of three leave-takings in English. In the last dyad, Robert controlled most of these moves in the first session, without asking for his partner’s preference. In particular, he took total control of the work on task, the discussion topics, and most of the language use. All of his sessions started in French. It is telling that this dissymmetry concerning decision making within the dyads did not seem to lead to additional tension or open conflict. On the contrary, it seemed that the French students willingly let their American counterparts take the lead. This behavior was perhaps more indicative of a difference not only in discursive styles, but in the perceived functions of the verbal interaction and the exchange. While the American students focused heavily on accomplishing the task work, bringing the conversation back on track on many occasions, the French students tended to diverge or go off topic. This was not necessarily reflective of a much lesser interest in the tasks on their hand, but more probably of their motives and French conversational patterns with friends. In “Cultural Mistunderstandings”, a book used in this class and in other telecollaborative projects (Kinginger, Gourvès-Hayward & Simpson, 1999) to introduce Franco-American cultural differences, Raymonde Caroll (1988) explains how French people use conversation to develop and sustain relationships. Although, unlike Americans, they do not normally
connect and verbally interact with someone they meet for the first time, this unspoken rule appears to be voided in certain contexts. It may be that the dyadic telecollaborative environment, where students are paired by instructors within a class exchange, is such a context because it provides the necessary justification for French students to engage and converse with a stranger. This behavior was apparent in the initial exchange of Mark’s partner, where he started off calling Mark his “friend the web friend”, a word not used by the American participants in the recordings. He then engaged in the exchange in English upon Mark’s request and quickly generated a lot of questions, in an informal and friendly exchange. His intention and level of connection was further substantiated at the very end of the exchange when he confirmed: “you have any question in French or if you come in France you can totally or you’re very welcome here”. That is not to say that all French/Francophone (i.e. Kathy’s partner is Algerian) participants aimed at making friends through conversing or tried to connect with their American partners to this extent. Individual factors and preferences evidently played a role, too. The way they gave priority to their American partners, showing willingness to let them take control of the rules and topics of conversations and volunteered personal information suggested that their main goal with the exchange was not to gain intercultural information on specific topics or to solely work on their language skills. In fact their behavior was consistent with the idea that their principal activity and focus was the conversation itself and through it, the means to develop a personal connection with American students. For their part, the American participants were focused on the “business side” of the exchange, thereby adopting in all appearance a more active role. They managed the exchange and the work

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53 Carroll explains that “these rules are suspended under exceptional circumstances and on vacation” (1988, p. 30)
on task, thus showing their primary focus. Still, based on these considerations alone, it cannot be ascertained that their only goal was the work on task. Language practice, especially for Robert and to a somewhat lesser extent for Mark, was another important motive. And if one looks closely at Marks’ behavior, that is, his lack of show of personal interest and tendency to prioritize himself, it did not match the personal comments he made in his last reflection: “When I spoke to Van we began in French and it was truly interesting because it was like talking to a friend … The thing I like the most was that at the end we both agreed to stay in contact via email and I feel like I’ve made a new friend.” This latter comment seemed to go counter to his previous behavior. But perhaps, this comment should be interpreted differently: it is true that he was the one who produced the fewest number of attitudes representative of intercultural development, yet it is possible that the sense of personal connection he mentioned developed later and was not expressed through the use of personal questions, but through working with his partner, exchanging cultural information, collaborating on task and exchanging emails. Kathy, although she did not verbalize it, displayed a greater desire to connect with her partner through the extensive use of attitudes. Further, the way in which she deflected a tense situation in the middle of a conflict on language use, through the use of scolding and teasing, indicated that she felt close enough to her partner to adopt such a behavior representative of a personal connection. Thus, even though developing close relationships with their partners was probably not an objective for these two American participants, the collaborative work and the type of mediated interaction afforded by the videoconferencing environment facilitated their personal connection, while Robert’s remain primarily connected to language practice.
Gender patterns

Gender was not a variable taken into account in the participant selection process, nor in the pairing of students, although I found it positive that the chosen sampling strategy led to a mixed-gender sample of participants. To my knowledge, gender has rarely been mentioned in telecollaborative-based research, save for the rare account of the closer relationships occasionally observed in dyads composed of both a male and female student and the ensuing positive (Thorne, 2003; Belz & Kinginger, 2002) effect of their discourse and acquisition of pragmatics, usually in synchronous chat environments. In the current study, the three dyads were composed of students of the same gender and it is unknown whether the exchange would have produced different learning results if the dyads had been of mixed-gender. Yet, I would like to suggest that there are observable differences in the way Kathy and the way Mark and Robert interacted with their respective partners, and that it is conceivable that as a consequence of these linguistic choices, the intercultural interactions unfolded differently possibly bearing on the learning outcomes. The effect of gender has been researched more extensively in L1 than in L2, and according Gascoigne, who summed up findings from a number of studies, English speaking females “tend to rely more heavily upon questions, justifiers, intensive adverbs, personal pronouns, and word-initial adverbs” and also resort to using hedges and mitigating devices (2002, p. 83). Interestingly, a limited number of studies have observed similarities between gender-specific interaction in the L1 and in the L2 (Gascoigne, 2002, p. 83). We have observed in the analysis of the recordings that Kathy tended to use a lot of mitigating devices when interacting with her partner, which contributed in part to her
high count of instances of self-relativizing, while the use of hedges\textsuperscript{54} and apologies was practically absent from both Mark and Robert’s speech. Another element associated with women’s speech is the increased use of personal pronouns. A comparison of Kathy and Mark’s first sessions (respectively 26 and 36 minutes of recording) and the first 30 minutes of Robert’s first session, shows that Kathy made a great use of address pronouns in French despite spending a little more time interacting in French compared to Mark. However, her use of address pronouns was clearly surpassed by Robert, who had more advanced proficiency level.

Table 8

*Participants’ Use of Address Pronouns (1\textsuperscript{st} session)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Robert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tu (informal)</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vous (politeness)</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significantly, Kathy initiated a lot more personal questions than both Mark and Robert with the aim of enquiring about her partner’s daily life (A6) (18 for Kathy, 10 for Robert with a much longer recording time and none for Mark). In fact, through her use of A6 and A4, she demonstrated a much stronger desire to connect, relate to, and encourage her partner (A5) than the other two male participants, and ultimately displayed a different

\textsuperscript{54} Robert did use hedges twice, but only in connection to the sound problems he was experiencing. Mark apologized once, as a show of politeness and laughed because he had mispronounced a word.
socialization pattern within this telecollaborative environment. These are notable behavioral and linguistic differences, which do not seem to be accounted for by proficiency levels, cultural exposure, or interest.

**Participants’ use of the videoconferencing technology and multimodal effect**

Table 9

*Participants’ Survey Responses about Technology Use*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Robert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and use of technology</td>
<td>IM-D Webcam-M</td>
<td>IM-D Voice chat-W Webcam-M</td>
<td>IM, voice chat-D Webcam-W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D-daily, W-weekly, M-monthly)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which technology have you used for</td>
<td>DVDs Internet search</td>
<td>DVDs Chat</td>
<td>Language software Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>search Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology for language learning</td>
<td>Useful Somewhat Interesting</td>
<td><strong>Very Useful Stimulating</strong></td>
<td>Useful Somewhat Interesting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kathy, Mark and Robert used technology daily and they were familiar with the use of the synchronous written medium and online technology with video and voice functions (Mark and Robert) (see table 8). They all had some experience with the use of technology for language learning, albeit in a basic form for Kathy. It is unknown in what format and frequency Mark and Robert had made use of chat to support L2 learning. But none of them had any experience with telecollaboration or other forms of networked-based class to class exchange. They had a certain level of online media literacy and at no point during the exchange did they either show signs of or express discomfort with the operation of the EVO videoconferencing system, apart from the aforementioned troubles with sound quality, which affected the interactions at time and which they tried to
circumvent by using the chat feature. Importantly, their French counterparts were Master’s students in Information Systems and Communication, and consequently had a high level of media literacy. At least one of them, Mark’s partner, mentioned that he had had some experience with webcasting in class. Over the course of the exchange, the participants principally made use of the multimodal set-up, but they also used email to submit their reflections to the instructor and further collaborate with their partners on the debate presentation. The use of emailing had the advantage of allowing for processing time and reflection but was not without problems since with the exception of Mark, the participants did not tend to follow deadlines well. Kathy, who had difficulties discussing her complex debate topic with her partner, also used email as a means to further the discussion and request her partner’s opinion in writing, something that she apparently had too much difficulty doing orally. A third medium was used by Robert and his partner who jointly decided to extend their interaction outside of the scheduled sessions via the use of Instant Messenger, a synchronous written tool. Kathy, Mark and Robert quickly acculturated themselves to the multimodal videoconferencing system, with the help of the technician and their partners as well. A close look at how the three participants engaged with the technology and how they used it to support their interaction and work on task shows three phases on a continuum of use. For the first phase, not unlike the observation noted by Kinginger in her 1998 videoconferencing session, there was an increase in anxiety levels in the dyads at the beginning of the first session (a less observable one in the case of Robert since he did not verbalize it, yet he repeatedly laughed nervously). The immediacy of the medium and the combination of visual/auditory and oral channels combined seemed to overwhelm the students who were able to partly overcome their
anxiety, in the case of Kathy, through the use of the questionnaire, a simple task drawing on vocabulary she was very familiar with. Mark also quickly lost his self-confidence at the beginning, requesting to start in English and for the first and only time, hinting at his discomfort by asking his partner if he was nervous too. The increase of anxiety inherent to the use of the videoconferencing medium and observed in all dyads to various degrees suggests that it is important to prepare the students ahead of the exchange through a combination of intense oral practice work with different partners in class and activities aimed at increasing their listening comprehension of authentic conversations in order to familiarize them with features of oral speech. Discussing issues with real-time intercultural conversations and strategies to express lack of understanding, reformulation and request for help is important as well. Finally, working with dyads in virtual meeting rooms created for and accessible to these partners only, instead of videoconferencing groups, limited the pressure on the students in the sense that they had to adapt to and interact with one NS only and no one was observing their interaction. The second phase was the acculturation one, in which the participants started settling into the environment, their partner, the technology, the activity, and with their anxiety level lowered, could start exploring the tools and how to use them to optimally mediate their interaction, thereby exploring strategies to facilitate communication. In the last phase, they had mastered most of the modes of communication available in the multimodal environment, showing preference for some (i.e. use of paralinguistic signs such as facial expressions, focus on pronunciation and enunciation, use of the chat feature to compensate for mispronunciation etc.) In this phase also, both Mark and Robert expanded their use of the technology to other media, internet, online dictionaries, IM out of class for Robert, while
Kathy made a limited use of the textbox, favoring the visual/auditory/oral channels. In all, all three participants were able to make use of the multimodal platform, and moved, especially for Kathy and Mark from a receiving mode to becoming more active users and thus gaining greater control over their learning. It was evident that Kathy was the participant, who struggled the most with the videoconferencing, because of her lower proficiency skills and because she had to compensate for the lack of effort and skills of her partner in order to maintain the flow of the conversation. Still, she managed to use the multimodal environment to her advantage and support her learning, thus producing the largest number of instances of all coded attitudes of all the participants. These observations point at the fact that this is a rich, yet demanding environment better suited for users with a minimum level of proficiency. Lastly, there were some episodes of tension but no breakdown in the conversations. With other modes of communication, particularly asynchronous ones, it is possible that some of the issues the participants ran into would have led to interruptions of the communication, but it seems that the real-time factor and the use of the visual channel compelled the participants to find ways to maintain the connection with their partners.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

A cross-comparison of the results of the three case studies, triangulated with the complementary data sources enabled me to identify individual, cultural, task-related and structural factors inherent in the use of the selected telecollaborative context which facilitated or on the contrary, did not foster the expression of attitudes of value and self-relativizing, an integral part of intercultural development. The case study results for Kathy, who was the participant with the lowest level of proficiency, the lowest level of self-reported interest in speaking with native speakers, and the least authentic exposure to and interest in francophone cultures of all three participants, indicate that she was able to take advantage of the mediating affordances of the videoconferencing features, the task work and her partner to produce the most instances of attitudes and thus displayed the most development of her intercultural competence. Significantly, the results suggest that the participants’ proficiency and comfort levels did not appear to be strong factors bearing on the learning results of this study. This is consistent in part with Kern’s remark (2006), that “language competence per se does not appear to be a key variable in the success of intercultural exchanges” (p. 199). Still, it should be noted that in the case of Kathy, both her and her partner’s lower skill levels made it difficult to fully take advantage of the debate task, thereby limiting the learning potential of this activity for her. Further, her partner’s own struggle with the immediacy of the videoconferencing environment suggests that this medium is not the best telecollaborative tool for students with very low language proficiency.
Unlike Kathy, Mark (intermediate) did not take advantage of the mediating function of this environment for the purpose of developing the IC factor of attitudes, other than displays of value related to language use (attitudes of A2 and A1). Similarly, Robert (advanced), produced a more varied (than Mark) but an overall limited amount of attitudes compared to Kathy, considering that he was given a much longer period of time to interact with his partner. The very limited results in the case of Robert and especially Mark indicate that “personal involvement” (Kern, 2006, p. 199) is indeed a key factor in tellecollaborative exchanges, but not the only factor. Participants’ agency seemed to have played an important role in the learning outcomes of this study. In effect, both Mark and Robert came to the exchange with their own cultural background, beliefs, motives and goals which did not seem to meet the pedagogical goals set for the task work. This, in turn, affected the way in which they engaged in the exchange and limited their production of attitudes of IC and intercultural development. Participation in telecollaboration and collaborative task work is therefore not a guarantee of intercultural development. Thus, attention should be brought not solely to whether the students reach predetermined learning goals, but also to closely observing how students go about negotiating the tasks in pursuit of their goals, such as when Mark had to work with his own partner’s agency and adapt his own goals and actions to reach an agreement about their shared debate topic, thereby moving on from a show of “lack of” value to more instances of Self-relativizing (A1). In fact, intercultural sensitivity and learning goals as well as a will for personal engagement and the ability to socialize within the videoconferencing technology and intercultural interactional context seem to constitute important factors necessary for intercultural competence development.
In addition, the case study analyses brought to the fore interesting differences in the way Kathy, the only female participant, and the two male students interacted with their respective partners. These observations were suggestive rather than conclusive. Given the small size of the sample, and the lack of at least another dyad composed of female students, it was not possible to ascertain that these observations in the production of attitudes, the use of personal address pronouns, mitigating devices and personal questions among the participants were truly gender-dependent or not. Further variation was observed not just among the three participants, but also in the way in which the French and the American students participated and conceived of the exchange. Differences in objectives and in the functions of the verbal interactions were noted. Thus, it seems relevant for the instructors on each side of the exchange to be mindful of these culture-specific patterns when preparing students, selecting the technological environment and developing task-work, since although individual goals do weigh in, these differences clearly bear on the learning outcomes.

Acculturation into the videoconferencing environment did not seem to cause significant problems to all three participants. In fact, one interesting finding was that in the real time multimodal environment created by the videoconferencing tool, Kathy, Mark and Robert were all able to develop both culture-specific interactional conventions and remedial strategies to avoid conversation breakdowns, convey meaning and adjust to their partner’s mediation both in French and in English. This showed that the participants were able to develop “skills of discovery and interaction”, another factor of Byram’s models of ICC. To do so, they had to meet the objective of using “in real-time
knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one’s own and a foreign culture” (1997, p. 63).

Finally, it is noteworthy that, regardless of their proficiency levels, all three participants reported a boost in their level of comfort, early on in the exchange (in their reflections). This translated into an increase of participation recorded during the class meetings following the first or the second session, and it remained steadily higher through the rest of the semester.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

In this study, just like in any exploratory qualitative research study facing the constraints and affordances of working with technology to allow for real-time interaction between human subjects in an intercultural context, some issues were likely to arise. Telecollaborative researchers have stressed the complexity of matching institutional calendars, course curricula, numbers of students, as well as taking into account less material factors such as proficiency levels, media literacy, target language valuation (Belz, 2002) etc. Thanks to a dynamic collaborative partnership, but also to favorable circumstances (i.e. comparable curricula, learning objectives, target language valuation among the students and flexibility with online meeting times on the French side), my colleague and I were able to clear some hurdles early on, yet some remained. While we tried to be mindful of proficiency levels during the pairing of students, we ran into problems with differing numbers of students on both sides. Consequently, some students had to share their time online with two partners and this led to issues with collaboration and motivation for the work on the debate task such as in the case of Kathy and her
partner. This lack of reciprocity also touched upon the duration of the sessions which was at times uneven among the dyads and affected the analysis and the comparison of the production of attitudes. However, this latter issue was discussed and taken into account in the analysis and discussion of the findings. Even if the study spanned an entire semester, the original number of online sessions planned was reduced due to mismatches in institutional calendars. In addition, connectivity and technological problems interfered at times with the sound quality, the recording of the sessions, and their length. While researchers mention the importance of media literacy and easy access to technology in mediated online exchanges, having access to high quality internet connection and hardware (headsets and microphones) on both sides of the exchange is also essential in desktop-videoconferencing.

A few remarks with respect to my role in this study and to the adopted methodology should also be made. In my many capacities as researcher (designer and analyst), course instructor, assistance provider during the online session etc., I came to wear many hats during this experience, foremost because it was a research study, integrated into a regular semester course, in which I was the ICC expert co-organizing a transatlantic exchange online. Consequently, my own agency (values, beliefs, motives, background) and epistemological stance on FL learning permeated throughout this endeavor. Researchers have argued that the role of the instructor/researcher is essential and expands and in telecollaborative work (Belz, 2003) compared to traditional classroom teaching. Significantly, the moment to moment management and observation of the exchange provided me with a unique insight into the inner workings of this complex set-up. Yet, to ensure the validity of the analysis and the findings, I was able and
careful to take a more objective stand through the implementation of several measures to minimize potential biases in the interpretation of the data. These measures included the use of multiple data collection sources for the purpose of triangulation, collaborative work with a co-rater and a carefully kept researcher’s journal. Further, it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of this study was to observe behavioral and developmental processes as they occurred within a unique socially and technologically mediated environment. For this reason, qualitative methodology, in particular case study analysis, was employed because it provided the best lens through which to analyze the data, even if it limited the scope of the generalizability of the findings. The small number of participants and the chosen qualitative methodology conferred certain limitations on the generalizability as well. The codebook used to analyze the data is comprised of a priori categories and emergent ones, the latter a result of my own iterative work of noticing, encoding, organizing and classifying data. Other researchers could interpret the data otherwise and consequently build a different classification of attitudes. In effect, these reported findings pertain to the specific learning environment studied and instead of seeking generalizability, I leave it to the reader or telecollaborative practitioner to decide which finding can be carried over to other telecollaborative environments. In rich but complex learning environment that is telecollaborative desktop-videoconferencing, methodological and pedagogical choices are made not just in the early stages of planning, but continue throughout the exchange. To take full advantage of the IC learning potential, it is important, for example, to continue to address issues with pairing, to monitor work on task, and to treat instances of escalating tension as learning opportunities (Belz, 2002). Researchers have recently put great emphasis on sound task design and
sequencing, and the need to adapt them to the students’ preferences and experiences with intercultural interaction (O’Dowd & Waire, 2009, p. 186). While this is a valid concern, I would like to address another step of the process which has been lacking attention in the research and yet probably bears strongly on the way students engage in the exchange, that is, the pre-online session work and how articulates with more traditional language course curricula. Depending on the chosen environment (synchronous, asynchronous, written, oral, multimodal) and the goals of the exchange, this preparatory phase includes work on specific discourse styles, linguistic and pragmatic competence, and a focus on raising students’ awareness of IC differences, preferably in connection with the two targeted cultures. To do the latter, researchers have used texts such as “intercultural communication” (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, cited in Kinginger et al., 1999), “cultural misunderstandings”, short cultural readings (Belz, 2002), and have advocated the use of excerpts pulled from telecollaborative exchanges. Yet, to some extent, they have to resort to patching together sets of documents in various formats for lack of a carefully crafted content, accessible to foreign language students, with authentic examples which would serve as a meaningful introduction to IC with materials discussing “the unconscious beliefs, behaviors and meanings” (Byram, p.1) of the target culture. Unlike their European counterparts, American students have little exposure to experiencing “foreignness”, and in spite of years of foreign language education, they have no understanding of the interconnectedness between language and culture (i.e. Agar’s “languaculture”) as illustrated by the lesser interest Kathy, Mark and Robert expressed in learning more about francophone cultures. Accustomed to living in a multicultural society, they also tend to overestimate their own intercultural skills, a point Li Jin and
Erben (2007) made when they explained that the American students engaged in IM interaction with Chinese native speakers in their study: “felt quite confident in their behaviors in intercultural interaction at the beginning of the project. In other words, students easily overestimated their intercultural interaction ability. During the real-time encounter with their Chinese partners, the participants realized that intercultural communication was not what they had imagined” (p. 300). These last two points support the need to introduce telecollaborative exchanges with videoconferencing more systematically in intermediate level courses with a solid introduction to basic notions of intercultural communication in the target language and culture.

Another idea for future implementation which arose from this study is the importance of taking into greater account the multiculturalism of the partner class. In effect, while I referred to the students in the French class as “French partners” throughout the study for the sake of brevity, it is important to remember that Kathy’s partner was Algerian and had only recently arrived in France and enrolled in the Master’s courses at the Université de Haute-Alsace, and that Mark’s partner was probably bi-cultural, although we did not have a lot of background information about him. Having a partner of a different cultural origin was interesting for Kathy. It was evident in the ways she tried to connect through mentioning her Algerian friend and trying to remember an Arabic word she had learned, but also in the questions she asked her partner about her perspective on abortion. In Mark’s case, there was no discussion of his partner’s origin except for a mention in his first reflection about English being possibly a second of third language for him. Kathy was, in fact, able to take better advantage of her partner’s different origin and unique experience. Nevertheless, this was perhaps a missed opportunity to address in
greater length the plurality of the target culture, in follow-up discussions in class. This last point highlights the fact that multimodal telecollaborative environments are systems which require flexibility, responsiveness and above all IC competence from the instructor. They are demanding teaching environments to work with, but carry tremendous learning potential especially now that manipulating multilayered technology no longer poses a challenge for today’s digital natives.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

List of questions handed out to the students at the beginning of the first session. It was designed to function as a conversation starter and it was optional.

Carte d’identité

Nom de famille et prénom :

Lieu de résidence :

Membres de votre famille :

Âge :

Année/niveau à l’université:

Votre matière principale à l’université ? Votre matière secondaire/option ?

Projets pour votre future carrière ?

Vos activités/ sports :

Raisons pour l’étude du français/anglais :

Ce que vous aimez et n’aimez pas à propos de la langue :
Votre film préféré :

Votre chanteur/groupe préféré :

Ce que vous aimez et n’aimez pas sur votre campus :

Autres questions au choix (plat préféré, vacances etc.) :

Appendix B

Script of Students’ background survey (completed online, SurveyMonkey.com)

*Please be as detailed as you can when answering the following questions*

Name: Age:

Language:

1- What is your native language?

2- What language(s) do you speak at home?

3- For how many years have you studied French in high-school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Years of French in high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beyond 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More years (<em>specify</em>)……….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (<em>specify</em>)…………….</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4- Which French classes have you taken at the University? *Check all that apply*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FRE 101 Beginning French I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRE 102 Beginning French II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRE 106 Pronunciation of French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRE 221 Intermediate French I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRE 222 Intermediate French II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRE 301 Structural Review of French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5- Which French classes are you currently enrolled in?
*Check all that apply*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRE 301</td>
<td>Structural Review of French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 306</td>
<td>Comprehension and Pronunciation of French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 315</td>
<td>Introduction to French Cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 341Z</td>
<td>Introduction to Global French Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 360</td>
<td>Social and Cultural History of France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 361Z</td>
<td>Readings in French Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 365</td>
<td>Contemporary French Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 405</td>
<td>Research in French Society and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 406</td>
<td>French Linguistics: Morphology and Syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 415</td>
<td>French Cinema and Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 430</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 455</td>
<td>Life and Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 461</td>
<td>Classics of Literature in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 461Z</td>
<td>Classics of Literature in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 470</td>
<td>French for Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 481</td>
<td>Francophone Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 499</td>
<td>Undergraduate Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6- Why do you want to learn French?
*Check all that apply*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>√</td>
<td>I like French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have French speaking friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have French speaking relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have French ancestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think it is useful for Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7- How comfortable are you speaking in French?

UncomfortableVery comfortable
1-----------------2------------------3------------------4

8- Have you spoken French with native speakers before?  
*Explain*

9- How did you feel about your ability to make yourself understood?

FrustratedPleased
1-----------------2------------------3------------------4

10- Did you feel that you connected with the person?

No connectionGood connection
1-----------------2------------------3------------------4

11- What did you like about the conversation?  
*Please explain*

12- What didn’t you like about the conversation?  
*Please explain*
13- Have you traveled to a French speaking area?

*Please indicate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Check all that apply*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>√</th>
<th>Purpose of travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (specify)…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14- How interested are you in traveling outside of the United States?

Not interested  Very interested  
1-----------------2----------------3----------4

15- Which language(s) have you studied?

16- Why have you studied these languages?

*Please explain*

17- How do you feel about the opportunity to speak with native French students?

Not interested  Very interested  
1-----------------2----------------3----------4

18- How much do you feel you know about Francophone cultures?

Nothing/very little  Very familiar  
1-----------------2----------------3----------4

*Please explain*
19- Are you curious about francophone cultures?

Not curious       Very curious
                   1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4

20- How interested would you be in knowing more about francophone cultures?

Not interested    Very interested
                   1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4

Please explain

21- How different/similar do you think French culture is from American culture?

Very different    Very similar
                   1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4

Please explain

Use of technology:

22- Do you use Instant Messaging/voice chat/webcam/SMS (how frequently)?

Check all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice chat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webcam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23- Have you done power point presentations? (Check)

Yes ________
No ________

24- Which technology have you used for language learning?
Check all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>√</th>
<th>Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DVDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25- How do you feel about the use of technology (computers, chat etc.) to learn languages?

Not useful  Useful
1-----------------2-----------------3------------------4

Boring  Stimulating
1-----------------2-----------------3------------------4

26- What do you expect to get out of the telecollaboration project?


Appendix C


Script of introduction of the study to the class

I wish to explain the format and purpose of the exchange program with the French students. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions at any time if you need clarification about any part of the project.

As you know, the main goal of this class is to prepare you for meaningful, active communication with native speakers of French. In order to do so, it is important not only to learn the structural part of the language, but also to develop an ability to understand and relate to native speakers. Because meaningful communication is limited in the regular classroom, I have started using telecollaborative exchanges with French students as part of the regular class curriculum. I have been using this format for the past two semesters. Students seem to have really enjoyed the exchanges and have told me that it is an efficient and motivating language learning tool.

The five telecollaborative sessions will take place at the Center for Languages and International Communication (HU 311) during our regular class time. The exchanges will last approximately 40 minutes, with 20 minutes for conversation in French and 20 minutes for English use. The sessions will be automatically recorded, password protected and stored on the computers you will be using.

You are probably aware that, besides being a member of the teaching staff, I am also an advanced graduate student working to complete my PhD in French Studies. This semester, I am planning to use the recordings in two ways: to give you feedback on the sessions as I would do with a regular recorded assignment, but also as data for my dissertation. The purpose of my research is to look at certain attitudes and skills that are important components of intercultural competence (ability to understand and relate to people from other cultures) and that are acquired through meaningful conversation with native speakers. I believe that the results will help us better understand how some parts of intercultural competence develop and could lead toward improved methods of language teaching. In my research, the data will be analyzed and presented in such a way that you will not be personally identified.

Now, the University has strict guidelines about the use of human subjects in research that are designed to protect your individual rights. So, in addition to getting the ok to use the data for my dissertation from the Chair of LLC, I have had to go through a formal review process with a group of faculty and administrators known as the Institutional Review Board, or IRB. The explanation that I am providing here, and the form I am about to hand out to you is part of the process known as “Informed Consent.”
The IRB is especially concerned that you understand that while participation in the telecollaborative exchange is a required component of this class, you are not required to let me use this material in my research. The decision as to whether you let me to use your recordings, or the information gathered through the “Survey of language background, language attitudes and technology use,” in my research is yours and yours alone. It is also important that you not feel that you are being forced into letting me use this data, so I want you to understand that I will not penalize you by, for example, lowering your grade if you don’t give me permission to use your recordings, or reward you by giving you extra credit for doing so.

I am now going to hand out the Informed Consent Form. I am going to read it aloud with you to make sure that you do understand it. Then I will ask you to indicate whether you do or do not give me permission to use your recordings, and then to sign and date the form.

One last thing that you should know is that signing the form does not mean that your decision is irrevocable. You always have the right to change your mind one way or the other at a later date.

Please let me know if you’re not clear about any part and need additional clarification. If you do not have anymore questions, I will pass around the Informed Consent form.
Appendix D

University at Albany
Informed Consent in Exempt Research
Office of Research Compliance Approved IRB Consent Form for Exempt Research

Title of Research: Mediatational effects of telecollaborative exchanges on the intercultural competence of intermediate level students of French as a foreign language

Name, Department, Phone Number of Investigator and Faculty Supervisor (if Applicable):
Véronique Martin, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Tel: 442-XXX. Faculty Supervisor: Cynthia Fox, Ph. D, Tel: 442-XXX

You have been asked to participate in a research study which has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. The purpose of the study, terms of your participation, as well as any expected risks and benefits, must be fully explained to you before you consent to participate in this research study.

You should also know that participation in research is entirely voluntary. Even after you agree to participate in the research, you may decide to leave the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise have been entitled. You should also be aware that the investigator may withdraw you from participation at her professional discretion.

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In addition, the Institutional Review Board, the sponsor of the study (e.g. NIH, FDA, etc.) and University or government officials responsible for monitoring this study may inspect these records.

If at any time you have questions regarding this research or your participation in it, you should contact the investigator, faculty advisor or research assistants who must answer your questions.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University at Albany Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 518-442-9050 or orrc@uamail.albany.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent to keep.

The main goal of FRE 350Y is to prepare you for meaningful, active communication with French native speakers. In order to do so, it is important not only to learn the structural part of the language, but also to develop an ability to understand and relate to native speakers (Intercultural Competence).
The five telecollaborative sessions (online class exchange) during which you will engage in discussions with French native speakers are an integral part of this course and will take place at the Center for Languages and International Communication (HU 311) during class time. The exchanges will last approximately 40 minutes, with 20 minutes for conversation in French and 20 minutes for English use. The sessions will be automatically recorded, password protected and stored on the computers you will be using because I plan to use the data for my dissertation.

The purpose of my research is to look at certain attitudes and skills that are important components of intercultural competence and that are acquired through meaningful conversation with native speakers. The results will help us better understand how some parts of intercultural competence develop and could lead toward improved methods of language teaching. In my research, the data will be analyzed and presented in such a way that you will not be personally identified.

Although participation in the exchange is a required component of this class, you are not required to let me use this material in my research. If you do not want me to use your recordings, or the information gathered through the “Survey of language background, language attitudes and technology use,” in my research, please be assured that this will not affect your grade in any way.

I have obtained the permission of Jean-François Brière, Chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, to carry out this study. Professor Cynthia Fox is my dissertation advisor. They can be reached through the LLC office at 442-4100. Please feel free to contact them if you have questions or concerns.

Now that you have read this material, please complete the following statement by circling either “I agree” or “I do not agree,” and then sign and date it.

_I understand the purpose, the terms, the risks and the benefits of this project and I agree/I do not agree to be a participant in this study._

Name: (please print) ___________________________

Signature ___________________________

Date ___________________________

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THIS FORM IS FOR USE WITH EXEMPT RESEARCH WITH ADULTS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER
Appendix E
Transcription Conventions

General conventions:
All lines are numbered for each transcript
The duration of the recording is indicated at the beginning and at the end of the transcripts
Each turn is double-spaced and single-spacing is used within a turn
Pseudonyms are used for each participant and are indicated at the top of each transcript. Afterwards, only the first initial of the pseudonym is used throughout the transcript.
When intervening in the conversation, other participants are (a) referred to by their function (i.e. technician, instructor) or (b) by the first initial of their pseudonyms

Selected transcription conventions:
Italic: code-switching
(     ) comment about what the speaker is actually doing (a) which cannot be heard over the audio or (b) is meant to clarify what is going on during the conversation (also including other participants or comments on technical problems)
… short pause (less than 2 seconds)
(…) long pause (more than 2 seconds)
/ /codeswitching (the word or sequence is in italics)
# #student using the textbox on the screen. If known, the text will be specified within the number signs otherwise comments might be added, for ex. #typing#
Xinaudible word
XXX inaudible sequence
? ?code used when there is a doubt about what the speaker said (the text will be put within question marks)
[ ] overlap
?question
Appendix F

1st recording   Transcription Kathy- Sophie  Duration: 26 minutes

K: bonjour (A1)
S: bonjour
K: uh
S: vous m’entendez
K: je m’appelle K Je m’appelle K

S: ok and I uh mon nom c’est S je vais l’écrire (S types her name)
K: uh je ne peux uh un moment

S: c’est bon uh je vous ai écrit mon nom donc uh comme ça vous pourrez vous pouvez le prononcer correctement

K: (K asks for help to find the window where S wrote her name) where do they where do they write to you she wrote something to me (...) I can’t je ne peux vu I can’t see the box uh (she talks to someone else) I don’t think that’s the right one mh tu veux tu veux commence en anglais ou en français

S: uh c’est comme vous voulez parce que moi en anglais je suis nulle donc uh je sais pas (laughs)
K: uh hello uh
S: uh hello donc uh si vous voulez commencer en anglais ou en français c’est comme vous voulez (pause) vous m’avez compris
K: quand oui uh yeah uh j uh commencer en français c’est bon
S: en français ok d’accord et sinon vous vous appelez K
K: oui je m’excuse (they speak simultaneously)
S: ok moi aussi uh
K: je m’excuse je ne peux parler uh meilleur
S: uh non ben moi aussi je suis nulle en en anglais donc uh (laughs) ça va … donc uh vous faites quoi comme uh vous faites des études vous faites uh
K: uh mon matière principale est espagnol
S: ok [donc]
K: [et]
S: vous parlez très bien espagnol
K: oui et uh je parler un peu de français
S: ok d’accord
K: mais ne sais pas très bien
S: uh tu ne sais pas très bien uh prononcer la langue française c’est ça mais vous comprenez vous arrivez à comprendre c’est ça
K: uh je ne je ne peux écouter bien uh le
S: uh vous n’écoutez pas bien vous m’entendez
K: non uh oui mais il y a beaucoup [de uh]
S: [de bruits]
K: oui oui oui
S: uh de chez moi ou de chez vous
K: uh je ne sais pas (she calls someone) un moment
S: ok

K: (talking to someone else) I can hear a lot of noise and I don’t know how to change it like you see (…) but and then which one so I just turn it to ok ok that’s it alright and then her conversation I can’t read I don’t know how to read her conversation when she typed me (…) I know she wanted to show me how to spell her name and stuff (…) ok see that’s not that one ‘cause I when but earlier they were doing it (…) ok uh ok uh
S: c’est bon ?
K: oui oui oui
S: ok d’accord donc on va essayer de parler français après on parle un tout petit peu anglais
K: oui uhm comment uh je ne sais pas (…) uh quel âge as as-tu
S: uh quel âge as-tu donc uh j’ai vingt et un ans
K: quoi uh que
S: vingt et un ans (she types it)
K: vingt et un oui
S: uh twenty one
K: [oui]
S: [twenty] one years
K: oui uh j’ai uh vingt ans
S: ah ok d’accord ok donc uh et vous êtes en quelle année uh espagnol c’est ça vous faites de l’espagnol
K: uh c’est mon troisième an uh à l’université mais j’ai uh j’ai étudié uh pendant huit ans
S: [mhmm]
K: [et uhm] j’ j’ai j’ai allé à France et à Espagne quand j’était petite uh j’avais uh quinze ans quand j’ai visit j’ai visité
S: oui
K: mais je ne je ne pratiqué la langue quand je suis
S: donc vous ne parlez pas mhm d’accord
K: [oui]
S: [d’accord moi] c’est uh c’est ma première année que je voyage donc je suis pas je suis pas française
K: oui uhm
S: je suis uh je suis algérienne
K: uh oui
S: de l’Algérie
K: uh mon
S: de l’Algérie
K: mon uh mon amie est uh est d’Algérie