LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN TELECOLLABORATION[1]

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ABSTRACT

It is widely reported (e.g., Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2002; Kern, 1996; Kinginger, in press; Warschauer & Kern, 2000) that the goals of telecollaborative language study are the development of foreign language (FL) linguistic competence and the facilitation of *intercultural competence* (e.g., Bausch, Christ, & Krumm, 1997; Bredella & Delanoy, 1999; Byram, 1997; Harden & Witte, 2000). Whereas evaluations of the impact of telecollaboration on FL linguistic competence have been based on structural descriptions of learner discourse from the earliest days of research in this field (e.g., Beauvois, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Pelletieri, 2000; Sotillo, 2000; Warschauer, 1996), discussions of intercultural competence in the same configuration have been characterized primarily in *alinguistic* terms. These have included analyst-sensitive content analyses of learner interaction in telecollaboration, post-semester interviews with learners who have participated in telecollaborative projects, and attitudinal surveys of these same learners (e.g., Fischer, 1998; Furstenberg, Levet, English, & Maillet, 2001; Lomicka, 2001; Müller-Hartmann, 1999; von der Emde, Schneider, & Kötter, 2001; Warschauer, 1998; see, however, Belz, 2001; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003). In general, the fields of foreign language learning and teaching (FLL&T) have neither advocated nor presented linguistically critical interpretations of the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. In this paper, I present a detailed case study of the development of intercultural competence (or lack thereof) in a German-American e-mail partnership by examining the electronic interaction produced in this exchange within the framework of *appraisal theory* (e.g., Eggins & Slade, 1997; Martin, 2000; White, 1998), a Hallidayian-inspired linguistic approach to the investigation of evaluative language.

> The quality of conversation may well be one of the most significant measures of civilization, and when people converse, the interlocutors inevitably realize that civilizations do *not* clash, contrary to some academic reductionists, the media, and politicians... (Kadir, 2003, p. 9; emphasis added)

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this paper is to suggest a linguistically grounded analysis of *intercultural competence* (IC) in telecollaborative foreign language learning and teaching (FLL&T). *Telecollaboration* involves 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 (e.g., Belz, 2002b; Furstenberg et al., 2001; Kinginger, 1998, in press; Müller-Hartmann, 1999; Thorne, 1999; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer & Kern, 2000).[2] As a result of the technological mediation employed in telecollaborative study, participants on each end of the network have direct (and cost-effective) access to expert representatives of the "languaculture" under study (Agar, 1994). In FLL&T, IC is typically loosely defined as an awareness and/or understanding of foreign attitudes, beliefs, values, and (linguistic) practices (e.g., Bredella, 2000, p. 146; Hu, 2000, p. 97; Kinginger, in press; Kramsch, 1998, pp. 27-29). One of the goals of this paper is

to flesh out the notion of IC in the special case of telecollaboration through close attention to its linguistic encoding and expression in the medium of electronic discourse.

Evaluations of the influence of classroom-based computer use on FL linguistic competence have been based on structural descriptions of learner discourse from the earliest days of research in this field (e.g., Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Pelletieri, 2000; Warschauer, 1996). In contrast, discussions of the impact of computer use on the development of IC (which includes culturally appropriate uses of language) have been characterized primarily in *alinguistic* terms. Typically, researchers have employed analyst-sensitive content analyses of e-mail and chat exchanges and retrospective learner surveys and interviews as the primary indices of gains in IC (e.g., Fischer, 1998; Furstenberg et al., 2001; Lomicka, 2001; von der Emde, Schneider, & Kötter, 2001; Warschauer, 1998; see, however, Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003). In this study, I suggest that IC (or lack thereof) in telecollaboration may be more fully explicated if researchers augment content-based interpretations of this phenomenon with Hallidayian-inspired linguistic analyses (e.g., Burton, 1982; Martin, 1995; White, 1998). Such analyses would broaden the investigative focus on *what* learners say to include *how* they say it. My claim is not that linguistically-based analyses of IC in telecollaboration should replace content-based analyses, but rather that the systematic linkage of aspects of IC to the lexico-grammar of telecollaborative discourse will provide the field of FLL&T with an additional and revelatory (but not definitive) "analytic cut" (Layder, 1993, p. 108) into the rampantly complex and multi-layered social action of telecollaborative language study.

The linkage of IC to specific lexico-grammatical features is particularly important in the case of text-only telecollaborative discourse because learner-learner interaction will be relatively "lean" (Daft & Lengel, 1984) with regard to visual channel cues such as gender, age, and ethnicity, but also with respect to other paralinguistic meaning carriers such as "facial expressions that indicate sincerity, amusement, trust or dislike … blushing, yawning, rapid breathing or blinking; body language that indicates shyness, distrust or nervousness; [and] gestures like hand motions or nods and headshakes that indicate simple agreement or dissent…" (Giese, 1998). According to sociologist Erving Goffman (1981, p. 128), "the paralinguistic markers of a language will figure" in indexing a speaker's footing or the (attitudinal) alignment that he or she takes up with respect to his or her interlocutor in the production and reception of utterances. Thus, markers of attitude that are typically conveyed through non-linguistic but parallel expressive systems (Walther, 1996) will be shifted to the textual mode in e-mail and chat-based telecollaboration, as in the case of emoticons (Walther & D'Addario, 2001), or they will be absent altogether.

Linguistically grounded analyses of IC have been lacking in the literature to date for at least two reasons. First, IC has not been acknowledged universally as a legitimate goal of FLL&T (Hu, 1999). Despite the efforts of scholars such as Agar (1994), Fantini (1995), Kramsch (1993, 1998), and McCarthy and Carter (1994) to dissolve the "dubious" dichotomy (Kramsch, 1993, p. 2) of *language* and *culture*, many foreign language specialists, in both theory and praxis, continue to conceptualize language as "a fixed system of formal structures and universal speech functions, [a] neutral conduit for the transmission of cultural facts" and thus persist in teaching "language *and* culture, or culture *in* language, but not language *as* culture" (Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996, p. 105; emphasis added). It may be the case that analysts would not look for evidence of the development of intercultural competence in the linguistic structure of telecollaborative texts if they do not accept the inextricable nature of language and culture on both practical and theoretical levels.[3] Yet, as educational linguist and discourse analyst James Gee (1999) notes, it is in the empirical details of language and interaction that "people are harmed and helped" (p. 2).

In those cases where IC has been accepted as a legitimate learning objective (e.g., Bausch, Christ, & Krumm, 1997; Bredella & Delanoy, 1999; Harden & Witte, 2000; Hu, 2000; Kramsch, 1998), it generally has been defined in "conveniently broad and vague" terms (Harden, 2000, p. 117; see Edmondson & House, 1998, pp. 161-165, for further definitional concerns). Vague formulations do not foster linguistic analyses of IC because they impede the establishment of a clear link between specific features of

telecollaborative discourse and components of IC. The absence of linguistically grounded examinations of IC in telecollaboration is somewhat surprising, since advocates of intercultural learning in FLL&T tend to ground their attention to this concept in social semiotic accounts of language (e.g., Halliday, 1978). To illustrate, Harden and Witte (2000) define language as "a system of communication that allows for interpsychological and intrapsychological *representations of a socio-cultural order"* in the introduction to their volume on intercultural understanding in German as a Foreign Language (p. 7; emphasis added). Psychologist Rom Harré (2001), however, comments on a similar lack of attention to language in social psychological studies of interpersonal relationships: "The discursive study of friendship and other interpersonal relations is still undeveloped, despite the large number of data available concerning destructive and constructive ways of conversing, for example within families" (p. 702).

In this study, I adopt Michael Byram's (1997) model of IC precisely because it has been operationalized quite extensively in terms of its various parts (see also Kim, 2001). The focus of the current analysis is on the "attitudes" component of this model (see section on Intercultural Competence for a description of the entire model). The intercultural speaker, that is, the speaker who is deemed to be interculturally competent, must display not only positive attitudes toward "people who are perceived as different in respect of the cultural meanings, beliefs and behaviors they exhibit" (because "even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding"), but also attitudes of "curiosity and openness" (Byram, p. 34). In some cases, IC on the level of attitudes can lead to *re-socialization*, a process whereby "individuals dismantle their preceding structure[s] of subjective reality and re-construct [them] according to new norms" (Byram, p. 34). Such re-socializations -- which engender various degrees of "success" -- are vividly represented in the literary works of bilingual and multilingual authors such as Eva Hoffman and Werner Lansburgh (see Belz, 2002c, pp. 228-240). *Attitude* is a particularly relevant site for a first linguistic cut into telecollaborative intercultural learning, since, unlike other components of Byram's model, it is presented as both a necessary prerequisite to and an anticipated outcome of IC (Byram, p. 33). Thus, an early analytic focus on attitude may serve practical purposes for teachers and learners in telecollaboration as well as theoretical ones.

The current study centers on the electronic correspondence of two Germans, Anke and Catharina, and one American, Eric. These learners' developing attitudes toward both the other and the self are analyzed within the frameworks of (a) *appraisal theory* (e.g., Eggins & Slade, 1997; Iedema, Feez, & White, 1994; White 1998, 2002) and (b) *epistemic modality* (e.g., Toolan, 2001). Appraisal theory is a Hallidayian-inspired linguistic approach to the investigation of evaluative language in English, which focuses on the ways in which lexico-grammar may operate as a site for the formation, dissemination, but also contestation of speakers' attitudinal positionings or value systems. Analysts interested in epistemic modality examine the linguistic resources speakers use in order to express their degree of willingness to commit to the truth of a particular proposition.

In the next section, I provide a more detailed discussion of Byram's (1997) model of IC with particular emphasis on the attitudinal component. In Linguistic Indexes of Intercultural Competence, I outline and exemplify the basic tenets of appraisal theory and various analytical categories of epistemic modality. The suitability of each of these approaches for an analysis of IC in telecollaboration is discussed as well. In the section The Study, I describe the telecollaborative partnership in question, the focal students, and the methodology employed in this analysis. In the sections Data: Analysis in Sequence and Data: Analysis in Aggregation, I present a linguistically grounded analysis of Anke, Catharina, and Eric's e-mail correspondence which entails (a) the close examination of linguistic elements of appraisal and modality as well as other select details of their electronic microinteraction in sequence and (b) the presentation of numerical aggregates of particular lexicogrammatical features along languagcultural lines. Discussions of the findings and conclusions are included at the end.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

In the introduction to his monograph, Byram (1997) sets up a dichotomy between the *tourist* and the *sojourner*.[4] The tourist is a traveler to foreign lands who sets out to see foreign peoples, cultures, and artifacts with the hope that these encounters with otherness will enrich his or her current way of life, but not fundamentally alter it. The sojourner, on the other hand, "produces effects on a society which challenge its unquestioned and unconscious beliefs, behaviours and meanings, and whose own beliefs, behaviours and meanings are in turn challenged and expected to change" (Byram, p. 1). The key to becoming a sojourner, or an *intercultural speaker,* is the ability to *decenter* (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kohlberg, 1983; Kramsch, 1998). This process is evidenced when an individual can relativize his or her own beliefs, practices, values, and meanings when faced with those of the other. (For examples of decentering in telecollaboration see Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2002, p. 72, for the case of Jackie; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003, pp. 75-84, for telecollaborative teachers; Furstenberg et al. 2001, p. 57; Kinginger, in press, for the case of Anita; Müller-Hartmann, 1999, p. 75, for the case of culture-specific irony; Thorne, 2003, this issue, for the case of Kirsten.) Byram (p. 3) argues that it is the qualities of the sojourner that constitute IC, and that this, in turn, is an integral and definitive part of what it means to learn a foreign language.

The proposed model consists of five distinct but interdependent components, some of which Byram rather unfortunately refers to as "skills." The first four are *attitudes, knowledge, skills of discovery and interaction,* and *skills of interpreting and relating.* In an educational setting geared toward *politische Bildung* (Byram, 1997, p. 43), the interplay of these first four components ideally should lead to the fifth, namely, *critical cultural awareness* or an *evaluative orientation* (Byram, p. 43) toward the examination of difference, where learners' evaluative points of reference are made explicit and where the new evaluative orientation toward difference fosters a readiness for political engagement (Byram, p. 44). The choice of the word *skills* to designate components three and four of IC is unfortunate because it carries with it the negative connotation that these components might be "learnt by a simple technology and transferred unproblematically" from one context to another (Ivanic, 1998, p. 168; see also Byrnes, 2001, p. 520; Kumaravadivelu, 1994), when, in point of fact, intercultural interpretation, relation, discovery, and interaction are complex human activities that shape and are shaped by an intimate interface of macro- and micro-sociological factors, including both history and power (Archer, 1995; Layder, 1993; see Belz, 2002b, pp. 61-63). In the following sections, I examine each of these four components in turn, focusing, in particular, on *attitudes.*

Attitudes

The intercultural speaker must exhibit a "readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours" and a "willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviors, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging" (Byram, 1997, p. 34). Interestingly, communication theorist Susan Herring (2002, p. 144) also uses the phrase "suspend disbelief" in order to refer to what computer users must do in order to interact in virtual environments. According to Herring, the requirement to suspend disbelief in computer-mediated communication may render the user subject to virtual deception and, I would add, instances of miscommunication.

Concrete curricular objectives for the component of attitudes include developing in the learner (a) a willingness to seek out interaction with the other in a relationship of equality; (b) a genuine interest in the other's point of view on phenomena in one's own culture and in the other's culture; (c) a readiness to interrogate the value systems and assumptions behind one's own cultural practices; (d) a readiness to examine one's own affective reactions to the experience of otherness and to cope with these reactions; and (e) a readiness to engage with culturally appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication in the

corresponding contexts (Byram, 1997, p. 51). In general, the interest of the intercultural speaker in the other is distinct from the interests of those whose interaction with the other is motivated by economic profit or by a fascination with the "exotic."

For the assessment of all aspects of IC, Byram (1997) suggests criterion-referenced performance in particular situations as opposed to norm-referenced exhibition of facts; qualitative progression in contrast to quantitative display; and leaps in insight as compared to incremental increases in knowledge (pp. 104-105). Furthermore, progress is defined in terms of frequency of occurrence of particular "intercultural behaviors" rather than as an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Byram suggests that the key factor to consider in assessing the attitudes component of intercultural competence is "the existence or absence of a perspective shift" (p. 108). Thus, a linguistically grounded analysis of the development of attitudes of curiosity and openness in telecollaboration would need to establish both the frequency and distribution of those lexico-grammatical features that index "shifts in perspective."

Relational Knowledge and Skills

According to Byram (1997), the intercultural speaker does not only "gather facts" about the foreign culture (p. 35), but he or she is able to put this information into dialogue with information about his or her own culture (see Byram, p. 90, for "shallow" learning; Entwistle cited in Gipps, 1994, p. 24, for "deep learning"). For example, an American learner of German would be able to put information about the restriction of Jewish civil liberties in 20th century Germany into dialogue with information on the restriction of Japanese-American civil liberties in the United States in the 1940s and the restriction of Muslim-American civil liberties under the George W. Bush administration. Relational knowledge also entails the ability to provide critical commentaries on inter-cultural phenomena (e.g., collegiate school spirit in the US vs. professional soccer fanaticism in Germany) as well as intra-cultural inconsistencies (e.g., articles 2 and 4 of the German Grundgesetz, or basic constitution, vs. the 2002 Kopftuch-Verbot, or scarf-ban for teachers in German schools).

Byram (1997) defines the skills of discovery as "the ability to recognize significant phenomena in a foreign environment and to elicit their meanings and connotations, and their relationship to other phenomena" (p. 38).[5] These skills are needed in situations where individuals have little prior knowledge of the foreign culture or when interlocutors are unable to explain what is obvious for them in their "taken-for-granted reality" (Byram, p. 99). One important mode of discovery is social interaction. Byram (p. 61) characterizes the skill of interaction as the "ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real time communication…"

Byram (1997) defines the skills of interpreting and relating as the "ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own" (p. 52). The outcome of the application of these skills is not necessarily a "balance of opposites, or a moderate pluralism of opinions" (Kramsch, 1993); instead, relating phenomena in one culture to those in another may result in "paradoxical, irreducible confrontation that may change one in the process" (p. 231).

LINGUISTIC INDEXES OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theory is both an extension and a refinement of the aspect of situation known as *tenor* in systemic functional linguistics (e.g., Halliday, 1994; see Fowler, 1996, p. 192). Tenor refers to the interpersonal relationships and social roles at play in any act of communication and the ways in which these roles and relationships are negotiated among speakers. Peter White (2002) explains that appraisal theory is "an approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships." It is important to distinguish between the psychological phenomenon of *evaluation* which refers to "how …

interlocutors are feeling, the judgments they make, and the value they place on the various phenomena of their experience" and the linguistic phenomenon of *appraisal* which indicates "the semantic resources [interlocutors use] to negotiate emotions, judgments, and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations" (Martin, 2000, p. 144). Thus, the term APPRAISAL (written in small caps by appraisal theorists) refers to the system of language used to evaluate and position oneself and others intersubjectively within a text.

In English, APPRAISAL is divided into three subsystems: (a) ATTITUDE, (b) ENGAGEMENT, and (c) GRADUATION (Martin, 2000; White, 1998). As is apparent, the notion of "attitude" surfaces as a key theoretical/analytical construct in both appraisal theory and Byram's (1997) formulation of IC. Whereas Byram (1997, pp. 57-58) provides functional descriptions of the projected attitudes of intercultural speakers (and concrete examples of learner behaviors that would "count" as instances of such attitudes), the appraisal framework offers fine-grained delineations of the linguistic resources (i.e., the lexico-syntactic building blocks) that one might use in order to express varying attitudinal positions in interpersonal interactions. Thus, appraisal theory seems eminently well suited to a linguistically-grounded analysis of IC in the text-only medium of telecollaboration.

According to White (1998, p. 101), the linguistic systems within the ATTITUDE dimension of APPRAISAL provide the resources for social evaluation (see section on Attitude for a detailed description of this subsystem). These analytical tools are adopted in their entirety in the current analysis because IC is centrally concerned with suspending disbelief about the other and belief about the self. In other words, IC entails modifying or re-evaluating one's evaluations of other societies, cultures, and individuals (through confrontation with them) as well as re-analyzing one's evaluations of the self and one's own culture and society. The subsystem of ATTITUDE, therefore, provides a concrete and transparent linguistic procedure for revealing how speakers do this in the empirical details of their talk at the microinteractional level. The subsystem of GRADUATION comprises those linguistic resources that speakers use in order to raise or lower the intensity of a wide range of semantic categories. In the current analysis, I use the category of FORCE from within the subsystem of GRADUATION in order to examine the ways in which the focal students upscale or downscale their attitudinal positionings. The subsystem of ENGAGEMENT "supplies resources by which the author negotiates (engages with) heteroglossic diversity -- the various convergent, alternative and counter socio-semiotic realities or positions activated and referenced by every utterance" (White, p. 78).

In his formulation, White (p. 13) notes that most of the linguistic resources that he includes in this subsystem of ENGAGEMENT overlap "substantially" with those included in other approaches to the grammar of interpersonal relations such as truth functional approaches to modality (Lyons, 1977), evidentiality (Chafe, 1986), and hedging (Lakoff, 1972). His formulation is broader than either of these other approaches, however, because he is primarily concerned with emphasizing the role of the audience (i.e., the hearer, the recipient of a text) in his analysis of hard news stories. Although I believe that an analysis of telecollaborative discourse using White's (1998) subsystem of ENGAGEMENT could be quite illustrative in future investigations, I do not adopt it in the current analysis for several reasons. First, I am limited by space and the fine-grained subsystem of ENGAGEMENT would require extensive explication of its numerous sub-categories in order for the results of its application to illuminate relevant and revelatory discourse patterns in intercultural Internet-mediated communication. Second, in contrast to White, in this initial attempt to offer a linguistic analysis of IC in telecollaborative FLL&T, I am interested less in the ways that the language learners in this study negotiate heteroglossic diversity in their texts and more in the ways that their individual attitudes vis-à-vis themselves and the other change over time. Negotiating heteroglossic diversity in texts would involve not only the degree to which a speaker commits to the truth of a proposition, but also the speaker's acknowledgement of the "contentiousness of a particular proposition or the deference of the speaker for those alternative views" (White, p. 20). Undergraduate students, many of whom had their belief systems challenged by a confrontation with otherness for the first

time in the telecollaborative partnership under study, may be less equipped to negotiate heteroglossic diversity in their emails with keypals than professional journalists in hard news stories. As a first linguistic cut into this research site, I am interested in ascertaining whether or not the learners involved begin to lessen the degree to which they view particular beliefs as "universal" and "natural" by means of electronically mediated interaction with a representative of the "foreign" languaculture under study. Therefore, I choose an analytical tool that is narrower in scope than White's subsystem of ENGAGEMENT. Third, several of the subcategories of ENGAGEMENT do not fit well with my data set since they were developed with media texts in mind and my data involve prolonged interaction between a limited set of particular interlocutors. For example, one of the first subdivisions in the subsystem of ENGAGEMENT involves the classification of utterances into *extra-vocal* and *intra-vocal.* Extra-vocalization involves the explicit introduction of outside voices into a text via attributed or reported utterances. Citation and attribution of sources is less likely to be at stake in informal conversations among keypals than it is in hard news stories (the object of White's analysis). For these reasons, I adopt the notion of epistemic modality as employed in various approaches to the analysis of point of view in (literary) texts (e.g., Toolan, 2001) as a final analytical tool in this initial analysis. In the following two subsections, attitude and epistemic modality are described in greater detail.

Attitude

The ATTITUDE subsystem of APPRAISAL is divided into three subcategories: (a) AFFECT, (b) JUDGMENT, and (c) APPRECIATION. Each of these three subcategories may be coded as either positive or negative. *Affect* is the semantic resource used to convey emotional responses. For example, Anke and Catharina convey positive affect when they use the verb *love* in the following example: "We love to laugh, to giggle, to have fun…" (e-mail 1, line 28). For existing or realis (as opposed to irrealis) states, Martin (2000, pp. 151-152) divides emotional responses into *un/happiness* (misery, antipathy, cheer, and affection), *in/security* (disquiet, surprise, confidence, and trust) and *dis/satisfaction* (ennui, displeasure, interest, and admiration).

Judgment refers to the semantic resource deployed for construing (moral) evaluations of human behavior (which are necessarily culture-specific). To illustrate, Anke conveys a negative judgment of drug use with the word *sad* in e-mail 6, lines 57-58: "Not only drinking, many of my former friends started doing drugs as well. I think it is really sad." She upscales her judgment of this behavior with her use of the adverb *really*. The subsystem of JUDGMENT is subdivided into *social esteem* and *social sanction* (Martin, 2000, p. 156). Social esteem includes *normality*, *capacity*, and *tenacity*, while social sanction is divided into *veracity* and *propriety*. White (1998, p. 35) explains that "breaches of social sanction will be seen as sins" from the religious perspective and as crimes from the legal perspective. Judgments of social esteem, on the other hand, serve to raise or lower particular individuals in the eyes of their communities, but they do not carry moral or legal implications. Each of these subcategories may be encoded either positively or negatively.

Appreciation designates the semantic resource used to express the "aesthetic" quality of natural phenomena and the products of human behavior. For instance, Anke positively appreciates the juvenile novel *Ben liebt Anna* (Härtling, 1997) when she uses the word *cute* to describe it in the following e-mail excerpt: "Well, back to 'Ben liebt Anna,' really cute, but thinking back I have never experienced anything like this in my childhood" (e-mail 4, lines 49-50). The subsystem of APPRECIATION is divided into the following five subcategories: (a) reaction, +/- impact; (b) reaction, +/- quality; (c) composition, +/- balance; (d) composition, +/- complexity; and (e) +/- valuation (Martin, 2000, p. 160).

Epistemic Modality

Halliday (1994) suggests that modality "refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no -- the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity" (p. 356). For Toolan (2001), modality is a "powerful indicator of point of view, of the speaker's or writer's subjectivity" (p. 71). With respect to the

use of modality to express point of view in literary texts, Fowler (1996) explains that a writer "may create a narrator, or a character, whose language expresses a characteristic or idiosyncratic point of view; and the style may be adjusted, as the book progresses, in order to express ideological development" (p. 168). In telecollaborative partnerships, the learner-as-writer may index the development of IC through variations in patterns of modality in the texts of his or her e-mails over time.

The modal systems of English and German are divided generally into three semantic subsystems, *deontic*, *boulomaic*, and *epistemic*, which are variously encoded in linguistic form. Deontic modality indexes a speaker's sense of duty or obligation in connection with a particular person, event, or state of affairs. Boulomaic modality indicates the wishes and desires of the speaker, while epistemic modality refers to the confidence that a speaker has in the truth of a certain proposition. This confidence (or lack thereof) is signaled linguistically by *categorical assertions* (Simpson, 1993, p. 49), such as in English *you are right*, modal verbs, lexical verbs (in English, *suppose*; in German, *vermuten* [to suppose]), modal adverbs (in English, *allegedly*; in German, *sicherlich* [certainly]), as well as certain idiomatic phrases (in English, *there is no question*; in German, *ohne Zweifel* [without doubt]). In the case of German, epistemic modality also has been grammaticized as a verbal mood (e.g., *sie sei die reichste Frau der Welt* [she is reported to be the richest woman in the world]) and in the form of modal particles (e.g., *das ist doch nicht wahr* [that is really not true]). In the first case, the speaker employs subjunctive I (*sei*) in order to distance herself from the truth value of the subordinate proposition. In the second case, the speaker's use of *doch* underscores her commitment to the truth of a given proposition. Thus, a speaker may either intensify or mitigate his or her commitment to the truth of an utterance. In the current analysis, categorical assertions (the most intense form of commitment), intensification (e.g., certainly), mitigation (e.g., perhaps), and the use of lexical absolutes (e.g., no, all, every) are tallied for each side of the partnership under study.

THE STUDY

The Research Project

The data presented here are drawn from a three-year (2000-2002) research project designed to investigate the impact of telecollaboration on FLL&T at the collegiate level in the United States. From 2000 to 2002, three fourth-semester FL classes at a public institution, one each in French, German, and Spanish, were paired electronically with university-level EFL classes in Europe in which participants speak the FL under study natively. The focal students in this study were participants in the German component of the project during the Fall of 2000. These students used the teleconferencing program *FirstClass* in order to correspond in both English and German. Although *FirstClass* supports multi-room synchronous chat in addition to e-mail, Eric, Anke, and Catharina opted to communicate with one another using e-mail only.

The Telecollaborative Partnership

In the first phase of the partnership (mid-August to mid-October), while the German university was not in session, the U.S. students collaboratively prepared Web Project I, a Web site that contained individual Web-biographies. At the start of the second phase (mid-October to mid-November 2000), the German students chose an American keypal based on their examination of these Web-biographies. Thus, e-mail 1 (see Appendix A) represents Anke and Catharina's initial e-mail to Eric, which was written in class on the first day of their *Proseminar* after they had visited Eric's Web-biography and picked him as a partner. In the remainder of phase 2, the keypals got to know one another and discussed three sets of parallel texts. Parallel texts explore a phenomenon (e.g., racism or beauty) from different socio-cultural perspectives in different languages. The pedagogical rationale for their use is to provide opportunities for the exposure, juxtaposition, and exploration of cultural fault lines (Kramsch, 1993) with a view to the development of IC. Within the *FirstClass* program, a folder was established for each set of transatlantic keypals to which they could send e-mails. All members of a particular set could read all e-mails that were sent to their folder. In a third phase, keypals worked collaboratively on the design and production of Web Project II, a

second Web site in which they examined in greater detail a topic that arose from their common engagement with parallel texts.

Participants

Anke and Catharina were second-year students in TESL and were therefore preparing for careers as primary/secondary-level English teachers in Germany, while Eric was a second-year student in computer science. Based on their responses to a pre-telecollaboration survey, Anke and Catharina appear to have very different profiles in comparison to Eric in terms of their experiences in electronic discourse communities (see Belz, 2001, pp. 225-227; see also Herring, 2002, p. 138; Thorne, 1999). For example, while Eric has his own personal computer with free Internet access and his own personal Web page unrelated to the telecollaborative course, neither Anke nor Catharina owns a personal computer. Anke/Catharina and Eric also differ with respect to their goals for the course. While Eric wants "to improve his reading/writing/speaking skills," Anke and Catharina are interested in "getting to know an American person" (see also Thorne, 2003, this issue, for differing expectations in a French-American exchange). Anke has studied for one year in Canada. Neither Eric nor Catharina has spent an extended period in a community where their respective FLs are spoken natively.

These three students were chosen for analysis because their electronic correspondence does not reflect well the euphoric reports in the literature of intercultural learning in telecollaboration. In fact, Eric disengaged from his German keypals after e-mail 13 on November 13, 2000, and did not write any more individual messages to them for the duration of the U.S. semester. In his genetic approach to the study of human development, Vygotsky (1978) notes that one of the most constructive ways to ascertain the developmental path of a particular phenomenon is to study those instances where it is disrupted, that is, those cases where the system fails. Eric, Anke, and Catharina do not appear to develop attitudes of "curiosity and openness" vis-à-vis the other to the extent that one might hope in the course of their telecollaborative partnership. Their 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.

Method

In the current study, I first examine chronologically sequenced excerpts from Anke/Catharina and Eric's e-mail correspondence with respect to the chosen analytical constructs (e.g., AFFECT, FORCE, epistemic modality). The purpose of this analytical move is to gain insight into the ways in which the meanings of this interaction for these interlocutors emerge at the microinteractional level of situated activity through time. Next, I present numerical aggregates of the relevant analytical constructs for the partnership as a whole along languacultural lines because the effects of particular patterns of language use may be "cumulative, rather than locally salient" (Fowler, 1996, p. 172; see also Gee, 1999, pp. 119-148, for the alternation of qualitative analysis at the microinteractional level of talk and quantitative presentation of specific features of this same talk in his example of "an ideal discourse analysis"). Like Layder (1993, p. 112), Gee notes that "counting things" in stretches of discourse provides an invaluable guide "in terms of hypotheses that [one] can investigate through close scrutiny of the actual details and content" (p. 125) of language-in-use. Similarly, Johnstone (2002) remarks that "[a]ny analytical move that involves drawing boundaries, pulling out chunks from the flow of experience and treating them as wholes" constitute the "essential first steps of any discourse analysis or any other approach to humanistic or social scientific research", despite the fact that the resulting categories may be somewhat arbitrary (p. 20). Although the linear nature of writing demands that one present micro-interactional and aggregational data in a linear fashion (i.e., one before the other on paper or in cyberspace, as the case may be), it should be noted that "discourse analysis is a reciprocal and cyclical process in which we shuttle back and forth between the structure (form, design) of a piece of language and the situated meanings it is attempting to build about the world, identities, and relationships" (Gee, p. 99).

DATA: ANALYSIS IN SEQUENCE

The entire 7-week e-mail correspondence between Anke/Catharina and Eric is presented in unaltered form (with English translations at appropriate junctures) in Appendix A.[6] In the remainder of this section, I highlight key moments in this developing interaction in sequential fashion.

Example 1 is taken from Anke and Catharina's introductory e-mail to Eric. Anke took the lead in the in-class composition of this message, while Catharina sat at her side as she typed.

Example 1 (from e-mail 1; October 19, 2000)

1 Dear ERIC
2 It was very interesting (6) reading your homepage and getting to know you a little bit through it.
3 This week it was the beginning of the semester and today our first class of English
4 started. …now we are here to introduce ourselves to you.
5 Well, lets start with my friend.
6 Her name is CATHARINA … She is 21 years old … [she] is really good looking, always dressed
7 in fancy cloth, but no skirts … I'm the typer for today, not that I'm better than her, with my two
8 fingers search system of typing. My name is ANKE, I'm the same age as CATHARINA, 21 but
9 we mostly (107) kinda behave younger. We love to laugh, to giggle, to have fun -- everywhere we
10 go, so mostly (124) we are the loudest (128) out of class and the wildest (134) on the street, the
11 fastest (139) in the car…
12 Ach, wir sollen ja noch einige Fehler von dir korrigieren, also uns ist nur ein grosser Fehler
13 aufgefallen. In deiner Web-page hast du gleich am Anfang in einem Satz "weil's Manchmal"
14 geschrieben, das gibt es in dieser Reihenfolge nicht, es heisst "aber manchmal" und du weißt
15 bestimmt (190) selbst, dass man im Deutschen in einem Satz nur Nomen, Substantive gross
16 schreibt. Aber mach dir keine Sorgen, wir haben bestimmt auch viele Fehler gemacht…

Anke opens this e-mail by expressing positive affect (satisfaction: interest) with regard to reading Eric's Web page at word 6 in line 2. Beginning in line 7, she initiates a series of negative self appraisals which begins with a negative judgment (social esteem: capacity) of her own typing ability. This series ends with three successive negative judgments (social esteem: normality) of her and Catharina's behavior. These latter judgments are upscaled with the use of the adverb "mostly" at words 107 and 124 and the superlative forms of the descriptive adjectives "loud," "wild," and "fast" at words 128, 134, and 139, respectively. Although these appraisals are tallied as negative (self) judgments (and thus possible instances of positive politeness strategies vis-à-vis Eric) in the appraisal framework, Anke/Catharina actually use them in a positive sense in order to distinguish themselves as "cool" students. In short, they establish their own desirability as telecollaborative partners in their opening e-mail by distinguishing themselves as different from other German university students.

Anke suddenly remembers, as indicated by her use of the German interjection *ach* in line 12 that, according to the rules of the partnership, she should correct some of Eric's mistakes in German. Anke introduces this topic in lines 12 and 13 by stating directly that she and Catharina noticed a mistake in Eric's Web page. Anke's use of the word *Fehler* (mistake) is upscaled by the adjective *grosser* (big) and simultaneously downscaled by the adverb *nur* (only) in the phrase "only one big mistake." Next, Anke asserts that Eric made a syntactic error *gleich am Anfang* (right at the beginning) of his Web page and follows this with the categorical assertion in line 14 that the word order Eric employed "doesn't exist." This information is followed by another categorical assertion in which Anke supplies Eric with the correct word order. Next, Anke uses the German phrase *du weißt bestimmt selbst* to introduce her correction of an error in capitalization on Eric's part.[7] From the perspectives of the Germans, this adverb may function as a face-saving strategy for Eric by means of which Anke/Catharina attribute knowledge of German orthography to him (i.e., "for sure you already know that nouns are capitalized in German"). From Eric's viewpoint, however, *bestimmt* may function as the capstone of a mounting series of face-threatening

insults (i.e., "certainly you must know that nouns are capitalized in German, so why did you make that mistake?"), which began with the Germans' assertion that Eric made a "big" mistake.

Contrasting interpretations of the situated meaning of *bestimmt* may lie in differences in American and German conversational styles (Byrnes, 1986). In her corrections of Eric's mistakes, Anke exhibits the German conversational feature of directness (House & Kasper, 1981) by first failing to praise Eric's efforts in German (a face-giving strategy) and then listing his mistakes in what appears to be unmitigated and even upscaled fashion (the use of categorical assertions). Thus, while Anke and Catharina may intend their conversational moves as a simple listing of the "facts" (i.e., Eric made a mistake in syntax and capitalization), with *bestimmt* functioning as a face-saving device, Eric may perceive their use of this adverb to accomplish a face-threatening positioning of him as a "deficient" user of German (see Belz, 2002a). Kotthoff (1989, p. 454) notes, based on the anecdotal experiences of German-speaking academicians at U.S. universities, that an American student "*sich nie wieder bei ihnen blicken ließe*" (would never allow himself to be seen by them again) if he or she were to encounter (unmitigated) negative appraisals on his or her written work. It should be noted that Anke/Catharina attempt to further soften the imposition of their corrections in line 16. One might even argue that their admission that they, too, hae made a lot of mistakes characterizes them as overly attentive to Eric's positive face, since, as Kotthoff (p. 450) notes, "*die Sympathiesignale der Deutschen sind spärlicher*" (the sympathy signals of Germans are sparser). In fact, the manner in which Anke/Catharina correct Eric's mistakes in German mirrors the example of German norms for the performance of critique given in Kotthoff (p. 454), except for Anke/Catharina's use of softeners:

> *Ich kann die Arbeit so nicht akzeptieren. Sie haben die wesentlichen Gedanken des Buches nicht erfaßt … es fehlen Literaturangaben und eine klare Gliederung…*
>
> [I cannot accept the paper like this. You have not comprehended the main points of the book … there are no references and the text is not clearly structured…] (Kotthoff, 1989, p. 454)

It is important to note, however, that Anke/Catharina's face-giving strategies involve a negative judgment (social esteem: capacity) of their own abilities in English, rather than a positive appreciation of Eric's command of German. As Kotthoff (1989, p. 454) observes, the typical American performance of critique requires first praise, even in the case of unacceptable work, followed by tempered suggestions for improvement.

These American norms for the performance of critique are exemplified clearly in Eric's correction of Anke/Catharina's English mistakes in his first e-mail to them:

Example 2 (from e-mail 2; October 19, 2000)

1 Hello ANKE und CATHARINA,
2 It's nice to hear from you for the first time. I am glad you liked our home page, I spent a
3 lot of time working on it! Your english is very impressive. My german is not nearly that good so
4 you're probably gonna have a lot of errors to correct. I actually had a hard time finding many
5 errors in your e-mail. I guess I will begin by correcting a few of your english errors.
6
7 Error: "This week it was the beginning of the semester…"
8 Correction: "This week was the beginning of the semester…"

In line 2, Eric opens his e-mail correspondence with Anke/Catharina by expressing positive affect (happiness: cheer) with respect to his receipt of their e-mail. This move is repeated in the next sentence when Eric states that he is glad that Anke/Catharina liked his Web page. Next, Eric positively appreciates (reaction: quality) Anke/Catharina's abilities in English with the word "impressive" which is upscaled by the adverb "very" in line 3. His praise for his keypals' English is followed by two negative appreciations (reaction: quality) of his own competence in German. Eric then positively appreciates (reaction: quality)

Anke/Catharina's English for a second time in lines 4-5, before he finally corrects one of their linguistic errors.

In sum, each of these keypals exhibits culturally-specific linguistic patterns for the performance of critique (a required task in the partnership under study). However, the Germans do seem to deviate more from their own preferred norms of directness through their use of multiple softeners. Such language use might be an indication that Anke/Catharina exhibit a "readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal" interaction in their FL (Byram, 1997, p. 58), perhaps in an attempt to offer Eric positive face in what is, for him, a face-threatening situation. In this way, they mark themselves linguistically as intercultural speakers who take into "consideration the expectations the others may have about appropriate behavior from foreigners" (Byram, p. 58). However, Anke/Catharina have not adopted English-language norms in their entirety (indeed, should they, if their critique is performed in German?), as evidenced by their lack of praise for Eric's FL abilities and their heavy use of bare assertions. Thus, the hybrid nature of their performance of critique may not be read by Eric as an attempt to meet him halfway; instead, Anke/Catharina inadvertently may have positioned themselves as rude and overbearing from Eric's perspective. The inability of e-mail to convey paralinguistic details of meaning such as facial movements and intonation may detract from an interpretation that is favorable to the Germans and bolster one that highlights stereotypical accounts of German conversational style (Byrnes, 1986, p. 203). In effect, the very medium that is touted as the cost-effective means of bringing sets of "others" together for the purposes of fostering intercultural understanding may simultaneously exacerbate the realization of this educational goal. An additional and crucial point to consider here is that, in their use of uncharacteristic softeners in their correction of Eric's mistakes, Anke and Catharina seem to have imported, at least to a certain degree, the norms of English interaction into the words of German. Kotthoff (1989, pp. 454, 458) indicates on two occasions that this type of lingua-pragmatic hybridity is a desired outcome of FLL. I will return to this point in the section "A Readiness to Interrogate the Value Systems and Assumptions Behind One's Own Cultural Practices."

In the next excerpt, the analytical focal point occurs in line 6 where Anke uses the word "cool" to positively judge those parents who allow their daughter's boyfriend to sleep over in their home and the word "scared" to negatively judge those parents who would not allow this arrangement.

Example 3 (from e-mail 6; October 30, 2000)

1 Hi ERIC,
2 …the weekend was great…we went…to my place and looked at pictures I made during my visit
3 in Canada … At my house it is no problem to bring boys over, my parents really trust me … In
4 Canada I experienced something totally different. My host parents slogen was: NO BOYS IN
5 THE HOUSE … In Canada I have heared of many family handling the boy-girl thing as my host
6 parents did, what about the US? Are your parents cool with these kind of things or scared??…

The excerpt opens in line 2 with Anke expressing positive affect (happiness: cheer) vis-à-vis her weekend activities which involved reminiscing about the year she spent as an exchange student in Canada. In line 3, Anke positively judges (social esteem: normality) the practice of bringing boys over to her house and thereby positively judges her parents' decision to sanction this practice. Said parental permission is construed as a result of Anke's parents' positive affective appraisal of her (security: trust). The second appraisal in line 3 is upscaled with the use of the adverb "really." In comparison with her parents' behavior in Germany, Anke negatively judges (social esteem: normality) the behavior of her Canadian host parents by refering to their household rules as "something totally different" in line 4. By analogy, Anke negatively judges (social esteem: normality) the behavior of other Canadian families when she states that they dealt with the "boy-girl thing" in the same way that her host parents did. With this chain of appraisals, Anke does not appear to display a "willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment" (Byram, 1997, p. 50), the third curricular

objective in the attitudes component of IC. Instead, she seems to supplant her cultural values (as evidenced by her appraisal of a particular social practice) into a new cultural context without a(n) (developing) awareness of the relative nature of value systems in general. Byram (1997, p. 92) suggests that in order to judge a learner's interest in other perspectives, the second curricular objective of the attitudes component of IC, one would need evidence that learners are "not prioritising their own over other perspectives" and that they are "choosing the other's explanation of phenomena in the learner's own culture." Anke seems to be providing linguistic counter-evidence for the realization of these two objectives when she makes the syntactic choice to phrase the query concerning mixed sex "sleepovers" in line 6 as an *either/or*-question. In effect, she offers Eric virtually no discursive space in which to explain his parents' policies. He is expected to adopt one of her pre-fabricated labels and thereby re-inforce her pre-determined, culturally mediated taxonomy of parental behavior. The syntax of her question may preclude intercultural discussion of teenage sexuality in the cultures under study because it rules out and simultaneously devalues alternative possibilities, such as Eric's parents disallowing not only mixed-sex sleepovers, but dating in general. In other words, Anke appears to attempt to understand Eric's potential response to her question by assimilating it to her own cultural phenomenon -- Eric's parents are "cool" if they let his girlfriend sleepover, but "scared" if they do not. However, as Byram (1997, pp. 104-105) notes, IC should be assessed based on the frequency of occurrence of particular behaviors (hence the need for numerical aggregates of certain linguistic phenomena in the section "Data: Analysis in Aggregation").

An excerpt from Eric's response to this e-mail is given in example 4 below.

Example 4 (from e-mail 7, October 31, 2000)

1 Hey ANKE and CATHARINA,
2 Thanks for writing me. I would like to reply to all the questions you've asked in your e-mails, but
3 first I have to write about the stuff that we are reqquired to talk about.
4 Meine Lehrerin meint dass "Disney hat das deutsche Kulturgut gestohlen, als er die verschiedene
5 Märchen wie Aschenputtel und Schneewittchen verfilmt hat." Was meinst du ueber diese Idee?
6 Weisst du ueber Disney and was es ist und was es macht? Ich glaube dass Disney die Maerchen
7 gestohlen hat und politisch korrekt gemacht. Aber in den USA sind politisch falsch Maerchen
8 nicht akkzeptiert. Vielleicht ist es eine kulturelle Reflexion von den USA dass wir nicht so viel
9 Kontrovers Maerchen haben.

Eric opens his response to the "cool-or-scared" e-mail by first thanking Anke/Catharina for their message, even though it contains what, for him, may be perceived as shocking information (Belz, 2001, p. 222) concerning teenage sexuality in Germany, a taboo topic in many American circles (Byrnes, 1986, p. 204; Kotthoff, 1989, p. 452). In line 2, Eric offers Anke/Catharina positive face by positively appraising their questions implicitly when he states that he would like to answer all of them. However, he declines to answer the "cool-or-scared" question (and enter potentially contentious conversational territory) by appealing to the rules of the partnership when he states that he must discuss the assigned parallel texts (German and American versions of *Cinderella,* in this case). In doing so, Eric displays English-language conversational style which is characterized by a greater degree of "commitment to creating an air of civility and graciousness toward the other" than is the case among speakers of German (Byrnes, pp. 199-200). However, his avoidance of "topics for which social behavior has no clear prescriptions" may negatively impact Eric's social evaluation in the estimation of speakers of German, among whom the same topics "can be explored very freely, rewardingly, and substantively, thus leading to greater depth than would otherwise be likely under a system which must continuously defer to the sensitivities of others" (Byrnes, p. 201). Thus, Eric's conversational moves at the beginning of example 4 may not be appreciated positively by Anke/Catharina as a skillful display of "practiced ambiguity" in the tradition of English-language conversations (Byrnes, p. 200), but rather negatively judged as an attempt to "seek ... refuge" (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995, p. 466) in the comfortable script of the foreign language classroom (Belz, pp. 227-229; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003, pp. 76-77).

In line 4, Eric switches topics and languages to introduce the proposition that the Disney Corporation "stole" the "cultural goods" of Germany when they adapted various German-language fairy tales to the screen. Eric, however, does not present this idea as his own, but rather attributes it to his instructor. In this way, he can safely maintain a position of uncommitted ambiguity if his German keypals were to disagree with this potentially face-threatening assertion. From the German perspective, however, it is precisely these types of deferential moves that portray speakers of English as "superficial, uninformed, uncommitted, uninterested conversational partners" who are unwilling or perhaps unable to "take a stand" (Byrnes, 1986, p. 203). In effect, Eric's attribution of this idea to his teacher represents a crucial moment in the development of the online exchange under study. Just like Anke and Catharina unwittingly may have positioned themselves as rude and uninviting in their performance of critique, Eric may have shaped himself linguistically as an individual who shies away from disagreement and confrontation. Anke and Catharina may be less likely to value Eric's pending displays of intercultural awareness now that they have ascertained that he does not exercise those conversational qualities -- disagreement and confrontation -- that are highly valued in German conversational style.

One such display comes in the very next sentence where Eric realizes that Disney may be a culture-specific phenomenon and, as a result, checks his partners' comprehension of it. In lines 6 and 7, Eric finally does offer his own opinion of Disney when he states that Disney has stolen German fairy tales and made them politically correct. By way of explanation of this "crime," he negatively appreciates politically incorrect fairy tales by stating that they are "unacceptable." The final sentence of this example almost reads as if Eric were speaking to himself, a possibility that is enhanced by the asynchronous nature of e-mail (see Belz & Reinhardt, 2003). The nascent decentering of his own position is signaled linguistically by his use of the sentence adverb *vielleicht* (maybe) in line 8.

Anke and Catharina's growing frustration with the perceived noncommited nature of Eric's correspondence is reflected in the bulleted format of their subsequent response. In the opening of this message, they (perhaps ironically) echo Eric's deferential strategy of appealing to the rules of the partnership, one of which is to answer all of their partner's questions. By doing this in the form of a brief and disengaged list, they signal to Eric that, at this juncture, they are not willing to offer the type of "highly emotional participation" that typifies German conversational style (Byrnes, 1986, pp. 201-202). Nonetheless, their subsequent contributions maintain the quality of directness.

Example 5 (from e-mail 8; November 2, 2000)

1 Hi ERIC,
2 zuerst möchten wir Deine Fragen beantworten:…
3 3.) Ob Disney dt. Kulturgut gestohlen hat? Also ANKE und ich sind da nicht so kleinlich. Wenn
4 jemand ein schönes Buch, Märchen oder Schriftstück liest und dies gerne verfilmen möchte,
5 finden wir, dass er es tun soll…
6 7.) We wonder wether you personally think the same about German fairy-tales, or if just your
7 teacher told you to write so, because almost everybody from your class did so…

In response to Eric's request for their opinion concerning whether or not Disney has stolen German "cultural goods," Anke and Catharina state in the form of a categorical assertion that they are not so *kleinlich* (narrow-minded). Their use of this word amounts to a negative appreciation (reaction: quality) of Eric's teacher's remark and may simultaneously be interpreted as a negative judgment (social esteem: capacity) of her abilities as an instructor. From Eric's perspective, it appears that his strategy of non-committedness with regard to this proposition has paid off, otherwise he would have served as the object of this uncomplimentary appraisal. In lines 6 and 7, Anke and Catharina offer an implicit negative judgment (social esteem: capacity) of Eric's ability to think for himself by asking whether or not he simply parrots what his teacher tells him to write in his messages. This appraisal may leave Eric both angry and baffled since he may feel that he not only offered his own opinion, he also relativized his

position with respect to his own culture. His response to their confrontational query is true to English conversational norms -- he does not answer it. Instead, he chooses to maintain "surface harmony" (Byrnes, 1986, p. 200) by ignoring uncomfortable and confrontational questions.

These same culturally-contingent conversational styles widen the already substantial chasm of intercultural misunderstanding between Anke/Catharina and Eric in example 6 below.

Example 6 (from e-mail 9; November 2, 2000)

1 we just read the parts from Ben libet Anna that your teacher put into the net. Wow, they are so
2 different … Why can't kids swim naked in America? Deutsche Kinder sind schlauer, die wissen,
3 dass man in nassen Sachen später friert.

In line 1 of this excerpt, Anke/Catharina refer to the English-language translation of *Ben liebt Anna* (Härtling, 1990), one of the parallel texts in the partnership under study. In the original version of this German-language classic, the two 9-year-old protagonists, Ben and Anna, swim together naked in a lake in a key scene. In Auerbach's English-language translation, the nudity has been censored. Instead, the children jump into the lake fully clothed which prompts Anna to speculate that Ben's mother will be angry that they got their clothes wet, lines that were never uttered in the original text. For the second time in the course of the partnership, Anke/Catharina ask a direct question related to the, in American culture, "stärker tabuisiert" (Kotthoff, 1989, p. 450), or "more strongly tabooed" topics of sex and the human body in line 2 of this excerpt. Immediately thereafter, they negatively judge (social esteem: capacity) the mental faculties of American children in general with their use of the comparative form of the adjective *schlau* (clever) to refer to German children who know that they will be cold later, if they swim in their clothes.

In his next e-mail, Eric chooses not to answer Anke and Catharina's question about nude bathing. Instead, he discusses school spirit, a subject that several members of the German group addressed in a communal folder in *FirstClass.* Example 7 is of interest because it exemplifies Eric's typical pattern of qualification of his commitment to the truth value of his utterances. Italics indicate clause-internal qualification (either mitigation or intensification), while bolding indicates clause-external qualification.

Example 7 (from e-mail 10; November 2, 2000)

1 Hey ANKE and CATHARINA,
2 I'm *really* (2) not surprised to hear that your school doesn't have much (12) school spirit. *Perhaps*
3 (15) school spirit is more of an American kind of thing. **However** (26), you *do* (28)
4 *still* (29) have (30) a great deal of (34) spirit for your sports teams in Germany like soccer teams
5 for example. **At least** (48) that how it *seems* (52) from what I've seen on TV. *Perhaps* (59) you
6 even have more *"spirit"* (64) for your soccer teams than we have for our sports teams in America.

In line 1 at word 2, Eric uses the clause-internal sentence adverbial *really* to intensify his statement that he is not surprised about the lack of school spirit in Germany. In line 2 at word 15, he uses the clause-internal sentence adverbial *perhaps* to mitigate his statement that school spirit might be an American phenomenon.[8] This same strategy is repeated two more times at words 52 and 59. At word 29, Eric uses the clause-internal sentence adverbial *still* to intensify his assertion that Germans have a great deal of spirit for professional sports teams. Eric further intensifies this statement with the verbal circumlocution *do have* at words 28 and 30 in contrast to the non-emphatic form *have*. Eric's use of scare quotes at word 64 is a clause-internal means of expressing skepticism toward his statement that Germans might have more spirit for German soccer teams than Americans do for sports teams because he implies that he is not sure if he can equate the sometimes violent behavior of German sports fans with what he understands as spirit at, for example, college football games (e.g., marching bands, mascots). Eric further qualifies his assertions by avoiding the use of lexical absolutes. For example, he does not state that Germans don't

have *any* school spirit, rather he states that Germans don't have "much" school spirit at word 12. This strategy is repeated at word 34. Finally, Eric does use clause-external mitigation at words 26 and 48.

In contrast, Anke and Catharina tend to present their opinions in the form of bald categorical assertions. Mitigation of their assertions is generally distributed over multiple clauses such that the mitigator does not necessarily occur in the same clause as the proposition that it is designed to soften. This situation is illustrated in example 8. Underlining designates a categorical assertion (intensification), while bolding again indicates clause-external mitigation.

Example 8 (from e-mail 11; November 9, 2000)

1 Women were suppressed for a very long time. Now, they want to be treated like men,
2 **but** (17) they are **still** (20) women … It is a very hard subject to talk about and it is easy to be
3 misunderstood. We think everybody (40), no matter what (43) race, culture or gender, should be
4 respected for what he/she is -- human and not be harrased. **But still** (62) there are differences and
5 that is good. We were not made for physical labour – you were not made to be pregnant. **Anyway**
6 (84) I hope you understand what we mean.

In line 1, Anke and Catharina state that women were oppressed for a very long time and that now they want to be treated like men. In the following clause, they use the adversative adverb *but* at word 17 to indicate their doubt that women can or should be treated like men. In lines 2 and 3 they make two more categorical statements about the emancipation of women as a topic of discussion. In lines 3 and 4, they imply equality between people by stating in absolute terms at words 40 and 43 that "everybody" should be respected and not harassed "no matter what." In the next sentence, however, they qualify the implication of equality by using the adverbial *but still* at word 62 to introduce the opinion that there are differences between people. Following two more categorical statements about culturally and biologically determined gender roles in society, Anke and Catharina use the topic shifter *anyway* at word 84 to mitigate the gravity of their statements and thus their degree of engagement with them.

Anke and Catharina's pattern of categorical assertion and mitigation is illustrated further in example 9.

Example 9 (from e-mail 16; November 20, 2000)

1 Anyway we *did* wrote you one letter in German, one in English that we *both* (15) didn't like *any*
2 (18) *of the two* movies. They were boring and they were *full of* (30) drug abuse. I can't take *any*
3 *one* (36) serious who is a pot smoker or an alcoholic. **Well** (46) they spoke about sexuality and
4 life and so one **but** (56) in *such a* (59) boring way.…
5 By the way, we think it is sad (69) that you only write to us about the thinks the teachers tells
6 you to. Are you interested in us or only on your mark you will receive at the end of the year. We
7 have heard that your course it four times a week. Don't you have the time to write us anything
8 personal?

Anke and Catharina begin by making four categorical assertions about the films *American Beauty* (Mendes, 1999) and *Nach fünf im Urwald* (Schmid, 1995). It should be noted that Eric had positively appreciated these two films in his previous e-mail (see e-mail 13 in Appendix A). Anke and Catharina's negative appreciation of the films is upscaled with the use of the modifiers *full of* at word 30 and *such a* at word 59. Furthermore, their commitment to the negative appreciation of the films is intensified clause internally with the use of absolutes: *both* at word 15; *any* at word 18; and *any one* at word 36. With the use of *well* at word 46, they mitigate their commitment to the negative appreciation of the movies clause externally. In sentence five, Anke and Catharina offer the fact that the movies discussed sexuality and life as evidence for the mitigating statement that they are not only about drug abuse and they are not entirely boring. At word 56, they use adversative *but* to mitigate their hedge of the original position and thus, simultaneously reinforce their initial assertion that the movies are boring and full of drug abuse.

In line 5, Anke and Catharina shift the focus of their negative appraisals from the films to Eric himself in a series of direct questions and assertions. At word 69, they negatively appreciate Eric's participation in the partnership by using the word *sad* to describe what they believe to be his practice of repeating his teacher's opinions. In line 6, they again employ an *either/or*-question to query Eric's motivation for participating in the partnership. The syntax of this question construes Eric as either interested in them or interested in himself. Since they previously stated that he only writes about the things his teacher tells him to, they have already chosen the first option as an answer to this question for him and thereby negatively judged his behavior in the partnership as improprietous (according to their own desire to get to know an American person). Finally, in lines 7 and 8, Anke/Catharina implicitly judge Eric negatively with a *yes/no*-question regarding his e-mail correspondence. If Eric answers this question in the affirmative (yes, I have the time to write something personal to you) he is, in effect, admitting that he has not done so in the past and therefore stands in breach of the e-mail arrangement (at least from the Germans' perspective). A negative response to this question (no, I don't have any time to write anything personal to you [nor do I want to because you have been so rude to me]) forces Eric into a conversational role which requires a high degree of directness and thereby flouts the conversational norms of English. Byrnes (1986) reports the experiences of an American student living in Germany who chose not to present factual information to counter the position of his German-speaking interlocutors (although this move left the impression that he was uninformed on political matters) because it would have required him to engage in "aggressive" conversational behaviors that, for him, were "overwhelmingly imbued with negative evaluations" (p. 203). My interpretation of Eric's correspondence is that he does indeed present his own opinions (however trite and nebulous they may be) and that he even begins to decenter with respect to his commitment to them (see, e.g., e-mails 10, 12, and 13); however, Anke/Catharina may not be able to read his messages in this way because they are unfamiliar with the package -- the culturally appropriate linguistic encoding of opinions in conversational English.

By the same token, the German students in this study (at least Catharina) may also, at times, construct a conversational package that Eric cannot open. In example 10, which, in contrast to most of the messages from the German side of the partnership, was written exclusively by Catharina, we see heavy use of modal particles and other kinds of language-specific attitudinal qualifiers.

Example 10 (from e-mail 15; November 16, 2000)

1 Du hast den Film ,,American Beauty" doch (7) bestimmt (8) auch gesehen, oder? (11) Wir sollen
2 dir nämlich (15) heute darüber schreiben. Also (19), wir fanden den Film ein bisschen (25)
3 lächerlich (26), da sich ein erwachsener Mann wie ein Teenager aufgeführt hat. Aber (37) wir
4 fanden es (40) schön, wie sich sie [sic] Beziehung von der Hauptdarstellerin und ihrem Nachbarn
5 entwickelt hat. Meinst du, das sich ein erwachsener Mann wirklich (61) in so (63) ein junges
6 Mädchen verlieben kann? Sie war ja (71) so (72) alt wie seine Tochter…Außerdem (77) ist der
7 Vater von dem Nachbarn etwas (84) komisch, zuerst denkt er, sein Sohn sei (91) schwul, dann
8 will er einen anderen Mann küssen. Irgendwie (100) alles ein bisschen (103) komisch. Und die
9 Drogen dürfen natürlich (109) auch in diesem Film (113) nicht fehlen… Na ja (116), wir denken
10 nicht, dass dieser Film so (123) sehr der Realität entsprichst oder (128) was meinst du?

In line 1, Catharina uses the clause-internal sentence adverb *bestimmt* (certainly) at word 8 to intensify her belief that Eric has already seen the film *American Beauty*. Her use of the modal particle *doch* at word 7 serves to further emphasize her commitment to the truth of this proposition. She uses the utterance-final tag *oder* (or) at word 11, however, to allow for a contradiction of this statement and thus mitigates her engagement with it. In line 2 at word 15 Catharina employs the adverb *nämlich* (namely) to emphasize the fact that she is supposed to write about the film in her present e-mail. In lines 2-3 Catharina appreciates the film negatively with the adjective *lächerlich* (ridiculous) at word 26; she downscales this evaluation, however, with the use of *ein bisschen* (a little bit) at word 25. In line 4 at word 37 Catharina uses clause-external adversative *aber* (but) to mitigate her previous appraisal of the film as ridiculous and goes on to

state an aspect of the film that she feels was *schön* (nice). Syntactically, Catharina uses an anticipatory *es*-construction to refer cataphorically to the content of her positive appreciation. In this way, Catharina's appreciative evaluation (*schön*) and the object evaluated (i.e., the relationship between the female character, Jane, and her neighbor, Ricky) do not appear in the same clause. Catharina's use of the adverb *wirklich* (really) at word 61 casts doubt on the statement that a grown man (Lester) falls in love with a teenage girl (Angela). The adverb *so* (so) at word 63 upscales Catharina's description of Angela as young. In the following sentence at word 71 the modal particle *ja* intensifies the assertion that Angela is as old as Lester's daughter, Jane, and implicitly mitigates the statement that Lester falls in love with Angela. The adverb *außerdem* (in addition) at word 77 introduces another example from the film that supports Catharina's contention that the film is ridiculous, specifically, the character of Ricky's father, whose appraisal as *komisch* (strange) is downscaled with the adjective *etwas* (somewhat) at word 84. In line 7 at word 91, Catharina uses the subjunctive I mood of the verb *to be* in German to report the thoughts of Ricky's father and thus simultaneously distances herself from the statement that Ricky is gay. The phrase *igendwie alles ein bisschen komisch* (somehow everything [is] a little bit strange) in line 8 echoes the use of *komisch* (strange) at word 85 as well as the use of *ein bisschen* (a little bit) at word 25 and therefore reinforces these previously expressed opinions. The adverb *natürlich* (naturally) in line 9 at word 109 intensifies Catharina's opinion that drugs form an integral part of the film's plot. The phrase *auch in diesem Film* (also in this movie) anaphorically refers to the previously discussed film *Nach fünf im Urwald* and intensifies Anke and Catharina's statement in e-mail 14, lines 1-4 that this movie inappropriately depicts drug use as something normal. The particle *naja* at word 116 downtones the gravity of Catharina's commentary and thus serves to mitigate her commitment to her statements. She also mitigates the idea that the film reflects reality with the adverbial phrase *nicht so sehr* (not too much). Finally, Catharina further mitigates her engagement with this final proposition by using a coordinating conjunction to introduce a clause in which she asks Eric for his opinion. Unfortunately, for all parties concerned, Eric had already disengaged from the partnership at the time that this message was sent, such that the softer linguistic positioning of the writer (Catharina) achieved in this e-mail was most likely lost on him.

DATA: ANALYSIS IN AGGREGATION

Attitude

A numerical summary of Anke/Catharina and Eric's total appraisals with respect to ATTITUDE is presented in Table 1. In the first horizontal quadrant of Table 1, overall attitudinal rates are given. Then they are broken down into positive and negative valuations for all attitudinal categories. In the remaining three horizontal quadrants, appraisal rates are given for the individual subcomponents of this category: AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION. In each case, combined data for both the positive and negative poles are presented first and then the results for each pole is given individually. For both Anke/Catharina and Eric, raw numerical counts for the number of intervening words between each appraisal are given in the first vertical data column. These data were calculated by dividing the total number of words written by a particular side of the partnership by the number of appraisals in a given category. In the second vertical data column for each side of the partnership, the rate of appraisals per 100 words for a particular category is reported. Since Anke/Catharina and Eric produced differing amounts of telecollaborative discourse over the course of their correspondence, the frequency of their appraisals needs to be relativized according to an absolute value for the purposes of revelatory comparison (see Gee, 1999, p. 133, for an identical analytical move).

Table 1. Summary of Attitudinal Appraisal

	Anke/Catharina		Eric	
	word interval between appraisals	rate per 100 words	word interval between appraisals	rate per 100 words
Total attitudinal appraisal	26	3.85	29	3.44
Positive attitudinal appraisal	60	1.67	47	2.13
Negative attitudinal appraisal	46	2.17	73	1.37
Total affective appraisal	91	1.10	115	0.87
Positive affect	138	0.72	146	0.68
Negative affect	268	0.37	535	0.19
Total judgmental appraisal	61	1.64	85	1.18
Positive judgment	252	0.40	178	0.56
Negative judgment	81	1.23	161	0.62
Total appreciative appraisal	89	1.12	70	1.43
Positive appreciation	179	0.56	115	0.87
Negative appreciation	179	0.56	178	0.56

Based on these results, Anke/Catharina and Eric appear quite similar in their rates of appraisal for all categories over the course of their e-mail correspondence, 3.85 and 3.44 appraisals per 100 words, respectively. However, marked differences in their relative rates of appraisal become clear when one considers positive and negative appraisals separately. Anke and Catharina make 1.67 positive appraisals per 100 words (e.g., e-mail 1, line 22, *Catharina is really good looking, always dressed in fancy cloth, but no skirts*.) in comparison to 2.13 positive appraisals per 100 words for Eric. The results are nearly the opposite for negative appraisal (e.g., e-mail 18, line 3, *we are not very much impressed with your work!*): 2.17 and 1.37, respectively. Anke/Catharina and Eric have nearly the same rate of positive affective appraisal at 0.72 and 0.68 evaluations per 100 words, respectively (e.g., e-mail 6, line 23, *I loved Pulp Fiction…*; e-mail 2, line 2, *I am glad you liked our homepage…*), while Anke/Catharina's negative affective appraisal out-strips Eric's rate by nearly 2 to 1.

The biggest difference is seen in the rates of negative judgment (e.g., e-mail 16, lines 8-9, *We cann ot understand you acctually liked American Beauty*), where Anke/Catharina out-perform Eric by a margin of 2 to 1. On the whole, Anke/Catharina make 41% of their total judgments in the category of *+/- propriety*. These empirical details of the interaction appear to confirm Byrnes' (1986, p. 201) suggestion that in German conversational style, as opposed to American, speakers tend to place greater emphasis on the information-conveying function of language, an orientation which is concerned more rather than less with facts and truth-values. These truth values, Byrnes speculates, are derived from "social norms which are more amenable to evaluations of right and wrong, or at least to evaluations of propriety or impropriety" (p. 201). While Eric makes positive appreciative evaluations about 1.5 times as frequently as Anke and Catharina (e.g., e-mail 2, line 3, *Your english is very impressive*), their rates of negative appreciation are equal (e.g., e-mail 15, line 4, *Also, wir fanden den Film ein bisschen lächerlich…*).

These already marked differences between Anke/Catharina and Eric become even sharper if one compares what it is they are appraising with their evaluative comments. White (1998) notes that by "tracking the broad social type of the human participants, the manner of their identification in the text and the nature of the evaluations and positionings applied to those participants, it becomes possible to develop a profile of the readerships that a text constructs for itself and the nature of the relationship it seeks to establish with those readerships" (p. 117). In these data, Anke and Catharina negatively evaluate Eric or Eric's work on 18 occasions (e.g., e-mail 18, lines 25-6, *…and Eric, if this [writing two e-mails per week] is too much for you, you might have thought about it before taking the course*.), while Eric never

negatively evaluates Anke or Catharina or their work. In fact, Eric positively evaluates them or their work 12 times (e.g., e-mail 7, lines 17-8, *I think it's really amusing that the racial problems in the movie "Shaft" reminded you of the racial problems in "if you come softly." That's very perceptive of you. :)*), while they positively evaluate Eric or his work only three times (e.g., e-mail 19, lines 3-4, *…wir wollten dir noch einen kurzen Brief schreiben und sagen, dass uns die Web-Page sehr gut gefallen hat*.). The placement of these three appraisals is critical. One occurs in the opening line of their first e-mail to him when they stated that it was "interesting" to read his Web page, whereas the other two occur in their last e-mail to him (e-mail 19), which was written approximately three weeks after Eric had discontinued his correspondence with them. Furthermore, Eric negatively appraises his own behavior or ability in comparison to Anke and Catharina's more superior behavior or ability, from his perspective, on four occasions (e.g., e-mail 2, lines 3-4, *Your english is very impressive. My german is not nearly that good so your probably gonna have a lot of errors to correct*). Thus, one might interpret Eric's self-deprecating evaluations as politeness strategies with regard to Anke and Catharina's positive (and, in this particular case, also negative) face. Anke and Catharina also engage in self-deprecating appraisals of their own abilities and behavior (e.g., e-mail 1, line 26, *I'm the typer for today, not that I'm better than her, with my two fingers search system of typing*); however, some of their negative self-appraisals are actually designed to increase their own positive face. For example, throughout the correspondence, Anke, in particular, emphasizes that she is not a typical girl/student (e-mail 6, lines 11-15, 53-54; e-mail 14, lines 3-7). Because she explicitly uses the terms "not normal" and "not typical," these appraisals are tallied as *social esteem: normality* in Martin's (2000, p. 156) coding scheme. However, in Anke and Catharina's particular discursive sub-community, they are using the characterization "not normal" positively, as it distinguishes them from other university students who engage in the "normal," but, from their perspectives, indecorous behavior of taking drugs and drinking alcohol.

Graduation

Anke/Catharina and Eric have similar rates of upscaling evaluations at 1.51 and 1.69 times per 100 words, respectively. Anke/Catharina upscale their evaluations three times as much as they downscale them, while Eric upscales his evaluation 5.5 times as often as he downscales them (see House & Kasper, 1981). Again, it is important to note what it is that Anke/Catharina and Eric are upscaling and downscaling. In these data, Anke and Catharina upscale negative evaluations 1.7 times as frequently as they upscale positive ones (41 to 24 occurrences; e.g., e-mail 16, lines 8-9, *Well they spoke about sexuality and life an so one but in such a boring way*). Eric, on the other hand, upscales positive evaluations 1.6 times as often as he upscales negative evaluations (17 to 10 occurrences; e.g., e-mail 5, line 3, *Wow! That was a really long letter you sent me Anke*).

Epistemic Modality

In Table 2 below I provide a comparative look at Anke/Catharina and Eric's use of intensifiers and mitigators in expressions of epistemic modality.

Table 2. Number and Types of Epistemic Modality per E-mail per Author

	Anke/Catharina				Eric			
	Intensification			Mitigation	Intensification			Mitigation
	Lexical Absolute	Categorical Assertion	Other Intensif.		Lexical Absolute	Categorical Assertion	Other Intensif.	
1	8	3	4	14				
2					0	1	1	2
3	0	0	0	0				
4	8	4	14	18				
5					1	0	0	2
6	5	13	6	17				
7					2	1	1	7
8	1	2	3	11				
9	0	4	1	4				
10					2	5	2	13
11	2	12	5	7				
12					7	2	1	4
13					0	6	0	5
14	2	5	0	5				
15	1	1	3	8				
16	2	5	4	5				
17	1	9	3	5				
18	5	11	4	5				
19	0	0	1	1				
Subtotals	35	69	48	100	12	15	5	33
Word Interval	122	62	89	43	134	107	321	49
Rate/100 Words	0.82	1.61	1.12	2.33	0.75	0.93	0.31	2.04
Subtotals	152			100	32			33
Word Interval	28			43	50			49
Rate/100 Words	3.57			2.33	2.00			2.04
Totals	251				65			
Word Interval	17.1				24.7			
Rate/100 Words	5.85				4.05			

These data reveal several important trends. First, Anke/Catharina use intensification approximately 1.5 times more frequently than Eric does (see House & Kasper, 1981). In contrast, their rates of mitigation are quite similar at 2.33 and 2.04 times per 100 words, respectively. Notably, Anke and Catharina outnumber Eric in their use of categorical assertions by a margin of nearly 2 to 1 and they outscore him in their use of other types of intensification by almost 4 to 1. In other words, Anke and Catharina tend to emphasize rather than hedge their commitment to the truth of the statements they make. Second, Anke and Catharina's use of mitigators appears to decrease in density per e-mail over time (note the abrupt drop off at e-mail 9), while Eric's use of mitigators appears to increase in density over time (see e-mail 7). On the face of things, these data would appear to suggest that Anke/Catharina and Eric move in opposite directions with respect to the development of IC in telecollaboration, at least to the extent that they use

intensifiers in expressions of epistemic modality and to the degree that these uses can be interpreted as an index of intercultural learning.

As we have seen in example 10, however, there are other, language-specific linguistic means and patterns (e.g., modal particles, clause-external mitigators, subjunctive I, and cataphoric *es*-constructions) that may be used by speakers of German to both mitigate and intensify their engagement with specific opinions. Because some of these devices are not represented (to a similar degree) in Eric's first language, they may not be as salient to him as other types of epistemic modality, and, therefore, he may be less able to apprehend the full impact of Anke/Catharina's use of epistemic modality. On the other hand, they may occur at points in the e-mail partnership where their effects are lost on Eric either because he has already disengaged from the correspondence (e.g., the modal particles in Catharina's e-mail 15) or because he has already been positioned by Anke/Catharina as a particular type of partner through their systematic use of particular appraisal patterns.

DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss the linguistic features and patterns of Anke/Catharina and Eric's 7-week e-mail correspondence with respect to the five curricular objectives and learner behaviors that Byram (1997, p. 51) associates with the attitudes component of his model of IC.

A Willingness to Seek Out Interaction with the Other in a Relationship of Equality

One might argue that Eric does not seek out interaction with the other because he does not write to his partners outside of class time. This tendency is reflected in the number and frequency of his messages (see Table 2). Anke and Catharina, on the other hand, follow the 2-e-mails-per-week-rule established at the outset of the partnership, even though this may cause some inconvenience for them since their *Proseminar* only meets once a week, they do not have computers at home, and computer access at their institution is quite limited by American standards. In a post-semester telecollaborative survey, Anke and Catharina related that they sometimes paid US $5.00/hour at a local Internet café in order to e-mail Eric. On the other hand, Eric may not perceive himself to be in a relationship of linguistic equality after he learns that Anke finds the juvenile novels to be such easy reading. Furthermore, Anke and Catharina may doubt the equality of the partnership in terms of Eric's performance as a telecollaborative partner. They negatively evaluate Eric or his work 18 times, whereas he never negatively evaluates them or their work. On the contrary, he positively evaluates them or their work 12 times, whereas they positively evaluate him or his work three times.

A Genuine Interest in the Other's Point of View

Semantically, Anke and Catharina express interest in Eric's point of view and this is evidenced by their frequent e-mail messages, the long, personal survey that Anke sent Eric in e-mail 4, and Anke's comments on a post-telecollaboration survey where she stated explicitly that she was disappointed that Eric did not answer the "cool-or-scared" question because she really would have liked to compare American and Canadian families on this issue. Syntactically, however, Anke and Catharina frequently choose question types that allow Eric very little responsive space or that force him into a conversational role in which American norms are flouted (see also e-mail 16, lines 6-7). At two points in the course of the correspondence, Eric actually uses the word *curious* when asking Anke and Catharina a question (e-mail 7, line 30; e-mail 12, line 13), thus echoing Byram's (1997, p. 34) prerequisite of attitudes of curiosity and openness for the development of IC.

A Readiness to Interrogate the Value Systems and Assumptions Behind One's Own Cultural Practices

In e-mail 10, Eric reconsiders his previous position that Disney is morally upright, although, in the end, he does return to his initial, positive evaluation of Disney as an American cultural icon. Anke certainly interrogates the practices of drug use among German youth; indeed, she states her opposition to drug and alcohol use among German youth quite vehemently. However, she transfers her entrenched opposition of this social practice to the American cultural context and it appears to hinder her from understanding the film *American Beauty* (1999) in a more symbolic or ironic sense. In other words, she does not see the portrayal of teenage drug use in the movie as a potential critique of American society, something that would be in line with her own viewpoints. Linguistically, Anke and Catharina's use of mitigation appears to decrease over time, whereas Eric's remains about the same. One might interpret this to indicate that Anke and Catharina become more committed to the truth values of their own propositions over time rather than less committed. In other words, their electronically mediated interaction with Eric served to re-inforce (not de-stabilize) stereotypes that they held of Americans.

A Readiness to Examine One's Own Affective Reactions to the Experience of Otherness and to Cope With These Reactions

Eric's refusal to communicate with Anke and Catharina after e-mail 13 and his repeated refusal to be interviewed by researchers concerning his experiences in the partnership may indicate that Eric had a low tolerance for the experience of otherness. Elizabeth, Eric's American partner during phase 3 of the partnership, indicated in a post-telecollaboration focus group interview that Eric was angry about the way that his German partners had corresponded with him and was just waiting for the semester to end. Anke and Catharina, on the other hand, continue to express interest in Eric's well-being in the partnership (through their use of boulomaic modality), even though he was not performing up to their expectations. Their frustration may have resulted in verbal aggression in several messages; however, they did seem to be able to return to a more even tone in their final e-mails and even compliment Eric on his work on Web Project II.

A Readiness to Engage With Culturally Appropriate Verbal Communication in the Corresponding Contexts

Anke, Catharina, and Eric were unable to establish and maintain functional social relationships in telecollaboration because they did not have adequate knowledge of culture-specific patterns of interaction in their partner's language (e.g., the performance of critique, the discussion of taboo topics, the degree of directness in conversational discourse, linguistic devices for the mitigation of opinions). They were unable to identify and appropriately assign meaning to these features of their partners' discourse. Crucially, the text-only medium of e-mail did not allow them access to additional non-verbal cues that might have aided them in the identification and interpretation of these same interactional conventions. Furthermore, Anke/Catharina and Eric had different levels of experience with the interactional norms of computer-mediated discourse communities. These varying levels of experience led to disparate interpretations of the electronic signs that they encountered in the course of the partnership (e.g., capitalization, the ephemerality of e-text) and this, in turn, resulted in social misunderstandings.

The patterns of appraisal uncovered in these data find corroboration in the work of House (1997, 2000), House and Kasper (1981), and Wierzbicka (1998) on German-American contrastive pragmatics (see also Clyne, 1998; see Rings, 1995, for anecdotal corroboration). House (1997) proposes five continua of interactional patterns for German-American encounters (a) directness -- indirectness; (b) orientation toward the self -- orientation toward the other; (c) orientation toward content -- orientation toward the addressee; (d) explicitness -- implicitness; and (e) ad hoc formulations -- linguistic routines. In each case, House (1997, p. 8) argues that speakers of German tend to fall toward the left ends of these continua, whereas speakers of English tend to fall toward the right. Thus, Anke and Catharina's tendency toward

negative appraisal, categorical assertions, and intensification may be reflective of broader German interactional patterns of directness, explicitness, and an orientation toward the self. Eric's patterns of self-deprecating judgments, positive appreciation, and the upscaling of positive evaluations may index broader English communicational patterns of indirectness and implicitness (see also Fandrych & Graefen, 2002; Tirkkonen-Condit, 1996).

At first blush, one might interpret the results of this study to indicate that, in the case of German-American telecollaboration, one needs to teach German partners not to make so many negative judgments, to decrease their use of categorical assertions, or to modify the ways in which they use intensification and mitigation in expressions of epistemic modality. Similarly, one might argue that American learners need to be told to express their opinions more directly through the increased use of judgment and intensification in order to build positive face in conversation with German-speaking partners. Indeed, Kotthoff (1989, p. 454) appears to take this tack when she writes that

> *…sich deutsche Kinder meines Bekanntenkreises in amerikanischen Schulen schnell sehr wohlfühlen, während das umgekehrt nicht zutrifft. Die deutschen Kinder profitieren von der positiven Atmosphäre, die u. a. dadurch zustande kommt, daß sie mehr positives feedback bekommen und weniger negatives. Aus interkulturellen Kommunikationsvergleichen können wir auch lernen und uns Anregungen für Veränderungen holen.*
>
> [...the children of my German friends quickly feel at ease in American schools, while the reverse situation is not the case. The German children benefit from the positive atmosphere that, among other things, comes about because they receive more positive and less negative feedback. We can learn from intercultural comparisons of communication and see in them an impetus for change.]

Byrnes (1986), however, questions the appropriateness of changing one's conversational style, even when speaking in the second language:

> …speakers [from Germany] seem ... to be known and not loved by many for their inflexibility, at times combative directness, and domineering way of always appearing certain they are right in a discussion. Should [for example] a Japanese teacher of German really teach students to emulate such behavior which is arguably less than desirable and which, in addition, is contrary to Japanese cultural norms? (p. 190)

Later, in the same article, Byrnes states that any "suggestions that hint at changing individual behavior dangerously disregard the interconnectedness of the [communicative] system" and the fact that conversational style typically is the result of early socialization processes and therefore quite resistant to change (p. 204). Instead, she suggests that it is the task of the foreign language teacher "to foster ways that enhance our ability to be aware of each other's style, although we cannot change the other's style nor do much to alter our own" (Byrnes, p. 204).

These arguments seem to indicate that Germans should not decrease the number of negative judgments when communicating with Americans in German, if this linguistic feature is representative of conventional patterns of verbal interaction in German. Instead, the American learners need to become aware of the existence and, most importantly, the meaning of the pattern. Similarly, Americans should not necessarily alter patterns of argumentation and consensus when communicating with Germans in English, but they need to become aware of the situatedness of their interactional styles and the impact that they may have on their evaluation by their German-speaking interlocutors. One should also not assume that Americans have de-centered more than Germans because they hedge their commitment to the truth value of propositions more than Germans do, if these patterns are characteristic of conversational norms in the respective languages in genenral. Instead, one would need to demonstrate a change in language use over time within a particular community of speakers relative to that group's participation in the telecollaborative partnership. When writing in German, however, American learners should be able

employ German patterns of communication, and vice versa for German learners of English. For example, American learners of German should be able to use modal particles in order intensify and mitigate their engagement with the truth value of their utterances. Germans should be aware that they need to be less direct and to employ fewer negative appraisals in order to exhibit typically American patterns of interaction. These discourse patterns are integral components of sociolinguistic and interactional competence in German and English, respectively, and the speaker who is unaware of their operation will suffer the interactional consequences.

On a final note, I would like to return to the notion of linguistic hybridity that was raised in relation to Anke and Catharina's performance of critique in their opening e-mail to Eric in the section Data: Analysis in Sequence. The line of argumentation presented in the preceding paragraph seems to be predicated on the notion of the monolingual native speaker and on the idea that the first language is (or should be) insulated from the FL in the mind of the learner. Sociolinguistic research (e.g., Edwards, 1994), however, has shown that multilingualism, not monolingualism, is the world-wide norm, while recent reconceptualizations of the learner as a multicompetent speaker of both the first language and the FL (instead of as a deficient communicator in the FL) have revealed that the first language and the FL are in an intimate and illuminating interrelationship in both psycholinguistic (Cook, 1991, 1992) and affective regards (Belz, 2002a). For example, Belz (2002c, pp. 220-225) has shown that Yen, a Japanese and English-speaking learner of German, uses both English and German in an experimental text in order to construct metalingual jokes, reflect on the polysemy of German modal particles, and to clarify the socio-pragmatic ambiguity of certain politeness markers in ways that are pleasurable to her. It seems, therefore, that linguistic hybridity does not necessarily compromise the integrity of either linguistic system, but may reflect, instead, a natural and emerging state of multicompetence, that is, the state of mind with two (or more) languages, in the learner. It should be made clear, however, that the type of linguistic hybridity under consideration is not the result of an uniformed and haphazard juxtaposition of the norms of two linguistic systems. On the contrary, it is a creative act that is rooted in a conscious and reasoned variation on a previously mastered FL (or first language) linguistic norm. Thus, Anke and Catharina's hybrid performance of critique in e-mail 1 may be enabled by a sense that strictly German patterns of directness are likely to offend an American interlocutor. Similarly, Eric can only understand the hybrid and thus super-sensitive nature of their corrections if he is first aware of the conventional patterns of directness in German conversation. The quasi-anonymity and temporal disentrainment of the (asynchronous) electronic medium may contribute to the occurrence of linguistic acts of hybridity that would not be possible typically to the same degree in face-to-face interactions. In the end, becoming interculturally competent may be not so much about adopting the words and interactional norms of the other in his or her language as it is about performing judicious acts of linguistic hybridity in a broadened discursive space.

CONCLUSION

Research on the role of the teacher in computer-mediated FLL&T has suggested that he or she is reconfigured as more of a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage" in the virtual learning environment (Fitch cited in Tella, 1996, p. 6; see also Teles, 2000; Warschauer, 1997). And, indeed, some administrators have interpreted these observations as a legitimization of a decrease in student-teacher contact hours in favor of an increase in student-computer contact hours in the FL classroom. The findings of this study seem to indicate, however, that the importance (but not necessarily the prominence) of the teacher and, ultimately, teacher education programs (e.g., Cain & Zarate, 1996) increases rather than diminishes in Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education precisely because of the electronic nature of the discourse. In contrast to conventional face-to-face classroom-based learning, the teacher in telecollaboration must be educated to discern, identify, explain, and model culturally-contingent patterns of interaction in the absence of paralinguistic meaning signals (see also Belz &

Müller-Hartmann, 2003, p. 86; Müller-Hartmann, 1999), otherwise it may be the case that civilizations ultimately do clash -- in the empirical details of their computer-mediated talk.

NOTES

1. This research is funded by a United States Department of Education International Research and Studies Program Grant (CFDA No. 84.017A). The author is a research associate on this grant and the instructor of the experimental German section in the United States. The instructor of the Teacher Education *Proseminar* in Germany is Andreas Müller-Hartmann.

2. The linguistic formulation of the goals of telecollaboration as the development of "linguistic" competence and "intercultural" competence does not imply in any way that linguistic and cultural competencies are separate and discrete ontological entities (see Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003, for an in-depth discussion and explication of "languaculture" [Agar, 1994, p. 60] in telecollaboration); it merely serves (a) to echo the goals of telecollaborative language study as reported in the published literature and (b) to emphasize the author's experience that issues of culture (both big *C* and little *c* as well as culturally appropriate ways of interacting in the FL) assume high focus for students in telecollaborative partnerships. The saliency of culture for students in such configurations is related to the computer-mediated opportunity for prolonged intercultural communication with expert speakers of the languaculture under study.

3. It should be noted that Edmondson and House (1998) have argued that intercultural competence is a superfluous construct in FLL&T on precisely these grounds (see also House, 1997).

4. Byram's (1997) dichotomization of the language learner into the "tourist" and the "sojourner" tends to downplay the important fact that not all language learners are in the privileged position of travelers to foreign lands. Much second language learning takes place under conditions of occupation, invasion, colonization, slavery, economic and social marginalization, and more recently, cultural imperialism via telecommunications technologies, without the privilege of volitional travel. Since language learning is eminently context-dependent, as Byram repeatedly notes, these configurations will influence the development of intercultural competence, the methods by which it is assessed, and indeed, its societal valuation.

5. The ability to pose appropriate and relevant questions and a readiness to answer questions asked are two linguistically based markers of the skill of discovery (Byram, 1997, p. 62). In this partnership, Anke/Catharina's rate of questioning was 0.79/100 words, while Eric's rate was 1.92/100 words. However, Eric answered only 18% of the questions his partners asked him, while they answered 56% of the questions that he posed. Space considerations prevent a detailed analysis of the questioning patterns in this exchange, but O'Dowd (2003, this issue) and Belz (2001, p. 223) point toward the relationship between questioning techniques and the functionality of particular learner dyads in telecollaboration.

6. It is suggested that the reader familiarize himself or herself with it at this time, since the subsequent discussion assumes good knowledge of it.

7. Although it is true that adverbs are not capitalized in German and therefore *manchmal* (sometimes) should not be capitalized, lack of capitalization is one of the characteristic features of electronic discourse (Crystal, 2001, pp. 164-165). As I have shown elsewhere (Belz, 2001, pp. 225-227; 2002b, p. 71), Anke and Catharina repeatedly mark themselves as inexperienced users of computer-mediated communication , while Eric is a highly proficient user of the same medium. Thus, Anke/Catharina's characterization of a capitalization error as "a big mistake" may be met with bemusement on the part of Eric.

8. With the phrase "more of an American kind of thing" in line 2, Eric makes use of the category FOCUS in the subsystem of GRADUATION. White (1998, p. 109) explains that linguistic resources in the category

of FOCUS serve to sharpen or soften the degree to which particular elements are viewed as prototypical members of certain categories (see Lakoff, 1987; Rosch, 1973; and Taylor, 1995). In this case, the adverb *more* serves to sharpen the degree to which "school spirit" is seen as a member of the category "American kinds of things." In may be the case that the semantic resources of FOCUS are particularly indicative of processes of decentering. For example, Eric seems to indicate here through his use of this phrase that he has re-evaluated his view on the universality of school spirit. Due to space considerations a detailed analysis of FOCUS was not possible here (see, however, Belz, 2003).

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