Abstract:
Network-based language teaching (NBLT) involves the application of global or local communication networks within foreign and second language education (Warschauer and Kern, 2000). In telecollaboration, a type of NBLT, distally located language learners use internet communication tools to support dialogue, debate, collaborative research and social interaction for the purposes of language development and cultural awareness (e.g. Kinginger et al., 1999). To date, the research on NBLT has been limited, focusing primarily on pedagogical implementations of technology and linguistic features of online communication. In particular, researchers have not robustly explored social and institutional dimensions of telecollaboration (Chapelle, 2000:217) nor have they adequately investigated the pervasive assumption that telecollaborative interaction will necessarily and unproblematically afford language learning (e.g. Kramsch and Thorne, to appear). Drawing on social realism (Layder, 1993), a sociological theory which emphasizes the inter-relationship between structure, i.e. society and institution, and agency, i.e. situated activity and psycho-biography, in researching and explaining social action, I present a sociocultural account of German-American telecollaboration. In particular, I explore the meanings that the macro features of (1) language valuation (Hilgendorf, 1996); (2) membership in electronic discourse communities (Gee, 1999); and (3) culturally determined classroom scripts (Hatch, 1992) may have for the differential functionality of virtual group work in this partnership. Differences in group functionality are reflected at the micro-interactional level in terms of (1) frequency and length of correspondence; (2) patterns of discursive behavior such as question-answer pairs; and (3) opportunities for assisted L2 performance and negotiation of meaning. Ethnographic data (e.g. interviews, electronic and classroom discourse, surveys and participant observations) on individual psycho-biographies are interwoven with macro-level descriptions and statistics to paint a rich picture of learner behavior in intercultural telecollaboration. This project 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 for the German component.

Description:
This article submitted to IUPUI ScholarWorks as part of the OASIS Project. Article reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission. Permission granted through posted policies on copyright owner’s website or through direct contact with copyright owner.
Institutional and individual dimensions of transatlantic group work in network-based language teaching. ReCALL, 13(2), 213-231. Brown, M., Castellano, J., Hughes, E., & Worth, A. (2012). Computer applications in second language acquisition: Foundations for teaching, testing and research. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Chen, X.-B., (2013). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as the ‘Communicative Approach’. Task-based language learning, a more recent refinement of CLT, has gained considerably in popularity. Shortcomings of structuralism and behaviorism. Discourse competence: refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and how meaning is represented in relation to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence: refers to the coping strategies that participants use to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication. Network-based language teaching. Introduction. Over the past 20 years, computer networks have introduced unprecedented opportunities for language learners to access and publish texts and multimedia materials and to communicate in new ways within and beyond the classroom. Whereas computer-assisted language learning (CALL) refers broadly to a wide range of applications (e.g., tutorials, texts). Work in this area will not only influence how we define language learning in general, but also how we define key concepts such as communicative competence, and how we frame online pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Third, expanded research will be needed on the relationship between form-focused in-class activities and online collaborations whose pri