

Introduction:

Internet-mediated Intercultural Foreign Language Education and the Intercultural Speaker

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Despite what our political and corporate leaders want us to believe, the educational bridge to the 21st century will not ultimately be found in the ever-increasing technological cleverness of school graduates. The quality of life in the new millennium will depend much more on the capacity of human beings to find ways to resist the draw of victimizing and brutalizing others, and the seduction of joining those who build their sense of identity and value on the indignity of others (Shapiro 2002, p. 64).

Internet-mediation and the Intercultural Perspective in Foreign Language Education

When we first began work on this volume, it became clear to us that there was the potential for its purpose to be misconstrued as an explication of the use of technology and, more specifically, the Internet, in foreign language (FL) learning and teaching. This is a reasonable conclusion, of course, because the adjective “Internet-mediated” occurs in its title as a modifier of the phrase “foreign language education.” Such a perception might be supported further by the fact that an engagement with technology seems to permeate contemporary foreign language education (FLE) with respect to pedagogy, curricular design, and research (e.g., Beatty 2003; Chapelle 2003; Fotos and Browne 2004; Levy 1997; Muyskens 1997; Warschauer 1996a; Warschauer and Kern 2000). These three areas of inquiry have been at the heart of the professional mission of the *American Association of University Supervisors, Coordinators, and Directors of Foreign Language Programs* since its inception in 1980.

The stated present-day preoccupation of FLE with technology is evidenced by the number of publications focusing on technology-related research and pedagogy in generalist journals in our field such as *The Modern Language Journal* and *Applied Linguistics*, the existence of specialist journals devoted to issues of technology and language learning (e.g., *CALICO Journal*, *Language Learning & Technology*, *ReCALL*, and *System: An International Journal of Educational Technology and Applied Linguistics*), the high number of conference presentations and symposia in which technology constitutes a key component, the ubiquity of required coursework on technology and language teaching in many

graduate degree programs in the FLs and applied linguistics, as well as the sheer volume of recently coined terms and acronyms to index the intersection of technology and language learning (e.g., computer-assisted language learning [CALL], technology-enhanced language learning [TELL], network-based language teaching [NBLT], networked collaborative interaction [NCI], tandem learning, and telecollaboration, to provide only a partial list).

The attention paid to technology in FLE circles and in education in general (e.g., Cuban 2001; Cummins and Sayers 1995; Tomei 2003) is derivative of the attention that it attracts, for better or for worse, in other facets of modern life, where it has been heralded variously (and oppositionally) as the democratizing force *par excellence*; the hemlock of higher education; the new mediator of human identity and social activity; the death of meaningful human relations; one of the primary tools advancing socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural globalization; and the medium that enables resistance to the crushing forces of global capital toward convergence (see, for example, Brabazon 2002; Brennan 2003; Cameron and Block 2002; Castells 1996; Feenberg 2002; Hiltz and Turoff 1993; Lanham 1993; Rheingold 1993; Sproull and Kiesler 1991; Tella 1996; Turkle 1984, 1997; Warschauer 1996b).

As pervasive and alluring as the role of technology in FLE might be, we do not view the adjective “Internet-mediated” to be the most important word in the title of this volume and, correspondingly, this volume is not primarily about the use of technology in FL learning and teaching. Instead, the emphasis for us lies on the adjective “intercultural” and the potential for FLE to serve as a site for the complexification of the self on linguistic, social, cultural, and ethical planes through lived experiences of communicative interaction with persons from other cultures in both additional and native languages. As a result, Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education (ICFLE) fundamentally is predicated on what Istvan Kecskes (2004), in the inaugural editorial of *Intercultural Pragmatics*, refers to as the “intercultural perspective.” Language-related inquiry from the intercultural perspective takes the phenomenon of intercultural communication (Scollon and Scollon 2001a) as its primary object of investigation. *Intercultural* communication differs from *cross-cultural* communication in that the latter “is usually considered a study of a particular idea(s) or concept(s) within several cultures that compares one culture to another on the aspect of interest, [while the former] focuses on interactions among people from different cultures” (Kecskes 2004, pp. 1–2). Scollon and Scollon further observe that intercultural communication involves “the study of distinct cultural or other groups *in interaction with one another*” (italics in the original). In the cross-cultural paradigm, on the other hand, “the members of the distinct groups do not interact with each other . . . but are studied as separate and separable entities” (2001b, p. 539).

There are two analogies to be drawn here. The first regards the similarity of cross-cultural communication and traditional classroom-based FL instruction where learners study the language and the culture of a different group but typically do not interact with members of that group during instructional periods. The second analogy concerns the parallels between intercultural communication in general and ICFLE in particular where interaction with members of the studied

culture forms the leading classroom activity. Just as the intercultural perspective on communication brings “a multilingual angle into . . . overwhelmingly monolingual research paradigms,” directs special attention to the “dynamic nature of meaning and culture,” and investigates “the construction of culture by interactants with different national, ethnic, and racial backgrounds” (Kecskes 2004, p. 2), the linkage of different cultural groups in ICFLE shifts the focus of tutored FLE away from monolingual norms (Firth and Wagner 1997), static depictions of culture, and monolithic target-language identities (Davies 2003) toward the quotidian realities of multilingualism (Belz 2002a; Blyth 1995; Danet and Herring 2003) and the multiplicity of meaning and identity (Norton 2000; Rampton 1990, 1995).

As the above discussion makes clear, the hallmark of ICFLE, as defined in this volume, is the inclusion of living, breathing human representatives of the languages and cultures under study in classroom-based FL instruction (Kinginger 2004, p. 103). The Internet serves as the mediator of this inclusive process, but it is not the object of investigation *per se*; instead, it is the means by which educators may bring together those who represent various national, ethnic, socio-economic, social class, and faith-based viewpoints via classroom practices generally termed “telecollaborative” in a supportive environment and in pedagogically sound ways to develop what Byram (1997) has described as “intercultural competence” (see also Ager, Muskens, and Wright 1993; Bausch, Christ, and Krumm 1997; Bennett 1998; Corbett 2003; Freinet 1992; Kramersch 1993) as well as grammatical and pragmatic FL competencies.

To repeat a definition that by now has been learned by rote by many FL educators, particularly those who regard FLE as a curricular pillar of the humanistic tradition, Byram characterizes intercultural competence (IC) as “a readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others’ meanings, beliefs and behaviours” and as a “willingness to suspend belief in one’s own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging” (1997, p. 34; see Müller-Hartmann, this volume, for a more detailed explication of Byram’s formulation of IC). Byram likens this process to the ability to decenter, an advanced aspect of psychological development, which is necessary for understanding other cultures and may culminate in the dismantling of an individual’s “preceding structure of subjective reality and [its reconstruction] according to new norms” (1997, p. 34). As is evident in this focus on culture, identity, behavior, and meaning, Byram does not view the development of FL linguistic competence as the sole or, indeed, as the most important outcome of FLE, although he does refer to such development as “central” (p. 22). Instead, Byram argues that “the more desirable outcome [of FLE] is a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviors and meanings . . . and those of their interlocutors” (1997, p. 12).

A person who possesses such abilities is referred to as an “intercultural” or sometimes “multicompetent” speaker (Belz 2002a; Cook 1992). According to Kramersch (1998, pp. 27–30), a pedagogy of the intercultural speaker in FL classrooms would involve efforts to make classroom discourse itself more explicitly intercultural by identifying and examining the various social and cultural voices

present in the class (see Belz, this volume, for a discussion of varying social class backgrounds in the classroom) or by capitalizing on the multiple languages that may be present in the FL classroom (Belz 2003; Blyth 1995). Kramsch further explains that “an increase in the quantity and quality of contacts between learners across national borders through student exchanges” (1998, p. 25) can result in a FL pedagogy wherein intercultural competence is fostered. Although Kramsch does not explicitly mention the role of Internet-mediated contacts in the implementation of an intercultural pedagogy, the essays in this volume (as well as other studies on telecollaboration) amply demonstrate their potential to contribute to the goals of intercultural education (e.g., Conelios and Oliva 1993; Donath and Volkmer 1997; Eck, Legenhausen, and Wolff 1995; Fischer 1998; Kern 1996, 1998; Kinginger, Gourvés-Hayward, and Simpson 1999; Tella 1991), particularly for persons living in more culturally and ethnically homogenous regions, who may otherwise have limited opportunities to participate in prolonged intercultural communication.

In ideologically monolingual cultures (see Train, this volume), where educational achievement is often measured in terms of the obtainment of skills and the possession of facts and figures, there is the danger that the development of the interpretive expertise characteristic of the intercultural or multicompetent speaker may be underappreciated or, worse yet, overlooked as an educational and/or life goal. In such contexts, intercultural speakers may be misunderstood, devalued, marginalized, oppressed, or even despised, often by virtue of their membership in multiple communities, and as they move with artful poise and linguistic grace in the interstices and in the inlands of their own interpretive repertoires. Kramsch’s use of the word “privilege” (1998, p. 16) to index the state of being an intercultural speaker is an attempt to remedy this injustice, among other things.

Individual Contributions to the Volume

The chapters in this volume fall into three categories: 1) the pedagogy of ICFLE; 2) research on ICFLE; and 3) new developments in ICFLE. The volume is framed with opening and concluding chapters by Steven L. Thorne and Robert Train, respectively. In Chapter 1, which functions as a prologue, Thorne argues for the relevance of a shift from communicative competence to intercultural competence and outlines the role of ICFLE in this process. Aimed primarily at the concerns of FL instructors and language program directors, Thorne provides a detailed description of ICFLE pedagogical frameworks, a select review of research, and a discussion of the cultural variability of Internet communication tools used to mediate ICFLE partnerships. In Chapter 9, which serves as an epilogue, Train offers a critical appraisal of the ways in which key ideologies of FLE, such as the Native Speaker and the Native Standard Language, are either reproduced or challenged in the telecollaborative partnerships reported here. Concrete examples from each chapter are examined with a view to creating meta-discursive awareness of the ideologies and conceptual metaphors that underpin both research and practice in Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education.

Above and beyond this organizational taxonomy, the chapters in this volume can be distinguished according to whether or not they investigate primarily the development of intercultural or linguistic competence in telecollaboration. In the chapters by Beth Bauer, Lynne deBenedette, Gilberte Furstenberg, Sabine Levet, and Shoggy Waryn (Chapter 2), Robert O'Dowd (Chapter 4), and Jeffrey Schneider and Silke von der Emde (Chapter 7), the primary emphasis lies on the development of intercultural competence. FL researchers and practitioners, however, have also recognized the potential of telecollaborative instruction for the development of linguistic and/or pragmatic competence (e.g., Belz and Vyatkina 2005; Kinginger 2000; Kinginger and Belz 2005). Studies in this vein generally vary according to the ways in which the native-speaking keypals and the process of intercultural communication itself are conceptualized. In those studies that espouse the interactionist hypothesis as their guiding theoretical framework, the foreign partners typically are conceptualized as L2 "input providers," while the action of Internet-mediated intercultural communication is seen as a cost-effective means for learners to obtain exposure to comprehensible input that, in turn, can provide opportunities for the negotiation of ideational meaning and the subsequent acquisition of L2 structures. In contrast, the foreign partner is generally understood as a person embedded in particular socio-historical contexts and settings who exercises agency for specific, personally meaningful reasons, while the electronic interactions in which they engage are viewed as dynamic sites for the interpersonal construction and contestation of identity in and through language in those investigations that are underpinned by sociocultural, semiotic, or linguistically critical theoretical commitments. The contributions to this volume that focus on the ways in which ICFLE affords linguistic or pragmatic development, Dussias (Chapter 5), Lee (Chapter 6) and Belz (Chapter 8), span the range of theoretical possibilities described above.

Bauer *et al.* (Chapter 2) provide an updated report on the *Cultura* Project, one of the most widely recognized and exemplary pedagogical projects incorporating telecollaborative practices for the purposes of ICFLE. *Cultura* is based on the premise that FL students can and should develop critical perceptions of both their own as well as another's culture through the structured juxtaposition of texts and images, the creation and interrogation of lexical and semantic networks, and the sharing of interpretations of these data by participants in intercultural exchanges. The authors detail the development of the project since its start in French language courses at the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* in 1997 to include new techniques and technologies, additional institutions, new topics and issues, and the instruction of less commonly taught languages. In particular, Bauer and her colleagues describe the adaptation of the principles and techniques of *Cultura* to two new socio-institutional settings: 1) a Russian-English exchange between intermediate students of English at the *University of Petrozavodsk* in Russia and second and third-year students of Russian at *Brown University*; and 2) a Spanish-English exchange between third-year students of English enrolled in a course called "Intercultural Comparisons" at the *Universidad de las Américas* in Puebla, Mexico, and third-year students of Spanish in a course on Hispanic Populations in the United States also at *Brown University*. While the Russian-American

exchange illustrates the pressures of the digital divide and the operation of socio-institutional constraints on the execution of a specific intercultural collaboration, the Mexican-American partnership highlights how a *Cultura*-based pedagogy can foster an increasingly complex sense of national identities and cultural heterogeneity in language learners. Because the authors focus explicitly on the challenges associated with the expansion of the project to new institutions and languages, the chapter provides practical advice as well as instructional inspiration for FL teachers, language program directors, and other administrators who are contemplating involvement with ICFLE.

Andreas Müller-Hartmann (Chapter 3) is also concerned with the development of intercultural competence via telecollaborative activity. His contribution to the volume is unique, however, in that it examines the potential of Internet-mediated intercultural language and culture learning partnerships to foster IC in pre- and in-service FL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers rather than in language students (see also Fuchs 2005). Relying on an empirically robust data set of five years of German-American telecollaborative exchanges between the *Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg* in Germany and *The Pennsylvania State University* in the United States, Müller-Hartmann demonstrates how the processes of reflective practice and model learning contribute to the construction of teacher knowledge bases with respect to critical media literacy, the design, execution, and management of international telecollaboration projects, and the development of intercultural competence via participation in such projects. Qualitative evidence for student-teachers' emerging knowledge bases in these areas is found in the pages of their cumulative course portfolios, in retrospective interviews and surveys, and in the micro-interactional details of their electronic interactions. Müller-Hartmann's description of his two-tiered instructional configuration involving a transatlantic pairing of two graduate-level teacher education/applied linguistics seminars, the members of which observed and discussed the intercultural interactions of a second pair of undergraduate language courses as they engaged in telecollaborative activities, will be of particular interest to those language program directors who wish to integrate technology-enhanced experiential intercultural learning into their FL teacher education programs.

Robert O'Dowd (Chapter 4) explores the use of "hands-on" ethnographic protocols by students in telecollaboration as a means of developing intercultural competence, including the operation of the skills of discovery in real time. Third-year English students at the *University of Essen* in Germany and undergraduate students in a Communication Studies course at the *University of Columbus* in Ohio received training in the use of typical ethnographic interviewing techniques such as descriptive or grand tour questions and creative listening. These techniques were later utilized by the same students in classroom-based interactions with their foreign keypals in the media of both e-mail and videoconferencing in order to construct thick descriptions of their keypals' culture from an *emic*, or insider's, perspective. O'Dowd's project is of import to the field of ICFLE because it is one of the few studies in which the influence of both text and image-based Internet communication tools is examined. In addition, the stipulation that project participants maintain an ethnographic stance in their intercultural interactions raises

important questions about both the possibility and desirability of “objective talk” and “neutral observation” in intercultural communication, and their relationship to the development of critical cultural awareness. Drawing on richly detailed excerpts from videoconference transcripts, the chapter provides practicing FL teachers with valuable information on the pedagogy of intercultural videoconferencing in FLE.

In Chapter 5, Paola E. Dussias asks whether text-based, Internet-mediated intercultural communication has measurable consequences for the development of face-to-face oral communication. She compares two sets of L2 learners, all enrolled in fourth-semester university-level Spanish courses, but who were assigned to either an experimental group that engaged in an ICFLE partnership with native speakers in Spain or to a control group that also participated in Internet-mediated activity but with one another in intra-class electronic discussions. Both groups engaged in synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) interaction. The focus of the study is a comparative linguistic analysis carried out on transcriptions of pre- and post-semester ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews. Her findings indicate that relative to learners in the control group, students in the experimental group demonstrated an increased capacity to attend to linguistic form, such as control over the use of overt-null subjects in Spanish, a finding that Dussias associates with awareness of NS discourse strategies made possible by the intercultural CMC discussions. Another student showed significant decreases in hesitations, pauses, and lexical interference from his L1 (English). While expressing caution about generalizing these findings to other populations of learners, her conclusion is that the experimental group benefited from the NS-NNS interactions and that language learning mediated by the use of synchronous and asynchronous Internet communication tools appears to readily transfer to spontaneous oral language production.

Working within the well-established tradition of the interactionist approach to Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Lina Lee (Chapter 6) reports on a study of networked collaborative interaction (NCI) that examined the relationships among error type, feedback types, and responses in synchronous communication between native teachers and nonnative speakers of Spanish. The participants engaged one another using two tasks—an open-ended question and a goal-oriented activity. Confirming the results of other studies, Lee found that for both the NS and NNS groups, lexical rather than syntactical errors were the main triggers for negotiation moves. Differences between the groups included the proportional use of particular moves, in particular that the NS group exhibited the strong tendency to provide corrective feedback using recasts. The NS use of recasts was successful in focusing the NNSs’ attention to errors in form as indicated by the high rate of NNS repairs. Lee notes that CMC provides a form of “written visual communication” that may have also facilitated the NNS response to corrective feedback. Her conclusions are that NCI empowers learners to become active and effective language users, supports a variety of interaction types, and promotes negotiation of meaning.

Jeffrey Schneider and Silke von der Emde (Chapter 7) address the issue of conflict emerging within intercultural partnerships. The participants in the study were students participating in what has been a long-standing exchange between

the German Studies Department at *Vassar College* and the English Department at *Universität Münster*. Synchronous interactions were carried out using a German-English MOO called *MOOssiggang*, based at *Vassar*. The topic for the exchange was to discuss two school shootings, one at *Columbine High School* in Littleton, Colorado, and the other in Germany at the *Johannes Gutenberg Gymnasium* in Erfurt. A significant conflict occurred during their interactions. In response, rather than proposing strategies to either deal with or avoid conflict, Schnieder and von der Emde report on the development of a dialogic paradigm that reframes the tensions of intercultural communication as valuable sites for intercultural exploration and learning. As part of their approach, they suggest a shift away from the term *communication*, encumbered by its long association with communicative language teaching, and toward the Bakhtinian conception of dialogue, which characterizes language not as a unified system or resource for maintaining *status quo* semantics, but as a site of struggle. Their approach also involves situating telecollaborative partnerships in explicitly academic discourse that includes having students read ICFLE research. A student in their course reported that the academic framing of the interpersonally challenging intercultural tensions provided her with conceptual tools to better understand the situation. Schnieder and von der Emde conclude that building intercultural knowledge helps ensure that students continue to learn about the language and culture they are studying, even in the face of conflict.

Julie A. Belz (Chapter 8) presents one of the very first discussions of the ways in which ICFLE and contrastive learner corpus analysis mutually inform one another with respect to the data-driven development of L2 linguistic/pragmatic competence and critical language awareness. In her essay, Belz introduces the 1-million-word *Telecollaborative Learner Corpus of English and German* or *Telekorp*, a bilingual contrastive learner corpus of diachronic, Internet-mediated, NS-NNS interactions with built-in NS control corpora. *Telekorp* was constructed using the process data produced by more than 200 learners who participated in German-American telecollaborative partnerships between the *Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg* and *The Pennsylvania State University* from 2000 to 2005. Based on learner and NS concordance lines extracted from *Telekorp*, Belz demonstrates how FL teachers can capitalize on the blended quality of telecollaborative pedagogy in conjunction with the results of contrastive learner corpus analysis to convey an understanding of L2 competence that is rooted in frequency of use as well as grammatical accuracy, to construct quantitative profiles of learners' linguistic development over time, and to design individualized, corpus-based pedagogical interventions for underused or misused features. The results of two such pedagogical interventions are discussed for the focal learner in the study with regard to her socio-cultural history as ascertained via an array of ethnographic data, also archived in *Telekorp*. One of the most important points in this chapter is the fact that *Telekorp* provides a longitudinal, quantitative look at individual learner's L2 development (see Ortega and Iberri-Shea 2005) since telecollaborative partnerships typically span two to three months and the entirety of all telecollaborative interactions have been archived in the corpus.

Underexplored Aspects of Internet-mediated Intercultural Foreign Language Education

Despite the fact that a great deal of attention has been paid to ICFLE from both pedagogical and theoretical perspectives, many areas remain underexplored, while other aspects are unexplored. In this section, we provide a brief and selective discussion of some of the more neglected areas in an effort to encourage future investigation.

Intercultural Tensions in ICFLE

At the outset of research on ICFLE, researchers and practitioners in FLE seemed to imagine that language learners would benefit unconditionally and automatically from contact with NSs, if we could just get them together. More recently, FL researchers and practitioners have recognized and documented the fact that ICFLE is not without its challenges (e.g., Belz 2001, 2005; Ware 2005), especially in text-based media bereft of paralinguistic meaning signals, just as researchers in intergroup contact, sociology, and conflict resolution have discovered time and time again that simply “getting people together does not work” (Tal-Or, Boninger, and Gleicher 2002, p. 89; see also Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998).

In response to the occurrence of intergroup tension in ICFLE, Schneider and von der Emde (this volume) recommend a dialogic telecollaborative pedagogy in which one should “teach the conflicts.” However, in the current geopolitical climate, it may be more productive to spin the enterprise of ICFLE in terms of “capitalizing on the rich points” (Belz 2005, p. 29). Lakoff (2004) reminds us of the importance of choosing the right metaphors in his discussion of the discursive framing of the 2004 U.S. presidential race. As the consumerization of the academy increases, administrators may be reluctant to schedule those courses that they perceive to be predicated on confrontation, not least of all because they are under institutional pressures to achieve “customer satisfaction” in their units. In any case, more research is called for on the types of tensions that arise in ICFLE, the ways in which such “sweet” or perhaps “sour” tensions may facilitate or impede learner development, and on the outcomes of a telecollaborative pedagogy that takes “conflicts” or “rich points,” as the case may be, as a point of departure.

Less Commonly Taught Languages

Aside from the discussion of Russian in Bauer *et al.* (Chapter 2), there are no partnerships involving less commonly taught languages reported in this volume, despite the fact that such studies constituted the number-two item in our 12-point call for papers. There is, however, an emerging body of literature on Japanese-English ICFLE in which researchers focus on the development of grammatical (Azuma 2003; Chapman 1997), pragmatic (Gray and Stockwell 1998), and “cultural” competence (Itakura 2004; Stockwell and Stockwell 2003; Torii-Williams 2004) as well as a few publications involving other less commonly taught languages (e.g., Chung, Graves, Wesche, and Barfurth 2005; Meskill and

Rangelova 2000; Sakar 2001). A forward-looking study by Vick, Crosby, and Ashworth on Japanese-American interactions using chat, *CUSeeMe*, and *Cooltalk* has as its goal the “development of advanced oral and written communication skills in Japanese” for non-Japanese participants and the “cultivation of a sense of international citizenship” for Japanese participants (2000, p. 204; see also Osler and Starkey 2005; Penttilä 2005; Starkey 2005). Nevertheless, the majority of ICFLE studies on less commonly taught languages seem to connect members of what Phillipson (1992) terms core English-speaking countries with members of periphery English-speaking countries. We feel that dialogue between all types of groups is valuable and potentially transformative and call for increased implementation and investigation of telecollaborative partnerships involving other less commonly taught languages (e.g., Arabic), interactions between periphery English-speaking groups, and interactions that do not involve English at all (e.g., a Hebrew-Arabic exchange).

Peace educators Tal-Or, Boninger, and Gleicher (2002, pp. 103–105) describe a program of contact encounters between Israeli Jews, Palestinians, and Jordanians called the *NIR School of the Heart* in which 60 high school students (20 from each group), all interested in medicine, met for a two-week period in Israel and Jordan (one week in each location) and used English to collaborate with one another on health-related projects. In addition to the mastery of specific content, one of the goals of the project was to foster intercultural understanding and to reduce prejudice and stereotypes through contact (Kadushin and Livert 2002). “Unfortunately,” the authors write, “the program is faced with enormous obstacles because the supportive environment in which it once existed has fallen apart . . . unrest has again returned to the area, leading to a breakdown in the peace process and a nearly complete loss of public enthusiasm for programs such as this one” (2002, p. 105). Internet-mediated intercultural communication may be a less threatening and less risky way forward for the *NIR School of the Heart* for the time being.

At the time of this writing, Nancy Kerranen at the *Universidad Iberoamericana* in Puebla, Mexico, and Yasemin Bayyurt at *Bosphorus (Boğaziçi) University* in Istanbul, Turkey, are experimenting with telecollaborative interaction in English among pre-service English teachers and adult learners of English in a course on intercultural communication, respectively. We proffer that such partnerships foster intercultural competence in the teachers who guide them as well as in the learners. Nader Morkus is in the process of designing and implementing synchronous and asynchronous collaborations between American students of Arabic at the *University of South Florida* and Egyptian learners of English at the *Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport* in Alexandria, Egypt. In Morkus’ exchanges, keypals answer online surveys (see Furstenberg, Levet, English, and Maillot 2001) that are designed to throw into relief important intercultural “rich points” (Agar 1994; see Thorne, this volume) such as dress, marriage, care of the elderly, and hospitality. While these efforts and others like them begin to push the boundaries of research on Internet-mediated intercultural interaction in new directions, further research in other contexts, using new and innovative configurations (see the two-tiered exchange reported in Müller-Hartmann, this volume) and new and emerging technologies (Thorne and Payne 2005) are required.

Critical Perspectives on Technology Use in ICFLE

Technology is not neutral; technologies and our uses of them are positioned by discursive, cultural, economic, and geographical systems of power (van Dijk 2005; Warschauer 2003). In this sense, global communication technologies are cultural artifacts that are produced by and productive of socio-historically located subjects. As a result, Internet information and communication tools accrue significance, value, and robust patterns of preferred and dis-preferred uses from the human activities they mediate and the meanings that communities create through them (see Kramsch and Thorne 2002). While Internet communication tools carry the historical residua of their use across time, patterns of past use do not determine present and future activity, just as nation-state affiliation, gender, or social class do not determine present and future activity. Rather, the cultures-of-use framework provides another axis along which to perceive and address intercultural variation and similarity (Thorne, this volume). When cultures-of-use do not align minimally, workable levels of intersubjectivity may be difficult to achieve in ICFLE. The reciprocal, however, is also possible, where proficiency with a digital vernacular, perhaps only at the level of style and affect, may form a bridge to support initial and then continuing interaction that could lead to the development of additional communicative repertoires. To date, relatively little work has been done on cultures-of-use of Internet information and communication tools and the ways in which varying cultures-of-use may influence the stated goals of ICFLE (e.g., Thorne 2000, 2003, 2005).

Socio-institutional Affordances and Constraints Operative in ICFLE

To date, research on ICFLE has revealed that the varying socio-institutional affordances and constraints operative on each end of an exchange will exert an influence on the ways in which the partnership is executed and on the ways in which learners react to the words and behaviors of their keypals (e.g., Belz 2002b; O'Dowd 2005). Scholars have explored the influence of such diverse factors as technological know-how, institutional layout, technological access, and societal valuations of particular FLs on the processes of ICFLE at the micro-interactional level from the perspectives of both the learners and the teachers. These explorations have occurred in a limited range of contexts for a limited range of languages, however. Further investigations of additional contexts, settings, and learning configurations are needed in order to ascertain best practices for a pedagogy of the intercultural speaker.

Persistent Records of ICFLE

A significant problem with the teaching of culture is that its more visible aspects, such as overt behaviors, material culture, and special events, while interesting and important, may require only modest explication or mediation to notice and potentially appreciate. On the other hand, the historically structured resources (i.e., culture) that inform everyday communication can remain difficult to access without the adequate time and perhaps also the expert assistance necessary for reflection. This is especially the case for face-to-face encounters.

Computer-mediated communication, on the other hand, provides a number of affordances in this area because most CMC environments produce a digital record that has been described as the “scriptialization of speech” (Sandbothe 1998, no pag.) or as “persistent conversation” (Erickson 1999).

The persistence of (relatively) spontaneous language production is useful for FL learning on at least two levels. The first is the immediate re-representation of a message that has been typed and submitted to a synchronous or asynchronous forum. A second and more profound level of persistence is that transcripts can be intensively studied after the fact. If we understand language use as a form of social action (Heritage 1984), computer-mediated communication makes these actions visible and durative. This opens up significant opportunities for reflection and analysis that would otherwise not be possible. Nevertheless, the persistent quality of CMC and the opportunities that it may afford for meta-pragmatic awareness over traditional forms of classroom-based FL instruction is an area that begs for more elucidation (see Belz, this volume).

The Negotiation of Language and Identity in ICFLE

One of the primary praxiological issues that teachers and learners in ICFLE must resolve is when to use what language and for what purposes in the course of Internet-mediated interactions with foreign keypals. Some researchers have ascribed a “deficiency” interpretation to the use of the L1 by learners in telecollaboration (see Train, this volume, for discussion); others have explicitly advocated L1 use in order to provide keypals with “accurate” models of the languages they are studying (see Bauer *et al.*, this volume). To a large extent, however, researchers have not investigated the electronic discourse of ICFLE partnerships from the sociolinguistic, sociological, and social psychological perspectives of code-switching and bi-/multilingualism in which the relationship between language choice and speaker identity often takes center stage, although some studies are beginning to emerge (e.g., Kötter 2003; Lam 2003, 2004; Thomas, Liao, and Szustak 2005). Communication researchers are also beginning to investigate the multilingual nature of the Internet in general (Danet and Herring 2003), the processes of language selection in bi-/multilingual Internet-mediated communities, and the relationship of language choice and (group) identity in Internet-mediated communities (e.g., Paolillo 2001). In ICFLE, some researchers have also examined the ways in which medium-contingent aspects of CMC as well as the non-traditional nature of telecollaborative classrooms may encourage learners to engage in creative and innovative forms of electronically mediated, multilingual language play (Belz and Reinhardt 2004). The digital and persistent nature of CMC in general in conjunction with the inherently bi-/multilingual nature of FLE in particular (i.e. speakers of at least one language learning another language) make ICFLE a research site par excellence for the investigation of multiple language use and its relationship to issues of identity and self-presentation (in text). The recent compilation of meticulously archived corpora of bilingual telecollaborative discourse (see Belz, this volume) represent an invaluable (and largely unprecedented) resource for the exploration of code-switching (from both functional and syntactic perspectives) and multiple language use in Internet-mediated environments, especially if the

electronic communication has been archived in association with a number of learner variables. We envision the investigation of multiple language use and its relationship to issues of identity to be an area of robust future research in ICFLE.

Blended Instruction and ICFLE

The persistent quality of Internet-mediated interaction has much to offer in the service of the meta-pragmatic, meta-discursive, and linguistically critical goals of ICFLE in the form of blended instruction (see Belz, this volume). In its essence, blended instruction involves the integration of technology-mediated teaching with traditional forms of instruction such face-to-face discussion. To date, very little research has been conducted on the interplay of technology-mediated and non-technology-mediated instruction and the relationship of various configurations to learner development (e.g., Schulz 2000). This is an area that is ripe for further exploration, particularly with respect to the development of pragmatic competence.

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