NEGOTIATING CONTRADICTIONS IN A JAPANESE-AMERICAN
TELECOLLABORATION:
AN ACTIVITY THEORY ANALYSIS OF ONLINE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

by

TOMOE NISHIO
(Under the Direction of Linda Harklau)

ABSTRACT

Intercultural telecollaboration is increasingly recognized as a meaningful mode of second/foreign language teaching and learning. Yet despite positive experiences with tellecollaboration often reported in existing research, technology-based intercultural projects have also encountered problems and tensions at a number of levels. This dissertation documents and analyzes such problems in one telecollaborative project, and argues for closer attention to the complex emergence, development, and negotiation of tensions in situated online exchanges.

The study drew upon activity theory (Vygotsky, 1987; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) and its notion of contradictions—situated, historically accumulating tensions (Engeström, 2001) to analyze an eight-week telecollaborative project between 20 American learners of Japanese and 33 Japanese learners of English. Transpacific pairs of students participated in discussions on Google Hangouts and a series of supplemental tasks. Data comprised questionnaires, weekly journals, emails, essays, end-products, and individual interviews. A three-stage grounded theory data coding strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to identify major tensions.
Multidimensional analysis of tensions encountered in the telecollaboration project revealed two major contradictions: intra-institutional contradictions originating in learners’ pre-project assumptions and expectations, and inter-institutional contradictions that emerged during interaction. Major intra-institutional contradictions included learner anxiety about language proficiency, technological challenges experienced by some Japanese participants, and negative attitudes toward the project among Japanese participants. Inter-institutional contradictions, on the other hand, revealed gaps between institutions’ understandings of project requirements and procedures, division of responsibility for tasks, and tolerance for off-topic interactions. The study finds that each contradiction underwent unique emergence and negotiation that could be best understood in terms of broader interactions between institutions. It also emphasizes the multilevel emergence and negotiation of contradictions from the individual (e.g., learner motivation), to the classroom (e.g., local group dynamics), to the institution (e.g., language valuation, cultures of language learning, cultures of technology use), and to interactions (e.g., task orientation). The dissertation concludes with implications for theory and research on intercultural telecollaboration, and for effective implementation of future telecollaborative projects.

INDEX WORDS: Telecollaboration, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Contradictions, Interaction, Foreign Language Education, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL)
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TOMOE NISHIO

B.A., Nanzan University, Japan, 2004
B.A., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2005
M.A., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2008
M.A., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2011

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TOMOE NISHIO

Major Professor: Linda Harklau
Committee: Don McCreary
Ruth Harman

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2015
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Background of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Significance of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research Questions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research Design</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Structure of the Dissertation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research on Telecollaboration</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous Telecollaboration Research Informed by CHAT</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research Design</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pilot Study</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology .................................................................................................................. 34

Summary ......................................................................................................................... 51

4 FINDINGS ..................................................................................................................... 52

Intra-Institutional Contradictions .................................................................................. 52

Inter-Institutional Contradictions .................................................................................. 84

Summary ......................................................................................................................... 107

5 DISCUSSION .................................................................................................................. 108

Understanding Contradictions ...................................................................................... 109

Methodological Consideration ...................................................................................... 120

Pedagogical Implications .............................................................................................. 123

Directions for Future Research .................................................................................... 129

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 129

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................. 131

APPENDICES

A PRE-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH) .................................................. 142

B PRE-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (JAPANESE) ................................................. 149

C POST-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH) ................................................. 156

D POST-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (JAPANESE) .............................................. 166

E JOURNAL PROMPTS (1ST WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, ENGLISH) .......... 175

F JOURNAL PROMPTS (1ST WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, JAPANESE) .......... 176
G  JOURNAL PROMPTS (2\textsuperscript{ND} AND 3\textsuperscript{RD} WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, ENGLISH) ...........................................................................................................................................177

H  JOURNAL PROMPTS (2\textsuperscript{ND} AND 3\textsuperscript{RD} WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, JAPANESE)...........................................................................................................................................179

I  HANDOUT “PROJECT OVERVIEW” (ENGLISH) .................................................................................................................................181

J  HANDOUT “PROJECT OVERVIEW” (JAPANESE) .................................................................................................................................183

K  CONSENT FORM ..................................................................................................................................................................................185

L  HANDOUT “TECHNICAL WORKSHOP” (ENGLISH) .................................................................................................................................186

M  HANDOUT “TECHNICAL WORKSHOP” (JAPANESE) .................................................................................................................................187
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Overview of the intercultural project.................................................................37
Table 2: Overall procedure of the intercultural project ......................................................45
Table 3: Example of finalized categories and themes .........................................................49
Table 4: Comparison of pre-discussion questionnaire answers........................................74
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>The structure of a human activity system</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Kuutti’s model of an activity system for a software team programming a system</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>A model of interacting activity system</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Engeström’s example of contradictions in children’s medical care in Helsinki</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>A screenshot of a Google Group discussion</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>A screenshot of a Google Hangout on a computer</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>A screenshot of a Google Hangout on a mobile device</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Activity System 1: Ideal model of UGA-OUC telecollaboration activity system</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Comparison between ideal activity system and actual activity system</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>UGA activity system after SUB-TOOL contradiction of language skills was</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>OUC activity system after SUB-TOOL contradiction of language skills was</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Comparison between the ideal activity system and actual OUC activity system</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>OUC activity system after SUB-TOOL contradiction of technology was</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Comparison of two object configurations</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Negotiation of subject and object in OUC activity system</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 16: OUC activity system with SUB-TOOL contradiction and SUB-RULE contradiction .................................................................83

Figure 17: Toru’s activity system at the beginning ..........................................................................................................................86

Figure 18: Comparison between ideal activity system and Noriko’s activity system ......................................................90

Figure 19: Noriko’s activity system after negotiation of rules ........................................................................................................92

Figure 20: Nana’s activity system in the beginning ..........................................................................................................................94

Figure 21: Nana’s activity system after negotiation of division of labor ....................................................................................96

Figure 22: Comparison between Chris’ activity system and Yota’s activity system ..........................................................98

Figure 23: Comparison between rules of two activity systems ..............................................................................................106
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization where the flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses are intensified by technological innovations, the world seems to have become and is yet going to be smaller and more accessible via highly developed media and communication tools (Blommaert, 2010). In many developed countries with relatively small sociocultural and socioeconomic gaps one can easily communicate with someone across the globe at any time using a tool of his choosing among varieties of options at hand. The wave of globalized Internet-communication surely is full of new possibilities at all levels of our lives. In the field of language teaching and learning, it has expanded opportunities for exposure to foreign languages and cultures via diverse media, such as email, chatrooms, social networking sites, multiplayer online games, telecollaboration, and other communicative tools to date.

Background of the Problem

In spite of the contributions of globalization-driven technology over the last few decades and its future possibilities, it certainly comes with its own challenges: We have been facing how to deal with destabilizing norms (Kramsch, 2014). Before the wave of globalization, many language educators had adopted norms and conventions assuming the existence of nation-states with a clear boundary for languages and cultures, the existence of good language use shaped by standardized grammars and dictionaries, and the purity of a language only possible by its native speakers. With the mobility and accessibility brought into our lives in the name of globalization, these long-embraced assumptions have been challenged like they never have before. The
boundaries of languages and cultures have become fuzzier, and the definition of good language use and the purity of being native speakers have become irrelevant in the real world of heteroglossia and hybridity. As globalization has changed the nature of communication, language educators, whether they are aware of it or not, are facing an immediate need to reconceptualize what it means to know a language and thus what it means to learn and teach one.

Exploring appropriate pedagogy for current and future language learning first requires critical reflection on the relationship between technology and language use. It is widely known that technologically mediated communication is different from face-to-face interaction in many aspects (Blake, et al., 2008; Kern, 2014; Warschauer, 1996). Take an online video conference, for example. Compared to face-to-face interaction, video conferencing requires different kinds of physical settings (e.g., a computer, software, an account, etc.), spatial settings (e.g., talking to a camera instead of talking to a person), temporal settings (e.g., time difference), psychological settings (e.g., pressure, nervousness, etc.), and discourse settings (e.g., body language, turn-taking, etc.). Imagine the software produces a second or two lapse in getting one’s voice heard on the other side. One will probably feel uneasy initially about the awkward moment the seemingly small lapse creates but eventually will get used to it and come to consider it a normal discourse feature. With all the different settings dynamically interwoven, video conferencing creates a discourse that is distinct from a face-to-face meeting at a very fundamental level. In other words, these differences are so critical that one cannot simply add technological tools into an existing face-to-face interaction without changing communication norms (Wertsch, 2002).

Just like face-to-face interaction, technologically mediated communication is a complex communicative act in its own right. Technology mediates language use, communication, cultural expression, and social meaning, and it is the very mediation that shapes our interpretations of the
communicative acts (Kern, 2014). The notion of mediated action as formulated by Lev Vygotsky and post-Vygotskian scholars can help us to focus on multiple layers of technologically mediated communication, learning, and teaching. Vygotsky’s fundamental theoretical insight is that human mental activity is always mediated through interaction with artifacts, tools, and social others (Lantolf, 1994, 2006; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Applying this notion to technologically mediated communication, we can see that individual users’ (i.e., subjects’) cognitive development and consciousness always results from the relationship of the technological tools (i.e., artifacts), language (i.e., tools), and the people one is communicating with (i.e., social others) in the given context. Moreover, individuals not only engage in meaning-making processes in their own cognition but also play a part in the interaction. The relationship among individuals, artifacts, tools, and social others is never stable but is always subject to dynamic transformation. Despite how much simpler and more accessible our methods of communication seem to have become, technologically mediated communication per se is as complex as other modes of communication.

In an endeavor to teach a culture of global communication, many language educators and researchers have started implementing classroom-based intercultural learning experiences. One of the most common modes of language learning and teaching using technology is telecollaboration—“virtual intercultural interaction and exchange projects between classes of learners in geographically distant locations” (O’Dowd, 2013). A number of recent reports have focused on the learning outcomes via telecollaboration including intercultural competence (Belz, 2003; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003; Müller-Hartmann, 2000; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006; O’Dowd, 2006; Ware, 2005), linguistic development (Kinginger & Belz, 2005; Ware & O’Dowd, 2008), negotiation of meaning (Darhower, 2008), cooperation/camaraderie
construction (Darhower, 2007; Liaw, 2006), and electronic literacy (Hauck & Youngs, 2008). Telecollaboration has been variously interpreted in foreign language classrooms, but has usually been used as a peripheral, add-on activity (O’Dowd, 2013). O’Dowd & Ware (2009) identify 12 general types of telecollaboration task designs: authoring ‘cultural autobiographies,’ carrying out virtual interviews, engaging in informal discussion, exchanging story collections, comparing parallel texts, comparing class questionnaires, analyzing cultural products, translating, collaborating on product creation, transforming text genres, carrying out ‘closed outcome’ discussions, and making cultural translations/adaptations.

Statement of the Problem

Intercultural telecollaboration has been increasingly recognized as a meaningful mode of second and foreign language learning and teaching which allows learners to engage in complex online dialogues for intended learning outcomes. Yet despite some positive experiences reported in existing research, a considerable number of technology-based intercultural projects have encountered impediments and dysfunctions such as missed pedagogical intentions and linguistic aims, indifference and low levels of participation, tension among participants, or a negative evaluation of the project or the partner group and their culture (e.g., O’Dowd, 2000; Belz, 2002; Belz and Müller-Hartmann, 2003).

Until recently, research has not gone beyond a descriptive account of such breakdowns. However, scholars are beginning to recognize that more attention must be given to the complexity of interactions among individuals, socio-institutional settings, and socio-cultural contexts involved in telecollaboration (Belz, 2001, 2002; Darhower, 2007; O’Dowd, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007; Thorne, 2003; Thorne & Black, 2007; Ware, 2005). These studies are yielding as many outcomes as there are different contexts, suggesting that there is no single “effect” of
intercultural telecollaboration. Moreover, they have pointed out that notions of interaction, culture, identity, and literacy need to be carefully reappropriated in every context (Kern et al., 2004). Given that computer-mediated communication has never been more authentic as a communicative medium, recent scholarship suggests the need for telecollaborative language teaching to go beyond the traditional scopes of spoken forms of language in face-to-face communication and also expand students’ intercultural competence (Byram, 1997) online.

Because of its very characteristics of multi-facetedness and context-dependency, more studies on telecollaboration are needed to better understand its complex human activity as systematically as possible and to contribute to the successful implementation of future telecollaborative projects.

In addition, the vast majority of existing research on intercultural telecollaboration has been limited to Indo-European languages such as English (Liaw, 2006; Madyarov & Taef, 2012), Spanish (Darhower, 2007, 2008; O’Dowd, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2013; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006), and German (Belz, 2001; 2002; 2003, Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003; Müller-Hartmann, 2006; Schneider & von der Emde, 2006; Ware, 2005; Ware & Kramsch, 2005). There is little research on classrooms of less-commonly taught languages. Nevertheless, in the U.S. context, there were more than 155,000 learners of Japanese as of 2012 and the number has been increasing (The Japan Foundation, 2012). The increasing number of learners, however, does not mean they have enough exposure to Japanese speaking environments in their daily lives. Given the situation, it is especially important for learners of less commonly taught languages like Japanese to purposefully/actively cultivate intercultural competence to communicate with speakers of the target language. Thus, more telecollaboration-based studies of less-commonly taught language instruction are needed to help develop pedagogical foundations for authentic learning experiences.
Finally, there is little research on intercultural learning through telecollaboration in the Japanese context (Katagiri, 2009, 2012). Japan-based research on telecollaboration is still in its infancy, mainly comprising descriptive reports and quantitative studies on technological affordances of computer-mediated language learning, such as development of translation tools (Inaba et al., 2009; Ishida et al., 2012) and incorporation of technology into language classes (Sakamoto, 2006; Yogi, 2009). The field would benefit from more qualitative inquiries into intercultural telecollaboration to shed light on interaction, culture, and agency in language learning in Japan.

**Purpose of the Study**

Motivated by the problems above, this study explores challenges in an eight-week intercultural telecollaborative project between a Japanese as a foreign language course at the University of Georgia (UGA) and an English as a foreign language course at Otaru University of Commerce (OUC) in Hokkaido, Japan. I originally developed this partnership between UGA and OUC in collaboration with a colleague in Fall 2013 where we were both the teacher-researchers of these courses (Nishio, 2014). The present study explores a second student cohort’s experiences in the UGA-OUC telecollaboration which took place between September 2014 and January 2015.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand how challenges emerge over the course of a classroom-based telecollaboration project and how they are negotiated and transformed. Twenty UGA students and 33 OUC students participated in the study. Transpacific pairs made by the teacher-researchers were asked to engage in two written chat discussions, one in Japanese and the other in English, for three weeks each via Google Hangouts. In order to identify challenges and negotiations, this study employs a Vygotskyian activity systems analysis
(Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) for multidimensional analysis of chat logs, questionnaires, journals, and individual interviews.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is two-fold. First, this study contributes to the development of activity systems analysis of telecollaborative contradictions. Although activity theory has long been used to examine human activities and issues in various fields of social sciences, it is not until recently that scholars in language learning and teaching have started to apply activity theory to the analysis of challenges and negotiation in language classrooms. With recent activity theory-based research on telecollaboration (Antoniadou, 2011; Basharina, 2004, 2007; Ryder & Yamagata-Lynch, 2014), activity systems analysis has been increasingly recognized as a systematic method of analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This study continues and contributes to research using activity systems analysis as an efficient method of analyzing and illustrating challenges and negotiations.

Second, this study provides pedagogical implications for future telecollaborative projects. It exemplifies what intercultural telecollaboration can offer in language classrooms by showing how emerging challenges are negotiated, resolved (or not), and critically reflected upon. Furthermore, taking a broad perspective on intercultural telecollaboration as a meaningful environment for learning and teaching language and culture, this study provides a powerful way to show how contextual factors at the individual, classroom, institutional and societal level affect language learning via technology in ways beyond the pedagogical precautions language teachers can take.
Research Questions

Intercultural telecollaboration almost inherently comes with contradictory elements such as socio-institutional gaps, differing sociocultural backgrounds, and uneven technological distributions (Antoniadou, 2011; Basharina, 2007; Belz, 2002; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006). In the present study, I aim to not only explore collective, pedagogical challenges but also go deeper to examine more local, individual challenges that may occur on the personal level via intercultural encounters (e.g., misunderstanding a partner’s intention). Due to the open-ended nature of the telecollaborative project, a primary research inquiry was initially addressed:

- How are challenges negotiated in an American-Japanese intercultural telecollaborative project?

The present study used grounded theory methods for data collection and analysis. The principle of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and a three-stage coding strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were used in data analysis where connections of identified codes were made and overarching themes were developed. After careful three-stage analysis, two main research questions of this study along with sub-questions were set based on the identified themes as follows:

(1) What were major intra-institutional challenges and how did they emerge and develop?
   a. What challenges did OUC participants experience?
   b. What challenges did UGA participants experience?
   c. How did each challenge emerge and develop?
   d. How were the challenges negotiated and transformed?

(2) How did participants manage inter-institutional challenges?
a. What challenges did participants experience through interaction?

b. How did they emerge and develop?

c. How were the challenges negotiated and transformed?

In order to illuminate situated challenges, I draw on principles of activity theory and its notion of contradictions for the present study. Activity theory is a set of basic principles that constitute a general conceptual system called an activity system (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 1997). The structure of an activity system comprises subject, object, instruments, division of labor, community, rules, and outcome, and these components are interrelated to each other (Engeström, 1987). Contradictions are historically accumulating tensions, potentially serving as the driving force of change and development in activity systems (Engeström, 2001). In order to carefully examine emergent contradictions, the present study employed activity systems analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) which allows for multimodal analysis of the data. After careful and thorough analysis of data, findings were drawn to identify and explain challenges that arose in the students’ intercultural learning experiences.

Research Design

The present study is based on an 8-week intercultural telecollaborative project between 20 UGA students enrolled in a Japanese-language course and 33 OUC students enrolled in an English-language course in the Fall 2014 semester. The Japanese course was taught by the author while the English course was taught by my collaborator. The participants engaged in the project as a part of course requirements. The project included three phases: pre-discussion phase, discussion phase, and post-discussion phase. During the pre-discussion phase, the participants were introduced to the project, given detailed instructions, assigned one or two transpacific partners, asked to complete a pre-discussion questionnaire, and asked to film a self-introduction
video for the partner school. In the discussion phase, which lasted six weeks in October and November 2014, the participants were asked to participate in two three-week-long open-ended discussions, one in Japanese and the other in English, with their partners on the platform of Google Hangouts and keep weekly journals on their experiences. The participants were then asked to complete a post-discussion questionnaire and participate in an individual interview with the teacher-researcher of the institution. Moreover, the UGA participants were asked to compose two essays in Japanese, one based on the first discussion and the other based on the second one, while the OUC participants were asked to make a presentation video in groups of three to four people about what they learned via intercultural exchange.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive survey of previous studies on telecollaboration and my theoretical framework. I explore the historical development of telecollaboration, followed by the literature review on activity theory. I also present activity theory-based research on telecollaboration. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the present study. Chapter 4 presents study findings. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings reported in the previous chapter. Methodological consideration and pedagogical implications will also be offered.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Telecollaboration

Organized intercultural partnerships have opened up an avenue not only to developing pragmatic skills in the target language beyond classrooms but also to cultivating intercultural awareness between geographically dispersed language learners. Despite a number of reported successes (e.g., development of intercultural competence in Belz, 2003; negotiation of meaning in Darhower, 2008; cooperation/camaraderie construction in Darhower, 2007; Liaw, 2006; to name a few), many telecollaborative projects, including those that report success, have encountered a variety of emergent impediments and dysfunctions (e.g., Belz, 2001, 2002, 2003; Hauck & Youngs, 2008; Müller-Hartmann, 2006; O’Dowd, 2005, 2006, 2013; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006; Schneider & von der Emde, 2006; Ware, 2005; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

In the early rise of intercultural telecollaboration, Belz (2002) addressed socio-institutional dimensions that emerged in a telecollaboration between German students in a teacher education course at Justus-Liebig-Universität and American students of German at Pennsylvania State University. At the core of this project was the online transatlantic bilingual discussion and analysis of the assigned parallel texts in pairs, using both a synchronous communication tool of chatting and asynchronous email communication. Belz identified three major sociocultural gaps between the two groups: (1) the higher sociocultural and sociopolitical value of English than German as a second language, (2) a discrepancy in perceived proficiency in the respective target languages (i.e., “Germans can speak English better than Americans speak
German”), and (3) American students’ higher technological access and know-how than the Germans. In addition, she illustrated an institutional mismatch in course accreditation: intermittent high-stakes assessments in Germany versus frequent low-stakes assessments in the U.S. For example, German college students are required to take comprehensive examinations at various points in their university careers, while American universities rely on more content-specific homework and quizzes to evaluate students’ progress. According to Belz, this difference impacted each cultural group; American students felt frustrated because of the German students’ limited participation while German students blamed American students for not sharing their personal information and for having too much focus on the completion of the project rather than the quality of discussions. These findings suggest that intercultural telecollaboration is a multifaceted and multi-directional negotiation involving context, settings, situated activities, and self.

In another early study, O’Dowd (2005) also addressed sociocultural and institutional issues that arose in conducting a *Cultura*-based telecollaboration (Furstenberg et al., 2001) between American learners of Spanish at Barnard College and Spanish learners of English at the University of León. Through examining asynchronous bilingual discussions between the two transatlantic groups, O’Dowd not only illustrated the participants’ frustration caused by different institutional contexts and accessibility to technology, but also highlighted sociopolitical settings and stereotypes that affected the interactions between participants. For example, the local coverage of U.S. foreign policy in Spain at the time (i.e., the ongoing war in Iraq by the Bush administration) led Spanish students to have rather negative attitudes towards the U.S. in general, while American students lacked factual knowledge about Spain and relied on common stereotypes such as bull fighting to establish their attitudes about the country and its people.
Tensions can also originate at other levels besides the sociocultural and institutional levels. Ware (2005), for example, illustrated how individual differences in motivation and use of time impacted students’ experience in telecollaboration. Ware and Kramsch (2005) illustrated a dynamic emergence and development of intercultural misunderstandings between a German-American dyad caused by the multiple layers of contextual factors including different sociohistorical ideologies, pragmatic gaps, and teachers’ involvement. These studies shed light on intra-group or intra-personal dynamism in telecollaboration, allowing us to go beyond looking at preexisting cultural or institutional boundaries between two target groups to scrutiny of dynamic, multi-directional relationships between influential factors as well as multi-vocality within a given community.

Based on problems and issues in telecollaboration reported in the existing body of research, O’Dowd and Ritter (2006) identified ten factors for the success and failure of intercultural telecollaboration: (1) learner’s current level of intercultural competence, (2) learner’s motivation and expectations, (3) teacher-teacher relationships, (4) task design, (5) learner matching procedures, (6) local group dynamics, (7) pre-exchange briefings, (8) technology, (9) general organization of the course of study, and (10) prestige of target language and culture. O’Dowd and Ritter argue that these ten factors occur at four different levels: individual, classroom, socio-institutional, and interactional. By illustrating the factors that may lead to cases of failed communication in online exchange, O’Dowd and Ritter delineated how their complex and dynamic interactions impact the intended outcomes of telecollaboration.

Every learner, teacher, object, tool, rule, environment, and division of labor involved in a telecollaborative activity is configured in its own sociocultural, socioinstitutional, sociopolitical, and sociohistorical context. As pointed out by Kern et al. (2004), these previous studies suggest
that it is vital for language teachers incorporating intercultural telecollaboration in their classroom activities to ask themselves what successful participation means in different contexts and levels. This work also brings up the notion of culture-of-use (Thorne, 2003)—that the medium used in online intercultural encounters is not a neutral factor but differs across cultures. In addition, as teachers are never neutral and bring their own experiences, it is necessary for them to critically reflect on how they themselves should be involved in the telecollaborative projects.

**Theoretical Framework**

In the following sections, I will review the major theoretical framework, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). The notion of contradictions, a key concept in CHAT will also be illustrated.

**Cultural Historical Activity Theory**

Scholars such as Belz (2002) have long acknowledged the unique potential of activity theory for analyzing tensions in telecollaboration because of its viewpoint on change and development. Activity theory is rooted in the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1987) and was developed by more modern scholars such as Engeström (1987; 1993; 1999; 2000; 2001), often referred to as Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). It is a set of basic principles that constitute a general conceptual system called an activity system (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 1997), which serves as the unit of analysis in activity systems analysis. Activity systems analysis, developed by Engeström (1987), is one CHAT-based method designed to collectively capture situated human activity with a series of triangle diagrams of activity systems. The structure of an activity system comprises subject, object, instruments, division of labor, community, rules, and outcome, and these components are interrelated to each other.
This model (Figure 1) conceptualizes three mutual relationships between subject, object, and community (Kuutti, 1996). Engeström (1993) defines the concepts of subject, object, and community as follows:

- **Subject**: the individual or subgroup whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis
- **Object**: “raw material” or “problem space” at which the activity is directed and which is modeled or transformed into outcomes with the help of tools
- **Community**: multiple individuals and/or subgroups who share the same general object (p. 67).

The relationship between subject and object is mediated by instrument, the relationship between subject and community is mediated by rules, and the relationship between object and community is mediated by the division of labor. Kuutti (1996) defines the three mediators as follows:

- **Instruments**: anything used in the transformation process, including both material tools and mental ones
- **Rules**: both explicit and implicit norms, conventions, and social relations within a community
- **Division of labor**: the explicit and implicit organization of a community as related to the transformation process of the object into the outcome (p. 28).
Each component of this model is embedded in its own cultural, economic, and historical contexts and is subject to dynamic development. The model allows us to depict “a multitude of relations” (Engeström, 1987, p. 78) of the components within the structure of activity. However, the model must be understood as a dynamic systemic whole of an activity, not just in terms of separate connections (Engeström, 1987, 1999; Kuutti, 1996).

For example, Kuutti (1996, p. 29) illustrated a contemporary example of an activity: a software team programming a system for a client. The subject of this activity system is members of the software team, and the object is the not-yet-ready system to be transformed into a delivered, bug-free application. The community includes the team and some representatives of the customer. There is a certain division of labor: between manager and subordinates, between software developers and customer representatives, and between the team members. The members of the team share a set of rules covering what it means to be part of this community; Some are more explicit while others are more implicit, and some are pre-existing and others are emergent in the process of software development. In each step of the development of the new system, a variety of tools and instruments is used—for example, computers, programming tools, or analysis methods. Each of the components of this activity system has a history, and whatever emerges in the process is shaped by the context of the activity.
Recent iterations of CHAT have expanded Engeström’s model further to capture interaction of two (or more) activity systems (Engeström, 2001). In Figure 3 below, the object of each activity system transforms from its initial state to “a collectively meaningful object constructed by the activity system” (p. 136). The intersection of these two objects may produce a shared or jointly constructed object common to the two activity systems. This minimal model for the current state of CHAT not only depicts the interrelations between elements of an activity system but also introduces the relationship between multiple working systems to the picture.

Going back to Kuutti’s (1996) example, the activity system of the software team illustrated in Figure 2 is inherently interconnected with other activity systems. Kuutti further illustrated an activity system of the software company interacting with the software team (1996, p. 29). This activity system puts personnel with authority in the subject and its financial status in

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**Figure 2.** Kuutti’s (1996) model of an activity system for a software team programming a system

**Figure 3.** A model of interacting activity systems (Engeström, 2001, p. 136)
the object. Different tools and tricks are used by the personnel to keep the project within budget and profitable. The community consists of team managers and their superiors, and there is a certain division of labor and a certain set of rules that are different from that within the programming team. The objects of the two activity systems are not isolated from each other but are influenced by each other, creating a shared object of a profitable bug-free application within budget. We can also imagine that there are other ongoing activity systems around the software programming team, mutually influencing the object and the entire activity system.

Contradictions

According to Engeström (2001), there are five principles of CHAT used to analyze the systemic whole of an activity as well as relationships between multiple activity systems: (1) a collective, artifact-mediated and object-oriented activity system as a unit of analysis, (2) multi-voicedness of activity systems, (3) historicity of activity systems, (4) contradictions as sources of change and development, and (5) possibility of expansive transformations in activity systems (pp. 136-137). Human activities are directed toward objects or “objectives that give meaning to what people do” (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2006, p. 66), and each activity system reflects multiple points of view, traditions, and interests (Engeström, 2001). Furthermore, history needs to be considered at multiple levels of relationships, including a particular activity system and its components, the relationship between multiple activities, and their transformation and development. The transformation and development are triggered by so-called contradictions. Engeström (2001) carefully differentiates contradictions from the static, screenshot-like connotations of such terms as problems or conflicts and defines them as “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (p. 137). In Kuutti’s (1996) terms, contradiction is “a misfit within elements, between them, between different
activities, or between different developmental phases of a single activity” which manifests themselves as “problems, ruptures, breakdowns, clashes” (p. 34). Engeström (2000) illustrated an example of contradictions from studies of children’s medical care in Helsinki which reported costly gaps, overlaps, and discoordinations of care due to a large number of repeated disturbances. According to Engeström (2000), these disturbances were most prevalent among chronic patients who had multiple diagnoses or problems and would move between the primary care health center and hospitals. Figure 4 below shows three systemic contradictions identified by Engeström (2000) using the bold-face arrows.

**Figure 4.** Engeström’s (2000) example of contradictions in children’s medical care in Helsinki

The first contradiction (number 1) concerned a mismatch between the instruments and the object. This particular hospital officially used so-called critical pathways, a type of normative step-by-step guidelines for a given diagnosis, as the major instrument for treatment. The problem with the instrument is that it was based on the assumption that a patient has a single diagnosis. Hence it was insufficient in cases where patients had two or more diagnoses. The second contradiction (number 2) was between the rules of the hospital organization and the object. While the traditional rules emphasized that each physician was alone responsible for the care of his or her patients, the multi-problem patients would move among different care providers who did not collaborate across institutional boundaries. The third contradiction (number 3) was related to the
second; the division of labor in the hospital had traditionally emphasized solo performance of a physician, which turned out to be violated by the patients’ actions. As a result of these contradictions in the activity systems, there emerged troubles in the form of excessive number of visits, unclear loci of responsibility, and failure to inform other involved care providers of the practitioner’s diagnoses, actions, and plans.

Although the contradictions in Engeström’s examples above can be understood as disturbances, CHAT sees them not only as disturbing problems but also as a driving force of change and development (Engeström, 2001). In order for contradictions to trigger change, they have to become conscious or visible (Smolcic, 2013). That is, from the perspective of the individual subject, an important step to working towards change is to be able to locate and identify contradictions and then remove or resolve them (Smolcic, 2013, p. 80). Essentially, the capacity for change is alive in the details of everyday practices (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999), and activities are virtually always in the process of working through contradictions (Kuutti, 1996). The constant possibility of change and development through contradictions then may allow for long-term qualitative, expansive transformations of the previous forms of activity (Engeström, 2001).

**Previous Telecollaboration Research Informed by CHAT**

Vygotsky’s fundamental theoretical insight is that human mental activity is always mediated by symbolic tools in one’s biologically specified mental capacities (Lantolf, 1994, 2006; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Within the Vygotskyian framework, development involves actively resolving contradictions through a process of changes (Thorne, 2009). In one study drawing on Vygotskian perspectives, Madyarov and Taef (2012) reported emergent contradictions and transformations of activities by non-native English speaking students engaged
in a distance English-medium course on critical thinking at a university in Iran. They examined activity systems of six student participants and analyzed ethnographically collected data over the course period. They reported five of the six student participants had multiple activity systems motivated by multiple objects (e.g., improving English, learning critical thinking, intellectual self-development, etc.). The primary contradictions they identified concern a duality between use value (i.e., using the language) and exchange value (i.e., for the sake of the grade) in academic-oriented activity systems; most participants shifted from being use value-oriented to exchange value-oriented, resulting in a lack of genuine learning motives. Moreover, the exchange value promoted the development of individualistic learners who bend to the rules (e.g., grading policy) and become regulated by them. The study also illustrates how a contradiction is the engine of development. For example, while all six participants had a contradiction between the insufficient English proficiency and the object, they eventually engaged in the use of English more actively via a number of anticipated and innovative transformations such as repeated use of dictionaries, hyperlinked glossary words, and reference to a grammar book. That is, the contradiction between the subject (i.e., student participants) and the object (i.e., improving English and learning critical thinking), which is insufficient proficiency for the goals, triggered changes in subjects’ means of learning (i.e., mediating tools) and resulted in both individual development and successful completion of the goals of the particular activity.

In another study using CHAT to analyze web-based language learning, Basharina (2007) examined contradictions that emerged in a WebCT bulletin board collaboration among English learners from Japan, Mexico, and Russia. Basharina identified three types of contradictions: intracultural contradictions, intercultural contradictions, and technology-related contradictions. Basharina defines intracultural contradictions as tensions which emerged within students’ local
activity systems before being involved in the interaction of the two activity systems, intercultural contradictions as tensions that emerged after they began to interact with one another, and technology-related contradictions as any issues with technology that emerged during the interaction. Basharina addressed how two major intracultural contradictions (students’ differing participation in the project, and differing levels of formality used for communication) remained unresolved within the local activity systems. Basharina further illustrated emergent intercultural contradictions (i.e., genre/topic clashing and unequal contributions) and how they were reflected on the students’ evaluation of the project and the partner groups. In analyzing technology-related contradictions, Basharina drew upon Thorne’s (2003) notion of cultures-of-use to account for unequal access to technology and the sociocultural, socioinstitutional settings around technology.

Antoniadou (2011) used CHAT to identify contradictions in a transatlantic telecollaboration via Second Life between student teachers in Spain and those in the U.S. Antoniadou also employed three types of contradictions for analysis: a) intra-institutional contradictions that emerged prior to actual engagement in Second Life, b) technology-based and c) inter-institutional contradictions that emerged during the online exchange. Antoniadou not only documented participant-reported contradictions but also examined how the participants worked through the contradictions and reorganized the activity system through new solutions. For example, the differing academic expectations of the two institutions (i.e., two activity systems) created a contradiction of objects. While the object of implementing the podcast they made in the transatlantic group into teaching was a requirement for the student-teachers in Spain, the U.S. student-teachers were only assessed on the general planning of the podcast and the final outcome. This difference created different priorities for the groups and many Spanish participants adopted an individualized division of labor and worked independently, assuming
most of the responsibility for the pedagogical part of the assignment. Despite several underlying contradictions that were not resolved (e.g., preference of a face-to-face setting to online), some of the emergent contradictions were resolved via transformation made within and across activity systems. For example, the student-teachers’ initial anxiety about their limited technological proficiency in Second Life was reduced when they were initiated into technological knowledge and practice in the platform. Also, the contradiction in the object of the two institutions was resolved via student-teachers adjustment in the division of labor driven by different academic expectations.

More recently, Ryder and Yamagata-Lynch (2014) reported a CHAT-based study on tensions that emerged in telecollaboration between American students of Chinese and Chinese student-teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. A total of seven pairs were made between seven American college student who took part in the project for extra credit and seven Chinese student-teachers who voluntarily participated in the project. After an introductory meeting on Blackboard Wimba, each pair was required to complete three questionnaires, compare their answers, post comments on their partner’s responses, and meet synchronously nine times throughout the course on Blackboard. Also, they were asked to write journals reflecting on the experience for each meeting. Data included journals, videoconference/audio-visual archives, interview recordings, and follow-up interview recordings, which underwent the three-stage coding strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify major tensions and activity systems analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) to examine configuration of each tension. Ryder and Yamagata-Lynch first compared low functionality pairs and high functionality pairs to identify tensions in the low functionality pair activities. A total of four major contradictions were presented: Tool versus Division of Labor (e.g., Uneven division of labor, where Chinese participants played the role of a
teacher helping American participants due to unequal target language skills), Rule versus Object (e.g., Limiting intercultural learning because of extra caution to be polite to partners), Tools versus Object (e.g., Limiting intercultural learning due to insufficient intercultural competence), and (4) Subject versus Subject (e.g., Gaps in individual motivations). Ryder and Yamagata-Lynch concludes that many of the tensions were caused by students’ level of intercultural competence in contributing to the outcome of the collaboration.

These CHAT-based studies thus contribute to demonstrating not only the relevance of CHAT analysis in examining contradictions in language learning tellecollaborations but also its particular usefulness in depicting contextual information and its dynamics. In the chapter that follows, I will present the methodology of the present study including CHAT-based data analysis in depth.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In the following chapter I will present the research design of the present study. In addition, I will describe a pilot study (Nishio, 2014) and its implications to the present study.

Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to better understand how challenges emerge over the course of a classroom-based telecollaboration project and how they are negotiated and transformed. Using the principles of grounded theory for data collection and coding, this study explores two research questions:

(1) What were major intra-institutional challenges and how did they emerge and develop?
   a. What challenges did OUC participants experience?
   b. What challenges did UGA participants experience?
   c. How did each challenge emerge and develop?
   d. How were the challenges negotiated and transformed?

(2) How did participants manage inter-institutional challenges?
   a. What challenges did participants experience through interaction?
   b. How did they emerge and develop?
   c. How were the challenges negotiated and transformed?
In order to present the dynamics of identified challenges and negotiations, I draw on principles of Vygotskyian activity theory and activity systems analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

**Methodological Frameworks**

**Grounded Theory.** The present study was carried out following the principles of grounded theory. Grounded theory stresses discovery and theory development rather than logical deductive reasoning which relies on prior theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2014). In the grounded theory framework explained by Charmaz (2014), inquiry is structured by discovering and analyzing social and social psychological processes where researchers develop theoretical propositions or explanations out of the data. Therefore, the data collection and analysis phases of research proceed simultaneously. Data collection is shaped by the researcher’s analytic interpretations and discoveries, and emerging ideas are checked and elaborated by collecting further data. Discovery is thus prompted by analytic processes, stressing reliance on studying data rather than literature. In doing so, theoretical sampling is applied to refine, elaborate, and exhaust emerging conceptual categories. Through its interactive process of data collection, discovery, and analysis, systematic application of grounded theory methods progressively leads to more abstract analytic levels.

After initial data collection, data were labeled, separated, compiled, and organized via coding. Coding is the fundamental means of developing the analysis, and codes may be simple, concrete and topical, general, or abstract conceptual. Codes are to be generated and identified through analyzing the data instead of fitting the data to pre-existing codes. Initial coding begins with studying data line by line, looking for leads, ideas, and issues emergent in the data. After the initial phase, a limited set of codes are selected for more focused coding to develop relevant categories. The purpose of focused coding is to build and clarify a category by sorting
interconnections between multiple codes identified in the initial phase. It is important to write memos, or written elaborations of ideas about the data, especially in the initial and focused coding phases. Memos allow for more systematic development of codes and identification of relationship between categories and codes. After the initial and focused coding phases, the target categories may undergo theoretical sampling when the data does not exhaust the theoretical category of the study.

The present study aimed to explore emergent challenges and negotiations in the complex human activity of intercultural telecollaboration. There were no pre-existing hypothesis to prove or prior theoretical frameworks to logically account for emergent student experiences. Rather, inquiry was generated as students underwent social and sociopsychological processes of the telecollaborative project due to the unpredictable nature of student experiences and their dynamism. Thus, grounded theory methodology best served the purpose of this study because of its inductive approach to human activity.

**Activity Systems Analysis.** Activity systems analysis is a method of data analysis employed by scholars of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) who explore complex learning environments and map human interactions in natural settings (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Activity theory views human activity as an object-oriented, collective, culturally mediated activity. Activity systems analysis uses a conceptual system called an activity system as a unit of analysis which depicts a multitude of relations between subject, object, community, instrument, rules, and division of labor. Activity systems analysis allows for describing dynamic configuration of an activity and its transformations over time. Moreover, one can also illustrate interconnection of an activity system with another. Furthermore, an emergent challenge, or “a contradiction” in the activity theory framework, can be visually identified in the triangle of an
activity system, showing its emergence, development, negotiation, and transformation within and across activity systems.

The activity systems analysis method provides a valid framework which “can help make sense of complex real-world data sets in a manageable and meaningful manner” (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 5). Adopting this method to the present study allowed for systematically analyze complex interactions of contextual factors at the individual, institutional, and inter-institutional levels. Moreover, visualization of complex interactions through activity system triangles enables comprehensive presentation of student challenges and negotiations.

In the present study, grounded theory and activity systems analysis were employed as in the work of some recent scholars such as Basharina (2004, 2007, 2009), Antoniadou (2011), and Rider and Yamagata-Lynch (2014) that examined intercultural telecollaboration. It is important to note that the data coding was conducted solely following grounded theory. It was after the data was thoroughly coded and connections were made between categories via grounded theory coding that activity theory analysis was first employed for reexamination of contextual information embedded in its emergence and development. In doing so, the coded data was revisited and the connections were analyzed over again to take as much contextual information as possible. Using grounded theory and activity systems analysis and going back and forth between them in the latter part of the analysis thus enabled us to critically reexamine the data itself and connections made out of it. In addition, activity systems analysis allowed for visualization of analyzed data, which made the presentation of data more effective than using grounded theory alone.
Pilot Study

In the following sections I will illustrate a pilot study (Nishio, 2014) that was conducted one year earlier than the present study. I will then discuss how implications of the pilot study were applied to the design of the present study.

Methodology

The pilot study (Nishio, 2014) was grounded theory-based research on an intercultural telecollaborative project between American students of Japanese as a foreign language at University of Georgia (UGA) and Japanese students of English as a foreign language at Otaru University of Commerce (OUC). The purpose of the intercultural project was to promote students’ intercultural competence and to expand their communicative repertoires in the respective target languages beyond the classroom setting via online asynchronous discussion in Google Groups. The project involved 29 American college students enrolled in an advanced Japanese-language course at UGA and 25 Japanese college students enrolled in an English-language course focused on reading news articles at OUC. The UGA course was taught by a colleague who granted me full pedagogical responsibilities for the project, while the OUC course was taught by my current collaborator. The UGA course had three 50-minute class meetings a week for 16 weeks, whereas the OUC course had one 90-minute weekly meeting for 15 weeks. For both institutions, the project was worth 10% of the course grade. The UGA participants were 18-22 years old (average age = 20.9) and the OUC participants were 18-21 years old (average age = 19.1) at the beginning of the project.

The project started in September 2013 and lasted until January 2014. Due to the different academic calendar systems between the U.S. (a fall semester runs between mid-August and early-December) and Japan (a kōki, “latter semester,” runs between early October and late-
January), the maximum length for the joint part of the project was limited to seven to eight weeks. The project included three phases: pre-discussion, discussion, and post-discussion. Prior to initiating the project, we provided the instructions, requirements, and the schedule for the project. For UGA participants, one of the researchers and the instructor explained the purpose and the procedures of the project during a 50-minute lab session, and all the project-related materials including web links were made available on a course website provided by Desire2Learn. For OUC participants, the other researcher-instructor introduced and explained the project during a 90-minute class where all participants were equipped with an institutionally-provided iPad. After the orientations, all participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire asking for their demographic information, intercultural experience, and learning experience of the respective target languages. Small virtual groups were then made in Google Groups, randomly assigning two to three participants from each institution to make groups of four or five in total.

The eight-week discussion phase was divided into four small discussions where the first and third discussions were to be carried out in Japanese while the second and the fourth discussions were to be in English. The fourth discussion session, however, had to be eliminated eventually because of scheduling delays. The topics for the discussions that took place included “Gun Control” (Discussion #1), “Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)” (Discussion #2), and “‘No Foreigners Allowed’ in Japan” (Discussion #3). These controversial topics were selected to facilitate discussion and to provide a learning opportunity by embracing conflict rather than achieving consensus (Kramsch, 1995). Participants were informed of the topic for each discussion via mass email about one week before the discussion period began. Participants were given some required/suggested online articles or videos to read or watch beforehand to prepare
for each discussion. We also provided several discussion questions to help initiate conversation between group members, always with an option of creating “your own discussion question(s).” A discussion leader was selected beforehand in each group and was asked to start and lead the assigned discussion. Each participant was required to post at least twice per discussion. The following is a screenshot of a threaded discussion in a Google Group (Figure 5).

Figure 5. A screenshot of a Google Group discussion

At the end of each discussion session, each participant was asked to submit a journal entry in English reflecting on the discussion. During the post-discussion period each participant was asked to complete a second online questionnaire to reflect on the entire project and to participate in an individual interview with one of the researchers. The participants’ performance on the project was assessed based on completion of the two questionnaires, participation in the
group discussion (i.e., meeting the required number of posts per discussion session), submission of journal entries, and completion of an individual interview.

Consistent with the study’s theoretical framework, data was collected from the particular cultural settings involved in the intercultural project, including project-related artifacts of the participants and the researchers’ field notes via participant observation at each institution. The overall artifacts comprised questionnaire responses, written discussion posts in Google Groups, emails, journal entries, and audio recordings of individual interviews and their transcripts. In addition to the rich body of artifacts, the researchers’ observation notes allowed for in-depth, multidimensional documentation of participants’ experience that may or may not manifest in the textual or audio data. After documenting and integrating the data for comprehensive analysis, we identified recurrent themes that emerged in the course of the project implementation. The integrated written data was first coded for perceived tensions and success, and the tensions were further divided into subcategories in order to scrutinize underlying factors and interrelations between them within the data. After collecting data along with simultaneous analysis, emerging themes were refined through three-stage coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and the themes underwent an activity systems analysis.

Application to the Present Study

The pilot study revealed some emergent intra-institutional contradictions and inter-institutional contradictions (see Nishio, 2014). Prior to planning the present study, my OUC collaborator and I carefully reexamined the pilot study methods and findings for necessary modifications to minimize potential contradictions as much as possible. Although the nature of the project remained the same, necessary changes and additions were made in (1) mode of
discussion, (2) number of participants per group, (3) platform, (4) number of discussion topics, and (5) types of discussion topics, for a more effective communicative environment.

First, the mode of discussion was changed from asynchronous to synchronous. Some participants in the pilot study reported that their discussions were slow due to the asynchronous mode of communication. For the asynchronous nature of Google Groups, student interactions were infrequent, resulting in only a few posts per group over a two-week period. Also, each post tended to be long and one-sided rather than being short and interactive, which failed to provide active, friendly atmosphere for learning and communication. Thus, my collaborator and I decided to switch from the asynchronous mode of communication to a synchronous one for the current study in order to promote more active interactions.

Second, the number of participants per group was changed from four-five to one-on-one transpacific pairs. One of the major causes of delay in OUC students’ posting was what Nishio (2014) calls the “you-go-first” atmosphere among OUC participants. Some OUC participants were reluctant to post because of concerns about how they or their skills in the target language would look in the eyes of fellow OUC group members, while others were simply not very responsible and relied on other OUC group members to post. In the end, this atmosphere not only caused a delay but also lowered overall motivation to post among group members. In order to avoid a similar contradiction in the present study, we decided to switch from groups of four-five to pairs so that students might feel a stronger responsibility to communicate with each other and maintain interactive exchanges.

Third, the platform was reexamined. Nishio (2014) reported a technological contradiction that many participants were not familiar with Google Groups and valuable time was taken in getting them used to it. In addition, the asynchronous nature of the platform failed to yield
interactive exchanges as originally intended. My collaborator and I thus decided to use a
different platform which allows for synchronous communication with little technological
complexity for participants. Among several online services of that kind, we decided on Google
Hangouts for its popularity, accessibility, and ease of use.

Fourth, the number of discussion topics was reconsidered since one of four discussions in
the pilot study had to be cancelled because participants ran out of time (Nishio 2014). In order to
minimize the risk, my collaborator and I decided to include a one week ice-breaking period,
followed by two three-week discussion periods. This change was meant to build rapport before
discussions and to give students enough time for meaningful discussion.

Finally, discussion topics were changed. Some participants in Nishio (2014) reported
struggling with reading articles and writing their opinions on the assigned topics because they
were beyond their proficiency in the target language. My collaborator and I therefore decided to
change topics from controversial ones (e.g., gun control) to the ones that participants could more
easily relate to (e.g., college life) and discuss in the target language in the hope that this would
facilitate more active interactions.

These five major changes were applied to the methods in the present study. Although
contradictions by their very nature are not predictable, the changes were intended to minimize
the risk of unnecessary contradictions.

Methodology

In the following sections I will describe the setting, participants, instrumentation, and
procedure of the present study. I will also illustrate how data was collected, coded, and then
analyzed for close examination of contradictions.
Setting

The present study took the form of a telecollaborative project between an advanced-level Japanese-language course at the University of Georgia (UGA) and an English-language course at Otaru University of Commerce (OUC), Japan in the Fall 2014 semester. The UGA Japanese language course focused on teaching comprehensive language skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and it was taught by the author with full responsibility. The course was 16 weeks long from mid-August to mid-December and consisted of 50-minute face-to-face meetings three times a week. Students enrolled in the course were required to have a passing grade in the intermediate Japanese course at UGA or equivalent. Students’ classroom experiences included lectures, pair work, small group activities, and discussions for learning Japanese language and culture. A textbook called Tobira was used throughout the course covering the topics of speech styles, technology, sports, food, and religion all pertaining to the Japanese society and beyond. Students were generally assessed based on their comprehension of the textbook materials as well as their language skills on homework, quizzes, lesson tests, and oral tests. The telecollaborative project constituted 15% of students’ course grade.

The English language course at OUC was designed as an intensive preparation course for the TOEIC (Test for English for International Communication), a standardized assessment of English skills for international workplace environments (Educational Testing Service, 2015). The course was part of OUC’s campus-wide effort to provide students with opportunities to get a higher score on the TOEIC, a test required by many Japanese employers. The test includes a listening comprehension section and a reading section on business-related topics such as commodities and stock markets. OUC implemented an in-house drill-based e-learning program in their TOEIC preparation course in 2011 focusing on listening and reading skills. This course is
required for all freshmen, and more than 200 students register every semester. The OUC course that participated in the telecollaborative project was one section of this course. Students worked in a computer lab on the e-learning program at their own pace under the supervision of the instructor who was the collaborating teacher-researcher of the present study. Like other typical Japanese college courses, this TOEIC course met once a week for 90 minutes for 15 weeks between the late September and the early February. Assessment was largely based on the students’ score on three sample TOEIC tests they were required to take during the course, their progress in the e-learning program, two mini quizzes, and attendance. The telecollaborative project became part of this course as a supplemental learning opportunity for language and culture, which was more authentic and interactive than completing the drill-based practice on a computer. The project was worth 10% of the entire course grade.

The telecollaborative project was called “Intercultural Project” at UGA and “ibunka kōryū purojekuto ‘intercultural project’” at OUC. Preparation spanned April through September 2014, when the project started. The project required UGA and OUC participants to engage in two three-week-long pair-discussion sessions for a total of six weeks. Participants used the written chat function of Google Hangouts, available on computers as well as mobile devices such as tablets and phones. Discussion topics set by the instructor/researchers included (1) the Education System and College Life and (2) the Experience of Learning English / Japanese. In addition, students were asked to create three discussion questions for each topic to ask their partners. Participants were required to communicate with each other in Japanese for the first discussion while the second discussion was to be carried out in English. In addition to the main activity of chatting on Google Hangouts, participants were also asked to complete a pre-discussion questionnaire, a weekly journal, a post-discussion questionnaire, and an individual
interview with the teacher-researcher of the institution. Each instructor also had institution-specific assignments for the project. Since the project was a part of the course grade, participants’ performance was assessed based on their overall participation, punctuality for project-related deadlines, and quality of project-related learner products. Table 1 provides an overview of the project:

Table 1

Overview of the intercultural project

| Who | • JPNS3010 (University of Georgia)  
|     | • E209 (Otaru University of Commerce) |
| What | • Two pair online bilingual discussion sessions  
|     | 1. “Education System and College Life” (in Japanese)  
|     | 2. “Experience of Learning English / Japanese (in English)  
|     | • A series of supplemental activities during the preparation, in-session, and wrapping-up periods  
|     |   ○ Questionnaires  
|     |   ○ Journal  
|     |   ○ End-products (essays for UGA, essays and presentation for OUC)  
|     |   ○ Interview |
| When | • End of September through early February |
| Where | • Google Hangouts (for pair discussions) |

Participants

A total of 20 UGA students and 33 OUC students participated in the project. The UGA participants were 18-23 years old (average age = 20.4) and came from diverse academic majors including Japanese, International Relations, Computer Science, Marketing, and Genetics. Participants included three heritage learners of Japanese who had Japanese-speaking parents and/or had lived in Japan for more than five years as a child. In addition, the group included three non-heritage participants who had studied abroad in Japan for four to nine months in the previous academic year. Four participants who had been educated abroad for the first 18 years of their lives, including three from China and one from South Korea. Aside from the heritage learners, a quarter of the UGA participants started learning Japanese in middle school or high
school, while the rest had started in college and had already taken approximately four semesters of college coursework. According to pre-discussion questionnaires, participants’ major reason to study Japanese was “interested in the language and culture” (91%), followed by “keeping my heritage” (23%) and “needed for my future job” (23%). More than half of the participants (59%) had been to Japan, mostly for sightseeing, and nearly half (41%) claimed they had had a constant exposure to a Japanese person in their lives, including their parents, friends, host families, and members of an on-campus Japanese conversation club.

The OUC participants were 19-22 years old (average = 19.8) at the beginning of the project. They were students in the Commerce Department with varying specializations such as Commerce, Economics, Enterprise Law, and Socio-Information Studies. All of the OUC participants were native Japanese speakers who had studied English as a foreign language in the Japanese school system since they were 13 years old. That is, they all had studied English for a total six years in junior high schools and in high school and some additional years in college depending on their year in school. All the OUC participants claimed they did not speak any language other than Japanese, despite their six plus years of English learning. Their intercultural experience was limited; no one had ever lived in a foreign countries before, and 94% of them claimed they had never had any kind of intercultural experience in their lives. According to the pre-discussion questionnaire, the majority of the OUC participants (89%) were studying English because it was “required in college.” The other reasons included: “required for entrance exams and job hunting” (46%), “needed for my future job” (34%), “interested in the language and culture” (31%), and “needed in daily life” (20%). About 20% of the OUC participants reported they had interacted with American people before, although the majority of such experiences were brief: “met American guys at a bar,” “ran into an American person at a gym once,” had a brief
conversation with an American person at a youth hostel,” and “in my trip to Hawaii.” To the
question “what does ‘a typical American person’ bring to your mind?” many OUC participants
provided comments about physical characteristics that generally pointed to Americans being
bigger. Other answers concerned more about ways of thinking and doing: “positive,” “logical,”
“direct,” “competitive,” “individualistic,” “likes junk food,” among other things. There were 33
OUC participants at the beginning of the project; two participants dropped the course at the mid-
point and were withdrawn from the project.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study to collect data included two sets of questionnaires,
chat logs, emails, journal entries, interviews, and institution-specific end products. The variety of
the data sources allowed for comprehensive examination of participants’ experiences in the
intercultural telecollaboration. In preparation for the project, a shared Google account was
created by the teacher-researchers as a unified platform specifically for this project. It was
decided that a single account rather than two separate accounts for each instructor-researcher
would best ensure smooth execution and data collection. A Google account gave us free access
to a suite of web-based applications and sites such as Gmail (email), Calendar (scheduler), Drive
(data storage), and YouTube that are coordinated to make access easy for users.

Questionnaires. There were two sets of questionnaires in this project: a pre-discussion
questionnaire and a post-discussion questionnaire. Each questionnaire was prepared using
Google Forms, a web-based application with which one can create surveys and share with people
online so they can answer the prepared questions. Google Forms are available on the online
storage service, Google Drive, where questionnaire answers are automatically collected on a
Google spreadsheet and saved in the same folder as the original questionnaires. The pre-
The discussion questionnaire was prepared in two languages, English for UGA participants and Japanese for OUC counterparts (see Appendix A and B). The first section of the questionnaire concerned the participants’ demographic information such as age, gender, and major. In a subsequent section on linguistic backgrounds, participants were asked about their first language, languages they were fluent in, and how they acquired or learned them. The third section asked participants about their experience of living in a foreign country, intercultural exposure, and experience of conflicts caused by cultural differences. The fourth section pertained to participants’ current experience of second/foreign language learning, Japanese for UGA participants and English for OUC participants. Students were asked why they had studied the target language, if they had been to a country where the target language is spoken, whether they had had exposure to the people and culture of the target language, and how they would characterize the people and culture. A fifth section asked participants to detail their former experience of intercultural projects, their initial evaluation of their attitudes toward the project, and their candid feelings about the project. Finally, a confirmation section at the end of the pre-discussion questionnaire reminded participants of the importance of cooperation between partners for effective intercultural exchange and the project’s contribution to one’s and the partner’s grades.

The post-discussion questionnaire was also prepared in two languages, the English version for UGA participants and the Japanese version for OUC participants (see Appendix C and D). The questionnaire was designed to elicit participants’ critical evaluation of the project design, project execution, and over-time changes in their performance, attitudes, and feelings. In the Project Design section, the participants were asked to evaluate Google Hangouts as a platform for the project and discussion topics. In the following section, they were asked about
emergent challenges they experienced in the course of the project (e.g., technological issues, time differences, etc.). They were also asked for feedback regarding the relevance, length, and number of discussion questions, distribution of labor, their own performance as well as their partner’s, language-related difficulties, misunderstandings, relevance of project-related assignments, and punctuality and clarity of project-related instructions and reminders. The participants were then asked how their expectations and feelings changed over time comparing the beginning, the mid-point, and the end of the project and what might have caused the change. In the last part of the questionnaire, participants were prompted to provide their suggestions for future development of the project.

**Email.** Email played an important role throughout the project for teacher-student communication, specifically for project-related inquiries, announcements, and reminders, which eventually served as a rich source of data highlighting emergent challenges. The email account that came with the project Google account was set as the sole contact for project purposes. Email messages from the participants and those sent out by each of the teacher-researchers were stored and archived in the Gmail account and were collected for data analysis after the project ended.

**Chat Logs.** The main activity of the project, pair chat, took place in Google Hangouts, an instant messaging and video chat platform developed by Google in 2013. One can easily gain access to Hangouts with a Google account, search friends by name or email address, and engage in written chat or video chat between two or more users. The service can be accessed through Gmail, Google+ (plus) which is a social networking service by Google, or through mobile applications available for Android and iOS. Once an individual initiates a conversation with someone else, their chat history is automatically saved online and synced between devices. One does not need to be online to receive a message; any messages sent to the chat while offline are
also saved within the chat window and will be visible upon logging in. One can share photos, use emoji (emoticons), and make a phone call while in the Hangouts window. Figure 6 and 7 below is a screenshot of a Hangout on a computer and on a mobile device, respectively, where the same conversation is synched.

![Figure 6. A screenshot of a Google Hangout on a computer](image1)

![Figure 7. A screenshot of a Google Hangout on a mobile device](image2)
At the end of each discussion period, UGA participants were asked to forward the archived chat log to the project email address. The chat logs were stored in the email account and then collected for data analysis later.

**Journals.** Participants were asked to keep a weekly journal for six weeks during the discussion period (see Appendix E, F, G, and H). Each journal was created using a Google Form, so the participants’ response was automatically recorded and archived on a spreadsheet in Google Drive. Each journal was due on Monday and the participants were asked (1) to summarize the discussion of the previous week and (2) to evaluate their own participation and their partner’s. In the summary section, they were asked to list discussion questions they prepared for the topic. In addition, UGA participants were asked to provide a 100-200-character summary of discussion of the previous week in Japanese while OUC participants were instructed to write a 200-300-word summary in English. In the evaluation section, UGA participants were asked to explain what went well and what did not in detail and to evaluate their partner’s performance in English. OUC participants were also asked to do so in Japanese. In addition, in each journal participants rated their overall evaluation of the previous week’s performance on a Likert scale (1 for “did not go well at all” and 4 for “went very well”). In the second and the third journal of a discussion session, participants were asked to report on any changes in the discussion questions they prepared and also asked to compare the target discussion week to the previous week(s).

**Interviews.** Individual interviews with each study participant were carried out at both UGA and OUC by the teacher-researchers. At UGA, 10-minute individual interviews were scheduled in the regular classroom after all other procedures were completed. At OUC, each participant was interviewed for about five to ten minutes in the teacher-researcher’s office. The
purpose of the interviews was to follow up on post-discussion questionnaires. Because this interview was based on each participant’s answers on the questionnaire, there were no pre-set interview questions. Each participant was asked for clarification and elaboration on their questionnaire answers. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder (UGA) or on a computer (OUC) and saved as MP3 files in Google Drive for collaborative analysis.

**End-Products.** End-products for this project were institution-specific. UGA participants were required to write two essays in Japanese based on two sets of pair discussion, respectively. Two drafts were required for each essay; UGA participants were first asked to create a draft of 600 characters or more on their Google Drive, share it with the UGA teacher-researcher online, receive feedback and revise it to make a final draft of the essay. The first draft of each essay was due on Monday immediately after the discussion session about which participants were supposed to write, and the final drafts were due two weeks after the first due dates. Assessment criteria for essays included: grammar, spelling, flow, rhythm, organization, source of information, punctuality, and content requirements.

OUC participants, on the other hand, were required to complete two one-draft essays in the course of the semester summarizing pair discussions and reflecting on the experience. In addition, OUC participants were put in a group of three or four to bring together what they learned via pair discussions and create a presentation video about what they learned from their UGA partners.

**Procedure**

Data collection began on the last week of September 2014 when the UGA course was six weeks into the fall semester and a new semester (kōki “latter semester”) started at OUC after a two-month summer vacation. The following table shows the overall procedure of the project:
The first week of the project was labeled as “Preparation Week” and devoted to getting the students ready for the project. At the beginning of the first week, there were a 50-minute lab session at UGA and a 90-minute smart-room class meeting at OUC for orientation on the intercultural project, followed by a technical workshop. Students were given a “Project Overview” handout which was prepared in both English for UGA and Japanese for OUC, illustrating the details of the project design, procedure, discussion topics, assessment, and timeline (see Appendix I and J). After a thorough review of the project overview, students at both institutions were asked to participate in the present study, and those who agreed to do so signed a consent form prepared by the teacher-researchers (see Appendix K). During the technical workshop that followed, the students were asked to (1) create a Google account if they

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1 All the enrolled students were required to take part in the project regardless of their participation in the study. The term “student” refers to those who were engaged in the project as a course requirement while the term “participant” specifically refers to the students who signed the consent form. Therefore, using the term “student” is inclusive of both study participants and non-participating students.
had not already, (2) send a blank email message from the participants’ Google account to a Gmail address the teacher-researchers created in advance, (3) download and set up the Hangouts mobile app on their smart phones and/or tablets, (4) try using Google Hangouts with a classmate, and (5) answer the pre-discussion questionnaire. The teacher-researchers prepared a handout (see Appendix L and M) to walk the students through the workshop and helped them solve any technological issues they had during the orientation session. The students were then assigned homework to decide on three discussion questions for the first topic of “Education System and College Life” and to start a hangout with a transpacific partner once they were assigned one via email. Moreover, students were asked to film a 10-second self-introduction video and send it to the project email address. The videos were later compiled at each institution as an introduction video and was shown to the partner institution in the following week.

Pair assignment was randomly made by the teacher-researchers soon after the orientation sessions. Due to the unequal number of students between the two institutions (UGA = 22 and OUC = 34), twelve UGA students volunteered to have two OUC partners. These UGA students was asked to hold two separate pair chats with their respective OUC partners. As soon as UGA-OUC pairs were assigned, every student was notified of the partner’s information via email and prompted to start a Hangout to introduce themselves and have some small talk to get to know each other before moving to the first discussion.

After the first week of preparation, transpacific pairs were prompted to start the first discussion of “Education System and College Life” using the individually-prepared discussion questions as a guide. The first discussion was conducted in Japanese and lasted for three weeks during which each student was required to complete weekly journals to summarize their discussion in the target language and to evaluate the pair exchange in their native language. After
the first discussion period was over, the UGA students were asked to send their chat log(s) to the project email address. The second discussion on the topic of “Experience of Learning Japanese / English” was to be carried out in English and started immediately after the first discussion period was over. The second discussion also lasted for three weeks and the students were required to complete weekly journals online. After the discussion period, the OUC students were asked to submit their chat log to the project email address. Thus, weekly journals were collected online for the six weeks of discussion, and two kinds of chat logs per pair, one in English and the other in Japanese, were collected via email after each discussion session.

All the institution-specific end products were collected online during and after the project. UGA’s end products, two two-draft online essays in Japanese, were submitted to the project email address, which were then stored and archived in its Google Drive. On the other hand, OUC’s products including essays and presentation slides were all submitted electronically via the institution’s course management system, manaba.

Following the end of the two discussions, students were asked to complete the post-discussion questionnaire online. Students also participated in a 10-minute individual interview with their teacher-researcher in the second week of December for UGA students, and in the second week of February for OUC students. Each interview was audio-recorded and content analysis was conducted after initial coding of post-questionnaire responses.

Data Analysis

The present study was carried out following the principle of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to explain how challenges emerged and were negotiated in the course of the transpacific telecollaboration. The constant comparative method involves the process of identification of a social phenomenon of interest, identification of local features of the target
phenomenon, and ongoing reflection of one’s initial understanding of the phenomenon. This approach allows for a good balance between one’s interpretation of the phenomenon and data.

Following Ryder and Yamagata-Lynch (2014), the present study adopted a three-stage coding strategy described in Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998). It is a set of flexible guidelines for data coding for a grounded theory analysis and comprises three types of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding refers to “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). Axial coding is “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories” (p. 96). Selective coding is “the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (p. 116). During the stage of open coding, the rich body of data was carefully examined line-by-line for potential emergence and negotiation of contradictions, resulting in the identification of 75 different codes. During the axial coding stage, after a number of reflections on the coded data, connections were made between such categories and overarching themes were developed. Then, after careful and thorough reexamination of the codes, themes, and data, core categories of contradictions were finalized. The following Table 3 illustrates how the codes generated in open coding were connected and categorized in axial coding, and how those categories were further put into an overarching theme in selective coding.
Table 3

Example of finalized categories and themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes in open coding</th>
<th>Categorized codes in axial coding</th>
<th>Categories put into a theme in selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility of Discussion Topic 1</strong></td>
<td>Participants report positive feelings about the first discussion topic</td>
<td>Discussion Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessibility of Discussion Topic 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessibility of Discussion Topic 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility of Discussion Topic 2</strong></td>
<td>Participants report positive feelings about the second discussion topic</td>
<td>Positive Feedback on Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Smooth Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smooth Flow of Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Participants feel the discussion is flowing smoothly</td>
<td>Smooth Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Smooth Flow of Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fun Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Partner Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fun Discussions</strong></td>
<td>Participants report they enjoy discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Participation</strong></td>
<td>Participants positively comment on partner’s participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division of Labor in Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Participants positively comment on partner’s and/or one’s own participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the three-stage coding process, two major categories of contradictions were identified: intra-institutional contradictions and inter-institutional contradictions. Intra-institutional contradictions refer to the contradictions participants of a specific institution experienced in the initial stage of the project, while inter-institutional contradictions refer to the contradictions that emerged in the course of transpacific interaction. After careful reexaminations of coding and categorizations, these two major contradictions underwent in-depth activity systems analysis to account for their unique configurations and negotiations (Engeström, 1987, 1993, 1999, 2000, 2001; Leont’ev, 1974; Vygotsky, 1987; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

In order to contrast each contradiction with the originally intended procedures and outcomes of the project, a UGA-OUC telecollaboration activity system model was created (see Figure 8). Activity System 1 in Figure 8 presents six basic components of the ideal UGA-OUC telecollaboration. It is important to emphasize, however, that this is an idealized activity system.
of the intended UGA-OUC telecollaboration rather than a full depiction of the series of activities that might have occurred at multiple levels in different institutions at various times.

**Figure 8.** Activity System 1: Ideal model of UGA-OUC telecollaboration activity system

In this model, the subject was 33 transpacific UGA-OUC pairs who participated in the telecollaboration. The object included (1) using the target language skills for communication, (2) helping partners with their target language skills, (3) gaining cultural knowledge, and (4) increasing intercultural awareness. The community was UGA’s Japanese-language class and OUC’s English-language class, including the teacher-researchers. The tools that mediated the relationship between the subject and the object included technological tools (Google Hangouts, email, Google Forms, Google Drive, institutional course management websites, etc.) and participants’ current language skills and intercultural communicative competence. The rules that mediated the subject and the community was the pre-set requirements for the telecollaborative project, including following the discussion timelines, submitting project-related homework (journals, essays, etc.), and completing other project-related tasks (questionnaires, interviews,
etc.). The division of labor for this activity system was set as evenly distributed contribution between UGA participants and OUC participants for the main activity of online pair discussions while solo responsibility was expected for the other tasks of the project. The expected outcomes for this ideal activity system were confidence and improved skills in the subject’s target language, increased knowledge of cultural information, and increased intercultural awareness.

**Summary**

This chapter illustrated the methodology of the present study along with the methodological framework and changes made from the pilot study (Nishio, 2014). This grounded theory-based qualitative study took place in a telecollaborative project between 20 American learners of Japanese at UGA and 33 Japanese learners of English at OUC which included eight weeks of transpacific pair discussion and a series of supplemental tasks. Data comprised two sets of questionnaire answers, six journal entries, email messages, essays, institution-specific end-products, and recordings of individual interviews. Participants completed a pre-discussion questionnaire, engaged in two sets of three-week transpacific online discussions on Google Hangouts alternating between Japanese and English, kept online weekly journals during the discussion period, completed a post-discussion questionnaire, and had an individual interview with a teacher-researcher. The collected data was analyzed using a three-stage data coding strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and activity systems analysis (Engeström, 1987, 1993, 1999, 2000, 2001; Leont’ev, 1974; Vygotsky, 1987; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). In the following chapter, findings will be presented to identify and explain major challenges that arose in the participants’ intercultural learning experiences.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents two types of contradictions that emerged in the course of telecollaboration between UGA and OUC: intra-institutional contradictions and inter-institutional contradictions. Intra-institutional contradictions refer to tensions that emerged in the initial stage of the project based on participants’ understandings and expectations about the project and people involved. Inter-institutional contradictions, on the other hand, refer to disparity that emerged in the actual interactions. In the sections below, I will show how these contradictions emerged, developed, and underwent negotiations and transformations over time.

**Intra-Institutional Contradictions**

Except for one OUC participant, telecollaboration was new to both OUC participants and UGA participants. At the time the project started in Fall 2014, teacher-researchers had had a number of teleconferences and email exchanges to make necessary preparations including testing technological tools, working on pair assignment, and creating student handouts clearly describing project objectives, tasks, procedures, and timelines. We spent about six months for planning beforehand as careful and thorough preparation was necessary for the project to proceed as smoothly and effectively as possible. We paid extra attention to making orientations and student handouts as clear as possible in order to minimize their anxiety about the project by giving them a clear overall picture at the beginning. After students were introduced to the project during the orientation sessions at both institutions, project-related questions were elaborately addressed on site. Yet in spite of these preparations and elaborate introduction to the project,
participants experienced tensions in the initial stage of the project based on their expectations about the project. What follows addresses contradictions common to both OUC and UGA and institution-specific contradictions.

**Contradictions Common to Both Institutions**

In the following sections, I will present a contradiction that was commonly salient in both institutions: anxiety about proficiency in the respective target languages. I will also illustrate how this contradiction was negotiated in various manners.

**Anxiety about Language Skills.** During the orientation session, many participants expressed a mixed feeling of excitement and anxiety about the new learning experience via telecollaboration. Both OUC participants and UGA participants experienced varying degrees of anxiety. According to the post-discussion questionnaire, 87.9% of OUC participants and 85.0% of UGA participants were generally worried about the project at the beginning of the project. It appears that one of the major causes of anxiety common to both institutions had something to do with the low confidence level of their proficiency in the target language. Based on the pre-discussion questionnaire, 100.0% of OUC participants and 90.0% of UGA participants reported that they were worried about their own proficiency in the target language. As the transpacific interaction on Google Hangouts started with a discussion in Japanese, UGA participants faced an immediate need to use Japanese. UGA participants commented explicitly on varying degrees of lack of confidence in their Japanese proficiency they had at the beginning. A UGA participant, Tiffany, went through mild anxiety about imbalance between her Japanese skills and her partner’s native proficiency in Japanese: “At first I was worried about communicating with a Japanese person because I thought their Japanese would be a lot more advanced than mine” (Tiffany, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire). Stella, on the other hand, experienced a much
greater degree of anxiety because of an utter lack of confidence in her Japanese proficiency. She was worried about herself using the target language more than any other aspects of the project because she was “terrified of speaking Japanese” (Stella, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire).

Although OUC participants started the discussion in their native language with little pressure and anxiety about using English, they also went through language-related anxiety especially three weeks into the transpacific interaction when they were supposed to switch the language of discussion from Japanese to English. An OUC participant, Shiori, expressed her anxiety about her English skills: “I was worried if they would understand my English” (Shiori, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Another OUC participant, Hikari, also commented on her initial anxiety related to her English proficiency: “I was worried about if my English is comprehensible or I could understand their English properly” (Hikari, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

Some OUC participants explicitly talked about their lack of confidence in English with their partners in an apologetic tone. Wakana informed her partner during the first week of interaction about her English: “My English is really poor, so I might send you a lot of weird English (>_<)” (Wakana, OUC, Japanese discussion, translated). Yuma also told his partner as soon as they started interaction: “My English is very poor, so please forgive my weird English when we start our English conversation;^_^A” (Yuma, OUC, Japanese discussion, translated).

Both UGA participants and OUC participants used extra caution to their own language use and to understanding the partners’ properly in the respective target languages. Therefore, it took them more time and energy than originally intended by the project. The following figure (Figure 9) compares the ideal model of UGA-OUC activity system the teacher-researchers’ had 

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2 Translation mine. As questionnaires, journals, and interviews were carried out in Japanese at OUC and in English at UGA, excerpts from OUC data presented here were translated into English by the author.
in mind and the actual activity system with the contradiction between the subject (i.e., UGA participants and OUC participants) and the tools (i.e., Japanese language and English language).
**Teachers’ ideal model of UGA-OUC telecollaboration activity system**

**Tools**
- Technological tools
- Language skills
- Intercultural Communicative Competence

**Subject**
- UGA participants
- OUC participants

**Object**
- Use language skills for communication
- Help partner’s language skills
- Gain cultural information
- Increase intercultural awareness

**Outcomes**
- Confidence and improved skills in the target language
- Increased knowledge of cultural information
- Increased intercultural awareness

**Community**
- UGA’s Japanese class
- OUC’s English class
- Transpacific pairs

**Division of Labor**
- Evenly divided contribution between UGA participants and OUC participants for pair work
- Solo responsibility for individual work

**Actual activity system at the beginning**

**Tools**
- Technological tools
- Language skills
- Intercultural Communicative Competence

**Subject**
- UGA participants
- OUC participants

**Object**
- Use language skills for communication
- Help partner’s language skills
- Gain cultural information
- Increase intercultural awareness

**Outcomes**
- Slow, extra-careful responses

**Community**
- UGA’s Japanese class
- OUC’s English class
- Transpacific pairs

**Division of Labor**
- Evenly divided contribution between UGA participants and OUC participants for pair work
- Solo responsibility for individual work

*Figure 9. Comparison between ideal activity system and actual activity system*
As illustrated in the figure above, participants’ responses were slow and very cautious during the first week of Japanese discussion and English discussion, respectively. A UGA participant Ling reported: “I needed to look up dictionary for every time I typed a Japanese sentence” (Ling, UGA, post-questionnaire). Another UGA participant, Aaron, reflected on how his language skills slowed down his responses: “Unfortunately I am not the most skilled writer in Japanese and it would take me a longer time on average to respond to their Japanese conversation. I wanted to make sure that I understood what they were saying” (Aaron, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire). An OUC participant, Eri, also commented on her slow responses due to her careful attitude toward language use: “It often took time as I had to understand my partner’s English and then make my own sentences” (Emi, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Another OUC participant, Eri, explained why it took her time to respond to her partner: “It was not that making English sentences was difficult, but it was more about having to check if my sentences are grammatical. That’s why it took time” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

The issue here may not have been the participants’ actual proficiency levels in the target language; Rather, it is speculated it had something to do with their limited self-efficacy in the target languages, manifesting as extra cautious looking up and grammar checking, and hence as slower interactions. Some UGA participants provided positive comments about their partner’s English. Brianna commented on her partner’s English skills: “She is very good at English. I’m impressed. There are a few times when she uses the wrong word but I can still basically understand what she is trying to say” (Brianna, UGA, Journal #4). Including Kiyo, many OUC participants not only understood what their partners were saying in Japanese but also were rather impressed by their Japanese skills: “I was worried if my Japanese was too difficult for my
partner, but there were no problems discussing in Japanese because her Japanese skills were very good” (Kiyo, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Regardless of varying proficiency levels and actual errors participants made in the target language, it was not the comprehensibility per se, but anxiety around learners’ evaluation of their own target language proficiency that made communication slow.

**Negotiation of Anxiety about Language Skills.** Thus, many participants initially went through anxiety about language skills in the target languages. As online exchange began, this anxiety was negotiated in various ways, both autonomously and naturally, and was greatly reduced in the course of the interaction.

**UGA Participants’ Negotiation.** Many UGA participants reported that reading was harder than writing because of the kanji (Chinese characters) and vocabulary they did not know, so they had to look them up in a dictionary or online translation tools. UGA participants found that after looking up words, understanding their partners’ Japanese was not too hard. For example, Tiffany reported: “Sometimes it was hard to understand what Hikari was asking of me, but after looking up words it was easier to understand” (Tiffany, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire). Hanna also pointed out the difficulty she felt in understanding what her partner said because of the kanji, but she generally thought understanding what they said “wasn’t too bad” (Hanna, UGA, post-discussion). Apparently, using a dictionary as a tool helped increase confidence in their proficiency and reduced language-related anxiety.

In addition to looking up kanji and vocabulary themselves, UGA participants directly asked their partners for clarification when they did not understand a certain word or a concept. For example, a UGA participant Takako asked her partner Wakana about a word *tsuugaku* “commuting” in their Japanese discussion:
Wakana:  *Tsuugaku dake de tsukare chau sa.*

“I get exhausted just by ‘tsuugaku.’”

Takako:  *Tsuugaku tte nani?*

“What is ‘tsuugaku’?”

Wakana:  *Tsuugaku tte iu no wa gakkou ni iku tte iu imi da yo!*

“‘tsuugaku’ means going to school!”

Takako:  Oh, okay! *Imi ga wakatta!*

“Oh, okay! Now I know what it means!”

(Chat log between Wakana and Takako, Japanese)

Thus, Takako figured out what *tsuugaku* means by directly asking Wakana who rephrased it in a simpler expression. In other pairs, too, UGA participants asked clarification questions and OUC participants instantly responded with a simpler equivalent, sometimes with an apology for using difficult expressions, which not only reduced UGA participants’ anxiety but also created more interactions and negotiation of meaning.

In some pairs, UGA participants’ comprehension was helped by OUC participants’ voluntary use of simple Japanese. Sofia, for example, shared her observation: “[My partner] seemed to keep her Japanese rather simple for me so it wasn’t too hard to understand her” (Sofia, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire). In Chris’ case, he did not ask his partner for clarification or simplification for the first few weeks, but eventually he wrote to his partner:

Chris:  *Gomen nasai. Motto kantanna hanashikata o tsukatte kurenai?*

“I’m sorry. Would you please use simpler language?

*Zenbu o rikai dekinai de shimai masu.*

I cannot understand everything, unfortunately.”
Yota: *Kochira koso gomen nasai.*

“It is my fault. I am sorry.

*Daigaku ni iru gaikokujinsei ga mina nihongo ga jouzu de aru no to,*

Because foreign students here at my university are good at Japanese

*nihongo no kaeshi ga totemo jouzu na node,*

and your Japanese is very good,

*sokomade ki ni shinai de okutte shimai mashita.*

I was not paying too much attention to my language.

*Korekara ki o tsuke masu.*

I will be more careful from now on.”

(Chat log between Yota and Chris, Japanese)

By explicitly asking his partner to use simpler Japanese, Chris eased his linguistic challenges in the target language. Thus, some UGA participants’ language-related anxiety was reduced by their partners’ implicit and explicit simplification of the Japanese language.

As illustrated above, UGA participants’ anxiety about language skills was negotiated in varying manners and was eventually reduced to a great extent. Figure 10 below shows the UGA activity system after the language-related anxiety was negotiated, compared to the initial UGA activity system.
Figure 10. UGA activity system after SUBJECT-TOOL contradiction of language skills was negotiated
In addition to the existing language skills and intercultural competence, many UGA participants used dictionaries and online resources as a tool. Using these tools they managed to communicate with OUC partners in Japanese, which boosted their confidence in the target language. UGA participants’ anxiety was also calmed as their partners’ use of simple Japanese in the transpacific pairs, which made their comprehension easier. With the newly defined tools (i.e., language skills, intercultural communicative competence, and dictionaries and online sources) and community configuration (i.e., transpacific pairs where clarification and simplification constantly occur), the contradiction between the subject and the tools was resolved, resulting in increased confidence and more active, frequent interaction.

**OUC Participants’ Negotiation.** Due to the discussion schedule starting with a Japanese discussion followed by an English discussion, transpacific pairs had already built a rapport more or less by the time they switch to English. In that sense, OUC participants were more relaxed about pair discussion than UGA participants at the very beginning of the project. However, OUC participants’ anxiety became marked around the time they had to switch to English. Hikari, an OUC participant, sent a message to her partner Tiffany as soon as the English discussion began about her nervous feeling: “Since I am poor at English, I become it tense very much” (Hikari, OUC, Chat log between Hikari and Tiffany, English).

Some OUC participants reported that they had to use a dictionary constantly for both understanding their partners and composing their own sentences. Eri, an OUC participant, reported: “I used the Internet to look up English expressions I had never seen in textbooks. I learned a lot” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Yoko also commented on how she used a dictionary: “I used the dictionary to look up grammar and polite expressions in English before sending my responses” (Yoko, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).
Just like UGA participants, dictionaries and online resources served as tools that helped OUC participants to slowly but steadily get discussion going.

To many OUC participants who were worried if their partners would understand their English, it was a little surprising that their partner actually understood them with no major problems. Niina shared her happiness in the questionnaire: “I was happy that my partner said she can understand my English well” (Niina, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

Tasuku found in the English discussion that his English was not too bad “because my partner understood and didn’t correct some English sentences I wrote down without using dictionary” (Tasuku, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Also, Shiori, an OUC participant who was worried if intercultural interaction would go well at the beginning, reported an unexpected success of their actual interaction: “I was worried if they would understand my English, but it seems my partner had no problem with it, and the interaction went better than I originally expected” (Shiori, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Hiromi, too, was pleasantly surprised to find that perfect language was not necessary for communication: “I was surprised that my partner understood my English… I felt I don’t have to be perfect in English for communication” (Hiromi, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Thus, the anxiety caused by OUC participants’ lack of confidence in English was reduced as they found that their English was good enough.

OUC participants’ anxiety about language skills was thus negotiated and eventually reduced. Figure 11 below shows the transformation of the OUC activity system via negotiation of anxiety:
Figure 11. OUC activity system after SUBJECT-TOOL contradiction of language skills was negotiated
Just like UGA participants, OUC participants used dictionaries and online resources as a tool. Using the tools manipulated in the course of discussion (i.e., dictionaries and online resources in addition to language skills and intercultural communicative competence) encouraged them to respond to partners somehow, which made them realize their English comprehensible to their partners. In the community of each transpacific pair, the smooth flow of conversation and friendly comments about OUC participants’ English skills served as a positive affirmation of their proficiency. As the contradiction between the subject and the tools was negotiated within the activity system of each pair, OUC participants gained confidence in communicating in English and became more active in the discussion.

**Institution-Specific Contradictions**

There were some contradictions unique to OUC: anxiety about technology, burdensomeness, and limited excitement. In other words, many OUC participants were worried about technology involved in the project and overwhelmed by project-related tasks to a greater extent than their UGA partners, and they were initially less excited about the project, which was also the case in the pilot study (Nishio, 2014). These contradictions created imbalanced attitudes in task completion including actual intercultural discussions.

**Technological Challenges.** One of the things the teacher-researchers paid attention to in order to avoid any unnecessary student challenges was technology. After a number of discussions as to which platform to use for participant interactions, Google Hangouts was chosen for its accessibility, ease of use, and expected participant familiarity with Google-based services. The platform underwent repeated trials by the teacher-researchers and step-by-step set-up instructions were created in two languages, English and Japanese. After the project was introduced and explained during the orientation session, the teacher-researcher provided a
technological workshop using the prepared instructions. Each UGA participant worked with a lab computer, while OUC participants were provided an institutionally-prepared iPad. During the workshop, participants were instructed to (1) create a Google account, (2) try using the Hangouts service with someone sitting next to them, and (3) download the Hangouts app on their own mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets and test it out. There was enough class time for everyone to go through the step-by-step instructions, and any questions participants had were answered on site.

In spite of these efforts to minimize technological issues for the project, 42.4% of OUC participants still expressed anxiety about technology on the pre-discussion questionnaire which took place after the technological orientation. A few OUC participants noted technological difficulties at the beginning of the partner discussion. For example, some OUC participants could not find their assigned partner on Hangouts, even though they had their partners’ full information and should have been able to simply type it in into the app.

During the initial stage of transpacific interactions, OUC participants thus experienced technological issues with Hangouts, some of which may be caused by participants’ lack of familiarity to the specific platform or the app. The following figure (Figure 12) shows OUC’s activity system concerning technological difficulty compared with the ideal activity system:
Figure 12. Comparison between the ideal activity system and actual OUC activity system concerning technological issues
Because of the contradiction between the subject (i.e., OUC participants) and the tools (i.e., technological tools), the originally-intended object was transformed to some extent. As a result, some OUC participants experienced technology-based anxiety and even a delay in communication.

**Negotiation of Technological Challenges.** Some of these issues were temporary and the anxiety did not last. According to the email archive, nine pairs out of 33 experienced an initial issue of not being able to locate one’s own partner on Hangouts. As soon as each of these issues was reported, teacher-researchers suggested trying alternative ways to locate one’s partner (e.g., asking the other member of the pair to locate him or her, sending an email message to the partner before trying Hangouts first, etc.). All the issues concerning finding one’s partner were resolved within a day or two, and therefore participants’ anxiety and communication delay on this score were greatly reduced.

In addition, OUC participants started to feel more comfortable with the platform as they navigated through it. While the vast majority of OUC participants had never used Google Hangouts before, it did not take them long to get used to Hangouts’ technological functions due to its simple design and similarity to other communication platforms OUC participants were familiar with (e.g., Line). Eri, for example, reported “Hangouts was a good platform. I had never used it before, but it did not take me much to get used to it as it was just like Line” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). At the end of the project, 95.2% of OUC participants rated Google Hangouts positively for its accessibility and ease of use. Many OUC participants who were initially worried about technology thus found Hangouts accessible and easy to use soon and overcame temporary anxiety.
Some OUC participants, however, experienced persistent anxiety because of a more general fear of technology. Fumika reported her initial challenge related to technology: “I am not good at technology so I had trouble in setting up devices, sending a message to my partner, etc. I even made a free call unintentionally” (Fumika, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). On her first journal entry, too, Fumika commented on her lack of competence on the target technology: “Sometimes I messed up because I have not been accustomed to using Hangouts and Gmail. Like I pressed ‘send’ without completing my message” (Fumika, OUC, Journal #1, translated). In Fumika’s case, the technology-driven contradiction was more persistent and lasted for some time. In order to overcome this contradiction, Fumika asked for help in using technology from her friends, classmates, and the teacher-researchers. Fumika’s first challenge was to attaching a movie file of her self-introduction to send to the teacher-researchers. She did not know how to attach something to an email message, so she asked her friends to help. In spite of the friends’ help, her movie file did not get through to the designated project’s email account, so one of the teacher-researchers had a conversation with her on Google Hangouts to show her a step-by-step instruction of how to send the file. She also did not know how to use the Hangouts app because it was new to her. To resolve the situation, she asked her classmates who were participating in the same project for help navigating the Hangouts app. By the second week of intercultural discussion, Fumika found herself more confident in using technology: “I feel I am getting used to the app” (Fumika, OUC, Journal #2, translated). Thus, in Fumika’s case, the technologically-driven contradiction lasted a few weeks during which her anxiety and delay in communication persisted. However, the contradiction was slowly resolved as Fumika negotiated it by asking for help and making herself familiarize the app.
The following Figure 13 shows how the contradiction between the subject and the tools was negotiated:
Figure 13. OUC activity system after SUBJECT-TOOL contradiction of technology was negotiated
Initially, there was a contradiction between the subject (i.e., OUC participants) and the tools (i.e., technological tools) as described in Figure 12 earlier. The contradiction was sooner or later negotiated by subjects in various manners; in addition to individual efforts in navigating technology, some resolved it by asking the teacher-researchers for help in locating their partners, while others negotiated it more slowly by asking for help from friends, classmates, and teacher-researchers. By eliminating the subject-tool contradiction, the subjects eventually felt more comfortable in using technology and experienced no more delays caused by technological challenges.

**Negative Attitudes.** In addition to language-based anxiety and technological issues, many OUC participants initially went through negative feelings about project-related assigned tasks and, because of that, limited enthusiasm. For this project, both OUC participants and UGA participants were required to (1) complete two questionnaires, (2) interact with their partners, and (3) write a journal including a summary of discussion in the target language and comments on their own participation and their partner’s in the language of each institution. OUC participants were also required to work in groups to make an informative presentation video of the Japanese language and culture by putting together what they learned via intercultural exchange with UGA partners. On the other hand, UGA participants were required to write two essays in Japanese reflecting on their transpacific exchange. OUC participants’ negative attitudes about assigned tasks and reluctant feelings about the project emerged at the beginning of the project and continued through negotiations over time.

**Task Burdensomeness.** Pre-discussion questionnaire responses show that 63.6% of OUC participants were worried about project-related assignments. Although a very similar proportion of UGA participants (=60.0%) reported they were also worried about the assignments, it appears
OUC participants were more overwhelmed by the assignments. OUC participants were more explicit about being overwhelmed than UGA participants. For example, Eri, an OUC participant, commented on her initial response to the assignments: “When I first looked at the project schedule, I thought there were so many things to do” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Takumi also reported that “the assignments seemed challenging at first” (Takumi, OUC, post-discussion, translated).

Not only were OUC participants worried about the assignments, but also they felt the tasks were burdensome. The post-discussion questionnaire revealed that 51.6% of OUC participants felt the assigned tasks were onerous and 57.5% of them felt they had “no choice” to take part in the project. Kiyo, for example, confessed his initial reluctance: “I was overwhelmed by a burdensome feeling at first” (Kiyo, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Eri, too, reported her reluctance about the project at the beginning: “To be honest, I felt it was a little burdensome” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

**Less Enthusiasm.** Because of the burdensome feeling overwhelming many OUC participants, to them the project started out as an obligatory series of complicated tasks. When added to general anxiety and technological difficulty, the project was not necessarily fun and exciting to many OUC participants, at least in the beginning. The pre-discussion questionnaire reveals OUC participants’ more limited enthusiasm. Only 66.7% of OUC participants were excited “very much” or “so-so” about the project compared to 95.0% of UGA participants choosing the same answers. In addition, to the item on the pre-discussion questionnaire regarding participants’ willingness for keeping friendship after the project, 75.0% of UGA participants and only 45.5% of OUC participants initially answered “willing.” Thus, the degree of excitement among OUC participants were considerably lower than that of UGA participants, which seemed
to have an inverse relationship to the greater degree of anxiety and technical issues they experienced at the beginning.

**Gap in Subject Configurations.** OUC participants’ feelings of obligation and burden and limited enthusiasm about the project manifested as examples of two different configurations of the subject. The following table (Table 4) shows participants’ answers on the pre-discussion questionnaire that concerns their motivation for the project.

Table 4

*Comparison of pre-discussion questionnaire answers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>UGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying the target language because it is required for my major</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying the target language because of I am interest in the language and culture</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having experience of using the target language in real life settings</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the experience of communicating with people of the target language and culture</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking forward to learning the target language through the project</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking forward to learning the target culture through the project</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking forward to intercultural interaction through the project</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking forward to helping my partner</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in the table above, OUC participants were generally less motivated and more worried about the project than their UGA partners. First, OUC participants were less interested in the target language and culture than UGA participants. OUC participants’ major motivation to take the English course where this project took place was “because it is required for my major (=90.9%),” eclipsing more personal reasons such as “because I am interested in the language and culture (=33.3%).” Second, OUC participants were less experienced in using the target language. Only 39.4% of OUC participants had the experience of actually speaking the target language in real life settings whereas 60.0% of UGA participants had used Japanese outside the classroom settings. Moreover, OUC participants’ experience with communicating with people of the target language culture (=21.2%) were much more limited than UGA
participants’ (45.0%). Third, OUC participants were generally less excited about the project as illustrated in the “looking forward to” items on the table above. In contrast to the great proportions of UGA participants who were excited in many regards, more than half of OUC participants were not particularly looking forward to learning the target language (48.5%), learning the target culture (33.3%), or helping their partners (33.3%). Although the table shows that OUC participants were looking forward to the interaction with UGA participants (78.8%), they were still less interested than their UGA counterparts (90.0%). In addition to the pre-discussion questionnaire, the post-discussion questionnaire also revealed that, as participants recalled, OUC participants were less excited about the project (66.7%) than UGA participants (95.0%).

Thus, there was a noticeable gap in the subject configurations of two institutions. Figure 14 below shows the gap between the configurations of two subject groups in two interacting activity systems:
Figure 14. Comparison of two object configurations

The subject in UGA’s activity system (i.e., UGA participants) comprised those who were generally more interested and experienced in the target language and culture, more comfortable and experienced in the technology used in the project, and more excited about the overall project than OUC participants. On the other hand, the subject in the OUC’s activity system (i.e., OUC participants) was a group of Japanese learners who were less interested and experienced in the target language and culture, less comfortable and experienced in the technological tools, and less excited about the project, compared to UGA.
Despite subject groups’ varying degrees of interests, experiences, technological know-how, and feelings within each institution, this noticeable difference in the overall institutional subject configurations existed from the very beginning of the project. Due to the interconnected nature of an activity system, the gap in the subject inherently influenced the object of each system. Whereas the premise of the object of two institutions was more or less shared at the beginning of the project, it is questionable if they also shared the degree of their motivation to achieve the object. That is, OUC participants’ motivation of attaining the object was initially lower than UGA participants’.

**Negotiation of Negative Attitudes.** Even though they started the project with negative feelings about the assigned tasks and less excitement, OUC participants nevertheless continued to take part in the transpacific interactions and work on the individual assignments such as journals and essays. As interactions went on, many OUC participants started to enjoy conversations with their partners, which eventually made them feel better about the overall project and about themselves. However, in spite of increased excitement and confidence, OUC participants continued to feel that the tasks were a burdensome obligation.

**From Negative Attitudes to Positive Attitudes.** As illustrated above, many OUC participants were more worried than excited about the project because of a lack of confidence in their target language and technological skills. In addition, they were more overwhelmed by the assigned tasks and less motivated about the entire project. In spite of negative feelings and attitudes toward the project, OUC participants nevertheless began communicating with their UGA partners on Hangouts. As they continued chatting, many OUC participants started to feel more comfortable and to become more engaged.
Transpacific partners cultivated friendships with each other as they communicated on Hangouts. Shiori, for example, found herself start enjoying the interaction: “Interaction became more fun as time went by” (Shiori, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Sae, too, commented on how she started enjoying the overall project: “It appears the project is becoming more fun these days” (Sae, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire). Satoru described how his anxiety disappeared as he became friends with his partner Aaron: “I started to enjoy our conversations. I was nervous about communicating with a stranger, but I started to learn about him through chatting over time. Now I think we are friends, not just project partners” (Satoru, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Satoru also appreciated his partner’s active participation: “My partner’s active participation is one of the major reasons why our interaction went well” (Satoru, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Takumi, too, reported how her attitudes changed over time: “At the beginning I thought this project would be a lot of work and I was worried if I could actually communicate with foreigners. But I started enjoying our conversations and I even felt sad when the project was almost over because my partner and I came to be close by then” (Takumi, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

Many OUC participants noted their appreciation of their UGA partners for their friendly, active participation which reduced anxiety and made interaction more fun. Eri reported how her anxiety disappeared after talking to her partner: “My partner was easy to talk to, and my anxiety was gone soon” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Sae commented on how her partner helped her: “My partner was very kind and attentive. My English is so bad, but she said things like ‘Don’t hesitate to ask, we are both learning,’ which really encouraged me” (Sae, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Also, Shoko commented on her partner’s active participation: “My partner was kind and willing to initiate topics” (Shoko, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).
questionnaire, translated). Satoru described how his partner’s active participation positively influenced his own participation: “As my partner was very active in discussions, I was willing to be more active myself, too” (Satoru, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

As OUC participants started enjoying interactions, the negative feelings and attitudes they originally had seemed to disappear over time. In OUC’s original activity system as shown in Figure 14 above, the subject (i.e., OUC participants) consisted of Japanese learners who were less interested and experienced in the target language and culture, less comfortable and experienced in the technological tools, and less excited about the project, compared to UGA. The following figure (Figure 15) shows how the subject and the object was negotiated and newly defined:
In the middle of interaction

OUC’s activity system

Object
Use language skills for communication
Help partner’s language skills
Gain cultural information
Increase intercultural awareness
(to a GREATER extent than before)

Tools
Technological tools
Language skills
Intercultural Communicative Competence

Subject
OUC participants

Rules
Community
OUC’s English class
Division of Labor
Evenly divided contribution for interaction
Solo responsibility for individual work

Figure 15. Negotiation of subject and object in OUC activity system

As OUC participants started to enjoy interactions, a new value was added to the subject characteristics: A group of Japanese learners who enjoyed interactions with American partners. With the newly defined subject configuration of OUC activity system, the object was also renegotiated and the gap in motivational degrees became more balanced between the two institutions than at the initial stage of the project. OUC participants became more motivated to achieve the object than they were initially. Thus, as the original gap in the subject configurations
of the two institutions became smaller, OUC participants’ motivation for the project became more similar to UGA participants’.

**Persistent Negative Attitudes.** Although OUC participants became more active in discussions as they started to enjoy chatting with their partners, some aspects of the project still appeared burdensome to some of them. Among project-related tasks, the weekly journals seemed to be the most challenging task for them. Each OUC participant was required to complete six weekly journal entries in Japanese online during the six-week discussion period, reflecting on overall interaction, their own participation, and their partners’ participation, just as UGA participants did in English. In addition, OUC participants were required to write a 200-word summary of the discussion of the week while UGA participants were to write a 300-character summary. Although a small number of UGA participants commented that the 300-word summary was a little time-consuming, the majority of UGA participants found the assignments adequate (=55.0%) or easy (=25.0%) and submitted them in a timely manner every week. On the other hand, OUC participants perceived the weekly journal assignment, especially the English summaries, as very challenging and very time-consuming (=29.0%) or challenging and time-consuming (=64.5%). In addition, there were a considerable number of late-submissions or no-submissions of journal entries every week.

OUC participants repeatedly noted that the English summaries were challenging because of their language skills and insufficient information from partners. Yasuki commented on how his English proficiency made the assignment difficult: “As my English is poor, it took me a lot of time for everything that I had to do in English” (Yasuki, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Niina, too, described how writing was time-consuming and challenging: “Because of my poor English, I could not express myself well in English and it took me time to write things”
(Niina, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). In addition to perceived difficulties in writing because of their English skills, many OUC participants reported that 200 words were too many, especially when they felt they did not have enough information from partners. Kiyo reported: “It was difficult because I didn’t have much to write about, apparently not enough for 200-word summaries” (Kiyo, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

In addition to the burden of English summaries, OUC participants continued to feel the overall amount of project-related tasks was excessive. Nami commented, “I felt there were too many project-related tasks” (Nami, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated). Eri, too, reflected on how overwhelming the project-related tasks were while appreciating the overall project: “Although I truly feel the project was very good for me, project-related tasks including weekly journals were a burden as I had to take time outside class” (Eri, OUC, post-discussion questionnaire, translated).

OUC participants’ issues with timely submission of assignments emerged when the first weekly journal was due and lasted until the end of the project. The following figure (Figure 16) shows two kinds of contradictions that lasted throughout the project:
There emerged a contradiction between the subject (i.e., OUC participants) and the tools (i.e., English skills) as OUC participants found difficulty in trying to write English summaries. There was another contradiction between the subject (i.e., OUC participants) and the rules (i.e., project requirements) that emerged out of OUC participants’ feelings about burdensome assignment amounts and content. The combination of these SUBJECT-TOOL contradiction and SUBJECT-RULE contradiction resulted in OUC participants’ submitting assignments late or not at all as well as some negative comments about writing English summaries and dealing with project-related tasks. In all, then, as transpacific interactions continued, some aspects of OUC participants’ negative feelings and attitudes were positively negotiated via engaging pair interactions. However, other aspects were more persistent and negatively affected the originally intended outcomes.
Inter-Institutional Contradictions

As illustrated in the previous sections, the telecollaborative project between UGA and OUC started with a series of intra-institutional contradictions. In addition, participants encountered inter-institutional contradictions that emerged during interactions. In what follows, three inter-institutional contradictions will be presented. The first contradiction concerns a misfit between the subject and the rules. The second contradiction is about a gap in division of labor of two institutional activity systems. The last contradiction is related to the disparity in the rule of two systems.

Contradictions between Subject and Rules

The proposed objectives of the OUC-UGA telecollaborative project were to practice using target language skills for communication, to help transpacific partners’ language skills, to gain cultural information, and to increase intercultural awareness through online exchange and a series of individual assignments such as journals and essays. The teacher-researcher informed participants of these project objectives during the orientation session at each institution before guiding them through required tasks, procedures, and schedules. Some OUC participants were absent on the day of orientation, and the OUC teacher-researcher explained the details of the project to each of them at the earliest possible time after the orientation. Some OUC participants, however, remained somewhat confused about the project objectives and/or procedures. Because of their lack of understanding, some aspects of the project procedures and assigned tasks were impeded until they were negotiated.

Lack of Understanding of Procedures. In Toru’s case, a lack of understanding of the project rules created anxiety and impeded punctual completion of tasks. At the beginning of the project, Toru did not have a clear idea about most aspects of the project, including the rules. He
attended the orientation, successfully set up a Google Hangouts app on his cell phone using his pre-existing Google account, and started talking to a UGA partner soon, just like other OUC participants. However, Toru asked his partner Ethan how to proceed with the project:

Ethan: *Hajimemashite, Iisan desu. Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*

“Nice to meet you. I am Ethan. Please treat me well.”

Toru: Hello! My name is Toru!

What is we have to do?

Ethan: *Juu gatsu muika kara juu gatsu ni juu roku nichi made nihongo de hanashite, shitsumon o kikimasu.*

“We discuss and ask questions in Japanese between October 6 and 26.”

*Juu gatsu ni juu nana nichi kara eigo de hanashimasu.*

“Starting October 27 we will discuss in English.”

Toru: *Sore wa juu gatsu muika kara juu gatsu nijuu roku nichi made wa otagai ga nihongo de hanasu no desuka.*

“Does that mean do we both use Japanese between October 6 and 26?”

Ethan: *Hai, soo desu.*

“Yes, that’s right.”

Toru: *Wakarimashita. Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*

“I understand. Please treat me well.”

(Chat log between Toru and Ethan, Japanese)

To begin with, Toru responded to Ethan’s initial contact by using English when he was supposed to write in Japanese. He then directly asked what he was supposed to with the project, and Ethan explained the expected schedule and language choice. Even though this interaction clarified
some procedures, it turned out his understanding of the overall procedures of the project was far from sufficient at this point. After ten days of active interaction with Ethan mainly on the topic of food, Toru wrote: “To be honest, I don’t know how to proceed with this project. It is interesting to talk with my partner, but I have no idea what to do from this point” (Toru, OUC, Journal #1, translated).

The following figure (Figure 17) shows a contradiction between the subject (i.e., Toru) and the rules (i.e., project requirements) of Toru’s activity system.

![Figure 17. Toru’s activity system at the beginning](image)

As illustrated in the excerpt earlier, Toru did not know what language he was supposed to use to communicate with his partner nor how to proceed with the project. Even after Ethan’s clarification on the schedule and language choice, he did not have a clear understanding of what he was supposed to do individually. According to the record of journal submissions, Toru submitted two weekly journal entries late in the first half of the six week discussion period. Toru recalled: “I had some late submissions because I didn’t understand how the project should work”
Thus, the contradiction between the subject and the rules resulted in anxiety and some delayed submissions of assignments.

Toru’s partial understanding of the expected project rules was negotiated as in-class project-related reminders were given every week and as he talked with other OUC participants about the project procedures. As Toru started to put pieces of rules in place, he started to collect his focus on getting back on track and following the expected rules. He wrote: “I think our English conversation went well just like Japanese conversation. I achieved my goal of following the pre-set topic. I also think my participation was active because I asked and answered questions frequently” (Toru, OUC, Journal #4, translated). In the following week, he wrote: “I regret that I could not reply as soon as I wished because of my personal business. I must improve the situation. We sometimes branched off, but it is not that we are off of the pre-set topic, so it is good. I would like to keep on going like this” (Toru, OUC, Journal #5, translated). Thus, Toru started to focus more closely on how he was following the project requirements. He also never missed a single due date for project-related assignments during the second half of the project. As the contradiction between the subject and the rules was negotiated via partner clarification and in-class exposure to expected rules, Toru successfully came back on track and participated in the project in an active and punctual manner.

**Partial Understanding of Requirements.** In Noriko’s case, a limited understanding of project requirements caused minimal interaction with her partner Bella and an extensive silent period until she realized what she was supposed to do. During each three-week discussion period, all participants were asked to prepare a minimum of three discussion questions beforehand so that there would be at least six discussion questions for each transpacific pair to discuss in each discussion period. Moreover, participants were instructed to expand on the
prepared questions to continue active discussions for the entire three weeks. In some pairs, participants often branched off the pre-set discussion questions and followed the emergent directions to come up with more relevant, interesting discussion questions, while other pairs discussed all the prepared questions and expanded on the topic for the rest of the discussion period. In most cases, participants continued talking to each other for the whole three weeks, both on and off topic, so they did not experience significant difficulty in summarizing the weekly discussion in terms of amount of conversation.

Just like other OUC participants, Noriko, too, started with asking Bella the discussion questions she prepared. Her questions were: (1) Have you studied abroad? Any particular impressions?; (2) How do you commute to school?; and (3) Are there club activities at UGA? Are you part of any of them? After a brief self-introduction, Noriko “was able to ask the pre-set discussion questions in the natural flow of the conversation with Bella” (Noriko, OUC, Journal #1, translated). She also “participated in the discussion with an intention to communicate with the partner a lot” (Journal #1) and “tried to respond to her in a timely manner” (Journal #2). Although Bella’s responses were sometimes late, Noriko actively participated in the first two weeks of the first discussion period by asking her questions. Bella, on the other hand, was relatively passive during the discussion because she “often neglected to check the Hangout app” and the first few weeks “was very stressful” due to assignments from other courses (Bella, UGA, Journal #1 and 2). Because Bella was not too concerned about asking her pre-set questions but preferred to go with the flow to discuss, she focused more on answering Noriko’s questions and ask some spontaneous questions relevant to the flow. Therefore, Noriko’s pre-set questions were fully discussed in the first two weeks of discussion.
Noriko’s understanding of the project requirements regarding the content of discussion was that participants were to continue to discuss with a partner until they ran out of the pre-set questions. After she was done with asking her questions, she stopped communicating with Bella when there was still one week left. As Bella was more passive, she did not contact Noriko, either, which caused a period of no interaction. The following figure (Figure 18) shows a gap in the rules between the ideal activity system and Noriko’s.
Figure 18. Comparison between ideal activity system and Noriko’s activity system
As illustrated above, there was a gap between the rules in Noriko’s activity system and that of the ideal activity system. Noriko misunderstood the instructions on the content of discussion and thought she would not have to talk to her partner any more after she finished asking her three questions. Because of her understanding of the rules, Noriko did not branch off of the pre-set topic, ask off-topic questions, or invite Bella’s questions but stuck to her minimal questions.

After four days of silence, Noriko learned from other OUC participants that she was expected to keep the conversation going for the entire three weeks even after she finished her three questions. Noriko then posted:

*Bella, it’s been a while! It looks like we were supposed to talk for the project. I am sorry I didn’t have a good understanding of the project. We have a journal due soon, so I will ask more questions. In Japan the major foreign language we study is English. What languages are mainly studied in the U.S.? Also, please share with me things you had trouble with, things you realized, and things that pleased you through your study abroad experience.*

(Chat log between Noriko and Bella, Japanese, translated)

Talking to other OUC participants, Noriko realized that she would not have anything to write about on the upcoming journal entry because of no contact with Bella for the week. So she explained the situation and asked multiple questions at a time. Bella, on the other hand, did not respond to her message for a while, which made Noriko send another message: “You have any required foreign language courses?” (Chat log between Noriko and Bella, Japanese, translated).
As illustrated below in Figure 19, the rules in Noriko’s activity system were thus standardized via negotiation with the rules of other participants’ activity systems. With the redefined rules, Noriko resumed actively participating in the discussion thereafter.

**Contradictions Related to Division of Labor**

This telecollaborative project was intended to provide learning opportunities that would equally benefit both OUC participants and UGA participants. Success of intercultural exchange was largely dependent on mutual cooperation in many aspects, such as frequent interactions, meaningful discussion contents, and friendly relationship. In other words, inactive participation in the project was going to not only affect one’s own grade but also negatively influence his or her partner’s project performance. All the participants were reminded of the importance of mutual cooperation in the first questionnaire and checked “I understand” before partner assignment.
**Autonomic Improvement of Division of Labor.** In many transpacific pairs, the number of individual posts was evenly balanced throughout the six-week discussion. However, there were some pairs where discussion was unevenly distributed in terms of participants’ attitudes. In Nana’s case, she was aware of her passive participation compared to her UGA partner Sofia, in spite of their similar number of responses. Sofia, an international relations major, was very passionate about the project from the beginning. She had been learning Japanese because she was highly interested in the language and culture, and she intended to use her Japanese language skills for her future job. Although she had never been to Japan before the project, she was going to participate in an intensive summer language course in Japan in the following year. In contrast, Nana, studying enterprise law, was learning English only because it was required for her major. She had never been abroad or interacted with American people before. In spite of her limited motivation in English learning, she was looking forward to this project, especially for cultural learning and helping her partner to learn Japanese.

As intercultural exchange started, Nana and Sofia actively communicated with each other. It did not take them long to become friendly through introducing themselves and exchanging mundane anecdotes. As Sofia was so excited about this opportunity, she asked cultural questions one after another along with her reaction to what Nana said. Nana, on the other hand, focused more on answering Sofia’s questions and did not get a chance to ask her own questions as much as she had hoped. Nana wrote: “I should have asked questions during our discussion. I feel I was only answering her questions” (Nana, OUC, Journal #1, translated). Even in three weeks into the discussion, Nana still felt she was passive: “I tended to just answer her questions” (Nana, OUC, Journal #3, translated).
For the first few weeks of interactions, Nana’s activity system was not necessarily what she intended. The following figure (Figure 20) shows that there was a contradiction between the subject (i.e., Nana) and the division of labor (i.e., evenly divided contribution between UGA participants and OUC participants).

![Diagram of Nana’s activity system](image)

**Figure 20.** Nana’s activity system in the beginning

From Nana’s point of view, she was supposed to contribute to the discussion in a more meaningful manner by asking questions as much as her partner. She was not satisfied with her underachievement in division of labor, which caused continuous anxiety reflected on her critical journal comments on her own participation.

Being aware of her passive participation in discussion, Nana was trying to make her participation more meaningful by asking questions. As discussion went on, Nana started to ask her questions to Sofia little by little. By the time they switched to English discussion, many of Nana’s responses included her reaction to Sofia’s earlier questions or comments as well as her own questions as shown below:
Sofia: Your English is good! I'm sure it is better than my Japanese!

What year in school did you start studying

Nana: Really? Thank you!

I began to study English when I was a junior high school student.

Your dream sounds great!

Do you have a Japanese friend at the Georgia university?

Sofia: I have a few Japanese friends. Some of them are even from the university I will study abroad at in Fukuoka next semester. Do you ever have any study abroad students at your university?

Nana: Fukuoka! I'm living in Hokkaido now. Fukuoka is far from Hokkaido.

When you talk with study abroad student from Japan, you speak in English?

I know many study abroad students at my university.

For example, my friend stayed at New Zealand and another friend stayed at Michigan.

(Chat log between Nana and Sofia, English)

As Nana started to incorporate her questions into ongoing discussions, she felt better about interaction with Sofia and her anxiety seemed to disappear. Nana commented: “It was nice I could ask questions almost every time I responded to her. It was really good that I could ask what I have wanted to” (Nana, OUC, Journal #6, translated). As illustrated in Figure 20, the contradiction between the subject (i.e., Nana) and the division of labor (i.e., evenly divided contribution between UGA participants and OUC participants) disappeared via negotiation through Nana’s continuous attempts to incorporate her questions without break the nice flow of
ongoing conversation. As a result, she came to feel better about her manner of participation and anxiety was reduced eventually.

**Figure 21.** Nana’s activity system after negotiation of division of labor

**Mild Frustration on Uneven Division of Labor.** In Nana and Sofia’s case, Sofia appreciated Nana for being a “great partner” and seemed very satisfied with their interactions (Sofia, UGA, Journal #1 and 2). It was Nana who was not satisfied with her own participatory manner and perceived it as overly passive. Unlike Nana and Sofia’s case, in some pairs, UGA participants felt that overall discussion was unevenly distributed as their OUC partners were rather passive. For example, a UGA participant, Chris, was a little concerned and frustrated about his partner’s lack of active participation in the discussion. This uneven balance of division of labor and Chris’ mild frustration were never resolved but lasted throughout the project.

Interestingly, Chris’ partner, Yota, was very prompt in responding from the beginning of the project. As soon as pair assignment was made by teacher-researchers and Chris send a self-introduction message to Yota on Hangout, Yota responded with his self-introduction
immediately. In a few hours, Yota sent another message, “Did my message go through?” (Chat log between Yota and Chris, Japanese, translated), to make sure his initial message was delivered. Chris then confirmed it was delivered, so Chris and Yota started talking about college life in Japan and in the U.S. and exchanging pictures. In doing so, there was another time where Yota sent a message followed by another sent a few hours afterwards, asking if his message was delivered. As Yota did not receive Chris’ confirmation, he sent an email message to the UGA teacher-researcher that he was worried if his message was delivered to Chris and wondering why he had not heard back from him. As Chris was informed of Yota’s concern from the teacher-researcher in class, he seemed surprised because to him things were going promptly. Thus, Yota’s expectation for punctuality was extremely high, and his participation was always very prompt.

Learning Yota’s high expectation for punctuality, Chris tried to communicate with Yota more frequently. However, as much as Chris appreciated frequent interaction and Yota’s prompt responses, he started to feel concerned about Yota’s passivity in terms of starting new subtopics. Chris commented on his mixed feelings of appreciation and frustration about Yota’s participation: “He is very prompt with responses, but I have to do most of the work of coming up with new conversation topics” (Chris, UGA, Journal #2). Chris’ frustration continued to grow as time went by, reflected in another comment: “Sometimes I have trouble finding new topics because he does not start many” (Chris, UGA, Journal #3). On the other hand, from Yota’s perspective, their interaction was going well: “I don’t think there are any problems in our discussion because my partner actively asked questions. It is nice he describes his life in detail” (Yota, OUC, Journal #2, translated). In addition, Yota’s critical comment on his own participation revealed his priority in frequency and promptness: “This week I couldn’t reply soon
because I was working when I wanted to. I think we could contact with each other, but only a limited number of times” (Yota, OUC, Journal #3, translated).

As Figure 22 below shows, there was a gap between the definitions of division of labor between Chris’ activity system and Yota’s. For Chris, “evenly divided contribution” included equal frequency and promptness, equal learning opportunities for language and culture, and equal levels of mutual respect and interest. On the other hand, Yota’s definition of “evenly divided contribution” was more narrowly defined and limited to equal frequency and promptness of messages. The interaction of these two activity systems with two slightly different configurations in division of labor lead to Chris’ anxiety and frustration about having to always initiate conversations.

**Figure 22. Comparison between Chris’ activity system and Yota’s activity system**
The contradiction between two sets of division of labor was never resolved throughout the interaction. During the individual interview after the discussion period, Chris described how he was a little frustrated initially about having to start new topics but “it wasn’t too bad overall” (Chris, UGA, interview). Instead trying to negotiate the issue, Chris came to feel accepting of the situation and his existing anxiety and frustration ebbed. Although Chris’ overall impression on the project was not negative, the post-discussion questionnaire revealed he became less excited about the project over time as he “just went with the flow” (Chris, UGA, post-discussion questionnaire).

**Contradictions in Rules of Two Systems**

Prior to project implementation, the two teacher-researchers had a number of in-depth discussions to set project rules including required tasks, schedule, and procedures. Except for post-discussion participant artifacts (i.e., Japanese essays at UGA and English presentation videos at OUC), these rules were shared between institutions. Although participants’ understandings of the rules were not always identical, each participant at least tried to follow the intended rules at varying degrees.

As transpacific interaction continued, there emerged a noticeable gap between the interacting activity systems in terms of rule-driven expectations. In other words, some participants were more bound to the rules while others had a more loose understanding of them. As illustrated in the previous section, Yota was trying to respond to Chris promptly and frequently. To many other OUC participants, too, following the expected promptness and frequency was such a priority that they mainly reflected about one’s own or partner’s participation based on that expectation. In contrast, UGA participants’ evaluation of participation was based on more diverse criteria, such as discussion contents, language issues, and partner
characteristics. The gap between OUC and UGA in terms of different expectations for promptness and frequency of discussion was a persistent contradiction that lay between the two institutional activity systems. Luckily for OUC participants, this contradiction was not a significant problem as UGA participants’ response frequency and promptness was not too low in the first place. In other words, UGA participants were enthusiastic to talk to OUC partners, which resulted in active interactions that happened to satisfy OUC participants’ needs for frequency and promptness. In this “win-win” situation where both OUC participants and UGA participants were happy about having had frequent and prompt interactions, it seems that the underlying contradiction in the rules between the two systems never became a serious issue in many pairs. What bothered OUC participants more in terms of gaps between two different expectations of rules was about tolerance for off-topic interactions.

**Gap in Tolerance for Off-Topic Interactions.** Some OUC participants critically commented on how off-topic their interactions often went while many UGA participants were rather happy about expanding the pre-set topic into more enjoyable, personally meaningful discussions. In the transpacific pair of Hikari and Tiffany, Hikari was more concerned about whether her partner directly answered her questions than Tiffany. For example, Hikari commented in her first journal: “It was nice she not only asked questions but also responded to my questions. However, I am sorry that she did not thoroughly answer some of my questions” (Hikari, OUC, Journal #1, translated). By contrast, Tiffany commented on the various topics they talked about during the first week of discussion: “Sometimes it was difficult to understand what my partner was saying because her vocabulary and grammar are more advanced than mine, so I would have to use the internet to translate some words. I appreciate how polite my partner is, but I wish she would talk more casually to me, especially since I am younger than her. I also really
appreciated how she sent me a picture of what she did on the weekend (hiking). It was nice to see what she enjoys to do” (Tiffany, UGA, Journal #1).

In addition, Hikari commented negatively on how their discussion sometimes branched off of the main topic, while Tiffany seemed to enjoy expanding the topic in a natural flow of conversation. The excerpt below comes from the conversation between Hikari and Tiffany where they discussed on the topic of language learning:

**Hikari: It is a new question from me. What is a difficult Japanese point?**

The point with No.1 difficult about English is pronunciation.

**Tiffany:** Hello!

That’s very interesting, have you ever thought about visiting America?

I think the most difficult part of Japanese is kanji or particles.

Do you have a lot of homework in your English class?

**Hikari:** Hello! I am sorry that I did not reply to you sooner.

I sometimes wished to go to America repeatedly. However, much money is required to go to America. And I had still gone overseas once yet.

Although it had said that you had come to Japan before, where of Japan did it go then?

In the lesson of my English there is no homework other than this project.

**Tiffany:** What kind of homework do you have taken out with a Japanese class?

**Hikari:** I do preparation for an examination for about 5 hours on the previous day.
Do you have an opportunity to talk with Japanese people in Japanese in a usual life?

(Chat log between Hikari and Tiffany, English)

This is the major part of their fifth week conversation. Hikari commented on her journal entry for this week: “It was nice I could discuss a lot about the topic. There were some off-topic conversation, though” (Hikari, OUC, Journal #5, translated). Apparently, to Hikari, the small talk initiated by Tiffany about Hikari visiting America and Tiffany’s visit to Japan was a little off-topic. The following excerpt is from the following week:

Tiffany: Hello! Perhaps one day you will be able to come to America for a visit.

When I came to Japan, I travelled to Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Miyajima. The one I liked the most was Tokyo because there was a lot of shopping. We had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister while I was in Japan.

I have homework in my Japanese class every day, and there are quizzes about once a week.

I usually do not have the opportunity to talk to Japanese people because there are not that many people who speak Japanese in America. I only speak Japanese in my Japanese class. Do you have the opportunity to speak English with Americans?

Hikari: Did you come to Japan and what mainly see? I have also been to the Kinkajuji Temple or the A-bomb memorial dome by the school trip of a high school.

The prime minister !?
Why was there such any precious opportunity?

You study Japanese every day! It is wonderful! Many foreigners are in the town in which I live. An opportunity to speak English sometimes has the visitor of a part-time job place, a tourist who here's a way, etc.

...tourist who hears a way, etc.

When you study Japanese, what is used in addition to a textbook? I may sometimes consider the meaning of the words of America’s song!

Tiffany: When I came to Japan we went to many temples, shrines, and museums. I also went to the A-bomb memorial. I thought it was very interesting to see.

We had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister because my elementary school was very close to Washington DC (United States’ Capital), and we have a close relationship with Japan’s government. It’s great that you have the opportunity to interact with Americans in English regularly. I wish I had that opportunity here.

In addition to a textbook, I use my teacher's notes from class and sometimes I use the internet to help me understand topics that are more complicated.

Have you ever studied any other languages besides English? In middle school, I tried studying Spanish for a little bit as well as Japanese

Hikari: For me who am a Japanese, your English is very kind and is intelligibly and I appreciate it!

It is very precious experience. In the opportunity for Japanese people to also meet the prime minister, it is rarely.
I studied Russian for two years in addition to English. First, it began from the study of a character and pronunciation and was very difficult.

(Chat log between Hikari and Tiffany, English)

During this week’s conversation, Hikari and Tiffany continued their discussion of various topics they had talked about in the previous week. Reflecting on the interaction of these weeks, Tiffany commented on how she appreciated Hikari’s effort to write long English sentences and on her positive evaluation of the interaction because of exchanging rich cultural information. On the other hand, Hikari’s overall reaction was about how off-topic some of their interactions were: “Continuing on the previous week, there were some questions that were off-topic” (Hikari, OUC, Journal #6, translated). She also critically reflected on the overall interaction: “We discussed on various things, but we couldn’t discuss the topic in depth” (Hikari, OUC, Journal #6, translated). In spite of the relatively negative evaluation of discussion contents, Hikari did not necessarily blame Tiffany or act disrespectfully even though she would have preferred to get back on track. Rather, she went with the flow, responding to “off-topic” contents and further expanding them.

In other pairs, some OUC participants were more critical about partners’ participation and more direct in getting back on-topic. In Toru and Ethan’s pair, Toru became more bound to the rules over time. As illustrated earlier, Toru initially did not have a clear understanding of the project rules until he learned them through his partner, classmates, and in-class reminders. As soon as he grasped the overall rules, he became so strict about following them. Toru was especially bound to the project rule of talking about the pre-set topics. On the fourth journal entry, Toru positively evaluated his own participation in terms of following the topic: “I was able to achieve the goal of talking about the topic” (Toru, OUC, Journal #4, translated).
When Toru encountered an off-topic flow in his interaction with Ethan, he directly brought the conversation back on track. The following excerpt comes from the last week of their discussion where Ethan started talking about the cooking club Toru was in:

Ethan: *Have you done anything interesting with the cooking club recently?*

Toru: *I have done nothing with that. And I have made a dinner recently. I have learned to make a dish. I like France. So, I learned English and Japanese and I wanted to make dish of France by visiting France. Also, language is useful for these cases. Especially, English is spoken by many people all over the world. Therefore, we should know again they are important for us.*

Ethan: *I haven't tried many French foods, but I like Cordon bleu and quiche lorraine.*

Toru: *They are nice! I like them too! By the way, we must talk about the meaning of learning languages, don't you?*

(Chat log between Toru and Ethan, English)

Ethan was finished with his pre-set discussion questions by that time, so he opened a new topic on the cooking club to keep the conversation going. Toru, on the other hand, responded to Ethan’s question and managed to bring the flow to the main topic of language learning. However, Ethan kept talking about food rather than language learning in his next turn. In reaction to this, Toru finally pointed out that they were supposed to talk about language learning in a rather direct manner (“By the way, we must talk about the meaning of learning languages, don't you?”). For this week’s journal entry, Toru wrote: “I did nothing that’s a waste of time because I was following the topic” (Toru, OUC, Journal #6, translated).
Both Hikari’s case and Toru’s case show a gap within some pairs in their sense of boundedness to the project rules. The figure below (Figure 23) shows the contradiction in the different relationships between the subject and the rules.

**Hikari and Toru’ activity system**

**Tiffany and Ethan’s activity system**

*Figure 23. Comparison between rules of two activity systems*

In Hikari and Toru’s activity system, the relationship between the subject (i.e., Hikari and Toru) and the rules (i.e., project requirements) were so tight that following the rules was very important to Hikari and Toru. On the other hand, in Tiffany and Ethan’s activity system, the relationship between the subject (i.e., Tiffany and Ethan) was not as tight so that their participation in the interaction was less strictly bound to the project expectations. In Hikari’s case, this contradiction was not explicitly negotiated during the interaction with Tiffany. Rather, she did not break the flow of their conversation even when it went off-topic. Instead, she implicitly negotiated this contradiction within her journal entries by critically reflecting on how off-topic some of their
conversation was. On the other hand, in Toru’s case, this contradiction was more explicitly negotiated during the interaction with Ethan. When Toru encountered an off-topic flow of conversation, he managed to interrupt it to bring it back to where it should be by directly pointing it out.

**Summary**

This chapter reports that two kinds of contradictions were found: intra-institutional contradictions and inter-institutional contradictions. First, a major intra-institutional contradiction common to two institutions, anxiety about language skill, was identified and its transformation was then analyzed. Then two kinds of institution-specific intra-institutional contradictions were identified: OUC’s technological challenges and negative attitudes. Some of these contradictions (e.g., less excitement) was negotiated and resolved over time, while others were more persistent so that they were never resolved. Following intra-institutional contradictions, three kinds of inter-cultural contradictions were identified and analyzed: contradiction between subject and rules, contradictions related to division of labor, and contradictions in rules of two activity systems. Activity systems analysis of each contradiction delineated its unique emergence and dynamic negotiation over time.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 illustrated the emergence and transformation of one intra-institutional contradiction related to language skills experienced by both OUC participants and UGA participants and two OUC-specific intra-institutional contradictions regarding use of technology and a sense of burdensomeness. The previous chapter also identified three inter-institutional contradictions: OUC participants’ lack of understanding of the rules, uneven participation, and uneven tolerance for off-topic interactions. In this chapter, these contradictions will be interpreted in terms of the broader institutional and societal contexts in which they are embedded. Methodological consideration and pedagogical implications will also be drawn and future directions of this study will be addressed.

Understanding Contradictions

Scholarship suggests that telecollaborative communication comprises a web of interactive relationships between institutions, and each telecollaborative project offers a variety of situated reasons for its success and failure (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006; O’Dowd & Ware, 2009). O’Dowd and Ritter (2006), for example, propose an inventory of reasons for failed communication in telecollaboration and divide them into four major levels: individual, classroom, socioinstitutional, and interaction. Applying these categories in the present study, we might interpret a gap in learner motivation as resulting in a disparity in attitudes toward the project on the individual level. On the classroom level, different community configurations caused an imbalanced understanding of the project procedures and requirements. One might further classify
the varying degrees of anxiety about language skills and technological know-how that emerged during the study as sources of failed communication at the institutional level. Finally, an implicit conflict in communicative manners was identified due to different task-orientations of the two cultural groups on the interactional level. We can examine contradictions at each of these levels in greater depth.

**Learner Motivation**

In a narrative-based study of a college-level Spanish learner, Negueruela-Azarola (2011) found that she had obligatory motives to learn Spanish and did minimal work in the classroom. Negueruela-Azarola contends that we need to pay greater attention to how such classroom behavior is logically connected to language requirements, learner motivation, and learning outcomes. Applying this work to a comparison of OUC and UGA, we might view this logical connection as manifesting more powerfully in the OUC classroom. As we have seen, OUC participants displayed a strong sense of obligation and minimal motivation for practical learning. In addition, another factor, burdensomeness, was added on to the already low motivation. It is helpful in this context to understand that Japanese college students’ typical attitudes toward college-level courses are much less studious than American students because many future employers in Japan do not ask for applicants’ college GPAs but focus on completion of college-level courses (Handa, 2006). Drawing on and expanding Belz’ (2001) work on the impact of “institutionalized classroom scripts” (p.227) on the functionality of student group discussion, this study found that there was a critical difference between the culture-specific classroom scripts of OUC and UGA in terms of academic expectations. In addition, the contradiction in learner motivation among OUC participants may also have been due to another gap in institutionalized classroom scripts of the two institutions concerning participants’ preexisting academic
experiences in college. Unlike U.S. classrooms where students typically invest a great deal of time in the completion of frequent, low-stakes evaluation opportunities (Belz, 2001), many courses in Japanese colleges do not require students’ active participation in classroom nor require homework assignments and out-of-class self-study, and student assessment is solely dependent on one or two in-class written tests (Abe, 1998). Given the cultural standards based on their previous college experiences and expectations, OUC students seem to have seen the series of tasks in this project as unusually burdensome and demanding. When facing the OUC-UGA telecollaboration, I would contend that these factors integrally created negative attitudes toward the project during the initial stage.

It is important to note, however, that learner motivation is not always stable nor necessarily critical for successful learning outcomes but is more dynamically negotiated in learners (MacIntyre, 2002; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Norton, 2013). Activity theory as a whole is more consistent with a configuration of learner motivation as complex, negotiated within and across preexisting historical features and emergent factors (Lantolf & Genung, 2002). In this view, some contributing factors may emerge more powerfully than others, dynamically changing both the degree and quality of learner motivation at a given time. Although OUC participants’ initial motivation was multifaceted and included positive feelings about the telecollaboration (e.g., excited about interaction, valuing learning opportunities, etc.), negative feelings such as anxiety, fear, and burdensomeness were dominant at the beginning. Nevertheless, as they started enjoying transpacific interactions, the data show that these negative feelings were dynamically negotiated with emerging, pleasant experiences that strengthened their initial positive feelings. Some contradictions, such as anxiety about language skills and technology, were soon resolved
as they were dominated by positive aspects of learner motivation, while other contradictions such as perceived burdensomeness of class assignments were too powerful to ever fully resolve.

**Local Group Dynamics**

O’Dowd and Ritter (2006) argue that local group dynamics is one of the key factors for successful telecollaboration and that learners in intercultural exchange need to negotiate tasks not only with their online partner(s) but also within their local group. Applying this notion to the OUC-UGA exchange, a noticeable institutional imbalance was observed in the quality and quantity of local group dynamics, particularly in in-class opportunities for clarification, reminders, or encouragement for the project. As shown in the previous chapter, some OUC participants did not start out with a full understanding of what to do and how to proceed with the project and it took them a considerable time to figure it out via in-class or interactional negotiation. Although some UGA participants were also somewhat confused at first, the contradiction of their incomplete understanding of the task was soon resolved via frequently talking about the project details with their classmates and the teacher-researcher. The local group relationship within the Japanese course at UGA was intimate because most of the UGA participants had been classmates for the past two years. Therefore, they had many opportunities to consult with each other whenever they faced a challenge in the course of the project both inside and outside the classroom setting. In addition, the Japanese course met three times a week, which allowed them frequent chances to directly ask questions to the teacher-researcher.

On the other hand, OUC’s community was more loosely connected because of more infrequent class meetings, many holidays falling on class meetings, and less intimate classmates. Unlike the Japanese course at UGA, the English course at OUC only met once a week on Mondays. What caused further imbalance was that there were three national holidays that fell on
Mondays, which made the already infrequent class meetings more so. Thus, there were much fewer opportunities to ask questions about any difficulties or to be reminded of project-related tasks and their deadlines, compared to UGA participants. Moreover, unlike UGA participants, most of the OUC participants were new to each other. With the infrequent meetings and no class meetings because of holidays, they had little chance to become friends with their classmates who could have been helpful as peer consultants for the project. Comparing the community configurations of the two institutions, OUC participants’ persistent lack of understanding of the project procedures or requirements was a natural outcome of fewer opportunities for project-related discussions and reminders.

O’Dowd (2007) argues that language learners benefit most from networked activities when they are firmly integrated into their local classes where they not only receive guidance and instruction from their teachers but also reflect on their learning experiences with the support of their classmates. Drawing on this point, we might account for UGA participants’ active, punctual participation for, in combination with other factors, their intimate relationships within the local classroom. At the same time, we could assume OUC participants’ limited motivation and informational gaps were partially caused by their distant relationships in their contact classroom. This suggests that it is important to pay greater attention to preexisting disparities between two classroom configurations in order to better balance learners’ motivation and participation in a telecollaborative project.

**Language Valuation**

Corroborating Belz’ (2002) and Ware’s (2005) findings that a gap in language valuation may affect learner motivation and participation at the micro-level interaction in telecollaboration, this study also finds that differential societal valuations of English and Japanese in Japanese and
American societies, respectively, contributed to a contradiction. In Japan, there is an extremely strong valuation on English as a socioeconomic tool. It is a required subject through junior high school and high school. Its value is also indicated by the fact that the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) adopted a national policy in 2011 to start foreign language education (i.e., English learning) as early as in the 5th grade (MEXT, 2015). In addition to English courses in elementary and secondary schools, academic entrance examinations generally include English in every field. In many Japanese colleges, English language courses are part of major requirements while other foreign languages such as Chinese, Korean, German, French, and Spanish are often treated as secondary to English. Even after college, Japanese companies require their applicants to submit proof of English proficiency, usually with scores on the popular standardized Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) test (Educational Testing Service, 2015). With the macro-level discourse of English as a necessary tool for Japan’s globalization reinforced by national policies and media as well as the micro-level everyday practice of English learning and assessment, the socioeconomic value of the English language is quite high.

Nevertheless, the findings from this study suggest that regardless of the high socioeconomic value, learners’ interest in the language and culture may be undermined because of an equally or even more powerful discourse of obligation. Considering that the major objective of the English course at OUC was to improve students’ English skills to mark a certain score on TOEIC as a socioeconomic tool, the majority of the in-class activities was devoted to individual, drill-based self-study on a lab computer with no interaction between learners. Moreover, TOEIC tests are computer-scored using bubble forms assessing test-takers’ skills in listening comprehension, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary size, and reading comprehension, so
that learners tend to value accuracy of their passive skills more than practical, communicative use of English. For OUC participation who had these preexisting expectations for the test itself and a test-preparation course, communicating with UGA participants was an add-on activity that would not directly concern their test scores. The intercultural project was a burden many OUC participants were puzzled by for its objectives not related to the course objectives, and by its activities that were extremely demanding compare to other college-level courses.

On the other hand, while there were approximately 155,000 learners of Japanese as of 2012 in the U.S. context (The Japan Foundation, 2012), the Japanese language does not have as high a socioeconomic value as English in Japan. There are not many American K-12 schools that offer Japanese, and even if a school has Japanese, it is not required in many cases. In colleges, too, Japanese is merely one of many language choices for language requirements. There are little socioeconomic need of Japanese proficiency in students’ daily lives, and in most cases, learners’ initial motivation to learn Japanese comes from their strong interest in Japanese language and culture. For many UGA participants, this intercultural project was an enjoyable learning opportunity to use the target language skills, to gain cultural information, and to increase intercultural communicative competence, as originally intended by teacher-researchers. Given the situation, it was natural that there was a gap between UGA participants and OUC participants in terms of motivation to pursue the originally intended objectives of the intercultural project.

In spite of the greater socioeconomic value of English in the Japanese society, OUC participants were less motivated to use English for communicative purposes. Rather, their learning objectives had been shaped by their preexisting academic experience and institutional expectations, prioritizing accuracy over practical language use. On the other hand, motivated by personal levels of investment in learning the Japanese language and culture, UGA participants
were more motivated to actively participate in the intercultural exchange, regardless of the lower socioeconomic value of Japanese in the American society. This suggests that the societal valuation of a language may be washed out by other salient factors such as academic experiences, institutional expectations, and personal investment around learning a language.

**Cultures of Language Learning**

All human activities are built upon one’s experience in particular cultural environments (Thorne, 2003). The activity theory framework adopted in this study assumes that language learning is, like all other human activities, deeply embedded in the cultural memory around each institution, which naturally creates a gap in all aspects, such as expectations, objectives, classroom experience, proficiency, etc. In OUC-UGA telecollaboration, cultural backgrounds around language learning highlighted one group’s excessive fear and temporarily transformed the originally-intended objectives. Although both UGA participants and OUC participants expressed a considerable degree of anxiety about their own proficiency in the target language, there was a noticeable gap in the relationship between the subject and the tool (i.e., language skills) of these two institutions. OUC participants were not simply nervous about communicating with UGA participants, but they were rather scared to use English because of the culturally-established relationship between English and themselves. Unlike most UGA participants who started learning Japanese in college, all the OUC participants had had at least six years of English learning. English is a mandatory subject in both junior high school and in high school as well as in the majority of entrance exams to high schools and colleges. Therefore, learning English is obligatory in the Japanese school system, and Japanese students learn English in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting with a special emphasis on grammar translation, rather than communicative language learning, to prepare themselves for written exams. Due to
the right-or-wrong nature of English exams, Japanese students generally become more sensitive to grammatical accuracy, resulting in a low level of error tolerance in English. Even after high school, colleges generally require their students to complete some English courses to graduate, and many Japanese companies test applicants English skills on written exams as a part of their recruiting process. On the other hand, the majority of UGA participants started learning Japanese in college motivated by their strong interest in the Japanese language and culture. Other than the four UGA participants majoring in Japanese, no other participants were taking the Japanese course for academic requirement. The Japanese courses the UGA participants had taken in college were taught following a communicative approach where students were encouraged to use language for interaction rather than to pursue grammatical accuracy.

It is helpful in this context to consider language learning as an exercise in cultural translation (Pratt, 2002) where cultural values and meanings are negotiated on their own term. Seen from this perspective, OUC and UGA can be viewed as having two distinct relationships with the respective target language in their culturally-configured context of language learning. UGA participants’ anxiety about their language skills seemingly came from a lack of exposure to Japanese speakers outside of classroom, and it was not too hard for UGA participants to negotiate anxiety as they gradually gained confidence in communication by asking their partners clarification questions and looking up things on dictionaries, just like they had been doing in the classroom. On the other hand, unlike UGA’s situation, what caused OUC participants’ anxiety was something commonly found among EFL learners. As illustrated in the existing research on EFL learners’ anxiety (e.g., Liu & Jackson, 2008; Aydin, 2008, Williams & Andrade, 2008), OUC participants were not confident in their English proficiency, despite the longer years of learning the target language, due to the continuous emphasis on grammatical accuracy in the
input-centered classroom. The combination of the greater sense of obligation, less error tolerance, and a nervous feeling about a new venue for interacting for intercultural communication with native speakers (Lee & Markey, 2014) outside the EFL setting thus created fear-like anxiety before actual interaction with UGA participants, resulting in more explicit articulation of anxiety.

**Cultures of Use of Technology**

Thorne (2003) argues that technology-mediated learning is a cultural activity shaped by everyday communicative practice. Cultures of use of technology may differ across social, generational, institutional, and national groups, as illustrated in many previous studies (Antoniadou, 2011; Basharina, 2007; Belz, 2002; O’Dowd, 2005). In OUC-UGA telecollaboration, too, there were varying relationships between technology involved in this project, Google Hangouts, and the participants. Some were more proficient and comfortable with the app, while others struggled to get used to using it for academic purposes. Although these relationships were individually defined, there was a general tendency for OUC participants to experience the contradiction with the required tool to a greater extent than OUC participants. It is assumed that this gap in attitudes toward technology came from different institutional experiences with technology in classroom, rather than sociocultural practice of technology. With increasing use of technology for personal lives, American college students generally have basic technological skills both on computers and mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and they have been exposed to increasing use of technology in classrooms, too. Compared to American classrooms, Japanese college classrooms are slightly behind in using technology as a basic communication tool or learning tool. Unlike American schools, teachers and students in Japan usually do not use computers in classrooms, especially in the K-12 setting. It is after
students entered college that they first get exposed to using technology for academic purposes, such as word processing, emailing, making presentations, etc. Nevertheless, technology-based communication such as email is not always considered as a part of their academic communication. For example, American students and teachers may use email for administrative correspondences such as sending absence notices and making additional course-related announcements, whereas course-related communications between teachers and students in Japan are usually expected to take place only in face-to-face classroom meetings. Considering OUC participants had a basic technological proficiency in emailing and texting for everyday communicative purposes, the OUC-specific anxiety with technology were not caused by materiality of the medium itself. Rather, we may view it derived from different associations between a particular culture-of-use and a specific technological tool (Thorne, 2003). For OUC participants, emailing and texting were associated almost exclusively with their personal lives, and using them in an academic environment was not as established as in UGA. After going through initial anxiety, OUC participants’ personal relationship with the project-specific technology improved by individually negotiating the pre-existing technological skills from their daily lives.

Task Orientation

Languages can be learned for a number of reasons. Some may learn a language for immediate needs in their socioeconomic environment, while others may learn one in the hope they would watch a foreign movie without subtitles. Different learners value different aspects of target language proficiency, and their priority is always in negotiation with multiplicity in the configuration of their motivation and context (Madyarov, 2008). At one point some may emphasize use value of the target language in their lives, while others may prioritize exchange
value, the orientation towards earning a grade (Engeström, 1987; Madyarov, 2008). In OUC-UGA telecollaboration, UGA participants tended to value the interaction for language use and cultural learning, while OUC participants emphasized more on exchange value of the project with excessive rule-orientedness. As pair discussion began, many UGA participants positively commented on their new cultural learning, partner characteristics, and mundane anecdotes they exchanged through interaction. On the other hand, OUC participants’ journal entries were centered around how prompt and frequent they responded to each other or not and how they were able to keep their conversation on-topic or not. OUC participants even felt frustrated when their partners’ responses were not punctual or on-topic as they hoped because their intended relationship with the project rules was intervened, which they thought would put their grades at risk. This frustration was not uncommon among other OUC participants, as many of them often articulated in their journal entries that they did not have enough information to write about for weekly summaries due to infrequent responses from their partners and a lack of on-topic contents. Considering there was no single comment like this among UGA participants who were also required to summarize their weekly interaction, promptness and on-topic contents were not as prioritized by UGA participants as by OUC participants. Rather, many UGA participants enjoyed off-topic interactions, too, for intercultural learning, not feeling obliged to discuss the pre-set discussion topics or worried about what to write for weekly summaries.

Use value and exchange value are not mutually exclusive of each other nor inherently contradictory (Engeström, 1987). One learner or group of learners may have a certain balance of these two values at one point, and that balance may be different from others both in quantity and quality. To OUC participants, successful participation was to follow the project rules for earning a good grade, and actively initiating entertaining conversations was not necessary for their
purpose. OUC’s emphasis on rule-orientedness because of the overwhelming exchange value, when interacted with UGA, led to their minimal participation and therefore uneven distribution of division of labor.

This also brings us to the question of what successful participation means in different contexts (Hanna & de Nooy, 2003; Kern et al., 2004). Some OUC participants, like Nana, were aware of the existing constraints (i.e., passivity in the interaction) and tried to improve their participation to achieve a more equal balance in division of labor with their partners. However, in some groups where participants failed to understand constraints and posit themselves as partners, the existing imbalance between OUC’s emphasis on exchange value and UGA’s orientation towards use value not only caused a gap in their participatory manners but also created mild frustration on one side of the collaboration. What was at stake for successful participation in present telecollaboration was not necessarily the existing contradiction concerning the imbalance of use value and exchange value of the two institutional groups, but it rather concerned how participants would understand the contradiction and do something about it by putting themselves in their partner’s position (Hanna & de Nooy, 2003). This suggests that it is vital for participants to be coached to anticipate possible emerging or pre-existing tensions and take action to resolve problems instead of simply going along without critical reflection or problem-solving.

**Methodological Consideration**

Human activities are inherently multifaceted and complex. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1987) provides a theoretical framework for understanding complex human mental activities. Seen from this lens, all human activities are artifact-mediated and object-oriented action (Vygotsky, 1987, p.40). Activities systems analysis is a descriptive and analytic
tool that incorporates notions of intentionality, history, mediation, collaboration, and development in constructing consciousness (Nardi, 1996).

Applying to the present study, activity systems analysis served both as an analytic tool and a presentation tool. In some cases, recurring themes were apparent in participants’ articulation of emergent issues (e.g., technological issues). In such cases we identified the subject first and the other element in a triangle of activity system where the specific contradiction lied between. After that the remaining elements were filled in to describe the context where the contradiction emerged and relationships between all the elements in the triangle were reexamined. In other cases, contradictions were so deeply embedded in cultural memory that they only became more apparent in the middle or toward the end of the project (e.g., task-orientedness). These contradictions emerged and developed more subtly and were multifaceted in its own configuration. For example, we could say, without clearly defined elements of an activity system, an OUC participant’s limited participation was a result of contradictions between the subject and the rule, between the subject and the division of labor, or between the rule and the division of labor. In such cases, multiple triangles had to be drawn and compared to each other to closely analyze its emergence, development, and transformation. For effective yet comprehensive analysis of the context, it is especially important to clearly define elements in each activity system.

This study also suggests that in defining elements of activity systems, we perhaps need to rethink the applicability of labels conventionally used in the model for language learning and teaching contexts. For example, a label such as “division of labor” might be misleading. Although there was nominally a conventional division of labor in the present study in that two institutional groups were each required to initiate a discussion, in reality most of the transpacific
exchange comprised a complex accumulation of mutual negotiation in a shared discussion without clear divisions of responsibility for communication. Using the term “division of labor” in the case of language learning thus goes against what we know about the jointly constructed nature of human communication and might leave a mistaken impression that one can always delineate clear boundaries among interactants’ responsibilities in discourse. This is a misconception scholars in applied linguistics cannot afford. Given that this model was originally intended for understanding human activity in the field of psychology, it is only natural that some terminology does not fit well with field-specific concepts and modifications are necessary. As the CHAT framework has been used in various fields of social science for its comprehensive depiction of context in human activity, it is important to give clear definitions of the labels or even rename them in order to accurately conceptualize and capture dynamics of language use and language learning that are critical to the field.

Although activity theory may not be a strongly predictive theory (Nardi, 1996), its capacity as a descriptive and analytic tool provided the present study with a useful framework to effectively present complex configuration of participants’ activities in telecollaboration and to help analyze tensions that were more deeply embedded in socioinstitutional and sociocultural factors. Especially, using triangles allowed for clear comparison between multiple activity systems that were interacting at a given time as well as between an ideal activity system and an actual activity system. It is suggested future research in telecollaboration can benefit from using activity systems analysis to illustrate dynamism of intercultural exchange and negotiation of contradictions that may emerge in a telecollaborative project.
Pedagogical Implications

The present study thus revealed complex, situated negotiation of contradictions involved in a case of telecollaboration. In the following sections I will present pedagogical implications drawn from the present study.

Minimizing Curricular Contradictions

Scholars (see, e.g., O’Dowd, 2007) have noted that successful implementation of telecollaboration requires establishing appropriate activities, ground rules, and assessment criteria, and finding ways to smoothly integrate exchanges into course curricula. Nevertheless, there has perhaps been inadequate emphasis in the literature to date on how essential it is for instructors to anticipate and minimize contradictions. Learning from a pilot study (Nishio, 2014), my collaborator and I made significant curricular modifications in our telecollaboration design in order to create the most effective communicative environment we could for the OUC-UGA project. These included rethinking (1) mode of discussion, (2) number of participants per group, (3) platform, (4) number of discussion topics, and (5) types of discussion topics. Piloting the project and being proactive about curricular changes allowed for a smooth integration of the telecollaboration from a curricular perspective and were essential to preventing contradictions that might have overwhelmed participants or stalled the project.

Choice of software and media platform proved to be especially important. Switching from asynchronous communication in Google Groups in the pilot to synchronous communication on Google Hangouts in this study dramatically increased the number of posts in general. In the pilot study, one of the major contradictions was OUC participants’ low level of participation, especially during the initial period, which eventually resulted in reducing UGA participants’ motivation and participation. With the change in the mode of discussion, the OUC-UGA
exchange described in this study started with and maintained a much higher level of participation in terms of the number of posts. The change in the mode of communication also had a positive impact on the quality of a single post; Instead of sending a long, one-sided comments on a discussion board the previous cohort did in the pilot study, the current cohort engaged themselves in exchanging shorter, more interactive messages.

Changing the structure of the transpacific groups also proved to be highly consequential, significantly improving student participation. In the pilot study, each group consisted of two to three students from each institution, totaling four to five participants in each Google Group. This structure unfortunately proved to foster a “you-go-first” atmosphere among OUC participants. None of them wanted to be the first among their classmates to post due to a lack of confidence in the target language and a heavy reliance on other members to discuss the assigned topic. This group structure thus resulted in two weeks without OUC posts, significantly delaying the pre-set project schedule and also lowering UGA participants’ motivation to post. The present study thus changed group structures so that participants were in OUC-UGA pairs, giving students more responsibility to engage in discussion and reducing potential anxiety from peer evaluation. As a result, unlike the delay described in the pilot study, the transpacific pairs of the present study started active exchange of messages as soon as the project began.

Switching platforms from Google Groups and Google Hangouts resolved the technological contradiction reported in Nishio (2014). My collaborator and I picked Google Hangouts from among various potential platforms for the present study because of its popularity, accessibility, and ease of use. As it turned out, almost all the UGA participants had used Google Hangouts or the similar Google Gmail chat function, before. Although not many OUC participants had used Google Hangouts or the chat function before, questionnaire responses
revealed that they nevertheless found the platform easy to use because of its similarity to LINE, a communication app widely used among Japanese college students. Using the chat function of Google Hangouts allowed the participants not only to engage in friendly communication like texting, but also to access the chat more easily, which resulted in an increased number of participants’ posts. Moreover, the alerting function on the mobile app was helpful in keeping participants engaged throughout the project period so that it was much less likely than the pilot study cohort that they “forgot to check the discussion and couldn’t post as much” (Nishio, 2014).

The choice and number of assigned topics also proved to be an important consideration in successful telecollaboration. The four topics chosen for the eight-week pilot study resulted in an emerging contradiction; scheduling delays resulting from OUC participants’ initial reluctance to participate made it impossible for participants to discuss all four topics. When combined with other contradictions such as technological issues and proficiency in the target languages, some participants felt they ended up with a shallow exchange of opinions. Given this experience in the pilot, the present study’s curriculum included fewer topics (2) and more time (3 weeks apiece), so that participants were to fully discuss the topic and enjoy expanding conversation. As the second questionnaire revealed, the majority of the participants in the present study was satisfied with the number of discussion topics as well as the length of discussion period.

Discussion topics were also altered based on experiences in the pilot study. In the pilot study, some topics were selected in order to integrate the telecollaboration with OUC’s institutional requirements for the course, including “Gun Control,” “Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP),” and “No Foreigners Allowed in Japan.” However, pilot data showed that these topics were too challenging for participants to discuss given their levels of language proficiency and stifled interaction. Accordingly, in the present study topics were chosen for their relevance to
college students’ experiences. This made possible a much greater exchange of information and opinion.

**Embracing Emergent Contradictions**

Despite even extensive advance preparation and attempts to minimize administrative contradictions, participants nevertheless experienced emergent contradictions. Some contradictions only become salient when two different activity systems interacted more in depth, and participants and teachers simply needed to work around them as they emerged.

While systematic solutions to possible contradictions might be ideal, it is also important to acknowledge that dynamic interaction between two institutions of different sociocultural, socio-historical, and sociopolitical backgrounds is bound to present challenges. This study’s findings suggest that practical solutions for contradictions in intercultural telecollaboration are never ready-made but only emerge in the dynamic configurations of activity systems and their interactions with another for the human nature of problem solving (Vygotsky, 1987). Therefore, it is more effective to cultivate an “intercultural stance” (Ware & Kramsch, 2005) and to use conflicts as developmentally available opportunities for students, rather than avoiding or intervening in every one. I contend that embracing emerging tensions in telecollaboration can be more authentic learning and exploration of target language and culture (Schneider & von der Emde, 2006) than, for example, superficial information about popular culture.

**Teachers’ Roles**

Telecollaboration comprises a series of activities, each of which may be configured in a complex manner. Scholars (e.g., O’Dowd, 2007) have pointed out that it is not online exposure alone that helps learners to improve interactional skills with distant partners or enriches their intercultural competence. Rather, in order to maximize students’ learning in telecollaboration,
teachers’ training and preparation is vital for smooth execution as well as for spontaneous decision making on emergent contradictions.

Teachers must first be prepared to identify socioinstitutional differences between partner institutions and make appropriate adjustments in preparation for telecollaboration. In addition to balancing participants’ proficiency levels in target languages, teachers need to incorporate a careful consideration on different cultures of language learning and technology use. Two groups may have very different cross-cultural experiences of language learning in terms of learning objectives and approaches. Also, groups may be in very different environments around technology use. Technology may be more advanced in some sociocultural settings than others. In other cases, one group may associate a certain technological tool with a specific context, which can be different from the other group’s use of that tool. In addition, this study suggests that teachers need to keep in mind that different language valuations may lead to a gap in learner motivation and resulting learner objectives for telecollaboration participation. To minimize potential contradictions caused by differences in language valuation, project objectives must be set in as practical a manner as possible and clearly explained to participants.

The study also shows the importance of teachers who are attentive to local group dynamics (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2006) in telecollaboration and how they might impact the interinstitutional relationship. It finds that negotiation of tasks in a local group can play an important role in resolving contradictions. It also illustrates that intra-institutional peer dynamics may differ across institutions leading to an imbalance in available opportunities for negotiation. Teachers need to be prepared to balance the quality and quantity of such opportunities as much as possible by helping learners build rapport (Belz, 2001; O’Dowd, 2005) not only across groups but also within local groups.
This study also suggests an important role for teachers in monitoring and maximizing student motivation for learning through telecollaboration. As learner motivation for language learning is inherently multifaceted, individual learner’s attitudes for telecollaboration may be diverse. Teachers may introduce a variety of potential benefits of telecollaboration explicitly, especially when some learners find it nothing but a burdensome assignment. Although learners’ motivation for telecollaboration does not have to be identical to peers’ or to the original intention of the project, discussing potential benefits of telecollaboration with learners may help them find intercultural interaction helpful for themselves and lead to positive attitudes towards the overall project.

In all, then, I would argue that focusing only on the potential contradictions that were avoided as a result of careful preparations by teachers is a lost opportunity for teachers and learners (Ware & Kramsch, 2005). Facing contradictions and solving them are an essential part of our daily lives, and those in language learning and intercultural telecollaboration are no exception. Successful execution requires teachers to posit themselves in the triangle of the activity systems as well as to make spontaneous judgments for teacher intervention by being objective of the interaction between the activity system they are a part of and the other. Teachers’ roles are not limited to that of facilitator in a telecollaborative project but also include model/coach to help learners with critical reflection on online exchange, and source/resource to provide learners with access to materials and information in need in a particular context (O’Dowd, 2007). Moreover, collaborating teachers are also intercultural partners themselves in a sense that they need to negotiate gaps in institutional needs and capacities via, in many cases, online communication like emails. Although perfectly prepared activity that benefits everyone involved and is smoothly executed with no contradictions may be beyond our reach, one of the
biggest factors for successful implementation of telecollaboration is teachers’ negotiation of different roles in the process of planning and integration.

**Directions for Future Research**

Future research is necessary to better understand the complexity of intercultural telecollaboration. It is particularly important to explore teachers’ role in the dynamism of exchange to corroborate the current literature that offers various examples of teacher roles and involvement (Belz, 2003; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2003; Chen & Yang, 2014; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Müller-Hartmann, 2007). Teachers facilitating technology in instruction have multiple roles, such as designer, coach, guide, mentor, and facilitator (Kelm, 1996) and “must be educated to discern, identify, explain, and model culturally-contingent patterns of interaction in the absence of paralinguistic meaning signals” (Belz, 2003, p.92). It is essential to examine teachers’ activity within the big picture of telecollaboration to critically reflect on their roles.

The present study mainly discussed student challenges in telecollaboration caused by cross-institutional gaps on various levels. Future studies may explore dynamism of individual negotiation of interaction. Particularly, a close look at interaction will shed light on how learner agency is negotiated (Basharina, 2009), how digital identity is constructed (Thorne, et al. 2015; Vandergriff, 2013a), and how learners interpret shared space (Yang, 2011). These will also lead to exploring negotiation of humor (Vandergriff & Fuchs, 2009) and emotive communication (Vandergriff, 2013b) in computer-mediated intercultural communication.

**Conclusion**

Using CHAT as analytical lens, this study showed some examples of dynamism within and across human activity systems and their transformational outcomes. Although cross-institutional gaps were highlighted in this study, it is important to note that configuration of an
activity was always unique at the levels of individuals, classrooms, institutions, and interactions of the two groups, and never was stable. Some of them were preexisting while others emerged or became more apparent through interaction. Some contradictions were resolved soon while others were more persistent. Some contradictions were negotiated via subjects’ proactive approach to resolve a particular issue, while other contradictions resolved themselves in the natural flow of interaction. For future projects, it is suggested that although teachers need to minimize potential contradictions in advance by carefully examining various factors on the levels of individual, classroom, socioinstitutional, and interaction, it is more practically important to be ready for spontaneous decision making and using emergent contradictions as learning opportunities.
REFERENCES


Madyarov, I., & Taef, A. (2012). Contradictions in a Distance Course for a Marginalized Population at a Middle Eastern University. *International Review of Research in Open & Distance Learning, 13*(2).


APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: PRE-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

Intercultural Project Questionnaire #1
Note that any personal information you provide will be kept confidential.

*必須

Demographic Information

1. Full name *

2. Age *

3. Gender *
   〇 Male
   〇 Female

4. Major *

Linguistic Background

5. What is your first language? *
   〇 English
   〇 その他: __________________________

6. Are you bilingual/multilingual? *
   Being bilingual/multilingual here refers to having had a constant exposure to two or more languages outside the educational settings. (e.g., at home, in your community)
   〇 Yes
   〇 No
7. If yes to the question above, what are you bilingual/multilingual in? To what extent? How did you come to be?


8. What language(s) have you learned before? *


9. When and how long? How? (e.g., in school, tutored, self-study)


Intercultural Experience

10. Have you lived in any foreign country before? *
    1つだけマークしてください。
    □ Yes
    □ No

11. If yes to the question above, when, where, for how long, and why?


12. Have you had a constant exposure to cultures other than your own growing up? *
    1つだけマークしてください。
    □ Yes
    □ No
13. If yes to the question above, please describe your experience briefly.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

14. Have you experienced any major misunderstandings or conflicts caused by cultural differences? *

〇 Yes 〇 No

15. If yes to the question above, please describe your experience briefly.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Japanese Learning

16. Why are you learning Japanese? *

Check all that apply.

〇 Required for my major
〇 Needed for job hunting
〇 Needed for my future job
〇 Needed in my daily life
〇 Interested in the language and culture
〇 その他: ______________________________________________________________
17. What interests you in learning Japanese? *
   - Pop culture
   - Traditional culture
   - History
   - People
   - Society
   - Language
   - その他

18. Have you been to Japan? *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   - Yes
   - No

19. If yes to the question above, when and how long were you there? What was the purpose of your visit?

20. Have you had a constant exposure (in person or online) to a Japanese person before? *
   Please do not count your Japanese-language teachers here.
   1つだけマークしてください。
   - Yes
   - No

21. If yes to the question above, please describe your experience briefly.
22. Based on your first-hand experience or what you have heard, how would you characterize a typical Japanese person? 

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

23. Based on your first-hand experience or what you have heard, what are some examples of typical Japanese values and/or behaviors? *

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Project

24. Have you participated in an intercultural project like this? *
   Referring to in-class, well-organized projects only. Not including personal interactions on SNSs.
   1つだけマークしてください。
   " " Yes
   " " No

25. If yes to the question above, please briefly describe your experience.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
26. **In taking part in this project, how important are these to you?**
   
   Your answers will NOT affect your grade, so please provide your candid opinions.
   
   行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unimportant/ I don't care</th>
<th>Of little importance</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning your partner's cultures and values</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing your cultures and values with your partner</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving your Japanese</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping your partner with their English</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having frequent/active interactions with your partner</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating interactions</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping friendship with your partner even after the project is over</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a good Project grade</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. **At this point in time, what do you think about the project?**
   
   Your answers will NOT affect your grade, so please provide your candid opinions.
   
   行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not so much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No choice&quot;</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbersome</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. **What are you excited about?**
   
   Check all that apply.
   
   査定をするものをすべて選択してください。

   - [ ] Practicing Japanese
   - [ ] Learning about different cultures and values
   - [ ] Communicating with Japanese people
   - [ ] Helping your partner's language skills
   - [ ] Using technology
   - [ ] Not excited at all
   - [ ] その他: _____________________________
29. **What are you worried about?**
   Check all that apply.
   当てはまるものをすべて選択してください。
   - Using technology
   - Your Japanese skills
   - Your partner's English skills
   - Misunderstandings and/or conflicts caused by cultural differences
   - Project-related homework (E.g., journal, essays)
   - Your partner's level of motivation and participation
   - もの他: ____________________________

30. **As this project is realized by reciprocal contributions and mutual cooperation, you need to actively participate in the pair interaction.** Failure to frequently communicate with your partner would not only affect your grade but also result in taking away your partner's learning opportunities and affecting his/her grade, too. Please be considerate of your partner.
   1つだけマーキングしてください。
   - Understood
   - Will give up having a partner (No Project grade will be given)
APPENDIX B: PRE-DISCUSION QUESTIONNAIRE (JAPANESE)

事前アンケート

このアンケート結果は異文化交流プロジェクトを円滑に進めるために利用されます。また、研究目的でデータを統計的に処理し、個人を特定できない形で公表されることがあります。それ以外の目的では利用されません。

*必須

基本情報

1. 氏名 *


2. 年齢 *


3. 性別 *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   ○ 男性
   ○ 女性

4. 専攻 *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   ○ 経済学科
   ○ 商学科
   ○ 全業法学科
   ○ 社会情報学科

言語背景

5. 母国語 *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   ○ 日本語
   ○ その他: ____________________________
6. 母国語以外に流暢に話せる言語がありますか。*
学校でのみ学んだ外国語（例：英語）を除く
1つだけマークしてください。

☐ はい
☐ いいえ

7. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方にお聞きします。何語が話せますか。どの程度ですか。どう習得しましたか。


8. これまでに長期的に学んだ言語がありますか。*
当てはまるものを全て選択
当てはまるものをすべて選択してください。

☐ 英語（学校で）
☐ 英語（学校以外で）
☐ その他：

9. 上の質問で「Other（その他）」を選択した方にお聞きします。どこで、どれぐらいの期間
勉強しましたか。


異文化交流の経験

10. 外国に住んでいたことがありますか。*
1つだけマークしてください。

☐ はい
☐ いいえ
11. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方にお聞きします。いつ、どこに、どのぐらいの期間住んでいましたか。なぜそこに住んでいたのですか。


12. これまで異文化に深く触れる機会がありましたか。 *
1つだけマークしてください。


13. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方にお聞きします。異文化交流の経験について簡単に説明してください。


14. これまでに文化的な違いによる誤解や衝突を経験したことがありますか。 *
1つだけマークしてください。


15. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方にお聞きします。その経験について簡単に説明してください。


英語学習
16. なぜ英語を勉強していますか。*  
当てはまるものを全て選択してください。

☑ 大学で必須だから
☑ 受験や就職で必要だから
☑ 将来、仕事で必要だから
☑ 日常生活で必要だから
☑ 英語や英語圏の文化に興味があるから
☐ その他：

17. 海外旅行で英語を使った経験がありますか。また日本で外国人と交流するために英語を使った経験がありますか。*  
学校のAET/ALTは除く。
☑ はい
☑ いいえ

18. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方に問います。いつ、どこでその経験をしましたか。

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

19. 直接的にオンライン上に関わらず、これまでにアメリカ人と交流したことがありますか。*  
学校のAET/ALTは除く。
☑ はい
☑ いいえ

20. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方に問います。その経験について簡単に説明してください。

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
21. 「アメリカ人」と聞いてあなたが思いつく特徴を挙げてください。


22. 「アメリカの価値観、行動パターン」と聞いてあなたが思いつく特徴を挙げてください。


プロジェクト

23. 今までに、今回のプロジェクトのようなオンラインでの異文化交流経験をしたことがありますか。

長さの一環として行われる体系だったプロジェクトに限る。SNSなどでの個人的な交流を除く。
つぎのマークしてください。

〇 はい
〇 いいえ

24. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた方にお聞きます。その体験について簡単に説明してください。
25. 今回のプロジェクトに参加するにあたって、あなたにとって以下の項目の重要度を教えてください。*
回答は成績に全く影響はありませんので、正直にお答えください。
1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>全く重要ではない/気にならない</th>
<th>比較的重要なではない</th>
<th>比較的重要なである</th>
<th>最も重要なである</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>相手の文化や価値観を学ぶこと</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自分の文化や価値観について伝えること</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英語を上達させること</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>相手の日本語学習の手助けをすること</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>内容かつ活発に交流を進める</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自発的に相手に関わっていくこと</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクト終了後もパートナーと友人関係を続けていくこと</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクトの成績をよくすること</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. 今回のプロジェクトについて、現時点でのあなたの率直な感情の度合いを教えてください。
回答は成績に全く影響はありませんので、正直にお答えください。
1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>全くそう思わない</th>
<th>そう思わない</th>
<th>そう思う</th>
<th>とてもそう思う</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>楽しみだ</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不安だ</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>仕方がない</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>困った</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. 特に何を楽しみにしていますか。
当てはまるものを全て選択
当てはまるものをすべて選択してください。

☑ 英語の練習/学習
☑ 異文化についての学習
☑ 外国人との交流
☑ 相手の日本語学習の手伝い
☑ テクノロジーの使用
☑ 特に何も楽しみだとは思わない
☑ その他:

______________________________________
28. 特に肩が不安ですか。*
当てはまるものを全て選択してください。

☐ テクノロジーの使用
☐ 自身の語学力
☐ 相手の語学力
☐ 異文化交流による会話遮いや衝突
☐ プロジェクト関連の提出物や発表
☐ 相手の関心度や参加熱意
☐ その他：________________________

29. 今回のプロジェクトは相手との協力によって成り立っているため、あなた自身が積極的に相手に関わりが必要不可欠となります。相手への関与を怠ることは、あなたの自身の成績に影響することはもちろんです。队友の学習名を参考にしたのと、相手の成績に影響を及ぼします。お互いの状況を尊重しあいながらプロジェクトを進めてください。
当てはまるものを全て選択してください。

☐ はい
☐ パートナーを持たない（プロジェクトに参加せず、プロジェクトの成績を受信する）
APPENDIX C: POST-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

Intercultural Project Questionnaire 2
Please answer the following questions in English.

1. Your LAST / FAMILY name *

2. Your FIRST / GIVEN name *

Project Design

3. Have you used Google+ Hangouts before this project? *

- Yes, I have been using Hangouts quite often.
- Kind of, I have tried it a few times.
- No, I had never used Hangouts before.
- その他: 

4. What did you think about Google+ Hangouts as a platform of this Intercultural Project? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. On what device did you often access Google+ Hangouts? *

- Computer
- Cell phone
- I used both computer and cell phone equally.
- その他:
6. Are there any other online services or software that you can think of to be potentially used for this type of project? What advantages might they have compared to Google+ Hangouts? *

7. What did you think about the first discussion topic, “Education System and College Life”? *
   1 行につき 1つだけマークしてください。
   Interesting? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Easy to talk about? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Already knew a lot of what you talked about? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Learned something new? [ ] [ ] [ ]

8. Please provide a comment on your answers above about the first discussion topic, if any.

9. What did you think about the second discussion topic, “Experience of Learning Japanese/English”? *
   1 行につき 1つだけマークしてください。
   Interesting? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Easy to talk about? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Already knew a lot of what you talked about? [ ] [ ] [ ]
   Learned something new? [ ] [ ] [ ]
10. Please provide a comment on your answers above about the second discussion topic, if any.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

11. What kind of topics would you have liked better? *

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Project

12. Did you experience any technological difficulties in this project? *

Google+ Hangouts, App, etc., EXCLUDING ALF Learning

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. If yes to the question above, please explain.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. Was the time difference a big issue for you and your partner(s)? How did you manage it? *

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
15. **What did you think about the length of each discussion session?**
   Each discussion session was 3 weeks long.
   - [ ] About right
   - [ ] Too long
   - [ ] Too short

16. **What did you think about the number of discussion questions per session?**
   You had to prepare and ask 3 discussion questions per session.
   - [ ] About right
   - [ ] Too many
   - [ ] Too few

17. **Do you think your online exchanges were evenly distributed between you and your partner(s)?**
   One asked more questions than the other? One was always passive than the other? If it was evenly distributed, select "3."

   I was passive  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] My partner was passive

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. If you chose a number other than 3 above, please explain.

   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

19. **Regarding the participation throughout the discussions, how would you rate your performance and your partner’s?**
   1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>So-so</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner’s participation</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Please provide a comment regarding your answers above about participation, if any.

21. How easy/difficult was the project in terms of Japanese language skills? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Difficult / Challenging</th>
<th>Difficult / Challenging</th>
<th>Not so bad</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Please elaborate your answers above in the following box.

23. Did you have difficulties understanding your partner’s English? *

- [ ] Always
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Other: __________________________

24. When you encountered something difficult to understand either in Japanese or English, how did you manage the situation? *

- [ ] Asked for clarification
- [ ] Looked up
- [ ] Avoided dealing with it and moved on
- [ ] Other: __________________________
25. Did you experience any misunderstandings during the discussion? How did you manage the situation?

26. What did you think about the project-related assignments?  
1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Difficult / Time-consuming</th>
<th>Difficult / Time-consuming</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Please elaborate your answers above in the following box.

29. What did you think about the project-related instructions and reminders?  
1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Very Clear / Very Punctual</th>
<th>Clear / Punctual</th>
<th>Not Clear / Not Punctual</th>
<th>Very Unclear / Very unpunctual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the project</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological workshop</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair assignment</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class reminders</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email reminders</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal instructions</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over-Time Changes
29. **Looking back at yourself before the project began, how important were these to you?**

Your answers do not have to be the same as the ones on the first questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Of Little Importance</th>
<th>Unimportant / I don't care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning your partner’s cultures and values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing your cultures and values with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving your Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping your partner with their English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having frequent/active interactions with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping friendship with your partner even after the project is over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a good Project grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. **At the beginning of the project, what did you think about the project?**

Your answers do not have to match the ones on the first questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not so much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No choice&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbersome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31. At the mid-point of the project, how important were these to you compared to the beginning? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Became more important</th>
<th>Was about the same importance level</th>
<th>Became less important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning your partner's cultures and values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing your cultures and values with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving your Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping your partner with their English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having frequent/active interactions with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping friendship with your partner even after the project is over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a good Project grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. At the mid-point of the project, what did you think about the project? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot more so</th>
<th>More so</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Less so</th>
<th>A lot less so</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No choice&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbersome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
33. In the final week of the project, how important were these to you, compared to the mid-point? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Became more important</th>
<th>Was about the same importance level</th>
<th>Became less important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning your partner’s cultures and values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing your cultures and values with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving your Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping your partner with their English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having frequent/active interactions with your partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping friendship with your partner even after the project is over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a good Project grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. At the end of the project, what did you think about the project? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot more so</th>
<th>More so</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Less so</th>
<th>A lot less so</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No choice”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbersome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Please provide a comment on any major changes (attitudes, feelings, etc.) you experienced, if any. What do you think caused the changes? *

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Overall Evaluation
36. Was there anything that you hoped would go better but actually did not? Why do you think it did not go well? Also, was there anything that went better than you expected? Why do you think it was the case?

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

37. Is there anything in this project that you feel needs improvement? If so, please explain.

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________
APPENDIX D: POST-DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE (JAPANESE)

異文化交流プロジェクト 事後アンケート
下記の質問に日本語で答えてください。
*必須

1. 氏名 *

プロジェクトデザイン

2. このプロジェクト以前にGoogle社のハングアウトを利用したことがありますか。 *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   □ よく利用していた
   □ 何度か利用したことがある
   □ 利用したことがなかった
   □ その他:

3. 今回のプロジェクトのためにハングアウトを利用してみたでしょうか。 *
   1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

   良い まあまあ よくない
   
   千切り
   使用やすさ
   音声伝達

4. どんなデバイスでハングアウトを利用しましたか。 *
   1番頻度が高かったものを選択すること
   1つだけマークしてください。
   □ パソコン
   □ 携帯電話
   □ タブレット
   □ その他:


5. 今回のようなプロジェクトをするにあたり、ハングアウト以外に何か追加したサービスを知って
いますか。ハングアウトに比べてどのような利点がありますか。

6. 最初のディスカッションビック「教育制度と大学生活」についてどう思いましたか。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>はい</th>
<th>まあまあ</th>
<th>いいえ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>色味足かった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>話しやすかった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>すでに知っていることが多かった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>新しいことを学んだ</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. 最初のディスカッションビックについて何かコメントがあれば記入してください。


8. 2番目のディスカッションビック「外国語を学ぶ経験」についてどう思いましたか。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>はい</th>
<th>まあまあ</th>
<th>いいえ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>色味足かった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>話しやすかった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>すでに知っていることが多かった</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>新しいことを学んだ</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. 2番目のディスカッションビックについて何かコメントがあれば記入してください。


10. 他にどんなトピックがあったらよかったと思いますか。*

__________

__________

__________

__________

プロジェクト

11. このプロジェクトを通じて、テクノロジー関連で問題がありましたか。*
   ハングアウト、アプリなど（アルフラーーキングを除く）
   すだけマークしてください。
   □ はい
   □ いいえ

12. 上記の質問に「はい」と答えた場合、簡単に説明してください。

__________

__________

__________

__________

13. パートナーと連絡を取る際、時差の問題はどうでしたか。どう対応しましたか。*

__________

__________

__________

__________

14. それぞれのディスカッションセッションの長さについてどう思いましたか。*
   それぞれ3回間つ
   すだけマークしてください。
   □ ちょうどよかった
   □ 長すぎた
   □ 短すぎた
15. それぞれのディスカッションで用意したディスカッションクエスチョンの数についてどう思いましたか。
それぞれのディスカッションにつき3つ
「1つだけマークしてください。

○ ちょうどよかった
○ 多すぎた
○ 少なすぎた

16. パートナーとの交流について、参加度や貢献度は同等でしたか。
　同等だった場合は「3」を選ぶ
　1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>私の方が受身だったと思う</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>相手の方が受身だったと思う</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. 上記の質問で「3」以外を選んだ場合、詳細に状況を説明してください。


18. 相手と自身のディスカッションへの参加・貢献度についてどう思いますか。
　1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>よかった</th>
<th>普通</th>
<th>よくなかった</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>自分</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>パートナー</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. 上記の質問についてコメントがあれば記入してください。


20. 英語を使用するという観点から、プロジェクトの難易度はどうでしたか。*
1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>とても難しかった</th>
<th>難しかった</th>
<th>どちらでもない</th>
<th>簡単だった</th>
<th>とても簡単だった</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>読みとり</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聞きとり</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. 上記の質問に関して具体的に説明してください。

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

22. パートナーの日本語を理解するのは難しかったですか。*
1つだけマークしてください。

- 難しかった
- 時々難しかった
- ほとんど問題がなかった
- その他：____________________________________________

23. 日本語・英語に関わらず、相手の言っていることで何か理解できないことに遭遇した場合、
どう対応しましたか。*
当てはまるもの全て選択
当てはまるものをすべて選択してください。

 □ 相手に説明を求めた
 □ 自分で調べた
 □ 話題を避け、別の話題に移った
 □ その他：____________________________________________

24. ディスカッションを通じて、誤解が生じたことがありましたか。どう対応しましたか。*

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
25. プロジェクト関連の宿題についてどう思いましたか。
（行につき1つだけマークしてください。）

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>トンとも難しかった / とても時間がかかった</th>
<th>トンとも苦しかった / トンとも時間がかかった</th>
<th>トンとも苦しかった / トンとも時間がかかった</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>アンケート</td>
<td>ジャーナル</td>
<td>作文</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. 上記の質問に対して具体的に説明してください。


27. プロジェクト関連の指示についてどう思いましたか。
（行につき1つだけマークしてください。）

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>トンとも明確だった / 時間的余裕があった</th>
<th>明確だった / 時間的余裕があった</th>
<th>あまり明確ではなかった / 時間的余裕が無かった</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクト概要の説明</td>
<td>テクノロジー関連の説明</td>
<td>ベア検証</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>クラス内連絡</td>
<td>メール連絡</td>
<td>ジャーナルの指示</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

変化について
28. プロジェクト開始時に以下の項目の重要度はどの程度でしたか。
最初のアンケートで答えたものを正確に覚えている必要はありません。今思い出してみようと思ったら、というものを選択してください。
1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>最も重要である</th>
<th>比較的重要である</th>
<th>比較的重要でない</th>
<th>全く重要ではない/気にならない</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>相手の文化や視点を学ぶこと</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自分の文化や視点について伝えること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英語を上達させること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>相手の日本語学習の手助けをすること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>円滑かつ円滑に交流を進めること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自発的に相手に関わっていくこと</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクト終了後もパートナーと友人関係を続けること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクトの成績をよくすること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29. プロジェクト開始時、辛抱する感情の度合いはどうでしたか。
最初のアンケートで答えたものを正確に覚えている必要はありません。今思い出してみようと思ったら、というものを選択してください。
1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>とてもそう思う</th>
<th>そう思う</th>
<th>そう思わない</th>
<th>まったくそう思わない</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>楽しみだした</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不安だ</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>仕方がない</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>はげだした</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. プロジェクトの中盤の時点で、開始時に比べて以下の項目の重要度はどの程度でしたか。
1 行につき 1 つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>より重要になった</th>
<th>重要度に変化なし</th>
<th>あまり重要ではなくなくなった</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>相手の文化や視点を学ぶこと</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自分の文化や視点について伝えること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英語を上達させること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>相手の日本語学習の手助けをすること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>円滑かつ円滑に交流を進めること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自発的に相手に関わっていくこと</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクト終了後もパートナーと友人関係を続けること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクトの成績をよくすること</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31. プロジェクトの中盤の評点で、開始時と比較して真剣な感情の変化はどうでしたか。*1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

| とても思う    | そう思う    | 変わらなかった | そう思わない | 全くそう思わない |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------
| 楽しくなかった |               |                |               |                 |
| 不安になった   |               |                |               |                 |
| 仕方がないという気持ちに    |               |                |               |                 |
| 面倒になった   |               |                |               |                 |

32. ディスカッション終了間際の時点で、真剣に比べて以下に関する項目の重要度はどの程度でしたか。
1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>比較重要になって</th>
<th>重要度に変化した</th>
<th>あまり重要ではなくなっ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>高見の文化や価値観を学ぶこと</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自分の文化や価値観について伝えること</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英語を上達させること</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>理手の日本語学習手助けすること</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>奥様がかわいわれて交流を深めること</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自発的に相手に関わりていくこと</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクト終了後もパートナーと友に関係を続けていくこと</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>プロジェクトの成果をよくすること</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. ディスカッション終了間際の時点で、真剣に比べて素直な感情の変化はどうでしたか。
1行につき1つだけマークしてください。

| とても思う    | そう思う    | 変わらなかった | そう思わない | 全くそう思わない |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------
| 楽しくなくなった |               |                |               |                 |
| 不安になった   |               |                |               |                 |
| 仕方がないという気持ちに    |               |                |               |                 |
| 面倒になった   |               |                |               |                 |

34. 開始時、中盤、終了間際での姿勢や感情などを比較して、どんな変化が見られましたか。なぜそのような変化が生じたと思いますか。
全体の評価

35. プロジェクト全体を通じて、もっとうまくいくはずだったのにうまくいかなかったこと、うまくいくなかったのに意外とうまくいったことなどがありますか。なぜそうなったと思いますか。

36. このプロジェクトを将来的に展開させていくために、何か改良すべき点があると思いますか。
APPENDIX E: JOURNAL PROMPTS
(1ST WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, ENGLISH)

1. Your Name *
   In English

2. あなたが準備した質問は何ですか。どうしてその質問を選びましたか。 *
   日本語で答えなさい

3. パートナーとどんなことを話しましたか。100-200字の日本語で書きなさい。 *
   日本語で答えなさい

4. About YOUR performance in the project, what went well? What didn’t? Give specific examples from your experience and explain in English. *
   Eg., Participation, manner of discussion, language issues, technological issues, etc.

5. About YOUR PARTNER’s performance in the project, was there anything that you appreciated? What would you have hoped went differently? Give specific examples from your experience and explain in English. *
   Eg., Participation, manner of discussion, language issues, communication styles, etiquette, etc.

6. In general, how did this week’s discussion go? *
   つけた数値にマーカーしてください.

   1 2 3 4
   Not well at all   □ □ □ □   Very well
APPENDIX F: JOURNAL PROMPTS
(1ST WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, JAPANESE)

1. 氏名 *
日本語で

2. What were the discussion questions you prepared? Why did you pick them?
   * Answer in English

3. Summarize what you discussed with your partner in 200-300 English words.
   * Answer in English

4. 自分自身のプロジェクトへの参加を振り返って、うまくいったこと、いかなかったことを日本語で説明してください。
   * 例: 参加度合、話し合いの内容や進め方、言語、テクノロジーの利用などについて具体的に

5. パートナーのプロジェクトへの参加を振り返って、いい点、改善が必要な点を日本語で説明してください。
   * 例: 参加度合、話し合いの内容や進め方、言語 / コミュニケーションスタイル、マナーなどについて具体的に

6. 全体を通じて、今週のパートナーとのやり取りはうまくいきましたか？
   * 1つだけマークしてください。
   1 2 3 4
   全然うまくいかなかった ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ とてもうまくいった
APPENDIX G: JOURNAL PROMPTS
(2ND AND 3RD WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, ENGLISH)

1. Your name in English *

2. 最初に準備した質問の他に、新しいディスカッション用の質問がありますか。*
   1つだけマークしてください。
   ○ はい
   ○ いいえ

3. 上の質問に「はい」と答えた人は、新しい質問を書きなさい。

4. パートナーとどんなことを話しましたか。100-200字の日本語で書きなさい。
   日本語で答えなさい

5. About YOUR performance in the project, what went well? What didn't? Give specific examples from your experience and explain in English. *
   Eg., Participation, manner of discussion, language issues, technological issues, etc.
6. About YOUR PARTNER's performance in the project, was there anything that you appreciated? What would you have hoped went differently? Give specific examples from your experience and explain in English. *
   E.g., Participation, manner of discussion, language issues, communication styles, etiquette, etc.

7. Compared to the previous week, how did this week's interaction go? *

8. In general, how did this week's discussion go? *
   1 2 3 4
   1 Not well at all  2  3  4  Very well
APPENDIX: H: JOURNAL PROMPTS
(2ND AND 3RD WEEK OF A DISCUSSION SESSION, JAPANESE)

1. 氏名 *
日本語での

2. Were there any changes to your originally-prepared discussion questions? Any additional/ emerging questions? *
   1つだけマークしてください。
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

3. If yes to the question above, please explain your changes.

4. Summarize what you discussed with your partner in 200-300 English words. *
   Answer in English.

5. 自分自身のプロジェクトへの参加を振り返って、うまくいったこと、いかなかったことを日本語で説明してください。 *
   例: 参加度合、話し合いの内容や進め方、言語、テクノロジーの利用などについて具体的に


6. パートナーのプロジェクトへの参加を振り返って、いい点、改善が必要な点を日本語で説明してください。
例: 参加度合、話し合いの内容や進め方、言語/コミュニケーションスタイル、マナーなどについて具体的に

7. 先週と比較して、今週のやりとりはどうでしたか。

8. 全体を通じて、今週のパートナーとのやり取りはうまくいきましたか。
   1つだけマークしてください。

   1  2  3  4
   全然うまくいかなかった ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  とてもうまくいった
APPENDIX I: HANDOUT “PROJECT OVERVIEW” (ENGLISH)

Project Overview

Design

| What | Two small-group online discussion sessions (one in Japanese and the other in English) with Japanese college students learning English  
|      | A series of supplemental activities during the preparation, in-session, and wrapping-up periods |
| When | End of September through early December (including all stages) |
| Where | Google+ Hangouts |
| Who | JPNS3010 (University of Georgia)  
|      | E209 (Otaru University of Commerce) |

Procedure

| Preparation | 1. Orientation in a computer lab  
|            | 2. Technical set-ups  
|            | 3. Pre-discussion Questionnaire  
|            | 4. Pair/group assignment |

| In-Session | 1. Think of three discussion questions of your own for a given topic  
|           | 2. Initiate the discussion on Google Hangouts in Japanese  
|           | 3. Hangout with your partner(s) for three weeks till all of your pre-set and emergent issues are fully discussed  
|           | 4. Keep a weekly journal  
|           | 5. Write an essay based on the discussions (2 drafts)  
|           | 6. Submit your chat log to oucuga@gmail.com |

| 1st Discussion (3wks) | JAPANESE |
| 1. Think of three discussion questions of your own for a given topic  
| 2. Initiate the discussion on Google Hangouts in Japanese  
| 3. Hangout with your partner(s) for three weeks till all of your pre-set and emergent issues are fully discussed  
| 4. Keep a weekly journal  
| 5. Write an essay based on the discussions (2 drafts)  
| 6. Submit your chat log to oucuga@gmail.com |

| 2nd Discussion (3wks) | ENGLISH |
| 1. Think of three discussion questions of your own for a given topic  
| 2. Wait for your OUC partner(s) initiating the discussion on Google Hangouts  
| 3. Hangout with your partner(s) in English for three weeks till all of your pre-set and emergent issues are fully discussed  
| 4. Keep a weekly journal  
| 5. Write an essay based on the discussions (2 drafts)  
| 6. (OUC students will submit your chat log) |

| Wrap-ups | 1. Have a video-chat session and submit the audio-visual recording  
|          | 2. Post-discussion Questionnaire  
|          | 3. Individual interview with your instructor |

Discussion Topics

1. Education System and College Life 教育のシステムと大学生活  
2. Experience of Learning English/Japanese 英語／日本語を学んで

You are expected to create at least three discussion questions for each topic. Although frequency to communicate may vary, you will probably need more than 10 chat posts per discussion to fully discuss your questions and your partner’s. Avoid simple Q&As, but discuss the topics deeply and multi-directionally.

Assessment

Your performance will be assessed based on:

- Participation (discussions, questionnaires, and interviews)  
- Punctuality (questionnaires, journal entries, and essays)  
- Quality (journal entries and essays)
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### プロジェクト概要

#### デザイン

##### 内容

- アメリカの大学で日本語を学習している学生とペアとなり、2種類のオンラインディスカッション（一方は日本語、もう一方は英語）を行う。
- ディスカッション期間前、期間中、期間後それぞれにおいて補助的アクティビティを行う。

##### 期間

- 9月末～12月初旬（全てのアクティビティを含む）

##### プラットフォーム

- Google+ ハングアウト

##### 参加者

- ジョージア大学 (University of Georgia, “UGA”) 日本語 3010
- 小樽商科大学 (Otaru University of Commerce, “OUC”) E209

### 手順

#### 準備期間

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#### セッション中

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<tr>
<th>セッション</th>
<th>日本語</th>
<th>英語</th>
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</table>
| ディスカッション1 | 1. トピックに対してリサーチ用質問を3つ設定する  
2. ハングアウト上で UGA のパートナーからの連絡を待って、日本語でディスカッションをする  
3. 相手と自分のリサーチ用質問がしっかり議論されるよう、3週間にわたりディスカッションを継続する  
4. 毎週末ジャーナルを提出する  
5. プレゼンテーション用資料としてまとめめる  
6. (UGA の学生がチャットログを提出する) | 7. トピックに対してリサーチ用質問を3つ設定する  
1. ハングアウト上で、今回は自分からの働きかけでディスカッションを開始する（英語）  
2. 相手と自分のリサーチ用質問がしっかり議論されるよう、3週間にわたりディスカッションを継続する  
3. 毎週末ジャーナルを提出する  
4. プレゼンテーション用資料としてまとめめる  
5. チャットログを提出する (oucuga@gmail.com 吠) |

#### 総括期間

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### ディスカッション

1. Education System and College Life 教育のシステムと大学生活
2. Experience of Learning English/Japanese 英語/日本語を学んで

上記の各トピックに対して、リサーチ用質問を最低3つ設定すること。各ペアにおいて連絡する頻度は異なるが、自分の質問と相手の質問をしっかりと話し合うためには、3週間のディスカッション期間中、最低でも10回以上のやりとりを要することが予想される。質問への表面的かつ単純な答えのやりとりではなく、大学生としてより深く、自発的かつ多角的なディスカッションが望まれる。

### 評価基準

参加意欲（ディスカッション、アンケート、インタビュー）、期日遵守（アンケート、ジャーナル、プレゼンテーション）、内容（ジャーナル、プレゼンテーション）を総合的に評価し決定する。
スケジュール

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＊インタビュー：1月12日（月）、13日（火）

＊プレゼンテーション：2月2日（月）、9日（月）

＊ジャーナル提出用リンク、アンケートへのリンクはmanabaにあります。
APPENDIX K: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I, _________________________________, agree to participate in a research study titled “Intercultural Learning in An English-Japanese Telecollaboration” conducted by Tomoe Nishio from the Linguistics Program at the University of Georgia (tnishio@uga.edu) and Masanobu Nakatsugawa from the Graduate School of International Media, Communication, and Tourism at Hokkaido University (masa@res.otaru-uc.ac.jp) under the direction of Dr. Linda Harklau, Department of Language and Literacy Education, University of Georgia (lharklau@uga.edu). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. If I decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as mine will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless I make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information. If I decide to refuse to participate in or to withdraw from the study, none of my work in class activities related to the study will be included in the data.

The reason for this study is to investigate the nature of intercultural learning in an English-Japanese telecollaboration. The anticipated duration of participation will be eleven to twelve weeks (mid-September to early December, 2014) for JPNS3010 students, and eight to nine weeks (early October to late November) for English 209 students. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- Give the researchers permission to access online exchanges between me and my trans-pacific partner(s) that occur as part of course requirement in JPNS3010 and English 209 respectively.
- Give the researchers permission to access my project-related materials I submit to the course instructor.
- Give the researchers permission to audio-record my in-class discussion and/or individual interviews with one researcher about intercultural telecollaboration.

The data will be labeled with an indirect identifier that the research team can link to individually identifiable information, but the results, when disseminated, will not be individually identifiable. The key to the code will be in an encrypted and/or password-protected file, and the coded data file will be maintained on a separate computer. All the data from JPNS3010 and English 209 will be merged after the data collection is complete and will be securely stored online and shared between the researchers. Each file will be password-protected and stored in the researcher’s online storage which is also password-protected. Only the researchers and the director will have the access to view and/or edit these files. All the data, including online artifacts and audio-recordings of in-class discussion and/or individual interviews, will be retained for one year for full analysis, and will be destroyed after the analysis.

The benefit for me is the intrinsic knowledge that I am helping people study processes of second/foreign language learning and become more effective language teachers. Implications of this study may help current/future students of a language effectively learn the target language and culture.

No risk or discomfort is expected. The decision to participate or not to participate will not affect my grades or my relationship with the instructor.

No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Tomoe Nishio
Name of Researcher
Email: tnishio@uga.edu
Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

Masanobu Nakatsugawa
Name of Researcher
Email: masa@res.otaru-uc.ac.jp
Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

Name of Participant
Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.
APPENDIX L: HANDOUT “TECHNICAL WORKSHOP” (ENGLISH)

Technical Workshop

STEP 1: Create a Google account

□ Go to www.google.com and create your account if you do not have one.
□ Make sure the name on the account is identifiable. (e.g., “Tomoe Nishio” not “tnishio,” “tn,” etc.)

STEP 2: Email oucuga@gmail.com from your Gmail account

□ Put “UGA” in the subject line and your full name in the body, and send it to oucuga@gmail.com.

STEP 3: Activate the Japanese keyboard on your computer

1. Go to Control Panel.
2. Click “Change keyboards or other input methods” under “Clock, Language, and Region”.
3. Click “Change keyboards...” under the Keyboards and Languages tab.
4. Click “Add...” under the General tab.
5. Click the + symbol next to Japanese (Japan) to expand.
6. Click the + symbol next to Keyboard to expand.
7. Check Microsoft IME and click OK to close all the windows.

❖ After activation, locate the “EN” icon on the taskbar. You can manually switch languages using the icon and then clicking the “A” symbol. Or you can use the “Shift + Alt” combination to switch between EN and JP, and the “Alt + ~” combination to switch between hiragana and romaji. The cursor must be in a type-able area to see switching.

STEP 4: Set up your mobile device (optional)

□ Download Hangouts App on your mobile device for future convenience.
□ Activate the Japanese input system on your device.

STEP 5: Try a Google+ Hangout

□ Exchange your email address with someone sitting next to you.
□ On your computer go to your Google+ Hangouts and type in your partner’s email address in the “New Hangout” box and search for your partner.
□ Start a hangout with your partner in Japanese.
□ After a while switch to your mobile device and continue.

STEP 6: Locate your chat log

□ On your computer go to your Gmail account and click the category called “Chats” on the left sidebar. If you do not see the category, go to: Settings → Labels → click “show” for Chats.
□ Locate the chat log with your partner and select “Forward by mail” from the dropdown list.
□ Forward your chat log to oucuga@gmail.com.

STEP 7: Complete Pre-discussion Questionnaire

□ Go to: eLC → Project (under Content) → Pre-discussion Questionnaire
ワークショップ

ステップ1: Googleアカウントの作成

- Googleのアカウントを持っていない人は、www.google.comからアカウントを作成する
- アカウントの名義を本名に設定すること（省略形やニックネームを使用しない）

ステップ2: Gmailから新規作成で oucuga@gmail.com宛にメールを送る

- 件名欄に「OUC」と入力、本文に自分の氏名を書き込み、上記のアドレスへメールを送る
- Googleアカウント用にGmail以外のメールアドレスを使用している人はそのアカウントから送ること

ステップ3: モバイル端末を設定する（スマートフォン、タブレットなど）

- ハングアウトのアプリを自身のスマートフォンにダウンロードする（チャットに迅速に対応するため、スマートフォンへのダウンロードを推奨）
- 個人のスマートフォンやタブレットを所有していない人は、PCからGmail/Google+ハンガアウトをこまめにチェックするよう心がけること。Gmailと携帯電話のメールアドレスを転送設定でつないでおおくのもよい

ステップ4: Google+ハンガアウトを使ってみる

- 隣の学生とペアになり、Googleアカウント用メールアドレスを交換する
- コンピュータ上でハンガアウトへ行き、「新しいハンガアウト」欄にパートナーのアドレスを入力、検索する
- パートナーが見つかったらクリックしてハンガアウトを始める
- しばらくチャットをした後、スマートフォンから同じハンガアウトにアクセスし、チャットを続ける（スマホがない人はPCのまま）

ステップ5: チャットログを確認する

- Gmailを開き、左側のラベル内にある「チャット」をクリックし、今終えたハンガアウト上でのチャットが保存されていることを確認する（もし「チャット」というラベルが見当たらない場合は、画面右上の設定ボタンをクリック→設定をクリック→「ラベル」タブをクリック→「チャット」の設定を非表示から表示へ変更する）
- クラスルートとのチャットを開き、右上の返信（▲）ボタンの左にあるドロップダウンメニュー（▼）から「転送」をクリック、oucuga@gmail.comへチャットログをそのまま転送する

ステップ6: 事前アンケートに答える

- manaba上にある「事前アンケート」に答える