Sociopragmatic Features of Learner-to-Learner Computer-Mediated Communication

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ABSTRACT
The present study offers a holistic and rich description (as recommended by Ellis, 1999b) of the sociopragmatic features of exchanges among first-year learners of German. Specifically, it examines the use of opening and closing sequences, patterns of topic assignment, and maintenance by participants in computer-mediated interactions in order to gain insights into learners’ sociopragmatic abilities in the foreign language. This is an important first step towards exploring the potential of computer-mediated communication (CMC) for fostering foreign language (L2) sociopragmatic competence, which—Kasper (1998) posited—may be developed only through practice and awareness raising. The results of the present study suggest that computer-mediated learner-to-learner interaction offers L2 learners unique opportunities for active control of topic selection and management and provides rich opportunities for learners to recognize and adapt to diverse interactional patterns through collaboration among the interactants. Thus, the study furthers the argument that through meaningful participation in different speech communities—here, CMC communities—L2 learners may develop the procedural knowledge (Wildner-Bassett, 1994) necessary for recognizing the interactional patterns of a microlevel speech community (e.g., an online discussion group) and for adapting their discourse effectively to function in these speech communities.

KEYWORDS
Computer-mediated Communication (CMC), Sociopragmatic Competence, Topic Assignment, Topic Development, Interactional Competence

INTRODUCTION
Despite research findings suggesting that sociopragmatic mishaps may limit interactive success more than phonological, lexical, or grammatical mistakes (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998), very few textbooks focus on developing sociopragmatic competence (Kasper, 1997). Even typical teaching practices tend to limit student opportunities for a broad range of interactions in which learners can develop the skills to manage (i.e., initiate, moderate, and terminate) the flow of communication (Ellis, 1999a; van Lier, 1988). Managing interpersonal communication effectively is a socially and cognitively complex and demanding task (Coupland, Wiemann, & Giles, 1991). In L2 learning contexts—especially at lower levels of proficiency—the cognitive, linguistic, and sociolinguistic demands are particularly substantial. In addition to interpreting incoming and producing responsive lexical and morphosyntactic patterns and implementing effective communication strategies, learners need to be able to meet the sociopragmatic demands of communication as well. Given these conditions, tasks that allow second language (L2) learners to use the language for a wide range of interactional purposes have important implications for pedagogical programs designed to foster interpersonal communication. The present study focuses on large-group computer-mediated communication...
(CMC) among beginning L2 learners to examine the sociopragmatic features of beginning language learners’ interactions: how they coconstruct opening and closing sequences and how they manage topic development as a community of practice (Wenger, 1999).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INTERACTION AND SLA

Ellis (1999b) calls for holistic, socially situated examinations of interactional phenomena in second language acquisition (SLA) to gain insights into “ways in which interactions are constructed by participants as they dynamically negotiate not just meaning but also their role relationship and their cultural and social identities” (p. 17). The present study aims to provide such a socially situated examination of learners’ development of sociopragmatic competence in a CMC environment grounded in Goffman’s (1974) claim that the social situation is the basic unit of interaction. In other words, this study presupposes that the way in which a given interaction develops is shaped to a large extent by its microcontext: the participants, the roles they play, the purpose or perceived purpose of the interaction, and the particular medium that is used for the interaction (in this case CMC).

This study also draws on van Lier’s (1988) suggestion that topic-focused student-centered activities—in which learners interact with their peers and actively negotiate and coconstruct meaning—are essential for the development of sociopragmatic competence. In topic-focused interactions participants exchange ideas and information using discourse that is characterized by fairly evenly distributed topic initiation by all participants, requests for clarification, collaborative expansion of these topics, and control of the interaction. This type of interaction often results in linguistically daring and complex utterances in which language learners are willing to try out new language forms or lexicon. van Lier’s topic-focused activities can be seen as related to social activity (in a Goffmannian sense) since in the language classroom genuine social interaction and language learning should co-exist.

This leads to the third presupposition underlying the current study. Namely, this study is grounded in the belief that social (see Hall, Cheng, & Carlson, 2006; Lee, 2006; Wenger, 1999; Young & Miller, 2004) and cognitive (in the tradition of Doughty & Pica, 1986; Ellis, 1999b; Long, 1996) understandings of language learning are complementary, not mutually exclusive. To be more precise, this study presupposes that social interaction is a legitimate focus of study in and of itself, and that intra- and interpersonal communication is essential for language learning, especially for facets of language that are bound to social practices (i.e., sociopragmatic competence). However, accepting language use as a disciplinary objective does not preclude acknowledging the potential cognitive benefits of learners’ participation in authentic communicative events (i.e., the purpose of which is to exchange ideas, not merely to practice certain morphosyntactic rules). Rather, it is only during such exchanges that learners can experiment with (try out and revise as necessary) novel patterns of interaction in order to develop sociopragmatic competence. This duality can be seen in Hall et al.’s (2006) statements that (a) “[t]he more frequent and reliable the appearance of particular patterns is, the more likely the patterns will be stored and remembered” (p. 226) and (b) “the more frequent and varied the communicative context are in which individuals engage, the wider the range of forms and functions they are likely to have experienced, and the wider and more encompassing their understandings about language are likely to be” (p. 230). These statements suggest the need to offer varied and extensive practice (cognitive) done in legitimate communities of social practice (social). Thus, interaction is both a means to an end—to promote language development—and an end in itself: participating in socially meaningful exchanges (see Wenger, 1999). The next section discusses the concept of sociopragmatic competence and offers a working definition of this concept for the present study.
Sociopragmatic Competence

Communicative competence, a notion developed during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, was based on Halliday's (1994) and Hymes' (1970, 1974) sociolinguistic work. The groundbreaking aspect of this movement was a view of language as a social tool used in real-life interaction, a view that had already been accepted by linguistic anthropologists at the time. Savignon's (1972) original conceptualization emphasized the dynamic, interpersonal characteristics of communicative competence and focused on speakers' “ability to function in a truly communicative setting … in which [a speaker's or learner's] linguistic competence must adapt itself to linguistic and paralinguistic demands required by one or more interlocutors” (p. 8).

Interpersonal skills required for effective communication play a significant role in all models of communicative competence. Savignon's (1972, 1997) model, which juxtaposes grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competences, posits that sociopragmatic competence, a speaker's understanding of “social rules of language use … the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction” (1997, p. 41) is primarily responsible for interpersonal communication. Hall et al. (2006), Lee (2006) and Young and Miller (2004) offer a similar framing of interactional competence: one in which “all language learning is socially contingent and dynamic” (p. 229, emphasis in original). The focus of language research, according to these authors, should be on how language learners participate in social activity and what communicative repertoires they develop by participating in different interactional situations. In this paradigm interactional competence refers to the ability of a group of learners to coconstruct interaction effectively, “changing their patterns of social co-participation” as the communicative situation requires (Young & Miller, 2004, p 520).

This notion of interactional competence reflects Littlewood's (2006) interpretation of communicative competence which includes: (a) linguistic competence (e.g., lexicon, grammar), (b) discourse competence (e.g., link ideas, participate in interaction), (c) pragmatic competence (e.g., convey and interpret meaning in real situations), (d) sociolinguistic competence (e.g., appropriate language use in specific situations), and (e) sociocultural competence (e.g., background knowledge of cultural assumptions). Based on these definitions, sociopragmatic competence refers to the intersection of how a group of local participants, within a microcontext (see Goffman's framework above), coconstruct and operate their own rules for interaction, where the rules are constantly negotiable and developing (Leech, 1983). Drawing on these models, sociopragmatic competence is defined here as the ability to communicate effectively with interlocutors who “are co-present and engaged in a joint activity, either within the same temporal and spatial frame or within a shared temporal frame only, in which case the spatial displacement is compensated through electronic devices such as … Internet facilities” (Kasper & Rose, 2002). This competence includes knowledge about the listeners/readers, their beliefs, shared or unshared world knowledge, the subject of the conversation, as well as extralinguistic communication (Goffman, 1974; Kasper, 2004; Savignon, 1997). In other words, sociopragmatic competence refers to learner's ability (a) to recognize how broader societal rules for interaction are adapted locally and (b) to use those rules to participate effectively within the constraints of the local interaction (and participants).

Sociopragmatic transfer from speakers’ L1 can both help or hinder performance in an L2. Kasper (1997) states that some pragmatic knowledge may be transferable between languages, for example, softening requests by manipulating verb forms or adding appropriate particles, especially between languages that use similar forms to express similar intents.
However, sociopragmatic knowledge, even if it were positively transferable, is not necessarily utilized.

there is a lot of pragmatic information that adult learners possess...[but] they don’t always use what they know. There is thus a clear role for pedagogic intervention here, not with the purpose of providing learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts. (n. p.)

In addition, Kasper points out, textbooks often do not cover pragmatic issues, so students have few opportunities to develop this competence. One possible solution is to offer varied student-centered interaction in the classroom, which might help learners develop the necessary competences to manage diverse communication tasks in real-life interactions (Kasper, 1997; Nunan, 1989). CMC has shown promise to be able to support substantial learner-to-learner language practice, enabling students to take on diverse participant roles (Abrams, 2001) and to use a large variety of discourse functions (Chun, 1994) for more diverse communicative purposes (Beauvois, 1998; Darhower, 2002; Kern, 1995), as presented in the next section.

**CMC and Learner-Centered Language Practice**

It has been firmly established that CMC enhances learner-to-learner interaction in the L2 offering both linguistic and affective/interpersonal benefits. First, in CMC students use more diverse discourse functions than in classroom interactions, making their exchanges more authentic and discursively richer (Chun, 1994). Second, CMC seems to equalize participation by distributing interactional patterns more evenly across all participants, providing opportunities especially for those students who are more timid or whose learning styles favor more planning time for interaction than what is available in typical classrooms (Bruce, Kreeft Peyton, & Batson, 1993; Kern, 1995; Sullivan & Pratt 1996; Warschauer, 1996, 1997). Third, students seem to find the learner-to-learner interactions in CMC especially interesting, the lack of rigid turn-taking sequences liberating, and the opportunity to say what they want without being on the spot less anxiety inducing than classroom interactions (Beauvois, 1995; Meunier, 1998). Finally, as Darhower (2002) found, participants develop a high level of ‘intersubjectivity’ by taking an active part in extended discussions. Based on his data, Darhower concluded that when students maintained social space, they were able to achieve coherent, often substantive, communication. When the shared perspective broke down, students either re-established it through cooperative repair work or abandoned it completely. Abrams (2003) similarly found that L2 learners are eager to build speech communities in which they collaboratively establish rules for interaction (such as limiting rude verbal behavior or developing jokes) and that students help each other negotiate a broad range of participant roles. These participant roles can allow students to practice language for more diverse discourse purposes and to maintain shared space and dialog more extensively, resulting in improved language practice opportunities. The present study aims to further the ongoing research on CMC by exploring the notion of sociopragmatic competence of beginning language learners who participated in large-group synchronous CMC, focusing specifically on the collaborative negotiation of shared sociopragmatic rules for interaction.
The Present Study

Methodological Traditions

The present study draws on two methodological traditions for collecting and analyzing data. First, it follows the traditions of interactional sociolinguistics by examining “the dialogic processes through which interactants display shared perceptions of who they are, manage interpersonal relationships, and otherwise position themselves vis-à-vis others ... by locally framing societal level practices—that is, adapting these broader rules to immediate interactional contexts” (Gumperz, 2001, p. 217). Closely related to interactional sociolinguistics, ethno graphic microanalysis examines “the immediate ecology of relations between participants in a situation. How we communicate—what kinds of language we use and how much ... is very much a matter of what others are doing in the situation while we are doing what we are doing ... individuals [are] being influenced by others’ actions in the scene at the moment” (Erickson, 1996, p. 284).

The Participants

Seventy-eight undergraduate students, enrolled in four sections of a second-semester German course at a large American public university, participated in this study. Fifty-three students were freshmen; the remaining 25 were sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Only 5 of these participants were nonnative speakers of English, but they had been studying at the university for at least 18 months. The participants reported being proficient users of synchronous CMC (SCMC); they regularly participated in chat rooms and sent and received regular text messages, but they had not participated in SCMC in their German course or in any other courses prior to this study. They reported using asynchronous CMC (e.g., email, assignments posted on Blackboard, and virtual office hours) for academic purposes both in their German course and other courses. The participants were grouped according to enrollment rather than assigned randomly (see Table 1). While this decision limits the generalizability of the findings, the emerging patterns of interaction are more representative of what may happen in normal classroom situations (Koike & Pearson, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>(2 TAs: 1 male, 1 female)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>(2 TAs: 2 females)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>(1 TA: male)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>(1 TA: female)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six graduate Teaching Assistants in charge of these sections participated in the CMC exchanges, sharing their ideas and asking and answering questions. Considering findings by Chun (1994) and Kern (1995), their presence was not expected to limit a valid analysis of the learners’ interactions; Chun and Kern found that the students felt very comfortable ignoring their teachers’ questions and comments and were able to maintain extensive interactions with each other, including and excluding the teachers as the dynamics of the interaction de-
manded. Three of the instructors were native speakers of German, and the other three were native speakers of English and fluent speakers of German. All six were also expert written communicators in both their L1 and L2.

**The Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication Sessions**

During the semester, starting the second week and biweekly after that (six sessions in total), students participated in open-ended discussions with their classmates through the virtual classroom function of the *Blackboard* course website. They joined the SCMC sessions from home or from a computer laboratory on campus. Prior to the first chat session, the students received an in-class tutorial on accessing the virtual classroom on the *Blackboard* course site, submitting their messages, and producing special German characters in CMC. The discussions were held during regular class time. Students used their own names because *Blackboard* does not allow anonymous contributions and because their participation was graded as part of the syllabus. They participated in whole-class interactions for each of the chat sessions. This format, as opposed to small-group interactions, was used because much of authentic SCMC takes place among larger groups of individuals in chat forums. The topics of the chat sessions corresponded to general themes covered in the course textbook (e.g., entertainment, free-time activities, and sports) and asked students’ opinion on several subtopics related to the overarching chapter themes (for description of CMC task types, see Blake, 2000; Pelletieri, 2000). For each chat session students received questions to help generate ideas for discussion (see chat discussion questions in Appendix A); they were also encouraged to expand or change the discussion topics (a normal pattern in authentic CMC interactions).

**Data Analyses**

Herring (2003) argued that CMC discourse analytic techniques that use data from a continuous time period preserve the richest interactional context and include coherent threads that have the additional “advantages of thematic sampling as well” (p. 351). Thus, the data in this study consisted of complete CMC transcripts to preserve both the temporal and the thematic coherence of the interactions. The data for this study came from the first CMC sessions. While CMC has been used by beginning language learners (see Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995) and by more advanced learners (Belz & Reinhardt, 2004; Darhower, 2002), we still know relatively little about how learners at lower proficiency levels create speech communities and how these speech communities may reflect, or contribute to, the learners’ developing sociopragmatic competence. The current study examined language produced by learners at an early stage of second-semester L2 studies focusing on two primary and three subsidiary indices of sociopragmatic competence:

1. opening and closing sequences (Kasper, 1997)  
   a. Greetings and leave-taking phrases and expressions (‘hello’ and ‘good-bye’) were coded and analyzed in terms of their location, length, and the person who submitted them.

2. patterns of interaction (Condon & Čech, 1996; Kasper, 1997; van Lier, 1988)  
   a. topic initiation and development were analyzed to determine authorship and topic coherence, and
   b. the activity- or topic-focus of interactions was noted.
After coding, the transcripts were compared across the groups to help identify characteristics of L2 sociopragmatic competence and to examine whether these characteristics reflected sociopragmatic competence and the emergence of speech communities. It is impossible to include all examples of the various interactional phenomena examined in this article. Instead, the data samples were selected to represent typical patterns of interaction within and across the four groups. Some tabulated frequencies of phenomena are included in the discussion to provide further information about these patterns (see Silverman, 2004). The students’ original comments are used in the excerpts to maintain the integrity of the data; however, the original mistakes were not translated into English because the present analyses emphasized sociopragmatic features of learners’ interlanguage, not their lexical or grammatical errors per se.

**EVIDENCE OF SOCIOPRAGMATIC COMPETENCE**

**Opening Sequences**

Analysis of the SCMC sessions revealed that opening sequences were developed very similarly across the groups. First, in each group anywhere from 2-4 students logged into the Blackboard course site prior to the beginning of the class period to test whether they were able to enter the virtual classroom; they left greetings behind, such as *Hallo!* ‘hello’ or *Tag!* ‘good day!’ or an explicit statement about coming to the Blackboard site to practice logging into the virtual classroom. One individual in Group 3 entered into a synchronous private “dialog” with himself during a preliminary visit to the course site, submitting six turns, asking himself questions and responding to them, although not actually answering them:

**EXCERPT 1**

Group 3  

1 ACW *Hallo Ich bin A**. Was studierst du?*  
‘Hello I am A**. What are you studying?’  

2 ACW *Ich komme aus Mansfield. Woher kommst du?*  
‘I am from Mansfield. Where are you from?’  

3 ACW *Das ist sehr interessant.*  
‘That is very interesting.’  

4 ACW *guten tag.*  
‘hello.’ (lit: good day)

In spite of the absence of other participants (who become visible on the computer screen), ACW’s introduction and question in line 1 can be interpreted as a genuine opening and request for information, considering the pronoun *du* ‘you.’ Similarly, in line 2, he asks a potential, expected participant where he is from. This suggests that ACW is using these question and answer pairs as routine formulae, but with authentic communicative intentions. The tone of his self-interaction becomes playful, however, when in line 3 he jokingly comments on how interesting his previous entry was, taking on the role of interactional partner. Even though *guten tag* (Line 4) is typically an indicator of opening a dialog, here he uses it more broadly, to bid himself good-bye, as a closing sequence. The structure of his dialog is typical of formal face-to-face greeting sequences modeled in beginning language textbooks. Were he transferring sociopragmatic knowledge from L1 CMC contexts (chat, IM, email), his interaction would presumably be less formal.
These pre-CMC session episodes were often followed by a single-user or a two-person exchange of content information, which, in turn, were followed by extensive greeting sequences, which began with simple one-word or one-phrase greetings, such as *Guten morgen* 'good morning' or *hallo* occupying an entire turn, as illustrated in Excerpt 2.

**EXEMPLARY 2**
Group 3 (continuation of a previously initiated discussion)

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ACW</td>
<td><em>hello</em></td>
<td>‘hello’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TKS</td>
<td><em>hi</em></td>
<td>‘hi’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LAS</td>
<td><em>hey april</em></td>
<td>‘hey april’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(MR has entered. [01.54.02 PM])</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ACW</td>
<td><em>hello</em></td>
<td>‘hello’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MR</td>
<td><em>Hallo Tera</em></td>
<td>‘hello Tera’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ANS</td>
<td><em>guten tag</em></td>
<td>‘good day, hello’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all opening sequences were multiturn, each participant providing a greeting as they entered the CMC session, such as seen in lines 5-11 above. Students initiated the opening sequences in each class. While in most cases students used a greeting that matched the informality of student-student interactions, they also often utilized a more formal greeting (e.g., *Guten Morgen/Guten Tag*). This suggests that students were not quite aware of the register difference between these two expressions, or, if they were, they could not systematically perform according to register needs. Table 2 shows the range of greetings students used in the first CMC session.

**Table 2**
**Greeting Types Across Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>expressions used as greetings in greeting sequences</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallo</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Guten Tag/Morgen</em></td>
<td>17/7</td>
<td>17/9</td>
<td>20/0</td>
<td>18/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Servus</em> (regional, not instructor’s dialect)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wie geht’s?</em> (L1 transfer; not a greeting in German but used by students as such)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although relatively infrequently, students did use the phrase *Wie geht’s?* as a greeting (see line 15 in Excerpt 3 below). This phrase is a direct linguistic translation of the English “How are you?” but is a false cognate sociopragmatically. In other words, it asks for a content-filled response instead of being a component of what Wardhaugh (1997) termed phatic communion: exchanges whose sole purpose is the act of interaction itself, used to establish rapport, fulfill politeness requirements, or greet and take leave of other interactants.
Greetings were not restricted to opening sequences and occurred throughout the first SCMC sessions. In Excerpt 4 Line 1 marks JMH’s entry to the ongoing CMC session. The next three entries in Lines 2-4 are part of the ongoing discussion on one of the day’s assigned topics on health, sports, and free-time activities. These appeared on the screen simultaneously with JMH’s arrival so it is not until line 5 that his arrival is acknowledged by JBR.

This type of exchange seems to suggest that Blackboard’s marking of when participants enter and leave the virtual classroom is interpreted by students as the visual equivalent of nonverbal behavior, such as when somebody physically joins a gathering. The greeting sequence is continued in line 8 when JMH returns JBR’s greeting, once again with a 2-line (one nonverbal in line 6 and one verbal in line 7) interception.
Closing Sequences

Similar to opening sequences, closing sequences were quite elaborate and without exception were initiated by a student asking the instructor (addressed by name) for permission to leave. With the trigger request students included an explanation of why they had to leave: work, another class to go to, or lunch. This practice is probably a transfer of L1 sociopragmatic competence to the L2 context, and in the case of German it is a successful transfer since making requests of supervisors or teachers requires exactly this kind of elaborated request (request + explanation). The first group began the closing sequence with 5 minutes still remaining of the 50-minute class period, as illustrated in the excerpt 5.

EXCERPT 5
Group 1

1 AMP  U**, Ich sein spat für Arbeit, kann könnt ich jetzt gehen?
'I am late for work, can could I go now?’

2 UB  alte Jeans oder was?
‘old jeans or what?’

3 NBM  Ja, alte Jeans.
‘yes, old jeans.’

4 PEH  Natürlich kannst du gehen, wenn du in die Arbeit gehen mußt!
‘of course you can go if you have to go to work!’

5 CLL  Ja, tut mir leid, trinken.
‘Yes, I’m sorry, to drink.’

6 UB  Tja, A**, das ist schade, aber was kann ich machen. Schönes Wochenende.
well, A** that’s too bad, but what can I do. Have a good weekend.’

7 PEH  Ciao, A**!
‘Ciao, A**!’

8 SD  Da gibt es auch ein anderen Saft, von Dole wenn ich mich richtig erinnere, das ist auch ser gut. Ich glaube est hat Pfirsich.
‘there is also another juice, by Dole if I remember correctly, that is also very good. I think it has peaches.’

9 AMP  Danke schoen!
‘Thank you very much!’

10 JAH  Tschüss, A**!
‘Bye, A**!’

11 APB  Ich denke Sie sollen um 18 trinken.
‘I think you should drink about 18.’

12 UB  Ist okay, C**. Schnell schreiben ist schwer.
‘It’s ok, C**. It is difficult to write fast.’

13 CMN  Tschüss!
‘Bye!’

14 AMP  Tschüss!
‘Bye!’

15 AMP has left [11:45:13 AM]

16 APB  Tschüss!
‘Bye!’
17 RTB  Ich habe hunger! Ich muss essen! Wiedersehn!
‘I am hungry! I have to eat! Later!’

In this exchange AMP initiates leave taking in line 1 using the subjunctive form könnte ‘could’ of the verb können ‘can’ accompanied by an explanation of why she has to leave. At this point in the course, the subjunctive mood—often used in German to soften requests and express politeness—had not been covered yet, and her use of this modified verb form is probably formulaic. However, AMP’s use of this verb form suggests that she is already trying to vary the register of her language according to her interlocutor and the purpose of her utterance.

Although AMP may have learned könnte as a formulaic expression of politeness, it is noteworthy that she left kann in her sentence even though she could have deleted this more forceful declarative form before submitting her comment. She may be transferring the formation of the subjunctive from the verb möchte ‘would like’ with which students are familiar from early on in their studies onto a verb whose meaning she knows, but which she had not yet learned to use. Her comment is interesting for another reason as well. Similar to AMP, other students tried out phrases before submitting their comments, self-correcting incorrect word choice, spelling or grammatical forms (e.g., DRD in group 2 wrote Ich nicht wisse*. weiss. ‘I do not know’). One explanation for this phenomenon may be that learners view SCMC as a written equivalent of spoken language where false starts are simply continued after a brief pause, corrected (which displays remarkable awareness by the students, not only of being able to recognize typographical errors and incorrect forms but also the ability to correct them). Alternatively, it may indicate a feature of CMC in that interaction is fast and typographical errors are not deleted, but rather simply amended, in order to keep the conversation(s) flowing.

After AMP’s initial request to leave in line 1, one of the instructors (PEH) gives her permission in line 4, reiterating AMP’s reason for having to leave. Yet, AMP remained in the CMC session long enough to say good-bye to her peers. In lines 6 and 7 both instructors contribute to the leave-taking routine by wishing her a good weekend. In line 10, a classmate acknowledges AMP’s leave taking, and AMP then says good-bye to her peers in line 14 (although she does not actually leave the chat until line 827 [not shown here]). While the remaining comments in this chat session contained some attempts at recapturing a conversation, they are unsuccessful. After AMP’s initial request, all the other students took explicit leave of the class by saying good-bye; almost all of them gave a reason for having to leave, but nobody made any more requests (e.g., RTB on line 17). Approximately half of the students in each group waited until at least one other person, instructor or peer, acknowledged their leave taking; others simply left after their two-part closing comment which consisted of (a) an explanation and (b) a term for “good-bye.” The class coconstructed a very extensive leave-taking sequence. Students similarly took charge of the topics of interaction throughout the SCMC sessions, as discussed in the next section.

**Topic Initiation and Development**

From the very beginning, students took control of the discussion topics and, similar to findings by Kern (1995) and Chun (1994), did not feel compelled to comment on or acknowledge instructors’ contributions. Of considerable interest, every topic was student initiated in all groups (and often did not relate to, or related only marginally to, the assigned topics). The assigned topic for Chat 1 (students were to introduce themselves and come up with a demographic profile of their class) was ignored by all groups. The students may already have gotten to know each other in class, making this topic redundant. Instead, a new discussion
thread emerged immediately after the opening sequence about the students’ plans for the weekend. The first 12-20 turns (depending on the group) simply listed one activity after another, for example, schlafen ‘sleep,’ Partei Zeit ‘party time’ (literal translation from L1, false cognate with ‘party’ which in German refers to political parties), hausarbeit zeit ‘homework time’ (again a literal translation of English ‘house work’/’chores’). Soon the discussion split into two subtopics: (a) partying (who goes to parties, where, when) and (b) the Super Bowl, which was taking place that weekend.

Students in class typically respond to questions about their weekend plans with Ich arbeit/Ich schlafe ‘I work/I sleep,’ regardless of the verity of these statements, perhaps as a type of avoidance communication strategy (Yule & Tarone, 1997). The present data illustrate that students have quite a bit to say about their weekend plans and that they are eager to share these plans with their peers. Possibly SCMC reduces the cognitive demand placed on learners to process multimodal input and output simultaneously by allowing them to plan their comments without having to attend to phonological aspects of the message. Alternately, SCMC may also motivate students to exchange ideas because the forum is more democratic and because the shared control over the interaction means that questions, in van Lier’s terms, are not activity focused (i.e., for display only) but instead topic focused (requesting genuine information). The following excerpt from Group 1 (chat 1) illustrates how students developed the new topic of weekend plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCERPT 6</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student contribution</td>
<td>Topic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 APB</td>
<td>Ja kein Party fur mich auch, ich muss fur dem Super Bowl bereiten. ‘Yes, no party for me either, I have to prepare for the Super Bowl.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 AMP</td>
<td>lol (laugh out loud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 RTB</td>
<td>haha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 UB</td>
<td>Hallo, C**. Es geht mir gut. ‘Hello, C**. I am doing fine,’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SES</td>
<td>mich auch! Ich habe keine Kleider. ‘Me too. I do not have any clothes.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 RTB</td>
<td>Micheal Jackson kann tanzen ‘Micheal Jackson can dance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 AMP</td>
<td>stimmt ‘true’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 SES</td>
<td>haha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jokes in response to any preceding comment – unclear discourse connection
In line 1 APB makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion on weekend plans. The connection between the next two lines (2-3) cannot be identified. They could be either in response to APB’s comment or to any previous comment; there is no explicit cohesion marker, such as a term of address or an explicit referent to the content of a previous comment. APB’s comment in Line 1 seems to have triggered three distinct threads of ensuing discussions. First, the subtopic of Super Bowl is further developed in Lines 10-16. Second, SES’s comment in Line 5 mich auch! Ich habe keine Kleider focuses on the “no party theme” in APB’s original comment. It is connected linguistically to APB’s comment with the discourse marker “also,” although the phrase “me too” is directly translated from English and is related topic-wise to the term Kleider ‘clothes’ since the only logical referent to this item would be a party among the preceding contributions. Third, RTB seems to have made the connection between party and Michael Jackson in Line 6. Although SES’s subtopic of a lack of a party is abandoned by the group, RTB’s subtopic (Michael Jackson) is continued by CLL in Line 9 and AMP in Line 17.8

As Excerpt 6 also illustrates, the topics were developed both sequentially (one topic commented on by several participants) or simultaneously (not related to each other and originated by new topic nominations). Several themes could be discussed concurrently either
by smaller subgroups or by everybody, and any sequence could be interspersed by other unrelated comments that introduce a new topic or merely express phatic communion—communication for the sake of establishing rapport (Wardhaugh, 1997). While it could be argued that learners are simply ignoring other students' comments (and not really managing multiple threads), the data seem to indicate otherwise. The participants seemed able to manage multiple threads of discussion concurrently. For example, RTB (see Line 6 [Michael Jackson] versus Line 13 [Superbowl] versus Line 20 [new subtopic: winner of Superbowl]), CLL (see Line 9 [Michael Jackson] versus Line 15 [Superbowl], and SES (see Line 5 [Party] versus Line 12 [Superbowl]) are able to contribute to two simultaneously developing subtopics with relatively short lapses of time (although in the transcript the contributions are sequential, in the chat comments often appeared simultaneously). This is a remarkable feat because most often there were no clear discourse markers, not even the names whose comment a subsequent interlocutor addressed, to connect threads of discussion.9

While some comments remain mysterious in terms of their role in topic development or how they contribute to the ongoing discourse (e.g., laughing in Lines 2, 3, and 8), many are connected by overt repetition of a key noun as topic marker, for example, when APB repeats Überbowl in Line 14. In face-to-face communication, the second and third instances of this term might be replaced with a pronoun (e.g., it). Thus, in SCMC explicit reiteration of key vocabulary/phrases or mentioning the original commenter's name facilitated participants' balancing multiple threads of discussion. The written modality of SCMC and Blackboard's function of providing the contributors' name also helped provide discourse cohesion: students could identify and keep separate the different themes based on who was talking about which topic.

In addition, the length of the comments helped provide further visual coherence in the interactions. Condon and Čech (1996) state that when discourse is poor in overt linguistic cohesion markers, it requires cohesion of moves and their relevant responses to facilitate interpretation. In order to accomplish this locational cohesion, the authors argue, participants in CMC sessions often simplify linguistic material for the sake of efficiency in turn taking and topic introduction, primarily by submitting short comments. This seems to hold true for the multiparticipant interactions in the present study as well; the participants seemed to be able to navigate the limited-clue environment successfully by developing and maintaining topic cohesion.

Another interesting feature of the interactional patterns of chat 1 was that the comments were almost always topic focused; there were only about 4-12 comments in each group during SCMC session 1 in which students either asked explicitly for vocabulary or about the correct form of a verb to use. In addition, discussions shifted emphases and dealt extensively with topics the students were interested in; alternatively, they abandoned some student-initiated topics that the group as a whole was not interested in pursuing (see Appendix B for an example of a longer, fluid exchange between students, already during the first chat). van Lier (1988) refers to this process as topicalization and considers it a sign of discourse control. This process may be key to providing acquisition rich opportunities for students to develop their L2 competence; it requires that participants be conversational equals and manipulate the discourse democratically (Ellis, 1999a).

Although videotaped classroom observations were not available for this study, interviews with the instructors revealed that, in class, students hardly ever asked administrative questions in German, for example, about specifics regarding their course projects (a long-term research project which culminates in a class presentation done in pairs or small groups). In these SCMC chats, however, students actually had lengthy exchanges in German with each other and their instructors about these projects, such as selecting topics, setting up groups,
arranging meetings, and discussing the various steps in the project. This suggests that students viewed German as the language of communication, not merely an object of study.

To reiterate, four key observations can be made from Excerpt 6. First, participants formed malleable discussion groups whose membership constantly shifted as new topics were introduced. Second, contrary to some previous findings in CMC research (see Pelletieri, 2000; Smith, 2004), there were very few instances of negotiation of meaning in this data set, and these instances were mostly initiated by the instructors. Perhaps the task (discussion) did not require learners to reach a specific outcome, so they ignored comments that did not make sense to them. As studies have shown, the nature of the task may have an impact on the type of language used and the extent of negotiation of meaning (Blake, 2000; Pelletieri, 2000). The lack of negotiation of meaning, however, may also be due to a preference for continued exchange of ideas—in other words, maintaining what Darhower (2002) calls intersubjectivity—even at the expense of complete comprehension. Third, CMC requires that participants cope with the ambiguity of overlapping, interwoven threads of discussion, constantly deciphering what comment may be relevant for which subsequent utterance. Kramsch (2006) suggests that tolerance of ambiguity is a necessary prerequisite for successful interpersonal and intercultural communication; it is also a sign that students have enough trust in their community to cope with the ambiguity. Finally, CMC sessions seem to provide genuine communication among the students, in essence a topicalization of classroom interaction, in contrast to the more typical activity-focused classroom interactions which often consist of hierarchically structured, instructor-controlled move and response pairs.

CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study described the sociopragmatic characteristics of second-semester learners’ use of the L2 in synchronous CMC sessions to explore whether these interactions offer pragmatically rich opportunities for student-centered language practice, which is necessary for pragmatic development in the L2 (Kasper, 1998). While future research needs to broaden this study (which was limited to second-semester students of German and in which SCMC tasks were only open-ended discussions), its findings suggest that learner-centered SCMC interaction is, in fact, a source of rich opportunities for authentic L2 interaction in which participants seek information from each other and focus on the exchange of ideas, using the L2 effectively (often correcting themselves or their peers when miscommunication occurs). Specifically, the results showed that these beginning-level learners of German (a) began chats with extensive opening sequences, (b) greeted late arrivals throughout the session, (c) initiated all new topics instead of waiting for their instructors to take control of the discourse, (d) focused their interactions on topic instead of activity, and (e) balanced multiple threads of discussion successfully in spite of the very limited number of explicit discourse cohesion markers. In other words, they performed diverse discourse patterns well beyond the classroom initiation-response-feedback formula described by van Lier (1988).

Thus, the data indicated that SCMC can contribute to an interaction-focused pedagogy by providing transcripts that can help raise awareness of sociopragmatic patterns, potentially leading to improved sociopragmatic performance (Davies, 2001; Wildner-Bassett, 1994). Students can develop sociopragmatic competence by participating in SCMC sessions. To do so, they should participate in interactions with varied interlocutors and in varied group sizes so they are exposed to diverse interactional patterns and practices. Rather than teaching one set of rules for interaction (i.e., in German you say X) it is more important to train students to be aware of and to adapt to ongoing patterns of interactions in fluid speech communities. Here are a few activities L2 learners can do with SCMC transcripts:
1. Students could identify the opening and leave-taking sequences they used in order to learn about register variation. They should also compare how they use these pragmatic features in their L1 and L2 CMC interactions.

2. Students can develop more discourse functions in the L2 through SCMC than in the traditional classroom since they are more likely to initiate and manage topics in the former setting. Thus, CMC is an excellent forum to introduce expressions of agreement, disagreement, encouragement, advising, and so on.

3. Students can revise or edit their transcripts in order to learn how to connect ideas more coherently and effectively in the L2. They should be encouraged to identify coherent threads in the discussion and insert explicit connections to clarify how the different comments in the thread relate to each other, building their competence from the sentence-level to longer discourse-levels. (These connections may be helpful for other L2 interactions: face-to-face discussions, formal essays, etc.)

4. Students can be asked to examine chat transcripts from L2 native or more advanced speaker communities and compare their own use of pragmatic features to those used in these communities in order to expand their repertoire of greetings and to learn about diverse rules of interaction as established by various speech communities (e.g., register or regional variation).

5. Finally, students can explore the notion of language and identity by looking at the transcripts. Specifically, they should be directed to identify instances in which they played with words or used pragmatic features “out of place” in order to tease each other. Discussing the notion of humor and what role it plays in establishing identity both in the L1 and the L2 is a significant component of being—and feeling like—a member of a speech community.

It is very important, however, to keep in mind that while these explicit discussions about the SCMC transcripts are useful because they help raise students’ awareness of the pragmatic aspects of L2 interlanguage, it is the act of participating in SCMC that leads to the actual development of sociopragmatic competence. In other words, it is through participating in topic-focused activities that L2 learners develop procedural knowledge, the productive ability (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wildner-Bassett, 1989, 1994) necessary to recognize the microlevel interactional patterns of a speech community (here, a CMC community) and to adapt their discourse effectively to function in these speech communities.

As a final point, I would like to emphasize the validity of learner-to-learner SCMC. Native speaker competence is often used as a standard by which L2 learners’ progress is evaluated; it is the norm for which students must aim. As a result, some educators worry that learner-to-learner interaction should be limited in order to prevent students from learning mistakes (i.e., “bad” patterns of interaction) from each other. However, as Kasper (1998) points out, native-speaker pragmatic competence may not be an attainable goal for language learners, and more realistic learning objectives must be identified. Furthermore, at lower levels of L2 proficiency, learner-to-learner SCMC might be more effective in attaining any development since interactions in native-speaker speech communities may overburden learners’ cognitive abilities with simultaneously high levels of lexical, grammatical, and sociopragmatic demands, potentially resulting in communication breakdown and reduced motivation to learn and use the L2. I argue instead that developing interactional flexibility and adaptability is a
more realistic and attainable learning objective. In other words, instead of learning a set list of sociolinguistic norms, students should focus on recognizing and adopting group-appropriate sociopragmatic rules for interaction on a microanalytic level, whether the group includes native speakers of the L2 or diverse speakers of the L2 "who have grown up in a variety of national, supranational, and ethnic cultures" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 252). As the present study demonstrated, learner-to-learner computer-mediated communication can foster interactional flexibility and adaptability by developing students’ sociopragmatic abilities as well as—or perhaps by—raising their awareness of sociopragmatic features of L2 interaction.

NOTES

1 In contrast, in activity-focused interactions “the topic is not really what matters” (Ellis, 1999a, p. 212). Discourse in activity-focused classroom tasks is hierarchically controlled: a figure of authority determines and controls topic nomination and the beginning and end of the interaction. It is also characterized by display questions (with one correct/right answer) and simpler and more controlled linguistic structures, typically lacking innovation or risk taking.

2 The term “communicative competence” has undergone a variety of permutations since Hymes introduced the term to foreign language study in 1972. Current views argue for a much greater emphasis on teaching students to respond appropriately to different cultural contexts and to recognize that appropriate language changes with the setting and people involved. Thus Swaffar (2006) stresses that a program involving meaningful communicative competence must be anchored in students’ articulation of relevant content and their ability to demonstrate analytical thinking germane to a given communicative situation.

3 Although one could argue that the original socially grounded view of communicative competence established by anthropological or sociolinguistic traditions (e.g., Halliday, 1994; Hymes, 1970) was somewhat derailed in L2 pedagogy with a monochromatic view of language learning as only consisting of learner-internal cognitive processes.

4 When allowing students to join the virtual community from any convenient location, students had to have high-speed internet access and the requisite applications on their computers for participating in the online discussions. In this study, a few participants were unable to join their group during the first chat sessions when they discovered that their computers did not support JavaScript or that their home connection was too slow to accommodate SCMC.

5 All student contributions are quoted in the original language and format, including all lexical innovation and language mistakes, to preserve the integrity of the data and to present realistic linguistic performance by second-semester L2 learners.

6 In English “How are you?” is in fact used as a greeting and is the sociolinguistic equivalent of ‘hello’ with a response of ”great” or “How are you?” In contrast, in German “Wie gehts?” ‘How are you?’ is still a request for information about interlocutor’s well-being and requires a more or less detailed response, depending on the level of familiarity between the speakers (i.e., the better they know each other, the more detail is provided).

7 Chat 1 took place at the end of the second week in the semester; the class sizes are generally small enough and the class activities interactive enough that students get to know each other fairly soon after the beginning of each semester.

8 It could be argued that AMP’s comment in Line 7 is also in response to RTB’s original contribution regarding Michael Jackson’s dancing talent, but there is not enough contextual information to draw this conclusion with any force.

9 In the entire data set, there was only one comment (Group 3, chat 4) about the difficulty of keeping up with the speed of online communication in German.
Compiling a list of native speaker practices would need to consider the question of whose norms students should learn; native speakers do not constitute homogeneous speech communities, nor are they always perfect model users of their language (Kasper, 1998).

REFERENCES


Chat Discussion Questions for CMC Sessions 1 – 6

1. Introduce yourself (childhood, family, hobbies, studies, etc.). What is the demographic profile of the class?

2. What’s your favorite hobby? Who has the most interesting hobby? What do you like to do when it’s raining and cold outside? If a student has a really tight schedule, is it more important to study, sleep, exercise or keep up with friends?
3. Is physical fitness important? How important? How do you think we can get people to exercise more? Is physical fitness more important than mental fitness? How much exercise is too much? Do parents overwork their children (e.g., are their schedules too busy with different athletic and social events at too young an age)?

4. In your opinion, which city is the most interesting in the world? Why? Would you rather live in the city or in the country? Why and at what stage of your life would you want to live there? What are the inherent problems / advantages of living in the city vs. living in the country?

5. Has the class as a whole traveled to all seven continents? Plan a week-long class trip. What would you take along? Where would you definitely not want to go and why? Would you want to rough it (hike and camp) or stay at hotels and resorts?

6. What difficulties have you had to face in your life and how did you solve them? Many musicians face hardships today: overzealous fans, paparazzi, substance abuse... Is their life to be envied or pitied? What are some controversial movies that you have seen lately? Is it good to discuss controversial topics or not?

APPENDIX B
Excerpt from a Student Exchange in the First CMC Session;
Group 4, 10 minutes into the class period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Original German Comment</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SMH</td>
<td>Was macht dir spass!</td>
<td>What is fun for you to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SBN</td>
<td>Gibt es keine topik</td>
<td>Is there no topic [for discussion today]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MAC</td>
<td>ah, das stimmt</td>
<td>Aha, that's right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. JWC</td>
<td>hey T***, ist huete abend gut?</td>
<td>Hey, T***, is tonight good?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. TWK</td>
<td>Sehr Gut</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. JWC</td>
<td>gut</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CDW²</td>
<td>Aber, doch! Das Thema ist, wer seid Ihr und was macht Ihr gern?</td>
<td>But of course! The topic is, who you are and what you like to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. JWC</td>
<td>dass macht mir spass</td>
<td>that’s fun for me [perhaps the CMC]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. SBN</td>
<td>Danke, C***</td>
<td>Thank you, C***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MAC</td>
<td>Fur mich, wandern macht mir spass</td>
<td>For me, hiking is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. CDW</td>
<td>Man soll hier sechs gute Sätze schreiben, dann kann man gehen.</td>
<td>You should write six good sentences, then you can go.³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. JWC</td>
<td>ish heisse j*** und buch lesen mir spass machen</td>
<td>my name is j*** and reading books is fun⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. CDW</td>
<td>Aber ich bleibe hier bis 14:00!</td>
<td>But I’ll stay here until 2 pm!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. MAC</td>
<td>ich willst die A.T. wandern</td>
<td>I want to hike to A.T. [?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. CDF</td>
<td>Lesen macht mir spass.</td>
<td>I like to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. SMH</td>
<td>Das ist gut</td>
<td>That's good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. MAC</td>
<td>Nach etudieren ich</td>
<td>After I study [?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. MND</td>
<td>C***, wollen wir am nexten Freitag zur Kalsse gehen?</td>
<td>C***, do we want to go to class next Friday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. CDW</td>
<td>M***, wandern macht mir auch Spaß. Wo wanderst Du gern? Kennst Du Enchanted Rock?</td>
<td>M***, I also like hiking. Where do you like to hike? Do you know Enchanted Rock?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. TWK</td>
<td>Ich mag schreiben und horen musik.</td>
<td>I like to write and listen to music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. JSP</td>
<td>Ich habe keine Umlats. Tatsachlich!</td>
<td>I don’t have any Umlauts. Really!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. CLF</td>
<td>Ich spiele Basketball gern.</td>
<td>I like to play basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. MAC</td>
<td>ah ja!! ich liebe enchanted rock</td>
<td>oh yea, i love enchanted rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. CDW</td>
<td>Was ist die A. T.?</td>
<td>What is the A. T.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. MAC</td>
<td>und die green belt</td>
<td>and the green belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. JWC</td>
<td>ist a*** hier?</td>
<td>is a*** here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. MAC</td>
<td>grun gelb?</td>
<td>green yellow? [she may be thinking that ‘gelb’ is ‘belt’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. LAH</td>
<td>Ich mag schlafen und rudern</td>
<td>I like to sleep and row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. SMH</td>
<td>Ich spiele Fussball und Baseball</td>
<td>I play football and baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. MAC</td>
<td>hah, mich auch!</td>
<td>hah, me too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. SEP</td>
<td>Hallo, alles</td>
<td>Hello, everyone!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. SWC</td>
<td>Ich mag lesen und horen musik.</td>
<td>I like to read and listen to music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. SBN</td>
<td>Ich habe klassen bis 16! Am Freitag, dass macht mir keine Spass.</td>
<td>I have class until 4 pm! That is no fun on Fridays!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. CDW</td>
<td>M***, nächsten Freitag haben wir eine Prüfung. Komm bitte zu RAS 313A nächsten Freitag.</td>
<td>M***, next Friday we have an exam. Please come to RAS 313A next Friday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. JSP</td>
<td>Margaret, reist du oft?</td>
<td>M***, do you travel a lot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. TWK</td>
<td>Ich bin zum snoop dogg gestern Abend gehen.</td>
<td>I went to snoop dogg last night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. MAC</td>
<td>ja!</td>
<td>yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. CLF</td>
<td>Lesen macht mir spass.</td>
<td>I like to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. JDL</td>
<td>Wer mag Sciencefictiongeschichten lesen?</td>
<td>Who likes to read science fiction stories?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. CDW</td>
<td>S***, heute habe ich Klasse bit 19.00 Uhr.</td>
<td>S***, tonight I have class until 7 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. MND</td>
<td>Wann haben wir die Prüfung von heute?</td>
<td>When do we have the test from today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. CDW</td>
<td>Hej, T***, wie war das?</td>
<td>Hey, T***, how was it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. SBN</td>
<td>Wie war die Konzert?</td>
<td>How was the concert?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. TWK</td>
<td>i mag sciencefictiongeschichten lesen</td>
<td>I like to read science fiction stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. JSP</td>
<td>Wo reist du?</td>
<td>Where do you like to travel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. LAH</td>
<td>Was ist eine gute Concerzt?</td>
<td>What is a good concert?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
49. MAC  ich habe gern für reisen…. ich reise in Kanada I like to travel... I travel in Canada.
50. TWK  In der Austin music hall In the Austin music hall
51. SBN  Es tut mir leid, C*** I’m sorry, C*** [possibly misunderstood CDW’s comment or is teasing him about his LOVE of science-fiction]
52. MAC  und Europa? and Europe?
53. SBN  Am Freitag? On Friday?
54. JCR  ich lese PK dick gern auch I like to read PK dick too.
55. TWK  Sehr gut very good
56. JWC  hey c***, ich muss dir sagen hey, c***, I have to talk to you
57. JDL  Mein Leblingsautor ist Michael Crichton! Und du, C***? My favorite author is Michael Crichton! And yours, C***?
58. CDW  Ich bin einmal nach Ontario gereist. Once I went to Ontario. I want to visit Montreal.
59. JWC  a*** kann nicht in hier kommen a*** can’t come here
60. CDW  Tolkien, der Klassiker Tolkien, the classic [sic]
61. SMH  Wer mag fischen? Who likes to fish [although, fischen’ is closes to the noun: fish]
62. JDL  Lieblingsautor favorite author [self-correction]
63. SBN  T***, WIE war die Conzert? T***, HOW was the concert?
64. JWC  sein computer ist kaput his computer is kaput
65. SBN  (how was it?) (how was it?)
66. JBH  Hallo hello
67. CDW  ]***, kann ich A*** helfen? Was ist los? J***, can I help A***? What’s wrong?
68. JSP  Oh ja. Das ist richt. Du kommst auf Maine. Ich mochte nach Europ reisen. Oh, yeah. That’s right. You are from Maine. I would like to go to Europe.
69. TWK  Snoop war die Scheiße Snoop was crap
70. MAC  Ontario ist sehr gut’ Ontario is very good
71. CDW  die Scheiße – ist das gut oder schlecht? Crap – is that good or bad?
72. MAC  Ich liebe New Brunswick I love New Brunswick
73. TWK  Sehr gut very good
74. CDW  Ich will Nova Scotia besuchen. Ich liebe schottische Kultur. I want to visit Nova Scotia. I love Scottish culture.
75. JWC  kann er meine computer machen (use) he can use my computer
76. SBN  Haha, ja ich hoere Ihnen Musik gern. Haha, yes, i like to listen to their music.
| 77. JSP | Das ist kalt! | That’s cold! |
| 78. MAC | ja ja! mich auch | yes, yes! Me too |
| 79. SBN | Rauchst du? | Do you smoke? |
| 80. CDW | Danke schön, J*** | Thank you, J*** |
| 81. TWK | Ich liebe Alaska | I love Alaska |
| 82. CDW | Ich bin Nichtraucher. Ich bin allergisch | I’m a non-smoker. I’m allergic. |
| 83. SEP | C***… woher kommst du? | C***... where are you from? |
| 84. JDL | ah, natürlich C***! „Herr der Ringe” ist mein Lieblingsbuch! | ah, of course C***! “Lord of the Rings” is my favorite book! |
| 85. JSP | Was hast du fur Hobbys, M***? | What are your hobbies, M***? |
| 86. CDW | Ich komme aus Ost-Texas. Das Dorf heißt Conroe, in der Nähe von Houston. Und Du? | I am from East-Texas. The town is called Conroe, near Houston. And you? |
| 87. MAC | Ah, Ich habe gern fur schwimmen | Ah, I like to swim. |
| 88. MAC | ich bin eine schwimmenlehrerin | I am a swim instructor |
| 89. JWC | ich hab’ veile freunden von Conroe | I have a lot of friends from Conroe |
| 90. CDW | Ich schwimme gern bei Hippie Hollow. | I like to swim in Hippie Hollow. |
| 91. SEP | Ich komme aus Monterrey, Mexico… | I’m from Monterrey, Mexico… |
| 92. MAC | mich auch!!! | me too!!! |
| 93. MAC | hahah | hahaha |
| 94. CDW | J***, echt? | J***, really? |
| 95. MAC | wirklich? | really? |
| 96. LAH | M***, arbeistest du heute? | M***, are you working today? |
| 97. CLF | Ich komme aus Taylor, Texas. | I’m from Taylor, Texas. |
| 98. MAC | Monterey? | Monterey? |
| 99. CDW | HMMM…. S***, kannst Du gut kochen? | Hmmm... S***, can you cook well? |
| 100. MAC | ja, diese morgen | yes, this morning |
| 101. JSP | Wo ist es warm, richt? | Where it’s warm, right? |
| 102. MAC | at 5:45 am! | at 5:45 am! |
| 103. SBN | C***, das ist gut. Ich habe fuer vier monaten vergelasst. | C***, that is good. I [was lost?] for four months. |
| 104. SEP | mmmmm…. vielleicht... haha | mmmmm... maybe... haha |
| 105. CDW | Wo liegt Taylor? | Where is Taylor? |
| 106. TWK | meine mutter liebe hippy hollow. Sie gehe jede sommer | My mother loves hippy hollow. She goes there every summer. |
| 107. LAH | Das ist nicht Sprass. | That is not [fun?] |
| 108. TWK | sommer | summer [self-correction] |
| 109. MAC | was bedeutet liegen? | what does “liegen” mean? |
110. SBN Echt? Really?
111. JWC ja, ich kenne fünf leute yes, I know five people
112. JWC vom conroe from Conroe
113. CDW Liegen, wie auf einem Bett. to lie, like on a bed
114. CDW nicht sitzen not sit
115. SBN wann du willst schlafen gehen? when do you want to go to sleep?
116. MAC ah, ich verstehe aha, I see.
117. TWK Wie Geht's, A*** Hi A***
118. JWC hallo... hey t***, wie zeit soll ich zu deine hause kommen? hello... hey t***, at what time should I come to your house?
119. ARS So la la so so
120. SBN Hallo K... willkommen! Hello K... welcome!
121. ARS Meine computer ist kaput... my computer is broken...
122. JWC HALLO A*** HELLO A***
123. CDW Conroe gefällt mir nicht so sehr, aber ich mag die Pinienwälder in Ost-Texas. Ich liebe Bäume und die grüne Natur. I don't like Conroe very much, but I like to pine forests in East-Texas. I love trees and nature.
124. KMC hallo hello
125. TWK Rufen Sie mich später an Call me later
126. ARS Hallo J*** [using nickname] Hello J*** [using nickname]
127. SEP C***, magst du deine Mac? C***, do you like your Mac?
128. JWC ganz toll!! excellent!!
129. CDW Kann ich helfen, A***. Hast Du einen Mac oder Windows? I can help [question, perhaps?], A***. Do you have a Mac or Windows?
130. JSP Ich liebe Natur... I love nature
131. JWC adameizerheiwen [??]
132. ARS Windows
133. LAH Ich bin in meine bett sitzen I am sitting in bed
134. JSP Hallo K***, wie geht's? Hello K***, how are you / how's it going?
135. JDL Hallo L*** [newcomer] Wie geht's? Hello L***. How are you?
136. LKF Hallo J***, es geht gut. Und du? Hallo J***, I'm fine. And you?
137. JDL Sehr gut weil Heute Freitag ist! Very well because today is Friday!
138. CDW A*** ich lese Deine Sätze OK. A*** I can read your sentences just fine. Keep writing!
139. JSP man kann nach seiner Mac sprechen you can talk to your Mac
140. SBN ich verstehe I understand
141. TWK Lassen Sie uns über Politiken sprechen. Let's talk about politics!
Ich liebe Freitag
I love Friday

ich habe es ist nicht gut Stadt gehoren
I heard it wasn’t a good town

hast du andere klassen heute, L***?
Do you have other classes today, L***?

Aber, ich habe veile Klasse.
But I have many classes.

Nein, M***, Samstag ist besser!
No, M***, Saturday is better!

mich auch und viel Hausaufgaben diese Wochenende!
me too and a lot of homework this weekend!

am samstag arbeite ich nicht
I don’t work on Saturdays

T*** hast du eine Party heute?
T*** are you having a party today?

“viele”
“lots” [self-correction]

Mein Freund kommt heir aus San Antonio huete abend.
My boyfriend is coming here from San Antonio tonight.

L***, was studierst du?
L***, what is your major?

Und dann... ich wises nicht
And then... I don’t know

Wir essen manchmal in Restaurant...
We sometimes eat at a restaurant...

ich sehe ich sehe
I see I see

Ich habe ein Gast aus Houston
I have a guest from Houston

Ich bin ein sophomore
I’m a sophomore

ich muss Material erhalten
[?]

Wir essen manchmal in Restaurant...
We sometimes eat at a restaurant...

ich sehe ich sehe
I see I see

C***, I habe dir nach unten gesehen
C***, I saw you downstairs

Erste Jahre?
first year?

jeder man kommen aus Texas?
is everyone from Texas?

ich bin
I am

aber ich wies nicht meine Lieblingsrestaurant sind.
But I don’t know which one is my favorite restaurant.

zwitte
second

ich ich studiere Biolo aber ich liebe Computers
I’m studying biology but I love computers

ich bin aus Oklahoma geboren, aber in der Oberschule wohnte ich aus Washington
I was born in Oklahoma, but during high school I lived in Washington
174. MAC ich willst in Washington wohnin\ i want to live in Washington
175. JDL Ich komme aus Texas aber ich habe in Prag gewohnt. I am from Texas but I lived in Prague.

1 [ ] indicates author’s clarification, comments.
2 CDW is the instructor.
3 This is a broad interpretation by the instructor; six sentences were the minimum the students had to write. It is noteworthy that nobody left after writing only six sentences.
4 Lesen/Karten spielen/Kochen macht mir Spass 'Reading/playing cards/cooking is fun for me' is a somewhat awkward expression in German that students learn from the textbook, not an L1 transfer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
I would like to thank Professors Elaine K. Horwitz, Janet Swaffar, and Katie Arens for their wisdom and detailed comments on earlier drafts of this study. My gratitude also to the anonymous reviewers at CALICO for their careful reading of the paper. Last, but definitely not least, my heartfelt thanks goes to Professor Robert Fischer for his patience and guidance.

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