

Title: Social media writing and telecollaboration for novice Russian L2 learner
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Abstract:

The greater bulk of current research on second language (L2) writing and text-based telecollaboration has mainly focused on intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency and gives little attention to early stages of writing development in L2 learners. Meanwhile, in the era of Web 2.0, the Internet mediated communication (including social media writing) has become one of the essential 21st century skills and an important learning outcome in both high- and low-level L2 courses. In this paper, we present some reflections on an experimental text-based telecollaboration project conducted at low-proficiency level: 46 first-semester Russian language learners from two universities participated in a two-week writing-based telecollaborative chat with each other and with native speakers in a partnered institution in Russia. A conversational analysis of the participants' writing production provides empirical evidence for our hypothesis that the low-level learners are able to demonstrate writing language performance significantly above the beginner's level benchmark when they were exposed to the kind of writing that motivated self-expression and identity enactment as well as involved a real reader. The project results will allow us to problematize the traditional notion of low-proficiency L2 writing that constitutes one of the factors informing the use of writing-based telecollaboration at the low-level of instruction. In addition, we will explore, from the perspective of the genre and affordance theories, the affordances that social networks like vKontakte offer for developing writing proficiency at the beginning level of language instruction.

Selected biography:

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