

Learning across borders: A teaching case connecting writing students internationally

Heather Steinmann

Western New Mexico University, USA

heather.steinmann@wnmu.edu

Ruslan T. Saduov

Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication

Bashkir State University, Russia

ruslan.saduov@gmail.com

Bruce Maylath

Department of English

North Dakota State University, USA

bruce.maylath@ndsu.edu

Abstract

This article describes a collaborative project between writing classes in Russia and the United States, conducted under the auspices of Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP), a long-standing international network of writing, usability testing, and translation instructors. Although previous projects had linked technical writing students internationally as co-authors, this project broke new ground by linking a Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences classes in the US with a Précis Writing class in Russia. Students edited their international collaborators' writing for grammar and use of different Englishes, and in the process gained experience in intercultural communication and email etiquette. This project may be reproduced in a variety of educational environments where one party is represented by native speakers of the working language, while the other is represented by non-native speakers. Cooperation with EFL students may help instructors to inform native speakers in their classroom about the necessity to adjust writing for the needs of non-native audience.

Keywords: collaborative writing; email etiquette; intercultural communication; précis; TAPP; testing; translation

1. Introduction

Since the 1999-2000 academic year, the Trans-Atlantic & Pacific Project (TAPP) has connected university-level writing classes, translation studies classes, and sometimes usability testing classes in joint international projects, requiring students to collaborate across geographic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. The projects have led to improvements not only in the students' understanding of how they can adjust written texts for international audiences and purposes; they have also heightened students' awareness of cultures and languages beyond their own. TAPP collaborations have included, mostly commonly, writing-translation projects, in which one class writes texts in a source language, then works with another class that translates them into a target language (Humbley, Maylath, Mousten, Vandepitte, & Veisblat, 2005; Maylath, Vandepitte, & Mousten, 2008; Mousten, Maylath, Vandepitte, & Humbley, 2010; Verzella & Tommaso, 2014). Occasionally, they have included translation-editing/reviewing projects, in which a translation class translates texts from a published source, such as a newspaper, into English, then works with a writing/editing class to ensure that the target text is rendered idiomatically in the target language (Hammer & Maylath, 2014). In addition, at two-year intervals, as many as seven classes in seven different countries collaborate to undertake both kinds of projects, along with usability testing of the texts different countries (Maylath, Vandepitte, Minacori, Isohella, Mousten, & Humbley, 2013; Maylath, King, & Arnó Macià, 2013; Sorensen, Hammer, & Maylath, 2015; Vandepitte, Maylath, Mousten, Isohella, & Minacori, 2016).

The project described in this paper experimented with two classes – one in the USA, one in Russia – collaborating on texts that they were assigned to write in English. One class consisted of native speakers of English; the other, of speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL). The project built on earlier TAPP experiments in which mostly native-English speaking students in an international technical writing class in the USA co-authored technical documents with engineering students in an EFL technical writing class in Spain (Maylath, King, & Arnó Macià, 2013). The project with Russian and American students differed in that students collaborated on academic writing based on the papers produced by the US students. Russian students learned to abstract original academic papers, whereas American students had a peer audience that helped with their

clarity in writing and their understanding of the difficulties non-native speakers may have with writing and editing skills.

2. The advantages of collaborative learning

During the past several decades, the pedagogical advantages of having students learn by collaborating on projects has become increasingly clear. Collaborative, or cooperative, learning has been shown to enhance students' learning when they are engaged in a shared task or assignment (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Building on theories of human learning first articulated by Vygotsky (1978) and expanded by Bruffee (1993), subsequent researchers have applied collaborative and cooperative learning theory to classroom settings (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005; Dillenbourg, 1999; Sharan, 1990), including those at the tertiary level (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007), in language classrooms (Oxford, 1997) and in those employing communication technologies (Gokhale, 1995), including online (Roberts, 2004). As Gokhale (1995) found,

Most of the participants felt that group work helped them to better understand the material and stimulated their thinking process. In addition, the shared responsibility reduced the anxiety associated with problem-solving (...) collaborative learning fosters the development of critical thinking through discussion, clarification of ideas, and evaluation of others' ideas.

The advantages of collaborative writing have likewise drawn the attention of researchers and teachers. While collaborative writing, or co-authoring, has long been common in professional workplaces, until the last couple decades it was often looked at askance by researchers and teachers in the humanities, even as it was the norm in the laboratories of the natural and social sciences. Among engineers who became technical writers, Ede and Lunsford (1990) found that "these writers (...) stressed the satisfaction that comes from the broadest form of collaboration their work calls for: establishing direct ties with one primary audience – those people around the world who operate and maintain their equipment" (p. 32). Among students writing in their second language, Storch (2005) found that "collaboration means that learners have joint responsibility over the production of the text. This may promote a sense of co-ownership and hence encourage students to contribute to the decision making on all aspects of writing: content, structure, and language" (p. 154). She also found "that it was helpful for both improving their grammatical accuracy and learning vocabulary" (p. 167). Others have observed such advantages when collaboration is incorporated into translator training (Kenny, 2008). Similar advantages have been observed in TAPP collaborations, as recorded in Moustén, Humbley,

Maylath, and Vandepitte (2012); Vandepitte, Mousten, Maylath, Isohella, Musacchio, and Palumbo (2015); Verzella and Mara (2015), and Lisaité, Vandepitte, Maylath, Mousten, Valdez, Castel-Branco, and Minacori (2016).

3. Teaching case explained

The project described in this paper took place between writing students of two universities, namely North Dakota State University (NDSU), in the USA, and Bashkir State University (BSU), in Russia. The project connected NDSU students in a course titled "Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences" and BSU students in a "Precis Writing" class. In the BSU cohort of juniors, all students majored in English philology and translation studies. Upon graduation, they become English language professionals, that is teachers and translators, which requires them to be fluent English speakers and efficient writers. It was important for the project that NDSU students were native speakers, practitioners of contemporary American English, while BSU students were international EFL learners. Both cohorts were of approximately the same size, just over 20 students, which allowed each student to have a partner of their own, except for some BSU students who worked in groups of two for collaboration with their NDSU counterparts.

The project started with extensive explanation of the general idea of TAPP as well as instructions of the particular project the students were supposed to take part in: an analysis of an academic journal that included a summary of one of the articles in the journal. All students received a greeting from instructors, a timeline, a flow chart to track the deadlines for completed assignments to be exchanged or submitted, and a roster of students that showed who they were to work with. Students were also instructed about the cultural background of the cohort they were to work with. The project was almost semester-long, starting February 1 and ending May 2, so students had enough time to complete the three parts of the assignment, that is the article summary, the journal analysis, and the abstract, and receive feedback and editing suggestions from their cohorts within the allotted time.

In the first phase of the project, NDSU students selected an academic, peer-reviewed journal relevant to their field of study. As part of the assignment, they picked one article in the journal to briefly summarize as an example of the type of article the journal publishes. This summary was subsequently sent to the respective BSU counterparts. Upon receipt of the papers, BSU students were asked to read through the summaries, spot the language difficult (or potentially difficult) for understanding, and provide their suggestions on possible improvements. It is natural, that as EFL learners, they were sometimes less proficient in English compared to their counterparts. In addition, the specifics of Russian education with its

inclination to expose students primarily to British English makes Russian students less prepared to understand texts produced by their American partners. The combination of these factors yields possible misunderstandings in texts from native speakers. All such ambiguities were to be clarified with the authors of the texts. NDSU students, on the other hand, may be less aware that their writing is sometimes difficult for understanding by the non-native speakers from other regions of the world. Comments about the writing from Russian counterparts, in this respect, could be informative about the possible difficulties the international audience may have reading these texts and about what changes could be introduced in order to improve this understanding. In the end, collaborators produced the final version of that summary.

In the second phase of the project, BSU students drafted abstracts to complete journal analysis papers produced by NDSU students. The article summary produced in the first phase of the project was incorporated into an analysis of a peer-reviewed academic journal in the NDSU student's field of study. In this way, the analysis itself was co-written. After BSU students wrote abstracts of the papers, the partners in America edited them, with both partners collaborating on the final draft of the abstract. This part was a hands-on experience for BSU students of reading and understanding a native speaker's text and producing abstracts of them. NDSU students performed as editors of non-native speakers' writing, an experience many of them could use in the future careers as journal editors, scholars, and writers. Overall, the project was intended to achieve the following aims:

1. To instruct NDSU students about the difficulties international audiences might have understanding their texts. In this respect, BSU students worked with the texts produced by native speakers to test them for "usability" by the international audience. Equipped with the knowledge about the predicaments BSU students had, NDSU counterparts can use it in their future careers to produce clearer texts.
2. To instruct BSU students about the contemporary language practice of the younger generation in the USA. Subsequently, they will be able to use it in their teaching and translating / interpreting careers.
3. To instruct BSU students about writing abstract of an original writing of their American counterparts.
4. To instruct NDSU students about editing the writing produced by international non-native speakers of English.
5. To pair up partners with different cultural backgrounds and let them uncover similarities and differences between the cultures behind their partners.
6. To instruct students on both sides of collaboration about email etiquette.

At the beginning of the project, NDSU and BSU partners exchanged pre-learning reports with basic background information to learn more about each other. The standard form of the report, originally conceived by TAPP member Birthe Mousten, of Denmark, was borrowed from TAPP projects inaugurated by other instructors in the project. At the end, students exchanged post-learning reports. The latter was specifically designed for this project to receive feedback from the participants. Students were encouraged to provide extensive and honest opinion about the project in general and their benefit from it in particular, even if this opinion was less than favorable. The individual post-learning reports were sent only to their respective instructors and have never been disclosed to their counterparts or instructor on the other side. Instructors on both sides undertook responsibility to process the feedback themselves and present only the overall results of the project without revealing student names. These results were used by the instructors to analyze this particular teaching case and are the primary source of this paper.

4. Results of the project

This section uncovers the collaboration effects for BSU and NDSU students as seen by themselves and their instructors. Results are documented and interpreted using students' post-learning reports. For the sake of convenience, the section is divided into several parts depending on the skills and knowledge acquired during the project: *Professional skills*, *General skills*, and *Cultural knowledge*, which address student gains from the project, and *Challenges*, which addresses issues that need to be addressed in future iterations of the project.

4.1. Professional skills

This project, among other things, was aimed at enhancing the skills directly related to the future professions of the participants: for BSU students, improvement of English language and abstract writing; for NDSU students, writing for an international audience and providing feedback by way of editing via electronic (Microsoft Word) means. These aims were meant to be attained through the project activities. On the one hand, reading the original papers produced by native speakers informed BSU TAPPers about the formal end of contemporary language practice. On the other hand, email correspondence exposed them to the informal American English of younger college population. For NDSU TAPPers, having their original papers read by someone who spoke sometimes several different languages (an impressive difference noted by many NDSU students as most of them speak only English) made them keenly aware of idioms or vagueness in their writing and encouraged them to clean up their email correspondence. The second

part of the project, in which BSU students wrote abstracts for the NDSU students' papers, further improved skills in abstract writing and editing, increasing language proficiency. The feedback collected from both BSU and NDSU participants confirmed the usefulness of the project in relation to their professional skills.

Almost 80% of BSU participants clearly stated in their feedback that the project improved their language. Among them, 43% acknowledged that understanding the language (specific sentence or utterance) and conveying their own thoughts was sometimes challenging. Most commonly, the participants referred to new lexical units they had found in their counterparts' papers as well idiomatic expressions: one of the students, for example, did not know "Catch 22" in the meaning of a paradoxical situation. In some cases, the unknown unit was found in the dictionary, while in other cases it was explained by the NDSU students. In a few cases, BSU students referred to unknown grammatical structures they found in the texts. Some BSU students also mentioned the differences they spotted between the British English they were exposed to during their studies and American English, the minor discrepancy being in spelling and vocabulary, for example the use of *vacation* over *holiday* or *behavior* over *behaviour* in American English.

We also received some feedback we had not expected to have. A few Russian students (almost 20%) mentioned that the project had helped boost their confidence in their use of language. They claimed to have realized that they were able to hold conversations with native speakers. This experience removed the psychological communication barrier they had had about the use of English outside classroom. It is worth mentioning that Bashkortostan Republic, the home region of BSU students, is located away from English-speaking countries, and students have little to no experience communicating with their peers from abroad in particular in the academic environment. Most often, they use English to interact with their instructors or with each other. A new experience outside the regular communication frame was perceived by many of them as a challenge, which in the end reduced their anxiety about the use of language.

For NDSU students, improvement of language was noted in their increased need to use "concise" (50%) or "specific" (31%) language to avoid miscommunication. They noted that it was difficult to avoid "cultural phrases" and ambiguities and reported that finding the need to omit nonessential information was common. One student wrote that "Even when you use words that are translatable, some things still need to be fixed and we still had to talk about it". The seeming wordiness on the part of the NDSU students appeared both at sentence-level and document-level. One NDSU student reported that their BSU collaborator wanted to stay within strict guidelines for the summary assignment and not stray from a three-paragraph structure, something that the NDSU student found surprising. Some NDSU students (16%) reported that while their BSU

partners might have some issues with grammar, they had no trouble getting their ideas across. The NDSU students found it more difficult to explain their grammar choices than to give other, more substantive feedback, a reaction not surprising from native speakers whose study of English grammar commonly ends after high school.

With writing assignments, both BSU and NDSU students showed significant interest in working on the initial summary prepared by NDSU students and discussing the language difficulties with them. In general, students indicated the following professional skills they had gained with this assignment: thoughtful and careful reading, summarizing, finding main ideas, providing ideas for text clarification. Three students also stated it was the first time that they used the commentary function in MS Word, so the project has increased their technological proficiency. However, participants were less excited about the assignment with abstracts. Less than half of BSU students indicated that the project had helped them to improve the skill of abstract writing. At the same time, we did not expect this number to be very high, because all the participants had already had the experience of making an abstract, and in this light the project was yet another exercise of something that they had already done more than once. Another possibility for this lack of interest is that the abstract was the last part of the project, and students might have felt as though they had already accomplished the more difficult work of the project.

However, BSU students indicated that editing from NDSU partners was beneficial in a number of ways. Most commonly mentioned that improvements from the partners included better word choices, such as, for example, "the author speculates" instead of "contemplates" or "the article titled" rather than "the article named". A few BSU participants gave examples when their partners improved their grammar, for example, by providing a better choice of articles (in most cases this would be the use of the definite article in restrictive function). NDSU students also suggested improvements at sentence and text-level by removing unnecessary parts of the sentence or rephrasing, for example, splitting long sentences (native Russian EFL learners often tend to write in overly long and complex sentences) and adding up link-words (at first look, moreover, etc.). In several cases, the logic required exchanging blocks of sentences or omitting some.

4.2. General skills

General skills are understood here as such skills as email etiquette, social and communication skills, ability to contact an unknown international person, etc. These skills are essential for students because they can be applied in any profession or industry, no matter whether they choose to work in the same area they are majoring in or not.

Social and communication skills were essential for the project, as it has been the first experience of international collaboration for most BSU participants, and more than half of them (56%) indicated that initiation of this collaboration was challenging. On the part of NDSU, about 20% of students mentioned that they felt awkward initiating conversations. In some cases, it was a language problem, whereby students found it difficult to find proper words to address their American peers. For example, some participants said it was difficult to find a proper way to know what to call their counterparts or they had to be very careful choosing words to convey their message so as not to offend American students accidentally. For other students, it was more difficult to step over their shyness and establish contact with an unknown international student. One of the students indicated that when they opened up to the partner, it turned out that it was equally embarrassing to this partner to have a close contact with an unknown person whom they have never seen: "Opening up was the best idea. I was amazed, but my partner seemed to open up in response". Students mentioned that they searched for profiles of their counterparts on *Facebook* and tried to "friend" them there to see the profile picture of that person and know more about them. Some students made initial contact that way and then communicated via email. Only one student suggested substituting email conversation for another means of communication; all other students were glad to have a chance to have a formal correspondence with their partners. At the same time, students wrote that *Facebook* may be an easier platform to communicate with their partners – some because of the speed of the communication, and some because of speed of response as 26% of NDSU collaborators noted the importance of responding to an email right away to let the sender know it was received. (*Facebook* has a built-in feature for indicating that a message has been read). Speed of communication will be discussed in more detail in the section on challenges.

The necessity to build up social and communication skills is closely connected with collaboration skill, which was at the heart of the project, because the very nature of TAPP implies that there are two or more international students working on the same project together. Apart from overcoming the initial awkwardness, it also required skills and qualities for long-term cooperation. Thus, a third of the participants discovered the importance of responsibility as a vital component in the project. This realization often came from a rather stressful personal experience, either because their partner was less than responsible, and they did not receive their files on time and had to send friendly reminders, or they were irresponsible themselves and realized how much it undermined somebody else's performance. In both cases, students felt pressure and stress, which resulted in very dramatic understanding of how vital responsibility is for collaboration, when both partners depend on each other. These students expressed their regret for being irresponsible or having an irresponsible partner.

However, what BSU students rated as one of the most beneficial skills among those obtained during the project was email etiquette. It is not a coincidence, because emailing culture in Russia is not deep or extensive, and very few students had the necessary skill. For this reason, prior to the project, BSU students were instructed in email etiquette, so that they could practice it during the project. Upon completion of the project, 75% of the students indicated in their feedback that they had learned a lot about emailing and substantially practiced the skill. The remaining 25% claimed that they possessed the skills before the project or that they did not have enough practical experience during TAPP. According to several participants, proper email correspondence with an international student was the main benefit from the project. For NDSU students, 26% said that their email etiquette was improved in that they were careful to use "proper English" when emailing. Being mindful of tone and making sure that their language was "on point and clearly organized", as one student wrote, was essential. They also noted new experiences, such as becoming more familiar with using professional greetings and learning to include the instructor's address in the Cc: line. Almost half of them reported that being prompt in responding was an essential skill and factor to success in the project.

The success of the project in reinforcing email etiquette knowledge cannot be overestimated in light of a small-scale experiment conducted by the BSU instructor along with the project. The Russian education system allows the same instructor to teach the same student groups several years in a row, as was done in the experiment reported here. At the beginning of the semester, the instructor had two student groups of approximately the same size: the TAPP group (35 students) and a control group (47 students). At the beginning of the semester, both cohorts were instructed on email etiquette. However, the TAPP group had a hands-on experience with international students, while the control group was tested for their practical skill. Next semester, the same two groups were required to write emails to the same instructor under a different assignment. It turned out that most TAPP participants (as many as 48%) fully complied with the basic email etiquette requirements, while 22% of them had minor mistakes (omitting a subject line, name, greeting). The control group showed a significant decline in the amount of students able to write a proper email from 52% to 12% (plus 18% of those who had minor deviations) in just a semester-long period (see Figure 1). Thus, students who took up the project retained the skill more successfully.

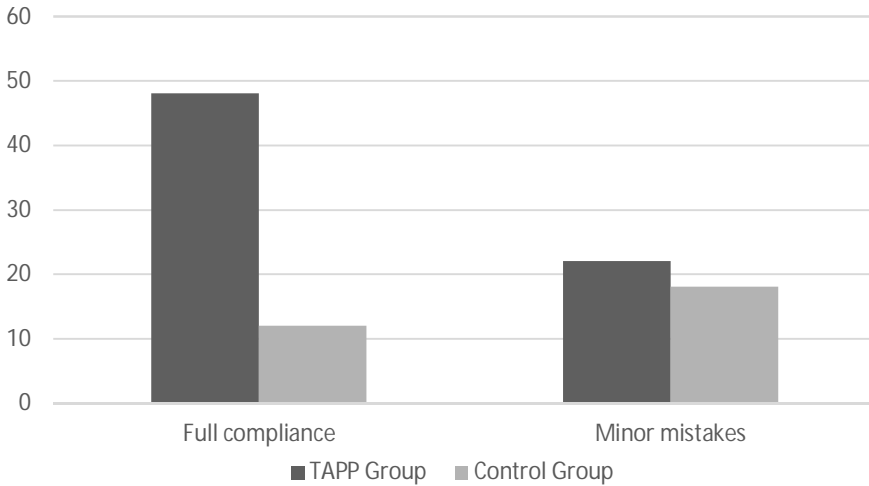


Figure 1 BSU student email etiquette retention after working with TAPP

4.3. Cultural knowledge

Both sides of the collaboration project belonged to different cultures, and in the post-learning report, they were required to indicate if they had noticed any cultural differences or similarities with their partners throughout the project. Several BSU students, indeed, noticed that NDSU partners had a more business-like approach to the project, and sounded more laconic and reserved. NDSU students reported feeling bad about making corrections in BSU students' writing, even when they were not entirely sure what their partners were asking, and 20% of NDSU students were unsure if the lack of feedback they received was due to their partners' not having much to say about the work or their partners' not being sure how to communicate what they had to say about the work.

However, half of TAPP participants on both sides claimed either that they did not see any cultural differences or similarities or that the differences were not an issue. As one BSU student wrote, "I actually saw more similarities in us: we are both quite purposeful, polite, adore travelling, find studies important, tried to do our best for a project". Also, some students claimed that the project did not provide enough direction for them to exchange any substantial background knowledge that would let them express a well-grounded opinion. On the topic of culture, NDSU students reported observations such as amazement at the number of languages their BSU partners spoke, an assumption that the success of their project was due in part to both cultures valuing respect and manners, surprise at how much more travel their BSU partners had done, a sense that BSU partners were "a lot more driven in [their] schoolwork than we sometimes

tend to be in the United States”, an interest in the differences of the school system/credit system, and a contradiction of the stereotype of Russians as “being standoffish and cold ... [this was] false”. In this respect, TAPP bridged two cultures and clearly indicated that collaboration can be established regardless of any cultural differences, which become irrelevant to the partners.

At the same time, students on both sides asked for more culture-related interaction with their partners. BSU students suggested more assignments to be completed together with the partners, *Skype* conferences at the beginning and/or at the end of the project, video presentations instead of/in addition to pre-learning reports, more elaborate pre-learning reports, country-study reports prepared by students. Several NDSU students expressed a desire to have more of an introduction to Russian culture at the outset of this project, which again shows a desire to learn more about the people they were working with.

4.4. Challenges in the project

The post-learning report was also designed to let the instructors learn about the difficulties the participants had to face faults they saw in the project. It was important to hear students’ opinions on the project outcomes, because it might be a valuable contribution into future projects connecting writing students.

It turns out that time gap (American students were 10 hours behind the Russian ones) was a major predicament mentioned by a third of the BSU participants. Even more, 58% of NDSU participants mentioned the time difference as a challenge to the project. One student explained this challenge as being one of checking email only once a day, writing “sometimes I would check my email and there would be nothing, only to check it the next day and see I missed what they sent”. Other NDSU students seemed to be primed for the opposite, that is to expect an electronic response from someone right away; therefore the time difference was frustrating to them. This time gap left little opportunity for fast responses or chatting. Another difficulty was the necessity of waiting for responses, sometimes for several days, and delayed submissions. The delays were sometimes perceived as lack of interest in the project or irresponsibility on the part of the partner and led students to suggest that delays should be managed more efficiently. Several students stated that the project should include a more complicated assignment. Some of them suggested that there should be more texts for commentary or editing to benefit from the partner’s expertise. Others put forward an idea to write a paper together with their partner to have a closer collaboration experience. A tighter schedule was also mentioned by two BSU students as a means to improve the project.

Overall, students expressed great satisfaction with the project. Of the BSU collaborators, 60% were unconditionally satisfied, 26% more had minor reservations about the project, whereas 14% were dissatisfied. When asked if they would want to take up a similar project again, only 10% of BSU students answered 'no', whereas the remaining 90% were excited about the opportunity even though a third of them had certain reservations about the project. The major reasons for dissatisfaction or partial dissatisfaction in the project included irresponsibility on the part of the partner or their own lack of interest in the project, the assignments' being too easy, lack of culture-relevant assignments, or lack of school-related communication with partners. Responses from NDSU students were similar: 63% of respondents were unconditionally satisfied with the project, 16% had minor reservations, and 21% were dissatisfied, with the most-often cited dissatisfactions being that students wished for more interaction with collaborators, more oversight by instructors, or that they had encountered some kind of frustration with time complications. Despite these reservations, 95% of NDSU students said they would do a similar project again, with just 5% saying they would not. Figure 2 presents the data more comprehensively. It speaks to the success of the project and to the importance of such international student collaborations, showing that the improvements suggested by students involve more work on the project, which clearly indicates interest in the project. Moreover, several students on both sides suggested that a *Skype* conference somewhere at the beginning of the project could help a lot to establish contact, which indicates an interest in the people they were working, which goes beyond the writing project itself.

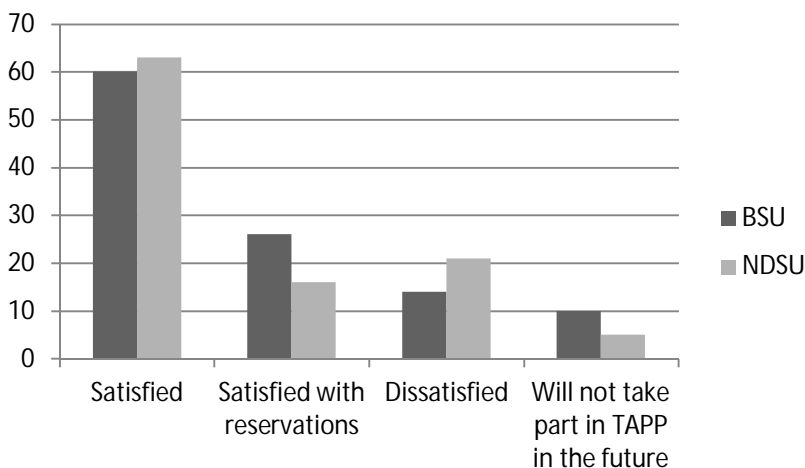


Figure 2 Overall project satisfaction

5. Conclusion

In summary, the project met its six goals: to instruct students about differences in Englishes and test the usability of a co-written document, to instruct students in abstract writing, to instruct students in the intricacies of editing text written by someone from a different country, to broaden the cultural experiences of students, and to instruct students in correct and pleasant email conversation, despite possible language variations.

It is invaluable that both sides in the collaboration tried to be considerate towards each other. BSU students mentioned “ability to make a polite remark” as a new skill they obtained, because it was essential to try to make a remark in a way that does not offend the author. Indeed, 76% of NDSU students noted that their BSU collaborators were “understanding and considerate”, “polite”, “respectful”, “nice”, or “pleasant”, or they noted the importance of having or developing these qualities in themselves for the sake of collaboration. On the other hand, BSU students mentioned similar characteristics in their partners. In this respect, the project helped students to discover that collaborations of this kind require partners to have essential qualities, such as friendliness, politeness, patience, courtesy, tolerance, amiability, respect, perseverance, determination, and discipline. It is obvious that despite the shortcomings any particular project under the umbrella of TAPP may have, the noble idea of bridging expertise and cultures across the borders helps to share practices and gain new knowledge, on the one hand, and break any ice walls between cultures, on the other. It is rewarding that many students in the project mentioned similarities between themselves and their partners and, moreover, asked for more cultural background regarding their counterparts. In addition, the student level of satisfaction with the project was high, and most students reported they would participate in such a project again. It gives us hope that the ways in which the project informed the students were beneficial and will help students establish efficient and effectual international collaborations in their future carriers, should their employment require it.

References

- Barkley, E. F., Cross, P. K., & Major, C. H. (2005). *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bruffee, K. A. (1993). *Collaborative learning: Higher education, interdependence, and the authority of knowledge*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dillenbourg, P., (Ed.). (1999). *Collaborative-learning: Cognitive and computational approaches*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Ede, L. S., & Lunsford, A. A. (1990). *Singular texts/plural authors: Perspectives on collaborative writing*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gokhale, A. A. (1995). Collaborative learning enhances critical thinking. *Journal of Technology Education*, 7(1).
- Hammer, S., & Maylath, B. (2014). Global collaborations, face-to-face conversation: Social media in trans-Atlantic translation projects. In M. Limbu & B. Gurung (Eds.), *Emerging pedagogies in the networked knowledge society: Practices integrating social media and globalization* (pp. 144-161). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Humbley, J., Maylath, B., Mousten, B., Vandepitte, S., & Veisblat, L. (2005). Learning localization through trans-Atlantic collaboration. In G. F. Hayhoe (Ed.), *Proceedings of the IEEE International Professional Communication Conference, 10-13 July 2005, U of Limerick, Ireland* (pp. 578-595). New York: IEEE. Retrieved from <http://doi.ieeecomputersociety.org/10.1109/IPCC.2005.1494227>
- Johnson, R. T., & Johnson, D. W. (1994). An overview of cooperative learning. In J. Thousand, A. Villa, & A. Nevin (Eds.), *Creativity and collaborative learning*. Baltimore: Brookes Press.
- Johnson, R. T., Johnson, D. W., & Smith, K. (2007). The state of cooperative learning in postsecondary and professional settings. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19, 15-29.
- Kenny, M. A. (2008). Discussion, cooperation, collaboration: The impact of task structure on student interaction in a web-based translation exercise module. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 2(2), 139-164.
- Lisaité, D., Vandepitte, S., Maylath, B., Mousten, B., Valdez, S., Castel-Branco, M., & Minacori, P. (2016). Negotiating meaning at a distance: Peer feedback in electronic learning translation environments. In B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Ł. Bogucki (Eds.), *Translation and meaning* (pp. 99-113) (*Łódź Studies in Language, New Series*, Vol. 1). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Maylath, B., King, T., & Arnó Macià, E. (2013). Linking engineering students in Spain and technical writing students in the US as coauthors: The challenges and outcomes of subject-matter experts and language specialists collaborating internationally. *connexions: International Professional Communication Journal*, 1(2), 150-185.

- Maylath, B., Vandepitte, S., & B. Mousten. (2008). Growing grassroots partnerships: Trans-Atlantic collaboration between American instructors and students of technical writing and European instructors and students of translation. In D. Stärke-Meyerring & M. Wilson (Eds.), *Designing global learning environments: Visionary partnerships, policies, and pedagogies* (pp. 52-66). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Maylath, B., Vandepitte, S., Minacori, P., Isohella S., Mousten, B., & Humbley, J. (2013). Managing complexity: A technical communication translation case study in multilateral international collaboration. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22, 67-84.
- Mousten, B., Maylath, B., Vandepitte, S., & Humbley, J. (2010). Learning localization through trans-Atlantic collaboration: Bridging the gap between professions. *IEEE-Transactions on Professional Communication*, 53, 401-411.
- Mousten, B., Humbley, J., Maylath, B., & Vandepitte, S. (2012). Communicating pragmatics about content and culture in virtually mediated educational environments. In S. Kelsey & K. St. Amant (Eds.), *Computer-mediated communication across cultures: International interactions in online environments* (pp. 312-327). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Oxford, R. L. (1997). Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction: Three communicative strands in the language classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, 81, 443-456.
- Roberts, T. (Ed.) (2004). *Online collaborative learning: Theory and practice*. London: Information Science Publishing.
- Sharan, S. (Ed.). (1990). *Cooperative learning: Theory and research*. New York: Praeger.
- Sorensen, K., Hammer, S., & Maylath, B. (2015). Synchronous and asynchronous online international collaboration: The Trans-Atlantic & Pacific Project. *Connections: International Professional Communication Journal*, 3, 153-177.
- Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 153-173.
- Vandepitte, S., Maylath, B., Mousten, B., Isohella, S., & Minacori, P. (2016). Multilateral collaboration between technical communicators and translators: A case study of new technologies and processes. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 26, 3-19.
- Vandepitte, S., Mousten, B., Maylath, B., Isohella, S., Musacchio, M. T., & Palumbo, G. (2015). Translation competence: Research data in multilateral and interprofessional collaborative learning. In Y. Cui & W. Zhao (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching methods in language translation and interpretation* (pp. 137-159). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

- Verzella, M., & Mara. A. (2015). Translocal pragmatics: Operationalizing postnational heuristics to locate salient cultural overlap. *Rhetoric, Professional Communication and Globalization*, 7, 12-28.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.