

REVISTA DO GEL



Grupo de Estudos Linguísticos
do Estado de São Paulo

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do Estado de São Paulo

REVISTA DO GEL

ISSN 1984-591X

Revista do GEL	São Paulo	v. 15	n. 3	352 p.	Dezembro / 2018
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DIRETORIA DO GEL / 2017-2019 (FCL ASSIS/UNESP)

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Publicação quadrimestral
Solicita-se permuta/Exchange desired

Revista do GEL / Grupo de Estudos Linguísticos do Estado de São Paulo. Vol. 1 (2004).
São Paulo: Grupo de Estudos Linguísticos do Estado de São Paulo, 2004-

Quadrimestral

ISSN 1984-591X

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PALAVRA DO EDITOR

Este é o segundo número temático da **Revista do GEL**, desde a sua criação em 2002. O primeiro número temático, publicado em dezembro de 2017, inaugurou um projeto de promoção e divulgação de conhecimento científico que busca articular expertises de brasileiros e estrangeiros em torno de pesquisas das áreas de Linguística e Letras. Com a publicação do presente número, o projeto vai aos poucos se consolidando e ganhando contornos mais definidos no âmbito da revista.

Sob o título “Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios”, as editoras convidadas Leila Martins Gonçalves da Costa (University of Miami), Ana Cristina Biondo Salomão (UNESP) e Maisa de Alcântara Zakir (UNESP) cumpriram uma grande tarefa, a de reunir trabalhos que tratam das trocas (inter)culturais, no que tange principalmente aos problemas relativos às noções de identidade e de (inter)subjetividade em situação de aprendizagem, tendo como pano de fundo o contexto de tandem, tanto nas experiências presenciais quanto nas parcerias telecolaborativas institucionais.

Contribuição inegável para os estudos sobre ensino de língua estrangeira em situação de (tele)colaboração, este número temático deixa evidente a preeminência da pesquisa brasileira na área e o papel essencial das parcerias com centros de pesquisa estrangeiros para a sua consolidação.

Assis, dezembro de 2018.

Matheus Nogueira Schwartzmann
FCL/Assis – UNESP
Editor da Revista do GEL

TELECOLABORAÇÃO TRANSCULTURAL E TRANSCONTINENTAL PARA APRENDIZAGEM DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS: PROPOSTAS E DESAFIOS

Leila Martins Gonçalves da COSTA¹

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Propostas de ensino centrado no aluno e não somente na figura do professor ganharam espaço na área de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas a partir da década de 1980, por meio de atividades para promover a interação e negociação de significados. Para Crandall (2000), esse tipo de colaboração desenvolve aspectos afetivos positivos, tais como, redução da ansiedade, aumento de motivação, facilitação do desenvolvimento de atitudes positivas frente à aprendizagem em geral, fomento à autoestima, assim como apoio a distintos estilos de aprendizagem, uma vez que os aprendizes se beneficiam da ajuda dos colegas e o professor não se coloca como o detentor de todo o saber.

Os primeiros relatos de projetos de colaboração *on-line* entre aprendizes em diferentes localidades somente começaram a aparecer na década de 1990, quando professores de línguas e aprendizes começaram a ter acesso à internet com mais regularidade (O'DOWD, 2007). Entretanto, a ideia de engajar os alunos em tarefas colaborativas em localidades geográficas distintas já era praticada muito antes disso. Os relatos a que se tem acesso datam de 1920, quando o educador francês Célestín Freinet conduziu um projeto com seus alunos de produção de jornais que, posteriormente, foram trocados com alunos de outras partes da França, que também tinham criado publicações (KERN, 2013; O'DOWD, 2007).

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- | Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios

O'Dowd (2018) descreve a telecolaboração (*telecollaboration*) como o engajamento de um grupo de aprendizes em interações interculturais *on-line* e projetos em colaboração com parceiros de outros contextos culturais ou localizações geográficas como parte integrante de programas educacionais. O autor explica que diferentes terminologias vêm sendo usadas nos últimos anos para denominar esse tipo de atividade: intercâmbio intercultural *on-line* (*online intercultural exchange*), intercâmbio virtual (*virtual exchange*), COIL (*Collaborative Online International Learning*), educação intercultural em língua estrangeira mediada pela internet (*internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education*), ambientes de aprendizagem globalmente em rede (*globally networked learning environments*), e-tandem e teletandem.

Concordamos com o autor que a profusão de nomenclaturas tem um lado positivo, que mostra que esse tipo de aprendizagem tem sido implementado de diferentes formas e se mostrado adaptável para diferentes contextos e localizações geográficas. Entretanto, isso também demonstra que as práticas e os resultados de pesquisa de iniciativas semelhantes não são conhecidas por membros da comunidade acadêmica de áreas distintas ou afins. O'Dowd (2018) menciona ainda o desafio que as diferentes terminologias e abordagens trazem para a promoção e disseminação de tais atividades entre educadores e legisladores que não estão familiarizados com o conceito.

Atualmente, há uma gama de projetos telecolaborativos, que vão desde propostas individuais, conduzidas por professores em suas salas de aulas, até projetos interinstitucionais, os quais contam com reconhecimento e, muitas vezes, com recursos para sua execução. Há também plataformas internacionais, como *eTwinning* (MIGUELA, 2007), que buscam colocar em contato os profissionais da educação que trabalham em escolas de diferentes países, para que possam se comunicar, colaborar e desenvolver projetos em conjunto.⁴

Há projetos que buscam a intersecção da aprendizagem de línguas com o componente cultural, como o projeto *Cultura*, iniciado em 1997, no MIT por Gilberte Furstenberg, Shoggy Waryn e Sabine Levet (GARCÍA; CRAPOTTA, 2007). O objetivo é conectar grupos de alunos por meio de recursos da internet para um intercâmbio cultural, por meio de questionários *on-line*, posteriormente analisados, assim como de fóruns nos quais os grupos discutem valores culturais e crenças a partir das respostas dadas por eles nos questionários.⁵

4 Para mais informações, ver: <https://www.etwinning.net/pt/pub/index.htm>.

5 Para mais informações, ver: <https://cultura.mit.edu/>.

Outros exemplos de projetos e portais *on-line* de telecolaboração atuais são: *eTandem Europa*⁶, da Ruhr-Universität Bochum, na Alemanha, cujo objetivo é difundir as possibilidades de se aprender uma língua por meio da prática de eTandem, além de oferecer suporte para os interessados em encontrar um parceiro; *Lingalog*⁷, da Université Lumière Lyon II, na França, que tem como concepção o trabalho colaborativo, colocando em contato falantes nativos de diferentes línguas por meio de uma plataforma que lhes oferece ferramentas tecnológicas como fórum, *chat* e *wiki*.; INTENT⁸ (*Integrating Telecollaborative Networks into Foreign Language Higher Education*), projeto desenvolvido em várias instituições de ensino superior pelo mundo, que, a partir de uma plataforma, tem como objetivo apoiar professores universitários e mobilizar projetos de telecolaboração entre seus alunos; TILA⁹ (*Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition*), projeto da Comissão Europeia que utiliza a plataforma *Moodle* e consiste em uma comunidade internacional de professores e pesquisadores interessados em inovar e enriquecer as práticas de ensino de línguas, integrando atividades de telecolaboração com parceiros de diferentes países; *Tandem Exchange*¹⁰ e *ePals*¹¹, *sites* que colocam em contato pessoas interessadas em parcerias colaborativas *on-line* e presenciais, no caso do primeiro, e apenas *on-line*, no caso do segundo.

O'Dowd (2014) cita exemplos de projetos que incluem discussões em fóruns internacionais de jornais e revistas, como do *Le Monde* ou *The Guardian*, que visam a ir além da interação entre aprendizes e prover oportunidades de comunicação "autêntica", que requerem conhecimento das regras culturais e de registro neste gênero de comunicação. O autor menciona também iniciativas denominadas "Telecolaboração 2.0", baseadas nos recursos da "web social" que emergiram da criação de ferramentas colaborativas na internet, como os *blogs*, as *wikis* e as chamadas redes sociais, como Facebook, Instagram, entre outros, que envolveriam iniciativas mais independentes da sala de aula em comparação aos modelos anteriores.

No caso específico da aprendizagem de línguas, destacamos o eTandem (O'ROURKE, 2007) e o Teletandem (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; TELLES, 2009), que colocam pares de falantes de diferentes línguas trabalhando de forma colaborativa por meio de recursos de comunicação síncrona ou assíncrona na Internet para aprenderem a língua um do outro. No caso do eTandem, a conversa é feita por meio de *chat*, enquanto

6 Para mais informações, ver: <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/tandem-server/etandem/etindex-en.html>

7 Para mais informações, ver: <http://lingalog.net/dokuwiki/>

8 Para mais informações, ver: <http://www.uni-collaboration.eu/>

9 Para mais informações, ver: <http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/>

10 <https://www.tandemexchange.com/>

11 www.epals.com

- | Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios

no Teletandem privilegia-se a compreensão e a produção oral, optando-se por recursos de tecnologia VOIP (*Voice over Internet Protocol*), como o Skype e, mais recentemente, o Zoom.

Os artigos compilados neste número temático enfocam, em sua maioria, essas duas modalidades de aprendizagem telecolaborativa. Portanto, na próxima seção apresentamos um panorama sobre elas a fim de recuperarmos suas respectivas características, bem como de refletirmos acerca de suas implicações no ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras na atualidade.

Do Tandem ao Teletandem¹²

Tandem é nome dado àquela bicicleta que possui dois bancos e dois conjuntos de pedais, na qual os dois usuários devem trabalhar em conjunto para que consigam atingir o objetivo de fazê-la andar. A imagem da bicicleta cujo funcionamento depende do esforço de seus dois ocupantes é uma metáfora à colaboração entre os parceiros envolvidos no contexto de aprendizagem em tandem. Originalmente, segundo Vassallo e Telles (2006), essa concepção de aprendizagem surgiu na Alemanha nos anos 60 e baseou-se na promoção de parcerias entre aprendizes de línguas estrangeiras, que falavam idiomas diferentes, para que cada parceiro aprendesse a língua do outro. Os autores explicam que foi somente na década de 1970, na Espanha, que o nome Tandem passou a ser usado para denominar essa modalidade de aprendizagem de línguas, sendo que a sistematização de seus princípios ocorreu efetivamente durante os anos de 1990 (BRAMMERTS, 1996).

Vassallo e Telles (2006) afirmam que o currículo do Tandem emerge das necessidades e do envolvimento dos parceiros. Segundo os autores, o contexto de aprendizagem em tandem oferece oportunidade para a socialização e a individualização, uma vez que é baseado em uma autonomia que é entendida como a responsabilidade pela tomada de decisões, não isoladamente, mas “com” e “em relação” ao “outro” (parceiro de tandem). Eles afirmam, ainda, que no Brasil o Tandem foi escassamente praticado em sua modalidade face a face, devido a dificuldades de encontros entre falantes (nativos) de diferentes línguas e de mobilidade por diferentes países, como ocorre na Europa, onde o Tandem surgiu e se tornou bastante popular, especialmente em contextos acadêmicos. Os autores apontam, entretanto, que a expansão da Internet e do uso de *e-mails* para a comunicação entre as pessoas trouxe popularidade ao regime de tandem para o

¹² Optamos por grafar Tandem e Teletandem com letras maiúsculas quando se referirem ao conceito ou projeto e com letras minúsculas quando se referirem à prática ou contexto dessa modalidade de aprendizagem. Nas citações e referências, mantivemos a grafia utilizada pelos respectivos autores.

ensino de línguas mediado por computador no Brasil e que os avanços tecnológicos da comunicação síncrona abriram novas possibilidades de interação para sessões de tandem a distância.

Nesse sentido, Telles e Vassallo (2006) propuseram o contexto que denominaram *Teletandem*, no qual a aprendizagem colaborativa em tandem ocorreria por meio de ferramentas digitais na internet, como os aplicativos para comunicação *on-line* com áudio, vídeo e *chat*. Os autores, então parceiros de tandem face a face para a aprendizagem de português e italiano, revelam que a ideia dessa nova modalidade *on-line* surgiu quando Vassallo teve de voltar para a Itália, e, assim, ambos pensaram em novas formas para estabelecer comunicação a distância. A princípio, optaram pelo e-tandem, via *e-mail*, de caráter assíncrono. Entretanto, sentiam falta da interação oral, visto que este meio somente possibilitava a produção escrita e a leitura. Sua busca os levou às ferramentas de comunicação instantânea na Internet, como o *MSN Messenger*, o mais comumente usado e disponível na época (anos de 2005 e 2006). Os autores afirmam que, ao testarem essa ferramenta para a aprendizagem em tandem entre si e com amigos, notaram que os resultados foram divertidos, práticos, e, acima de tudo, de baixo custo. Assim, surgiu o projeto *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas estrangeiras para todos*, com o intuito de investigar as ramificações do modo de aprendizagem que estavam experimentando e seus possíveis resultados para a educação.

O projeto Teletandem Brasil¹³ (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; TELLES, 2009; BENEDETTI; CONSOLO; VIEIRA-ABRAHÃO, 2010), que foi financiado como projeto temático pela FAPESP (Processo 06/03204-2), apresentou em seu bojo o objetivo de colocar pares de falantes de diferentes línguas trabalhando de forma colaborativa, por meio de recursos de comunicação síncrona na Internet, como o Skype, para aprenderem a língua um do outro. Além disso, ao colocar em perspectiva essa modalidade de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas, o projeto teve como objetivo investigar: (1) o uso da(s) ferramenta(s) de comunicação *on-line* como instrumento pedagógico para o ensino de línguas em tandem a distância; (2) as características linguísticas, culturais e pedagógicas da interação entre os pares de aprendizes; e (3) o modo como se dá a formação inicial dos alunos-professores (em sua maioria, alunos do curso de Licenciatura em Letras) envolvidos nas interações e o papel do mediador nesse contexto.

¹³ Este projeto, criado pelo Prof. Dr. João Telles, da FCL/UNESP de Assis, é desenvolvido em conjunto nessa instituição, no IBILCE/UNESP de São José do Rio Preto e na FCL/UNESP de Araraquara. Para mais informações, ver: <http://www.teletandembrasil.org> e <http://teletandem.wixsite.com/fclar>.

- | Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios

Do ponto de vista teórico, os princípios fundamentais que subjazem à parceria dos aprendizes em regime de tandem/teletandem são: o princípio da igualdade (ou separação de línguas¹⁴), da reciprocidade e da autonomia. Há também a previsão de assistência pedagógica à dupla por parte de um mediador para auxiliar o desenvolvimento da aprendizagem, conforme detalharemos mais adiante.

O princípio da igualdade estabelece que as sessões de tandem devem ser compostas de duas partes: cada participante da parceria deve comprometer-se a usar a língua estrangeira, da qual ele é aprendiz, e sua língua materna, mas nunca na mesma parte da sessão, para que ambos tenham oportunidades iguais de praticar a língua estrangeira. Os princípios da autonomia e da reciprocidade, juntos, estabelecem que cada aluno será responsável por seu próprio processo de aprendizagem e pela aprendizagem do outro, e que ambos devem trabalhar em conjunto para delimitarem seus objetivos e escolherem quais serão os melhores métodos para alcançá-los.

Little (2002) afirma que os princípios da reciprocidade e da autonomia no tandem só fazem sentido se existirem conjuntamente, uma vez que o propósito da parceria não será alcançado a não ser que ambos os parceiros se comprometam com sua própria aprendizagem e com a aprendizagem do outro. Segundo Salomão, Silva e Daniel (2009), os princípios estão atrelados, uma vez que a reciprocidade auxilia a separação de línguas, na busca da igualdade de oportunidade de prática para ambos os interagentes¹⁵. Para as autoras, a reciprocidade também faz parte de uma autonomia colaborativa, coconstruída na interação do par, dado que ambos “trabalham juntos no entendimento da delimitação de suas necessidades, bem como na definição de práticas e/ou procedimentos que os levarão ao alcance mútuo de suas metas” (p. 91). Desse modo, autonomia neste contexto não quer dizer uma tomada de decisões individual, mas sim em conjunto com o outro.

Assim, a relação entre os parceiros é o que constitui a prática de (tele)tandem, sendo, portanto, responsável pelo sucesso ou insucesso das sessões de interação. A interação é o momento em que os parceiros ajudam um ao outro no processo de aprendizagem. É constituída de trocas (tele)colaborativas e recíprocas que ultrapassam os limites de uma conversa trivial, uma vez que os interagentes devem ficar atentos não apenas ao conteúdo mas também à forma dos respectivos turnos. A duração da sessão é definida entre os próprios interagentes, no caso de parcerias não-institucionais. No

14 Segundo Telles e Vassallo (2006), as línguas não devem ser misturadas, e, por isso, os autores denominam esse princípio no teletandem de separação das línguas. Desse modo, cada um dos aprendizes deve beneficiar-se igualmente da parceria, por meio da garantia da mesma duração de tempo para a prática das duas línguas. Além disso, existe a recomendação de que cada sessão tenha início com uma língua, assegurando, assim, que ambos os aprendizes tenham acesso ao início da interação na língua-alvo.

15 Interagente é o nome geralmente dado ao participante de teletandem. Neste artigo, usamos as palavras interagente, participante e parceiro de modo intercambiável.

caso da modalidade de teletandem institucional, em que maioria das sessões é feita em grupos, a duração varia de acordo com o período da aula em que a interação é realizada, geralmente de 50 a 75 minutos.

A literatura sobre a área de (Tele)Tandem prevê algum tipo de assistência pedagógica por parte de um professor aconselhador (que no Teletandem foi denominado mediador), que será responsável pelo esquema organizacional, prático e teórico no qual o processo se desenvolverá. Autores como Little (2002), Brammerts, Calvert e Kleppin (2002), Stickler (2003) apontam para a necessidade de sessões de aconselhamento para participantes de uma parceria de aprendizagem colaborativa em tandem. A razão para isso, segundo os autores, é que, apesar da motivação do aprendiz em realizar esse tipo de trabalho, ele pode não conseguir explorar totalmente o potencial que o contexto oferece. Portanto, faz-se necessário incentivar os parceiros a usar suas próprias habilidades para aprender de maneira independente e colaborativa e a refletir sobre seus processos de aprendizagem, decidindo seus objetivos e revisando-os continuamente, levando-os também a avaliar seu progresso na aprendizagem.

O aconselhamento, para Brammerts, Calvert e Kleppin (2002), é necessário porque, embora sejam capazes de perceber os fatores que devem utilizar para tomar decisões, como objetivos, hábitos, oportunidades, preferências, muitos aprendizes provavelmente não estão conscientes sobre eles conjuntamente. Segundo os autores, nem sempre é fácil para esses aprendizes traduzir suas decisões em ações e, portanto, sua proposta se volta à reflexão, culminando no auxílio à busca pela autonomia do aprendiz. O aconselhador deve formular perguntas que possam eliciar para o aprendiz elementos relevantes para sua tomada de decisões, tanto a respeito de seus pressupostos e objetivos quanto em relação a mudanças já ocorridas no âmbito da interação, ajudando-o a fazer conexões por meio da introdução de seu conhecimento de especialista e experiência, sem, entretanto, direcionar a prática do aprendiz.

A proposta de Stickler (2003) envolve também aspectos ligados ao aconselhamento, que levem o aprendiz à autonomia, por meio da exploração e da reflexão. A autora fornece uma lista de sugestões sobre o que o aconselhador deve ou não fazer, geralmente voltadas a comportamentos não direcionadores, e sim exploratórios das atitudes e ações do aprendiz, afirmando, ao final, em uma visão mais pragmática, que tais habilidades só serão compreendidas e aperfeiçoadas pelo aconselhador na prática.

No projeto Teletandem Brasil, as sessões de aconselhamento das parcerias foram denominadas sessões de mediação (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006), com base na teoria sociocultural. A mediação tem sido realizada de diferentes modos, por alunos

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de graduação e pós-graduação com conhecimento e experiência em teletandem, por meio de sessões individuais ou em grupos, assim como pelo uso de diários reflexivos, dialogados ou não, hospedados em ambientes virtuais de aprendizagem (como Moodle, Teleduc, Google Classroom, Blackboard etc.) e, mais recentemente, até mesmo em redes sociais, como o Facebook.

Segundo Williams e Burden (1999), o termo “mediação”, no processo de ensino e aprendizagem, refere-se ao papel de uma pessoa significativa na vida dos alunos, que seleciona e configura as experiências que levarão à aprendizagem. Acreditamos, como já afirmado em Salomão (2011, p. 659), que a ideia de mediação em vez de aconselhamento, trazida pelo projeto Teletandem, entende o auxílio prestado pela figura do mediador “não somente como conselhos sobre como proceder para aprender melhor”, mas sim como uma terceira pessoa que se insere na relação de ensino e aprendizagem colaborativos da parceria de interagentes para “auxiliá-los a refletir sobre sua própria prática enquanto aprendizes da língua do outro e professores de sua própria língua”.

Salomão (2008) define a figura do mediador como um parceiro mais competente que irá mediar, em termos vygotskyanos, a aprendizagem do interagente, oferecendo-lhe a mediação por instrumentos – os recursos tecnológicos, ou não, utilizados –, e a mediação por meio do uso da linguagem, que permeia o processo de interação entre os envolvidos. Telles (2015) corrobora essa ideia ao afirmar que as sessões de mediação são um suporte pedagógico, por meio do diálogo reflexivo, conduzido pelos mediadores enfocando estratégias de aprendizagem e aspectos culturais e linguísticos que emergem durante a sessão de teletandem. Concordamos com o autor que a prática de conduzir uma sessão de mediação requer conhecimento sobre encontros interculturais, discurso e comunicação por parte dos mediadores.

Ao longo dos anos, a mediação tem sido feita por meio de sessões presenciais individuais, como descrito nas pesquisas de Salomão (2008), Mesquita (2008), Bedran (2008), Cavalari (2009), Funo (2015), Elstermann (2017), ou em grupo, como descrito por Carvalho, Messias e Días (2015), ou ainda, de forma semipresencial, com contatos via videoconferência, no Facebook ou em outros aplicativos para discussões em grupo (BEDRAN, 2012). Há ainda experiências de mediação por meio de diários dialogados na plataforma Moodle (EVANGELISTA; SALOMÃO, 2019). Funo, Elstermann e Zakir (2016) sistematizaram as práticas desempenhadas por mediadores em contexto teletandem em uma grade de observação elaborada a partir de questionários abertos respondidos por professores e pesquisadores experientes nessa área.

Considerando o lugar ocupado por diferentes projetos de telecolaboração no âmbito do ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras e visando a colocar em discussão o impacto da aprendizagem em (Tele)Tandem nas práticas e pesquisas da área, foi realizado o I INFLIT (*International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in Tandem: Present, Past and Future*), na Universidade de Miami, em Coral Gables, Flórida, EUA, de 27 de fevereiro a 01 de março de 2014. O encontro teve a organização conjunta de pesquisadores do projeto Teletandem Brasil, da Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), e do Departamento de Línguas e Literaturas Modernas da Universidade de Miami, contando com a participação de pesquisadores europeus, norte e sul-americanos.

A conferência de abertura do I INFLIT foi realizada pela Dra. Karin Kleppin, da Universidade de Bochum, Alemanha. A pesquisadora, que foi uma das precursoras do Tandem em seu país, fez um panorama da história do Tandem ao eTandem e apontou a evolução e os caminhos para o futuro desse contexto de aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras.

A segunda edição do evento foi realizada também na Universidade de Miami de 22 a 24 de março de 2018. O II IMFLIT (cuja grafia foi alterada com a letra M fazendo referência a *Meeting* na sigla em inglês) teve como tema *Transcultural Language Learning: Toward Global Citizenship in (e)Tandem*. O encontro também contou com a colaboração dos pesquisadores do projeto Teletandem Brasil, da UNESP, e do Departamento de Línguas e Literaturas Modernas da Universidade de Miami e teve apoio do diretor do Programa de Português, Dr. Steven F. Butterman, e da chefe do departamento, Dra. Lillian Manzor.

O tema da conferência de abertura, ministrada pelo idealizador do projeto Teletandem Brasil, Dr. João Antonio Telles, foi “Performando a transculturalidade na aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras”. O evento também teve a presença de pesquisadores de instituições internacionais da área de telecolaboração, que puderam debater seus trabalhos por meio de um formato de apresentações que priorizou as discussões entre os participantes de cada sessão. Na mesa-redonda “Engendrando diversidade e diferenças culturais em telecolaboração: identidades de gênero e os papéis de mediadores e professores”, Dr. Steven Butterman, Dra. Ana Menda, da Universidade de Miami, e Me. Ivian Destro, da Universidade Internacional da Flórida, promoveram um importante debate sobre como tratar a diferença nas interações *on-line* e na sala de aula, promovendo o respeito e a tolerância nos encontros presenciais e virtuais.

Foi a partir de todas as discussões deflagradas ao longo do II IMFLIT que surgiu a ideia de se pensar uma publicação temática, cujos artigos são apresentados a seguir, sobre as propostas e desafios trazidos pela telecolaboração para a aprendizagem de línguas na atualidade.

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Apresentação do número temático

Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios, número temático da *Revista do Gel*, reuniu quinze artigos de pesquisadores de diferentes instituições brasileiras e estrangeiras, que estão organizados em quatro eixos temáticos: (i) contexto de tandem presencial; (ii) experiências de parcerias telecolaborativas institucionais; (iii) (auto)avaliação, aprendizagem de práticas de linguagem e estrutura linguística em teletandem e (iv) questões (inter)culturais, de identidade e (inter)subjetividade.

O primeiro eixo é composto de dois artigos. Em *“Face-to-face tandem and eTandem: differences that influence the maintenance of tandem learning activities”*, Masako Wakisaka compara dois estudos de caso múltiplos em contexto de tandem face a face e e-tandem entre parcerias de japonês-inglês e japonês-alemão. Os resultados trazem implicações para a reflexão sobre os fatores que influenciam a manutenção de atividades nesses contextos colaborativos de aprendizagem.

Em *“A deaf and a hearing student learning Portuguese and Libras in a tandem context”*, Francisco José Quaresma de Figueiredo e Quintino Martins de Oliveira apresentam resultados de um estudo sobre tandem face a face sobre os possíveis benefícios dessa abordagem para falantes de línguas de modalidades diferentes: oral auditivo (português) e visuoespacial (Libras), por meio da análise das estratégias colaborativas adotadas e das negociações estabelecidas nos momentos dos encontros.

O segundo eixo temático deste dossiê, que reúne trabalhos voltados a diferentes vertentes e características de parcerias institucionais, é composto de seis artigos. Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe Ramos e Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de Carvalho, em *“Estabelecendo objetivos de aprendizagem em contexto de Teletandem”*, discutem o “estabelecimento de *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações que se dão no contexto virtual do teletandem” a partir da abordagem do Ensino de Línguas para Fins Específicos, ancorando-se metodologicamente na teoria fundamentada em dados. As autoras visam a prover “subsídio a mediadores e interagentes que atuam nesse ambiente *on-line* de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas, no sentido de que possam direcionar e potencializar o processo a partir dos objetivos estabelecidos”.

Edú Alberto Cruz Lecona e María Guadalupe Alfaro Martínez, no artigo intitulado *“El Teletándem en el aprendizaje alemán – español: Mediateca Enallt – Unam Y Universidad De Würzburg”*, apresentam a análise de dados coletados no projeto *Aprendizaje Virtual de Lenguas Extranjeras* (AVLE), no qual avaliaram o desempenho de alunos que realizaram

teletandem alemão-espanhol. Os autores discutem os resultados dos desempenhos dos alunos, assim como a função dos centros de aprendizagem de línguas em cada uma das universidades envolvidas.

No artigo *“Experiencing teletandem: a collaborative project to encourage students in tandem interactions”*, Viviane Klen-Alves e Fernanda Franco Tiraboschi discutem os resultados de uma pesquisa-ação realizada em colaboração entre duas professoras, uma de uma escola secundária brasileira e a outra de um colégio técnico americano sobre “o potencial das interações em tandem para o aprimoramento da aprendizagem de segunda língua”. Segundo as autoras, os resultados apontam para a atividade telecolaborativa como promotora de atitudes positivas e o aumento da competência intercultural dos alunos.

Em “Desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em PLE: teletandem em foco”, Rozana Aparecida Lopes Messias e Michael Jones Ferreira, buscam compreender “em que medida a prática de teletandem institucional integrado influencia o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral” e investigam quais aspectos da fala dos participantes de teletandem evidenciam o desenvolvimento de sua produção oral.

No que tange ao conceito de mediação no contexto de teletandem institucional, Daniela Nogueira de Moraes Garcia e Micheli Gomes de Souza, em seu artigo intitulado *“Teletandem mediation on Facebook”*, abordam o suporte pedagógico ao participante por meio de um grupo fechado em uma rede social. As autoras apresentam “os resultados de uma análise qualitativa interpretativista que revelam que o papel do mediador é focado na promoção de encorajamento e direcionamentos baseados nas teorias e princípios básicos do teletandem”.

Michael Abernathy Marsh-Soloway e Olivier Michel Delers, em *“New directions in eTandem: an expanded vision of capabilities and practices”*, apresentam três estudos de caso a partir dos quais propõem inovações ao modelo tradicional de eTandem, com ferramentas e metodologias que motivem e desafiem os alunos a expandir seus horizontes linguísticos, habilidades e conhecimento. Assim, são propostas ideias para que os professores que trabalham com telecolaboração iniciem novos caminhos em eTandem e considerem essas inovações em práticas já consolidadas.

No terceiro eixo temático deste volume, que traz trabalhos sobre (auto)avaliação, aprendizagem de práticas de linguagem e estrutura linguística em teletandem, temos três artigos. Em “A correção de erros e as relações entre avaliação por pares e autoavaliação no ambiente teletandem”, Suzi Marques Spatti Cavalari e Ana Carolina Freschi investigam a correção de erros no contexto teletandem, em um estudo de base qualitativa e interpretativista que utiliza como dados gravações de sessões orais. Os participantes são

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três pares de aprendizes que interagem em português e em inglês. Segundo as autoras, a análise revela que “a avaliação por pares envolve não apenas a avaliação do parceiro linguisticamente mais competente, mas, principalmente, a avaliação do próprio aprendiz (autoavaliação) a respeito do que é considerado certo ou errado em sua produção ou compreensão em língua estrangeira”.

No artigo intitulado “Episódios relacionados à língua em interações de teletandem: implicações para a formação de professores de PLE”, Gabriela Rossatto Franco discute os episódios relacionados à língua emergentes nessas sessões de teletandem, por meio da análise da forma como participantes brasileiros esclarecem dúvidas sobre a língua portuguesa a seus parceiros, destacando a importância de que “os praticantes de teletandem, futuros professores de língua estrangeira, desenvolvam uma atitude reflexiva sobre as práticas de linguagem”.

Edvan P. Brito, em “*The variation of obligatory preposition-article contractions in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese*”, analisa “a variação sociolinguística de contrações obrigatórias entre a preposição *de* e os artigos definidos na interlíngua de aprendizes adultos de português como língua estrangeira nos Estados Unidos”, demonstrando que “dados de fala de interações telecolaborativas podem ser usados como uma das técnicas para coleta de dados em estudos de variação de interlíngua de grande porte”.

O quarto eixo, que reúne trabalhos voltados a questões (inter)culturais, de identidade e subjetividade, reúne quatro artigos. Aurora Castillo-Scott, em “*Teaching social issues through cinema and teletandem*”, apresenta uma experiência pedagógica de uso de cinema e teletandem para promover habilidades linguísticas, abordando questões socioculturais, por meio de conversas focadas em problemas culturais, raciais, de gênero e sociopolíticos associados à cultura hispânica.

Kaitlin Teske e Alexis Vollmer Rivera, em “*A critical exploration of heritage language learners’ identities within HelloTalk*”, investigam como aprendizes de língua de herança constroem suas identidades no contexto de aprendizagem de eTandem, por meio do aplicativo HelloTalk. A partir de reflexões relatadas pelos participantes do estudo e com base na Análise de Conteúdo no âmbito da Linguística Aplicada Crítica, os resultados apontam que, embora algumas características promovam relações colaborativas de poder, em geral, a configuração do aplicativo promove relações coercitivas de poder.

Em “*Deconstructing language learners’ feelings of inferiority through teletandem*”, Paula A. Zulaica-Gómez investiga de que modo, no caso de alunos mexicanos que estudam inglês como língua estrangeira, “vários fatores socioculturais, resultantes da

história colonial do país, afetam sua motivação e atitude em relação ao inglês”. A autora analisa de que maneira as percepções e atitudes em relação ao inglês afetam a disposição dos aprendizes mexicanos de participar de sessões de teletandem e de que modo o teletandem pode romper com noções preconcebidas.

Gerson Rossi dos Santos e Douglas Altamiro Consolo, no artigo intitulado *“Understanding teletandem language learning from an intersubjective perspective”*, abordam o estabelecimento da intersubjetividade nas sessões orais de teletandem em uma perspectiva hermenêutica. Os resultados mostram que o estabelecimento da intersubjetividade abrange tanto uma dimensão de parceiro para parceiro imediato quanto uma dimensão mais ampla baseada na comunidade.

Esperamos que os artigos deste número temático possam contribuir para a discussão sobre como o desenvolvimento dos recursos digitais ligados à internet tem mudado as práticas comunicativas do mundo atual. Lembramos que Kern, Ware e Warschauer (2004) já sugeriram que esse momento do ensino de línguas mediado por computador seria uma “segunda onda”, constituída principalmente pela telecolaboração a distância orientada pelas relações interculturais. Isso é corroborado pelos muitos projetos que têm sido implementados ao redor do mundo, diminuindo espaços geográficos e trazendo à tona uma expansão do contexto de instrução da sala de aula, como atividade local, para interação entre comunidades e nações (THORNE, 2006).

Por fim, concordamos com O’Dowd (2014) que a complexidade e as dificuldades enfrentadas ao se organizar e executar um projeto telecolaborativo podem desencorajar os professores de implementar tal iniciativa em suas aulas. Entretanto, é importante lembrar também que a telecolaboração é um claro exemplo de como é possível articular o ensino de língua estrangeira em sala de aula com experiências de contato com outros aprendizes, que podem ser extremamente enriquecedoras, tanto no nível linguístico quanto (inter) cultural. Afinal, o impacto das relações que se estabelecem (tele)colaborativamente proporciona à aprendizagem de línguas novas oportunidades de explorar as possibilidades de atuação entre os envolvidos no mundo globalizado, constituindo-se, assim, de modo cada vez mais efetivo o campo da telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: COSTA, Leila Martins Gonçalves da; SALOMÃO, Ana Cristina Biondo; ZAKIR, Maisa de Alcântara. Telecolaboração transcultural e transcontinental para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras: propostas e desafios. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 9-25, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2433>

TRANSCULTURAL AND TRANSCONTINENTAL TELECOLLABORATION FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: PROPOSALS AND CHALLENGES

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Proposals that focus on student-centered approaches and not only on the role of the teacher have gained space in the area of foreign language teaching and learning since the 1980's, by activities aiming at promoting interaction and negotiation of meaning. For Crandall (2000), this type of collaboration promotes positive affective aspects like reduction in anxiety, increase in motivation and self-esteem, development of positive attitudes towards learning in general, as well as exposure to different styles of learning. In this sense, learners benefit from collaboration and help from their peers, and teachers do not position themselves as the authority and producer of knowledge in the classroom.

The first reports of online collaborative projects between learners from different places only started in the 1990's, when language teachers and learners had access to the internet more regularly (O'DOWD, 2007). Nevertheless, the idea of engaging students from different places in collaborative activities had already been practiced long before the 1990's. There are reports from the 1920's about the French educator Célestin Freinet conducting a project with his students to produce newspapers that were later exchanged with students from other parts of France, who had also created newspaper articles (KERN, 2013; O'DOWD, 2007).

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O'Dowd (2018) describes telecollaboration as the engaging of a group of learners in intercultural online interactions and collaboration projects with partners from other cultural contexts or other geographical spaces as an integral component of educational programs. The author explains that different terminologies have been used in the past to name this kind of activity, such as online intercultural exchange, virtual exchange, COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education, globally networked learning environments, e-tandem and teletandem.

We agree with the author that the amount of different projects is positive because it shows that this modality of learning has been implemented extensively in different ways and has been adapted to different contexts and geographical spaces. Yet, this also shows that the practices and research results of these similar initiatives are not known by members of the academic community from different or related areas. O'Dowd (2018) also mentions the challenge that the different terminologies and approaches bring to the promotion and dissemination of these activities among educators and administrators that are not familiar with these concepts.

Currently, there are various telecollaborative projects ranging from individual proposals, conducted by teachers in their classrooms, to interinstitutional projects, which have recognition and, many times, resources for their execution. There are also international platforms like *eTwinning* (MIGUELA, 2007), which coordinate contacts among education professionals who work in schools from different countries so that they can communicate, collaborate and create projects together.⁴

There are projects that combine language learning with a cultural component, like the Cultura Project, originated in 1997 at MIT, by Gilberte Furstenberg, Shoggy Waryn and Sabine Levet (GARCÍA; CRAPOTTA, 2007). Their objective is to connect groups of students through the internet for cultural exchange, using on-line questionnaires, which are later analyzed, as well as forums in which the groups discuss cultural values and beliefs based on the answers given on the questionnaires.⁵

Other current online telecollaboration projects and websites are: *eTandem Europa*⁶, from Ruhr-University Bochum, in Germany, which has the objective of promoting language learning through eTandem, and offering the interested parties support for finding a partner;

4 For more information, see: <https://www.etwinning.net/pt/pub/index.htm>.

5 For more information, see: <https://cultura.mit.edu/>.

6 For more information, see: <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/tandem-server/etandem/etindex-en.html>

*Lingalog*⁷, from Université Lumière Lyon II, in France, which also offers collaborative work for learning languages by connecting natives of different languages through a platform providing them technological tools, such as forum, chat and wiki; INTENT⁸ (*Integrating Telecollaborative Networks into Foreign Language Higher Education*), a project developed in many Higher Education institutions around the world, which, from a platform, gives support to university professors and promotes telecollaboration projects among their students; TILA⁹ (*Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition*), a European Commission Project that uses the platform *Moodle* and consists of an international community of teachers and researchers interested in innovating and enriching practices of language learning, integrating telecollaboration activities with partners from different countries; *Tandem Exchange*¹⁰ e *ePals*¹¹, websites that connect people so that they can work in collaboration, online and face to face

O'Dowd (2014) cites examples of projects that include discussions in newspapers and magazines in international forums, like the ones in *Le Monde* or *The Guardian*, which go beyond learner interaction and provide opportunities of “authentic” communication, requiring knowledge of cultural codes and registers of this particular genre. The author also mentions initiatives like “Telecollaboration 2.0”, based on resources of the “social web” that emerged from the creation of collaborative tools on the internet, like blogs, wikis and social media like Facebook, Instagram, among others, which could provide more independent initiatives in the classroom if compared to previous models.

As far as language learning is concerned, we would like to highlight the projects eTandem (O'ROURKE, 2007), and Teletandem (TELLES, VASSALLO, 2006; TELLES, 2009), which pair up speakers of different languages to work in a collaborative manner by synchronous or asynchronous communication on the Internet in order to learn each other's language. In eTandem, the interaction is done using chat while in Teletandem the focus is on oral comprehension and production with the use of VOIP technology (Voice over Internet Protocol), like Skype and, more recently, Zoom.

The articles included in this thematic issue focus mainly on these two last modalities of telecollaborative learning. Therefore, in the next section, we present an overview of these two modalities in order to discuss their respective characteristics as well as reflect on their implications for foreign language teaching and learning presently.

7 For more information, see: <http://lingalog.net/dokuwiki/>

8 For more information, see: <http://www.uni-collaboration.eu/>

9 For more information, see: <http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/>

10 For more information, see: <https://www.tandemexchange.com/>

11 For more information, see: www.epals.com

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From Tandem to Teletandem¹²

Tandem is the name given to the bicycle that has two seats and two sets of pedals, on which two people ride together in order to make it move. The functioning of the bicycle depends on the effort the riders dedicate to the process together. This is a metaphor for the collaboration between partners involved in the context of in-tandem learning. According to Vassallo and Telles (2006), this concept of learning originated in Germany in the 1960's and was based on the promotion of partnerships among speakers of different languages so that each partner would learn each other's language. The authors explain that only in the 1970's in Spain the name Tandem was used to characterize this language learning modality and the systematization of its principles effectively occurred during the 1990's (BRAMMERTS, 1996).

Vassallo and Telles (2006) state that the Tandem curriculum emerges from the needs and involvement of the partners. According to the authors, the tandem-learning context offers opportunities for socialization and individualization, since it is based on autonomy, i.e., understood as responsibilities for decision making by both tandem partners, not individually. They also state that, in Brazil, Tandem was barely practiced face-to-face due to difficulties to arrange meetings between native speakers of different languages, for example, in Europe, where Tandem emerged and became popular mainly in academic contexts. The authors also point out that the expansion of the Internet and the use of e-mails for communication have brought popularity for the tandem regime in computer-mediated language learning in Brazil and that technological advances in synchronous communication have opened up new possibilities of interaction for remote tandem sessions.

Vassallo and Telles (2006) proposed the context of "Teletandem", in which tandem collaborative learning would take place through digital tools on the internet, like applications for online communication using audio, video and chat. The authors, who, at the time, were face-to-face tandem partners in order to learn Portuguese and Italian, reveal that the idea for this new online modality emerged when Vassallo had to go back to Italy, and they thought of new ways to continue their communication overseas. At first, they decided for asynchronous e-tandem, via e-mail, but Vassallo and Telles missed their oral interaction since this medium allowed written production and reading only. They searched and found tools for instant communication on the Internet, like *MSN Messenger*, the most

¹² We chose to write the words Tandem and Teletandem using a capital letter when they refer to the concept or to the Project and in lower case when they refer to the practice or context of such modality. In citations and references, we kept the way they were used by the original authors.

commonly used and available in 2005 and 2006. The authors mention that when they tested this tool for learning in tandem between them and with their friends, they thought the results were practical, interesting and affordable. That is how the Project *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas estrangeiras para todos* (Foreign languages for all) started. The aim of the project was to investigate the new learning modality that they were experimenting and its possible implications for education.

The *Teletandem Brasil* Project¹³ (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; TELLES, 2009; BENEDETTI; CONSOLO; VIEIRA-ABRAHÃO, 2010), which was sponsored as a thematic project by FAPESP (process 06/03204-2), had as its main objective to connect partners/speakers from different languages working in collaboration, using resources of synchronous communication on the Internet, like *Skype*, in order to learn each other's languages. Moreover, as the authors placed this language learning modality in perspective for future use, the project aimed specifically at investigating: (1) the use of online communication tools as a pedagogical instrument for remote tandem language learning; (2) the linguistic, cultural and pedagogical characteristics of the interaction between learning partners; and (3) the initial education of student-teachers (mainly students from the Language and Literature courses) involved in the interactions and the role of the mediator in this context.

From a theoretical point of view, the fundamental principles that underlie learners' partnerships in tandem and teletandem are the principle of equality (or separation of languages¹⁴), reciprocity and autonomy. There is also the projection of pedagogical support from a mediator to help practitioners with their learning development, as we will detail later.

The principle of equality determines that tandem sessions should have two equal parts: each participant has to commit to using the foreign language which he/she is learning and his/her native language, but never during the same part of the session so that both partners may have equal opportunities to practice the foreign language. The principles of reciprocity and autonomy together determine that each partner will be responsible for his/her own learning process and the other person's learning and that both have to work together and choose the best methods to achieve their goals.

13 This Project, created by Prof. Dr. João Telles, from FCL/ UNESP Assis, is jointly developed in this institution, at IBILCE/UNESP in São José do Rio Preto, and FCL/UNESP in Araraquara. For more information, see: <http://www.teletandembrasil.org> and <http://teletandem.wixsite.com/fclar>.

14 According to Telles and Vassallo (2006), the languages should not be mixed, and therefore, the authors denominate this principle in teletandem as separation of languages. In this way, each of the practitioners should benefit from the partnership by guaranteeing the same length of time for the practice of both languages. In addition, there is a recommendation that each session begin with one language, thus ensuring that both learners have access to begin the interaction in the target language.

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Little (2002) states that the principles of reciprocity and autonomy in tandem only make sense if they are practiced together since the goal of the partnership will only be achieved if both telecollaborators become responsible for their own and for their partners' learning. According to Salomão, Silva and Daniel (2009), the principles are interdependent because reciprocity helps the separation of languages and fosters equal opportunities of practice for both partners¹⁵. For the authors, reciprocity is also part of collaborative autonomy co-constructed during the interaction, as the partners work together to understand and define their needs as well as to decide the practices that will lead them to achieve their goals. In this way, autonomy in this context does not mean individual decision making but in collaboration with the other person.

The relationship between partners is what constitutes teletandem practice being, thus, responsible for the success of the interaction sessions. The interaction is the moment in which the partners help each other in the learning process. It is the space for reciprocal and collaborative exchanges that go beyond the limits of a trivial conversation: the participants have to be attentive to the content of the conversation but also to the language form in their turns. The duration of the session is defined by the participants, in the case of non-institutional modalities. In modalities of institutional teletandem, which take place mainly in groups, the duration varies according to the duration of the classes, usually from 50 to 75 minutes.

The literature on (Tele)Tandem presupposes pedagogical support by a teacher/counselor (in teletandem, it was called mediator) who will be responsible for the organizational, theoretical and practical functioning in which the whole process will take place. Authors such as Little (2002), Brammerts, Calvert and Kleppin (2002), and Stickler (2003) mention the need for counseling sessions for the participants of collaborative learning in tandem. According to them, in spite of the learner's motivation for this kind of work, he or she may not be able to totally explore the potential that the context offers. Therefore, it is necessary to motivate practitioners to use their own abilities to learn independently and collaboratively and to reflect on their own learning processes, making decisions and revising them continually, and finally evaluating their learning progress.

For Brammerts, Calvert e Kleppin (2002), counseling sessions are necessary because many learners may not be aware of all the factors conducive to their decision making, like objectives, habits, opportunities, preferences, etc. According to the authors, it is not always easy for learners to translate their decisions into action, so their proposal goes toward reflection, culminating in the search for learner autonomy. The counselor must formulate

¹⁵ Partner is the name used to refer to a teletandem participant. In this article, we use partner, participant and practitioner interchangeably.

questions that could elicit relevant elements for the participants' decision-making as far as their presuppositions, objectives and the changes that have taken place in their practice, helping them to make connections. In this way, the counselor will introduce his/her knowledge, experience and expertise without controlling the participant's practice.

Stickler's (2003) proposal also involves aspects related to counseling which lead the learner toward autonomy using exploration and reflection. The author offers a list of suggestions about do's and don'ts for the counselor generally concerning exploratory but not authoritative behaviors in relation to the learner, suggesting a more pragmatic view, which will be improved by the counselor in his/her practice.

In the *Teletandem Brasil* Project, counselling sessions of partnerships are called mediation sessions (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006), based on sociocultural theory. Mediation has been done in different ways by graduate and undergraduate students with knowledge and experience in teletandem through individual or group sessions as well as reflective journals, in narratives or in dialogues, hosted in virtual learning websites like Moodle, Teleduc, Google classroom, Blackboard, and more recently even in social media like Facebook.

According to Williams and Burden (1999), the word "mediation", in the teaching and learning process, refers to the role of a significant person in the students' lives that selects and plans the procedures and experiences that will result in learning. We believe, as Salomão (2011) has observed, that the idea of mediation instead of counseling, used by the Teletandem Project, considers the support given by the mediator, not only as advice about procedures in order to better learn but as the introduction of a third person that becomes part of the collaborative teaching and learning, guiding participants to reflect upon their own practice as learners of the target language and teachers of their own language.

Salomão (2008) defines the figure of the mediator as a more competent partner that will mediate, in Vygotskian terms, the practitioner's learning process, by offering mediation by instruments – using technological or non-technological resources –, and mediation by language, which permeates the process of interaction between the students involved. Telles (2005) resonates this idea by saying that mediation sessions are pedagogical support, performed by means of a reflective dialogue conducted by the mediators, who focus on learning strategies and linguistic and cultural aspects that emerge during the teletandem sessions. We agree with the author that the practice of conducting a mediation session requires knowledge about cultural encounters, discourse and communication from the mediators.

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Throughout the years, mediation has been performed in individual face-to-face sessions, as described in the research conducted by Salomão (2008), Mesquita (2008), Bedran (2008), Cavalari (2009), Funo (2015), Elstermann (2017), or in groups, as described by Carvalho, Messias and Días (2015), or even through videoconference, *Facebook*, and applications for group discussions (BEDRAN, 2012). There are also mediation experiences using dialogue-diaries on the Moodle platform (EVANGELISTA; SALOMÃO, 2019). Funo, Elstermann and Zakir (2016) have structured the practices performed by mediators in a teletandem context in an observation grid organized from open questionnaires answered by professors and researchers experienced in this area.

Considering the space occupied by the different telecollaboration projects in the scope of foreign language learning and teaching with the aim of generating a discussion on the impact of (tele)tandem learning in practice and research, the first *International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in tandem: Present, Past and Future* (I INFLIT) took place at the University of Miami, in Coral Gables, Florida, USA, from February 27 to March 1, in 2014. The meeting was jointly organized by researchers from the Teletandem Brasil Project of São Paulo State University (UNESP), and from the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures from the University of Miami, USA, and had the participation of European, North and South-American researchers.

The opening lecture of the I INFLIT was presented by Dr. Karin Kleppin, from the University of Bochum, Germany. The researcher, who was a pioneer of Tandem learning in her country, talked about the history and evolution of Tandem and eTandem, and discussed the future of this context of foreign language learning.

The second edition of the event also took place at the University of Miami on March 22-24 in 2018. The second IMFLIT (now with M for “meeting” and not N) had the theme “Transcultural Language Learning: Toward Global Citizenship in (e)Tandem”. The meeting also had the collaboration of researchers from the Teletandem Brasil Project, at UNESP, and the department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Miami, and had special support from the director of the Portuguese Program, Dr. Steven F. Butterman, and the department chair, Dr. Lilian Manzor.

The theme of the opening lecture, presented by the creator of the project Teletandem Brasil, Dr. João Antonio Telles, was “Performativity and transculturality in foreign language learning”. The event also had researchers from international institutions in the area of telecollaboration, who could debate their work in presentations that prioritized discussions among the participants of each session. In the roundtable, “(En)Gendering Diversity and Cultural Differences In Telecollaboration: Gender Identities and The Roles

of Mediators and Professors”, Dr. Steven Butterman, Dr. Ana Menda, from the University of Miami, and Ms. Ivian Destro, from Florida International University, held an important debate about how to deal with “difference” during the interactions in the classroom and online, promoting respect and tolerance in face-to-face and virtual encounters.

It was from all the discussions that took place during II IMFLIT that the idea of a thematic publication, whose articles are presented below, came up, focusing on the proposals and challenges brought by telecollaboration for language learning in the present time.

Presentation of the thematic issue

The thematic issue of *Revista do Gel*, “*Transcultural and Transcontinental Telecollaboration for Foreign Language Learning: proposals and challenges*”, contains fifteen articles from Brazilian and foreign researchers, which are organized in four thematic axes: (i) face-to-face tandem context (ii); experiences from institutional telecollaborative partnerships; (iii) (self-)assessment, language practice and linguistic structure in teletandem learning; (iv) (inter)cultural, identity and subjectivity discussions.

The first thematic axis contains two articles. In “Face-to-face tandem and eTandem: differences that influence the maintenance of tandem learning activities”, Masako Wakisaka compares two studies of multiple cases in face-to-face tandem and e-tandem between Japanese-English and Japanese-German partnerships. The results bring implications for the factors that influence the maintenance of activities in these collaborative learning contexts.

In “A deaf and a hearing student learning Portuguese and Libras in a tandem context”, Francisco José Quaresma de Figueiredo and Quintino Martins de Oliveira present results from a study in face-to-face tandem about possible benefits of this approach to speakers of different language modalities: oral hearing (Portuguese) and visual-spacial (*Libras* – Brazilian Sign Language). The authors analyze the telecollaborative strategies adopted and the negotiations established during the interactions.

The second thematic axis of this issue, which brings together works focusing on different aspects and characteristics of institutional partnerships, is composed of six articles. Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe Ramos and Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de Carvalho, in “*Estabelecendo objetivos de aprendizagem em contexto de Teletandem*” (Establishing learning objectives in Teletandem context), discuss the use of learning

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objectives in a Teletandem context based on the Language Teaching for Specific Purposes approach, with a methodological background from Grounded Theory. The authors aim to provide “support to mediators and partners that are involved in this kind of online language teaching/learning context, so that they can direct and optimize the process by using the established objectives”.

Edú Alberto Cruz Lecona and María Guadalupe Alfaro Martínez, in the article “*El Teletándem en el aprendizaje alemán - español: Mediateca Enalt-Unam Y Universidad De Würzburg*” (“Teletandem in German-Spanish learning - Mediateca Enalt-Unam and University of Würzburg”), present the analysis of data obtained from the project *Aprendizaje Virtual de Lenguas Extranjeras* (AVLE - Virtual Foreign Language Learning), in which they evaluated students’ performances in the German-Spanish teletandem. The authors discuss the results from performances of students, as well as the role of the language learning centers in each of the participating universities.

In the article “Experiencing teletandem: a collaborative project to encourage students in tandem interactions”, Viviane Klen-Alves and Fernanda Franco Tiraboschi discuss the results of an action-research study that was carried out in collaboration between two teachers, one from a Brazilian secondary school and the other from an American technical school about “the potential of online in-tandem interactions for the enhancement of students’ second language learning”. According to the authors, the results indicate that telecollaborative activities promote positive attitudes and increase students’ intercultural competence.

In the article entitled “*Desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em PLE: teletandem em foco*” (“Oral communicative competence development in PFL: focusing on teletandem”), Rozana Aparecida Lopes Messias and Michael Jones Ferreira discuss “to what extent Integrated Institutional Teletandem practice influences oral competence development” and investigate which aspects of the Teletandem participants’ speech evidence improvement in their oral production.

As far as the concept of mediation in the institutional teletandem context is concerned, Daniela Nogueira de Moraes Garcia and Micheli Gomes de Souza, in their article entitled “Teletandem mediation on Facebook”, discuss the pedagogical support to the participants using a closed group in a social network. The authors present “the results of an interpretivist qualitative analysis that shows the role of the mediator is focused on providing encouragement and guidelines based on teletandem theory and principles”.

Michael Abernathy Marsh-Soloway and Olivier Michel Delers, in “New directions in eTandem: an expanded vision of capabilities and practices”, present three case studies from which they state that the traditional model of eTandem “can be enhanced with related tools and methodologies to engage students more deeply, and challenge them to push the boundaries of their language, abilities, and knowledge”. Thus, the article “outlines ideas for instructors to commence new directions in eTandem, and consider improvements to long-standing practices”.

There are three articles in the third axis, which focuses on assessment, language practice and linguistic structure in teletandem learning. In “*A correção de erros e as relações entre avaliação por pares e autoavaliação no ambiente teletandem*” (Error correction and the relationships between peer and self-assessment in teletandem), Suzi Marques Spatti Cavallari and Ana Carolina Freschi investigate error correction in the teletandem context, in an interpretative and qualitative study, that uses data from oral session recordings. The participants are three pairs of learners that interact in Portuguese and English. According to the authors, the analysis show that “that peer feedback involves not only the assessment made by the partner who is linguistically more competent, but also (and mainly) by the assessment made by the learner (self-assessment) of what is considered an error in his/ her oral production or comprehension”.

In the article “*Episódios relacionados à língua em interações de teletandem: implicações para a formação de professores de PLE*” (Language-related episodes in Teletandem sessions: implications on the education of teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language), Gabriela Rossatto Franco discusses language-related episodes that emerge in the teletandem sessions by analyzing how Brazilian participants solve questions that their partners have about the Portuguese language. The author discusses the importance that “teletandem practitioners – who are future teachers of foreign languages – develop a reflective attitude towards language practices”.

Edvan P. Brito, in “The variation of obligatory preposition-article contractions in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese”, analyses “a sociolinguistic variation of obligatory contractions between the preposition *de* and definite articles in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese as a foreign language in the United States”, demonstrating that “speech data from telecollaborative interactions can be used as one of the tasks in large scale interlanguage variation studies”.

The fourth axis comprises four articles about (inter)culturality, identity and subjectivity issues. Aurora Castillo-Scott, in “Teaching social issues through cinema and teletandem”, presents a pedagogical experience using cinema and teletandem to promote

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linguistic abilities touching on sociocultural topics, through conversations that focus on cultural, racial, gender and sociopolitical problems associated to Hispanic culture.

Kaitlin Teske and Alexis Vollmer Rivera, in “A critical exploration of heritage language learners’ identities within HelloTalk”, investigate how heritage language learners construct their identities in the e-tandem learning context, using the application *HelloTalk*. By examining participant-reported reflections and based on Content Analysis informed by Critical Applied Linguistics, “the results showed that although some features promote collaborative relations of power, in general the design of the application fosters coercive relations of power”.

In “Deconstructing language learners’ feelings of inferiority through teletandem”, Paula A. Zulaica-Gómez investigates Mexican learners of English as a foreign language and discusses how “several sociocultural factors, resulting from the country’s colonial history, affect their motivation and attitude towards English”. The author analyses how these perceptions and attitudes towards English affect the willingness of Mexican learners to participate in teletandem sessions and how teletandem can break through these preconceived notions and change the way they perceive themselves and their partners.

Gerson Rossi dos Santos and Douglas Altamiro Consolo, in the article “Understanding Teletandem language learning from an intersubjective perspective”, discuss the establishment of intersubjectivity in teletandem sessions from a hermeneutic perspective. The results show that the establishment of intersubjectivity encompasses both an immediate partner-to-partner dimension as well as a broader discourse community-based dimension.

We hope that the articles in this thematic issue may contribute to the discussion of how the development of digital resources on the Internet has currently changed communicative practices around the world. It is important to remark that Kern, Ware and Warschauer (2004) had already suggested that this moment in language learning mediated by computers would be “a second wave”, constituted mainly by telecollaboration guided by intercultural relations. This is reinforced by the many projects that have been implemented around the world, shortening geographic spaces and promoting an expansion of instruction and classroom contexts as local activities to the integration between communities and nations (THORNE, 2006).

Finally, we agree with O’Dowd (2014) that the complexity and the difficulties we have to face when organizing and executing a telecollaborative project may discourage professors wanting to implement this kind of activity in their classes. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that telecollaboration is a clear example of how it is possible to

articulate foreign language learning in the classroom with experiences in which students have contact with other learners, and these opportunities may be enriching both in linguistic and (inter)cultural perspectives. Lastly, the impact of relationships established through telecollaborative language learning promotes new opportunities to explore possibilities of links among those involved in the globalized world and constitutes in a more and more effective way the field of transcultural and transcontinental telecollaboration.

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FACE-TO-FACE TANDEM AND ETANDEM: DIFFERENCES THAT INFLUENCE THE MAINTENANCE OF TANDEM-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Tandem face a face e eTandem: diferenças que influenciam a manutenção de atividades de aprendizagem em tandem

Masako WAKISAKA¹

Abstract | This paper compared two qualitative multiple case studies and discussed the influence that face-to-face tandem and eTandem methods had on maintaining learning activities in tandem. One study focused on face-to-face tandem learning and the other focused on eTandem via e-mail and Skype. The participants of the former were three Japanese-English tandem pairs who participated in a face-to-face tandem project on the campus of a Japanese University. The participants of the latter were three Japanese-German tandem pairs who participated in an eTandem project as part of a collaboration between a Japanese and a German university. These multiple qualitative case studies employed multiple data, including recordings of tandem sessions, learning diaries, resources used in tandem sessions, e-mail/chat logs, field notes, and post-research interviews. The result of the comparison between the two case studies revealed the following three differences affecting the maintenance of learning activities in tandem: 1) distance and physical restriction caused differences in accessibility to sessions, 2) when encountering communication breakdowns, partners in face-to-face tandem learning drew pictures and used nonverbal communication, whereas learners in eTandem tended to rely on online or electronic dictionaries, and 3) learners supported each other more actively in face-to-face tandem learning.

Keywords | Face-to-face tandem learning. eTandem. Motivation. Learner autonomy. CALL.

Resumo | Este artigo comparou dois estudos de casos múltiplos e qualitativos e discutiu a influência que os métodos de tandem face-a-face e de eTandem tiveram na manutenção de atividades de aprendizagem em tandem. Um estudo centrou-se na aprendizagem em tandem face-a-face e o outro centrou-se no eTandem via e-mail e Skype. Os participantes do primeiro grupo eram três duplas de tandem japonês-inglês que participaram do projeto de tandem face-a-face no câmpus de uma universidade japonesa. Os participantes do segundo grupo eram três duplas de tandem japonês-alemão que participaram de um projeto colaborativo de eTandem entre uma universidade japonesa e uma alemã. Esses estudos de casos múltiplos e qualitativos utilizaram dados múltiplos, incluindo gravações de sessões tandem, diários de aprendizagem, recursos usados em sessões tandem, registros de e-mail/ bate-papo, notas de campo e entrevistas pós-pesquisa. O resultado da comparação entre os dois estudos de caso revelou as seguintes três diferenças que afetam a manutenção das atividades de aprendizagem em tandem: 1) a distância e a restrição física causaram diferenças na acessibilidade às sessões; 2) ao encontrar falhas de comunicação, os parceiros de tandem face-a-face desenhavam figuras e usavam comunicação não-verbal, enquanto os aprendizes de eTandem tendiam a contar com dicionários on-line ou eletrônicos; e 3) os alunos se apoiavam mais ativamente na aprendizagem em tandem face-a-face.

Palavras-chave | Aprendizagem em tandem face-a-face. eTandem. Motivação. Autonomia do aprendiz. Aprendizagem de línguas mediada por computador.

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- | Face-to-face tandem and eTandem: differences that influence the maintenance of tandem-learning activities

1. Introduction

Brammerts (2005, p. 28-29) defined tandem learning as a learning mode in which two people with different mother tongues work together in order to learn from each other based on the principles of “reciprocity” and “learner autonomy”. Reciprocity is a relationship in which two partners help each other in order to improve their abilities and skills, and to accomplish an individual goal. Learner autonomy is the ability to take control of one’s own learning. Each of the tandem partners decides what he/she wants to learn, how and when, and what kind of help he/she would like from his/her partner.

Previous research reveals that tandem learning is effective in:

- Improving communicative competence (LEWIS, 2003; BOWER, 2006);
- Developing intercultural competence (STICKLER; LEWIS, 2003);
- Fostering learner autonomy (LITTLE, 2003);
- Increasing motivation (USHIODA, 2000; WAKISAKA, 2013);
- Developing confidence in speaking a target language (WAKISAKA, 2012);
- Stimulating motivation to study abroad (OKOCHI, 2011).

2. Research focus

This paper discusses how different tandem-learning methods influence maintaining tandem-learning activities. There are roughly two types of tandem learning, face-to-face tandem learning and eTandem (see Figure 1). While communication in face-to-face tandem learning is synchronous, communication in eTandem can be asynchronous, quasi-synchronous or synchronous. Since 2006, tandem learning via Internet telephone with webcam has been called “Teletandem” (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006). However, different researchers use other terms, such as video conferencing and telecollaboration. The term “eTandem” is used to refer to tandem learning via the Internet in this paper.

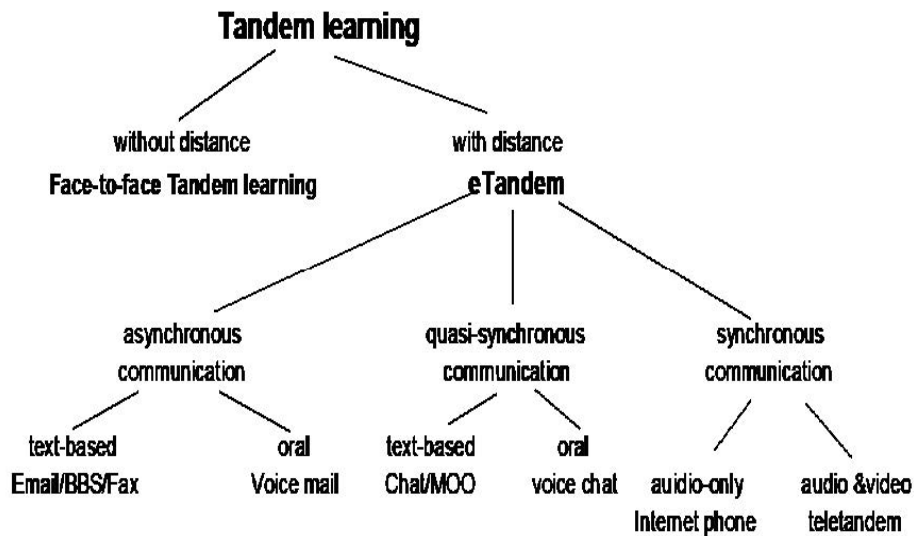


Figure 1. Different types of tandem learning

Normally, it has been said that synchronous eTandem offers advantages that are similar to those of face-to-face tandem learning (BRAMMERTS; CALVERT, 2005). However, it can be difficult for learners to maintain their eTandem activities informally. For example, in a study of an eTandem project at a university in Ireland, Apple and Mullen (2002) found that students exchanged less emails outside of class than in class—3 emails compared to 16.

Motivation has been found to play a large role in a learners' decision to continue tandem activities (USHIODA, 2000; WAKISAKA, 2013). Ushioda (2009) suggests a "person-in-context relational view" of motivation, which focuses on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions. For Ushioda (2009, p. 220), her focus is on the "agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intentions.". Ushioda proposes that researchers need to take "a relational (rather than linear) view of these multiple contextual elements, and view motivation as an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations." (USHIODA, 2011, p. 78). Based on Ushioda's view, two qualitative multiple case studies focusing on real learners in each project were used to try to understand the meaning of the project for each learner.

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3. Methodology

Two qualitative research studies were conducted using a multiple case study method to find the factors related to maintaining tandem-learning activities. Case study research investigates a case or cases within a bounded system (CRESWELL, 2007; MERRIAM, 1998; YIN, 1994). Multiple case studies have two stages for analysis. In the first stage, a within-case analysis, the researcher focuses on each case and tries to understand each case deeply. In the second stage, a cross-case analysis, the researcher compares cases and focuses on similarities and differences. In this study, stage three consists of comparing the multiple case studies.

The first multiple case study examined an informal face-to-face tandem learning project on the campus of a Japanese university, and the second multiple case study investigated an extracurricular eTandem project between Japanese university students learning German and German university students learning Japanese. Both projects were organized to give students the opportunity to learn the target language through communication with proficient speakers. The two studies used qualitative methods to explore what/how students learnt through helping each other and how to maintain tandem learning.

4. Case Studies for Face-to-Face Tandem Learning

The face-to-face tandem-learning project was an extracurricular activity organized and operated by the author. Participants decided what they would learn and how they would learn it. They were supported by guidelines, coordinator-pair guidance, and networking parties.

4.1. Participants

The participants were three English-Japanese tandem pairs (Table 1). Mel, Pat and Arnold were studying Japanese. Mel was an Australian student. Pat was a German student, and Arnold was an Indian researcher. Pat and Arnold were very fluent in English, so they did tandem learning in English. Jun, Masa and Kimura were Japanese students who were studying English through tandem learning.

Table 1. Participants in multiple case studies for face-to-face tandem learning project

Pair	Name (Pseudonym)	M/F	Major	Target Language	Mother Tongue (Other Languages)	Language Level (CEFR)
Case 1	Mel	F	Japanese	Japanese	English	B1-B2
	Jun	M	Science	English	Japanese	B1-B2
Case 2	Pat	M	Robotics	Japanese	German (English)	A2
	Masa	M	Engineering	English	Japanese	B1
Case 3	Arnold	M	Engineering	Japanese	Marathi (English, Bengali and Hindi)	A1
	Kimura	M	Engineering	English	Japanese	A2-B1

4.2. Data collection

Multiple qualitative data sets were collected, consisting of

- Recordings of activities (4 sessions)
- Final interviews (after 10 sessions)
- Resources used in the tandem sessions
- Emails to and from coordinator
- Field notes.

4.3. Summary of each case

4.3.1. Case 1: Jun and Mel

Jun and Mel had tandem sessions every Thursday for 90 minutes. They met at a cafeteria at the university. Mel's study was associated with her graduation thesis about gender equality in the workplace in Japan. She also reviewed and practiced what she learnt in her Japanese classes. On the other hand, Jun often chose to practice topic-based conversations in English and discuss the differences between Australia and Japan. He also practiced for the TOEIC test. They had 12 sessions for four months and continued after the interview until Mel went back to Australia.

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4.3.2. Case 2. Masa and Pat

Masa and Pat had tandem sessions once a week for 90 minutes at one of the cafeterias on campus. Masa often talked about his daily life in English because his purpose for tandem was conversing in English. He also learned useful phrases from Pat and practiced presentations for conferences. Pat talked about his daily life and his major and practiced some situations using role-plays. He learned useful phrases and Japanese slangs from Masa. They had 14 sessions over the four months.

4.3.3. Case 3. Arnold and Kimura

Arnold and Kimura had tandem sessions once a week for 90 minutes at one of the cafeterias on campus. During the first couple of sessions, Arnold and Kimura role-played daily situations, such as visiting a restaurant or a hospital, and asking directions. After that, they talked about Japanese and Indian culture, such as folklore, foods, old tales and sports. In later sessions, they talked about their daily life. They had 14 sessions over five months.

5. Case Studies for eTandem

The eTandem project was a collaboration between a Japanese university and a German university on a voluntary basis. I organized and operated this project along with two coordinators at the German university. Students exchanged e-mails and had Skype sessions from the third week. Table 2 shows topics for each week. This project was supported by guidelines, coordinator-pair guidance, and individual advising if needed.

Table 2. Topics for each week

Week	Topics
1	Introducing yourself
2	Food and drink
3	Festival and holiday
4	Culture
5	Stereotype

5.1. Participants

The participants were three German-Japanese tandem pairs (Table 3). Nana, Yuko and Aki were Japanese students majoring in German at the Japanese university. David, Charlie and Lea were German students who were learning Japanese in Germany, but during the project period, Charlie was staying in Japan as a researcher.

Table 3. Participants in multiple case studies for eTandem project

Pair	Name (Pseudonym)	M/F	Major	Target Language	Mother Tongue (Other Language)	Language Level (CEFR)
Case 4	David	M	Engineering	Japanese	German (English)	A1- A2
	Nana	F	German	German	Japanese (English, Italian and Cantonese)	A2-B1
Case 5	Charlie	M	Chemistry	Japanese	German (English)	A1- A2
	Yuko	F	German	German	Japanese (English and Italian)	A2-B1
Case 6	Lea	F	Scientific education	Japanese	German (English)	A1- A2
	Aki	F	German	German	Japanese (English)	A2-B1

5.2. Data Collection

Multiple qualitative data sets were collected, consisting of:

- Interviews after the project period was over
- Questionnaire before interviewing
- Video recordings of two Skype sessions
- Learner diaries
- Chat and email logs with researchers
- Copy of resources used in the tandem sessions
- Field notes.

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5.3. Summary of each case

5.3.1. David and Nana

David and Nana exchanged 27 e-mails in total and had three Skype sessions during the project period. They wrote and talked about the designated topics. They exchanged the longest e-mails about the culture topic, sharing about their favorite anime, manga and movies. They stopped exchanging e-mails after five weeks but continued holding eTandem sessions via Skype after the project period for more than four months.

5.3.2. Charlie and Yuko

Charlie and Yuko exchanged e-mails in both Japanese and German only in the first week. From the second week to fourth week, they wrote only in German and stopped writing e-mails in the fifth week. However, they had Skype sessions more than once a week continuing for longer than one hour. Charlie worked long days in the laboratory in Japan and he did not have chance to speak German. He enjoyed talking in German with Yuko. Yuko tried to use what she learned in her German classes at university when talking with Charlie. He was very helpful and her motivation went up after she started eTandem.

5.3.3. Case 6. Lea and Aki

Lea and Aki exchanged 24 e-mails and had three Skype sessions during the project period. They often corrected each other. First, Lea was very excited and eager to communicate with Aki, but she was anxious. Her motivation increased after she found a common interest with Aki, classical music. Aki said that she was so excited about the eTandem project. They both said they enjoyed talking by Skype. However, in the fifth week, Aki stopped responding to e-mails from Lea and their eTandem sessions did not continue.

6. Discussion

The comparison between two multiple case studies showed three differences affecting the maintenance of tandem-learning activities. First, distance and physical restrictions affected learners' accessibility to sessions differently. Participants in face-to-face tandem-learning were satisfied with their session times and locations. Mel had classes at three different campuses, so Mel and Jun planned sessions based on Mel's preferences. Masa and Pat were both graduate students who spent much of their days in the laboratory at the university. The cafeteria was very close to their laboratory and easy to access, quiet, and clean. Arnold and Kimura had tandem sessions regularly every Tuesday or Thursday in the cafeteria. However, the learners in eTandem had some difficulties. It was hard for some learners to schedule sessions due to the eight-hour time difference between Germany and Japan during the project. David and Nana continued their eTandem sessions, but Nana had difficulty adjusting her time for the Skype sessions.

(Excerpt-1)

The reason why my motivation decreased is because it became harder to take time for Skype session at night and I had other appointments except for classes during winter holiday. (Interview_Nana)

Learners in eTandem also had difficulty finding a place to use Internet for Skype sessions, as in the cases of Nana and Aki.

(Excerpt-2)

When I stay at my parent's house, it's difficult to concentrate on Skype because others are noisy and I felt uncomfortable talking by Skype because my mother said "You should go to bed" at night. (Chat_Nana)

(Excerpt-3)

[...] I am now at my parent's house. I cannot send emails and use Skype because I don't have Internet access. (I am sending this message from my cell phone.) There is a computer with Internet access in my father's room. But I cannot use it while he is in. [...] Can I tell Lea to cancel the session this week? (Email to coordinator_Aki)

Second, how learners negotiated meaning differed depending on the method of communication. As has been shown in previous studies (e.g., SMITH, 2004), lexical problems triggered most of the negotiation in both face-to-face tandem learning and eTandem in the present studies. However, in face-to-face tandem learning, learners often

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tried to assist by drawing pictures and using gestures to negotiate meaning when their communication broke down. For example, during one session Arnold explained how to cook Indian curry and cheesecake to Kimura in English and Kimura tried to understand it by drawing pictures (Figure 2). In Figure 3, Masa drew an explanation of the Japanese recruiting system based on recommendations from universities.

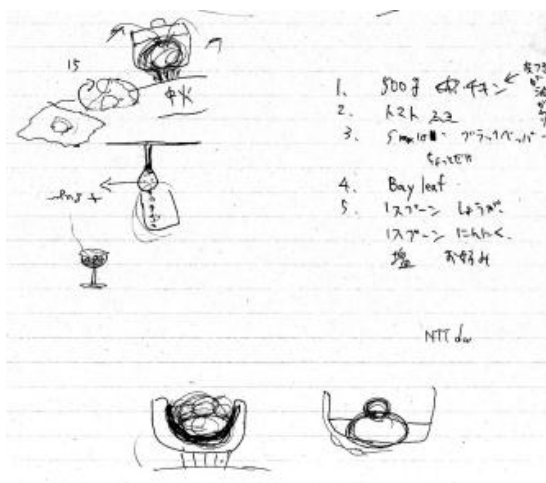


Figure 2. Drawn recipes by Kimura



Figure 3. Drawing of Japanese recruiting system by Masa

Another way learners in face-to-face tandem learning negotiated meaning was by continuing to ask their partner until they could understand. These excerpts are from interviews with Masa, Jun, and Mel.

(Excerpt 4)

When I don't understand well what Pat said [...] I ask him to repeat them many times and I wrote down guessing alphabet which he said on paper and confirm the meaning. I asked Pat to write down the words on the paper. (Interview_Masa)

(Excerpt 5)

I always try to ask what I don't understand because I want Mel to ask me whenever she doesn't understand. (Interview_Jun)

(Excerpt 6)

I asked until I could understand because Jun always taught me. (Interview_Mel)

On the other hand, learners in eTandem tended to rely first on online or electronic dictionaries when their communication broke down. They often asked their partners to wait while they tried to look up the appropriate words by themselves. When learners were unable to catch a word, they would first ask their partner to write down the word or phrase in the chat window, and then the learner would look it up in a dictionary. Figure 4 shows the search bar of the free online dictionary which Lea often used during her sessions.

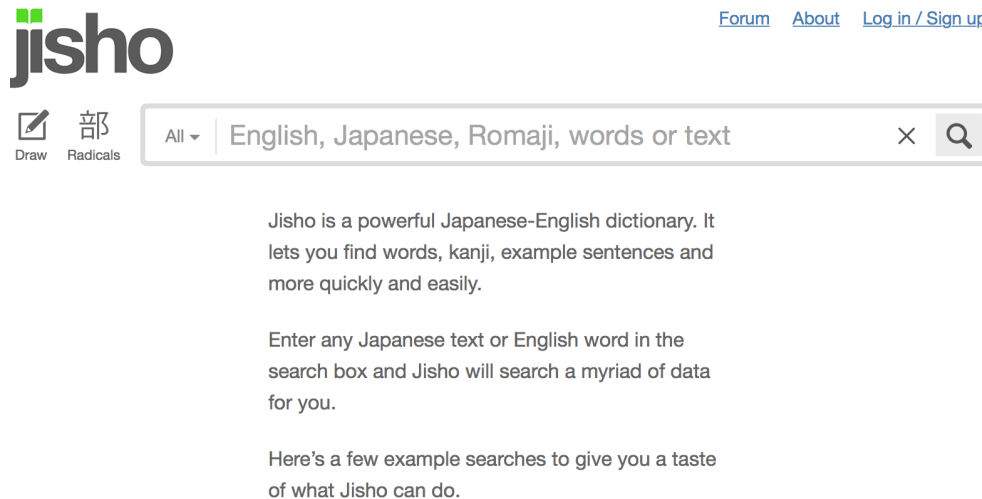


Figure 4. Lea's online dictionary (<http://jisho.org>)

Yanguas (2009) compared how learners of Spanish negotiated meaning when communication breakdown occurred in different communication media (i.e. audio chat vs. video chat vs. face-to-face chat). It was found that the audio chat group carried out different meaning negotiations from the video chat group because of the lack of visual contact, but the Skype chat and face-to-face chat groups did not differ significantly. However, in the present study, learners in eTandem communicated not only by video chat but also used text chat and other tools such as search engines and online dictionaries at the same time during their Skype sessions. Access to multimodal tools may make a difference in how meaning is negotiated between participants in face-to-face tandem learning and eTandem.

Third, there were differences in attitude of how to support their partner. In face-to-face tandem, active support through careful attention to partners was often observed. All participants in face-to-face tandem learning mentioned how they tried to effectively support their partners. These attempts can be seen in these excerpts from Mel, Arnold, Kimura, and Jun.

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(Excerpt 7)

In my opinion, mistakes are not so important if you understand the meaning, but I want to correct his English because Jun maybe wants perfect English because he learns English. (Interview_Mel)

(Excerpt 8)

I try to reduce Kimura's shyness and get him to speak aloud in English [...]. I advised [...] he should speak and repeat aloud. (Interview_Arnold)

(Excerpt 9)

I paid attention to speaking speed and code switching. I often use many gestures and paraphrase in the sentences which Arnold would understand. (Interview_Kimura)

(Excerpt 10)

I often pretend to understand even though I couldn't understand when I speak in English. So I could tell by the look on her face when Mel didn't understand, although she said "un, un" ("yes, yes" in Japanese), and I tried to confirm the meaning again. (Interview_Jun)

Moreover, learners in face-to-face tandem sometimes prepared materials for their partners. Figure 5 is an example of Kimura's "present" for his partner, Arnold. Kimura prepared a handout of Japanese tongue twisters because Arnold asked about it in the previous session.

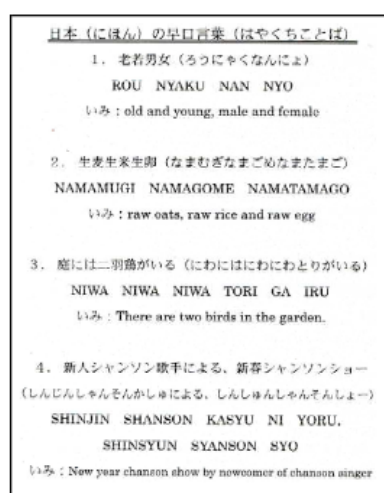


Figure 5. Japanese tongue twisters by Kimura

On the other hand, learners in eTandem tended to support learners as a response to their partners' explicit requests. The reason may be that learners can get to know their partners more easily in face-to-face tandem than in eTandem because more information is available in face-to-face conversation. In addition, both learners in face-to-face tandem are living in the same culture and they have many topics in common, so it could be easy for them to guess what their partners are trying to say even if the explanations are not clear enough. However, in eTandem learners need to explicitly explain content because they share less common awareness. It is said that Japan is a high context culture, while Germany is a low context culture (HALL, 1976). It might be difficult especially for Japanese learners to make explicit requests, and for their implied requests to be understood. This could be why Aki stopped having sessions, because she was unable to make direct requests to her partner.

7. Conclusion

This research compared two qualitative multiple case studies and discussed the influence face-to-face tandem and eTandem methods had on maintaining learning activities in tandem. It was found that there are three differences: 1) distance and physical restriction caused differences in accessibility to sessions, 2) when encountering communication breakdowns, partners in face-to-face tandem learning often drew pictures and used nonverbal communication, whereas learners in eTandem tended to rely first on online or electronic dictionaries, and 3) learners in face-to-face tandem learning supported each other more actively with careful attention.

However, given that the present study is a small-scale exploratory study, there are certain limitations. First, participants in face-to-face tandem learning were English-Japanese pairs, while participants in eTandem were German-Japanese pairs. There are potential sociocultural factors (e.g., communication styles, social status in the language, educational experiences with Japanese, etc.) influencing how meaning was negotiated and support was provided to partners. In addition, Japanese participants in eTandem were not familiar with Skype and were not used to communicating with others via the Internet whereas there are more learners familiar with the use of social network service (SNS) now. Those learners may be better at supporting their partner by making excellent use of information technology.

Future studies may investigate case studies in German-Japanese face-to-face tandem learning and English-Japanese eTandem. Notwithstanding the limitations, findings from the present study may have some important pedagogical measures that coordinators

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can take when organizing and managing eTandem projects. First, coordinators should take into consideration that the time difference may influence one side of the pairs more than the other. They also should confirm whether pairs have enough time and can secure a place for Skype sessions when pairing. Second, coordinators should suggest that supporting each other actively is very important and show how to effectively manage communication breakdown. Third, coordinators should suggest to Japanese learners to explicitly express their preferences to their partners. In particular, it is more polite to say no when the learner does not want to do something rather than just saying yes and trying to adjust to an undesirable situation. Finally, they should encourage tandem partners to say what they want directly and negotiate with their partner.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: WAKISAKA, Masako. Face-to-face tandem and etandem: differences that influence the maintenance of tandem learning activities. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 42-57, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2408>

Submetido em: 14/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

A DEAF AND A HEARING STUDENT LEARNING PORTUGUESE AND LIBRAS IN A TANDEM CONTEXT

Uma aluna surda e uma ouvinte aprendendo Português e Libras em um contexto de tandem

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Abstract | Inclusive education in Brazil has created a linguistic reality at schools in which deaf and hearing people share the same space (QUADROS; KARNOPP, 2004). However, some obstacles make it hard for this interaction to flow naturally, both by deaf people who do not master Portuguese and hearing people who do not know Brazilian Sign Language. Various studies about the process of teaching and learning spoken languages emphasize the relevance of collaborative interaction in pairs or in groups in the co-construction of knowledge (FIGUEIREDO, 2006; SWAIN, 1995). It is in this collaborative context that the present research takes place with the objective of promoting authentic contact between deaf and hearing people, who are beginners in the languages being studied, by means of tandem language learning. It is an approach used in the learning of spoken languages with the purpose of promoting linguistic and cultural exchange among people whose native languages are different (BRAMMERTS, 1996). We intended to verify the possible benefits of such approach to the speakers of languages of different modalities: a spoken language (Portuguese) and a visual-spatial language (Brazilian Sign Language - Libras). A deaf student and a hearing one who take Brazilian Sign Language as a major at the Universidade Federal do Tocantins, Porto Nacional, Brazil, took part in this study. They had to teach each other idiomatic expressions in their own languages. The collaborative strategies used by them and the negotiation established in such encounters show that the interaction among deaf and hearing students contribute to the process of learning the languages.

Keywords | Brazilian Sign Language. Tandem learning. Interaction. Collaboration.

Resumo | A educação inclusiva no Brasil formatou um cenário linguístico nas escolas em que surdos e ouvintes passam a compartilhar o mesmo espaço (QUADROS; KARNOPP, 2004). No entanto, alguns percalços dificultam o fluir natural dessa interação, tanto pelos surdos que não dominam a língua portuguesa, quanto pelos ouvintes que não sabem libras. Diversos estudos no contexto de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas orais salientam a relevância da interação colaborativa entre pares ou em grupos na construção do conhecimento (FIGUEIREDO, 2006; SWAIN, 1995). É nesse contexto colaborativo que esta pesquisa surge com o intuito de promover contato autêntico entre surdos e ouvintes, iniciantes nas línguas em estudo, por meio da *aprendizagem em tandem*. Trata-se de uma abordagem utilizada na aprendizagem de línguas orais, cujo propósito é a promoção do intercâmbio linguístico e cultural entre pessoas que possuem línguas diferentes (BRAMMERTS, 1996). Pretendemos verificar os possíveis benefícios dessa abordagem para falantes de línguas de modalidades diferentes: oral auditivo (português) e visuoespacial (Libras). Participaram do estudo uma aluna surda e uma ouvinte do curso de Letras: Libras da Universidade Federal do Tocantins, Porto Nacional, Brasil, em que tinham de ensinar, uma para a outra, expressões idiomáticas em suas línguas. As estratégias colaborativas adotadas por elas e as negociações estabelecidas nos momentos desses encontros apontam que a interação entre os alunos surdos e ouvintes contribuem para o processo de aprendizagem das línguas em questão.

Palavras-chave | Libras. Aprendizagem em *tandem*. Interação. Colaboração.

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Introduction

Brazil's current inclusive educational philosophy has led to a significant increase in the number of deaf people in the educational sphere. In consequence, communication at schools starts to contemplate another language whose modality³ is completely different from that of the Portuguese language, defined as a visual-spatial modality, as is the case of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) (OLIVEIRA, 2007; OLIVEIRA-SILVA, 2005; QUADROS; KARNOPP, 2004).

Many studies have been conducted on the learning of Portuguese as a second language, in the written modality, by deaf people. Such studies seek to verify if the methodologies developed in the teaching of spoken languages can be applied when one of the languages is of the visual-spatial modality.

In the context of spoken languages, the work in pairs and in groups has proven to be effective in learning different contents, bringing new possibilities for teaching methodologies to the language learning context (DONATO; MCCORMICK, 1994; FIGUEIREDO, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006; LANTOLF; APPEL, 1994; SWAIN, 1995). Hence, this collaborative approach in education is gaining space in research in the area of applied linguistics.

Collaborative learning refers to "educational situations in which two or more people learn or try to learn something together, be it through interactions in the classroom or outside of it" (FIGUEIREDO, 2006, p. 12). This approach goes by the premise that interaction is a fundamental factor in the cognitive and linguistic development of the learner, which can also occur by means of a collaborative process known as *tandem learning*. This is a process of linguistic and cultural exchanges between individuals who speak different languages, with purposes of learning the target language⁴ in a collaborative way (BENEDETTI, 2010; GARCIA, 2013; TELLES, 2009). Thus, we intend to verify if such benefits can be perceived in the interaction between deaf and hearing students, because little is known about how these interactions are established when the linguistic pair is constituted by languages of different modalities, as it is in the case of Libras and Portuguese.

³ Modality is understood as the way in which languages are perceived and produced, and it can be spoken or signed (OLIVEIRA-SILVA, 2017).

⁴ Target language (T-language) is the foreign language the subject is learning, different from L1 (FIGUEIREDO, 2006).

Mediating strategies in tandem learning

According to Vassallo and Telles (2009), tandem learning offers opportunities for interactions in which one person teaches their language to another person, and vice-versa, freely, without following a fixed curricular program. The goal of this proposition is for the peers to develop communicative capabilities in the foreign language (BRAMMERTS, 2002). Tandem can be done face-to-face or at a distance, using technological resources (FIGUEIREDO; SILVA, 2016). According to Benedetti (2010, p. 21), the tandem learning modality is known “as a complimentary proposal to the formal learning of the foreign language”.

This proposal of teaching and learning languages arises in the context in which the contact between two native speakers⁵ of different foreign languages is made possible. The practice of learning foreign languages via the tandem context is characterized, according to Benedetti (2010, p. 22), first

[...] with the accord, between the members of the pair, of the place previously agreed on for one to learn the language of the other through a conversation in the target language and mutual help. The time was divided in two balanced parts, with one period for each language. After that, the languages were swapped, and the roles inverted, so that the one who was previously teaching their language to the partner, the following moment helped them learn their mother tongue.

The interaction between the learners, in a tandem session, must obey some principles, such as: symmetrical sociability (there is an alternation of roles: in one session one of the participants acts as a teacher of their native language; in the other session, they act as a learner of the target language); reciprocity (each learner must help their partner in learning the language, receiving as much help as they offer); autonomy (both learners take personal responsibility for their respective part of the tandem sessions and determine their own learning objectives and methods); interculturality (both learners have access to different languages and different cultures); and bilingualism (the two languages of the partnership must be used in a balanced way by the learners (BRAMMERTS, 2002; SOUZA, 2003, 2006; VASSALO; TELLES, 2009)).

⁵ In a tandem perspective, the subjects must be native speakers of the languages involved. However, further studies of tandem learning at a distance, such as *teletandem*, widen the profile of the participants, considering also the proficient speakers of the target language (T-language) (BENEDETTI, 2010).

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In tandem sessions, learners can use different mediating strategies to assist them in the learning of languages. Figueiredo (2005, p. 124) presents some mediating strategies, which are defined by Villamil and Guerrero (1996) as “the activities that facilitate the fulfilment of the objectives of a task”. They consist of, for example, the use of symbols, appointments, mimicry, images, dictionaries, grammars, objects, as well as the use of the mother tongue as a means of facilitating the execution of the task.

Learners can also offer one another guidance that can occur by means of questions or instructions, known as *scaffolding*. Scaffolding is described as a process that allows the child, or the learner, to solve a problem, finish a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond their efforts, in case they did not have help from another person (WOOD; BRUNER; ROSS, 1976). Scaffolding must only be offered when the learner requires help, being taken away in the moment they manage to develop the activity alone (LANTOLF; APPEL, 1994). Thus, collaborative learning is a process in which there is the use of different mediating strategies that promote the co-construction of knowledge in a linguistic and sociocultural context (FIGUEIREDO, 2006).

The study

Two undergraduate students who take Libras as a major at the Universidade Federal de Tocantins, Porto Nacional, Brazil, took part in this case study. They had been taking the course for two and a half years. Both are adults, and their identities were preserved by using pseudonyms, chosen by them: Cecília, 23, hearing, and Luíza, 24, deaf.

Two face-to-face tandem sessions were conducted, and each occurred in different days, and lasted for one hour. In the first meeting, Luíza taught Libras to Cecília. In the second one, Cecília taught written Portuguese to Luíza. They chose ‘idiomatic expressions’ as the theme to be worked on.

Idiomatic expressions are combinations of words, used in a specific sequence and consecrated by the use, whose meaning is given metaphorically through the totality of the expression, which is socially accorded, and not given by the meaning of the isolated words that compose such expression (BIDERMAN, 2001).

Idiomatic expressions may or may not have a correspondent in the other language. Thus, not all idiomatic expressions in Portuguese have correspondents in Libras, and vice-versa. There are also idiomatic expressions that are specific to certain languages. For

example, the expression “olho caro”⁶ (literally, ‘expensive eye’) that exists in Libras does not have a correspondent in Portuguese (FARIA, 2003).

Idiomatic expressions and metaphors are constructed from the social, cultural, and linguistic context of their speakers. According to Oliveira (2010, p. 2836-2837),

[it is] incontestable that deaf and hearing people have different physical and cultural experiences. For the deaf, the sense of vision is more influent in the process of signification of the world and the acquisition of knowledge than the sense of hearing, since these comprehend the world predominantly through visual experiences (so much so that they use a visual-spatial language).

Before the tandem sessions, a meeting was set up in which the procedures of this study were made clear, and the consent forms for the use of the data generated in the research were also collected. After each tandem session, an individual interview with each participant was done in order to clarify their perceptions about their role in this interactive process of language learning. Each interview lasted for about 20 minutes and was recorded in audio and video.

The use of the video as a tool in the data collection procedure was needed due to the fact that one of the languages involved in the study is visual-spatial. It was agreed and made clear that all collected data would be transcribed and translated into Portuguese, thus guaranteeing the preservation of their identities and images.

This research is a qualitative case study analysis of the experiences of a hearing student and a deaf student who took part in face-to-face tandem sessions. Case study methodology allows for the use of several data collection instruments to provide a better view of the event or of the phenomenon being investigated (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1994; NUNAN, 1992; SELIGER; SHOHAMY, 1989).

All material used in the tandem learning sessions was produced by the participants, who were alone in the classroom during the sessions. They used images taken from the Internet that were shown to their partners in their laptops, and they also used the whiteboard and markers. All the sessions were video-recorded for further analysis, and the interactions in Libras were later translated into Portuguese. Cecília prepared a PowerPoint file with fourteen illustrative images with examples of idiomatic expressions in Portuguese,

⁶ The expression ‘olho caro’ is used in Libras to refer to a person with good visual acuity (FARIA, 2003, p. 136).

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with their meaning written below, also in Portuguese. Besides, she also produced two written tasks. In the first one, there were images that illustrated literally some idiomatic expressions in Portuguese, such as, for instance, the image of a person swallowing a frog. This way, her deaf partner, when seeing the image, was expected to write the expression 'engolir um sapo'⁷ in Portuguese. In the other task, the deaf partner had to match the images to their respective meanings written in Portuguese.

Luíza, the deaf participant, prepared a PowerPoint presentation containing six images that reflected some idiomatic expressions specific to Libras. This task was only signed, and she did not use any printed material. She explained the meaning of the idiomatic expressions to Cecília, her hearing partner. After that, Luíza asked Cecília to make sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

Analysis of the mediating strategies in the tandem sessions, and the perceptions of the participants about such collaborative learning process

In this study, the resources used by the participants, such as the whiteboard, markers of different colors, Microsoft PowerPoint showing slides with images, gestures, written explanations and drawings proved to be rather positive. They proved to be useful resources because they helped the learners to interact during the sessions and to do the tasks. They also helped the participants to provide each other with adequate input in the languages to be learned.

In excerpt 1, Cecília is teaching her deaf partner the idiomatic expression 'ao pé da letra'⁸ in Portuguese. She walks up to the whiteboard and writes in blue: "Ele leva tudo ao pé da letra"⁹, and then draws a human foot and the letter 'L' with two feet, as can be seen in the following figure.

⁷ Literally, the expression means 'to swallow a frog'. In general terms, however, the meaning is closer to 'swallow one's pride'.

⁸ When translated literally into English, 'ao pé da letra' becomes 'to the foot of the letter'; otherwise, it can be translated as the word 'literally'.

⁹ Literally: "He takes everything to the foot of the letter".

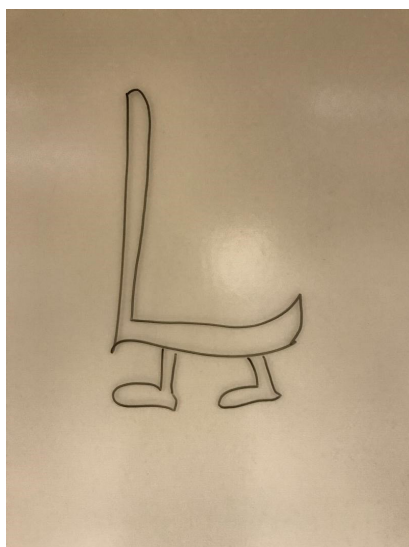


Figure 1. “Ao pé da letra”.

Source: Material used during the Portuguese class

When showing the drawing of the foot, Luíza identifies the meaning of the word ‘foot’ and, after that, she produces the sign for ‘human foot’ in Libras. From that understanding, Cecília explains that it does not make sense to translate idiomatic expressions literally and evokes the concept of idiomatic expressions as closed sentences, with a metaphorical meaning. Cecília, after drawing the human ‘foot’, writes the word ‘pé’ and interacts with Luíza in Libras, constructing the meaning of the expression, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 1

Cecília: What is the sign (pointing to the drawing of a ‘foot’)?

Luíza: “Pé” (uses the sign for ‘human foot’ in Libras).

Cecília: I used the letter ‘L’ here, but it can be any letter. I wanted to show here (pointing to the letter ‘L’ with legs) the meaning of ‘letter’. If we do it in Libras as we do in Portuguese, it makes no sense, right? (signs ‘human foot’ and then ‘letter’). We can’t understand anything. Hearing people say it like this (pointing to the idiomatic expression ‘ao pé da letra’ written in blue on the board), when they want to mean ‘literally’.

Luíza: Got it... but why do they say ‘ao pé da letra’? (signs ‘human foot’ and ‘letter’). Why do they say so?

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Cecília: Do you remember when I explained here (pointing, on the whiteboard, to the drawing of the letter 'L' with legs) that idiomatic expressions have no separate meaning, that they are metaphors?

Luíza I do, I remember. But I got curious.

Cecília: I confess I don't know why we say that way. I can only tell you that, when you want to say that someone does something literally, you say they do it 'ao pé da letra'.

As can be seen in this excerpt, when writing the letter 'L' on the whiteboard and assigning to it the image of a drawn human foot, Cecília provided an inadequate visual input to Luíza, since the drawing depicts the literal sense of the parts of the idiomatic expression, which caused some difficulty in understanding for her deaf partner. That difficulty was made worse because Cecília was using Libras with the structure of Portuguese, which can occur when two languages of different modalities are being used simultaneously (EMMOREY *et al.*, 2008). Such confusion could only be minimized when the students discussed the expression, with Cecília having clarified, to her deaf partner, that idiomatic expressions have a metaphorical meaning, and not a literal meaning, as Faria argues (2003).

In this example, we can perceive the different mediating strategies that Cecília used (the writing in blue - to show the correct spelling of the idiomatic expression - and the drawing of the letter 'L' with 'human feet') to explain the meaning of the idiomatic expression to her deaf partner. Even though the strategy was relevant - since, at first, Cecília managed to make sense of the Portuguese spellings for 'letter' and 'foot' - the fact that she translated an idiomatic expression in parts made its comprehension harder, since it drew the deaf partner's attention to the literal meaning of these parts and not to the metaphorical meaning of the expression, as Faria (2003) and Oliveira (2010) warn us.

In excerpt 2, Cecília gives Luíza a handout and asks her to match the idiomatic expressions to some images. After doing the matching task, Luíza had to write some sentences using the expressions. In the interaction below, the participants are talking about the expression 'falar pelos cotovelos'¹⁰.

¹⁰ Literally, the expression is translated as 'talk through/out of the elbows'. The expression 'falar pelos cotovelos' is used to refer to someone who talks too much, too quickly, similar to the English expression 'talk nineteen to the dozen'.

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Excerpt 2

- Cecília Here (pointing to the second part of the activity, where there are only lines), I want you to think of an example using the expression (points to the part in the activity in which Luíza wrote 'falar pelos cotovelos'.)
- Luíza Ok, let me think... (after a few seconds, she begins to write on the board: 'Cecília falar cotovelos aula Libras'¹¹) (laughing).
- Cecília You are being so mean... (starts laughing too) Ok, the expression is perfect, but here (pointing to the verb 'falar' in the sentence), it's not Cecília falar. You know how we conjugate verbs in Portuguese, right? How does it go?
- Luíza F-A-L-O (using fingerspelling¹²).
- Cecília F-A-L-O (using fingerspelling), can only be used in Portuguese with the pronoun 'E-U' (I, in English) (using fingerspelling). Cecília goes with which pronoun?
- Luíza E-L-A (She, in English) (using fingerspelling)?
- Cecília Exactly. She. How do we conjugate the verb 'falar with the pronoun 'ela'?
- Luíza F-A-L-A? (using fingerspelling)
- Cecília Exactly! Ela F-A-L-A (She talks, in English) (using fingerspelling).

This example illustrates a process of co-construction of knowledge favored by collaborative learning (FIGUEIREDO, 2006; SWAIN, 1995). The moment Cecília takes Luíza to reflect on how verbs in Portuguese are conjugated, she provides her deaf partner with scaffoldings (WOOD; BRUNER; ROSS, 1976) by directing questions at her. Cecília invites Luíza to think about the grammatical structures of Portuguese, offering hints and facial expressions as scaffoldings to help Luíza produce the verbal conjugation of the verb '*falar*' in the third person singular and, thus, reaches the correct final answer in Portuguese (*ela fala*).

In the following excerpt, we illustrate an interaction in which Luíza teaches the idiomatic expression '*cara de pau*'¹³ in Libras. In order to do so, she uses a video in which a man is walking with his wife, and another woman, who is very beautiful and attractive, passes by them. The husband, then, looks at the woman, and the wife realizes what is happening and slaps his face.

11 In this example, Luíza uses the verb 'falar' in the infinitive form. She does not conjugate the verb.

12 Fingerspelling (or dactylology) is the act of representing the letters of a writing system, and sometimes numeral systems, using only the hands (QUADROS; KARNOPP, 2004; SANDLER; LILLO-MARTIN, 2006).

13 Literally, 'face of wood' or 'wood face'. The meaning is very close to 'shameless', in describing a person that has no regard for what others think of them.

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After watching the video, Luíza tells her partner, in Libras: He is 'cara de pau', presenting the expression in Libras, as we can see in excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

- Luíza: Got it? He looked at the other woman from head to toe. He is 'cara de pau' (signs the equivalent idiomatic expression in Libras for 'cara de pau').
- Cecília: What sign is this? (repeats the sign for the corresponding idiomatic expression in Libras for 'cara de pau').
- Luíza: It's like in Portuguese 'C-A-R-A-P-A-U' (using fingerspelling). A shameless person.
- Cecília: No (gets up, takes the marker and goes to the whiteboard and writes 'cara de pau'). In Portuguese, we say "C-A-R-A-D-E-P-A-U" (using fingerspelling). It needs a 'D-E' (using fingerspelling). Got it?

Theoreticians of tandem learning (BENEDETTI, 2010; BRAMMERTS, 1996) advocate that there must be specific moments for the teaching of each language during the tandem sessions. However, excerpt 3 shows us that the languages are used when the students need them. This fact illustrates that the participants exert real autonomy over which language to use when they interact during the tandem sessions.

During the interview, when talking about their experiences in the face-to-face tandem sessions, the participants highlighted more positive aspects than negative ones. In the following excerpts we can see that they appreciated the opportunity of being able to learn from each other.

Excerpt 4

I thought it was very good because I learned a lot from her, much more naturally than in the Libras classroom. The fun thing is that, by interacting with the deaf, I have to find a way to communicate and, when doing that, I'm learning many more signs. Sometimes, we depart from the content of the class, but we continue learning new signs, and that's important too, right? By interacting with Luíza, I can learn more about the deaf culture, Libras grammar, and why we're not focusing only on the content.

[Interview – Cecília]

Excerpt 5

I really enjoyed learning Portuguese from my partner, but I found it difficult because there were times when I couldn't understand what she was saying. Sometimes she signs using the Portuguese structure, and that's very hard for me to understand, but I liked the activities a lot, and she is very nice to me. She has a lot of patience when teaching Portuguese to me because she knows that we, deaf people, do not learn Portuguese as a second language in school, and because of that she explained the meaning of the words to me. I also enjoyed teaching her Libras, because I had to prepare the lessons, think about what I was going to teach, look for the video to show the expression in Libras. I felt motivated by this approach.

[Interview – Luíza]

The data used in this paper illustrate the relevance of collaboration in the interactions in the language classroom, as is stated by Donato and McCormick (1994), Swain (1995) and Figueiredo (2006). These authors emphasize that efficient learning takes place when students have the chance to interact and to learn from each other, which leads to a process of co-construction of knowledge.

Final remarks

We noticed that the interactions in tandem favored the learning of Portuguese and Libras, as the participants used several strategies that could mediate the learning process. Among the strategies used by them, we highlight the use of videos, drawings, writing on the whiteboard with different colors, fingerspelling, examples, tasks to be done, and facial expressions. The scaffoldings were provided through questions that led the participants to reflect on the content being studied.

We also highlight that there was alternation between the roles of the participants of this study when they taught their native language or learned the target language, thus making the learning process much more significant to them. In the interactions, we observed the principles of reciprocity and autonomy, with Libras being the language in the interaction, characterizing it as an anchorage language in this process of learning.

The analysis of the data allows us to state that the alternating roles, promoted during the tandem interactions between Cecília and Luíza, were fundamental in the learning process of the languages involved in the interaction between them. The participants of this study had the chance to have a very active role in that process, acting as teacher and

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learner. That fact is of extreme relevance if we consider that the participants are studying to be language teachers. The data also allow us to state that tandem learning is a very useful collaborative approach to be used in contexts where two languages of different modalities are being used, as is the case of Portuguese and Libras.

The examples illustrated in this paper allow us to say that if we seek for true learning in our classes, we should provide learners with opportunities for interaction and collaboration by which they can become responsible for their own learning, so that they can develop autonomy by co-constructing knowledge and by being active in this process.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: FIGUEIREDO, Francisco José Quaresma de; OLIVEIRA, Quintino Martins de. A deaf and a hearing student learning Portuguese and Libras in a tandem context. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 58-72, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2389>

Submetido em: 24/10/2018 | **Aceito em:** 12/12/2018.

ESTABELECENDO OBJETIVOS DE APRENDIZAGEM EM CONTEXTO DE TELETANDEM

Establishing learning objectives in teletandem context

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Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de CARVALHO²

Resumo | O propósito do presente artigo é discutir a respeito das questões relacionadas ao estabelecimento de *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações que se dão no contexto virtual do teletandem. Para tanto, fundamentamos nossa discussão no aporte teórico da abordagem do Ensino de Línguas para Fins Específicos (HUTCHINSON; WATERS, 1987; ROBINSON, 1991, CELANI; FREIRE; RAMOS, 2005), que considera o ensino de línguas a partir das necessidades de aprendizagem dos estudantes e pode ser aplicada a diferentes contextos educacionais. Os dados analisados são oriundos de questionários propostos a interagentes de teletandem, alunos de uma universidade brasileira que fizeram interação com alunos de uma universidade mexicana, durante o segundo semestre de 2018. A perspectiva metodológica do trabalho está ancorada na teoria fundamentada (CHARMAZ, 2009), cujos métodos estão baseados na coleta sistemática de dados, os quais, após a análise, dão origem a conceitos. As discussões aqui empreendidas poderão servir de subsídio a mediadores e interagentes que atuam nesse ambiente *on-line* de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas, no sentido de que possam direcionar e potencializar o processo a partir dos objetivos estabelecidos.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem. Contexto de interação e mediação. Objetivos de aprendizagem.

Abstract | The purpose of this article is to discuss the issues related to the establishment of learning objectives for the interactions that occur in the virtual context of teletandem. In order to do so, we base our discussion on the theoretical contribution of the Language Teaching for Specific Purposes approach (HUTCHINSON; WATERS, 1987; ROBINSON, 1991; CELANI et al, 2005), which considers language teaching based on students' learning needs and can be applied to different educational contexts of a specific nature. The analyzed data come from questionnaires applied to teletandem interactants, students of a Brazilian university who interacted with students from a Mexican university during the second semester of 2018. The methodological perspective of the work is anchored in the grounded theory (CHARMAZ, 2009), whose methods are based on the systematic collection of data, which, after the analysis, give rise to concepts. The discussions undertaken here may serve as a subsidy to mediators and interactors who work in this online environment of teaching and learning languages, in the sense that they can direct and enhance the process from the established objectives.

Keywords | Teletandem. Context of interaction and mediation. Learning objectives.

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Introdução

O projeto *Teletandem*, em andamento desde 2006 (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; TELLES, 2009), tem trazido novas discussões a respeito do processo de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas em contexto virtual. Alicerçadas sobre os princípios de autonomia, de reciprocidade e de uso separado das línguas, as interações desencadeiam especificidades inerentes a esse ambiente telecolaborativo, que coloca alunos brasileiros de línguas estrangeiras em contato com alunos estrangeiros de português por meio de aplicativos de tecnologia VOIP. Assim sendo, há que se pensar nos papéis do mediador³ no teletandem (RAMOS; CARVALHO, 2018), bem como nas abordagens teóricas e metodológicas envolvidas, nas questões interculturais presentes (COSTA, 2015; ZAKIR, 2015; ANDREU-FUNO, 2015; SALOMÃO, 2015); nas suas diferentes modalidades (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014) e nas estratégias que emergem durante as interações (CAVALARI, 2016).

Com relação às perspectivas de se aprender uma língua estrangeira, o teletandem traz uma nova dimensão espaço-temporal do processo. No que diz respeito ao espaço, o contexto virtual requer dos interagentes um olhar diferenciado para as relações interpessoais estabelecidas. Nesse caso, não há mais o ambiente da sala de aula convencional, em que o professor faz as escolhas didático-pedagógicas e os estudantes interagem a partir dessas propostas. Há parceiros de interação que estabelecem suas regras de ritmo de aprendizagem, de correção, de conteúdos a serem discutidos etc. Quanto à questão temporal, o aprendizado da língua deixa de ter um foco no médio e no longo prazo para assumir uma quase instantaneidade. Não se aprende mais para propósitos longínquos de quem sabe um dia ser professor de língua estrangeira, fazer uma viagem ao exterior, programar um intercâmbio cultural ou pleitear uma vaga de trabalho fora do país. Aprende-se no uso para comunicar-se agora. Esse aspecto é favorecido pelo caráter síncrono das interações, que pode ser complementado por outras atividades assíncronas em contexto *e-tandem*, tais como *e-mails*, postagens em *blogs* e fóruns de discussão.

Nesse sentido, deixar claro aos interagentes a necessidade de fazerem autonomamente as escolhas durante o teletandem e de estabelecerem *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações é fundamental para que o processo se estabeleça, deixando de ser apenas uma sessão de bate-papo informal. Considerando-se essa necessidade, o propósito do presente artigo é discutir a respeito das questões relacionadas

³ São chamados de “mediador” pesquisadores, professores da graduação e alunos da pós-graduação e/ou da graduação que atuam desde o estabelecimento inicial das parcerias com as universidades estrangeiras até a organização, o acompanhamento e a supervisão das sessões de teletandem conjuntas, em seus múltiplos aspectos, tais como, orientações quanto ao uso das ferramentas tecnológicas, orientações de natureza linguístico-cultural, negociações entre pares de interagentes etc.

ao estabelecimento de *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações que se dão no contexto virtual do teletandem.

Para tanto, fundamentamos nossa discussão nos pressupostos teóricos do Ensino de Línguas para Fins Específicos (HUTCHINSON; WATERS, 1987; ROBINSON, 1991, CELANI; FREIRE; RAMOS, 2005), como uma abordagem em que as necessidades de aprendizagem e de uso da língua passam a ser o princípio norteador do processo. A partir dessas considerações, apresentamos uma análise e discussão a respeito da dificuldade que os interagentes demonstram em pontuar *objetivos de aprendizagem* de línguas para as interações em teletandem. Os dados analisados são oriundos de roteiros de interações (questionários) aplicados a interagentes de teletandem, alunos de uma universidade brasileira que fizeram interação com alunos de uma universidade mexicana, durante o segundo semestre de 2018.

A perspectiva metodológica do trabalho está ancorada na teoria fundamentada (CHARMAZ, 2009), cujos métodos estão baseados na coleta sistemática de dados, os quais, após a análise, dão origem a conceitos e interpretações. Essa perspectiva começa pelos dados, construídos por meio de observações, interações e materiais organizados segundo os objetivos da pesquisa. A partir dessa sistematização, são estudadas as práticas e os eventos empíricos, conforme as possibilidades analíticas que se apresentam, culminando em uma compreensão teórica da experiência estudada.

As discussões aqui empreendidas poderão servir de subsídio a mediadores e interagentes que atuam nesse ambiente *on-line* de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas, uma vez que tendem, eventualmente, a direcionar e potencializar o processo a partir dos objetivos estabelecidos.

Definindo objetivos de aprendizagem: uma perspectiva de abordagem

Os pressupostos teóricos do Ensino de Línguas para Fins Específicos (ELFE) consideram o ensino de línguas a partir das necessidades de aprendizagem dos estudantes e podem ser aplicados a diferentes contextos educacionais de natureza específica, para os quais os objetivos sejam bem definidos e localizados, diferentemente de um curso para fins gerais, cujos objetivos costumam ser mais amplos. De acordo com Hutchinson e Waters (1987), o ensino de línguas, no caso o inglês, para fins específicos, está voltado para a aprendizagem; no entanto, há um enfoque maior nas necessidades acadêmicas e profissionais dos estudantes, devendo estar fundamentado em sólidos princípios de aprendizagem.

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Nesse sentido, o processo é centrado no estudante e seu planejamento deve ser orientado, ao mesmo tempo, por e para suas necessidades específicas, implicando objetivos claramente definidos e alcançáveis. Nessa abordagem, o princípio da aprendizagem autônoma está fortemente presente, pois, mesmo aplicado a contextos de cursos presenciais convencionais, o estudante é corresponsável por seu aprendizado e seu conhecimento prévio e sua experiência são valorizados (RAMOS; FREIRE, 2009).

Considerando-se as interações em teletandem, nas quais a autonomia é um dos fundamentos, essa perspectiva, revisitada nesse ambiente, pode trazer contribuições significativas, uma vez que evidencia a importância de se estabelecer *objetivos de aprendizagem de línguas* a partir das necessidades específicas dos participantes. Com base nessa perspectiva é que vimos refletindo, mais recentemente, nos contextos de mediação em teletandem, sobre a relevância de se favorecer a conscientização crítica dos interagentes a respeito da construção dessa autonomia, no que se refere à definição de seus *objetivos de aprendizagem*, quanto aos aspectos linguísticos, discursivos e culturais presentes nas interações.

Em relação a esses aspectos, inclusive, vários estudos anteriores⁴ já assinalaram a potencialidade do teletandem, especialmente pelo fato de constituir um contexto autêntico de uso da língua e, portanto, possibilitar o contato com outra realidade linguística, discursiva, histórica e social, o que contribui, sobremaneira, para o desenvolvimento das competências linguística e intercultural na língua estrangeira, além de ser um espaço de formação docente.

Tendo isso em vista, o que queremos dizer é que os princípios da abordagem do ELFE podem servir de aporte, de complementação ou como uma alternativa, para além daquilo que já constitui o teletandem por si só, para aprimorar a condução desse processo de mediação, bem como promover o desenvolvimento da autonomia dos interagentes e, conseqüentemente, potencializar suas contribuições, favorecendo o aprendizado das línguas.

Contexto da pesquisa: participantes e instrumentos

Os dados utilizados para o desenvolvimento da discussão proposta, neste artigo, são resultantes do acompanhamento e participação como mediadoras nas sessões de teletandem português e espanhol, entre a UNESP (Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Assis) e a Universidade Nacional Autônoma do México – UNAM, desenvolvidas no segundo

⁴ Ver produção científica sobre Teletandem no site <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/publications.html>.

semestre de 2018. Trata-se de uma parceria já institucionalizada entre nossa universidade e a universidade mexicana, numa trajetória que vem se consolidando desde o ano de 2013, com o interesse comum de criar espaços institucionais para promover o ensino e a aprendizagem de línguas, no caso, português e espanhol, bem como a formação docente (aqui, mais especificamente no contexto brasileiro, como professores de espanhol/LE e de português/LE).

Tal vínculo se enquadra, conforme já descrito anteriormente (CARVALHO; MESSIAS, 2017), na modalidade de *Teletandem Institucional Não-Integrado* (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014), uma vez que as interações são acordadas entre as duas instituições, por meio das professoras responsáveis, mas não estão necessariamente integradas ao currículo ou curso de formação superior, em ambos os contextos. Assim sendo, a organização das sessões é definida entre as mediadoras, nesse caso, uma professora de português como língua estrangeira da Mediateca⁵ (instalada no Centro de Aprendizagem de Línguas da UNAM) e uma professora de espanhol como língua estrangeira do curso de Letras da FCL Assis/UNESP, de acordo com as disponibilidades dos grupos e das instituições.

Como modalidade de *Teletandem Institucional Não-Integrado*, as sessões ocorrem em grupos, em laboratórios, nas respectivas universidades. No contexto mexicano, as interações são realizadas na Mediateca, que se configura como um espaço de aprendizagem autônoma direcionado a alunos de graduação, pós-graduação (em diversas áreas do conhecimento) e funcionários da UNAM. Nesse caso, os alunos são orientados por assessores de línguas a desenvolver seu aprendizado autonomamente, respeitando sua forma de aprender e seus objetivos. Já no contexto brasileiro, as sessões são realizadas no Laboratório de Teletandem, com grupos de alunos, em sua maioria, do curso de Letras (Licenciatura em Português e Espanhol), como uma atividade extracurricular.

Durante o período aqui considerado, foram realizadas oito sessões de interações, em encontros semanais de uma hora de duração, conforme cronograma abaixo apresentado:

⁵ <http://cele.unam.mx/index.php?categoria=6>

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Quadro 1. Calendário das interações UNESP – UNAM, 2º sem. 2018

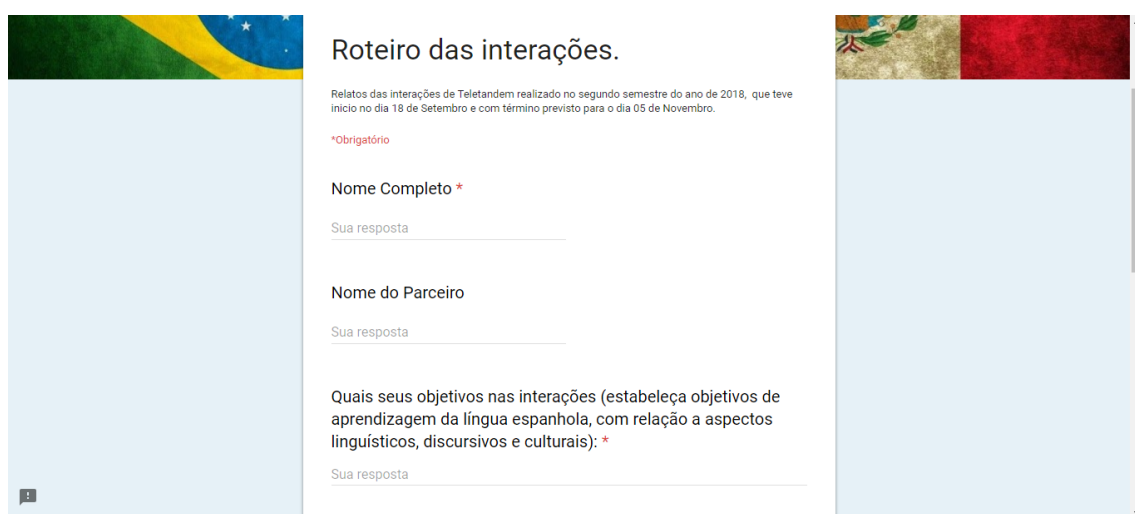
TELETANDEM UNESP – UNAM 2º sem. 2018			
NÚMERO SESSÃO	DIAS segunda/terça	HORA CIDADE DO MÉXICO	HORA SÃO PAULO
1	18 de setembro	12h00	14h00
2	24 de setembro	12h00	14h00
3	01 de outubro	12h00	14h00
4	09 de outubro	12h00	14h00
5	15 de outubro	12h00	14h00
6	23 de outubro	12h00	14h00
7	29 de outubro	12h00	15h00
8	05 de novembro	12h00	16h00

Desse grupo participaram dez pares de interagentes, os quais foram estabelecidos no primeiro encontro do semestre. Os pares foram mantidos (salvo em poucos momentos, quando algum dos participantes esteve impossibilitado de participar), ao longo do processo, como forma de promover maior entrosamento entre as duplas. A manutenção dos mesmos pares de interagentes favorece o comprometimento mútuo, o estabelecimento e a continuidade de ações planejadas/negociadas entre eles, a *definição de objetivos*, conforme previsto nos princípios da reciprocidade e autonomia, que definem o teletandem.

Como parte das ações como mediadoras desse grupo, acompanhamos todas as sessões nesse processo e buscamos, além de explicitar os procedimentos do teletandem, estimular uma maior reflexão sobre a necessidade de definir *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações que se dão nesse contexto virtual. É importante considerar que o grupo de brasileiros, nosso foco de análise aqui, era composto por alunos do curso de graduação

em Letras dos 1º e 2º anos, iniciantes na prática do teletandem, que careciam, portanto, de orientações, acompanhamento e supervisão de um mediador.

Com a finalidade de conduzir a reflexão sobre os *objetivos de aprendizagem*, utilizamos um pequeno *roteiro*, que deveria ser iniciado, em parte, desde a realização da primeira interação, e respondido, posteriormente, ao final de todas as sessões, em formulário específico, por meio da ferramenta *google.docs* (docs.google.com), conforme segue:



Roteiro das interações.

Relatos das interações de Teletandem realizado no segundo semestre do ano de 2018, que teve início no dia 18 de Setembro e com término previsto para o dia 05 de Novembro.

*Obrigatório

Nome Completo *

Sua resposta

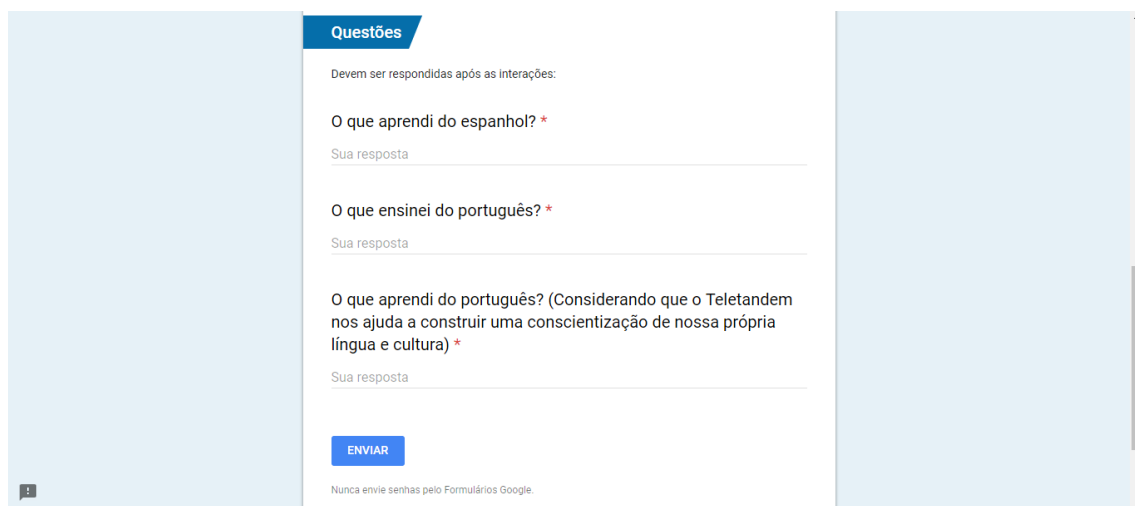
Nome do Parceiro

Sua resposta

Quais seus objetivos nas interações (estabeleça objetivos de aprendizagem da língua espanhola, com relação a aspectos linguísticos, discursivos e culturais): *

Sua resposta

Figura 1. Roteiro das interações UNESP – UNAM, 2º sem. 2018



Questões

Devem ser respondidas após as interações:

O que aprendi do espanhol? *

Sua resposta

O que ensinei do português? *

Sua resposta

O que aprendi do português? (Considerando que o Teletandem nos ajuda a construir uma conscientização de nossa própria língua e cultura) *

Sua resposta

ENVIAR

Nunca envie senhas pelo Formulários Google.

Figura 2. Questões das interações UNESP – UNAM, 2º sem. 2018

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Para nossa análise, a seguir, consideramos os dados extraídos das respostas obtidas por meio desses instrumentos, bem como de algumas notas e observações realizadas durante o desenvolvimento das sessões de interação e mediação. Observe-se que as proposições feitas nesses formulários incluíam não apenas a reflexão sobre a aprendizagem da língua estrangeira em questão, o espanhol, como também o ensino da língua portuguesa como língua estrangeira.

Discussão e análise dos dados

O vínculo entre a UNESP e a UNAM, conforme já observado (CARVALHO, MESSIAS, 2017), está orientado por uma base que prima pela autonomia dos participantes e isso, de certa forma, constitui seu diferencial. Nesse sentido, o formato de *Teletandem Institucional Não-Integrado* dessa parceria configura-se como um contexto que propicia, em tese, maior nível de independência e controle do processo, por parte dos seus interagentes. A qualidade no desenvolvimento das interações depende de interesse pessoal e disciplina, pois estas não estão vinculadas a créditos ou avaliação para o curso. No contexto brasileiro, o fato de os alunos de Letras, graduandos de língua portuguesa e espanhola em processo de formação inicial, elegerem o teletandem como atividade adicional em sua formação torna esse espaço muito mais significativo, uma vez que a experiência com esse contexto tecnológico e moderno pode favorecer não apenas a proficiência no idioma estrangeiro, como também desencadear processos de reflexão e construção de sentidos e recriar o conceito de ensinar e aprender línguas na prática e, nesse caso, também a sua língua materna como língua estrangeira.

Dessa forma, no processo de mediação dessa parceria, vimos insistindo na necessidade de que cada interagente exerça de forma mais consciente essa autonomia e estabeleça, segundo seus interesses e necessidades, os *objetivos de aprendizagem* para as interações teletandem, tendo em vista que esse contexto virtual, já amplamente caracterizado (TELLES, 2009), não se constitui simplesmente como um espaço de bate-papo em ambiente virtual, muito embora isso nem sempre seja tão evidente, como se observa no seguinte excerto⁶:

(1) *Na verdade, não comecei fazer o teletandem pensando em tudo isso e sim pensando em conhecer pessoas novas, aprimorar-me na língua espanhola [...]*

⁶ Todos os excertos são extraídos das respostas do roteiro, conforme explicitado anteriormente. Alguns trechos foram por nós grifados com o objetivo de ressaltar os aspectos que se confirmam na análise.

Ainda que esteja prevista a expectativa de “aprimorar a língua espanhola” – talvez a razão mais genérica e inicial – “conhecer pessoas novas”, fazer amizades, relacionar-se com alunos estrangeiros também pode ser um dos elementos que atrai muitos dos interessados pelo teletandem. Não há nenhum problema nisso; a questão que se coloca é possibilitar que tais interações possam ir além desse objetivo inicial e desdobrar-se em *objetivos específicos de aprendizagem*, nem sempre explicitados, os quais definem e caracterizam o teletandem.

Como forma de estimular tal consciência, dialogamos sobre a compreensão desse espaço como *contexto de aprendizagem*, desde o primeiro encontro e propusemos, aos alunos do grupo em questão, um *roteiro* sobre o qual deveriam refletir ao longo do semestre, em cada interação, e em que pudessem também descrever e especificar alguns de seus objetivos nas interações, considerando os *aspectos linguísticos, discursivos e culturais* inerentes a esse contexto.

Quanto aos objetivos caracterizados como *linguísticos*, observamos, nas respostas dadas, a recorrência dos seguintes temas: “melhorar a pronúncia”, “aprender novas expressões idiomáticas, vocabulário, gírias e falsos cognatos”, “conhecer expressões de uso comum”, “aprender a conjugar os verbos”, “melhorar a audição” (compreensão oral), “compreender e praticar a fala”. Para corroborar a análise, apresentamos a seguir alguns fragmentos:

(2) [...] aprendi diversas coisas como: *conjugar os verbos*, as semelhanças na aprendizagem das línguas etc.

(3) Aprendi palavras que não conhecia e mais *falsos cognatos*.

(4) Aprendi algumas *palavras novas*, como: *gírias* e também palavras para *aumentar o meu vocabulário*.

(5) Meu objetivo é entender as culturas do México e *conseguir ter uma pronúncia melhor* da língua espanhola, além de aprender *muitas formas de me expressar* em espanhol.

(6) Ao final das interações quero: *melhorar a audição*, *aprender expressões idiomáticas*, conhecer a cultura do país, pelo olhar de um cidadão comum, e *melhorar a pronúncia* das palavras na língua estrangeira.

Como se pode notar, as respostas mais frequentes se restringem a aspectos pontuais, mas não necessariamente relacionados a uma consciência mais crítica sobre os usos da língua com relação, por exemplo, à variação linguística (ao estilo mais formal/

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menos formal e a variantes dialetais), e ao nível de proficiência dos interagentes que, autonomamente, precisam saber avaliar sua competência linguística ou refletir sobre isso. Apenas dois dos alunos indicaram esses elementos em suas respostas, em algum momento:

(7) O objetivo é observarmos o *nível de dificuldade de cada uma* com sua língua [...]

(8) Meus objetivos são: compreender e praticar a fala da língua espanhola, como também aprender mais sobre a cultura e a *variação do espanhol no México*.

Um deles fez menção ao aspecto da variação linguística no ensino da língua portuguesa/LE, também previsto no teletandem, conforme assinalamos:

(9) Consegui colocar em prática o que aprendi na disciplina de Sociolinguística, *explicando um pouco da variação e os sotaques*. Além de pesquisar, aprender e respeitar mais os povos indígenas, principalmente quando eu e A. conversamos sobre as olimpíadas dos povos indígenas.

Em relação às *questões discursivas*, aqui compreendidas como concernentes aos enunciados concretos realizados nos diferentes campos de atividades humanas e aos seus gêneros do discurso (BAKHTIN, 2010), observamos a ausência de elementos que revelem a definição de objetivos claros. Os dados aqui considerados demonstram que, em geral, não há por parte dos interagentes uma preocupação maior em relação aos usos linguísticos e aos elementos que constituem os gêneros do discurso (conteúdo temático, estilo e construção composicional). Embora possa se dizer que, do ponto de vista comunicativo, esses elementos estejam presentes, não são, contudo, explicitados e sistematizados como objetivos de aprendizagem. Apenas em alguns momentos, observamos a referência a temas discutidos (tais como, músicas, comidas típicas, literatura, universidade) ou ao fato de os estudantes desejarem aprender a fazer “o uso comum da língua” (da língua do cotidiano, da vida das pessoas que vivem no México), e aprender a percebê-la “pelo olhar de um cidadão comum”, como se observa nos trechos seguintes:

(10) Ao final das interações quero: melhorar a audição, aprender expressões idiomáticas, conhecer a cultura do país, *pelo olhar de um cidadão comum*, e melhorar a pronúncia das palavras na língua estrangeira.

(11) Conhecer um pouco mais do México; *conhecer expressões de uso comum entre os mexicanos*; conversar sobre filmes e seriados.

(12) Conversamos sobre conjugações no passado, *cultura mexicana (em especial, o dia dos mortos), jogos, vocabulário, comidas típicas, músicas, um pouco de literatura e sobre a universidade.*

A proposta é que os interagentes, ao estabelecerem os *objetivos específicos de aprendizagem de língua*, possam também delimitar o campo de atividade humana para o qual querem direcionar as interações. De modo geral, esses campos estão relacionados com a vida acadêmica, considerando-se que a maioria dos interagentes é composta por estudantes universitários. A partir da delimitação do campo, sugere-se a seleção dos gêneros do discurso, orais ou escritos, que circulam na respectiva esfera de atividade humana. Dessa forma, as interações podem auxiliar, por exemplo, os alunos a elaborarem textos dos gêneros acadêmicos, tais como, fichamentos, resenhas ou até monografias, campos de suas atividades. Outros gêneros de interesse comum, de outras áreas do conhecimento, também podem ser considerados, segundo os objetivos estabelecidos.

Por fim, quanto aos *aspectos culturais*, encontramos referências muito genéricas ou menções àqueles elementos que, em geral, aproximam-se aos estereótipos sobre o México e o Brasil, tais como, as festividades, as comemorações típicas, o Dia dos Mortos, o Carnaval, o Natal. Em relação às questões interculturais, dada a especificidade do teletandem, é fundamental conduzir a reflexão de modo que as diferenças e comparações socioculturais possam de fato favorecer a compreensão de outras culturas e não reforçar preconceitos com base apenas em tais estereótipos. As seguintes respostas ilustram os exemplos de objetivos culturais mencionados pelos participantes:

(13) Meus objetivos eram aprender palavras diferentes e seus significados e pronúncias e aprender sobre a *cultura do México, tipo o Día de los Muertos e comemorações típicas* que não são muito conhecidas.

(14) Falei sobre *algumas brincadeiras de quando éramos crianças, traduções de palavras, tempos verbais, costumes, datas comemorativas, como Carnaval e Natal.*

(15) *Querida conhecer mais a cultura*, pois é bem diferente da nossa e alcancei meu objetivo, aprendi sobre várias *festividades mexicanas* que antes só tinha visto em filmes.

A partir da análise aqui desenvolvida, observamos que os interagentes revelam certa dificuldade em estabelecer seus *objetivos de aprendizagem*, pois muitos não se sentem seguros para fazer essas escolhas e não têm uma clara noção das possibilidades que se apresentam de forma mais consciente, nos planos *linguístico, discursivo e cultural*, nas interações de teletandem.

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Considerando o perfil dos participantes, alunos dos 1º e 2º anos do curso de licenciatura em Letras, podemos compreender, como pesquisadoras e mediadoras nesse processo, a existência de tais dificuldades. Entretanto, embora haja essa previsibilidade inicial, faz-se necessário observar como elas se revelam e se materializam. De acordo com a metodologia proposta por Charmaz (2009, p. 16), a reflexão a partir dos dados culmina em uma compreensão teórica da experiência estudada e, nesse caso, as informações oriundas dos roteiros aplicados aos participantes e do nosso acompanhamento nas sessões de interação e condução nas sessões de mediação deram origem às interpretações e discussões aqui empreendidas. Essas considerações possibilitam, portanto, constituir um olhar mais crítico e atento sobre tais dificuldades, de modo a repensar estratégias que venham a contribuir para o processo de mediação em teletandem e para a construção da autonomia por parte dos estudantes (conforme prevista nos princípios do teletandem), especialmente se são iniciantes nessa prática.

Os dados considerados confirmam, uma vez mais, a importância da mediação no acompanhamento e supervisão das atividades no contexto teletandem com o objetivo de favorecer a conscientização crítica dos interagentes a respeito da construção de sua autonomia. Vale ressaltar que o princípio da autonomia não se restringe ao fato de os alunos estabelecerem *objetivos de aprendizagem*, mas entendemos que essa ação pode contribuir para um melhor aproveitamento das interações.

Nesse sentido, acreditamos que alguns encaminhamentos podem ser apresentados por mediadores e interagentes ao se debruçarem sobre o planejamento das sessões, especialmente no que diz respeito aos aspectos linguísticos, discursivos e culturais almejados ou a partir dos conceitos de campo de atividade humana e gêneros do discurso em que se queira focar, oriundos de uma perspectiva dialógica da linguagem (BAKHTIN, 2010). Dessa forma, o processo de estabelecimento de *objetivos de aprendizagem* de línguas pode ser entendido, no contexto do teletandem, como uma das atribuições do mediador, que tem assumido um papel cada vez mais fundamental na condução das ações (RAMOS; CARVALHO, 2018).

Considerações finais

Neste trabalho, buscamos explicitar o processo de estabelecimento de *objetivos de aprendizagem* no teletandem, a partir da experiência que vimos construindo na mediação de interações entre nossa universidade e uma universidade mexicana. Com tal propósito, sistematizamos uma discussão com base nos dados produzidos pelos interagentes após as sessões, buscando investigar como estabeleciam os *objetivos de aprendizagem* ao longo das parcerias.

Pautamos nossas discussões nos pressupostos teóricos do Ensino de Língua para Fins Específicos (HUTCHINSON; WATERS, 1987; ROBINSON, 1991, CELANI; FREIRE; RAMOS, 2005), com o intuito de enfatizar a importância de se orientar esse processo a partir das necessidades dos interagentes.

Nossa reflexão considerou que auxiliar os interagentes de teletandem a estabelecer objetivos mais claros e específicos para esse contexto educacional é papel do mediador, tendo em vista que a análise dos dados, extraídos dos roteiros de interações, revelou a dificuldade de pontuarem suas necessidades e seus *objetivos* com relação ao aprendizado da língua. Para tanto, sugerimos que os mediadores desenvolvam estratégias de conscientização dos interagentes quanto à delimitação de propósitos para as interações, segundo seus interesses reais.

Vale salientar que a referência teórica ao Ensino de Línguas para Fins Específicos, aqui utilizada, não tencionou a implementação dessa abordagem como um método para as interações, mas serviu como ancoragem teórica que reforça a importância da definição dos *objetivos de aprendizagem* para assim favorecer a constituição da autonomia no contexto virtual do teletandem.

De igual modo compreendemos que, embora nossa discussão esteja circunscrita a um contexto específico, este percurso analisado, em seus aspectos mais gerais, pode servir de aporte ou orientação para outras experiências, tanto no aprimoramento quanto na implementação da prática do teletandem em outros espaços educacionais, para instituição de novas parcerias e, conseqüentemente, para o fortalecimento do projeto.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: RAMOS, Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe; CARVALHO, Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de. Estabelecendo objetivos de aprendizagem em contexto de teletandem. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 73-87, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2397>

Submetido em: 10/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 12/12/2018.

EL TELETÁNDEM EN EL APRENDIZAJE ALEMÁN – ESPAÑOL: MEDIATECA ENALLT – UNAM Y UNIVERSIDAD DE WÜRZBURG

*Teletandem in German-Spanish Language Learning:
Mediateca ENALLT – UNAM and University of Würzburg*

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Resumen | El teletándem en la actualidad es un apoyo importante en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, ya que este actúa como herramienta útil y eficiente desde el punto de vista del empleo de recursos prácticos. En el caso del español y del alemán, la Universidad de Würzburg y la Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) participan en un proyecto denominado Aprendizaje Virtual de Lenguas Extranjeras (AVLE). En este ámbito se evaluó la situación del desempeño de los estudiantes que aprenden español y de aquellos que aprenden alemán. La variable que se consideró en el rendimiento del aprendizaje es la confianza con la que los participantes pudieron resolver situaciones cotidianas, por ejemplo: ser capaces de comunicarse a través de pares en diferentes contextos culturales/comunicativos: costumbres, fiestas nacionales y celebraciones típicas de sus países respectivos. A través de diarios de aprendizaje se pudo evaluar y reflexionar cómo fue el desarrollo de su aprendizaje. También se pudo advertir cómo fue su expectativa al inicio, durante el desarrollo y al final del proyecto. Por lo anterior, se pretende analizar la función de la mediateca de la Escuela Nacional de Lingüística Aplicada (ENALLT) y el Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad de Würzburg.

Palabras clave | Teletándem. Centros de autoacceso. Mediateca. Würzburg. ENALLT.

Abstract | The teletandem is currently an important support in the learning of a foreign language, which has become a useful and efficient tool. The University of Würzburg and the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) participate in a project called Virtual Learning of Foreign Languages (AVLE in Spanish). The performance of students who learn Spanish and those who learn German is evaluated. The variable that is seen in the learning performance is the confidence with which the participants adapt situations, for example: they work with information in different cultural / communicative contexts: customs, national holidays and typical celebrations of their countries. Through learning diaries, it was possible to evaluate and ponder how the development of their learning process was. It was also possible to announce how their expectations were at the beginning, during the development and at the end of the project. Therefore, we intend to weigh the role of the mediateca of the National School of Applied Linguistics (ENALLT) and the Foreign Languages Teaching Center of the University of Würzburg.

Keywords | Teletandem. Self-Access Center. Würzburg. ENALLT.

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Introducción

En este proyecto se presenta una evaluación cualitativa del resultado de las interacciones orales entre estudiantes universitarios de alemán y español nivel B1 en relación con el rendimiento del aprendizaje de dichas lenguas a través de las TIC (Tecnologías de la Información), como herramientas de comunicación y motivación en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. El objetivo fue poner en práctica la utilización del programa *Skype* como medio de comunicación virtual fuera de las clases que se imparten en la institución para reforzar el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, para fomentar la autoevaluación, la autonomía, la confianza en sí mismo y la motivación del estudiante.

La interacción que ocurre en el teletándem es de tipo independiente, lo que facilitó a los participantes la libertad de actuar de manera más autónoma en cuanto al tiempo, lugar, hora y a la preparación de las sesiones.

Para la organización de los testimonios de los estudiantes, se utilizaron dos *diarios de aprendizaje* que contenían preguntas con problemas pragmáticos y sociolingüísticos que los llevó a una autorreflexión de su proceso de aprendizaje.

Los referentes teóricos en la presentación de este proyecto se apoyan en registros de experiencias pedagógicas en la enseñanza universitaria, realizadas en el contexto del desarrollo de habilidades orales (TARDO, 2005) y técnicas de la conversación (LORENZO A., DE COULOM, G 2005), así como en la definición de los tres principios teóricos fundamentales del teletándem (MENDOZA, 2014), (BRAMMERTS, 2006), (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006):

- separación de lenguas: cada interacción en el teletándem se divide en dos partes y cada una de ellas debe estar dedicada a la práctica de una sola de las lenguas; - reciprocidad: los participantes deben turnarse como aprendices de una lengua extranjera y como expertos en su lengua materna (o lengua de competencia); - autonomía: cada participante debe decidir qué, cuándo, dónde, cómo y durante cuánto tiempo quiere aprender y debe evaluar su progreso. (VASSALLO, TELLES, 2006 apud CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016, p. 328).³

³ Teletandem practice is guided by three theoretical principles (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006): - separation of languages: each teletandem interaction is composed of two parts and each one should be devoted to the practice of only one of the languages; - reciprocity: participants should take turns as the learner of a foreign language and the expert of their native language (or language of proficiency); - autonomy: each participant should decide what, when, where, how and how long they want to learn and should assess their progress.

En investigaciones publicadas en *XII Jornadas de redes de investigación en docencia universitaria* (ICE de la Universidad de Alicante) en relación con las líneas teóricas generales del teletándem, se consultó particularmente a Chiapello, González y Mura (2014), para abordar los aspectos de planificación, realización y evaluación de los contenidos, en tanto que estrategias metacognitivas que se llevan a cabo al momento de la interacción para evaluar la propia cognición. El aspecto motivacional que conlleva la interacción de los participantes del teletándem, se define en las investigaciones de Boekaerts (GONZÁLEZ, 2014).

La perspectiva comunicativa e intercultural que implica este proyecto se encuadra en las líneas directivas de la política del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2002).

El objetivo del trabajo es describir la forma en que los participantes pueden resolver problemas en el momento de comunicarse a través de la estrategia teletándem. Así mismo, con base en diarios de aprendizaje se pretende que los estudiantes puedan plasmar en ellos sus experiencias en el momento de interactuar y por ende, se intenta ver el rendimiento en ciertas áreas como la planificación, el manejo del léxico y el desarrollo de la confianza, además de tratar de describir cómo los estudiantes universitarios aprenden y comprenden aspectos culturales de México y Alemania.

Marco conceptual

El rendimiento en el aprendizaje siempre ha constituido uno de los desafíos frente al proceso de la enseñanza. La toma de conciencia y la responsabilidad del propio aprendizaje, así como el trabajo colaborativo, forman parte de las preocupaciones educativas que pretenden superar este reto. En lo que respecta al aprendizaje en la enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras, estos aspectos forman parte de la política del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas puesto que los “alumnos aprenden una lengua principalmente como miembros de una sociedad que tiene tareas (no solo relacionadas con la lengua) que llevar a cabo en una serie determinada de circunstancias, en un entorno específico y dentro de un campo de acción concreto” (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2002, capítulo 2.1.). Bajo este enfoque, el teletándem se centra en la acción de dos participantes nativos, quienes al momento de comunicar ponen en práctica sus competencias individuales, su conocimiento y su percepción del mundo, así como sus valores sociales.

- | El teletándem en el aprendizaje Alemán – Español: mediateca ENALLT – UNAM y Universidad de Würzburg

Chiapello (2014, p. 2080) observa que cuando se puso en marcha el Teletándem entre estudiantes de español e italiano se describieron las etapas del proceso de investigación: “organizar la interacción entre los estudiantes, recoger del corpus de interlengua en italiano como también en español y analizar y proponer criterios de evaluación.”

Los diarios de aprendizaje que contestaron los estudiantes después de cada conversación y durante las conversaciones se enmarcan para su análisis en estas corrientes de investigación y en las orientaciones teóricas abordadas en estudios enfocados a la enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras y al teletándem.

Metodología del estudio

Contexto

En el caso del Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad de Würzburg, la expresión oral ocupa un lugar importante entre los objetivos de los estudiantes de español quienes, después de un sondeo en uno de los cursos del nivel B1 del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER) a través de un cuestionario en la primera clase del semestre, se constató que solo un estudiante tenía como primer objetivo aprender más de gramática. Para el resto del grupo, los objetivos principales fueron la comunicación oral y el conocimiento de otra cultura.

Una de las preocupaciones del departamento de español del Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad de Würzburg es cómo ofrecer más espacio a la práctica de esta habilidad en los cursos presenciales y aumentar, de esta manera, el rendimiento del aprendizaje del español. En este caso, el teletándem se trató como un proyecto piloto, y se ofreció a casi la mitad del grupo (seis participantes) la oportunidad de comunicar con nativos a través de las Tecnologías de la Información (TIC).

Por su parte, en la Mediateca de la Escuela Nacional de Lingüística y Traducción (ENALLT), el teletándem funciona como un proyecto en el cual, los participantes emplean esta metodología para poder ampliar su práctica en alguna de las lenguas extranjeras que se ofrecen en el centro de autoacceso y su desempeño es totalmente opcional. En este aspecto, los seis participantes aprendían alemán en el nivel B1 del MCER (Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas).

Tándem independiente

La organización interna (horarios, parejas, diarios) se realizó a través de la mediateca de la ENALLT-UNAM. Se propuso una organización de tipo “tándem independiente” definido como un “contexto que mantiene un amplio espacio de libertad en términos de negociación y de responsabilidad por parte de los aprendientes” (MENDOZA, 2014, p. 7), puesto que el lugar y la hora se acordaron entre los mismos estudiantes debido a los husos de horario de México y de Alemania. El primer contacto se realizó por correo electrónico. El programa *Skype* fue el medio de comunicación que se empleó con más frecuencia por ser un medio que permite tener una conversación como si fuese “cara a cara” y al mismo tiempo se realiza una comunicación escrita a través del *chat*, el cual se usa como herramienta para enviar enlaces, comunicar dudas por escrito o para tomar notas.

Herramientas

Para lograr una mejor medición del rendimiento de los participantes, se proporcionaron dos “diarios de aprendizaje” como herramientas para recoger el trabajo y los comentarios de manera sistemática de las doce sesiones previstas y nos ofrecieron la posibilidad de poder organizar el resultado final de las sesiones de forma tanto individual como grupal. Se les dejó la libertad de escoger la lengua (español o alemán) para completarlos.

En estos “diarios de aprendizaje” hay una serie de preguntas abiertas a través de las cuales se pudieron dilucidar los recursos empleados por los participantes que los llevaron a reflexionar sobre una solución rápida a problemas pragmáticos, lingüísticos y socioculturales que surgieron durante las sesiones, además de promover la capacidad de autoevaluación y autorreflexión. Se explicó que no era necesario contestar todas las preguntas en todas las sesiones.

También se proporcionó a los participantes las *top ten* de sugerencias para optimizar las sesiones teletándem, en donde se recomiendan actividades de preparación tomando en cuenta los principios relacionados con el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras como la *reciprocidad*, la *retroalimentación*, así como consejos prácticos: tomar apuntes, usar el *chat*, usar una *bitácora de aprendizaje*.

Los temas propuestos tienen como objetivo promover la competencia sociocultural del estudiante, ya que son su interés y están relacionados con su vida cotidiana. También fomentan una conversación lo más espontánea posible y el diálogo auténtico. Se intercalan temas *libres* que ayudan a motivar a los participantes a abordar un tema de interés común.

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Calendario, temas y sesiones

Las sesiones se realizaron cada semana, normalmente con una duración de 60 minutos, alternando periodos de 30 minutos para utilizar la lengua meta y la lengua materna. La duración de las sesiones fue de cinco meses (semestre escolar de “invierno” 2017-18) con la participación de seis estudiantes de español nivel B1 en el caso del Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad de Würzburg y seis aprendientes de la mediateca de la ENALLT con nivel B1 en alemán.

Fecha de inicio	Temas
Sesión 1. Martes 24 de octubre de 2017.	Mi presentación/mi compañero de tándem. Pasatiempos, intereses y proyectos.
Sesión 2. Martes 31 de octubre de 2017.	La Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM)/Universidad de Würzburg. ¿Qué es y cómo es mi universidad?
Sesión 3. Martes 07 de noviembre de 2017.	La Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM)/Universidad de Würzburg II. ¿Por qué es importante para mí estudiar en mi universidad? ¿Qué me ofrece?
Sesión 4. Martes 14 de noviembre de 2017.	Libre
Sesión 5. Martes 21 de noviembre de 2017.	Mi ciudad/estado. ¿Cómo son? ¿Qué atracciones me ofrecen?
Sesión 6. Martes 28 de noviembre de 2017.	Costumbres y celebraciones en mi ciudad/estado. ¿Qué y cómo celebramos?
Sesión 7. Martes 05 de diciembre de 2017.	Costumbres y celebraciones en mi ciudad/estado II. ¿Qué hacemos los jóvenes en nuestra ciudad durante las vacaciones?
Sesión 8. Martes 12 de diciembre de 2017.	Costumbres y celebraciones en mi ciudad/estado III. ¿Qué es la Navidad y Año Nuevo para nosotros? ¿Cómo la celebramos?
Sesión 9. Martes 09 de enero de 2018.	Proyectos para el Año Nuevo. ¿Qué planeo realizar en el año?
Sesión 10. Martes 16 de enero de 2018.	Libre.
Sesión 11. Martes 23 de enero de 2018.	Libre.
Sesión 12. Martes 30 de enero de 2018.	Reflexiones finales. ¿Qué aprendí? ¿Qué experiencias tuve?

Figura 1. Temas y fechas sugeridos

Perfil de los estudiantes

Las parejas se organizaron por edades e intereses comunes. La edad de los estudiantes alemanes fue entre 19 y 25 años. Las carreras correspondientes fueron Medicina (2), Ciencias Políticas (2), Geografía, Economía y Medios de la Comunicación (2). En tanto para los participantes de la mediateca de la ENALLT la edad fue entre 18 y 19 años, de las carreras de Veterinaria (1), Ciencias Políticas (1), Letras Hispánicas (1), Física (1), Química (1) e Ingeniería (1).

Análisis y evaluación de los diarios

González (2014, p. 1448) afirma que:

Las estrategias meta-cognitivas hacen referencia a la planificación, control y evaluación por parte de los estudiantes de su propia cognición. Son un conjunto de estrategias que permiten el conocimiento de los procesos mentales, así como el control y la regulación de los mismos con el objetivo de lograr determinadas metas de aprendizaje. La misión fundamental de estas estrategias es perfeccionar la eficacia del aprendizaje mejorando las condiciones en las que se produce. Esas estrategias incluyen: establecer y mantener la motivación, enfocar la atención, mantener la concentración, manejar la ansiedad y el tiempo de manera efectiva.

Un análisis cualitativo de los diarios de aprendizaje revela la progresión lograda en las funciones comunicativas y en las destrezas que los estudiantes practicaron durante las conversaciones para mantener el diálogo en los procesos de planificación, control y evaluación.

Análisis diario de aprendizaje versión uno

Aquí se analiza un primer diario de aprendizaje, cuyo objetivo es llevar al estudiante a adquirir mecanismos de autorregulación que “describen los distintos componentes que están implicados en el aprendizaje exitoso, explicar las relaciones recíprocas y recurrentes que se establecen entre ellos y relaciona el yo o, lo que es lo mismo, con las metas, la motivación, la volición y las emociones” (BOEKAERTS, 1999 apud GONZÁLEZ, 2014, p. 1449). El diario se centra en elementos del proceso antes, durante y después de la conversación. De esta manera, el participante, de forma libre, prepara el vocabulario, las cosas y las frases que quiere decir y utilizar en la lengua extranjera. También propone anotar el vocabulario o las ideas que surgieron durante la conversación. Incluye igualmente una evaluación sobre el nivel de satisfacción de los participantes de su competencia lingüística en cuanto a vocabulario, gramática, pronunciación, fluidez, así como la confianza con la que enfrenta la interacción.

Las tres primeras partes de este *diario de aprendizaje* abordan la planificación del léxico de la sesión, el monitoreo del mismo en los diferentes momentos de la conversación y la valoración del aprendizaje. La cuarta parte lleva a la autorreflexión del estudiante sobre su participación en la sesión y da la oportunidad de proponer cambios en futuras sesiones, lo cual constituye un aspecto importante en la progresión hacia su autonomía.

Toma de responsabilidad

Planificación

Este aspecto básico en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras se abordó en la fase de preparación y corresponde a la primera pregunta del diario, bajo la rúbrica “Prepara lo siguiente: vocabulario/cosas que quiero decir”. Se pudo constatar en las declaraciones reunidas que la preparación del léxico de las sesiones de los estudiantes alemanes fue bastante sistemática. Algunas declaraciones muestran que, si se realiza una planificación de la sesión, el aprovechamiento tiene más éxito, como se observa en los fragmentos:

(1) Hoy me preparé muy bien y pude hablar bien. El tema fue tan interesante que pude darle a mi compañera una pequeña visión de Alemania.

(2) Fue importante preparar el tema de la conversación para no tener que consultar muchas palabras durante la misma.

Otro aspecto es la gestión del tiempo, la cual también fue más efectiva:

(3) Me preparé bien y tuve bastante materia para hablar durante mis 25 minutos.

Para los participantes de la ENALLT, la situación no se aleja de la descripción anterior, ya que ellos mismos planificaron sus sesiones en función de su tiempo y de la disponibilidad del vocabulario/léxico y lo que ellos deseaban expresar.

Monitoreo del léxico

En la segunda etapa del proceso, “Durante la conversación”, se incita al estudiante a tomar nota de los aspectos relevantes de la misma con respecto al vocabulario o a las situaciones que surgieron en esa etapa. Las declaraciones de los estudiantes alemanes revelaron que la mayoría recuperó el vocabulario que consideró importante durante la

conversación. En otras ocasiones, los estudiantes también resumieron el contenido de la conversación. Un estudiante alemán mostró su nivel de autonomía y su participación colaborativa, porque se hizo responsable del aprendizaje de su compañero además del mismo y en algunos casos lo hizo, incluso, con mucho empeño, porque se ponía en la posición del profesor al anotar los errores cometidos y al exponer la respuesta correcta.

Lo anterior se basa en las ideas que plasmaron los aprendientes de la ENALLT en sus diarios, ya que ellos dijeron sentirse apoyados por su contraparte alemana cuando necesitaban ayuda en el vocabulario que no conocían.

Autovaloración

En la tercera rúbrica del diario 1, “Después de la conversación” se aborda el proceso de la autovaloración y se mide en una escala del 1 al 5, desde “muy poco contento” hasta “mucho muy contento”. Se ponen de relieve estrategias cognitivas que valoran aspectos de tipo lingüístico (pronunciación, fluidez, dominio del léxico y gramática) y motivacionales o de actitud ante la tarea que debe realizar: confianza en sus propias capacidades. Este último aspecto está en estrecha relación con los aspectos lingüísticos anteriores puesto que engloba las apreciaciones que tuvieron los estudiantes sobre su desempeño durante las conversaciones.

Confianza

En el caso de los estudiantes alemanes, se puede observar que no hubo cambios significativos individuales en el aspecto de la confianza en sí mismo. Desde el principio del teletándem, hasta el final de las sesiones se mantuvo constante la puntuación personal. El grado de confianza durante las conversaciones fue, en general, muy alto, puesto que ellos se encuentran en el nivel 5 de confianza. Este sentimiento de confianza en sí mismo se relaciona tanto con aspectos de la fase de la preparación ya evaluada en el “diario 1”, así como con aspectos afectivos reflejados en el “diario 2”, en donde se da la situación de comunicación con su compañero del teletándem. Por ello, los aprendientes de la ENALLT tampoco expresaron cambios importantes y eso está relacionado con el acompañamiento que sintieron con sus respectivas parejas en cuanto a la confianza para expresar sus ideas en los dos idiomas.

Vocabulario

El vocabulario obtuvo una mayoría entre 2 y 4 puntos en los estudiantes alemanes. El grado de mayor satisfacción se mantuvo en la valoración 3 (contenido), lo cual puede ponerse en relación con la etapa de preparación del vocabulario y con aspectos relacionados con las dificultades que aparecieron durante la conversación abordados en el *diario 2*. Esto también se constata en el aspecto gramatical, donde la puntuación fue en aumento en el transcurso de las sesiones y tuvo una fluctuación para la mayoría de los estudiantes alemanes entre 2 en las primeras sesiones y 3-4 puntos al final. El promedio general fue de 3 puntos (contenido). Con base en lo anterior, para los seis jóvenes mexicanos también valoraron su desempeño de satisfacción entre 2 y 4 puntos. Algunos aprendientes de la ENALLT expresaron en sus diarios que sintieron que aprendieron mucho más vocabulario durante las sesiones, que en la etapa de preparación.

Pronunciación

En el dominio de la pronunciación se mantuvieron como media general las valoraciones 3 y 4 (contenido-muy contenido) durante las sesiones. En la última sesión se constató la mayor satisfacción con la apreciación 4 en el diario de los estudiantes alemanes. Es así como para los mexicanos, la valoración en la pronunciación fue muy alta. La relación entre confianza y mayor aprendizaje también se relaciona con la pronunciación.

Fluidez

La fluidez, junto con la capacidad de articular son definidos por el MCER (Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas) como “dos factores genéricos y cualitativos que determinan el éxito funcional del alumno o usuario para seguir adelante y desenvolverse bien cuando se llega a un callejón sin salida” (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2002, capítulo 5.3.2.). La fluidez comparte aspectos de “entonación-pronunciación aceptables; seguridad y convicción” (LORENZO, COULOMB, 2005, p. 113), y por lo tanto está en estrecha relación con los otros aspectos evaluados en esta tercera pregunta del diario. Entre los estudiantes alemanes se puede constatar que el resultado fue similar al de los aspectos analizados anteriormente, destacando la nota 3 (contenido) en su evaluación. La valoración global final en cuanto a este aspecto, es muy positiva, como se puede observar en los relatos:

(4) Pudimos comunicarnos con fluidez, lo cual me hizo sentir orgullosa.

(5) Me di cuenta que cada vez era más fácil para mí hablar, que hablaba con más fluidez y que cometía menos faltas.

(6) Tenía la sensación de que había aprendido a hablar con más fluidez y también descubrí que Raquel podía mejorar sus habilidades en el idioma alemán.

(7) Ahora puedo hablar con más espontaneidad y construir frases más rápidamente en español.

La pregunta número 4 del diario 1, “Piensa cómo fue el intercambio, qué cambiarías”, muestra también aspectos enmarcados dentro del modelo del aprendizaje autorregulado. En el caso de los estudiantes alemanes se puede observar que en las respuestas que se obtuvieron, durante las primeras sesiones, los comentarios se concentraron sobre todo en las percepciones afectivas experimentadas durante el desarrollo de la sesión “conversación agradable”, “nos entendimos muy bien” y “me alegro de conocerlo”, “me dio mucho gusto conocerlo”. En la medida en que la interacción entre los participantes se vuelve más frecuente, la confianza aumenta. También hubo comentarios que abordan metas a alcanzar dentro del aspecto lingüístico como llegar a tener una mejor fluidez o tomar nota para aprender el vocabulario “difícil” o desconocido.

Autonomía

Brammerts (2006, p. 2) define al espacio en el que el teletándem se desarrolla como un

[...] contexto de aprendizaje donde comunicar y aprender en tándem son dos situaciones que llevan a los participantes a determinar su propio aprendizaje, donde cada uno de ellos puede decidir por sí mismo lo que quiere aprender y el tipo de ayuda que quiere recibir de su compañero.⁴

Este principio de autonomía se percibe, en el caso de los estudiantes alemanes, sobre todo en el deseo de abordar más temas libres. La motivación y los retos también son mayores en la preparación de estas sesiones. En uno de los testimonios se ve claramente

⁴ Zwei Personen mit unterschiedlichen Muttersprachen können voneinander lernen, denn beide verfügen schon über kulturelles Wissen und sprachliche Fertigkeiten, die der andere noch erwerben will.

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que el estudiante aprovecha la posibilidad de proponer, incluso, uno de los temas de las lecciones del curso de español y propone hablar sobre su infancia, “Cuando éramos pequeñas”, en donde no solo abordó los tiempos del pasado, sino también todo el vocabulario relacionado con los juegos y pasatiempos de la infancia.

En los testimonios de dos participantes, que ya habían tenido una estancia en un país de habla hispana, se constató que solicitaron una mayor libertad en cuanto a los temas de conversación, como en los ejemplos:

(8) Los temas son muy parecidos.

(9) Hablamos también de otras cosas que nos interesaban.

(10) Tuvo un carácter muy forzado, porque siempre tenías que estar bien preparado y tener suficientes temas para mantener una conversación y a menudo los temas de los que hablamos se repetían.

Uno de ellos llegó a expresar su deseo por tener un diálogo presencial o de “cara a cara” por considerarlo más “espontáneo” para comunicar:

(11) Si os encontráis en persona y hacéis cosas juntos, entonces podéis reaccionar mucho mejor a las situaciones espontáneas y poneros en contacto aún mejor y hablar de cosas que no podéis abordar por Skype.

Colaboración

El principio de colaboración está en correlación con el principio de autonomía porque

[...] parece controlar los niveles de responsabilidad y poder que el hablante competente puede tener sobre el proceso de aprendizaje de su pareja. Los participantes nunca están solos en su proceso y cada uno de ellos puede ser apoyado y animado por su socio más competente en un esfuerzo de colaboración. (VASSALLO, TELLES, 2006, p. 89).⁵

⁵ The autonomy principle is relevant, because it seems to control the levels of responsibility and power that the proficient speaker may have over his/her partner's learning process. Tandem participants are never all alone in their process and each of them may be supported and encouraged by his/her more proficient partner in a collaborative endeavor.

Este proceso representa uno de los aspectos de la conversación valorado muy positivamente durante todas las sesiones. La responsabilidad de ayudar al compañero a expresarse contribuye a mantener la dinámica del diálogo, abordando aspectos de vocabulario y gramaticales, como se nota en los testimonios:

(12) No tuvimos problema con el tema, sino con la gramática y vocabulario, pero fuimos pacientes y nos ayudamos mutuamente a expresarnos.

(13) El intercambio estuvo muy bien porque nos interesamos por lo que el otro dice. Nos corregimos las faltas y aclaramos lo que dijimos mal, por ejemplo, en los tiempos verbales.

(14) Muy bien, como siempre. Nos ayudamos mutuamente todo el tiempo.

(15) Hoy pudimos ayudarnos mutuamente cuando alguna de las dos no recordaba la palabra.

(16) No hubo ningún problema cuando el otro necesitaba más tiempo para expresarse. No hubo pausas incómodas por falta de palabras.

En la última sesión hubo comentarios como:

(17) Estuvo muy bien que los dos éramos igual de buenos, o malos en hablar la otra lengua, por esta razón, no nos daba vergüenza cometer errores o ayudar al otro con paciencia.

(18) Así hicimos conscientes nuestros puntos fuertes y nuestras deficiencias y las trabajamos juntos.

(19) Mi compañero de tándem y yo nos entendimos muy bien y nos ayudamos mutuamente a resolver los problemas.

Motivación e Interculturalidad

Tardo (2005, p. 3) considera que:

[...] la responsabilidad requiere una toma de decisiones por parte del alumno que aprende una lengua extranjera (LE), no sólo en cuanto a convertirse en protagonista de su propio proceso de adquisición, sino también debe ser valorado como una posición de autocontrol estratégico ante una necesidad inmediata de interacción comunicativa; lo que implica también un alto grado de *motivación*.

Los datos cualitativos obtenidos en el diario I constatan que el aspecto motivacional está en estrecha relación con el aspecto intercultural. El intercambio aportó nuevas amistades. La mayoría de los participantes tiene la intención de seguir en contacto con su pareja del teletándem, con la perspectiva de viajar al país extranjero, visitarse o recibirla en su propio país:

(20) Espero poder visitar algún día México. Fue muy bonito que a través de este proyecto pudiera establecer un contacto.

(21) En el futuro vamos a tratar de comunicarnos y de escribirnos de vez en cuando. Mi compañero de teletándem vendrá a Alemania por algunos meses y lo visitaré.

(22) Estaba un poco triste porque era la última sesión del teletándem, pero nos pusimos de acuerdo en comunicarnos de vez en cuando por Skype para mantener el contacto.

El desarrollo de la competencia intercultural se propicia desde el principio a través de algunos temas propuestos en las sesiones y es un factor de motivación importante:

(23) Estuvo muy bien y es muy interesante saber cómo son otras tradiciones.

(24) Me pareció bien contarle las tradiciones alemanas en Año Nuevo, por ejemplo: *"Dinner for one"* o comer una *"raclette"*.

También en los temas libres negociados entre ellos mismos se aborda el aspecto intercultural: "Día de los muertos/*Oktoberfest*", "Películas, series", "Lugares de interés en México y Alemania" o de tipo más personal como "Nuestra carrera", "Cumpleaños", "Cuando éramos pequeñas" (juegos tradicionales en cada país).

Al final del teletándem, en la sesión 12, todos los comentarios fueron muy positivos:

(25) El intercambio cultural fue muy interesante. Aprendí mucho sobre la cultura mexicana y la vida cotidiana. Espero poder visitar algún día México.

(26) Cada uno pudo hablar sobre su cultura.

(27) Creo que es bueno que este proyecto haya sido ofrecido, ya que nos dio la oportunidad de ponernos en contacto con México y practicar español.

(28) Los temas eran de actualidad y siempre fue interesante saber cómo son las tradiciones en México.

Motivación y aprendizaje

En las apreciaciones en cuanto a la experiencia del teletándem y el grado de motivación que suscitó va unido también a la experiencia del aprendizaje y a la práctica de la lengua. La mayoría afirmó haber mejorado sus conocimientos sobre la lengua y haber adquirido una mayor fluidez y confianza al hablarla, como se ha podido constatar en las secciones anteriores. También se expresó la posibilidad de seguir en contacto para continuar aprendiendo la lengua extranjera:

(29) Podemos decir que ¡encontramos un buen amigo! Emiliano y yo queremos seguir en contacto para seguir mejorando mi español y él su alemán y así tener una persona a quién poder preguntarle nuestras dudas o para resolver problemas de la lengua.

(30) El teletándem fue para mí una experiencia extraordinaria, tuve un compañero de tándem muy bueno con el que aprendí mucho y tuve conversaciones hermosas.

(31) En general encuentro muy buena la idea de un intercambio entre estudiantes de Würzburg y estudiantes de México. Fue una muy buena oportunidad para aprender español además de las clases de español y consolidar aún más el idioma.

(32) Gracias a las conversaciones por Skype, perdí el miedo de hablar en español.

(33) En general pienso que el teletándem fue una muy buena idea, sobre todo para aprender una lengua extranjera.

(34) El teletándem fue para mí una buena oportunidad para mejorar mis conocimientos de español.

Análisis diario de aprendizaje versión dos

Este diario aborda preguntas que llevan a los estudiantes a reflexionar sobre sus destrezas y habilidades interactivas como la reciprocidad y el trabajo colaborativo, sobre su proceso de desarrollo personal (autoconocimiento, autoeficacia) y las estrategias del estudiante para resolver problemas. Las estrategias empleadas en esta fase del proceso de aprendizaje controlan o monitorean el rendimiento en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. El resultado pone de manifiesto el grado de cooperación por las dos partes para establecer la comunicación. El análisis de las preguntas permite una sistematización de las respuestas y su ponderación.

Reconocimiento de emociones

Pregunta: *Antes de iniciar la conversación me sentí...*

En el primer contacto en la primera sesión, las respuestas de los estudiantes alemanes se relacionan a sentimientos de nerviosismo e inseguridad (4/6) y de curiosidad (2/6). Una de estas dos últimas participantes se sintió “curiosa y segura”, especificando que se debió a que se preparó para esta sesión con “apuntes”. Los sentimientos de inseguridad fueron por el hecho de mantener por primera vez en español “una conversación completa” o por no saber si iban a darse a comprender en español. En la segunda sesión, el sentimiento de inseguridad disminuyó notablemente: “No tan nerviosa/crispada” (4/6), “muy relajado” (1) y solo una de las participantes se sintió “nerviosa”, pero se “alegraba de la sesión” y la otra debido a la falta de preparación de la sesión. A partir de la tercera sesión se mantiene constante el sentimiento de seguridad. En algunas ocasiones esto se debe a la preparación de la sesión o a la motivación e al interés por volver a hablar con su compañero/a de teletándem.

Pregunta: *Cuando inició la conversación en alemán/español me sentí...*

La siguiente fase va relacionada con el hecho de comenzar la sesión en español o en alemán. En este aspecto, los participantes alternaron la lengua al principio de las sesiones. En la primera sesión el sentimiento de nerviosismo disminuyó: “más segura/aliviada” (2/4) “poco/algo nervioso” (2/4). La empatía que se estableció inmediatamente después del primer momento, aportó más seguridad “amabilidad y paciencia del compañero”. En el segundo caso el sentimiento de inseguridad se debe al nivel de la lengua hablada por el compañero y la preocupación de comprensión: “no sabía el nivel de alemán de la compañera y tampoco si lo comprendía”. Se constata también que a partir de la tercera sesión se estabilizan las opiniones de manera muy positiva variando entre muy bien y bien (31 veces en 12 sesiones) tomando en cuenta que una de las participantes nunca contestó a esta pregunta y que no era obligatorio contestar siempre a todas las preguntas. Hubo una opinión negativa solamente por falta de organización de los temas: “Un poco desbordado al iniciar la conversación en alemán porque ya se había hablado de muchos temas y no sabía cómo comenzar”. Estas valoraciones van acompañadas a veces por comentarios complementarios como “contenta”, “segura”, “relajado”, “acostumbrados”.

De esta forma, se puede deducir que el sentimiento de seguridad está relacionado sobre todo con la confianza y la empatía que se establecen entre los participantes, así como con la rutina creada a través de las sesiones.

Proceso de reflexión

Tardo (2005, p. 3) observa que:

la reflexión permite al alumno convertirse en su propio crítico, evaluar el proceso, una idea o la solución a un determinado problema comunicativo. A partir del distanciamiento que se produce durante la reflexión se puede detectar, por parte del aprendiz, cuáles son los aspectos o áreas en las que presenta una mayor dificultad.

Pregunta: *Cuando no encontraba las palabras o las frases para expresarme, yo...*

La estrategia más utilizada por los estudiantes alemanes, en todas las sesiones para encontrar las palabras desconocidas o construir frases, fue parafrasear la palabra (25 veces) y consultar el diccionario por Internet (21 veces). Dos estudiantes solicitaron ayuda al compañero de manera sistemática pidiendo la traducción directa (alemán-español) (17 veces). Un estudiante expresó su sentimiento de frustración al no recordar la palabra en español.

Pregunta: *Cuando no entendía lo que mi compañero me decía, yo ...*

Se pudo constatar que, durante las doce sesiones, la combinación “repetir” la frase o la palabra (lentamente) se nombró (27 veces) y “parafrasear” (16 veces) fueron las estrategias más empleadas. La traducción directa de la palabra fue otro de los recursos, aunque poco utilizado (9 veces). También se utilizó la expresión escrita como recurso al momento de solicitar ayuda (escribir lo dicho), con menor frecuencia (7 veces).

Pregunta: *¿Qué dificultades tuve? ¿Cómo las solucioné?*

La mayor parte de las dificultades encontradas a través de las sesiones para los estudiantes alemanes, se relacionan con la “falta de vocabulario” mencionada (26 veces), con la conjugación de los verbos (8 veces), variedad de expresiones (1 vez), variedad de temas (1 vez). Al analizar las estrategias utilizadas para resolver el problema, se corroboran las respuestas de la pregunta precedente. Entre ellas se nombra la utilización del diccionario (13 veces), la demanda de ayuda al compañero del teletándem, el parafraseo (4 veces). Con menor frecuencia se mencionó la utilización del inglés para explicar la palabra (2 veces).

Cuatro de las preguntas que finalizan el diario de aprendizaje 2 se relacionan con estrategias de tipo metacognitivo concernientes al proceso del desarrollo personal en el desempeño del aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera por parte de los participantes.

Pregunta: *Creo que debo mejorar en....*(reconocimiento de carencias).

En esta parte las respuestas se orientaron sobre todo a aspectos de gramática. Aprender los tiempos verbales se nombró (22 veces), los verbos y las preposiciones (3 veces), aprender más gramática en general (5 veces), más vocabulario (11 veces), fluidez (6 veces).

Pregunta: *Me di cuenta que puedo....*(reconocimiento de logros).

Las respuestas más frecuentes a esta pregunta se refieren al aspecto de la comprensión de lo que su compañero de teletándem dice durante la conversación en español (12 veces), expresarse bien (11 veces). Se hizo referencia generalmente al aspecto gramatical: expresarse bien en pasado, hacer las concordancias entre adjetivo y sustantivo, utilizar los “conectores” en sus frases. La toma de conciencia de su competencia comunicativa, pudiendo mantener la conversación en español a través de las sesiones, fue constante en una de las participantes. Otros participantes reconocieron haber tenido una mejor fluidez en el diálogo (7 veces). Explicar lo que se quiere decir (5 veces). Esta respuesta comprende aspectos de vocabulario, de formulación de frases y de exposición de un tema.

Pregunta: *Mi desempeño en esta conversación fue...*

En las apreciaciones de la autovaloración, los estudiantes alemanes dieron sus estimaciones sobre la conversación de la sesión de una manera global. Así, consideraron que su rendimiento personal fue “bueno” (26 veces), “muy bueno” (7 veces), “no muy bueno” (5 veces). Una de las participantes consideró en todas las sesiones que podría mejorar su desempeño.

Pregunta: *La(s) actividad(es) que realizaré para mejorar es/son... (corrección).*

Las respuestas para esta pregunta fueron escasas. Se mencionaron sobre todo tres tipos de intenciones para mejorar su rendimiento: “aprender el vocabulario de la sesión” (20 veces), “revisar la gramática” (14 veces) y solo una chica mencionó dos veces su propósito de “preparar más detalladamente la próxima sesión”.

Se pudo constatar que se mantuvo constante la preocupación por la importancia de aprender y preparar el léxico, adquirir una mayor fluidez en su discurso y la corrección gramatical en las conversaciones, al igual que el uso de las mismas estrategias a lo largo de las sesiones para solucionar los problemas presentados.

Conclusiones

Los datos proporcionados en el análisis de los dos diarios revelan aspectos importantes en cuanto al desarrollo del rendimiento del aprendizaje alemán-español en el contexto del teletándem en los centros de lenguas ENALLT-UNAM y el *Zentrum für Sprachen Universität Würzburg*. Los procesos de autoregulación como el monitoreo personal de destrezas y estrategias de aprendizaje de los estudiantes y del proceso interactivo del diálogo, muestran que durante las conversaciones tándem, los estudiantes evolucionaron de manera bastante positiva llevando a los participantes a la toma de responsabilidad y a la autonomía de su aprendizaje. El aspecto intercultural y la colaboración fueron un gran motor de motivación. Las apreciaciones, en el caso de los estudiantes alemanes, se mantuvieron en un nivel muy alto a este respecto.

Las recensiones finales de los estudiantes alemanes expresan su punto de vista sobre la función del teletándem en los cursos de español en el centro de lenguas de la Universidad de Würzburg. Los comentarios apoyan esta iniciativa porque no solo los puso en contacto con otra cultura para conocer a su gente y sus costumbres, sino también porque fue una buena oportunidad para practicar el español hablando con nativos de la lengua y, así, poder mejorar sus conocimientos de español. También lo ven como un “muy buen” complemento de los cursos de español o como una “continuación de los mismos”.

Durante el semestre se constató, en el curso de español, de una manera notable, la confianza que adquirieron en sí mismos, los participantes del teletándem, al expresarse oralmente en español, en comparación con otros compañeros que no participaron en este proyecto. Además, su rendimiento oral fue en aumento en cuanto a que podían encontrar más fácilmente el léxico que necesitaban al expresarse y hablar con mayor fluidez. También el grupo de Teletándem aportó elementos importantes al curso de español como la motivación, la creatividad y la colaboración al momento de abordar temas del curso y el trabajo en equipo.

Se puede decir, finalmente, que el proyecto teletándem entre la Escuela Nacional de Lingüística Aplicada (ENALLT-UNAM) y el *Zentrum für Sprachen Universität Würzburg* es una gran oportunidad para ofrecer a los estudiantes que aprenden español o alemán una alternativa promotora del aprendizaje autónomo que, sin duda, solo puede tener repercusiones positivas en el rendimiento de su aprendizaje.

- | El teletándem en el aprendizaje Alemán – Español: mediateca ENALLT – UNAM y Universidad de Würzburg

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: LECONA, Edú Alberto Cruz; MARTÍNEZ, María Guadalupe ALFARO. El teletándem en el aprendizaje Alemán – Español: mediateca ENALLT – UNAM y Universidad de Würzburg. *Revista do GEL*, v. 15, n. 3, p. 88-108, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2411>

Submetido em: 17/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 14/12/2018.

EXPERIENCING TELETANDEM: A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS IN TANDEM INTERACTIONS

*Experienciando teletandem: um projeto colaborativo para
encorajar interações em tandem*

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Fernanda Franco TIRABOSCHI²

Abstract | In this paper, we present findings of a semester long collaboration between two instructors: one from a Brazilian high school and the other from an American technical college. We investigated the potential of online in-tandem interactions for the enhancement of students' second language learning. Using Action Research, we assessed the impact of the partnership and our students' participation in two student-guided telecollaborative sessions. In this empirical qualitative study, we conducted semi-structured interviews and distributed a questionnaire to explore our students' attitudes towards language learning and their perceived development of their fluency in the second language. The results encourage partnerships in the format of inter-institutional collaborations to promote students' involvement in communicative tasks in Portuguese and in English. It also demonstrates how this type of telecollaborative activity promotes positive attitudes that indicate the nurturing of students' participation and intercultural competence.

Keywords | Telecollaboration. Teletandem. Second language learning. Education. English. Portuguese. Action research.

Resumo | Neste artigo, apresentamos as descobertas de um semestre de colaboração entre duas professoras, uma de uma escola secundária brasileira e a outra de um colégio técnico americano. Juntas investigamos o potencial das interações em tandem para o aprimoramento da aprendizagem de segunda língua. Partindo de uma perspectiva de pesquisa-ação, avaliamos o impacto da parceria de Teletandem na participação de nossos alunos em duas sessões de telecolaboração conduzidas por eles com nosso apoio. Nessa pesquisa empírica de cunho qualitativo, conduzimos entrevistas semiestruturadas com os alunos e também distribuimos um questionário com o objetivo de explorar as atitudes dos estudantes em relação à própria aprendizagem de línguas e sua percepção de seu desenvolvimento linguístico (aumento da fluência) na segunda língua. Os resultados encorajam parcerias no formato de colaborações interinstitucionais com o objetivo de promover o envolvimento dos alunos em tarefas comunicativas em português e em inglês. Os resultados também demonstram como esse tipo de atividade telecolaborativa promove atitudes positivas que resultam no incentivo ao crescimento da participação estudantil e no aumento da competência intercultural por parte dos alunos.

Palavras-chave | Telecolaboração. Teletandem. Aprendizagem de segunda língua. Educação. Inglês. Português. Pesquisa-ação.

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Introduction

There is an increasing motivation to expose students to a second and third language; it exists not only in the US and Brazil, but it also extends worldwide. The demand is that students learn how to speak the language to engage in conversations “in a clearly participatory manner in order to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest” (ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES, 2012) as established in the targets created by The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for the advanced levels of proficiency.

In our profession as public high school and private technical college educators, we have witnessed a lack of support from administrators and stakeholders in relation to foreign language teaching. In Brazil, the British Council (2015) conducted a survey in 2015 to understand the status of English teaching in Brazilian public schools. After interviewing 1,269 teachers from every region of Brazil, they shared that in terms of technological support, only 26% of the classrooms have one computer or notebook and only 24% of them have some internet access. There were more rooms with TVs (31%), however less than half (47%) of the interviewed teachers claim to use any technological resources to teach. In many schools, the computers were broken, waiting for repairs or locked down because of the possibility of burglary. In the US and Brazil, higher education, especially in technical colleges, is seen as an investment. In many cases, study or achieve fluency in a foreign language is not a requirement (INSIDE HIGHER ED, 2017). In both contexts, the foreign language is offered later in the students' academic life and is seen as a secondary subject. Still, we face a number of demands to provide our students with opportunities to access authentic information in the target language and to speak to fluent speakers of the language they are learning. These requests happen even when we do not have access to basic technology as demonstrated on the American Council survey and witnessed in our daily lives. Taking this into consideration, we can ascertain that Brazilian high schools and American technical colleges run the risk of perpetuating major monolingual settings in which the foreign language is never highlighted. The lack of investment in terms of resources and teacher education may affect students' opportunities to be in contact with a new culture, making it difficult for them to achieve advanced levels of proficiency.

To provide students with innovative activities in regular second language programs, language educators are turning to inter-institutional collaborations using Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) to facilitate the contact between their students and speakers of the languages they are learning. CMC is broadly defined as the way in which telecommunication technologies have combined information technology and computer

networks to offer new tools that support teaching and learning (WARSCHAUER, 1997 apud TOLOSA; ORDÓÑEZ; GUEVARA, 2017). CMC projects have become increasingly popular in the past two decades, but most of the existing research has focused on post-secondary contexts (s.f. O'DOWD; WARE, 2009).

The experience reported here aims to advance the field of in-tandem collaboration by sharing the lessons learned from an experience of telecollaboration between the Brazilian high school students and the American technical college students. The data collected through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and observations, in addition to the project narration complements the findings previously documented by one of the authors (see TIRABOSCHI, 2017) and are used to demonstrate how the use of CMC can promote students' interaction with the target language and, consequently, support positive attitudes, intercultural competence, and linguistic gains.

Theoretical Background

As educators, one of our goals was to stay true to the pedagogical practices and curricula principles from both the Brazilian and the American educational systems. The Brazilian standards promote an education that stimulates the cognitive, social and emotional dimension of the human being, so that the contemporary learner is capable of acting and interacting in diverse social practices (BRASIL, 2006). To achieve this goal learners must be able to deal with the recent changes in the multicultural practices of globalization and in the multimodal languages provided by technological advances. In American curricula, the expectation for 'World Language learners' is not different. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Performance Guidelines for K-12 and the Georgia Performance Standards for Modern Languages state that foreign language teaching should equip students with lifelong skills that will enable them to function competently in a language other than their own (s.p). In addition, learners should be able to communicate and compete effectively in the global community and marketplace. In this context, learning the new language is to raise awareness of one's own and other cultures, increasing students' cultural repertoire and appreciation for other languages³, in addition to preparing students for a more diverse world and job market.

³ Modern Languages and Latin. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.georgiastandards.org/standards/pages/BrowseStandards/ModernLanguageLatin.aspx>

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Principles and concepts of Telecollaboration via Teletandem

Considering the overarching curricula presented above, we used Teletandem to connect these language learners in synchronous CMC activities. Teletandem⁴ (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006) was chosen because the two instructors were familiar with it. The Teletandem project is the precursor of this modality of CMC in Brazil. It counts among its participants several professors and researchers from State University of São Paulo - UNESP (campuses Araraquara, Assis and São José do Rio Preto) and allows university students from different countries to interact with each other from their home institution computers in order to teach their languages and learn the languages of their peers (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016).

Teletandem, as a CMC platform, promotes meaningful communicative engagement, increased motivation and enhanced practice of the target language (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006, CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016). Tandem learning can be understood as an "intercultural and knowledge exchange of ideas between individuals from different cultures with a collaborative language learning objective."⁵ (BENEDETTI; CONSOLO; ABRAHÃO, 2010, p. 21). Accordingly, Teletandem follows the model of tandem learning with the addition of digital resources (Skype, Facebook, Oovoo, etc.) that allows for synchronous or asynchronous interaction in the oral (listening and speaking), writing (reading and writing) and image forms (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006).

Teletandem is also commonly associated with the term "telecollaboration" which, in turn, refers to collaborative learning in a virtual context (TELLES, 2015; FIGUEIREDO; SILVA, 2015; BELZ, 2002). Collaborative learning (WARSCHAUER, 1997) is based on the principles of sociocultural theory, which argues that learning and development take place through the mediated interaction between humans (VYGOTSKY, 1962). Under this sociocultural perspective, we define collaborative learning as a situation in which learners engage in the interaction, collaborating with each other to carry out a given task (FIGUEIREDO, 2006, DONATO; MCCORMICK, 1994, LANTOLF; APPEL, 1994). The interactions via Teletandem have three fundamental principles of tandem learning: language separation, reciprocity and autonomy (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016; TELLES, 2015; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006).

The first principle, language separation, has to do with the need to divide the time of interaction via Teletandem into two parts, each part being reserved for the practice of a language. The second, reciprocity, refers to the language and culture role during

⁴ Also known as "Teletandem Brazil: Foreign Languages for All" (see TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006).

⁵ No original "intercâmbio e compartilhamento de conhecimento entre indivíduos de culturas diferentes, com propósitos de aprendizagem de línguas de modo colaborativo." (BENEDETTI, 2010, p. 21).

the interaction. During the interactions, each learner should assume either the learner role of the target language, or the role of specialist in his or her language of proficiency, not undermining each other's languages and cultures. The third, autonomy, refers to the student's independence in Teletandem. "[Students] are autonomous in their learning, but they can resort to a teacher's professional mediation [during the interactions] if they wish" (SALOMÃO, 2015, p.784). In the integrated format of Teletandem, students are in charge of some of the decisions regarding their learning and the route they take during the interaction. They are responsible for negotiating with their interlocutors (language peers) the ways in which they can help one another achieve their own goals during the period of participation in the interactions.

The development of a more autonomous learning, in the context of Teletandem, does not dispense with the participation and intervention of the teachers in the classroom. The autonomy is negotiated in the relationship between educators and students, and students with their peers. According to Little (1991) "autonomy is not self-instruction or learning without a teacher, it does not involve the banning of the teacher's interventions and support in the learning process." ["a autonomia não é auto instrução ou aprendizagem sem professor, não envolve o banimento das intervenções ou iniciativas do professor no processo de aprendizagem"] (LITTLE, 1991 apud MOURA FILHO, 2009, p. 258). Thus, as instructors, we are responsible for the learning environment, creation of tasks for our students, acting as mediators during the sessions, and observing how they participate in the Teletandem activity without our aid.

We agree with Dickinson (1994) when he argues that it may take time for students to develop language learning autonomy. Therefore, researchers-teachers should collaborate with the students in order to guide them through the use of strategies that encourage the progressive development of their autonomy in their collaborative action and production of knowledge with their peers. For this reason, we have to make sure students understand the tasks involved with participating in the Teletandem sessions and provide them with tools to support their learning.

In recent years, Teletandem has grown to become its own in-tandem modality. During the *II International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in Tandem*, different institutions around the globe went to Miami to share how they have adopted and adapted Teletandem concepts to develop political, educational and pedagogical platforms of their own. Figueiredo and Silva (2015) present, in their article, experiences of Brazilian apprentices from the Federal Institute of Goiás (Campus de Goiânia) and German apprentices from two institutions in Germany with telecollaborative interactions from the open-meetings application. The inter-institutional project "Teletandem UEPB" promotes

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collaborative and linguistic exchange activities in Portuguese and Spanish between the State University of Paraíba (Campus of Monteiro and Campina Grande), Federal University of Pernambuco (Caruaru campus), Federal Institute of Paraíba (Monteiro campus), Federal Institute of Latin American Integration and the Institute of Languages of Salta (Argentina) (LINS; SOUZA, 2016).

In the same conference, Hasko, Moser and Klen-Alves presented a paper on *Enhancing Oral Proficiency via Telecollaboration in LCTL classrooms: The case of L2 Portuguese*. In addition to demonstrating how international sites are adopting Teletandem, they discussed the need for more empirical studies on fluency in Teletandem and the importance of studying and assessing students' oral proficiency development before, during, and after the Teletandem experience. Inspired by the different takes on Teletandem and more specifically by *Teletandem Institucional Integrado* (iiTTD) as presented by Cavalari and Aranha (2016). For this partnership, we have adopted a form of iiTTD in our collaboration between the high school and the technical college students. To date, Teletandem practices are part of the teaching and learning routines of many universities; however, it is still new in most public and technical schools around the world. In the context of Basic Education in Brazilian public schools, the use of Teletandem is an innovative pedagogical action. Nonetheless, it faces multiple challenges, since most of these schools do not have the basic conditions for an effective Teletandem practice; for example, they lack an equipped computer lab. In the North American context, sometimes there is a false belief that technology would not be an issue. In other words, because the technical college is situated in North America, some people believe that it has the necessary financial resources and technology for in-tandem interactions. However, in our experience it was the opposite. In addition to all the bureaucracy related to inter-institutional collaborations, we were not able to reserve a computer lab for Teletandem interactions. Consequently, in order to open the frontiers of intercultural communication and give our students the opportunity to develop their linguistic and intercultural skills, we had to adapt Teletandem to our teaching situations and classroom limitations.

Contexts of the research

Context I

Six high school students from the Brazilian school of integral education located in the interior of Goiás participated in this research. The students, aged from 15 to 18, participated in the interactions as part of an extracurricular class (elective course) named "English for Fun". The purpose of the course was to sensitize learners to the influence of

English cultural aspects through communicative interactions. The goal was to stimulate their critical intercultural awareness of the English language through games, play, and various digital tools.

Context II

Also participating in this study were five out of the seven technical college students studying Portuguese 2 at a technical college located in the southeastern United States. These students aged between 16 and 20. The Portuguese 2 course was a continuation of the Portuguese 1 course; it aimed to familiarize students with the language and culture of Portuguese-speaking countries and to help them achieve basic Brazilian Portuguese proficiency. To achieve this goal, the course was focused on basic principles of grammar, pronunciation, reading and writing through the communicative method. It requires the active participation of students through dramatizations, dialogues and question-and-answer exercises.

Focal Participants

The project involved a total of eleven students aged between 15 and 20, and their respective Portuguese and English teachers. These students were beginning learners of the language and, with the exception of one American student, had never travelled abroad.

In the Portuguese class, five of the seven students chose to participate in the interactions, while two students chose not to participate and worked on a one-to-one guided project instead. These students mentioned a lack of confidence in speaking in the target language as the main reason for not participating in the project. That was a valid reason, as the students had only been exposed to Portuguese for one semester (18 weeks) when they first heard about Teletandem and were invited to participate in the pilot project.

In the Brazilian public high school, all students enrolled in the discipline “English for fun” chose to participate in Teletandem. At first, we noticed that although some of them felt somewhat anxious about their language skills, after preparing for the interactions and participating in them, they all felt the experience was positive. It is worth noting that the project, approved by both institutions, was voluntary and did not require students to participate in the activities without their consent. At the end, only data from the eleven participants who consented to participate and complete the activity were used.

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Methodology

This study follows the qualitative research paradigm. According to Bortoni-Ricardo (2008), the qualitative paradigm allows the teachers to associate their daily pedagogical practice with the research exercise.

This article aimed to explore students' attitudes towards language learning and their perceived development of their fluency in the second language via CMC. In order to achieve this goal, we combined the analysis of our observation journals, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and interactions analysis. The analysis of these data allows us to answer the following questions:

1. What were our students' prior experiences with CMC?
2. Have they ever used CMC to communicate with people of other countries/cultures?
3. Before the Teletandem experience, have they used the internet or any other digital resources to learn the target language?

In addition to these three questions, after the interactions, the students who participated in this study were invited to talk about their experience and to complete the research questionnaire. During the semi-structured interviews, students were requested to talk about the two Teletandem sessions with the overseas program and to tell us whether or not they enjoyed the sessions and why. The data collected were then coded and only accessed by the two teachers participating in this project. The research findings can be seen below.

The Teletandem experience between the Brazilian school and the American college

The experience reported in this article started when we found out that we both had interest in Teletandem and were doing research on it.

We officially started our collaboration in the middle of January of 2017. We talked about our classes and negotiated the possibility of facilitating sessions of Teletandem with our students. At first, we wanted to hold Teletandem sessions during the semester, but we later narrowed the window down to the months of March and April. Unfortunately, we encountered numerous limitations in the planning of these sessions. Some of these

limitations included the differences between the start and end dates of the semester, the difference in time zone, the lack of resources such as computers with individual headset and camera for each student, and the already planned curricular activities which afforded little flexibility to change. Resisting these initial limitations, we insisted on maintaining the project as a pilot experience. After agreeing on a calendar and common goals, we guided the eleven participating students in the Teletandem principles of separation of languages, reciprocity, and autonomy.

During the first part of the semester (January and February), the students and we investigated the technologies available on our respective campuses to decide on the tools that we would use. We compared the dates in relation to the content prescribed for the semester and negotiated the active participation of our students in the preparation for the sessions and in the sessions per se. We constantly engaged our students in this project by suggesting that they should create personal goals for the interactions and prepare questions according to their needs and curiosities about the other cultures. We, as teachers-researchers, interacted several times through email, Facebook, and WhatsApp to discuss the development of what had been planned and the next steps prior to the interactions.

Initially and ideally, the sessions were going to be individual (each student using one computer to communicate with another student), but this was not possible because the Brazilian school had a limitation on available computers and no access to a computer lab. We also wanted to hold multiple sessions from the outset, but after investigating our prescribed calendars, we decided that two sessions would be more feasible. We confirmed the two dates for the interactions and decided to use our own classrooms spaces for the two one-hour sessions.

We tested WhatsApp desktop, Skype, and Facebook Messenger video call several times before the interactions to assess which of those applications would work best. After the tests, we decided to use Skype, and, if necessary, Facebook Messenger would be our backup app. Each teacher reserved a notebook, a projector, and a speaker and sound box to create a video conference ambience during the interactions. After taking care of the technical issues, we moved on to the students' profiles. We shared information about the students with each other in an effort to pair them during the interactions. The pairing of students consisted of observing their age (15-20), proficiency in English and Portuguese (consistently similar), and noticeable likes and dislikes to somehow create a match and avoid the situations where one student dominates the interaction, respecting the principles of separation of languages and reciprocity. Corroborating to this mission, we decided in collaboration that the first session was going to be guided by the Portuguese students. The

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English students were responsible for the second session. Following these principles, in the first session students started speaking English for 30 minutes and then Portuguese for 30 minutes, but in the second session they started with Portuguese and then moved to English (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016).

The two interactions between the students

Prior to the first interaction, the teachers and students collaboratively elaborated a list with 19 questions in Portuguese and English. This list was based on the lexical and grammatical elements that had already been taught by both teachers in the classroom. The list included simple basic questions that students could use to get to know one another, in addition to questions about likes and dislikes and everyday life. Students also added questions related to the study routines, customs, tastes, and ways of acting to the list.

During the first session, the students sat in a semicircle which facilitated the interaction between the students since they could see each other clearly. The interaction began with the use of the Skype video call. We asked the students to introduce themselves one by one. We then wrote their names in the chat box, so students could continue to look at each other's names during the session. The students then went through the 19 questions, but to balance out the number of turns between the two groups we decided that one group would ask ten questions while the other group would ask the remaining nine. The Portuguese students began the process by asking questions in Portuguese and directing them to people who would be their peers. The English students answered the questions and also asked follow-up questions in Portuguese so that the Portuguese students would take an active turn and answer questions in the target language. After the first 30 minutes, we asked students to rotate. At that moment, English students started asking questions, but now in English while the Portuguese students started responding to the questions and asking follow-up questions when needed. If we hadn't stopped the session after one hour, students would have continued to speak with each other. They asked several questions beyond what was proposed in the 19-question list. They were so engaged in the conversation that they forgot the peer assignment and started asking other students questions. It was common to hear students asking what everyone else did or thought about something. The students asked additional questions about personal preferences, tourist spots in Brazil and the US, customs, hobbies, and study routines.

During the interaction, students relied on each other and on the teacher-researchers for help whenever they needed to reformulate or create a new question, or to make sure they were being understood by their interlocutors. They also sought to help each other

by politely repeating a word to emphasize pronunciation or by explaining expressions or words. Sometimes, students or teachers repeated sentences used by their overseas peers with the correct grammatical and lexical structures to help them notice the mistakes, or they simply answered the questions while making corrections in a polite way.

For the second interaction, the Brazilian students proposed a conversation about popular musical styles in Brazil and the United States. Unfortunately, the call dropped twice during this phase. The teachers communicated via WhatsApp and decided to switch to Facebook messenger. Still, the connection was quite poor, which made students and teachers alike feel somewhat frustrated. During the session, when we were able to hear each other, the English students asked questions about North American music and its influence around the world. Each student shared what type of music they listen to and the teachers used the opportunity to introduce new vocabulary in both languages. Towards the end, students exchanged contact information and many students from both groups added the teachers and some peers on social media.

As mediators, we introduced the topics of both interactions to students beforehand, trained them on the Teletandem pillars, and supported them during the preparation prior to the interactions. These steps helped alleviate the anxiety about speaking with speakers of the other language and allowed students to have a sense of readiness even though they were still beginner learners of the second language. During the interactions, the idea was that they would practice their autonomy, knowing that they had the teachers to provide them support if they needed. At the end of the sessions, the teachers interviewed the students in order to evaluate and discuss the Teletandem experience.

Findings

Students' prior experience with CMC

Only two of the six Brazilian participants answered that they had previous experiences of intercultural interaction with people from other countries through social networks, discussion forums and Skype before participating in Teletandem. In the case of the American students, two of the five participants also reported similar experiences. The first, son of former missionaries in Brazil, would be present when his parents communicate informally with their Brazilian friends. The second, fluent in Spanish and English, was put in contact with a Brazilian student by the Portuguese instructor since she had to enroll in an introductory Portuguese level class even though she had a tremendous linguistic advantage when compared to the other students learning a second language without the knowledge of another Romance language.

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Although learning that four out of eleven students had previous experiences with CMC can be exciting at first sight, both teachers-researchers experiences confirm that they are exceptions. When we look at their peers and expand the observation to the general students' population in Brazilian public high schools and American technical colleges, we are familiar with, very few students have opportunities to be familiar with other cultures and very few of them study a language long enough to achieve proficiency to participate in communicative tasks in a second language.

There were specific social historical and cultural conditions that allowed these four students to connect with people from other cultures just as there were socio-cultural conditions that separated the other students from these contexts.

Students' use of CMC to interact with people of other countries/cultures

When asked if they have used CMC to interact with people from other countries, all the participants reported that they have had previous experiences with language learning using diverse digital resources to communicate with people from other countries and cultures.

The instruments reported by the student included subtitled movies, music, tv series, social networks and online forums. They also reported language-learning platforms such as Duolingo and Rosetta Stone. As teachers-researchers, it was our role to unpack the definition of these instruments with students and to help them understand what each instrument was and how the instrument helped them interact with people of other countries and cultures. At first, the teachers had the impression that students did not have a clear understanding of what CMC entails. For this reason, they explained to students that computer-mediated-communication was any communication by means of interactive platforms. They purposefully gave only one example to students, the use of email, and asked them to separate the other instruments they used into groups. Students from the technical college decided that instant messaging, social media, and Skype interactions were certainly CMCs. They were not sure about subtitled movies, music, tv series and language-learning platforms without human interaction such as Duolingo. We were excited to see students making distinctions, but more importantly noticing that computer mediated communications can happen from a desktop or a cellphone and that many apps, such as WhatsApp, are a type of CMC.

Students' use of the internet or any other digital resources to learn the target languages

As students were able to name and separate the type of technology that supported their language learning, they could easily identify the tools they have been using (e.g. movies with subtitles) to practice the second language.

We noticed that the students from the technical college mentioned using Rosetta Stone and Duolingo as the only resources to learn a target language while students from Brazil talked about a greater number of resources, including social media, subtitled movies, music, television series, social networks, and online forums.

Students' overall evaluation of the Teletandem experience

At the end of the Teletandem sessions, the teachers held a semi-structured interview with their students to talk about their responses to the questionnaire and to hear their general opinion about the experience. In this section, we will present the findings regarding students' perceptions on the effects of the interactions via videoconference, and its link, or lack thereof, to the motivation to learn languages through Teletandem.

Hall (2001, p. 22) emphasizes that "current understandings consider the essence of language to be social action, something that exists in use, in communication". From this perspective, teachers must engage learners in authentic interactions in which they will be able not only to use their linguistic knowledge, but also to negotiate meanings, receive and give feedback and analyze their use of language through the help of their interlocutors. It is interesting to note that one of the Brazilian participants mentions that the Teletandem experience has provided them with the application of the theory (the study of linguistic structures) to practice (interaction using authentic use of the target language). We can find evidence of that in the following excerpt⁶:

(1) Excerpt 1: *The video conference provided us with a unique experience that made it possible for us to put theory into practice. Teletandem could help us master oral comprehension, understand language functions and, most importantly, help us to analyze the elements we should improve to master our English... (Tom Watson)*

Similarly, an American participant reflects on the Teletandem experience to share his own sense of progress in the second language:

(2) Excerpt 2: *"After the interaction, I saw progress in my Portuguese (however, far from good Portuguese). It reminded me how much I want to learn Portuguese. It also strengthens my belief that I learn languages best when I am actually using them in conversations. However,*

⁶ The names have been changed to protect the privacy of our students.

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talking to people whose native language is Portuguese showed me just how little Portuguese I know and makes me want to learn more." (Jonny)

Although the level of proficiency of all students was similar and all of them were considered beginners in the language, it is important to look at the North American student reflection on the "little" he knew and how he wanted to learn "more". In contrast, the Brazilian student responded that he saw in Teletandem a way to analyze and to master his English. Thus, the Portuguese student seemed to feel more self-conscious about his linguistic abilities. Nonetheless, the Teletandem experience was positive to both groups of students, considering that even when discussing limitations, students reported they wanted to learn more and to continue studying the language to communicate orally with real people.

Additionally, Figueiredo (2006, p.24) emphasizes that, in situations of collaborative activities, "students have the opportunity to become more reflexive and more autonomous, since, through the exchange of information and points of view, and regulation by the other, they may become self-regulating". In this sense, it is relevant to highlight that both Tom Watson and Jonny's excerpts revealed the ability to reflect on and recognize their own weaknesses and the elements they were supposed to improve and master. Those abilities are quite related to the self-monitoring learning strategy which characterizes an autonomous and reflexive attitude towards language learning (DICKINSON, 1994). Therefore, it is possible to assume that this experience promoted the activation of the self-monitoring strategy which, in turn, contributed to a change in student's attitude towards language learning.

The Teletandem principles of separation of languages, reciprocity, and autonomy were visible during the sessions and observed in students' feedback about the Teletandem activity. It is possible to observe that collective scaffolding, which is closely related to reciprocity, occurred during many moments during the two Teletandem sessions as presented in two excerpts below:

(3) Excerpt 3: *During the interaction with North American students, I had an incredible feeling. We could see them trying hard to speak Portuguese, and our English group were also trying to be as clear as possible to facilitate understanding. It was one of the best experiences of my life. (Joseph)*

(4) Excerpt 4: *The video conference was very entertaining and interesting. Even though the conversation occurred in a short time, it was quite enlightening. The differences between our contexts are really significant. Athens's teens seem to be very different from us. Our listening and speaking skills were really put in check. Both groups had difficulties, but they did not embarrass*

us because some students helped each other when there was a question. And the teachers were also at our side to provide us with assistance. We shared very useful information about our daily life, habits, schedules, and personal preferences. (Maryanne)

Joseph's mentions about how the Brazilian group tried to be clear to facilitate the understanding of the North American students highlights the opportunities created for scaffolding during the Teletandem interaction. To Vygotsky (1998), scaffolding is seen as a support structure that enables an individual to perform a task or achieve a learning goal, which he could not do alone, with the help of an adult or a more competent partner. Maryanne's experience corroborates with this sense that the synchronicity of Teletandem allows for opportunities of collaborative mediated interactions that in turn become scaffolding moments as the peers try to help each other during the interactions. Moreover, knowing that they were not alone while their listening and speaking skills were "put in check" allows them to overcome their anxiety and self-consciousness by being free to request help from their peers or instructors, since in group works the assistance does not necessarily come from a more competent peer; that is, each member can contribute to the execution of a common goal using their specific abilities which can sometimes be complementary. (WRETCH, 1979 apud DONATO; MCCORMICK, 1994).

Finally, we noticed that both groups of learners tried to assume the role of facilitators in the Portuguese/English learning process for the other group.

(5) Excerpt 5: *"not only did we get to practice our Portuguese, but we also got to practice their English" (Adele)*

Adele's speech reflects the Teletandem principle of reciprocity, which emphasizes the equal value to both languages.

In addition to recognizing the interactive aspect of Teletandem, students demonstrated that they could see a clear connection between what they were learning (or already knew), and the planning Teletandem sessions: "I am a hands-on learner, so actually getting to practice what I learned helped." (Maryanne). Jonny, a student at the technical college, started the conversation by saying that "the interaction with the *Brazilian student* online in class was a fun experience". This statement helped us notice that even though students were part of a video conference between all the eleven students, the peer-to-peer experience was more salient to Johnny.

Another important aspect pointed out by Maryanne in excerpt 6 below has to do with the Teletandem activities as a useful, authentic and motivating tool for learning languages. She also emphasizes that this resource provides second or additional

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language learners with opportunities to engage in authentic intercultural communication (BENEDETTI; CONSOLO; ABRAHÃO, 2010; TELLES, 2015).

(6) Excerpt 6: *Videoconferencing is very useful for learning any language. English Teaching with traditional tools cannot offer the experience of interacting with people who speak the target language, because it is quite different. Thus, for people who do not have the opportunity to study or spent time abroad, it's something really helpful. (Maryanne)*

As we can observe in the excerpts above, the Teletandem activity offered several benefits to the language learning. Among these contributions are the following: motivation for language learning; encouraging the use of target language; promotion of sociocultural awareness etc. (LINS; SOUZA, 2016; TELLES, 2015).

Final Considerations

In this study, we played the role of mediators of the Teletandem activities and, at the same time, reflected on the effects of such activities on the learning of our students. The findings of this research support the continuation of inter-institutional partnerships and suggests that increased motivation to continue learning and using the language can be reached and encouraged via Teletandem even after only two sessions between students. Our findings also confirm that cultural encounters, like the one experienced via Teletandem, can promote student participation and the development of students' intercultural competence. By examining the research data and reflecting on the study we have conducted, new ideas on how we can understand and plan Teletandem sessions have emerged. The recommendations below could serve as the basis for future research involving inter-institutional collaborations, action research, and collaborative research design.

Resources. As we collaborated to make this partnership possible, we noticed that we needed more time to plan and collect resources before implementing the interactions. We have learned that it would be important to formalize the partnership between institutions prior to the academic semester so that we could, for example, invite the administration to have a bigger role in the project and request the available resources beforehand. The entire project was carried out from the context of our regular classrooms, using our own computers. A positive side of it was that we were able to collectively assess the impact of the project on our students' learning and we had the material readily available. A downside was that had we had access to a computer lab with stable internet, cameras and headsets, students would have been able to interact on a one-one basis.

Sample size. Most of the research on Teletandem thus far has been conducted at the college level. We could not rely on previous studies to complement our data. Taking into consideration that we only had a total of eleven students in our classrooms, we had to limit the scope of our analysis to this small sample. Consequently, our study works as a pilot project as it does not offer a substantially large sample that can be generalized to every high school and technical college experience. In the future, having a larger sample would help us to confirm our observations that in Brazilian public high schools and American technical colleges, very few students have opportunities to be exposed to a foreign language long enough to achieve advanced proficiency. Nonetheless, the experimental character of our Teletandem experience revealed itself to be an opportunity for students to take part in contextualized and meaningful learning opportunities in the foreign language. The results of this research encourage inter-institutional collaboration with the goal of promoting students' involvement in communicative tasks and nurturing their intercultural competence and fluency in the foreign language.

Methodology. As young scholars, we collaborated in the design of the study and each step of the way, including data collection and the discovery of our theoretical and methodological lens. We used Action Research to plan our collaboration and to conduct a rigorous observation of the students' participation in the two Teletandem sessions. For future research, we would like to apply a more robust intake of Action Research to address our participation in the research as researchers and instructors. We would also like to extend the discussion of ways in which we engage our students in each step of the research project. We believe that by expanding our understanding of Action Research, and by revisiting our methods of analysis, we can strengthen this qualitative study and reduce any limitations in our collaborative design.

Finally, as we assess these limitations in relation to the overall findings of our study, we see them as lessons learned as part of the continuous processes of conducting educational research. We believe that our study corroborates with the field of Telecollaboration, or more specifically, to the body of research on Teletandem, and calls attention to new opportunities to encourage the use of Teletandem in high schools and technical colleges, expanding the already existing circle of Teletandem usage. We hope that our study serves as the basis to carry on broader empirical studies, and that many of the outcomes presented here can be achieved by future research in the field.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: KLEN-ALVES, Viviane; TIRABOSCHI, Fernanda Franco. Experiencing Teletandem: A collaborative project to encourage students in tandem interactions. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 109-130, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2416>

Submetido em: 18/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

DESENVOLVIMENTO DA COMPETÊNCIA COMUNICATIVA ORAL EM PLE: TELETANDEM EM FOCO

*Oral communicative competence development in PFL:
focusing on teletandem*

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Resumo | Tendo por base a modalidade *Teletandem Institucional Integrado* - na qual as interações ocorrem planejadas no currículo de uma disciplina (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014) - e buscando responder às questões: (a) em que medida a prática de teletandem institucional integrado influencia o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral e (b) que aspectos da fala do interagente de teletandem evidenciam o desenvolvimento de sua produção oral, por um semestre letivo, assistimos e assessoramos as aulas de Língua Estrangeira-PLE, analisamos documentos e acompanhamos o desenvolvimento das atividades de Teletandem de uma turma de uma universidade norte-americana. O estudo foi desenvolvido com base na metodologia qualitativa (ANDRÉ, 1984; FLICK, 2004); teorias que sustentam a ideia de competência comunicativa oral (CANALE; SWAIN, 1980) e, como parâmetro de proficiência, os descritores do *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para Línguas* (CONSELHO DA EUROPA, 2001). A partir da triangulação dos dados, em análise preliminar, elaboramos um quadro que demonstra a construção da proficiência oral de dois estudantes praticantes de teletandem, bem como expõe diferentes variáveis que podem impactar o desenvolvimento e a avaliação da proficiência em foco.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem institucional integrado. Ensino de PLE. Competência comunicativa oral. Avaliação.

Abstract | Based on the Integrated Institutional Teletandem modality - in which interactions take place as part of the class curriculum (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014), this study seeks to answer the following questions: (a) To what extent does Integrated Institutional Teletandem practice influence oral competence development? and (b) How does this oral competence development manifest itself in the Teletandem interactor's speech? For a semester, we attended Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) classes while providing support through analyzing materials and accompanying Teletandem activities at a US university. Using qualitative methodology (ANDRÉ, 1984 and FLICK, 2004), oral communicative competence theories (CANALE; SWAIN, 1980) and, as a proficiency parameter, the descriptors from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2001), we developed a framework that demonstrates the building of oral proficiency in two practitioners of Teletandem as well as identifies other variables that may impact the development and evaluation/assessment of the proficiency in focus.

Keywords | Integrated Institutional Teletandem. PFL teaching. Oral Competence. Evaluation and Assessment.

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Introdução³

O avanço da tecnologia digital desde o final do século passado, em especial, nas últimas duas décadas, tem impactado sobremaneira os processos de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras. As práticas de Teletandem são um exemplo concreto dessa transformação. Iniciado em 2006, como um projeto temático, institui parcerias entre estudantes universitários brasileiros da UNESP e estudantes de universidades estrangeiras. A prática de teletandem configura-se como um contexto virtual, autônomo e colaborativo de aprendizagem no qual pares de falantes, por meio de aplicativos de mensageria, ensinam suas respectivas línguas ou línguas de proficiência e, também, em via recíproca, aprendem a língua do outro (TELLES, 2009; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2009). Atualmente, apesar da condição de finalizado enquanto projeto temático, o Teletandem tem suas práticas continuamente instituídas como ações de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas, instauradas nos câmpus da UNESP em que há cursos de Letras (Assis, São José do Rio Preto e Araraquara).

Ao longo de doze anos, no âmbito das práticas de teletandem, ocorreram transformações no que diz respeito ao formato das parcerias de interação entre as instituições de ensino envolvidas, brasileiras ou estrangeiras, e a forma como essas são conduzidas. Aranha e Cavalari (2014) apresentam, a esse respeito, uma síntese bastante pontual da trajetória das atividades do Teletandem no Brasil, no contexto da UNESP (Universidade Estadual Paulista). As autoras ressaltam que o Teletandem surge facilitado pela tecnologia, “como uma forma de promover o ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras por meio de encontros regulares e virtuais entre pares de falantes de línguas diferentes que vivem em países diferentes” (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014, p. 184).

Durante, pois, o tempo em que dialogam via aplicativo de mensageria (Skype ou outro), os interagentes devem dividir o tempo destinado a cada idioma de forma equitativa, para que ambos possam beneficiar-se do processo de ensino/aprendizagem. Dessa forma, nas interações, que costumam durar 1 (uma) hora, são destinados 30 (trinta) minutos para a utilização de cada idioma. Nesse espaço de tempo, os pares se revezam no papel de aprendiz e tutor da língua na qual são proficientes, podendo “negociar suas necessidades e preferências ao ensinar-aprender” (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014, p. 184). Diante desse quadro, uma modalidade que pode gerar resultados mais observáveis são as parcerias efetivadas na *modalidade institucional integrada*, quando “as instituições que promovem as parcerias reconhecem o Teletandem como parte das atividades obrigatórias que os alunos devem cumprir dentro de determinada disciplina de língua estrangeira” (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014, p. 185).

3 O presente estudo é parte de uma pesquisa apoiada pela FAPESP (Processo nº 2017/02937-0).

A *modalidade institucional integrada* de teletandem é mais rara por conta, principalmente, de diferenças de fuso-horário entre o Brasil e os países de origem das universidades estrangeiras parceiras. Esse fato dificulta a inserção das práticas de teletandem de forma a coincidir com os horários das aulas de língua nas duas nações envolvidas. Nesse sentido, constatamos que no câmpus de Assis prevalece a emergência de uma terceira modalidade – o *teletandem institucional semi-integrado* (MESSIAS; TELLES, mimeo) – na qual o tempo cumprido nas práticas de teletandem pode ser computado em horas de laboratório de línguas (para os cursos de Letras) ou Atividade Acadêmico-Científico Cultural (para todos os cursos de graduação).

A questão, destarte, de integrar ou não o teletandem ao currículo de alguma disciplina de língua estrangeira torna-se significativa quando consideramos, especificamente, o que e quanto os estudantes envolvidos nas interações aprendem de língua. Essa, por sinal, é uma inquietação de muitos docentes de universidades estrangeiras que desejam justificar, institucionalmente, a inclusão das práticas de teletandem no currículo de suas classes de língua estrangeira.

A partir dessa problemática, propusemos uma investigação no contexto de uma universidade estrangeira, onde acompanhamos, por um semestre letivo, uma classe de português como língua estrangeira, nível avançado, praticante de teletandem na modalidade institucional integrada. O objetivo principal dessa imersão foi avaliar de que forma avançava a competência comunicativa oral do grupo em questão e em que medida as práticas de teletandem influenciavam tal progresso. O curso, de forma geral, encontrava-se dividido em dois encontros semanais, sendo uma aula de conversação e outra de interação via teletandem com um grupo de alunos do câmpus da UNESP/Assis. A maioria das atividades obrigatórias versavam sobre a experiência do teletandem (*tracking sheets*, *blog*, anotações). Em termos de atividades avaliativas, setenta por cento (70%) da menção final do curso estava atrelada diretamente à prática de teletandem⁴.

Diante dessa realidade, acompanhamos 16 aulas de conversação e 12 sessões de teletandem cumpridas pela turma, durante o referido semestre letivo. O objetivo que nos moveu foi responder às questões: (a) em que medida a prática de teletandem institucional integrado influencia o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral? e (b) que aspectos da fala do interagente de teletandem evidenciam esse desenvolvimento? Para esse fim, utilizamos diversos instrumentos de coleta de dados, entre os quais: aplicação

⁴ *Tracking sheet* – formulário de autoavaliação da aprendizagem preenchido pelos estudantes após a interação; *Blog* – após a interação, os estudantes escreviam um texto relatando como havia sido a interação e o postavam em uma pasta organizada, pela professora, no *Google Drive*. Além dessas duas atividades, os estudantes também postavam as anotações que faziam no decorrer da interação. Sobre essa questão, um dos autores desenvolveu um estudo paralelo, em uma discussão sobre a inserção das práticas de teletandem no currículo.

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de dois questionários – realizados pelo *Google forms*, anotações, inserção de tarefas no espaço de uma interação, aplicação de um pré e um pós-teste (antes da primeira e depois da última interação), entrevista com a professora de PLE da turma e com o coordenador da área de língua portuguesa do departamento e análise de documentos (*syllabus* da turma).

Na presente discussão, observamos o primeiro questionário sobre os hábitos individuais de estudo de língua portuguesa cuja aplicação ocorreu antes do término das 12 interações de teletandem e, também, as gravações e transcrições de um pré e pós-teste de proficiência aplicado por nós e pela professora da sala, por sugestão do coordenador da área. Esses dados foram confrontados com uma entrevista efetuada com a professora da turma e com as respostas a outro questionário, aplicado após o encerramento das interações.

Sendo assim, no presente artigo apresentamos parte de um trabalho desenvolvido com o intuito de compreender em que medida a prática de teletandem contribui para o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em língua portuguesa dos estudantes acompanhados.

A metodologia do estudo

Para empreender a investigação sobre aspectos que possam demonstrar o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em língua portuguesa de estudantes praticantes de teletandem, centramo-nos em pressupostos da pesquisa qualitativa, mais especificamente, um estudo de caso. Os estudos de caso, de acordo com André (1984, p.51),

[...] procuram retratar a realidade de forma completa e profunda. Esse tipo de estudo pretende revelar a multiplicidade de dimensões presentes numa dada situação, focalizando-a como um todo, mas sem deixar de enfatizar os detalhes, as circunstâncias específicas que favorecem uma maior apreensão desse todo.

Tendo em vista a materialidade da competência comunicativa oral dos estudantes, atentamos para as transcrições de testes aplicados antes da primeira e depois da última interação de teletandem (pré e pós-testes). Para circundar os sentidos do fenômeno (progresso ou não da competência comunicativa oral), embatemos o observado nos testes com outros instrumentos de coleta de dados.

Sendo assim, as anotações das observações efetuadas no decorrer do acompanhamento das aulas e das interações e o que manifestou a professora, em entrevista, sobre o desempenho dos alunos, serviram como contraponto para analisar as informações coletadas em dois questionários via *Google forms* (um, no início do semestre, com o intuito de traçar o perfil de estudos dos alunos, e outro, no final do semestre, com o objetivo de coletar suas impressões acerca das práticas de teletandem e do impacto sobre seu desenvolvimento comunicativo em língua portuguesa).

Agregados a esses instrumentos, consideramos, também, dados de uma entrevista com o coordenador da área de língua portuguesa na universidade. Esse último como uma forma de compreender a relevância destinada à prática de teletandem no currículo dos cursos de língua portuguesa da instituição.

No presente artigo, em vista de ser ainda um estudo inicial, apresentaremos a triangulação (FLICK, 2004) dos instrumentos arrolados com a transcrição da produção oral (pré e pós) de duas estudantes. Tal seleção esteve pautada na forma como ambas descreveram sua rotina de estudos e perfil de proficiência.

Sobre avaliação em teletandem e competência comunicativa

Avaliar proficiência em língua estrangeira não é, certamente, tarefa simples, pois muitas variáveis devem ser consideradas. Observar o impacto das práticas de teletandem no desenvolvimento da proficiência de seus praticantes é ainda mais complexo, tendo em vista que os estudantes participam, concomitantemente, de outras práticas que podem impactar no seu desenvolvimento linguístico na língua-alvo. Além disso, a avaliação pode ser observada por diversos vieses, por meio da verificação pontual das interações, pela forma como os parceiros corrigem-se mutuamente, ou mesmo por questões linguísticas particulares. Pode-se, também, avaliar produções escritas decorrentes, aspectos específicos da fala etc. Ademais, a avaliação pode considerar todo o processo, pode ser específica e, inclusive, é possível criar instrumentos para que o próprio estudante se autoavaleie.

No que tange à temática da avaliação em contexto de teletandem, alguns estudos sobre aspectos particulares já foram desenvolvidos: Brocco (2009), por exemplo, observa o tratamento dado à gramática nas sessões de interação, em especial, na ocasião em que os interagentes fazem a correção de aspectos gramaticais da fala do parceiro e a forma como três livros didáticos de língua portuguesa para falantes de outras línguas abordam a gramática. Em estudo posterior, Brocco (2014) enfatiza a avaliação de produções textuais

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escritas realizadas por professores em formação inicial em uma parceria de teletandem institucional integrado. Nesse caso, o foco da pesquisa centrou-se nos textos escritos em português produzidos pelos estudantes americanos e corrigidos por seus parceiros brasileiros.

Ainda com relação à temática da avaliação em teletandem, Furtoso (2011) desenvolve um trabalho no qual observa a avaliação como elemento constituinte do processo de ensinar e aprender. Por esse ângulo, a produção oral dos envolvidos nas interações de teletandem é observada no que tange aos procedimentos de insumo entre os interagentes. As características da fala no teletandem são, de acordo com a autora, indicadores da necessidade de criação de novos elementos avaliadores, específicos para os contextos *on-line*. Em estudo posterior, Furtoso e Ferreira (2018) realizaram, com foco na avaliação formativa, uma investigação acerca da implantação de um sistema de autoavaliação da aprendizagem no contexto da mesma universidade americana na qual desenvolvemos o presente trabalho.

Diante do exposto, no âmbito da avaliação de proficiência oral, tem nos inquietado a necessidade de compreender, mais detidamente, em que medida as práticas de teletandem impactam na desenvoltura para falar a língua estrangeira e como tal compreensão pode orientar a atuação do mediador/professor e, conseqüentemente, em práticas de formação de docentes de línguas, envolvidos em atividades de teletandem. Em um estudo mais concreto, representado por questionários quantitativos e qualitativos de avaliação dos processos de interação em teletandem, Telles (2015) constatou que alunos praticantes de teletandem alegam ter desenvolvido, principalmente, vocabulário e “fluência”. Todavia, estudos empíricos com dados coletados do ponto de vista do pesquisador ainda não foram realizados, em particular aqueles que enfocam o desenvolvimento da proficiência oral dos praticantes de teletandem no contexto das práticas de ensino de línguas no qual encontram-se imersos.

A presente investigação, então, busca essa constatação a partir da compreensão de proficiência oral tendo por base os pressupostos de competência comunicativa propostos por Canale e Swain (1980), que entendem tal competência como sendo os conhecimentos e as habilidades que o indivíduo possui sobre a língua. De acordo com esses autores, o conhecimento diz respeito àquilo que o indivíduo sabe “de forma consciente ou inconsciente sobre a língua e sobre outros aspectos do uso comunicativo da língua” (OLIVEIRA, 2007, p. 68).

Tendo em vista essas breves considerações, para a análise sobre o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral dos estudantes, baseada nos testes de proficiência

(pré e pós-interações de teletandem), utilizamos como apoio os elementos de avaliação do *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para Línguas* (CONSELHO DA EUROPA, 2001), uma vez que o consideramos como um parâmetro possível para delimitar a competência comunicativa oral dos participantes. A escolha deveu-se à clareza, à objetividade e à organização de seus descritores, os quais permitem descrever o que o aluno é capaz de fazer com a língua estrangeira que está aprendendo, em oposição ao que ele “não é capaz”. Esse documento mensura, a partir da observação de níveis que variam do mais básico ao mais avançado (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), as diversas competências acionadas pelo aprendiz no processo de comunicação em língua estrangeira. Nesse caso, especificamente, enfatizaremos elementos da competência comunicativa (linguísticas, sociolinguísticas e pragmáticas), conforme expresso no *Quadro Europeu Comum de Referência para Línguas* (CONSELHO DA EUROPA, 2001, p. 156-177). De forma sintética, a partir da proposta desse documento, elaboramos o quadro que segue:

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Quadro 1. Síntese das competências comunicativas linguística, sociolinguística e pragmática (QECR)

Competências Linguísticas	Competências sociolinguísticas	Competências pragmáticas
<p>A competência lexical Consiste no conhecimento e na capacidade de utilizar o vocabulário de uma língua, bem como, compreender elementos lexicais e gramaticais. (p. 156)</p> <p>A competência gramatical A competência gramatical pode ser definida como o conhecimento dos recursos gramaticais da língua e a capacidade para os utilizar. (p. 161)</p> <p>A competência semântica Trata da consciência e do controle que o aprendiz possui sobre a organização do significado. (p. 165)</p> <p>A competência fonológica Envolve o conhecimento e a capacidade de percepção e de produção de sons (p. 166).</p>	<p>Os marcadores linguísticos de relações sociais</p> <p>São evidentemente diferentes segundo as línguas e as culturas, dependendo de factores como:</p> <p>a) o estatuto relativo dos interlocutores; b) a proximidade da relação; c) o registo do discurso, etc. (p. 170)</p>	<p>As competências pragmáticas</p> <p>Dizem respeito ao conhecimento do utilizador/ aprendiz dos princípios de acordo com os quais as mensagens são:</p> <p>a) organizadas, estruturadas e adaptadas (“competência discursiva”); b) utilizadas para a realização de funções comunicativas (“competência funcional”); c) sequenciadas de acordo com os esquemas interaccionais e transaccionais (“competência de concepção”). (p. 174)</p>

O pré e o pós-teste: mudanças no meio do caminho

Esclarecemos que, ao princípio da investigação, tencionávamos focalizar a proficiência oral dos estudantes por meio de uma tarefa comunicativa aplicada no íterim da primeira e da última interação. Todavia, ao iniciarmos as atividades em campo, atentamo-nos para o fato de que testes pré (antes do início das interações) e pós (após o término das 12 interações do semestre) prática de teletandem vinham sendo aplicados para as turmas e concluímos que esse instrumento seria oportuno para a demanda por nós pretendida. Ademais, a tarefa interativa planejada para a primeira e a última interação mostrou-se ineficiente para esse fim, uma vez que não possuíamos a logística necessária para inseri-la nas interações⁵.

Em face do exposto e com o intuito de esclarecer nossa opção por tais testes, ressaltamos que a princípio nos inquietou o fato de aplicar um teste fora da interação de teletandem para observar o desenvolvimento da proficiência comunicativa oral dos estudantes ocasionada por sua participação nessa prática. Inicialmente, pareceu-nos um pouco fora de contexto. Contudo, depois da aplicação da tarefa, do acompanhamento das sessões de teletandem e das aulas, conseguimos traçar um perfil dos estudantes e isso nos possibilitou ter mais instrumentos que “comprovassem” o resultado que o pré e o pós-teste apontaram, mesmo não tendo sido efetuados no íterim de uma interação de teletandem. Agregada a essas ferramentas, a avaliação acerca do desempenho dos estudantes manifestada pela professora da turma, em entrevista, também contribuiu para delinear o perfil estudantil dos aprendizes, no que tangia a sua relação com a aprendizagem de língua portuguesa.

Quanto à forma de aplicação, o pré-teste foi executado na primeira aula da turma, quando dividimos o grupo e, fora da sala de aula, gravamos o áudio da atividade que consistia em visualizar uma imagem por dois minutos e descrever o que estava acontecendo na situação apresentada. O teste constava em uma folha impressa que, após a facção da atividade, mantínhamos conosco. Todos os estudantes da turma, ao todo 14, fizeram o teste. Dessa totalidade, um foi descartado como possibilidade de análise, pois a estudante não respondeu aos dois questionários enviados, um no início e outro

⁵ Sobre essa questão desenvolveremos uma discussão mais aprofundada em outro artigo a respeito da metodologia de ensino e formação de professores de línguas. Não conseguimos aplicar a tarefa que planejamos na primeira interação pela inexistência de logística necessária, sobre a qual não havíamos pensado: o mediador do lado brasileiro teria que preparar os alunos para aplicar o teste durante a interação. Todavia, a primeira interação é sempre bastante tumultuada, as pessoas não se conhecem e muitos nunca fizeram teletandem, o que torna a inserção de uma atividade uma ação bastante confusa. Aplicamos a tarefa na terceira interação, apenas, e o resultado serviu muito mais para pensar em questões de metodologia de ensino de línguas do que, necessariamente, para mensurar proficiência comunicativa oral dos alunos.

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no final do semestre. A mesma atividade foi utilizada no pós-teste e o mesmo protocolo foi seguido. Durante a facção da atividade, procurávamos (a) manter um clima distenso, (b) dar dois minutos para o estudante observar a figura e formular sua fala e (c) iniciar a gravação quando o estudante dissesse que estava pronto. Abaixo ilustramos o material utilizado para o pré e pós-teste.

Appendix. Sample Task Prompts for Oral Production test (Pretest, mid-semester, and end-of-semester post-test)

Sample Picture Description Task

【Instruction】 Take a look at the picture and describe what the story is about. You have two minutes to prepare. Start narrating the picture when I tell you to do so.



Figura 1. Texto para teste de proficiência oral

Disponível em: <http://valueenglish.com/blog/eiken-pre1st-2/>

Apresentado o teste em questão, enfatizamos, conforme já explicitado, que selecionamos as gravações de duas estudantes a partir da constatação da similaridade entre suas respostas ao primeiro questionário sobre rotinas de estudo de língua portuguesa. Esse fato nos chamou a atenção, pois as duas apresentavam um perfil (do próprio ponto de vista) bastante similar, apesar de possuírem níveis de proficiência distintos, pelas observações efetuadas (por nós) em todas as atividades da turma.

Abaixo, apresentamos as perguntas do questionário sobre rotinas de estudo em língua portuguesa e as respostas de cada uma das estudantes, as quais denominamos de estudante A e estudante B. Ambas declaravam-se norte-americanas e, com relação à proficiência oral, de acordo com a nossa observação, a estudante B possuía maior fluência na produção dos enunciados, enquanto a estudante A, nos primeiros encontros, destacou-se, para nós, pela dificuldade em produzir enunciados completos, uma competência esperada em uma classe de nível avançado.

<p>Nationality:</p> <p>United States</p> <hr/> <p>Estudante A</p>	<p>Nationality:</p> <p>American</p> <hr/> <p>Estudante B</p>
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Figura 2. Nacionalidade

Da mesma forma, quando questionadas sobre seu contato com falantes de língua portuguesa, amigos ou parentes, ambas responderam que não possuíam conhecidos com quem conversassem em português. Tal questão, no nosso entender, justificava-se por essa ser uma situação que poderia potencializar as atividades realizadas no âmbito da universidade e influenciar na melhoria da proficiência comunicativa oral, caso tal fato fosse registrado ao final.

<p>Do you have any friends or relatives who speak Portuguese?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p> <p>From which country?</p> <hr/> <p>If so, how often do you talk to these friends or relatives in Portuguese?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Less than 2 times per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Less than 2 times a month</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always, almost every day</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante A</p>	<p>Do you have any friends or relatives who speak Portuguese?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p> <p>From which country?</p> <hr/> <p>If so, how often do you talk to these friends or relatives in Portuguese?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Less than 2 times per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Less than 2 times a month</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always, almost every day</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante B</p>
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Figura 3. Relação com a língua portuguesa

Quando questionadas sobre sua dedicação aos estudos de língua portuguesa, ambas responderam de forma semelhante, com a diferença de que a estudante A, como atividade extra, marcou que escutava músicas e a estudante B marcou que assistia a filmes. As duas, contudo, apenas cumpriam os exercícios da aula e as tarefas obrigatórias, como pode ser observado:

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<p>How much time of your week do you devote to the study of the Portuguese language?</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> I attend classes and do the mandatory tasks</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study at least 1 hour per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study at least 2 hours per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study more than 3 hours per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Check the activities you do to get in touch with the Portuguese language:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Watch movies</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listen to music</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Read news, books, etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante A</p>	<p>How much time of your week do you devote to the study of the Portuguese language?</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> I attend classes and do the mandatory tasks</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study at least 1 hour per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study at least 2 hours per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In addition to classes and mandatory assignments, I study more than 3 hours per week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Check the activities you do to get in touch with the Portuguese language:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch movies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Read news, books, etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante B</p>
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Figura 4. Rotina de estudo de Língua Portuguesa

Quando indagadas acerca de seu nível de proficiência, as duas responderam que se consideravam boas falantes de língua portuguesa, entre as possibilidades (bom, ótimo, excelente). A escolha desses três adjetivos para formular a questão deveu-se ao fato de a turma acompanhada ser uma classe de Língua Portuguesa – Conversação Avançada. Tendo em vista essa classificação, consideramos mais adequado começar a ordenação por (bom) pois, em tese, em uma classe de língua avançada, os alunos possuem um nível de proficiência que supera o nível básico. Já com relação à prática de teletandem, as duas alunas responderam que nunca haviam participado de uma interação antes, conforme pode ser observado abaixo:

<p>How do you rate yourself as a Portuguese speaker?</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Good</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Great</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Excellent</p> <p>Have you ever done teletandem?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> no</p> <p>If you answer yes, for how long?</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante A</p>	<p>How do you rate yourself as a Portuguese speaker?</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Good</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Great</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Excellent</p> <p>Have you ever done teletandem?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> no</p> <p>If you answer yes, for how long?</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Estudante B</p>
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Figura 5. Perfil de falante

Em vista do *feedback* apresentado pelas duas estudantes ao questionário aplicado, elaboramos um quadro-síntese com as principais características de cada uma, que nos permite observar o perfil de estudante de língua portuguesa:

Quadro 2. Perfil geral das estudantes em análise

ESTUDANTE A	ESTUDANTE B
Norte-americana	Norte-americana
Não possui amigos ou parentes com quem converse em língua portuguesa	Não possui amigos ou parentes com quem converse em língua portuguesa
Cumpre as atividades obrigatórias da aula e faz as tarefas	Cumpre as atividades obrigatórias da aula e faz as tarefas
Como ação de aprendizagem adicional, ouve músicas	Como ação de aprendizagem adicional, assiste a filmes
Considera-se boa falante de português em um nível entre bom, ótimo e excelente	Considera-se boa falante de português em um nível entre bom, ótimo e excelente
Nunca havia feito teletandem	Nunca havia feito teletandem

O exposto até o momento ilustra o perfil das estudantes, a partir das respostas a um questionário aplicado, via *Google docs*, durante o primeiro mês de aulas do grupo, setembro de 2017. Apresentamos, então, o perfil das estudantes, observado pela professora da turma (designada por X) em entrevista concedida a um dos autores (designado por R) no final do semestre.

ESTUDANTE A

X- ela se esforça muito eu acho que ela é a única aluna que não faltou uma aula, (uhum) ela assiste todas as aulas, todas as interações de teletandem. Ela, ela faz quase todas as tarefas eu acho que às vezes ela não entende o que foi a tarefa isso pode ser o problema, eu já tenho pensado nisso, (aham) Ah mas geralmente ela faz tudo ela assiste tudo e ela tem o nível mais baixo na aula (é) de português, mas eu vejo que ela se esforça muito, mesmo nas interações de Teletandem (fala por cima da outra) nossa, ela conversa bastante (aham) em português (sim) mesmo não sabendo as palavras ela sempre pergunta como que se fala isso? Qual a palavra? então, e ela vai estudar no Brasil o semestre que vem, Então eu acho que ela quer realmente aprender sobre a língua a cultura tudo, tem muito interesse apesar de não ter um nível muito avançado.

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ESTUDANTE B

X - Ah! (pausa) Ela participa muito, eu acho que ela participa muito na aula é que pode ser que ela, como o Cristian ela é jovem também porque ela tem faltado algumas aulas e não, não me avisou eu acho que faltou tipo 4, é bastante né, (uhum) mas quando ela sim assisti as aulas ela é uma ótima aluna.

R - As tarefas ela faz?

X - Sim, eu acho que sim. Eu não eu não tenho problema com ela quanto às tarefas. Ah! E ela adora as interações (risos) acho que ela gosta muito do parceiro. (Foi uma boa parceria), sim.

Excertos retirados de entrevista com a professora da turma, realizada no dia 5 de dezembro de 2017.

Tendo como parâmetro os apontamentos da professora da turma sobre o envolvimento das duas estudantes com o curso de língua portuguesa, sistematizamos o seguinte quadro:

Quadro 3. Perfil das estudantes observadas, apontado pela professora da turma

ESTUDANTE A	ESTUDANTE B
Se esforça muito, nunca faltou a uma aula	Faltou a algumas aulas e não avisou
Faz todas as tarefas, mas às vezes não entende as proposições	Faz todas as tarefas, não apresenta problema
Está muito envolvida com o teletandem, se esforça, faz perguntas quando não sabe como falar	Está envolvida com o teletandem, gosta muito do parceiro
Possui o menor nível de proficiência da sala, mas é muito esforçada, pois prepara-se para morar no Brasil no ano seguinte	Possui um bom nível de proficiência e, apesar de faltar, quando está nas aulas participa de tudo e é ótima aluna.

Pré e pós-testes: o que mostram?

Escolhemos traçar o perfil das estudantes observadas, antes de apresentar sua produção oral (pré e pós-teletandem), em princípio, pela similaridade de suas respostas às questões do *Google forms*. Embora as duas estudantes possam aparentar ter o mesmo nível de proficiência baseado em suas respostas, a vivência cotidiana nas aulas e nas sessões de teletandem mostraram o contrário. Dessa forma, a caracterização da professora sobre o desempenho das estudantes corrobora as nossas próprias observações sobre os processos de participação nas atividades do curso, durante o segundo semestre de 2017, quando acompanhamos a classe.

A seguir, apresentamos a transcrição do pré e pós-testes das duas estudantes e os observamos a partir do conceito de competência comunicativa de Canale e Swain (1980), divididas em competências gramatical, discursiva, sociolinguística e estratégica. Inicialmente, pontuaremos questões acerca da competência gramatical, tendo em vista, principalmente, questões de organização textual (caráter sintático de construção de enunciados completos) e competência discursiva, no que tange à sequência da narrativa, tendo em vista que os estudantes “narram” o que visualizam, ou seja, eles contam a história dos quadrinhos.

Essa escolha deveu-se, pois, ao fato de que nossa intenção não é desenvolver análises de cunho fonético aprofundadas, com foco na pronúncia dos alunos. Portanto, acreditamos que a observação dos enunciados transcritos, pelos vieses gramatical (sintático) e discursivo (construção da narrativa) demonstram a fluidez da fala. Tendo por base os estudos de Canale e Swain (1980), Oliveira (2007, p. 69) define competência gramatical:

[...] é o conhecimento que um falante ouvinte possui sobre as regras e as características dessa língua (*i.e.* a sintaxe, a morfologia, a pronúncia, o vocabulário e a grafia) somado às suas habilidades na utilização desse conhecimento para entender e expressar corretamente o significado literal de enunciados.

Sobre a competência discursiva, também pautado nos estudos de Canale e Swain (1980), Oliveira (2007, p. 70) expõe:

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[...] competência discursiva refere-se às regras do discurso. É o conhecimento que o falante-ouvinte tem de combinar formas gramaticais e sentidos para comunicar diferentes tipos de textos, falados ou escritos, de uma maneira unificada, sendo essa unidade textual realizada de duas formas: (a) através da coesão, ao nível da forma lingüística; e (b) através da coerência, ao nível do sentido.

Para atribuir maior visibilidade aos enunciados produzidos nos testes (pré e pós), organizamos tabelas com aqueles que podem constituir um discurso significativo, tendo em vista o que apresenta a figura utilizada no teste (Figura 1. Texto para teste de proficiência oral) como mote para que os estudantes falassem em língua portuguesa.

Baseando-nos no texto do teste e tendo por base o fluxo de sentido discursivo dos enunciados, efetuamos a divisão dos trechos de transcrição por unidades. Para esse estudo, consideramos que quanto menos segmentado o texto, maior será o fluxo de informações com sentido, relacionado à figura tema do teste.

Quadro 4. Comparação entre pré e pós testes estudante A

PRÉ-TESTE	PÓS-TESTE
<p>na: primeiro aham: o: pai tem uns livros ahm: sobre o: educação de computadora ahm: ahm:</p> <p>ela fala com o: pai ahm: sobre ahm: como ela quiere quere, ou quer, ahm o filho (pausa) para ter o livro e depois ela ahm: tem o livro</p> <p>o menino a: gostou na computadora e ahm: depois o menino ahm: quiere ou quere que outrU menino "two" ah: jogar jogaram jogam ahm: com o menino a: na computadora e</p> <p>no mês próximo ahm: os pais são ahm: fala sobre a: como o: os meninos não ahm. Jogar</p> <p>eu acho que ahm: the o o: história é muito semelhante de a: a maioria de: pessoas de minha gene geração</p> <p>e: agora eles ahm: não gosta da gente: ahm: ahm: para jogar ahm: na computadora, mas a gente trabalha ahm: na computadora mais, sim.</p>	<p>no situação ahm: o a mãe ahm: tem um livro para ahm: educação computadora ahm: para o seu ou sua ahm: criança e a: depois ela introdução ahm: no filho com a computadora e no livro para educação ahm: então ela ahm: ela gosto: na computadora e: ahm: nos nas dias próximos ele introdução se: ahm: seu amigo a: computadora e ahm: a mês próximos as países ahm: não gosto o fato a: que as: uhm: as meninos ahm: não vão jogar no fora e: ahm: jogar no computadora</p> <p>acho que no computadora não má coisa porque é importante para o desenvolvimento ahm: no futuro e ahm: as crianças devem ahm: para introdução no computadora e ahm: mas é importante para jogar fora também. Eu foi nasce ahm: jogando fora e: ahm: com as computadoras então eu gosto ahm: ambos</p>

Quadro 5. Comparação entre pré e pós testes estudante B

PRÉ-TESTE	PÓS TESTE
<p>eu me chamo Jojoh... então... a figura fala sobre uma família a: dois pais... está falando sobre seu filho que está jogando fora da casa e a mãe fala sobre um programa de “computadoras” como educação com o pai... essa: semana próxima o filho recebeu uma “computadora” e: uns dias depois “él” convidou seu amigo pra fazer coisas na sua “computadora” é: depois a: os pais se: preocupam-se porque oss as crianças não jogam fora (risos)... é: não sei o que devo falar mais ahm: eu tenho que repassar as (não compreendi a última palavra).</p>	<p>meu nome é Jojoh... então... nas imagens... ahm: no primeiro ahm: uns pais falam sobre um livro que se chama educação de computador pelos meninos e: pode ver que seu menino está jogando fora de casa... a próxima semana a:: mãe “introduce” o programa de computador a: seu filho e ele começa a usar o computador ahm: depois quando seu amigo ahm: vem na casa deles ahm o menino convida ele para fazer coisas ahm: pelo computador e a:: tempo depois os pais veem que os amigos estão só jogando “jogas” pelo computador e eles a: se preocupam porque eles basicamente nunca jogam fora da casa agora (...)</p> <p>eu acho que demonstra como ahm na: atualidade, na atual, ah:: os pais querem introduzir os filhos ao: computador porque oferece uhm: benefícios possivelmente, mas, há um, existe um compromisso entre “jugar” no computador e também fazer as coisas fora da casa ahm: e pode ser bem complicado pros pais.</p>

A observação da transcrição revelou nitidamente a evolução discursiva da estudante A. No pré-teste, considerando nossa participação no processo de aplicação, pela compreensão do contexto, segmentamos o enunciado produzido em oito blocos de sentido. Em contrapartida, no pós-teste, a unidade da narrativa apresentou menos truncamentos, podendo ser dividida em dois blocos significativos. Do ponto de vista da comunicação oral, esse fato é extremamente importante para que se efetive a compreensão entre os interagentes.

Comprovadamente, a estudante evoluiu de forma significativa. A questão é, então, em que medida o teletandem impactou essa transformação? Retomamos o que expõe a própria estudante sobre sua organização com os estudos de língua portuguesa: *cumprir todas as tarefas obrigatórias; não faz atividades extras, além de ouvir músicas em português; e*

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não possui amigos ou parentes com quem converse em português. A ausência de atividades, fora do que é obrigatório, pensamos, pode corroborar a ideia de que o teletandem possuiu impacto nesse progresso. Seguindo esse raciocínio, atentamos para o fato de que nas aulas de conversação, mesmo que todas as atividades estivessem direcionadas para que os estudantes pudessem expressar-se oralmente, não havia espaço para que esses produzissem mais do que 15 minutos (individualmente) por semana, uma vez que a aula durava, em média, 1h30 e a sala possuía 14 alunos. Sendo assim, a interação semanal de teletandem com o cômputo de 30 minutos semanais, em uma situação concreta de conversação com um falante proficiente é um diferencial incomensurável. Corroborando essa realidade voltamos, aqui, para a constatação efetuada pelo professor que implantou o teletandem na universidade americana na qual o estudo se realizou:

[...] então é: foi uma coisa que eu aproveitei pra começar a testar, brincar com isso porque a minha intuição era de que era melhor um aluno falar trinta minutos por semana na língua alvo de uma vez do que falar três ou quatro minutos por aula num total de quinze minutos né (Trecho entrevista professor M.)

No teste da estudante B, ao contrário de A, é mais difícil mensurar o avanço, tendo em vista seu nível de proficiência mais elevado, conforme constatação da professora da turma e de nossa observação acerca de seu desempenho nas atividades letivas. Nesse caso, tendo em vista que as duas produções orais são inteligíveis e têm uma narrativa bem construída, o ponto central está na qualidade da fala em termos de seleção lexical e organização dos períodos. Há maior fluidez no encadeamento das ideias no segundo teste. Não consideramos somente o fato de a segunda produção ser mais extensa em relação à primeira, pois na segunda produção a professora que aplica o teste pergunta sobre a opinião da estudante, o que ocasiona o prolongamento de seu discurso. No primeiro teste, aplicado por nós, não perguntamos sobre a opinião da estudante. Sendo assim, não há justificativa para considerar a extensão do discurso produzido pela estudante, no segundo teste.

Comparando os dois testes, pelo aspecto lexical, por exemplo, constatamos que, no primeiro teste, a estudante A utiliza expressões de língua espanhola: (*computadora*), em espanhol = la computadora, em português = o computador. Do ponto de vista sintático, pode ser observada, no segundo teste, a construção de um enunciado com orações coordenadas, um pouco mais complexas: *“os pais querem introduzir os filhos ao: computador **porque** oferece uhm: benefícios possivelmente, **mas**, há um, existe um*

compromisso entre “jugar” no computador e também fazer as coisas fora da casa ahm: e pode ser bem complicado pros pais”. Em termos de avaliação de proficiência oral, é bem mais complexo observar o avanço entre os níveis mais elevados, uma vez que as diferenças são, às vezes, bastante sutis e dificultam o trabalho do avaliador. A estudante B inicia o curso em um nível avançado e, conseqüentemente, avança no ínterim do mesmo nível. Ao contrário da estudante A, que começa o curso em um nível de proficiência oral mais próximo do básico (A2) e avança para um nível mais elevado (intermediário B1).

Em embate com as observações que fizemos das aulas e das interações de teletandem enfatizamos, também, o que expôs a professora da turma sobre a estudante A: a aluna era estudiosa, não demonstrava grandes dificuldades nas aulas, apesar de faltar a algumas; participou de todas as interações de teletandem e estabeleceu uma relação bastante positiva com seu parceiro brasileiro. Todas essas características configuram-se como positivas para o desenvolvimento de sua competência comunicativa, apesar de tal estudante esclarecer que cumpria apenas as atividades obrigatórias do curso e, como atividade complementar, assistia a filmes.

Observações das próprias estudantes sobre o teletandem

No intuito de circundar o fenômeno do avanço da competência oral dos estudantes, conforme explicitado, aplicamos, também, um questionário⁶ em dezembro de 2017, final do semestre. Nesse instrumento, buscamos informações sobre o desenvolvimento individual das interações de teletandem. Abaixo elencamos as respostas dadas às questões, pelas estudantes A e B:

(1) Describe the difficulties you encountered during the 12 Teletandem interactions regarding:(a) Logistics:(b) Brazilian partner (level of proficiency, commitment to interactions):(c) Mediator support: *

Logistically, it was very easy to use when we are in class, however it is difficult to schedule outside of class. As for my partner, she only missed a few session and then she would be replaced by another person. She very good at speaking English but I think, like me, she has difficulty understanding it when spoken to her. Support was always there as I would likely have another partner that could step in if my partner was not there.

(2) Did you use, in any interaction, the topic suggestions offered by the teachers? *

- Yes
 No

(3) If the answer is yes, what did you think of the possibility of having these topic suggestions?

They were good for spurring conversation that we would not naturally go to.

(4) If the answer is no, why did you think it's unnecessary these topic suggestions?

Not Applicable

(5) How have the teletandem interactions impacted/helped your language and cultural development? Explain and give examples of learning. *

I am definitely more comfortable just speaking Portuguese in general. I still slip and forget to conjugate properly like I would if I were writing instead of speaking. I don't think my writing ability improved at all though. I also learned surprising things about Brazil that I wouldn't necessarily think about.

(6) What would you change about the way the interactions in the Portuguese course are organized? *

I prefer to have one-on-one conversations when I'm speaking Portuguese because I feel like I'm always uncomfortable with the language. Any point that we would have groups of three or more, I would speak less often because it was easier to allow my classmates that were more comfortable to speak. I liked Teletandem because it was just one-on-one.

Figura 6. Respostas estudante A

6 Rozana Messias, adaptado de QUESTIONNAIRE (TELLES, 2015).

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(1) Describe the difficulties you encountered during the 12 Teletandem interactions regarding:(a) Logistics:(b) Brazilian partner (level of proficiency, commitment to interactions):(c) Mediator support: *

besides one interaction where a storm in Brazil caused the wifi to cut out, no problems!

(2) Did you use, in any interaction, the topic suggestions offered by the teachers? *

Yes
 No

(3) If the answer is yes, what did you think of the possibility of having these topic suggestions?

It was helpful to have a guiding topic.

(4) If the answer is no, why did you think it's unnecessary these topic suggestions?

(5) How have the teletandem interactions impacted/helped your language and cultural development? Explain and give examples of learning. *

Yes. I learned about the differences in culture from personal interaction. Language-wise, my partner helped me to trust myself and be more confident in trying to speak.

(6) What would you change about the way the interactions in the Portuguese course are organized? *

I think they were organized perfectly.

(7) Would you do teletandem again? *

Yes
 No

Figura 7. Respostas estudante B

Para o presente estudo, centraremos nossa observação nas questões (1) *Describe the difficulties you encountered during the 12 Teletandem interactions regarding: (a) Logistics, (b) Brazilian partner (level of proficiency, commitment to interactions), (c) Mediator support;* (5) *How have the teletandem interactions impacted/helped your language and cultural development? Explain and give examples of learning* e (6) *What would you change about the way the interactions in the Portuguese course are organized?*

No tocante à questão 1, sobre as dificuldades encontradas durante as 12 interações, a estudante A expõe que considera a logística fácil, todavia, o mais importante em sua observação é a análise de sua própria proficiência para falar português, em comparação com a parceira que possui mais facilidade com o inglês: *“She very good at speaking English but I think, like me, she has difficulty understanding it when spoken to her”*. A consciência de sua dificuldade, pensamos, levou ao esforço despendido para fazer-se compreender. Suas afirmações, com relação às questões 5 e 6 sobre o impacto das sessões do teletandem no seu desenvolvimento linguístico e a possibilidade de proceder a alguma alteração no modo como as interações foram organizadas, são muito importantes para esclarecer a influência dessa prática no desenvolvimento de sua competência comunicativa oral. Destacamos suas respostas:

I am definitely more comfortable just speaking Portuguese in general. I still slip and forget to conjugate properly like I would if I were writing instead of speaking. I don't think my writing ability improved at all though. I also learned surprising things about Brazil that I wouldn't necessarily think about. (Resposta questão 5)

I prefer to have one-on-one conversations when I'm speaking Portuguese because I feel like I'm always uncomfortable with the language. Any point that we would have groups of three or more, I would speak less often because it was easier to allow my classmates that were more comfortable to speak. I liked Teletandem because it was just one-on-one. (Resposta questão 6)

A estudante demonstra que se sente mais confortável falando português, depois da experiência de teletandem e reforça também a vantagem de poder falar com uma pessoa (um a um). Em estudo anterior, Telles (2015) já expunha que a maioria dos interagentes de teletandem relatava essa vantagem. Todavia, o diferencial, no caso dessa estudante é a forma como avalia o seu processo e relaciona seu desenvolvimento oral com a prática do teletandem. Isso fica bastante nítido quando demonstra o desconforto com as atividades em grupo, quando preferia deixar que os colegas (que falam melhor) falassem mais do que ela. Nossas observações, durante as aulas, corroboram essa afirmação, pois a aluna falava muito pouco durante as atividades de produção oral nas aulas, em comparação com os demais alunos.

Com relação às respostas da estudante B, acreditamos que, por encontrar-se em um estágio mais avançado de proficiência oral, são mais superficiais quanto ao processo, o que, intuitivos, pode demonstrar sua segurança nas interações. Ela não observa problemas nas interações e expõe que o teletandem a deixou mais confiante.

Yes. I learned about the differences in culture from personal interaction. Language-wise, my partner helped me to trust myself and be more confident in trying to speak. (Resposta questão 5).

O cerne das respostas da estudante B pode ser diretamente correlacionado aos demais dados a respeito de seu desempenho. As observações da professora, que a avalia como boa aluna, o resultado do pós-teste, que mostra sua evolução em relação ao primeiro e, também, nossas próprias observações das aulas e das interações são momentos em que ela sempre demonstrava segurança e uma produção oral esperada para uma classe de português avançado.

- | Desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em PLE: teletandem em foco

Considerações finais

Após rastrear todas as atividades cumpridas pelos estudantes de língua portuguesa de um curso de conversação avançada (com carga horária dividida entre uma aula de conversação e teletandem institucional integrado) de uma universidade norte-americana, durante um semestre letivo, verificamos a concretude do impacto das práticas de teletandem no desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral dos praticantes, a partir da observação pormenorizada dos dados produzidos por duas estudantes. Pelas análises, ainda que de apenas duas estudantes, retratamos que a questão central para mensurar o avanço da proficiência oral atrela-se, bastante, ao momento de aprendizagem em que os estudantes se encontram (básico, intermediário ou avançado) e, também, a como o fenômeno é observado pelo pesquisador. O estudo apresentado no presente trabalho carece, ainda, de aprofundamentos no que tange à análise de outros casos, no mesmo grupo.

Da mesma forma, a aplicação do pré e do pós-teste, defendemos, deve ser revista enquanto prática de avaliação focada na análise externa e poderia, pensamos, servir como mais um instrumento de autoavaliação dos estudantes. Acreditamos, também, que essa prática (de mensurar o avanço) pode ser uma ferramenta motivadora para os aprendizes e constitui um mote para se pensar em metodologias de ensino de línguas que, também, auxiliem os professores a visualizar o fenômeno do desenvolvimento da competência oral, com vistas a potencializar o processo de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas.

Os dados analisados até o momento, por sua abrangência em torno de fenômeno do avanço da proficiência oral a partir da prática de teletandem, demonstram que o impacto dessa atividade pode ser mensurado e avaliado pelos professores mediadores. Todavia, é importante, também, que os próprios estudantes se avaliem e se conscientizem de seu desenvolvimento.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: LOPES MESSIAS, Rozana Aparecida; FERREIRA, Michael J. Desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa oral em PLE: teletandem em foco. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 131-154, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2412>

Submetido em: 17/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 28/12/2018.

TELETANDEM MEDIATION ON FACEBOOK

Mediação de Teletandem por meio do Facebook

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Abstract | Teletandem is a telecollaborative learning context, which involves the process of pairing up language learners of different institutions around the world. Since 2006, institutional teletandem practice has involved the offer of pedagogical mediation to support learners' development. The mediation aims to provide teletandem participants a context for sharing experience and reflecting on their language and intercultural learning process. This article aims at describing the mediation session procedures and the findings of a study carried out during teletandem interactions between students from Brazil and from the United States. A private Facebook group was used to support the contact between the mediator and students of the Brazilian university. In this work, we present the review of the concept of mediation in teletandem and present the results of an interpretivist qualitative analysis that show that the role of the mediator is focused on providing encouragement and guidelines based on teletandem theory and principles. We also point out the study limits and propose some possibilities for future research that might focus on mediation sessions through virtual platforms or social networks.

Keywords | Institutional teletandem. Mediation sessions through Facebook. Role of the mediator.

Resumo | Teletandem é um contexto telecolaborativo de aprendizagem que envolve o estabelecimento de parcerias entre aprendizes de línguas ao redor do mundo. Desde 2006, a prática institucional de teletandem tem envolvido a oferta de mediação pedagógica para dar suporte ao desenvolvimento dos aprendizes. A mediação tem como objetivo prover aos participantes de teletandem um contexto para o compartilhamento de experiências e reflexões sobre seu processo de aprendizagem linguística e intercultural. Este artigo tem como objetivo descrever os procedimentos de mediação e os resultados de um estudo realizado a partir de interações entre aprendizes do Brasil e dos Estados Unidos. Um grupo fechado de Facebook foi utilizado para apoiar o contato entre mediadora e aprendizes de uma universidade brasileira. Neste trabalho, fazemos uma revisão do conceito de mediação no teletandem e apresentamos os resultados de uma análise qualitativa interpretativista que revelam que o papel do mediador é focado na promoção de encorajamento e direcionamentos baseados nas teorias e princípios básicos do teletandem. Apresentamos também os limites do nosso estudo e propomos algumas possibilidades para pesquisas futuras com foco nas sessões de mediação por meio de plataformas virtuais e redes sociais.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem institucional. Sessões de mediação via Facebook. Papel do mediador.

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1. Introduction

Web-based technologies have been providing proficuous contexts for pedagogical instruction in foreign languages. They have also fostered transcultural communication by highlighting possibilities and promoting educational partnerships. According to Vassallo & Telles (2009), the association of image, voice and written resources has reinforced these perspectives of transcultural communication. The authors believe that the learners can now have direct access to daily communication in different languages and with people from all around the world, by using the internet and synchronous communication technologies (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2009).

Schenker (2012) mentions that globalization requires diversified competencies and an education system that focuses on teaching the students the necessary abilities for the new needs and changes. The borders limiting communication between people located in distant geographical areas are shifting and disappearing as technologies and international relations emerge (WELSCH, 1999).

Telecollaboration is of particular interest with respect to Computer Mediated Communication and Computer Assisted Language Learning. According to O'Dowd (2015, p. 63), "one of the essential CMC activities in foreign language education is undoubtedly telecollaboration". Belz (2003) posits that it involves global computer networks to foreign (and second) language learning and teaching in institutionalized settings for internationally-dispersed learners that use it in parallel to language classes in order to support social interaction, and intercultural exchange. She states, "telecollaboration is characterized by institutionalized, electronically mediated intercultural communication under the guidance of a languacultural expert (i.e., teacher) for the purposes of foreign language learning and the development of intercultural competence" (BELZ, 2003).

Several academic institutions in Brazil and around the world have explored the context teletandem to promote telecollaborative partnerships between language learners. Researchers conducted within the *Teletandem Brasil Project* have highlighted the contribution of teletandem for the learners' linguistic and intercultural development (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015; MESSIAS; TELLES, mimeo; ZAKIR; ANDREU-FUNO; ELSTERMANN, 2015). Besides the positive impacts, researchers have also reported challenges such as the necessity of offering learners the opportunity to review and deconstruct stereotypes, bias and misunderstandings that occur in the sessions (ZAKIR, 2016; FRANCO, RAMPAZZO, 2016; SOUZA, 2016).

Based on the challenges described above, we strongly believe that the mediation can enrich the process of learning foreign languages in linguistic and cultural terms in Teletandem. Considering the role and possible impacts of mediation on learners' development, in this article, we focus on teletandem mediation sessions through Facebook. For this purpose, we present an analysis of a mediator's actions towards the demands of a group of Brazilian students engaged in an institutional semi-integrated teletandem partnership in Portuguese and English. The theoretical foundation is composed by studies of the mediation and of the role of the mediator in teletandem (ZAKIR; ANDREU-FUNO; ELSTERMANN, 2015; ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014). Finally, we present the context, procedures, and results of an interpretivist qualitative research about mediation through Facebook.

2. Mediation sessions

The mediation session is an opportunity to maximize the experience of teletandem practice (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015; ELSTERMANN, 2016). Brammerts, Calvert and Kleppin (2001, p. 107) use the term *counselling* to refer to what in the *Teletandem Brasil Project* has been called *mediation*. The authors point that "(t)he goal of every counselling session is to help learners to reflect on the decisions they have taken and/or to prepare new decisions for future action.". According to Guedes Evangelista & Salomão (2019, p. 160), based on Salomão (2011a, p. 659), "[...] the mediator in teletandem is closely linked to the concept in Vygotsky's social theory of knowledge, which addresses the constitution and development of subjects through their social relations and language interaction".

Garcia (2015) acknowledge the mediation as one of the contexts in teletandem that works on what Vygotsky (1991) defines as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept explains the distance between learners' real development, which relates to the learner's capacity of independent problem solving, and his/her potential level of development, determined by the solution of problems that the learner could accomplish with the help of a more capable individual. In this sense, learning in teletandem can happen by the collaboration between partners during the interaction sessions, and between learners and mediators.

The mediation session is also an important context for the teacher-mediator to focus on the intercultural dimension of the teletandem interactions. Such pedagogical aim demands both theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the organization and management of the partnerships on the part of teachers. Andreu-Funo (2015, p. 37) conceptualizes teletandem mediation sessions as:

[...] intriguing contexts in which there is a greater openness to the unusual and, thus, they are contexts for which (c) the planning of teaching and pedagogical activity is also displaced. After all, teachers do not prepare themselves for a conventional class in the same way as they do for a mediation session; there is no rigid pedagogical plan, but there is a policy of language learning under construction that guides the pedagogical action of the mediator.

As highlighted by the author, one of the main characteristics of the teletandem mediation is its openness to the unusual. This happens because its main focus is to provide pedagogical support based on learners' demands that emerge according to their experiences with their partners. Consequently, these necessities may range from linguistic issues to interpersonal and intercultural aspects of the partnerships.

It is important to mention that teletandem mediation sessions may vary on their format due the specificities of each institutional partnership (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015). Depending on characteristics such as time restriction, pedagogical demands, availability of mediator or level of integration to a language course curriculum, for example, mediation sessions can be conducted in different moments and formats. According to the necessities of each context, mediation can be conducted by the teachers synchronously or asynchronously, face to face or through different social media, e-mail or learning environments.

The semi-integrated institutional system of partnerships, which applies to the context focused on this article, for example, involves partner universities that conduct teletandem in different modalities: in an integrated modality, when the practice is integrated to the curriculum of the language course of one of the institutions, and in a non-integrated modality, when the teletandem practice is not integrated to the curriculum of a language course of the partner institution (MESSIAS; TELLES, mimeo). The non-integrated teletandem may require volunteer students for teletandem practice. Therefore, they can do interactions as an extra and optional activity, apart from their classes, while in the partner university that conducts the integrated teletandem, students can do teletandem activities (sessions and mediation) as part of their curricular requirements to complete a language course.

As we can see, despite the differences in the mediation offer, it has been considered of extremely importance in institutional teletandem. In this regard, we emphasize the role played by the mediator in collaboration with the professor/mediator from the partner

institution. The quality of the support offered to students also depend on the mediators dialogue to share their students experiences, compare their demands and negotiate changes during the process. Considering the importance of the mediators, in the section below we briefly describe their roles.

3. The mediator

The mediator in teletandem is usually a professor and/or researcher who is responsible for conducting the mediation sessions with the learners after interactions (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015). His/her importance is highlighted not only when s/he has to manage conflicts, but also as part of a teletandem partnership. The role of teletandem mediators has become more and more important as the project has been institutionalized and most of the interactions are held in groups of students (ZAKIR; ANDREU-FUNO; ELSTERMANN, 2015). We share Andreu-Funo's idea when she asserts that "[...] the mediator has the chance to perform the role of the observer along the interactions and, from his/her observations, he/she may provide relevant issues to maximize the participants' learning process" (2015, p. 40).

We emphasize that autonomy is not taken away from the learners. They are rather challenged towards it. The mediator provides an open and reflective conversation in order to make the learners reflect (SCHÖN, 1983) and evaluate their teletandem experience (MEZIROW, 1991, 2000).

Some recent teletandem researches focused on the synchronous mediation sessions (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015; GARCIA, 2015; ELSTERMANN, 2016) and emphasized the necessity of mediation in institutional teletandem contexts. However, we consider that the role of the mediator is also crucial in an asynchronous contexts such as a Facebook private group. This is the context from where we collected our data for the study described in this article. In the next section, we present our methodological procedures.

4. Methodology

Our study was conducted within the context of a semi-integrated teletandem institutional partnership (MESSIAS; TELLES, mimeo) that was carried out by a public Brazilian university and a private North-American university. The mediation sessions for the students from the Brazilian university, object of analysis in this study, were conducted through a closed Facebook group. The mediator, a Brazilian professor of English, was responsible for creating and adding the teletandem participants to the group.

The Facebook group was chosen because the teletandem interactions were non-integrated and happened during lunchtime for the students in the Brazilian institution and they could not stay after the session for a face-to-face mediation, since they needed to head to the university restaurant, which worked on a strict service timetable. This restriction is also due to the fact that, in this study, most teletandem partnerships carried by the Brazilian university have been conducted as a non-integrated program (MESSIAS; TELLES, mimeo), so, in this modality, the participants and mediators are required to be more flexible to adjust to the characteristics of each partnership. Therefore, depending on the country and the classes, the interactions can take place at lunchtime in Brazil. Many interactions that happen around that time do not allow us to conduct the face-to-face mediation sessions afterwards. Based on that, our decision was to use Facebook in order to keep in touch with our participants and try to share their session experience, and make them reflect about it.

The data collected for the present analysis was generated during the second semester of 2015. The focus of the analysis is the mediation process carried out by the Brazilian mediators and teletandem participants in a Facebook group. Mediators' and teletandem participants' messages on Facebook were shared in Portuguese asynchronously. For the purpose of sharing them in this article, we chose to translate them.

Frequency of participation of the mediators and students/participants were measured in terms of number of postings on Facebook, which is summarized on Table 1, below.

Table 1. Frequency of participation of mediators and teletandem participants on Facebook

Mediator (M)	Nº of posts	Participants (P)	Nº of posts	Participants (P)	Nº of posts	Participants (P)	Nº of posts
Daiane	69	Michel	03	Vivian	09	Adriana	07
		Carla	09	Fernando	06	Tatiana	01
Kátia ³	06	Helen	06	Aline	04	Laura	03
		Julia	06	Jenifer	05	João	01
TOTAL:	75	Leda	06	Lucas	06	TOTAL:	72

³ Kátia was Daiane's advisee and participated in the Facebook group as her assistant in mediating students' messages.

The names of mediators and participants presented on Table 1 are fictitious in order to guarantee their anonymity. Participants of this research signed a consent form allowing the analysis of their data. Daiane's and Kátia's messages posted on Facebook were directed to all participants or were responses to their individual questions or contributions to the suggested debates. As it can be seen on the table, Daiane, one of the authors of this article, was the most active mediator in the group with a total of 69 messages, so the analysis of the data is focused on her role in the interaction with the students on Facebook.

The process of organizing the data consisted of the following steps: (a) reading the Facebook private group posts; (b) separating the general messages (organizational messages, such as general posting requests, management of absences and time changes); (c) separating the mediator's and teletandem participants' messages about each interaction session, and (d) identifying the main themes of each post. The messages were organized on a Google sheet and shared with the authors. Its initial organization revealed the emergence of the following data (a) the most important characteristics of the mediation, (b) the role played by the mediators on the context of Facebook, (c) and the issues that teletandem participants shared. For the purpose of the qualitative analysis of this study, the main themes were summarized and presented on Table 2. Since the focus of this study is on the role of the mediator, the topics identified on Daiane's posts are highlighted in bold on the table below. They will be discussed in the next sections.

Table 2. List of general and subtopics of Facebook posts

Author	General topics	Subtopics
Mediator (Daiane)	Encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcoming; - Compliment; - Motivation.
	Teletandem theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy, reciprocity, separated use of languages and collaboration; - Setting and sharing clear goals; - Negotiating correction; - Focusing on form and content; - Learning strategies; - Drawing attention to (trans)cultural issues and to comparisons.
	Organizational issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post requests; - Time changes due to different time zones; - Management of absences; - Acknowledgement of replacement for missed sessions between partners.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptions Reflection Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner; - Session; - Difficulties; - Expectations - Approached topics. - Interpersonal relations; - Strategies; - Learning process; - Adjustments; - Emotions; - Cultural differences.

The analysis of the Facebook posts is oriented by the themes that were initially identified. By considering the participants' demands, the main foci of our qualitative analysis were: to map (a) the characteristics of this mediation context, (b) the role of the

mediator, and (c) how the mediation was conducted. The excerpts analyzed in this article were originally posted in Portuguese on the Facebook private group and translated into English.

5. Analysis: the role of the mediator

This section is divided into three subsections that refer to the main characteristics identified on the mediator's posts: organizational procedures, messages of encouragement and guidelines, and review of teletandem theories.

5.1 Organizational procedures

As it was mentioned in section 4, Daiane was the mediator of the institutional partnership analyzed in this article. Her mediation process consisted, to a great extent, of providing learners with encouraging messages and in providing explicit orientation (characterized by the use of the imperative mode as shown on the collected data). Organizational issues were also managed by both the mediator and the assistant mediator, Katia. For the purpose of this section, the focus will be on the role of Daiane in the process of encouragement and in providing orientation based on the teletandem theory and principles.

As O'Dowd (2013) describes, telecollaborative teachers have organizational, pedagogical and digital competences. It is possible to identify such characteristics as well as the attitudes of the telecollaborative teachers in the context analyzed in this article. The organizational competences described in O'Dowd's article (2013) refer to the abilities of the telecollaborative teacher to contact partners and establish criteria for online exchanges in an institutional level (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014). In the current phase of teletandem project, there is a network of researchers who establish partnerships among the universities that are involved in the project. Thus, this previous contact between the Brazilian and the American university had already been made by Daiane, the mediator of our research study.

Although it is possible to identify organizational procedures in our data, we consider that they are part of what O'Dowd (2013) includes in the pedagogical competences of the telecollaborative teacher, since s/he

[...] can integrate appropriate assessment procedures and rubrics which accurately reflect the activities which students carried out during their exchange [and] can explain clearly to students what is expected from them during an exchange – deadlines, performance objectives, learning outcomes etc. (O'DOWD, 2013, p. 10).

Considering this, the first characteristic that our data have evidenced was the organizational procedures and reinforcement messages. These indicate the guidelines that the mediator adopts during the mediation process to guide students towards accomplishing the agreements of using the Facebook group to share their experiences. As we can see on excerpt 1 below, the mediator describes the criteria for the postings (in Portuguese or in English) and their purposes (sharing experiences).

Excerpt 1:	Hi, everybody!!!
DAIANE (OCT 3) OPENING MSG 2	<p>I want to remind you, as we talked before, to comment on your teletandem experience here.</p> <p>We are very interested in listening to you and helping you on whatever you need. You can write in Portuguese or English, it is up to you!</p> <p>The important thing is that this is the time for sharing experience. Many times, we grow and start to think about our own practice by listening to the others´.</p> <p>Hope to hear from you soon!</p> <p>Have a wonderful rainy weekend!</p>

Excerpt 1 fulfills what we have just mentioned above from O´Dowd (2013), regarding one of the roles of the telecollaborative teacher in managing partnerships and establishing criteria for the learning process, both in an inter-institutional and in a pedagogical level. Daiane includes and integrates procedures and provide clear explanations on what the students are expected to do when posting on Facebook. Considering an alignment to the theoretical foundation of mediation in teletandem, she presents a flexible rule, seen in “You can write in Portuguese or English”, to encourage learners to share their experiences.

Daiane’s organizational messages, as we can see on the following excerpt, also aimed at reminding students of the changes during the partnerships (cancellations, time changes) and at warning them of the importance of not missing the sessions. Laura and

Natália are mentioned because they had missed an interaction and it was not well seen by the mediator. In order to solve the emergency, two extra students were called to replace them and as they enjoyed the experience, they asked permission to be part of the group. This is only possible if Laura and Natália give up. So that is why the mediator brings this topic to Facebook.

<p>Excerpt 2: DAIANE (OCT 14)</p>	<p>Dear students,</p> <p>We had absences last week and this makes us really sad because your partners from (University) waited for you. Unfortunately, we cannot tolerate absences, as our partners are available during their Portuguese classes. Laura, Natália, there were extra students to replace you last week. Some want to continue, let me know whether you intend to continue or not. I´m waiting for your reply.</p>
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The organization procedures summarized in this section reveal the mediator’s active attention to the whole partnership process. It also shows the necessity of guaranteeing that the students keep their partnerships until the end of the interactions period. It is important to highlight the personal approach used by Daiane to call students’ attention to the impact and consequences of their absences (partners waiting in their Portuguese classes, finding substitute partners and cancellation of the absent students’ participation). Managing student participation in the teletandem sessions was also a great part of the organizational task of the mediator. This was particularly true when we consider the volunteer participation of the Brazilian students and the context of non-integrated teletandem partnerships in the Brazilian university that we focused on this study. In this case, Daiane may have appealed to the frustration that student absences caused to their partners abroad (“We had absences last week and this makes us really sad because your partners from (University) waited for you”). She attempted to develop students’ awareness of the collaboration that is inherent to the Teletandem context.

In this subsection, we described the main organizational issues and how they were presented by the mediator. In the following section, we analyze Daiane’s encouragement messages provided during the mediation process.

5.2 Encouragement messages

Among the characteristics found in Daiane's posts, maybe the encouragement messages have played the most important role in terms of recurrence. Even when the topics of the posts were related to different issues, the mediator would always motivate students to keep their participation and face the possible difficulties reported during the teletandem interaction. In the excerpts below, Daiane's encouragement messages are underlined and in bold.

Excerpt 3: DAIANE	Keep in mind that you should help each other under the learning goals you have! Negotiate, adjust and take advantage of the context and the partnership. Nervousness and shyness are common <u>but</u> , from now on, you will become more confident for the interaction. <u>Keep going and count on me. (Wink emoticon)</u>
Excerpt 4: DAIANE	That's great, Vivian!!! I must tell you that I was worried about your nervousness last week. You will see, from now on , things will flow. <u>Keep going. (Wink emoticon)</u> .
Excerpt 5: DAIANE	Good job, Jéssica!!! I think she will get used to the Portuguese language too, as she listens to you. Let's hope!!! You will be more familiar in the course of time . <u>Go for it!! (Wink emoticon)</u>
Excerpt 6: DAIANE	Hi, Letícia, yes, keeping the same partner tends to be more comfortable and productive, don't you think? <u>I hope you keep the same partner from now on</u> . I am glad things worked out well <i>in spite of</i> the inconvenient. <u>Go for it!!</u>
Excerpt 7: DAIANE	Always provide feedback! This motivates and pushes you on, don't you think? What about the English language? Can you notice the same things? Very good!! <u>Congratulations and go for it!! (Wink emoticon)</u> .
Excerpt 8: DAIANE	Hi, Ana Paula! We don't like absences, do we? <u>But I am glad</u> you talked to another partner and that it was interesting. <u>Keep going!</u>
Excerpt 9: DAIANE	That's great, Juliana!!! Time brings benefits to the partnerships, don't you think? I am glad you are enjoying the experience, learning, helping each other, making friends and having fun. Great!!!! Good luck!

As we can notice, it is possible to identify a pattern in the mediator's messages, since there is a recurrence of the term "Go for it!!!". Such recurrence is possibly related not only to Daiane's positive profile, but also to the context in which the mediation was held. Whereas in a face-to-face mediation session, the whole group is involved in the discussions that emerge after the teletandem sessions, in a Facebook private group, we could observe that the interactions are more frequent between a student and the mediator. Thus, the encouragement messages can be understood as an effective way for the mediator to keep in touch with students and to motivate them to solve some of the difficulties reported in the subsequent teletandem interactions. Daiane's efforts are clearly seen and also her will for a comfortable and pleasant telecollaborative experience in language learning.

Another characteristic that can be evidenced in Daiane's posts is her focus on the students' development and on the good aspects of the teletandem interaction that they report. The use of the adversative conjunction "*but*" in excerpts 3 and 8 and the concessive conjunction "*in spite of*" in excerpt 6 provides evidence that Daiane considers the difficulties but acknowledges the success of each interaction. As an experienced teletandem researcher and mediator, Daiane knows that the first interactions may cause student nervousness and anxiety (ROCHA; LIMA, 2009). However, as the contact between the partners becomes more frequent, these feelings tend to fade. Excerpts 4, 5 and 6 provide examples of that when Daiane uses the adverbs "*from now on*" and "*in the course of time*" to highlight the fact that the next interactions will certainly be more successful. This can also be evidenced in excerpt 9, when Daiane says that time can bring benefits to the partnerships. This is what we have seen throughout the years, partners tend to establish a comfort zone and lower their level of anxiety as time passes by and they develop familiarity. The partnership tends to go beyond the learning exchanges by overcoming anxiety towards friendships.

The excerpts analyzed in this section provide examples of the mediator's role in encouraging students' improvement and development during their teletandem interactions. Through direct contact with each student, Daiane reinforces what she has been working on and she tries to counteract the difficulties that are typical of first contacts between telecollaborative partners.

In the next section, we focus on how the mediator provides guidelines to students and revisits teletandem theories through the Facebook mediation section.

5.3 Providing guidelines and revisiting teletandem theories

The principles of autonomy, reciprocity and separated use of languages (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006), which have grounded teletandem interactions, are based on tandem principles, as described by Schwienhorst (1998) and Brammerts (2002). Mediation sessions via Facebook have shown themselves to be an effective context either to introduce or to revisit these principles through the mediator's posts. In the excerpts below, the reference to teletandem theoretical principles and characteristics are underlined and highlighted in bold.

Excerpt 10: DAIANE	Let your goals evident to your partner so that she will be able to help you and the gains will be clearer. Remember the <u>reciprocity, autonomy and separated use of languages</u> teletandem principles. Best wishes!! (Wink emoticon).
Excerpt 11: DAIANE	Remember the <u>principle of reciprocity</u> and think about how you can help your partner to take greater advantage of the experience. Always negotiate, seek adjustments and enjoy the most. I wish you very productive interactions! Count on me to whatever you need! (Wink emoticon).
Excerpt 12: DAIANE	Be attentive for the Spanish language and establish, with her, the correction criteria you will follow. It is important that both of you tell each other how you would want/like to be corrected. Then you will avoid problems. Remember that <u>you must help each other and this has to be reciprocal</u> . I wish you an amazing experience. (Wink emoticon).
Excerpt 13: DAIANE	Hi, Juliana!! The themes you went through are very interesting! I emphasize what you said: " <u>we help each other</u> "! This is the key for any partnership, both of you need to be aware of helping each other towards learning. Very nice!! (Wink emoticon).

Excerpt 14: DAIANE	Yes, I think it is important that you <u>negotiate, between yourselves, what you consider more productive.</u> I agree that the interaction should not become “a boring class” but I also think that pronunciation/particularities of languages can reinforce the learning goals you have for the partnership. It is good to remember that <u>teletandem has the learning differential besides a talk to a foreigner.</u> Paying attention to what the partner says and how he does it is essential to provide him feedback afterwards. Have this in mind! Big hug.
Excerpt 15: DAIANE	See how interesting it is: he takes notes, is attentive and has efforts to communicate. Those things show that <u>teletandem is not a mere chat but a context for learning!</u> Good luck!!
Excerpt 15: DAIANE	Remember that the partnership is about <u>helping each other in learning.</u> Negotiate with your partner, discuss the correction criteria and ways of correcting. In teletandem, we develop the ability to listen to what the partner says (but also to HOW he says something). Good luck!!

One of the most recurrent characteristic in Daiane’s approach to provide guidelines is the use of imperative mode. She also gives several general statements defining what teletandem practice is or is not by referring to the teletandem main theoretical concepts. This form of approach can be observed in excerpts 10, 11, 12, in phrases such as “*Make your goals evident*”, “*Remember the principle of reciprocity and think how [...], always negotiate, seek adjustments [...]*”, “*Be attentive [...]*” *Remember that you must help each other and this has to be reciprocal.*”

Explicit orientations are present, to a great extent, in Daiane’s replies to the learners’ posts. Due to the space restriction and to our purpose of analysis, there is no space in this article to analyze these posts. Nevertheless, we can observe that this pattern (use of imperative mode and general and conclusive statements about teletandem) and the focus on the basic teletandem principles (reciprocity, autonomy, separated use of languages) tended to be present in Daiane’s replies. Regardless of the content of the participants’ messages, she always replied to their demands and also added recommendations. This recurrence may result from the limitations of the context to approach more specific issues in depth and from the previous experience in which learners would not follow the principles and have the results far from expected.

Therefore, Daiane keeps motivating and providing students with instructions, warnings and inspirational words. These basic teletandem principles promote collaboration and learning. Moreover, the emphasis on the main teletandem principles, mainly presented in the imperative mode, may indicate the need to distinguish the teletandem context from other practice and learning contexts as she mentions on excerpt 15: 'teletandem is not a mere chat but a context for learning'. This understanding is crucial to learners when having teletandem interactions.

Daiane's posts also demonstrate her concern to remind students of how different teletandem interactions are from casual/daily conversations (excerpt 12, 14, 15). According to Telles (2009), this difference is marked by the fact that learners are supposed to listen to the partner and develop the ability to pay attention to what they are saying as well as how things are being said. Since the goal of the interactions is helping a partner to learn a language, negotiation of strategies, discussion of topics and different ways of correction are central in the teletandem context.

In the following section, we present some final considerations regarding the Teletandem mediation sessions on Facebook.

6. Final remarks

In this work, we approached the mediation conducted in a private Facebook group. Considering the characteristics of this social media and the limitations of the mediation for the analyzed group, this study raises questions about the role of the mediator and the implications of teletandem mediation on Facebook.

Relevant issues from the Teletandem interactions could be revisited in the mediation sessions and then work as a trigger brought to the group. The person who plays the mediator role should be sensible to explore the mediation moment in order to develop the intercultural competence and more reflexive and autonomous actions.

The mediation sessions in the teletandem context demand a great participation of the mediators/ teachers. They should be a moment to explore and reinforce the subjects and situations lived and brought to learners in interactions. From the time the mediator creates a positive atmosphere, the learners start to realize that sharing contributes to her/his own benefits and to the other's. Feedback from the interactions and the experience is of great importance and can work as a guideline to move back and forth, demanding more specific actions.

We recognize the potential of face-to-face meeting to the participants for the mediation sessions. The visual and extra-visual communication are of great support as well as the promoted interaction among the participants and mediator. However, considering our constraints, the Facebook mediation made itself new and stressed its importance in this experience. The presented findings suggest that Facebook was a suitable alternative for the mediation. Given the fact that this social network is of easy access and used by most of the Brazilian learners who participated in this study, the interaction and visualization of the shared messages were facilitated in this context. Besides that, the participants could share their experiences during the best time for them, which has solved the problem of not having face-to-face mediation sessions due to lunchtime in Brazil.

On the other hand, the asynchronous nature of Facebook posts may have had some impact on the role of the mediator. According to the presented analysis, we can highlight her efforts to keep learners' motivation and participation in the group, either commenting on their messages or drawing their attention to the importance of posting in the group. Nevertheless, such a characteristic might have led the posts to be more related to foster motivation than to promote collective reflection through interaction (ANDREU-FUNO, 2015).

Analyzing the posts in our data, we identified that the most recurrent type of message is the one in which the mediator encourages learners' participation both in teletandem sessions and on the Facebook mediation private group. The mediator seems to be aware of her limited access to solve or to "guide" immediately all the participants' issues and revolves to teletandem principles to encourage them to continue discussing the topics they mention on the posts. This has proven to be possible to address immediately in face-to-face mediation sessions.

In regards to the learners' contributions to the group, when reading the messages and reports from each other, reflection processes on their own learning were expected to be developed. The participants were offered support to get back to their own comments as a form of growing, evaluating and following-up their experiences. It is possible to notice progress in the reports when the participants describe their interaction sessions and that offers information for the mediator to evaluate the group, their actions and needs and provide support/help.

The mediation session via Facebook shows the presence of the mediator, although the expectations of promoting deep reflection are not completely fulfilled, maybe, among other reasons, due to the fact that emphasis was given on keeping students' motivation. This does not mean, however, that this type of context for mediation sessions is not

important nor help the learners. It is part of the Teletandem institutionalized partnerships as long as it foresees both the teletandem interactions and the mediation sessions.

The present study has some limitations that should be noted. The most important one is the restriction of the analysis to the mediator's messages. Considering the large amount of data generated in the exchanged messages on Facebook, for the purpose of this study we focused on the role of the mediator. Since our scope of analysis was previously delimited, further studies could approach the interaction between the mediator and the teletandem participants. It would be also fruitful to pursue further research about the differences between face-to-face mediation and mediation in online contexts. This kind of research would contribute to the development of mediation practices and approaches.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: GARCIA, Daniela Nogueira de Moraes; SOUZA, Micheli Gomes de. Teletandem mediation on Facebook. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 155-175, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2400>

Submetido em: 12/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN ETANDEM: AN EXPANDED VISION OF CAPABILITIES AND PRACTICES

Novos caminhos em eTandem: uma visão expandida de capacidades e práticas

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Abstract | Autonomy and reciprocity, two central tenets of eTandem, are not ideologically neutral terms. In light of new technological opportunities and pedagogical directions in higher education, current formulations of these concepts are perhaps too narrow to accommodate the full range of collaborative activities available to instructors and students. For better or worse, education assumes a significant and definitive role in the market economy. The public-private distinction is not an actual binary: it is more accurately understood as a spectrum, and educational institutions function dually as hybrid recipients and benefactors of economic activity. eTandem is an excellent foundation, but teachers should not feel limited in its scope and purview. By reflecting on instructional activity and observation in Arabic, Italian, and Spanish courses at the University of Richmond, this article presents different interpretations of eTandem. The traditional model can be enhanced with related tools and methodologies to engage students more deeply, and challenge them to push the boundaries of their language, abilities, and knowledge. While additional SLA research would be needed to confirm the transference of learning outcomes of both models through comparative evaluative metrics, this article outlines ideas for instructors to commence new directions in eTandem, and consider improvements to long-standing practices.

Keywords | eTandem. Autonomy. Reciprocity. Private Sector Partners. L2 Instructional Technology.

Resumo | Autonomia e reciprocidade, dois princípios centrais do eTandem, não são termos ideologicamente neutros. Com o advento de novas oportunidades tecnológicas e diretrizes pedagógicas na educação superior, as formulações atuais destes conceitos talvez sejam muito limitadas para acomodar todas as possibilidades de atividades colaborativas disponíveis aos professores e alunos. Bem ou mal, a educação assume um papel significativo e definitivo na economia de mercado. A distinção entre o público e o privado não é, de fato, binária: deve ser entendida como um espectro, e as instituições educacionais funcionam duplamente como recipientes híbridos e benfeitores de atividades econômicas. O eTandem é uma excelente base, mas os professores não deveriam limitar-se somente ao seu escopo. Através da reflexão sobre as atividades educacionais e a observação dos cursos de árabe, italiano e espanhol na Universidade de Richmond, este artigo apresenta interpretações diferentes de eTandem. O modelo tradicional pode ser incrementado com ferramentas e metodologias que motivem e desafiem os alunos a fim de expandir seus horizontes linguísticos, suas habilidades e conhecimento. Embora sejam necessárias mais pesquisas em aprendizagem de segunda língua para confirmar os resultados de aprendizagem dos dois modelos através de uma avaliação, este artigo propõe ideias para que os professores iniciem novos caminhos em eTandem e considerem inovações para práticas estabelecidas.

Palavras-chave | Reciprocidade. Parceiros do setor privado. Tecnologia na aprendizagem de segunda língua.

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- | New directions in etandem: an expanded vision of capabilities and practices

Introduction

The three core principles of teletandem established by João Telles, drawing on the foundational definitions of tandem pedagogical models by Helmut Brammerts (2002), include autonomy, reciprocity, and separate use of both languages (TELLES, 2015; BRAMMERTS, 2002). By providing students with “a virtual, collaborative and autonomous context...in which two students help each other to learn their own languages (or language of proficiency),” instructors involved in tandem learning initiatives seek to develop partnerships with other institutions, usually across national borders, to facilitate productive exchanges. These activities tend to be oriented toward the common goals of promoting increased linguistic ability, intercultural competence, and multi-perspective debate. For instance, Brazilian students can practice their English with American peers. By comparing American culture with their own, they have the opportunity to reflect on their own identity, and thus to develop their intercultural skills. In turn, American students gain the unique chance to speak with native speakers of Portuguese, and to expand their horizons by learning about a culture with which they could not otherwise engage at a deeper, more ‘authentic’ level (GILMORE, 2007; MISHAN, 2005).

Authenticity is a topic that foreign language instructors need to engage critically, since there are often gaps between materials presented in textbooks and content produced by or familiar to native speakers. The situation is complicated, moreover, by the perceived function of English as a lingua franca, student motivation related to these concerns, and the difficulty of texts and activities corresponding to course levels. eTandem is an instructional practice worthy of reduplication, but the theoretical parameters of associated practices should be flexible enough to accommodate exciting opportunities for pedagogical experimentation and growth. As the 2018 IMFLIT (International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in Tandem) conference hosted at the University of Miami demonstrated, tandem learning has made possible the creation of a large network of practitioners who speak the same pedagogical “language,” and share a commitment to enhancing language and cultural learning in different parts of the world, across diverse disciplinary arenas of inquiry.

In describing the overarching pedagogical model, instructors and practitioners tend to use the terms of ‘teletandem,’ ‘eTandem,’ and ‘learning in tandem’ interchangeably. This practice has also been adopted by Telles (2015), and this article upholds the same convention. The progression of rhetoric used to refer to exchanges between students at different institutions through online collaborations has undergone marked transformations as technology and theory have brought to light new directions and realizations for

communicative opportunities. The multiplicity of nomenclatures and parlances used to describe the practice underscores the evolving nature of the instructional method as a whole, and speaks to the fluidity of forms that fall under its operative umbrella of classification.

Autonomy and reciprocity, two central tenets of eTandem, are not ideologically neutral terms. Firstly, from the perspective of autonomy, the pedagogical model stresses a spontaneous conversational setting, where students get to “choose what to talk about, and to manage their own learning by giving them the freedom to choose their favorite resources and activities” (TELLES, 2015). The model presumes that tandem learning exchanges simultaneously contribute in a mutually beneficial manner to the objectives of both instructors. Taking backward-course design directives into account, even within a single university, department, or program, it is exceedingly difficult to find two courses with identical goals, activities, assessments, and learning outcomes. This prospect becomes even harder in coordinating curricular connections between two institutions in different countries and education systems.

In short, seemingly no two courses have the exact same objectives and metrics to evaluate success. While students undoubtedly enjoy the increased ‘freedom’ of autonomous exchanges, the open-ended nature of their communication requires extensive “orientation” and “mediation” sessions to coordinate the activities toward common goals, and even then, there is no telling if the eTandem will serve to enhance specific outcomes of each course. Aside from Telles, A.K. Elstermann also endorses “orientation” and “mediation,” but too little is mentioned about the difficulties of facilitating the convergence of goals in different courses, departments, and institutions (ELSTERMANN, 2017). The disciplinary assignments of the two courses may be too far afield for this mutual benefit to transpire efficiently. For instance, will an ESL course taught in Mexico necessarily align with a second-year Spanish course in the US? What about the correlation, moreover, between cultural subjects and language courses? While there will undoubtedly be certain synergies and overlaps between the two instructional contexts combined separately in tandem, direct contributions to more specific course objectives, including critical thinking skills, qualitative reasoning, abstract analysis, and progress towards proficiency benchmarks relative to individualized learning plans, student portfolios, and curricular standards will be difficult to articulate, let alone successfully fulfill.

The notion of reciprocity also entails a wide range of manifestations. The methodological premise presumes an equal exchange, in which the giver is also a receiver of language instruction, and vice versa (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006). Everyone gains from the relationship, precisely because it does not involve a monetary transaction, and because

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no participants assume a direct financial or material obligation to their partner(s). When it works well, tandem learning can function as an economic equalizer of sorts, facilitating non-commercial exchanges between and within the West and Global South. Aside from cost-prohibitive and time-intensive opportunities for direct contact through travel, tandem learning represents one of the only ways to effectively connect students in different parts of the world, empowering them to forge relationships and engage global dialogues in the face of stark material disparities. By providing free educational exchanges, eTandem provides an invaluable service in the context of communication and networking systems in an imperfect post-colonial world. Aside from representing a pedagogical principle, the ascribed vision of “reciprocity,” consequently, also embodies a political ideal.

Advances in videoconferencing technologies have made both free and for-profit exchanges viable, but only the latter assumes sustainability as a dynamic hybrid business-educational model. For-profit sites more effectively accommodate the busy schedules of instructors by offering on-demand tandem exchanges, providing adaptable contexts for improved inclusion in established course goals and assignments, and offering technically compatible interfaces for documenting activities and learning outcomes in existing learning management systems, such as Blackboard, Canvas, Sakai, etc., relative to the retention, analysis, and ongoing progression of collected exchanges. There are numerous pedagogical directions that can both advance and benefit from the objectives of eTandem. By providing a section detailing possibilities for technological experimental and growth, this article outlines ways in which eTandem could easily coincide with ePortfolios, project-based language learning, intensive thematic instruction, and digital storytelling. In a for-profit exchange, students from the paying institution retain the right to the original recordings, whereas in a free, fully ‘reciprocal’ model they do not, and future access to the recordings hinges on the mutual media consent release of both parties. This puts limitations on the kind of work students can do after the associated exchanges in terms of integrating eTandem activities into other course objectives, assignments, and assessments.

Within the strict parameters of the theoretical basis set forth by Telles (2015) and Brammerts (2002), no tandem learning is possible if there is no reciprocity and the relationship between two parties becomes transactional. In practice, however, the powerful methodology and pedagogical goals that underlie tandem learning can still apply to these new language exchanges. For instance, even when the exchange is facilitated by a private company, students are still given the chance to interact with a native speaker in real time and on their own terms. They can also reflect productively on the nature of the bond that they are forming with another person and, as we would like to argue in this article, think about the tension between cultural dialogue, socioeconomic perspectives

on global events, and language learning through broadened exposure to representatives of different dialects and regions from the target subject. There is another aspect of online video language services to consider here. For instructors concerned about the time commitment of setting up tandem relationships and the scheduling and technological difficulties inherent to these exchanges, for-profit companies provide a turnkey product, with a low threshold to start experimenting with high-impact practices, and the possibility to discontinue the relationship quickly if it does not work well. Paradoxically perhaps, these new services hold a potential to make language e-learning more widespread, and to encourage instructors to move eventually to the more traditional tandem model involving free exchanges.

Over the last five years or so, many new companies from the private-sector have started offering language learning services online, often by selling the services of a native speaker of a particular language to students learning that language. Examples of these websites include TalkAbroad, iTalki, Tandem, LingoGlobe, Speaky, Wespeke, and Boomalang, just to name a few of the more popular interfaces. In these exchanges, one side buys a service while the other receives compensation for it – and a private company takes a cut as an intermediary for coordinating the collaborative meetings, providing an improved VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technical interface, as well as preserving recordings of all assignments and interactions. Since these companies work with multiple universities, they could eventually provide qualitative and quantitative feedback of student progress, abilities, and activity models relative to national and international data sets.

Despite the proliferation of these services, which in turn indicate the increased popularity of the for-profit model in higher education, Telles argues that they do not adequately exemplify the model of teletandem, on the grounds that “these initiatives do not offer links between institutions, [and] the three distinct modes of implementation have an impact on the ways, on the responsibility, and on the seriousness with which the students consider the practice” (TELLES, 2015). This article challenges the notion that for-profit language services could be viewed as completely lacking autonomy and reciprocity, following the formulation by Telles. The realization of these key principles in paid exchanges does not occur as a binary, e.g., off or on, yes or no, present or absent. We argue that it is more appropriate to accommodate varying permutations of these notions along the dynamic private-public spectrum, which corresponds more realistically to the financial composition and role of higher education as a whole in the twenty-first century.

Our goal in this paper is two-fold: first, we will describe and reflect upon pilot programs implemented in the Departments of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (LLC) and Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies (LALIS) at the University of Richmond

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that seek to achieve pedagogical outcomes similar to those made possible by eTandem learning. Second, we would like to consider eTandem as a set of pedagogical practices, which while grounded in notions of dialogue, autonomy, reciprocity, performativity, and discourse analysis, encompass a much broader set of activities than those mentioned by João Telles in his keynote address at the IMFLIT conference (TELLES, 2018). This article particularly explores re-evaluations of autonomy, reciprocity, and the separation of languages as areas that could benefit from expanded pedagogical application and practices. In light of changing technology, authentic interactions between different cultural perspectives, and linguistic research, eTandem is an evolving model that benefits from the ongoing consideration of and experimentation by dedicated instructors, motivated students, and collaborative partners across both the private and public sectors to offer improved learning outcomes.

Case Study 1: Traditional eTandem between UR and UAEH

Throughout the spring of 2018, the Global Studio language lab helped to connect an intensive second-year Spanish course, LAIS 221, at the University of Richmond with a series of English courses taught at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo (UAEH). The open-ended discourses provided an enjoyable language exchange that convened on two separate occasions, once on February 16, and again on April 5. In the first exchange, students connected in an open format to discuss any topic of their choosing. Most discussed details about their daily routines, college activities, social networks, and families. Subsequently, in the second connection, students explored the more complicated themes of politics, the media, and fake news. Based on the results from a brief poll conducted via a simple Google Form in April 2018, 11 of 15 the UR students evaluated the enjoyment and usefulness of the activities at an 8 or higher on a scale from 1-10. While the students successfully completed the exercises, coordinating the event did not unfold without its fair share of difficulties.

To preserve the privacy of students in the exchange, we needed first to create dummy Skype accounts to connect with our counterparts at UAEH. Due to increased security measures, Microsoft (the parent company of Skype) now requires cell phone numbers and email addresses from individual subscribers to both place and receive calls. Fortunately, our colleagues at UAEH had more experience in coordinating these connections, and they were able to lend us passwords and accounts to conduct the calls with greater anonymity. If there are a limited number of generic Skype accounts in circulation for eTandem purposes, this challenge could prove an insurmountable obstacle

for U.S. institutions bound by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) compliance regulations, which stipulate the law-binding needed to protect and prevent student data from being shared involuntarily. Asking students to use their personal accounts in a mandatory course exercise coordinated in conjunction with another institution could unwittingly expose universities, departments, and coordinating faculty to lawsuits and liabilities.

Leading up to the calls, moreover, it proved necessary to conduct a lengthy test of the bandwidth capabilities and audiovisual resources in the Global Studio lab. As a technical interface, Skype is a fairly robust program that requires a great deal of bandwidth to conduct a conversation without delays and splotchy signals. Holding calls from 19 computers simultaneously tends to put a drain on the local network. Including the separate Skype Call Recorder interface to automate the process of capturing the exchanges in a meaningful pedagogical manner involves numerous moving technical components.

Prior to the eTandem exchanges, the associated orientation, mediation, and logistics of pairing students between the two schools proved effective, but required patience, understanding, and flexibility. After introducing the instructors at both UR and UAEH, our connected group of lab support partners depended on their correspondence to establish themes, guidelines, and expectations. The two-hour difference between Hidalgo and Richmond evoked a modicum of stress, especially as late arrivals and unexpected absences made it necessary to make last-minute adjustments. Due to incongruous enrollment figures, students ended up working in groups of threes, and we sometimes adjusted partners mid-conversation to help pair-up students who arrived after the exchange had already begun. Additionally, while explaining guidelines to the students regarding which language to start with, suitable discussion topics, and frameworks for reflection, calls started to come in around the lab, which interrupted initial discussions. While some students requested to be paired up with a specific partner from the first exchange in the second connection, it became exceedingly difficult to determine at the last minute where these students were sitting, and which anonymous account they were using to participate in the call.

This case study shows the difficulty of implementing a traditional eTandem partnership. Even with good will and great effort on the part of the lab coordinators and instructors to facilitate successful exchanges, it is hard to preserve the core elements of the tandem model when each group's needs are not perfectly aligned. Here, for instance, students had no real individualized autonomy since they worked in small groups and could not in most cases develop a long-term relationship with their tandem peers. As we saw, eTandem practitioners also have to navigate constantly shifting technological and

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legal landscapes. A sudden drop in bandwidth could endanger months of planning. In the United States, in particular, new laws protecting student privacy could put the very notion of autonomous and reciprocal exchange at risk. Instructors could increasingly have to prepare waivers for their classes to sign in order not to run afoul of state or federal rules. Finally, it is clear that the idea of reciprocity cannot conceal the fact that setting up the logistics of exchange, orienting staff and students, and troubleshooting issues is extremely labor intensive and stressful. In many cases, that labor comes on top of other responsibilities and is not adequately compensated. Too often, the compensation comes from the pleasure of connecting students with each other, even when adjustments and compromises need to be made. The eTandem exchanges between UAEH and UR students proved successful, and most of the students indicated that they would enjoy communicating with their partners in subsequent independently coordinated conversations of their own volition. For the most part, the students all got along, they enjoyed learning about each other, and they exchanged meaningful, authentic details about their cultural contexts.

Case Study 2: Teaching Arabic Remotely

Technological innovation in the field of video-conferencing has greatly simplified the logistics involved in teaching remotely and has lowered the cost of access for many institutions. It has created new opportunities for American universities to offer beginning courses in languages that could not otherwise be taught on campus. This is particularly true for small liberal arts colleges: with enrollment topping at 3000 students, it is financially difficult to staff programs in less-commonly taught languages since the number of interested students would be too low to justify hiring a full-time faculty, or sometimes even an adjunct instructor. Two organizations to which the University of Richmond belongs, the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC) and the Associated College of the South (ACS) have given their members support and incentives to implement remote teaching programs.

Over the past four years, our Arabic Studies program has provided remote access for our beginning and intermediate courses (101, 102, 201, 202) to students at other Virginia colleges. The number of enrolled students is typically low (with a maximum of two students per course) and not all courses have remote students. The courses meet four times a week. Students from partner institutions attend every class session remotely using either the Cisco Polycom System or Lifesize, depending on the technical resources and infrastructure of institutions supporting remote students. The classroom is equipped with two cameras and built-in microphones. Our language resource center, the Global Studio,

hires one student to operate the cameras and troubleshoot any technological difficulties. The instructor is thus free to focus on his lesson plan and teach as he normally would in a non-remote setting. Remote students have access to the same resources as their peers: they take part in in-class activities, are asked to participate in group and individual assignments, and can ask questions when necessary. The instructor also offers office hours by Skype and travels to the partner school to meet the students in person when possible.

In our experience, remote teaching facilitates the implementation of two new types of tandem connections. First, the remote student and the instructor work in tandem in a unique teaching and learning relationship. The goal is to preserve to the greatest extent possible all the core elements of the class and to create a powerful relationship built on regular online interactions between teacher and learner. Each party is giving and receiving, in very much the same way that both teachers and students give and receive in a regular classroom. The teacher shares knowledge and puts into place activities and assessments meant to maximize the acquisition of communicative skills. In exchange, she is compensated for her labor but also observes the student's intellectual growth and language gains. Students are on the receiving hand of the teacher's work, of course, but they also fulfill their part of an implicit contract by following instructions and working diligently in and outside of class. Remote teaching, because it is not a "standard" way of learning, lays bare the reciprocal nature of this relationship for students and teachers alike and allows them to think critically about what is happening in an exchange that we have come to take for granted.

The second type of tandem made possible by remote teaching lies in the possibility for several schools to help each other and coordinate their language offerings. As of now, our Arabic studies program is "giving" to other schools and, unfortunately, there are no University of Richmond students taking courses remotely at other institutions. But the ultimate goal is reciprocity. The ACS would very much like to support a network of remote offerings built on the strength of each member school. For instance, there is demand at the University of Richmond for Korean and Farsi and our students could benefit from programs offered at other universities. It would mean that language instructors would increasingly need to be trained in the pedagogy of remote teaching. Here, the theoretical and empirical research that has been conducted on tandem learning over the past decade could provide a foundation for developing training programs and doing further methodological research.

We wanted to include this second case study precisely because it broadens Telles' definition of eTandem. Here, we are no longer thinking just of student collaborations but of new modes of teaching made possible by technological advances. If autonomy and reciprocity are the two key components of eTandem learning, is it possible to achieve

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either in new contexts? Our provisional answer is that these goals are transferrable as long as the instructor draws the students' attention to the nature of the relationship being built and asks for a certain level of reflection in the learning process. This case study also sheds light on the fact that reciprocity should be considered at two different levels: reciprocity between institutions as they pull together resources for improving student outcomes, but also reciprocity in the human relationship that results from tandem-type activities. If that form of reciprocity takes place between students learning from each other, then it is also a central aspect of any teaching/learning relationship.

Case Study 3: Intensive Second-Year Italian and TalkAbroad

Exemplifying a kind of 'realpolitik' approach to eTandem, two other colleagues also experimented with remote collaborations between UR students and native speakers of Italian through the paid service of TalkAbroad. From a technical standpoint, TalkAbroad proved to be the easiest paid service to offer enrolled students based on its competitive rates, user-friendly student-instructor interface, and hassle free digital video conferencing platform. The service relies on WebRTC, a browser-based video communication tool that easily integrates with almost every operating system and hardware specifications without requiring a separate installation.

Two models of incorporating TalkAbroad activities were deployed into existing course frameworks. First, one instructor opted to coordinate a series of eight guest interview exercises across two sections of ITAL 221, for a total of sixteen exchanges, throughout the spring semester. Following this method, students prepared scaffolded assignments corresponding to grammatical and thematic units from the assigned textbook in preparation for authentic discussions on these topics with representatives of different Italian dialects and regions. The exercises encouraged students to consider course materials relative to their engagement and perception by actual Italian people in the dynamic, differentiated, and subjective experience of real life. Since the assignments were tailored to echo the progression of linguistic content presented in the textbook, the collaborative communicative exchanges coincided more seamlessly with identified course objectives, the gradual increase of proficiency benchmarks, and diverse learning outcomes deliberately designed by the instructor.

Leading up to the actual guest interviews, the UR teacher addressed preliminary questions about usage, semantics, and cultural norms, and encouraged the students to get personal in the conversation to explore topics related to opinion, belief, and personal experience. Students reported that they enjoyed the TalkAbroad exchanges, and the

activities allowed them the unique opportunity to engage authentic interactions, which exposed them to different voices and perspectives in a collaborative environment that required less stress than parallel assignments completed on an individual basis. TalkAbroad also offers a user-friendly interface that automatically saves and distributes all assignment guidelines, recordings, and course commentary. Following the guest interviews, the instructor assigned students to reflect both on their abilities and the progression of the conversations in group discussion and in short written reflection compositions.

In the second model, a different Italian instructor opted to assign eight 15-minute TalkAbroad sessions to each student throughout the semester. This model was significantly more expensive and time-intensive, since it resulted in a total order of some 200 conversations. The instructor, who teaches jointly at Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Richmond, was able to accommodate this cost by asking students to acquire a small TalkAbroad subscription in their initial textbook purchase at a reduced price offered at scale for the entire program, which was then also partially offset by department funds. Since the recordings compile automatically, the instructor would have immediate access to audio files of the exchanges, as well as brief native-speaker feedback provided by the TalkAbroad partners. After going through each of the individual fifteen-minute conversations, this instructor was able to deliver meticulous, granular recommendations for improvements, corrections, and suggestions to individual students in the act of spontaneous speech. While we did not conduct statistical analysis of how the presented feedback influenced learning outcomes, students indicated that the careful commentary by both their instructor and speaking partner contributed to new linguistic realizations, cultural understandings, and a heightened awareness of how to communicate more clearly with improved mistake correction and mental dexterity to adjust speech accordingly.

At first glance, a paid service like TalkAbroad would seem to be completely antithetical to the tandem model. Carefully constructing assignments, however, makes it possible to preserve many of the central characteristics of eTandem: listening to authentic material, being exposed to a variety of dialects, and benefitting from a collaborative environment. This model also invites a cost comparison between free traditional tandem initiatives and the services provided by for-profit companies. As we argued earlier, the labor involved in tandem relationships is often not properly assessed. With paid services, some of the labor is outsourced and is given an actual “market value.” For instructors weary of the workload involved in launching a reciprocal tandem relationship with a partner abroad, services like TalkAbroad can serve as a first step in the right direction and as a way of experimenting with new pedagogies.

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Additional research would be needed to state whether deploying TalkAbroad in individual or group frameworks in second-year Italian produced better results relative to proficiency gains and course outcomes. For the time being, however, the options of using TalkAbroad for assignments by individual students and group interviews are not mutually exclusive. Instructors are welcome to experiment with both methods in a single course, and decide for themselves in light of the associated workload, ease of use, and student outcomes which model presents the more viable pedagogical practice to follow.

Technology and New Directions for Autonomy and Reciprocity

In light of the innovative and adaptable realizations of eTandem as an overarching pedagogical model, there exist many promising synergies that could arise from its combination with other technologies and methodologies to advance meaningful learning outcomes. For instance, eTandem provides unique frameworks that could simultaneously coincide with project-based language learning (PBLL) objectives, such as ePortfolio creation and collaborative digital storytelling. These initiatives could also benefit from multimedia engagement, including dubbing activities, subtitle creation, and diverse artistic representations of student expression in both synchronous and asynchronous exchanges. In a similar respect, instructors interested in group dynamics could deploy the Comprehensive Assessment of Team Member Effectiveness (CATME- <http://info.catme.org/>) as a means of optimizing outcomes between individuals with different personality traits. A self-assessment by students would allow instructors to pair individuals between different universities toward specific goals and objectives.

The miracle of the internet readily provides a variety of tools, resources, and websites that facilitate the simultaneous creation and revision of dynamic multimedia materials. Students could create ePortfolio resources using free Google Sites, Docs, and Slides, or through institutional corporate models, such as Digication, WordPress, Ning, and Linguafolio. For media creation projects, students could compile clips, songs, and recordings simultaneously from completely different locations using shared interfaces in Adobe Spark, VoiceThread, FlipGrid, and GoReact. Similarly, the browser-based tools, SubtitleHorse, ClipFlair, EdPuzzle and PowToons serve to augment these activities with dictation, dubbing, interactive video exercises, and animations, depending on the scope and outcomes of the given eTandem exchange.

In this vein, aside from talking generally about a broad topic, students could be encouraged to exchange ideas freely in a creative mode that facilitates their shared compilation and retention of resources toward a specific production that would then

represent the holistic sum of their different personalities, opinions, and ideas. Expressed in any range of multimedia formats, these collaborative models would allow students not only to talk obliquely about a given subject, but also to work together toward a common creative goal. How can they make their product, be it a video, blog, composition, collage, or bibliography compelling to the rest of the class? In the traditional eTandem model, how would students even know how their conversations relate to exchanges engaged by the rest of their classmates? Backchannel forums, polls, and surveys conducted via new websites like Padlet and Google Forms allow students to share both qualitative and quantitative feedback about their discussion with their peers, so they could then share important realizations, questions, and endeavors that came from the exchanges. Moreover, having a digital product that students could then share with their instructors and classmates preserves a creative record of the eTandem model relative to both the institutional memory of the participating courses and their sense of connection to their partner(s).

As the technological model for Tandem continues to expand and evolve, instructors, students, and lab support practitioners would be wise to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of various VOIP technologies. Skype as a digital video conferencing platform lacks internal recording capabilities, features compression algorithms that strain limited bandwidth capabilities provided predominantly by university contracts with ISPs, such as Comcast, AT&T, and Verizon. This is another important connection between education and the private sector. Universities rely on the internet for many of its most basic services. This often requires building a partnership with an established ISP to help students access and use the internet as a means of connecting to eTandem partners in other parts of the world. Aside from requiring users to adhere to stipulations that all accounts be registered to specific individuals, Skype as an interface also limits what the instructor can electronically monitor, deliver, and engage.

While this comment borders on dystopian science fiction, the fact that intelligence agencies retain legal access to monitor all unencrypted international VOIP connections comprises a valid concern for instructors. This is undoubtedly a perilous rabbit hole to go down, but this consideration is likely the root cause of the increased security measures that Microsoft recently required of users to register their cell phone numbers and email addresses to activate new Skype accounts. This understanding largely came to light in the revelations of the PRISM surveillance program from the Edward Snowden files, but the external monitoring also likely affects the associated technical reliability of the communicative interface. From the technical perspective of compression, moreover, Zoom handles the sizable audio and video inputs from student participants in a much

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more efficient manner than Skype, and the resulting communications transpire without frequent dropped calls and spotty connections.

Compared to Skype, Zoom, presents a number of promising benefits. Using a paid institutional license, instructors can dole out accounts without tying them to a specific identity or phone number, can observe and record all interactions conducted in an eTandem environment from a single computer, and even facilitate the ease with which different students can be paired and re-paired in groups using its unique breakout room feature. Originally, Zoom was developed as a replacement for legacy PolyCom systems, but its efficiency as a webinar platform, lecture capture interface, and remote learning tool will likely exert immense competitive pressure on similar programs, including Blackboard Collaborate, Adobe Connect, PanOpto, Skype, Camtasia, Evaer, and Skype Call Recorder. Zoom effectively bundles the capabilities of all of these different tools in a single package, and will almost assuredly render previous models obsolete, albeit at the cost of an institutional license. Although access to Zoom requires an initial investment by a single institution, speaking partners invited to participate in the associated exchanges do not need to create or to have their own accounts. A single license is sufficient for both parties, allowing users to connect remotely via both web and phone interfaces.

Expanded Notions of Reciprocity: Exploring New Engagement Strategies in eTandem

The theoretical foundations of eTandem learning lend themselves to reevaluation. Conceptions of dialogue, autonomy, reciprocity, performativity, and discourse analysis espoused by the critical theorists that João Telles highlighted in his keynote address at the IMFLIT conference are all subject to debate (TELLES, 2018). The very foundation underlying the body of practices associated with eTandem could be interpreted relative to a variety of ideological positions and realizations. There are different ways of understanding the canonical instructional theories, philosophers, and authors to advance the legitimacy and effectiveness of pedagogical experimentation, involving permutations of the traditional eTandem model. While Telles has both conducted and cited compelling applied SLA research to promote the effectiveness of eTandem for increased intercultural competence, confidence, and reflection, the underlying theoretical basis of the presiding model is too narrow to accommodate the diverse realizations of successful learning outcomes that can result from combining and expanding its overarching scope in new pedagogical applications.

The extensive writings of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), for instance, support numerous understandings of dialogism, autonomy and reciprocity (BAKHTIN, 1981). Despite his ostensible belonging to the Formalist School (the accursed 'F' word in critical theory), or the study of a text or phrase for its own sake on its own basis without any outside influence, Bakhtin invites increased inspection of his writings relative to the political realities of his life and times (BAKHTIN, 1978). As an advocate of polyphonic dialogue, or many voices in concert, like the setting of a language lab hosting eTandem activities, Bakhtin frames his theoretical perspective as an indirect subversive commentary of the monologic rhetoric of the repressive state (BAKHTIN, 1963; BAKHTIN, 1993). His writings need to be considered relative to the restricted political, economic, and social conditions of life under Soviet socialism (BENNET, 2003). If all endeavors serve the betterment of the state, then the realization of diverse, individualized, and free personas and voices within this society would come to undermine the congruence and unity of the central authority. While the Soviet Union was not devoid of artistic creativity, the expression of authentic beliefs and autonomous participation in the unofficial free market economy of ideas and goods persisted, albeit at the implied peril of participating actors. Consequently, the model of reciprocity presented by Bakhtin, which came to fruition in a context reminiscent of a totalitarian state, could be more completely understood as not dismissing monetary exchanges for educational and creative interactions.

Reciprocity, then, as the manifestation of an abstract ideal can still adhere to the position of Bakhtin in a variety of applied permutations without betraying its original Formalist basis. Several of the presentations at IMFLIT offered interfaces to improve the difficult scheduling and logistical details associated with coordinating eTandem interactions. The Mixxer project hosted at Dickinson College, and Panhora provide technical solutions for instructors and lab technicians to collaborate more efficiently with colleagues at other institutions across different time zones. While these efforts produce meaningful results in line with the ideal of free and direct reciprocity, the amount of energy and resources that goes into developing these ties is immense. The process is especially time-consuming, and it requires extensive investment, testing, and design mediation to develop, market, and deploy a digital platform that people will actually use. As a theoretical extreme, true reciprocity would allow students to coordinate their eTandem interactions with other students independently. The empirical reality, however, generally entails that the onus to set inter-institutional plans for pedagogical exercises and to navigate diverse technical resources falls primarily on the instructors. New technical resources empower students to remain at the center of these initiatives, and academics should not shy away from nor fear the private sector to facilitate these student-focused eTandem connections.

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Conclusion

Education almost assuredly coincides with the transmission of cost. In the United States, even public institutions receive only a partial amount of funding from the state, and the aggregate figure is trending downward nationally. While education is so much more than an economic commodity, the multifaceted services, resources, and expertise that serve to inspire students and help them to grow into mature professionals require great financial input. The cost of increased intellectual capital is immense, benefiting from diverse channels of investment through increased public and private funding. Even as states cut public spending on educational initiatives, private individuals, families, and companies are willing partners to cover the difference in cost. For better or worse, education assumes a significant and definitive role in the market economy. The public-private distinction is not an actual binary. It is more accurately understood as a spectrum, and all educational institutions exist dually as hybrid recipients and benefactors of both poles of economic activity.

eTandem is an extraordinarily effective approach to language instruction, but it is an evolving methodology that benefits from innovation and combination (as it were “in tandem”) with new technologies and pedagogical philosophies. eTandem is an excellent foundation, but teachers should not feel limited in its scope and purview. Why restrict ourselves to the traditional model of eTandem, when the premise can be enhanced with related tools and methodologies to more deeply engage and challenge students to push the boundaries of their language, abilities, and knowledge? Although Telles should be applauded for pioneering best practices associated with eTandem, his view of what counts and what does not from the overarching pedagogical model is too narrow. Additional SLA research would be needed to support the hypothesis that for-profit services provide equal, if not better outcomes, qualified by means of descriptive experiences and impressions, and quantified by increased linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence for students than corresponding traditional models.

The authors of this article would like to express gratitude and appreciation to our colleagues Lorenza Marcin and Martin Sulzer-Reichel for their roles in collaboratively developing and delivering our presentation at 2018 IMFLIT.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: MARSH-SOLOWAY, Michael Abernathy; DELERS, Olivier Michel. New directions in eTandem: an expanded vision of capabilities and practices. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 176-193, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2395>

Submetido em: 12/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

A CORREÇÃO DE ERROS E AS RELAÇÕES ENTRE AVALIAÇÃO POR PARES E AUTOAVALIAÇÃO NO AMBIENTE TELETANDEM

Error correction and the relationships between peer and self-assessment in teletandem

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Resumo | Este trabalho tem por objetivo investigar a correção de erros no contexto teletandem, evidenciando os momentos em que ambos os parceiros se envolvem. O teletandem é uma forma de telecolaboração em que pares de aprendizes de línguas-culturas diferentes interagem virtualmente a fim de aprenderem um com o outro por meio de recursos de texto, áudio e vídeo. Trata-se de um estudo de base qualitativa e interpretativista que utiliza como dados gravações de sessões orais de teletandem. Os participantes são três pares de aprendizes que interagem em português e em inglês. Neste estudo, enfocamos os dados em língua portuguesa e a análise revela que a avaliação por pares envolve não apenas a avaliação do parceiro linguisticamente mais competente, mas, principalmente, a avaliação do próprio aprendiz (autoavaliação) a respeito do que é considerado certo ou errado em sua produção ou compreensão em língua estrangeira.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem. Avaliação por pares. Correção de erros. *Feedback*. Autoavaliação.

Abstract | This paper aims at investigating error correction within teletandem context, shedding light to the moments when both partners are involved. Teletandem is a mode of telecollaboration in which pairs of learners of different languages and cultures are involved in virtual exchanges in order to learn with each other by means of text, audio and video resources. The study is qualitative in nature with an interpretive approach, which uses as data the recordings of teletandem oral sessions. The participants are three pairs of learners who interact both in Portuguese and in English. The analysis focuses the data in Portuguese and it reveals that peer feedback involves not only the assessment made by the partner who is linguistically more competent, but also (and mainly) the assessment made by the learner (self-assessment) about what is considered an error in his oral production or comprehension.

Keywords | Teletandem. Peer Assessment. Error correction. Feedback. Self-assessment.

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Introdução

O teletandem (TELLES, 2015) se caracteriza como um modo de telecolaboração em que pares de aprendizes de línguas-culturas diferentes interagem virtualmente a fim de aprenderem um com o outro por meio de recursos de texto, áudio e vídeo da tecnologia VOIP (como Skype ou Zoom). Tal contexto telecolaborativo bilíngue³ de ensino-aprendizagem se baseia no tandem (BRAMMERTS, 1996), desenvolvido na Europa desde a década de 1960, e tem como princípios norteadores a autonomia, a reciprocidade e a separação de línguas. Lewis (no prelo) destaca que um aspecto essencial à aprendizagem de línguas em ambiente tandem é a correção de erros. Segundo o autor, que se baseia em vários estudos (SOTILLO, 2005; LEE, 2006; AKIYAMA, 2017), nas interações em tandem, o *feedback* corretivo nem sempre é oferecido pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente (o informante linguístico, nas palavras do autor) por uma série de razões, como dificuldades para negociar com o parceiro, questões culturais e de ameaça à face. Porém, nos momentos em que a correção de erros é realizada, observam-se características específicas que envolvem principalmente questões de natureza lexical e pragmática, essenciais para a compreensão e produção de sentidos.

No contexto teletandem, implementado na UNESP desde 2006, essa questão foi investigada por Brocco (2014) e por Aranha e Cavalari (2015), na modalidade escrita, ou seja, no *feedback* escrito oferecido pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente a textos em língua estrangeira. Os resultados desses estudos revelam que o *feedback* corretivo costuma ser prescritivo, com foco na forma linguística. Freschi (2017), por sua vez, analisou os momentos de *feedback* durante a realização das sessões orais de teletandem e seu trabalho corrobora os apontamentos feitos por Lewis (no prelo), uma vez que os parceiros linguisticamente mais competentes nem sempre oferecem *feedback* e, quando o fazem, preferem formas implícitas (como estratégia de salvamento de face do parceiro) e enfocam prioritariamente questões gramaticais, levando em consideração o uso da língua. Os resultados de Freschi (2017) trazem evidências, ainda, sobre o papel que o aprendiz de língua estrangeira (parceiro linguisticamente menos competente) pode ter para a correção de erros, pois observa-se que a ausência de oferecimento de correções pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente pode levar o aprendiz a solicitar *feedback*.

3 Reconhecemos que há outros contextos telecolaborativos de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas. Conferir Lewis e O'Dowd (2016). Entendemos por bilinguismo o contexto em que há a troca de duas línguas, em que os participantes aprendem um a língua do outro.

Esse resultado vai ao encontro de estudos sobre a prática autoavaliativa no teletandem (CAVALARI, 2009, 2011) que mostram que um dos critérios para a autocorreção durante as sessões era a ausência de oferecimento de *feedback* pelo parceiro. Cavalari (2009, 2011) aponta que, ao se corrigir, o aprendiz mostra ao parceiro que tem dúvidas e, em alguns momentos, traz o foco da interação para tais dúvidas, recebendo o *feedback* que esperava.

Os resultados de Cavalari (2009, 2011) e de Freschi (2017) sugerem que, em um contexto telecolaborativo bilíngue como o (tele)tandem, em que a autonomia e a reciprocidade são princípios norteadores da aprendizagem, parece fazer sentido que a correção dos erros seja enfocada tanto sob a perspectiva de quem oferece quanto de quem solicita o *feedback* durante as sessões de teletandem. Nesse sentido, a correção dos erros pode ser caracterizada, conforme sugerido por Freschi (2017), como uma forma de avaliação por pares, sendo os pares compostos por um aprendiz de língua estrangeira e seu parceiro linguisticamente mais competente. Este trabalho⁴, assim, tem como objetivos discutir e caracterizar a avaliação por pares no contexto teletandem, focalizando os momentos em que ambos os parceiros (aprendiz e informante linguístico) se envolvem na correção de erros, buscando estabelecer relações entre a autoavaliação e o oferecimento de *feedback* corretivo.

Teletandem: a modalidade institucional integrada

O *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas Estrangeiras para Todos* (TTD) (TELLES, 2006) é um projeto pedagógico e de pesquisa⁵ que propõe um ambiente autônomo, recíproco e colaborativo de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras (LE) embasado nos princípios do tandem (BRAMMERTS, 1996), com o acréscimo de ferramentas de comunicação síncrona via internet (como MSN, Oovoo e Skype), bem como microfones, *headphones* e *webcams*. Desse modo, o TTD é uma forma de promoção do ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras por meio de encontros virtuais e regulares entre pares de falantes de línguas diferentes que vivem em países diferentes. Nesse contexto, Vassallo e Telles (2006), baseando-se em Brammerts (1996), afirmam que a prática de teletandem é guiada por três princípios teóricos:

- Autonomia: cada participante é responsável pela própria aprendizagem, tomando decisões quanto a seus interesses e preferências;

⁴ Esta investigação constitui um encaminhamento dos resultados encontrados por Freschi (2017).

⁵ Vale destacar que se trata do Projeto Temático FAPESP (processo 2006/03204-2) entre 2007 e 2010.

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- Reciprocidade: cada participante se compromete em apoiar a aprendizagem do parceiro;
- Separação de línguas: os participantes se comprometem em separar o uso das línguas e dedicar igual tempo à prática de cada língua envolvida.

Desde 2006, o teletandem vem sendo implementado na UNESP em diferentes modalidades, cujas características variam de acordo com a integração da prática de teletandem às disciplinas de língua estrangeira e às políticas institucionais das universidades parceiras (CAVALARI, no prelo)⁶. Interessa-nos, neste trabalho, discutir a modalidade institucional integrada, em que o teletandem é realizado como uma atividade vinculada a uma disciplina de língua estrangeira nas duas universidades envolvidas. Na UNESP - São José do Rio Preto, contexto enfocado neste estudo, tal modalidade passou a ser implementada a partir de 2011, em virtude das especificidades de algumas parcerias estabelecidas. De acordo com Aranha e Cavalari (2014) e Cavalari e Aranha (2016), o teletandem institucional integrado (TTDii) se caracteriza como um ambiente híbrido, no qual uma série de interações de teletandem são integradas às aulas de língua estrangeira, de forma que a participação no teletandem traga benefícios para a prática de sala de aula da mesma maneira que as atividades de sala de aula possam trazer benefícios para as interações do teletandem. Para que isso seja possível, Cavalari e Aranha (2016) afirmam que existem três procedimentos pedagógicos essenciais: (i) a preparação dos alunos para a aprendizagem em teletandem, por meio de uma reunião de orientação (tutorial); (ii) a criação de tarefas integradoras, que mesclam a prática de sala de aula à de teletandem; (iii) a implementação de uma avaliação integradora, que leve em consideração a perspectiva do professor, do aluno e do parceiro de teletandem.

As autoras ainda afirmam que essa avaliação integradora é promovida por três agentes: o próprio aprendiz (autoavaliação), o professor da disciplina a qual o teletandem é integrado e o parceiro de teletandem (avaliação por pares). A autoavaliação é estimulada pelas seguintes atividades realizadas pelos participantes brasileiros: (a) reconhecimento de seu nível linguístico no Quadro Comum Europeu de Referência para Línguas, durante o tutorial, ao responder ao questionário inicial, no qual uma das questões é sobre o estabelecimento de uma meta de aprendizagem; (b) escrita de diários reflexivos após cada sessão oral de teletandem; (c) confecção do portfólio e (d) resposta ao questionário final.

⁶ Vide Cavalari (no prelo) para uma discussão detalhada sobre as características das práticas de teletandem implementadas na UNESP.

A avaliação do professor, por sua vez, está relacionada ao desempenho e à participação dos alunos durante a realização das sessões orais. De acordo com Luvizari-Murad (2015), os alunos-participantes recebem uma nota pela participação na atividade de TTDii, que é parte da avaliação da disciplina de língua estrangeira. Essa nota pode compreender: a) a assiduidade nos encontros, b) a produção de textos escritos, c) a correção de textos do parceiro, d) a redação de diários e questionários e e) o armazenamento de todos os documentos citados anteriormente de acordo com a organização estabelecida pelo grupo. Já Cavalari e Aranha (2016) apontam que os critérios de avaliação são decididos pelo professor da disciplina de acordo com a proposta pedagógica adotada. Vale mencionar que Cavalari e Aranha (em andamento) apontam que, nessa modalidade, o professor da disciplina de língua estrangeira desempenha o papel de professor-mediador⁷ que, ao mesmo tempo em que ensina os conteúdos previstos na disciplina, apoia a aprendizagem autônoma em teletandem.

A avaliação por pares ocorre por meio do oferecimento de *feedback* (BROCCO, 2009, 2014; FURTOSO, 2009, 2011; BENEDETTI; GIANINI, 2010; CONSOLO, 2010; MESQUITA, 2010). Aranha e Cavalari (2014) afirmam que esse tipo de avaliação deve ser negociado pelos parceiros e que ela pode ser realizada por meio de oferecimento de *feedback* tanto na modalidade escrita, conforme apresentado nas investigações de Brocco (2014) e Aranha e Cavalari (2015), quanto na modalidade oral, como focado por Freschi (2017).

Neste trabalho, enfocamos a prática avaliativa de dois agentes: o aprendiz de LE e seu parceiro, durante as sessões orais de teletandem, observando, dessa maneira, as relações existentes entre as avaliações promovidas por eles. Discutiremos, na seção seguinte, a perspectiva teórica que nos permite estabelecer relações entre essas duas práticas.

Correção de erros e avaliação

Diferentes estudos na área de avaliação (SCARAMUCCI; 1999; BRINDLEY; 2001; GENESEE; 2001; FULCHER; 2003) apontam que, quanto a seus propósitos, a prática avaliativa pode ser somativa, cujo objetivo é classificar e atribuir notas ou conceitos aos aprendizes, ou formativa, quando tem o propósito de diagnosticar, retroalimentar e contribuir para o processo de aprendizagem. Neste trabalho, a avaliação é concebida

⁷ No teletandem, o professor-mediador é aquele que oferece apoio pedagógico para a aprendizagem autônoma e colaborativa. Em outros contextos de aprendizagem em tandem, observam-se os termos “advisor” ou “supervisor”, em inglês (STICKLER, 2003).

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dentro da segunda perspectiva, a formativa, que joga luz para o processo de aprendizagem (e não para o produto) e valoriza o papel desempenhado pelos diferentes agentes envolvidos nesse processo. A premissa que está por trás de tal perspectiva é que a correção de erros e o oferecimento de *feedback* é uma forma de avaliação formativa e que existem diferentes agentes que podem corrigir os erros e contribuir para a aprendizagem. Isso quer dizer que, além da avaliação realizada pelo professor, é também reconhecida a avaliação feita pelo próprio aprendiz (autoavaliação) e aquela feita por outros aprendizes (avaliação por pares, ou *peer feedback*).

A autoavaliação pode ser definida de acordo com Cavalari (2009, p. 127) como o processo que envolve o julgamento e a reflexão do aprendiz “sobre alguma habilidade linguística ou de aprendizagem, interrelacionando as metas estabelecidas, o uso das estratégias necessárias para alcançar tais metas e os parâmetros e critérios considerados”. Nota-se que essa definição implica que o aprendiz possa avaliar suas habilidades linguísticas, quanto progresso está fazendo e o que pode (ou não) fazer com as habilidades adquiridas.

No que tange à avaliação por pares, especificamente (FORMAN; CAZDEN, 1985; GOLDSTEIN; CONRAD, 1990; DIPARDO; FREEDMAN, 1998; FIGUEIREDO, 2001, 2005, 2015; MIN, 2005; HYLAND; HYLAND, 2006), muitos estudos se baseiam nos pressupostos Vygotskyanos de aprendizagem (1978, 1986), segundo os quais, o uso da língua, seja escrita ou oral, é uma atividade social que permite que os indivíduos construam significado dentro e a partir da interação (VILLAMIL; GUERRERO, 1996, 1998). As pesquisas realizadas dentro dessa perspectiva teórica mostram que as interações nos momentos de avaliação por pares promovem a aprendizagem e possibilitam aos alunos envolvidos o desempenho de diferentes papéis sociais, como: receber e dar conselhos, fazer e responder perguntas, agir tanto como quem aprende quanto como quem ensina. Além disso, a avaliação por pares favorece a reflexão, porque os alunos atuam ativamente no processo em vez de simplesmente recebê-la. Observa-se, nessa concepção de avaliação por pares, o reconhecimento de que tanto o aprendiz quanto o par mais competente têm um papel a desempenhar.

Apesar de essas pesquisas se referirem a contextos formais de ensino, tal concepção da avaliação parece estar de acordo com a proposta de aprendizagem em TTD, uma vez que se espera que os aprendizes, efetivamente, participem dos processos de avaliação e, conseqüentemente, de ensino-aprendizagem. Por um lado, ao ponderarmos o princípio da reciprocidade, observamos que o oferecimento de *feedback* é uma prática esperada, uma vez que são esses os momentos em que o parceiro linguisticamente mais competente pode oferecer apoio à aprendizagem. Por outro lado, ao se considerar o princípio da

autonomia, é possível reconhecer que a forma como o *feedback* é oferecido depende não só da avaliação feita pelo par mais competente, mas também, da avaliação realizada pelo próprio aprendiz de seu desempenho e de suas necessidades. Isso está de acordo com o apontamento de Little (2001, p. 32):

[...] é essencial que seja sempre o aprendiz que decida a direção e a forma da interação, tomando a maioria das iniciativas do discurso; para que, dessa forma, o seu aprendizado permaneça o centro da preocupação e o falante nativo não faça o papel de professor (sem treinamento). [...] quando o *feedback* é procurado pelo aprendiz, em vez de ser oferecido pelo falante nativo, ele deveria estar relacionado a aspectos da língua-alvo que o aprendiz queira ouvir em vez de aspectos que o falante nativo (com ou sem razão) considere importante.

Consideramos, assim, que o *feedback*, no TTD, tenha características peculiares, uma vez que ele pode ser direcionado pelo próprio aprendiz no exercício de sua autonomia, por exemplo, ao fazer questionamentos para que seu parceiro o ajude a decidir como ele prefere receber *feedback* sobre sua produção. Nesse sentido, a avaliação por pares, da forma como é concebida neste estudo, se alinha à perspectiva formativa (HAYDT, 1997; LUCKESI, 2002) e está ligada aos momentos de autoavaliação e oferecimento de *feedback*. Enfocaremos, portanto, a avaliação por pares como um fenômeno que engloba momentos interativos com foco no *feedback* oferecido pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente e solicitado pelo aprendiz.

Metodologia

Esta pesquisa, de natureza qualitativa e interpretativista, utilizou os dados gerados por meio da gravação das sessões orais de teletandem de parcerias institucionais integradas às aulas de inglês e de português como LE. Ressalta-se que a análise apresenta uma face quantitativa porque parte-se da quantidade de momentos em que há a correção de erros para, então, discutir-se como esses momentos se caracterizam no contexto enfocado. Foram utilizados dados compilados no MULTEC (Multimodal Teletandem Corpus)⁸:

8 O MULTEC é um corpus de dados multimodais gerados em ambiente teletandem, cujas especificidades e organização são descritas em Lopes (em andamento) e em Aranha e Lopes (em andamento). Tais trabalhos se vinculam ao projeto FAPESP (Processo 16/18705-9), coordenado pela professora Solange Aranha.

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apenas aqueles cuja prática de teletandem foi integrada às aulas da disciplina de língua inglesa do curso de Licenciatura em Letras que tivessem qualidade suficiente de áudio e vídeo para a transcrição. Dessa maneira, este trabalho enfoca os dados gerados por três grupos de TTDii do curso de Licenciatura em Letras, na universidade brasileira (UB), e dos grupos de português como língua estrangeira, na universidade estadunidense (UE), nos anos de 2012, 2013 e 2014. Consideramos os pares focais da nossa pesquisa:

(a) em 2012, o par 13, que contabiliza seis sessões (a sessão 7, realizada no laboratório, e a 8, realizada fora do horário de aula, não foram gravadas);

(b) em 2013, o par 12, com total de oito sessões (a participante brasileira realizou a última sessão no laboratório, o que permitiu sua gravação; na primeira sessão, há apenas o vídeo da participante brasileira);

(c) e em 2014, o par 13, que teve todas as seis sessões realizadas no laboratório gravadas com sucesso (apenas a terceira sessão foi gravada somente em áudio).

A fim de apresentar os alunos-participantes enfocados neste estudo, apresenta-se o Quadro 1. Essas informações foram coletadas a partir das informações compartilhadas entre os participantes e seus respectivos parceiros ao longo das sessões orais de teletandem utilizadas nesta análise.

Cumpre destacar que, neste estudo, investigamos os momentos em que os parceiros interagem em língua portuguesa em um total de 20 sessões orais de teletandem. Juntas, essas partes das sessões contabilizam um total de 8 horas, 49 minutos e 37 segundos de gravação, que foram transcritas verbatim.

Quadro 1. Caracterização dos pares focais

Ano	Descrição dos pares focais ⁹
2012	<p>PE012: estadunidense, mora na cidade da UE, aprende português há quatro anos e sabe espanhol.</p> <p>PB012: brasileira, da cidade da UB, cursa o último ano de licenciatura em Letras e ministra aulas de inglês.</p>
2013	<p>PE013: nasceu em Portugal e mora desde os três anos de idade nos EUA, filha de mãe portuguesa e pai estadunidense, 22 anos, mora na cidade da UE, cursa o último ano da graduação, afirma ter dificuldades com a língua portuguesa, já estudou espanhol.</p> <p>PB013: brasileira, 21 anos, é da cidade da UB, onde vive com sua família, cursa o terceiro ano de licenciatura em Letras.</p>
2014	<p>PE014: estadunidense, 21 anos, é de uma cidade próxima a UE, mas mora na cidade da UE, cursa terceiro ano da graduação, estuda português há dois anos e meio, aprendeu espanhol antes de português.</p> <p>PB014: brasileira, 23 anos, é da capital do estado da UB, mas mora na cidade da UB, cursa o último ano de licenciatura em Letras, afirma ter problemas com questões gramaticais da língua inglesa.</p>

Fonte: Freschi (2017)

Análise e discussão dos dados

Nesta análise, apresentamos, em primeiro lugar, uma perspectiva quantitativa do fenômeno focado (Quadro 2), a saber, os momentos em que a correção dos erros envolve a prática autoavaliativa e o oferecimento de *feedback* pelo par linguisticamente mais competente. Em seguida, discutimos qualitativamente as características desses momentos em que se observa o oferecimento de *feedback* a partir de uma solicitação (explícita ou não) do aprendiz.

⁹ A fim de garantir o anonimato, os nomes dos alunos-participantes foram omitidos. Para identificá-los, usamos a seguinte denominação: PE, para os participantes estadunidenses, e PB, para os brasileiros, seguido do ano da parceria: 012, 013 ou 014. Vale ressaltar que todos os participantes assinaram o termo de consentimento livre e esclarecido. Tal denominação não coincide com aquela adotada no *corp*us, mas foi usada para facilitar a descrição e análise dos dados neste trabalho.

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Quadro 2. Quantidade de *feedback* iniciado pela autoavaliação por par focal

	Par focal de 2012	Par focal de 2013	Par focal de 2014	Total
Avaliação por pares em que o <i>feedback</i> é solicitado pelo aprendiz	63	94	65	222

Fonte: baseado em Freschi (2017)

Os dados quantitativos sugerem a relevância da avaliação por pares em que o *feedback* é solicitado pelo aprendiz durante as sessões orais de teletandem dessas três duplas de participantes. Esse dado se mostra ainda mais relevante se compararmos com os dados desses mesmos participantes que revelam os momentos em que o *feedback* não é solicitado pelo aprendiz, conforme mostra o Quadro 3:

Quadro 3. Quantidade de *feedback* iniciado pela avaliação do par por par focal

	Par focal de 2012	Par focal de 2013	Par focal de 2014	Total
Avaliação por pares em que o <i>feedback</i> é iniciado pelo parceiro	19	83	8	110

Fonte: baseado em Freschi (2017)

Trata-se, como mostram os números totais nos Quadros 2 e 3, de dados robustos sobre um fenômeno que iremos ilustrar e discutir a partir de alguns fragmentos retirados das sessões em que os participantes falam português. O excerto 1 evidencia um momento em que a aprendiz está tentando dizer alguma coisa e percebe uma lacuna em seu conhecimento linguístico, o que a leva a solicitar *feedback* de sua parceira:

Excerto 1 (par focal de 2014)

1	PB: então eu cheguei cinco horas e:... acordei às nove aqui agora são dez horas
2	PE: hum... é... é demasiado sim? este é um palavra?
3	PB: sim
4	PE: de/demasiado... para:: diri/dirigir
5	PB: não é/eu vim de ônibus
6	PE: oh sim sim. este é:: melhor então
7	PB: existe demasiado mas a gente não usa tanto geralmente a gente usa a/uma palavra mais
8	peq/menor e mais comum que é demais
9	PE: demais sim!
10	PB: demasiado existe mas é geralmente em contexto mais formal que a gente utiliza
11	PE: hum... então agora eu sei

Notamos, na linha 2, que PE014 questiona sua parceira linguisticamente mais competente acerca da palavra “demasiado”, e esta confirma sua existência. No entanto, ao usar a palavra em uma sentença, a aprendiz comete uma inadequação (linha 04), que é retomada por PB014 (linha 7), na forma de um *feedback* em que ela explicita questões de uso da palavra. Observamos que o *feedback* aparece, de fato, depois de a aprendiz ter cometido um erro de adequação lexical; porém, consideramos que o *feedback* tem origem na autoavaliação de PE014, evidenciado pelo questionamento que ela faz na linha 2.

O segundo fragmento também ilustra como o momento em que o aprendiz está produzindo oralmente pode promover o *feedback* motivado pela autoavaliação:

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Excerto 2 (par focal de 2013)

1	PE: minha mãe é de Portugal mas meu pai é americano ele hum conhecia minha mãe quando ele
2	trabalha com os hum forças armas ((com tom de dúvida))
3	PB: forças armadas
4	PE: armadas
5	PB: hum hum

Na linha 2, PE013 mostra incerteza ao dizer a expressão “forças armas” (na gravação, nota-se sua entonação de pergunta). Entendemos que isso se deve ao fato de a aprendiz avaliar que havia algo errado no uso daquela expressão, o que a leva a solicitar o *feedback* do parceiro linguisticamente mais competente. Esse dado mostra que o “erro” é, de fato, percebido pela aprendiz que não sabe como corrigi-lo.

No terceiro fragmento, a lacuna no conhecimento linguístico do aprendiz de língua portuguesa é percebida no momento em que ele não compreende o que a parceira diz:

Excerto 3 (par focal de 2012)

1	PE: bom ela era descendência japonesa então mas acho que ela hoje em dia tá morando no
2	Pernambuco
3	PB: NOSSA!
4	PE: como? nossa?
5	PB: nossa eu disse
6	PE: que quer dizer nossa?
7	PB: é nossa nossa quer dizer 'oh my God!'((risos)) é isso que quer dizer
8	PE: como <i>like our?</i>
9	PB: nossa assim ó ((digitando)) é porque quer dizer nossa senhora
10	PE: hum <i>what are you talking about? I don't understand</i>
11	PB: é uma:: interjeição é quando você vai mostrar surpresa por alguma coisa que você ouviu
12	ouviu daí você fala nossa
13	PE: ok ((incompreensível)) nossa ah ok ((risos))
14	PB: é é
15	PE: <i>I gotcha</i>
16	PB: ou você fala 'NOSSA SENHORA'
17	PE: ah ok

O fragmento revela que o *feedback* se inicia a partir de um questionamento feito pelo aprendiz na linha 4, em que PE012 demonstra não saber o significado da palavra “nossa” como uma interjeição. A partir desse questionamento (linha 4), PB012 busca explicar o sentido da palavra a seu parceiro por meio de repetição, fornecimento de expressões de significado parecido em língua inglesa, escrita da palavra no *chat* e uso da palavra em uma situação de comunicação. Cumpre ressaltar que tais explicações não podem ser consideradas como um momento de correção de erro cometido pelo aprendiz (visto que ele não estava produzindo), mas entendemos que podem se caracterizar como oferecimento de *feedback*, motivado pela dificuldade de compreensão do aprendiz (um “erro” de compreensão) que evidenciou uma lacuna em seu conhecimento linguístico.

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A análise qualitativa dos fragmentos das interações orais em teletandem sugere que tanto os momentos em que o aprendiz está produzindo quanto aqueles em que está tentando compreender a língua estrangeira são propícios para a autoavaliação que evidencia lacunas em seu conhecimento e que promove a busca por *feedback*. Tais momentos parecem ser cruciais para a aprendizagem em teletandem por integrarem a avaliação dos dois envolvidos na interação, o que, na perspectiva adotada neste trabalho, caracteriza a avaliação por pares. Parte-se do princípio de que a avaliação formativa assim descrita promove, dentro da perspectiva vigotskiana de aprendizagem, o uso da língua como uma atividade social que permite que os indivíduos construam significado dentro e a partir da interação.

Considerações finais

A análise e a discussão dos dados realizadas neste trabalho buscaram evidenciar como a correção de erros pode ter um papel fundamental no ambiente teletandem ao envolver tanto o aprendiz quanto seu parceiro linguisticamente mais competente. Se, por um lado, os resultados de Freschi (2017) revelam a presença (e as categorias) de *feedback*, iniciado pelo par mais competente nas sessões orais de teletandem, por outro, o presente estudo mostra que o *feedback* iniciado pelo aprendiz é quantitativamente maior e permite interação significativa a partir da autoavaliação. A análise qualitativa enfocou os momentos em que a correção (ou percepção) de um erro por parte do aprendiz promove o fornecimento de *feedback*, indicando a relação existente entre a autoavaliação e a avaliação pelo parceiro de teletandem, o que revela características peculiares relacionadas aos princípios norteadores deste contexto, especialmente autonomia e reciprocidade.

Esse resultado corrobora os achados de Freschi (2017) que ressalta que, se considerarmos a autonomia como um processo coconstruído pelos pares durante a interação, podemos entender que a autoavaliação pode ter um impacto nos tipos de *feedback* que o par mais competente oferece ao aprendiz. Portanto, considera-se que o *feedback* iniciado pelo par mais competente não seja a única forma de avaliação por pares no teletandem. Os dados revelam, de fato, que os momentos de oferecimento de *feedback* iniciado pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente se caracterizam como “avaliação do par”, em oposição aos momentos de “avaliação pelo par”, em que os dois membros da dupla de teletandem têm um papel a desempenhar. Isso implica caracterizar o processo de “avaliação por pares” nesse ambiente a partir da perspectiva da autoavaliação do aprendiz que pode levar ao fornecimento de *feedback* pelo parceiro linguisticamente mais competente.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: CAVALARI, Suzi Marques Spatti; FRESCHI, Ana Carolina. A correção de erros e as relações entre avaliação por pares e autoavaliação no ambiente teletandem. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 194-213, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2413>

Submetido em: 18/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

EPISÓDIOS RELACIONADOS À LÍNGUA EM INTERAÇÕES DE TELETANDEM: IMPLICAÇÕES PARA A FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES DE PLE

Language-related episodes in Teletandem sessions: implications on the education of teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language

Gabriela Rossatto FRANCO¹

Resumo | O projeto “Teletandem e transculturalidade na interação on-line em línguas estrangeiras por webcam” (TELLES, 2011) possibilita que estudantes de universidades brasileiras interajam via Skype com alunos de universidades estrangeiras fornecendo explicações sobre a língua materna ou aquela em que são fluentes a seus parceiros. Desse modo, o presente artigo observa os episódios relacionados à língua (SWAIN; LAPKIN, 1998) emergentes nessas sessões, analisando a forma como os alunos brasileiros (professores de línguas em formação) esclarecem dúvidas sobre a língua portuguesa a seus parceiros. Metodologicamente, os dados foram analisados de acordo com a pesquisa qualitativa de caráter interpretativista. Como fundamentação teórica, este artigo se baseia nas teorias do Foco na Forma (LONG, 1991) e da Conscientização da Linguagem (HAWKINS, 1984), pois destaca a importância de que os praticantes de teletandem, futuros professores de língua estrangeira, desenvolvam uma atitude reflexiva sobre as práticas de linguagem. Os resultados mostram que o teletandem pode favorecer um contexto de discussão e reflexão a partir dos episódios relacionados à língua e, portanto, contribuir para a formação de professores de línguas, especialmente de português como língua estrangeira (PLE).

Palavras-chave | Teletandem. Episódios relacionados à língua. Conscientização da linguagem. Ensino-aprendizagem de línguas. Formação de professores.

Abstract | The project ‘Teletandem and transculturality in online foreign languages interactions via webcam’ (TELLES, 2011) promotes interaction through Skype between Brazilian students and students from various courses of foreign universities. During teletandem interactions, participants provide explanations about their mother tongue or about the language in which they are proficient. Therefore, this study focuses on the language-related episodes (SWAIN; LAPKIN, 1998) which emerge in teletandem sessions. It aims to investigate how Brazilian students (pre-service language teachers) answer questions about Portuguese as a foreign language. Methodologically, data were analyzed according to the interpretative-qualitative paradigm. Theoretically, the study is grounded on the concepts of Focus on Form (LONG, 1991) and Language Awareness (HAWKINS, 1984). This paper intends to show how important it is that teletandem practitioners - who are future teachers of foreign languages - develop a reflective attitude towards language practices. Through the analysis, it is possible to notice that teletandem may provide an environment to discuss and reflect upon the language because of the language-related episodes that emerge during the interactions. Thus, it may contribute to the education of language teachers, mainly for those who aim to work with Portuguese as a foreign language.

Keywords | Teletandem. Language-related episodes. Language awareness. Language learning and teaching. Teacher education.

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Introdução

Mais do que o contato entre pessoas de espaços geográficos distintos, o avanço da tecnologia tem possibilitado a criação de contextos de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras tanto em cursos de ensino a distância quanto por meio da comunicação entre falantes de línguas distintas. Dentro dessa perspectiva, por meio de recursos tecnológicos, o projeto *Teletandem e transculturalidade na interação on-line em línguas estrangeiras por webcam* (TELLES, 2011) possibilita interações entre falantes de português e falantes de outras línguas.

Os dados analisados neste artigo foram coletados de interações que ocorreram de acordo com um modelo de teletandem interinstitucional que “prevê um acordo entre instituições de ensino superior com interesse em aprender e ensinar línguas estrangeiras” (RAMOS; CARVALHO; MESSIAS, 2013, p. 4). Nesse modelo, há a presença de mediadores de teletandem (TTD) a fim de que as interações possam ser otimizadas pelos participantes no que concerne ao ensino-aprendizagem das línguas envolvidas bem como na relação com seus parceiros.

No que tange ao ensino-aprendizagem de línguas, de acordo com Almeida Filho (1993), a sistematização de um novo código linguístico pode auxiliar o aluno a se conscientizar de seu próprio. Sendo assim, este artigo pretende mostrar que o teletandem, bem como uma aula de língua estrangeira (L2), pode auxiliar o participante a se conscientizar de sua própria língua. Ademais, além de aprendiz de L2, o interagente é deslocado para a posição de professor de sua língua materna (ou de proficiência) ao ensiná-la a seu parceiro. Por conseguinte, ele precisa fornecer correções e explicações, o que demanda uma reflexão que pode promover a conscientização sobre sua própria língua.

Para guiar este estudo, foram suscitadas duas perguntas: *Quais os episódios relacionados à língua que emergem nas interações de teletandem? Como esses episódios podem promover conscientização da linguagem?*

A análise de dados explorou como o teletandem pode promover um ambiente favorável à conscientização da linguagem a partir dos episódios linguísticos emergentes e quais as implicações disso para a formação de professores de português como língua estrangeira (PLE).

O presente artigo está dividido em cinco seções. A primeira trata do contexto do teletandem. As duas seguintes, sobre a fundamentação teórica, sendo uma a respeito da

conscientização da linguagem (HAWKINS, 1984) e a outra sobre episódios relacionados à língua (SWAIN; LAPKIN, 1998) e foco na forma (LONG, 1991). A seção posterior às fundamentações teóricas tratará da análise dos dados, sendo ela dividida em três subseções, cada uma explorando um par de interagentes. Por fim, nas considerações finais, serão respondidas as perguntas de pesquisa e expostas as conclusões alcançadas através da análise.

O contexto Teletandem

Segundo Vassallo e Telles (2009), o processo de ensino-aprendizagem em tandem teve início no final da década de 60, na Alemanha. O termo *Teletandem* foi utilizado pelo grupo de pesquisadores do programa de Pós-graduação em Estudos Linguísticos da UNESP para denominar o tandem quando ocorrido em contexto virtual. Para Telles (2006), o teletandem é um tandem a distância que utiliza meios de comunicação oral, escrita e conferências em áudio e vídeo, e se caracteriza por ser um contexto autônomo, recíproco e colaborativo de aprendizagem (TELLES, 2006).

As sessões de teletandem permitem que alunos brasileiros interajam com estudantes de universidades estrangeiras a fim de divulgar a língua portuguesa entre falantes de outras línguas e, em contrapartida, proporcionar aos nossos alunos o aprendizado de outro idioma de domínio de seus parceiros.

O teletandem se caracteriza por três princípios que foram incorporados do tandem (BRAMMERTS, 1996, apud VASSALLO; TELLES, 2009): (1) *as línguas não devem ser misturadas* a fim de desafiar o interagente a falar na língua estrangeira e a incentivar seu parceiro quando ele falar a língua-alvo; (2) *reciprocidade*, a sessão é dividida igualmente em duas partes, cada uma destinada ao uso de apenas uma das línguas, e ocorre uma troca mútua de conhecimentos sobre a língua e cultura de cada participante (p. 24); (3) *autonomia*, ou seja, os interagentes podem escolher sobre *o quê* querem conversar, *o quê* e *como* querem aprender.

Atualmente, as interações de teletandem utilizam o Skype ou o Zoom que contam com recursos em áudio, vídeo e *chats* para comunicação. Logo, por possibilitarem aos participantes que vejam e ouçam um ao outro, essas ferramentas permitem uma comunicação simultânea (síncrona), assemelhando-se a um encontro face a face.

Os dados desta pesquisa foram coletados de interações que ocorreram de acordo com a modalidade de teletandem institucional não-integrado (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014),

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que acontece dentro da universidade, em parceria com uma universidade estrangeira, mas que não adota o teletandem como atividade obrigatória no currículo do discente.

Sobre essa modalidade, Brammerts e Calvert (2002, p. 85) afirmam:

A participação neste tipo de programa é, na maioria das vezes, voluntária. Algumas universidades disponibilizam salas onde, em horários determinados, os aprendizes em tandem podem encontrar com seus parceiros [no caso do teletandem, se conectar a seus parceiros através da tecnologia] ou têm a possibilidade de utilizar a Internet e, onde também, com frequência podem obter aconselhamento e materiais específicos de trabalho; em princípio, são no entanto os aprendentes que determinam quando, onde e como é que vão desenvolver o seu trabalho tandem.

Ainda que o aluno não seja obrigado a participar do teletandem de acordo com essa modalidade, uma vez assumido o compromisso, ele deve se comprometer com relação aos horários e seguir os princípios propostos pelo projeto.

As interações de TTD têm duração de uma hora, sendo meia hora destinada a uma língua e meia hora a outra. Ao final, os alunos se reúnem para as sessões de mediação cujo objetivo é oferecer um espaço para que os alunos conversem sobre os aspectos interativos, linguísticos e culturais que vivenciaram durante suas interações (TELLES, 2015).

Cada sessão de mediação dura, em média, meia hora e é conduzida por um professor-mediador (professor da universidade e/ou pós-graduando e/ou pesquisador de teletandem). Sobre o papel do mediador, Little (2003, apud SALOMÃO; SILVA; DANIEL, 2009) esclarece que, além do suporte técnico e operacional no tandem, ele também pode auxiliar o interagente com relação “aos aspectos complexos da língua em si e de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas” (SALOMÃO; SILVA; DANIEL, 2009, p. 81).

Destarte, o teletandem fornece um espaço para que os participantes discorram sobre a língua. Conforme será exposto na análise de dados, esse contexto pode favorecer reflexões e, conseqüentemente, promover implicações para a formação dos interagentes como futuros professores de línguas.

Conscientização da Linguagem

A Conscientização da Linguagem foi introduzida nos anos 80, na Inglaterra, por meio de um movimento denominado “Movimento Britânico de Conscientização da Linguagem” (*British Language Awareness Movement*). Em seu livro “Conscientização da Linguagem: uma Introdução” (*Awareness of Language: an Introduction*), Hawkins (1984) argumenta a favor da implantação da Conscientização da Linguagem (CL) no currículo escolar das escolas públicas britânicas por meio do estudo *sobre* a língua. O trabalho do autor se preocupava com os alunos que cresciam em cidades do interior, sobretudo da Inglaterra, que, por falarem um dialeto considerado fora do padrão, chegavam à escola sem as ditas “habilidades verbais essenciais” (HAWKINS, 1984, p. 1).

Além de auxiliar na transição da escola primária para a secundária, Hawkins (1984) acreditava que a CL também favorecia os estudos em línguas estrangeiras. Segundo o autor, o programa possibilitava aos alunos de diferentes línguas, dialetos, ou *backgrounds*, compartilharem suas experiências sobre a língua. A intenção dessa atividade era direcionar a atenção dos alunos a aspectos da língua, levando-os à reflexão, além de encorajá-los a fazerem perguntas sobre a mesma (HAWKINS, 1984).

Wright e Bolitho (1993) apresentam implicações dessa teoria para a formação de professores, uma vez que a conscientização da linguagem promoveria uma associação entre o conhecimento do professor sobre a língua e suas práticas ao ensiná-la. Segundo os autores, “quanto mais um professor é consciente da língua e de como ela opera, melhor”² (WRIGHT; BOLITHO, 1993, p. 292). Por conseguinte, tal conscientização o auxilia na preparação de suas aulas, na escolha dos materiais, na elaboração das provas e no ensino da língua.

De acordo com Wright e Bolitho (1993), falar sobre a língua pode elevar a confiança do aprendiz. Dessa forma, os autores acreditam que a CL pode ajudar o professor, bem como o usuário, a serem mais autônomos e a explorarem a língua, além de reconhecerem sua complexidade e sua diversidade. Ao fazê-los, refletirão sobre as descobertas e conhecimentos já adquiridos, o que os tornará mais sensíveis e possibilitará que avancem fronteiras estabelecidas pela gramática tradicional (WRIGHT; BOLITHO, 1993).

Hawkins (1984) ainda destaca a importância de considerarmos o fato de que as línguas diferem muito umas das outras. Sua proposta era criar um contexto que permitisse uma discussão sobre sua diversidade. Assim, seria possível desafiar o preconceito e o que

² No original “the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better” (WRIGHT; BOLITHO, 1993, p. 292).

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ele denomina de “paroquialismo linguístico” (HAWKINS, 1984, p. 4). Conforme afirma o autor (op. cit., p. 4), “a melhor arma contra o preconceito é uma discussão aberta e uma maior conscientização”³. Destarte, a Conscientização da Linguagem nos convida a repensar o ensino de línguas e a nos educar e superar esse preconceito linguístico, uma vez que direciona nossa atenção à língua e ao seu uso, e reitera a diversidade existente em uma ou entre mais línguas.

De acordo com Fairclough (1992), o conceito dessa teoria concebe o ensino de línguas como uma experiência fundamentada na “atenção consciente para as propriedades e para o uso da linguagem”⁴ (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, p. 1). Essa abordagem defende, portanto, a importância de se refletir e conversar sobre a língua.

No teletandem, o participante fornece *feedback* a seu parceiro sobre a língua em que é proficiente. Ao corrigi-lo e ao fornecer explicações, o interagente pode ser estimulado a refletir sobre a língua. Os episódios relacionados à língua (SWAIN; LAPKIN, 1998) e os momentos de foco na forma (LONG, 1991) podem favorecer esse contexto de discussão e reflexão sobre a língua e, portanto, serão explorados a seguir.

Episódios relacionados à língua e foco na forma

Swain e Lapkin (1998) apresentam o uso da língua como uma atividade tanto comunicativa quanto cognitiva. Nessa perspectiva, a língua atua como uma ferramenta auxiliar no processo de aprendizagem da L2 (língua estrangeira). Esse *output* é usado para uma função cognitiva. Segundo as autoras, os aprendizes se tornam capazes de usar a língua do outro para regular o próprio funcionamento cognitivo.

De acordo com Swain e Lapkin (1998), o diálogo colaborativo proporciona a oportunidade para o ensino de L2 proporcionando o aprendizado. Em um estudo em que examinam o diálogo entre dois aprendizes, as autoras observaram o surgimento de processos cognitivos que permeiam o processo de aprendizagem. Ao se corrigirem e ao corrigirem o outro, os estudantes têm a oportunidade de refletir sobre a língua estrangeira, estimulando esses processos cognitivos.

Na investigação, as autoras analisam os episódios relacionados à língua (*language-related episodes*) emergentes nos diálogos entre um desses pares de alunos na medida em que eles realizavam a tarefa proposta (a elaboração de uma narrativa). Segundo as

3 No original “The best weapon against prejudice is open discussion and greater awareness” (HAWKINS, 1984, p. 4).

4 No original “conscious attention to properties of language and language use” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, p. 1)

autoras, os episódios relacionados à língua (ERLs) são os momentos do diálogo nos quais os aprendizes discorrem acerca da língua produzida, questionando-a, corrigindo suas próprias produções ou as de seu colega.

Em alguns excertos do estudo de Swain e Lapkin (1998), as autoras expõem como a língua atua no desempenho da tarefa proposta. Os alunos recorrem à língua materna (L1) para sanar dúvidas, refletir e propor algo na língua estrangeira. Há, ainda, momentos em que a L1 dá suporte à L2, não apenas para comunicação, mas para confirmar uma hipótese do aprendiz, além de funcionar como uma ferramenta para que os aprendizes regulem seus comportamentos, direcionem sua atenção às estruturas da L2 e para produzir e acessar alternativas (SWAIN; LAPKIN, 1998).

De acordo com as autoras, quando um aluno se depara com problemas relacionados ao léxico, à morfologia e à sintaxe, ele foca na forma linguística, aquela que é necessária para que consiga se expressar. Esse enfoque nas formas linguísticas nos remete à teoria do *foco na forma* (LONG, 1991) que, diferentemente da teoria do foco nas formas que apresentava uma abordagem estruturalista e sem considerar os aspectos funcionais da língua, defende a reflexão sobre aspectos formais da língua em contextos comunicativos.

De acordo com Long (1991), o foco na forma (FonF) direciona nossa atenção a itens lexicais e, sobretudo, a seus significados ao invés de sua forma gramatical. Nessa perspectiva, o aprendiz processa o significado da palavra em um contexto de compreensão de um texto escrito ou falado, ou seja, é um tipo de ensino que envolve forma e significado dentro de um contexto comunicativo (ver LONG, 1991; WILLIAMS, 2001). Nessa abordagem, o foco ocorre de maneira espontânea, incidental, no momento em que há um problema de produção ou compreensão.

Vidal (2007, p. 162) destaca que essa é uma abordagem essencialmente centrada no aprendiz e que respeita suas dificuldades em situações comunicativas durante interações “com o objetivo de fazê-lo notar aspectos linguísticos no insumo modificado e registrá-los na memória...”. Nesse viés, a teoria do foco na forma dialoga com o contexto do teletandem na medida em que, conforme apontam Rocha e Lima (2009), a abordagem centrada no aluno é uma das mais apropriadas para promover a autonomia dos aprendizes em tandem. Por conseguinte, os momentos em que os participantes de teletandem focam na forma, a fim de refletir sobre a língua, auxiliam o processo de autonomia deles.

Conforme exposto nesta seção, os episódios relacionados à língua promovem momentos de foco na forma que, por sua vez, auxiliam os aprendizes a refletir sobre a língua. Na análise de dados, buscarei explorar se essas teorias (ERLs e FonF) podem favorecer a conscientização da linguagem dos participantes e, conseqüentemente,

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auxiliá-los tanto no processo de aprendizagem da língua estrangeira quanto no ensino da sua própria língua.

Procedimentos metodológicos

Os dados da presente pesquisa foram coletados de interações de teletandem que ocorreram durante o primeiro semestre de 2012, de acordo com a modalidade institucional não-integrada e provenientes de uma parceria entre uma universidade pública do estado de São Paulo e uma universidade particular dos Estados Unidos.

Foram selecionados três pares cujas interagentes brasileiras eram alunas do curso de Letras e, portanto, professoras de línguas em formação. As interações foram gravadas e, posteriormente, transcritas por um grupo de pesquisadoras com o consentimento de todas as participantes envolvidas. Por uma questão de recorte de dados (por serem muitas interações e com duração de uma hora cada) e enfoque na formação de professores de PLE, foram analisados apenas os momentos em que os pares falavam na língua portuguesa.

Os dados foram analisados de acordo com o paradigma qualitativo interpretativista. Tal escolha se deve ao fato de que, segundo Dörnyei (2007), os aspectos da aquisição e do uso da língua são determinados, ou significativamente moldados, por fatores sociais, culturais e situacionais. Com base nessa afirmação, o autor argumenta que a pesquisa qualitativa é ideal para promover a percepção dentro dessas condições e influências contextuais.

Nessa abordagem, o pesquisador é parte do mundo social que pesquisa, podendo agir nesse mundo social, trazendo suas próprias experiências para esse campo bem como tendo a oportunidade de refletir sobre si mesmo e sobre suas ações. Nesse sentido, Bortoni-Ricardo (2008, p. 58) afirma que “o pesquisador tem de estar consciente das molduras de interpretação daqueles que observa e de suas próprias molduras de interpretação, que são culturalmente incorporadas e que ele traz consigo para o local da pesquisa”. A autora ainda esclarece que o olhar do pesquisador age como uma espécie de “filtro” ao interpretar a realidade com a qual se depara.

Moita Lopes (1994) esclarece que, no mundo social, os significados que o caracterizam são construídos pelo homem, podendo ser (re)interpretados por ele. Dessa forma, não há uma única realidade, mas diversas realidades. Logo, o autor argumenta a favor de uma pesquisa interpretativista. Ao realizar a análise por meio do paradigma qualitativo-interpretativista, busquei observar como as crenças e experiências anteriores

dos alunos interferem nas atitudes referentes à língua e seu uso. Foram consideradas as diferentes realidades dos envolvidos: aprendizes da língua estrangeira, falantes nativos e professores da própria língua.

Para a pesquisa interpretativista, a investigação do mundo social deve considerar a visão dos participantes desse contexto (MOITA LOPES, 1994). Logo, a entrevista é uma ferramenta viável para acessar a perspectiva dos envolvidos. De acordo com Seidman (1991, p. 9), a entrevista visa a “compreender a experiência vivida por outras pessoas e qual significado elas atribuem a essa experiência”⁵. Desse modo, ao entrevistar os participantes desta pesquisa foi possível observar o que eles depreendiam das próprias interações e quais considerações apresentavam a respeito de suas experiências com o teletandem.

Para Fontana e Frey (2005), a entrevista não é considerada um método neutro, pois duas ou mais pessoas se envolvem nesse processo. As trocas entre os envolvidos promovem a criação de um esforço coletivo que seria a *entrevista*, ou seja, o produto final seria a junção do que ocorre entre entrevistador e entrevistado(s) (op. cit., p. 696). Desse modo, os autores criticam a concepção da entrevista como uma “laranja mecânica”, ou seja, quando o entrevistador procura pelo melhor espremedor (técnicas) para espremer o suco (obter respostas) da laranja (entrevistados). Argumentam, portanto, a favor de uma abordagem empática, uma vez que essa “assume uma postura ética em favor do indivíduo ou do grupo estudado”⁶ (FONTANA; FREY, 2005, p. 696).

No caso do presente artigo, as interações ocorreram em 2012 e as entrevistas posteriormente, no ano de 2016. Esse espaço de tempo se deve ao fato de que, inicialmente, a intenção era explorar apenas os dados coletados das sessões de teletandem. No entanto, no decorrer da análise, muitas questões foram suscitadas e houve, então, um interesse em contatar as participantes brasileiras e explorar a perspectiva das mesmas a respeito de suas próprias interações.

O lapso temporal entre a ocorrência das sessões de TTD e das entrevistas se apresentou como uma limitação no que concerne à lembrança das interagentes a respeito das próprias interações. No entanto, tal distanciamento apresentou implicações positivas, pois, na época em que foram realizadas as entrevistas, as participantes já haviam se graduado e trabalhavam como professoras de línguas. Por conseguinte, suas experiências nas áreas profissionais, acadêmicas e pessoais provavelmente implicaram suas perspectivas ao analisarem as próprias interações em comparação às perspectivas e atuações que desempenharam em 2012.

5 No original “[...] is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (SEIDMAN, 1991, p. 9).

6 No original “[...] take an ethical stance in favor of the individual or group being studied.” (FONTANA; FREY, 2005, p. 696).

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Concordando com Seidman (1991) sobre a importância da entrevista, mas ponderando sobre a abordagem empática defendida por Fontana e Frey (2005), optei por manter a análise dos dados que foi realizada anteriormente às entrevistas. Desse modo, exponho minha percepção inicial como pesquisadora a partir da investigação dos dados à luz das teorias, ou seja, sem a visão dos participantes. Igualmente, ao entrevistá-los, não foi exposta minha análise primária, apenas os excertos selecionados a fim de não interferir ou manipular suas respostas.

Na seção a seguir, explorarei, primeiramente, a análise do trecho de cada interação e, em seguida, o excerto referente à entrevista com o participante em questão. Por fim, ambos os dados serão contrastados e (re)analisados à luz das teorias que embasam este artigo para, por fim, delinear uma possível conclusão.

Análise dos dados

Dupla 1 – Lívia e Hanna

- Lívia: professora de Inglês formada pela universidade brasileira e doutoranda em Estudos Linguísticos. Desenvolve pesquisa no projeto teletandem;
- Hanna (destacada em azul): nascida em Cuba, mora na cidade onde está localizada a universidade estadunidense onde estuda Microbiologia e Imunologia.

Vejamos a seguir um trecho da interação entre Lívia e Hanna a respeito das experiências de Hanna sobre a ida de imigrantes a Miami em comparação a outras cidades:

1 H: eu acho que sim, eu tem viajado? ou eu tenho viajado?

2 L: tenho viajado.

3 H: Eu tenho viajado a/a Tennessee.

4 L: uhum.

5 H: a Nova York.

6 L: uhum.

7 H: a California.

8 L: uhum.

9 H: não tive muito tempo em Califórnia, mas ah...

10 L: uhum.

11 H: é diferente de Miami, eu acho que sim.

12 L: uhum.

Nas linhas 1 e 3, Hanna diz “tenho viajado” e questiona à parceira se a forma correta é “eu tem viajado” ou “eu tenho viajado”, ao que Lívia responde: “tenho viajado”. No entanto, quando Hanna termina o relato de sua experiência, Lívia retoma (linha 23) a questão da locução verbal (“tenho viajado”) aplicada anteriormente:

13 H: são os imigrantes.

14 L: uhum.

15 H: e a cultura é muito mista com/com as culturas dos imigrantes. elas não...não quero dizer

16 que não assimilam, mas não deixam sua cultura muito fácil, então não...

17 L: a tradição, né, eles são...

18 H: a tradição mista.

19 L: tentam manter a tradição, uhum, entendi.

20 H: então você pode *oir* outras línguas e, é bom, eu acho bom pra...

21 L: uhum.

22 H: é diferente.

23 L: aham tá legal, agora, Hannah, eu só fiquei na dúvida, quando você usou «tenho viajado»,

24 eu acho que não é eu tenho viajado, é eu já viajei.

25 H: Eu já/aham, sim.

26 L: você viu a diferença? que “eu tenho viajado” dá a ideia de que você ainda viaja, que ainda

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27 você vai pra esses lugares ainda, mas acho que a ideia que você quer mostrar é que você já

28 foi, que você já visitou esses lugares.

29 H: sim.

30 L: né? então tá, então, eu já viajei. É interessante, mas é a mesma coisa no Brasil, por exemplo, a região

31 sudeste é de maioria assim os imigrantes são mais da Alemanha, são imigrantes alemães, é, que já é

32 diferente, por exemplo de São Paulo, mas eu acho que a mobilidade hoje em dia, como ela tá tão fácil a

33 tendência é não tem como mais se manter sempre uma única tradição, uma única eu não sei uma única etnia

34 assim, esse conceito já nem é usado mais, né, assim, mas tá tudo muito misturado né?

35 H: aham

No decorrer da conversa, Lívia constata que “tenho viajado” não é a forma verbal apropriada. Percebe-se que ela entende que esse uso denota uma ação contínua (linha 14) e que, no caso da descrição de Hanna, todas as ações já haviam sido concluídas. Dessa forma, o tempo verbal mais apropriado seria o pretérito perfeito (“eu já viajei”, linha 24).

O equívoco cometido por Hanna ocorre, possivelmente, devido a uma transferência verbal da estrutura da língua inglesa (*present perfect*) aplicada à língua portuguesa. Sobre isso, Alvarez (2002) explica que esse fenômeno da transferência é o uso, pelo aprendiz, dos aspectos linguísticos ou comunicativos de uma língua (a qual ele adquiriu anteriormente) à língua-alvo.

É importante reiterar que Lívia, a interagente brasileira, é uma professora e pós-graduanda em Estudos Linguísticos, além de ser pesquisadora em teletandem e de já ter participado de outras interações. Desse modo, a experiência e a formação da interagente implicam, diretamente, seu desempenho pessoal e pedagógico.

Ainda assim, é interessante o fato de Lívia ter retomado essa questão ao invés de deixar a conversa fluir e não corrigir a parceira e, ainda, explicar o porquê de utilizar “viajei” ao invés do “ter viajado”. Observa-se que ela o faz sem abordar questões

meramente estruturais como nomear o tempo verbal aplicado ou apresentar a conjugação e a terminologia dos verbos no pretérito perfeito. Lívia fornece, apenas, as explicações necessárias para a compreensão da parceira e a aplicação adequada, segundo as normas gramaticais, no momento e no contexto nos quais foi abordado.

Na entrevista com Lívia, a fim de abordar a perspectiva da interagente a respeito do próprio excerto, fiz-lhe a seguinte pergunta:

Pesquisadora: A primeira pergunta, que é sobre esse excerto aí que você viu, eu queria que você me falasse o que que tá acontecendo entre você e a sua parceira na interação em termos de correção e explicação da língua portuguesa.

Lívia: Com base só nesse excerto, né?

Pesquisadora: Isso, só nesse excerto. Que que tá acontecendo em termos de correção e explicação da língua portuguesa?

Lívia: (pausa) tá. Então como aqui era o turno de português... eu percebi aqui, lendo o excerto, que eu tava bastante/ que eu dei bastante espaço pra ela falar. Então eu só respondia com “aham” e anotava, eu acho que eu prestava bastante atenção nos erros que ela cometia, ou nas dificuldades que ela tava tendo... e na descrição aqui que ela tava tentando fazer da viagem... eu percebi que ela trocou o/o tempo verbal, eu acho que a ideia que ela quis dizer quando ela explicou que ela viajou para/pro Tenessee, eu acho que é uma ideia/ que ela viajou uma vez só, mas ela apresentou como se ela tivesse viajando, como se fosse uma rotina, né, “eu tenho viajado a Tenessee” e aí no decorrer da interação eu acho que eu identifiquei essa confusão com os verbos, com os tempos verbais e eu corrijo indicando que foi uma ação única no passado, que ela não tá se referindo a uma ação recorrente. E eu acho que ela entendeu.

(Entrevista com Lívia, 2016)

Em conformidade com o que foi verificado na análise inicial, Lívia diz, na entrevista, que ela percebeu (no decorrer da interação) a “confusão com os verbos, com os tempos verbais” e, então, corrigiu a parceira. Além disso, nota-se a preocupação de Lívia em dar

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“espaço” à parceira, já que aquele era o turno da língua portuguesa. O apontamento de Lívia é bastante relevante, pois evidencia suas realidades: professora de línguas, doutoranda em estudos linguísticos e pesquisadora de teletandem. Por conseguinte, sua postura reflete seu conhecimento sobre o projeto teletandem bem como sobre o processo de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas.

O caso de Hanna e Lívia é um exemplo de episódio relacionado à língua e que ocorreu de acordo com a teoria do foco na forma (LONG, 1990), ou seja, de modo espontâneo. Igualmente a essa teoria, ao defenderem a conscientização da linguagem, James e Garrett (1991) ressaltam que o estudo da língua deve ocorrer de forma contextualizada e com base no uso da mesma, bem como Lívia faz ao corrigir a parceira quando percebe seu equívoco e conduzindo a atenção de Hanna à forma apropriada.

Tinkel (1985), citado por James e Garrett (1991), acredita que a CL explora um conhecimento que o aprendiz já possui, direcionando sua atenção para algo que ele já sabe, tornando explícito um conhecimento que, até o momento, era implícito. Logo, observando a interação, percebemos que os esclarecimentos fornecidos por Lívia trazem à tona um conhecimento de sua língua materna, permitindo que a interagente volte sua atenção à língua portuguesa. Nota-se, claramente, que houve um momento de reflexão, uma vez que ela retoma o tempo verbal empregado por Hanna anteriormente para corrigi-la, bem como fornece explicações à parceira. Esse momento de reflexão e elucidação sobre qual emprego gramatical seria mais apropriado pode ter permitido que Lívia se conscientizasse sobre a própria língua materna (se isso ainda não tivesse ocorrido até o momento da interação).

Não é possível constatar, com toda a certeza, se houve conscientização da linguagem. No entanto, a partir do excerto analisado e do trecho da entrevista com Lívia, depreende-se que o teletandem promoveu às interagentes um ambiente para discorrer e refletir sobre a língua, o que pode favorecer a CL.

Dupla 2 – Sílvia e Brendan

- Sílvia: Tem 27 anos, é de uma cidade do interior de São Paulo e aluna do segundo ano do curso de Letras da universidade brasileira;
- Brendan (destacado em azul): Tem 19 anos e é de Nova York. Estuda Finanças internacionais e *Marketing*, além de espanhol e português.

No encontro ocorrido no dia 11 de abril, Sílvia e Brendan resolvem abordar gírias que consideram comuns em suas respectivas línguas.

1S: e it's a slang, "beleza"

2 B: o que significa, like, ótimo?

3 S: in portuguese is...

4 B: beautiful?

5 S: não, é/beleza mas no sentido "ah ta ok", sabe? é uma expressão, uma gíria que você fala assim

6 "tomorrow I will go to the home" "ah beleza!" entendeu? "pode ir né"

7 B: ah fica assim como "legal", "ótimo"?

8 S: é, similar.ou/ or "I have to go", do you said, you said, "beleza, bye"

9 B: sí, eu ouço muito por a minha professora. ah...

10 S: ((risos))

Nas linhas 1 e 5, Sílvia esclarece que as palavras apresentadas são gírias. No decorrer da interação, ela ainda ressalta que o uso dessas expressões é "informal" e "popular".

Ao investigar se o contato intercultural através do teletandem possibilitaria, durante as interações, reflexões e compreensões a respeito das culturas envolvidas, Zakir (2015) verifica que gírias são percebidas, pelos participantes, como um dos aspectos relacionados à ideia do que eles concebem como cultura. Logo, mais do que abordar essas questões "informais" e/ou "populares" da língua, os interagentes estão trocando informações a respeito do uso da língua na prática social do cotidiano. Além disso, o emprego de gírias destaca a importância do contexto de uso, não apenas pelo fator da informalidade, mas também pelo sentido que pode ser atribuído a cada palavra dependendo da circunstância.

Observemos o momento em que Sílvia aborda a gíria "beleza" (linha 1). Em um primeiro instante, Brendan indaga o significado e arrisca um palpite: "ótimo?" (linha 2). No entanto, Sílvia não se manifesta sobre o que o parceiro havia dito e continua falando com o intuito de explicar a palavra (linha 3). Por conseguinte, Brendan evoca a tradução mais literal da palavra: "*beautiful*". Imediatamente a interagente explica o outro sentido (linha 5) e o parceiro demonstra entender, citando, novamente, a palavra "ótimo" e relatando já ter ouvido sua professora utilizar o termo (linha 9).

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As comparações realizadas entre os participantes (como entre “beleza” e “*beautiful*”) ocorrem de acordo com a Análise Contrastiva, proposta por James e Garrett (1991), em que o aprendiz observa não somente aspectos relacionados à estrutura linguística, mas também o modo como as diferentes línguas operam. Segundo os autores (op. cit.), esse fator promove a conscientização linguística a respeito das semelhanças e diferenças entre as estruturas da língua materna e da língua estrangeira.

Hawkins (1984) afirma que a língua é suscetível a mudanças. Assim, acredita que aprender uma língua significa aprender a fala atual da comunidade. Dessa forma, o autor defende que utilizar a gramática correta e as palavras que signifiquem o que queremos dizer não é suficiente, e que é importante empregar a língua considerada adequada a cada ocasião. O uso do que é considerado apropriado envolve escolhas dentro da sintaxe e dentro da semântica da língua, e também fora delas.

Destarte, a escolha por abordar gírias permite aos interagentes explorar os diferentes sentidos que as palavras apresentam, afastando-os da ideia do foco nas formas e considerando os contextos interativo e social nos quais as palavras são utilizadas. Conseqüentemente, ambos os participantes de uma dupla podem se conscientizar das variações existentes dentro da língua e do modo como o contexto social influencia o sentido de cada palavra. O aprendiz se conscientiza, portanto, da L2 e de sua variedade, e aquele que ensina toma consciência da L1 e das questões que vão além do sistema linguístico da língua, como os aspectos sociais, culturais e políticos (ALTENHOFEN; BROCH, 2012).

Na entrevista realizada com Sílvia, apresento o seguinte questionamento:

Pesquisadora: Eu queria que você falasse pra mim, com base no que você leu nesse trecho aí, o que tá acontecendo entre você e o seu parceiro em termos de explicação e correção da língua portuguesa? (pausa) O que que acontece entre vocês dois sobre correção e explicação da língua portuguesa? (pausa) Sobre a parte em que você tá fornecendo explicação sobre a língua portuguesa, porque vocês estão falando sobre gíria, né? E aí o que que você fala sobre isso?

Sílvia: Ahh (pausa) na verdade eu tô explicando pra ele o significado das gírias em língua portuguesa, é totalmente diferente né, as expressões nas línguas estrangeiras mudam totalmente né? Então são coisas que você vai aprender só com um nativo mesmo, ou morando lá né, que você vai ter o contato com o nativo, ou no caso do tandem

que nós dois/nós dois tivemos contato, né (pausa) com/com cada nativo da língua e podemos (pausa) podemos trocar informações, expressões, gírias, foi muito bacana esse dia porque a gente relembra né esse momento, porque os professores no tandem sempre falavam né: “é uma troca, o que você quer aprender, o que você gostaria, mesma coisa você deixa claro pro seu parceiro” né, e foi isso que aconteceu sabe, sugeri “ah a gente podia falar sobre as gírias” que é uma coisa que eu não vou aprender em um livro né, só conversando mesmo com um nativo. Então, o rico também da interação é isso né: ter alguém pra aprender outras coisas diferentes, e que eu fico triste porque hoje eu não tenho (risos).

(Entrevista com Sílvia, 2016)

Sílvia relata que falar sobre gírias foi um tema sugerido por ela. A escolha da participante é justificada pelo fato de esse ser um aspecto da língua que, segundo ela, só pode ser aprendido em contato com um falante nativo da língua-alvo, ou seja, não é algo que se aprende “em um livro”.

A aluna brasileira mostra ter conhecimento das diferenças existentes entre as línguas no que concerne a expressões linguísticas. É pertinente salientar essas questões porque Sílvia era, na época da interação, estudante de Letras e, no período em que a entrevista foi realizada, atuava como professora de línguas. Ainda assim, percebe-se, tanto por meio da análise quanto pela entrevista dela, a importância que ela atribui à língua falada coloquialmente, ou seja, não apenas àquela que segue a gramática considerada padrão. Isso também nos permite depreender que ela se preocupa com a comunicação, visto que gírias e expressões fazem parte dos mais diversos sistemas linguísticos e, portanto, são utilizadas para fins comunicativos.

Sílvia ainda prossegue com a reflexão suscitada pela primeira questão:

Sílvia: Antes de você fazer a pergunta, eu queria falar uma coisinha.

Pesquisadora: Pode falar!

Sílvia: É bacana também que eu percebi agora também, é você pensar, porque a gente fala/nós falamos várias expressões né, e assim às vezes têm pessoas que sabem o significado, têm outras que

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não, né? (incompreensível) às vezes pode acontecer de a pessoa só usar a expressão. No caso, até no dia assim, talvez, eu acho que eu pesquisei, eu não lembro, ou se eu falei algumas coisas que eu sabia, não lembro. Mas pensando assim, de qualquer forma, mesmo que eu tenha pesquisado, é bacana você procurar entender a sua própria língua também né, que às vezes a gente tá acostumado apenas a falar, não vai procurar entender de verdade tudo assim. É isso, mas pode fazer a sua pergunta.

(Entrevista com Sílvia, 2016)

A participante brasileira aponta que estamos acostumados a falar (nossa língua materna), mas que nem sempre buscamos compreender tudo aquilo que falamos. O relato da interagente nos remete à definição proposta pela *Association for Language Awareness* (2012) de que a conscientização da linguagem é uma percepção consciente e uma sensibilidade no uso da língua, bem como em seu processo de aprendizagem e ensinamento.

Destarte, com base na análise da interação e na entrevista com Sílvia, é possível inferir que o teletandem contribuiu para que ela se conscientizasse de sua língua materna. Tal constatação é ainda mais reforçada por outro excerto, exposto a seguir:

Sílvia: [...] é bacana você procurar entender a sua própria língua também né, que às vezes a gente tá acostumado apenas a falar, não vai procurar entender de verdade tudo assim [...] a gente refletir sobre a própria língua, né? *Eu mesma refleti sobre minha própria língua* que, às vezes, principalmente na hora que você vai explicar pra alguém você se pega “meu Deus, como que eu vou explicar isso pra ele? Qual que é a melhor forma?”, né? Ou como (pausa) eu compreendi o significado, ou compreendo e se talvez a forma como eu compreendo também não vai ser a minha visão ao invés de ser o significado, talvez, da língua portuguesa, né? *Tem/a gente toma ou se preocupa em tomar esse cuidado de/em como mostrar a própria língua também, ensinar a própria língua. Isso é uma boa reflexão, né,* que a gente tem que fazer com a gente mesma né, principalmente quando você vai ser professor, né? E você/tem certos momentos que a gente pega/ a gente sabe português, mas na hora de/que a gente tá

acostumado a falar português naturalmente, então/ mas tem coisas que a hora que você vai ensinar você precisa, sabe, pensar mais a respeito daquilo pra conseguir passar de uma maneira clara talvez também pra que a pessoa compreenda. Acho que é isso.

(Entrevista com Sílvia, 2016)

A fala de Sílvia supracitada está em conformidade com esta análise, que buscou confirmar a proposição de que o teletandem suscitou reflexões sobre a língua materna à interagente. Isso reitera as suposições de que, possivelmente, as experiências no TTD propiciaram a conscientização da língua portuguesa para Sílvia.

Dupla 3 – Alice e Norma

- Alice: estudante de Letras da universidade brasileira onde atua como professora de inglês no centro de línguas da instituição;
- Norma (destacada em azul): nasceu na Espanha e desenvolve um intercâmbio na universidade americana onde estuda Engenharia Elétrica.

No encontro ocorrido no dia 11 de abril, Alice e Norma conversavam sobre o fato de morarem longe de suas famílias e sobre o contato que mantinham com elas:

1 N: *Eu nunca falo com meu irmão*

2 A: Nossa, imagino

3 N: *Ele está muito, muito longe daqui, é muito mais velho? velho que yo? like mayor?*

4 A: maior ((corrigindo a pronúncia))

5 N: *é muito mais maior que eu*

6 A: é maior que eu, só diga, diz assim só, é maior que eu

7 N: *é maior que eu, dez años maior que eu*

8 A: mais velho

9 N: *mais velho*

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10 A: isso, dez anos mais velho

11 N: você solo tem una irmã? ou tem...

12 A: a minha irmã é dez anos mais velha que eu também

13 N: mas solo tem una uma irmã ou tem mais?

14 A: eu tenho um irmão e uma irmã

15 N: hum

Norma relata que, raramente, se comunica com seu irmão, alegando que ele está muito longe dela e acrescentando a informação de que ele é muito mais velho do que ela (linha 3), talvez como uma maneira de justificar o distanciamento físico e pessoal entre ambos (linha 1: “Eu nunca falo com meu irmão”). A fim de confirmar o emprego da frase “mais velho”, ela recorre à língua espanhola para explicitar o que quer dizer (linha 3), utilizando “*mayor*” que, em espanhol, transmite o sentido de “mais velho(a)”.

No entanto, há um mal-entendido quando Alice, possivelmente sem entender a intenção da parceira, afirma “maior” (linha 4), o que, para Norma, soa como uma correção, visto que na linha 5 ela refaz a frase dita na linha 3 empregando “maior”, ao invés de “mais velho”. Nota-se também que, ao fazê-lo, ela utiliza a pronúncia referente à língua portuguesa (“maior” e não “*mayor*”), pois Alice havia falado “maior” quando Norma disse “*mayor*”.

Ao reelaborar a frase aplicando a palavra sugerida por Alice (“maior”), Norma comete um pequeno engano: “é muito mais maior que eu” (linha 5). A parceira brasileira intervém corrigindo “é maior que eu, só diga, diz assim só, é maior que eu” (linha 6). Alice não percebe a intenção de Norma (referir-se à idade) e não relaciona essa frase com o que ela queria expressar desde o início desse tópico: de que o irmão era muito mais velho do que ela (rever linhas 1-3). Conclui-se que Alice se concentrou em corrigir o emprego da palavra “maior” à oração de Norma e não se atentou para o contexto no qual a parceira a estava utilizando.

O foco da interagente brasileira incide sobre a forma linguística e não sobre o significado desejado pela interagente estadunidense. Este é, portanto, um caso em que há o foco nas formas, criticado por Long (1991) que alega que tal teoria ignora os aspectos funcionais da língua enquanto sua atenção recai sobre itens puramente linguísticos.

Já a teoria do foco na forma, defendida pelo autor (op. cit.), envolve forma e significado dentro de um contexto comunicativo. De acordo com Long (1991), o foco na

forma pondera sobre o que está por trás da língua, por exemplo, a cultura desses falantes, a geografia do país onde essa língua é falada, entre outros aspectos. No caso apresentado, é possível que Alice tenha ignorado a nacionalidade da parceira e sua língua nativa (espanhola) ou não possuía conhecimento de que, quando Norma disse “*mayor*”, ela não estava se referindo à palavra “maior” em português, mas sim ao sentido atribuído a essa em espanhol: “mais velho”.

Alice corrigiu Norma em três momentos (linhas 4, 6 e 8) e a interagente estadunidense utiliza cada uma das correções propostas por sua parceira. No entanto, a estudante brasileira não oferece nenhuma explicação sobre o ocorrido, nem justifica a correção final (e mais apropriada). Ademais, Alice poderia, mesmo que brevemente, esclarecer à Norma que não é adequado utilizar “mais” antes de “maior” e, ainda, aproveitar para dizer que o mesmo se aplica às palavras “menor”, “melhor” e “pioor”, por exemplo. A ausência de explicações por parte de Alice pode ter prejudicado o processo de reflexão e, conseqüentemente, de conscientização sobre a língua portuguesa para Norma.

De acordo com Tinkel (1985), citado por James e Garrett (1991), a conscientização da linguagem explora um conhecimento já possuído pelo aprendiz, direcionando sua atenção para algo que ele já sabe. Portanto, embora Alice não tenha promovido esclarecimentos e mais informações à sua parceira, os episódios relacionados à língua abordados por ambas podem ter contribuído para que Alice ponderasse sobre a própria língua, atentando-se às questões expostas e refletindo sobre o modo como operam no português.

A inferência a respeito das implicações dos episódios relacionados à língua para a conscientização da linguagem de Alice pode ser reforçada pelo seguinte excerto retirado da entrevista realizada com ela:

Alice: [...] Então que que a gente tem com esse contato, não só no teletandem, mas quando a gente tem um contato com outras pessoas tentando aprender o português é que a gente começa a ver a língua portuguesa como uma língua estrangeira, que é uma visão totalmente diferente, não é do mesmo jeito que você trabalha com um brasileiro que você vai trabalhar com um estrangeiro, então as dificuldades deles são coisas que talvez a gente nunca pensaríamos sozinhos, né? Então, por exemplo, em sessões de teletandem mesmo eu já tive algumas perguntas muito interessantes, algumas dúvidas muito interessantes [...] Então *you have a completely*

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diferente da sua própria língua como uma língua estrangeira, como uma segunda língua e isso é muito legal, é muito bom. Então essa é a influência: é você pensar na sua língua com todas as dificuldades que um estrangeiro tem [...] Então perguntas bem interessantes como essa apareceu e eu tive que me virar, né, tipo “qual a diferença de ‘nós’ com acento e ‘nós’ sem acento, essas coisas que pega a gente de/ né, de surpresa. [...] Então é muito bom que a gente vê de uma outra forma, a gente amadurece como um professor de língua portuguesa como língua estrangeira, é muito bom MESMO essa experiência. Legal de verdade. Gostei muito [...]

(Entrevista com Alice, 2016)

Observa-se que a experiência proporcionada pelo teletandem no que concerne ao uso/ensino da língua portuguesa é percebida, pela interagente, de uma maneira diferente da habitual. Desse modo, o excerto supracitado confirma a importância dos ERLs e como eles auxiliam no processo de reflexão e, conseqüentemente, de conscientização da língua. Além disso, a fala de Alice sobre seu crescimento como professora de português como língua estrangeira está em conformidade com Wright e Bolitho (1993) que acreditam na importância da CL para a formação de professores.

Considerações finais

O presente artigo se propôs a analisar os episódios relacionados à língua que emergem nas interações de teletandem, a fim de observar indícios de conscientização da linguagem por parte dos interagentes.

A primeira pergunta de pesquisa que norteou este estudo foi: *Quais os episódios relacionados à língua que emergem nas interações de teletandem?* Os ERLs observados nas interações foram de ordem verbal e lexical. Por uma questão de recorte de dados necessário aos moldes de um artigo, foram selecionadas apenas três incidências de ERLs, sendo uma verbal, exposta na dupla Lívia e Hanna, uma lexical na dupla Sílvia e Brendan, e outra lexical no par Alice e Norma.

A partir da seleção dos ERLs, buscou-se responder à segunda pergunta: *Como esses episódios podem promover conscientização da linguagem?*

No decorrer da análise, observei que os ERLs propiciavam instantes em que os interagentes discorriam sobre a língua e, além disso, direcionavam o foco dos alunos na forma linguística. Desse modo, orientei-me, também, pela teoria do foco na forma, defendida por Long (1991). Segundo Long (1991), a teoria do FonF é centrada no aluno e, portanto, favorece sua autonomia no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de uma língua. Além disso, conforme evidenciado na análise, os instantes de ERLs e de FonF permitem que os interagentes discorram e reflitam sobre a linguagem, o que pode auxiliá-los a se conscientizarem sobre a língua.

Os instantes de explicações, dúvidas e reflexões permitem que os parceiros evoquem questões linguísticas que, embora corriqueiras ou concebidas por eles como já garantidas (ou seja, já conhecidas e dominadas), são percebidas de uma forma diferente. Quando um interagente precisa fornecer explicações sobre a própria língua, é necessário evidenciar o conhecimento sobre aquele determinado aspecto. Esse conhecimento explicitado seria o processo de conscientização da linguagem (ALA, 2012).

Em suma, observamos que, além da proposta principal do teletandem de possibilitar o ensino de uma língua estrangeira aos participantes, esse contexto pode auxiliá-los no conhecimento e no uso da própria língua materna e, ainda, no desempenho pedagógico daqueles que se formarão como professores de línguas. Por desempenho pedagógico, compreendo as atitudes didáticas de um professor como: o esclarecimento de dúvidas, o fornecimento de explicações, preparações de aula, postura em sala de aula e, inclusive, interação com alunos.

Ademais, são raros os contextos existentes de ensino de português como língua estrangeira, especialmente em cidades do interior. Desse modo, o teletandem é uma oportunidade para que os estudantes de Letras tenham uma primeira experiência com o ensino de PLE.

Por fim, ressalto a importância de pesquisas que visem à formação de mediadores e a análise do próprio contexto do teletandem sob a perspectiva da conscientização da linguagem. Desse modo, será possível corroborarmos para a formação de professores mais conscientes sobre a linguagem e suas propriedades, sobre as diferenças entre as línguas, sobre as variações linguísticas e, conseqüentemente, sobre suas próprias práticas pedagógicas.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: FRANCO, Gabriela Rossatto. Episódios relacionados à língua em interações de teletandem: implicações para a formação de professores de PLE. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 214-240, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2410>

Submetido em: 16/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 17/12/2018.

THE VARIATION OF OBLIGATORY PREPOSITION-ARTICLE CONTRACTIONS IN THE INTERLANGUAGE OF ADULT LEARNERS OF PORTUGUESE

A variação de contrações obrigatórias entre preposição e artigos na interlíngua de aprendizes adultos de português como língua estrangeira

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Abstract | This study analyzes the sociolinguistic variation of obligatory contractions between the preposition *de* and the definite articles in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese as foreign language in the United States. Using this variation phenomenon as an example, the main objective of this pilot study is to discuss the feasibility of using speech data from telecollaborative interactions in interlanguage variation studies. The analyzed data come from four audio-recorded teletandem sessions held in 2017 among nine US-based learners of Portuguese and native speakers of this language in Brazil. The quantitative analysis included three linguistic group factors –preceding word category, gender marking, and number marking– and four social group factors –learner gender, native language, immersion experience, and teletandem session. The results showed that only gender marking was selected as a significant factor for the occurrence of contraction. The study concluded that speech data from telecollaborative interactions can be used as one of the tasks in large scale interlanguage variation studies. However, it also cautions researchers to consider some of the major issues regarding selection of variables, learners’ style shifting and stage of acquisition, and technical limitations of this type of interaction.

Keywords | Sociolinguistic variation. Interlanguage. Reduced forms. Contractions. Teletandem. Portuguese as a foreign language.

Resumo | Este estudo analisa a variação sociolinguística de contrações obrigatórias entre a preposição *de* e os artigos definidos na interlíngua de aprendizes adultos de português como língua estrangeira nos Estados Unidos. Usando este fenômeno variável como exemplo, o objetivo principal deste estudo piloto é analisar a viabilidade de usar dados de fala de interações telecolaborativas em estudos de variação de interlíngua. Os dados analisados foram coletados dos áudios gravados de quatro sessões de teletandem que aconteceram, em 2017, entre nove aprendizes de português localizados nos Estados Unidos e falantes nativos desta língua no Brasil. A análise quantitativa incluiu três grupos de fatores linguísticos –classe de palavra precedente, gênero e número– e quatro grupos de fatores sociais –gênero do(a) aprendiz, língua nativa, experiência de imersão e sessão de teletandem. Os resultados indicaram que apenas gênero gramatical foi selecionado como um fator significativo para a ocorrência de contração. O estudo concluiu que dados de fala de interações telecolaborativas podem ser usados como uma das técnicas para coleta de dados em estudos de variação de interlíngua de grande porte. Todavia, o estudo também chama a atenção dos pesquisadores para que considerem alguns dos principais problemas relacionados à seleção das variáveis, as mudanças de registro e estágio de aquisição dos aprendizes e as limitações técnicas deste tipo de interação.

Palavras-chave | Variação sociolinguística. Interlíngua. Formas reduzidas. Contrações. Teletandem. Português como língua estrangeira.

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- | The variation of obligatory preposition-article contractions in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese

Introduction

This study investigates a linguistic dimension of teletandem, defined as “a collaborative, autonomous and reciprocal method of foreign language learning” that takes place on the Internet (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006, p. 84). More specifically, it focuses on the use of obligatory contractions between the preposition *de* (translated into English as ‘of’ or ‘from’ and into Spanish as ‘de’) and the four Portuguese definite articles *o*, *a*, *os*, *as* (translated into English invariably as ‘the’ and into Spanish as ‘el, la, los, las’) in the interlanguage of adult learners of Portuguese as a foreign language in the United States and native speakers of Portuguese in Brazil, concentrating on the use of obligatory preposition-article contractions by the first group. Given the fact that more and more foreign language programs have encouraged learners’ participation in telecollaborative interactions with native speakers or have even incorporated these conversations as an element of the curriculum, this study also aims to discuss the extent to which the data produced in these online interactions are feasible to the analysis of variation in interlanguage, the language developed by a second language learner (SELINKER, 1972).

Variability has been largely accepted as an important aspect of both language (L1) and interlanguage (L2, L3, or additional language). In both cases, many scholars have shown that variation is not random; rather it is systematic, rule-governed, and is influenced by a combination of linguistic and social factors (BAYLEY; TARONE, 2012; LABOV, 1966, 1972a; TARONE, 1988; WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG, 1968). Following Young (1991), Regan (2013, p. 4) states that “learners restructure their grammars as they progress through various stages of variability, where they use different forms (target and non-target) towards categorical usage; that is, they use one particular target form finally.” The necessity to describe the nature of variability in interlanguage has been a central point in the contributions made by sociolinguistic variation studies to the development of the area of second language acquisition.

In the case of Portuguese as a foreign language, learners’ interlanguage presents a considerable amount of variation in their use of reduced forms or contractions involving the prepositions *de* and definite articles *o*, *a*, *os*, *as*, even though native speakers would realize these combinations categorically as *do*, *da*, *dos*, and *das*, respectively. Knowing when to keep them apart is also part of the implicit knowledge that native speakers have of this grammatical rule. Speaking about the context of the United States, the fact that this contraction rule is not obligatory in either English or Spanish is one of the reasons for L1 English and L1 Spanish learners of Portuguese L3 not to follow it in the target language, especially in early stages of acquisition.

Another challenge in the acquisition of the preposition-article contraction rule is the notion of grammatical gender in the learners' previous languages. The reality of the United States is such that Portuguese is mostly offered at the college level, when learners have already been introduced to a second language in the preceding stages of their educational career. This second language is usually Spanish for those who have English as their first language and is English for those whose first language is Spanish. In either case, the source of crosslinguistic influence is not always easy to pinpoint, but studies in this area have suggested that L3 transfer is strongly related to the learner's nonnative language (e.g. DE ANGELIS, 2005a, 2005b; DEWAELE, 1998; HAMMARBERG, 2001; MURPHY, 2003; WILLIAMS; HAMMARBERG, 1998). Nevertheless, as mastering this contraction rule requires a strong understanding of the grammatical gender rules in the Portuguese language, this is particularly difficult for L1 and L2 English speakers given the absence of this feature in this language.

Even though studies of interlanguage variation represent an important field of research within the area of second language acquisition (see BAYLEY; TARONE, 2012; REGAN, 2013), this approach is still understudied among scholars concerned with Portuguese as a foreign language. In fact, the treatment of variation phenomena in PFL textbooks needs to be further developed (CAMPOS, 2017). With this in mind, this study presents a sociolinguistic variation analysis of obligatory preposition-article contractions in the interlanguage of L3 learners of Portuguese, using preliminary data collected from teletandem interactions. In focusing on this variation phenomenon, the study also discusses some of the main issues associated with the nature of linguistic data extracted from computer-mediated-communication environments.

Methods: Vernacular speech in telecollaborative interactions

Educational institutions represent one of the major sites for learning a second, third or additional language; however, as Bayley and Tarone (2012, p. 51) remind us, "language classrooms naturally elicit formal styles of speech and encourage attention to formal accuracy." The authors also add that those who learn a foreign language in an academic environment often acquire the standard register of that language and sometimes face some difficulties when talking with someone in a context that requires an informal register. These scholars see Internet chat or telecollaborative interactions in general as good resources to complement classroom activities (i.e. role-plays, scenarios, task-based activities) that language instructors usually use in order to trigger informal styles. In their own words, "Internet chat may offer classroom bound learners the opportunity to engage

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in authentic interaction with L2 speakers who are not teachers, and expose them to the stylistic differences of L2 that vary according to context" (BAYLEY; TARONE, 2012, p. 51). In this sense, language produced in this kind of environment can be seen as vernacular speech or "the style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech" (LABOV, 1972a, p. 208).

Traditionally, sociolinguistic variation studies analyze naturalistic data sets obtained from speakers through the use of sociolinguistic interviews, which include conversation about different topics between the researcher and the participant and other tasks such as reading passage, word lists, and minimal pairs (LABOV, 1972a). By employing each of these tasks and strategically changing the topic of the conversation, the interviewer aims to collect a sample of the interviewee's speech containing a variety of speech styles, ranging from more formal to more casual. According to Labov (1972b, p. 113), another goal of the sociolinguist interview is to minimize the effects of the *observer's paradox*, the idea that "to obtain the data most important for linguistic theory, we have to observe how people speak when they are not being observed." In the case of second language acquisition studies, the goal of using different methods to obtain data has been to shift the learner's attention from form to meaning. Achieving this goal is even more challenging in the beginning stages of second language acquisition and so the idea of using data from teletandem interactions was seen here as an attempt to solve or minimize this problem.

Another important point in the discussion of the methodology used in sociolinguistic variation research is the notion of speech community, which has been defined as a group of people who have shared characteristics of linguistic use and social practice (PATRICK, 2002; SCHILLING, 2013). After defining the speech community, which may or may not require ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher decides on a plan of how he or she is going to recruit participants for the study in order to have a representative sample of the speech community. To meet this requirement, the researcher often recruits as many speakers as possible to fill cells based on census demographic information (i.e. gender, race, class, age, etc.). With the development of the field of sociolinguistic variation, other sampling techniques for dealing with the representativeness of the speech community have been proposed. One of them is social network, which was used by Milroy (1987) in a sociolinguistic study of Belfast in the 1980s. Using the snowball (also referred to as friend of a friend) technique, the researcher was introduced to new participants as a friend of a friend and so other participants were recruited based on their connections within the existing social network.

Another way to frame the idea of speech community is to think of it as a community of practice or “an aggregate of people who come together around some enterprise” (ECKERT, 2000, p. 35). The best example of how the idea of community of practice was used in sociolinguistic variation studies was Eckert’s (2000) investigation of the linguistic and social practices of the *jocks* and *burnouts* of Belten High School, which is located in the suburbs of Detroit. After an extensive period of ethnographic fieldwork, Eckert’s sociolinguistic analysis showed that the patterns of variation for each group were consistent with the values, attitudes, and orientations they had about life inside and outside of the school boundaries. The notion of community of practice is useful in the present study because it can be used to identify the participants as a group of people who share the identity of student and are also united by the goal of learning a foreign language, in this case, Portuguese.

As members of a community of practice oriented toward the goal of learning Portuguese, the students engaged in a variety of activities that are usually done by people who attend language classes in an academic setting. These activities included attending class regularly, interacting with instructor and peers, doing homework, taking quizzes, and so on and so forth. Teletandem sessions were added to the course curriculum as speaking activities that would give students an opportunity to practice linguistic structures they were reviewing in class as well as expose them to other elements of the language and the culture in informal conversations with people who were not their instructor. It is also important to mention that, as far as the US-based learners are concerned, their teletandem sessions were categorized as both institutional and integrated, which is when these interactions are not only supported by the academic institution but are also part of the course curriculum, making students’ participation mandatory (BRAMMERTS, 2002, p. 86).

Keeping the above discussion in mind, the data analyzed in the present study were collected in 2017 from four audio-recorded teletandem sessions among nine learners of Portuguese as a foreign language in the United States and native speakers of this language located in Brazil. Each session lasted about 50 minutes, which corresponded to the duration of a class period for the US-based learners. During this time, participants normally spent half of the time speaking in Portuguese and the other half speaking in English. Following the three core principles of tandem learning, namely autonomy, reciprocity, and separation of languages (BRAMMERTS, 2003; TELLES, 2015; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006), the expectation was that participants would enhance their communicative skills overtime by performing these two different roles (foreign language learner and native speaker), developing a sense of agency, and collaborating with one another to achieve their learning goals.

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The nine US-based participants, six females and three males, were all enrolled in their first semester of a Portuguese language program. Their ages ranged from 19 to 65 years old and all of them, except for one, were undergraduate students in various stages of their academic career. They were divided into two sub-groups, Group A (GA) and Group B (GB), which corresponded respectively to Portuguese for Spanish Speakers and Elementary Portuguese, the two classes they were taking at the time of the data collection. Group A had five members, of whom three were speakers of Spanish (one was a native-speaker). The remaining two students were the only ones who had had an immersion experience in Brazil. Out of the four members of Group B, only one spoke Spanish. Even though they were in two different classes that followed two different teaching methodologies, all students were assumed to be learning Portuguese as a third or additional language.

The only criterion used to select a participant for the study was the availability of recorded data, which was only technically possible in both the initial and the last teletandem sessions. So, the four teletandem sessions that were selected for analysis correspond to the first and the last teletandem sessions for each of the two groups. In this sense, as Group A had a total of seven sessions over the semester, its interactions were labeled GA1 and GA7. Approximately two months went by between the first and the last interaction. As for Group B, as it had four interactions total, with one and a half months between the first and the last one, its interactions were labeled GB1 and GB4. This group had fewer occurrences of the dependent variable due to the fact that some students interacted in groups of three participants (two Portuguese learners and one native speaker), which limited the number of speaking opportunities for individual students.

After selecting the participants and the interactions, the data were coded separately for the quantitative analysis carried out in the study. The dependent variable was the contraction between preposition *de* (translated into English as 'of' or 'from' and into Spanish as 'de') and the four Portuguese definite articles *o, a, os, as* (translated into English as 'the' and into Spanish as 'el, la, los, las'). Each occurrence of *de* was coded as "target like" if the learner followed the contraction rule, that is if he or she appropriately contracted the preposition with the definite article in order to produce a target-like combination or reduced form, and as "non-target like" if applying the rule would be inappropriate for the given context. This distinction was also applied to contexts where native speakers usually do not use a definite article, in which cases contraction would not happen. Examples of the coding method are shown below:

1. Coding examples for contraction between *de* and definite articles

Target-like: Eu gosto *do* Brasil. 'I like Brazil.'

Eu gosto *de* Portugal. 'I like Portugal'

Non-target like: Eu gosto *de o* Brasil. 'I like Brazil.'

Eu gosto *do* Portugal. 'I like Portugal'

As it can be seen above, the four different types of occurrences for the dependent variable were combined into two possibilities, namely target-like and non-target like occurrences. The idea here was to account for all the instances where learners applied or did not apply the contraction rule appropriately. In other words, the goal was to see if and when learners were able to identify the contexts in which a contraction was required and contexts where it was not appropriate. It is also important to mention that both learner groups were introduced formally to these contraction rules three weeks prior to their first teletandem interactions.

After classifying each occurrence of *de* with definite articles based on the specifications made above, this process also included coding for other eight independent variables, of which four were linguistic and four were social. Among the social variables were preceding word category (noun, adjective, and pronoun; adverb and conjunction; or verb), gender marking (masculine or feminine), and number marking (singular or plural). The social variables were learner gender (male or female), native language (Spanish, English, or other), immersion experience (yes or no), and teletandem session (GA1, GA7, GB1, or GB4). More specific information about the collected data and the quantitative analyses carried out for contractions with *de* are presented in the next session.

Quantitative Results

The data collection yielded a total of 104 tokens of contractions with *de*, of which 80 were target like, meaning that the rule for making a contraction or for not making one was followed by the learner, and 24 were non-target like (Please see the previous session for more information). The influence of the seven independent variables (preceding word category, gender marking, number marking, learner gender, native language, immersion experience, and teletandem session) for the dependent variable was measured using the binomial one level analysis in Rbrul (JOHNSON, 2009), a variable rule program that runs within the R programming language environment. For this procedure, the non-target

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like occurrences of contraction were treated as the application value. Table 1 shows the quantitative results for contractions with *de*.

Table 1. Multivariate analysis of the contribution of linguistic and social factors to the probability of non-target *de* contractions

Teletandem data			
Input probability			0.009
Log likelihood			-47.069
Total N			104
	Factor weight	Proportion	N
Gender marking ($p > 0.01$)			
Feminine	0.69	31	32
Masculine	0.30	19	72
Number marking (Not significant)			
Plural	0.62	33	18
Singular	0.37	20	86
Preceding word category (Not significant)			
Noun, Adjective and Pronoun	0.52	25	59
Adverb and Conjunction	0.48	28	14
Verb	0.48	16	31
Learner gender (Not significant)			
Male	0.65	25	43
Female	0.34	21	61

Native language (Not significant)			
Spanish	0.87	50	4
English	0.45	23	90
Other languages	0.14	10	10
Immersion experience (Not significant)			
Yes	0.50	19	46
No	0.49	25	58
Teletandem session (Not significant)			
Group A, session 7	0.99	35	39
Group B, session 1	0.98	25	20
Group A, session 1	0.98	13	38
Group B, session 4	0.00	00	7

Linguistic factors

The quantitative analysis included three linguistic or internal factors, namely preceding word category, gender marking, number marking. The results that appear in Table 1 show that gender marking was the only linguistic factor that significantly influenced the occurrence of non-target *de* contractions. Based on these results, feminine definite articles favored non-target like contractions of *de*, with a probability weight of 0.69. Conversely, masculine definite articles disfavored this kind of contraction, with a factor weight of 0.30.

Even though they were not selected as significant by Rbrul, the other two linguistic factors - number marking and preceding word category - also showed interesting results. For number marking, the quantitative results showed that definite articles marked for plural favored the non-application of the contraction rule. The probability weight for this factor

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was 0.62. Unmarked definite article, on the other hand, disfavored this feature. This means that the grammatical rules for *de* contractions had more chances to be followed by learners when the definite article, and consequently the noun phrase, was in the singular form. In the case of preceding word category, the results showed that the factors considered for these factor group had an almost neutral effect on non-target like *de* contractions, having factor weights of 0.52 for nouns, adjectives and pronouns and 0.48 for both adverbs and conjunctions and verbs.

Social factors

The results for the social or external factors included in the quantitative analysis, namely learner gender, native language, immersion experience, and teletandem session, also point to important information about the use of contractions in the interlanguage of learners of Portuguese as a foreign language, even though none of them was selected as significant for the occurrence of non-target like *de* contractions.

In the case of learner gender, the quantitative results showed that male learners favored the non-target like *de* contractions while female learners disfavored it. The probability weight was of 0.65 for the first group and of 0.34 for the second one. As far as native language is concerned, the results indicated that the non-target like use of *de* contraction was favored by Spanish native speakers (factor weight of 0.87). It is important to mention that there was only one participant that met this criterion and this particular speaker produced 4 contractions with *de*, of which 2 (50%) were non-target like. This linguistic feature was slightly disfavored by English native speakers (factor weight of 0.45) and strongly disfavored by the native speakers of other languages (factor weight of 0.14).

Another social factor included in the quantitative analysis was immersion experience, which showed no effect on the dependent variable. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that only two learners had previously spent some time in a Portuguese-speaking country. Even though they produced almost half of all *de* contraction cases with a total of 46, the proportion of contractions errors they had was of 19 percent, compared to 25 percent of the rest of the group. Even though these two speakers had developed a certain level of fluency when speaking in Portuguese due to the fact that they probably focused more on meaning than on form than the other learners, their use of the contraction rule shows that they were still processing the acquisition of this linguistic feature.

The last social factor that was included in the quantitative analysis was teletandem session or the initial and final sessions for each of the two groups of learners considered in the study (Group A – GA and Group B – GB). The results for this factor were compromised not only by the small number of occurrences produced by group B (7 occurrences) but also the inexistence of non-target like *de* contractions for this group in their second interaction. Even though the small number of occurrences can be blamed to the fact that this interaction did not have a large amount of speech data compared to the other ones, it is difficult to determine if their use of the contraction rule would remain the same if the learners had actually spoken more. In what follows, I comment on the main points regarding the results presented in this session and on the major challenges faced during the development of this research project.

Discussion

Looking at the quantitative results presented in the previous sessions, it is possible to see some interesting points regarding the effect of some of the group factors included in the analysis on the use of non-target like *de* contractions by the group of learners of Portuguese as a foreign language. Even though the amount of data used in the quantitative analysis jeopardizes any attempt to generalize these results, it is worth noting the effect of gender marking, the only group factor selected as significant. As seen above, non-target like *de* contractions were favored when the article, and consequently the whole noun phrase, was marked for gender or in the feminine form. This is actually expected, given the fact that grammatical gender is a difficult morphological feature to acquire by L3 learners of Portuguese, especially if their L1 or L2 is English (BRITO, 2015; DEKEYSER, 2005). In this case, appropriate use of the contraction rule requires mastering of the grammatical gender first and so it will be interesting to test the development of these two variables in a longitudinal study.

As it was discussed earlier, collected data from telecollaborative interactions, such as those from teletandem, can be a good solution to the challenge of recording vernacular speech for a sociolinguistic variation analysis of interlanguage. However, a few things should be taken into consideration by researchers attempting to do accomplish this goal. For example, the researcher could use these data as an additional task to be performed by learner, which could be compared to recordings of sociolinguistic interviews, including its usual parts such as spontaneous conversation, narrative, minimal pair, word list, and reading passage. The ultimate goal is to be able to get a range of speech styles, ranging from more formal (careful) to less formal (casual) (LABOV, 1972c) and so, as discussed

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above, telecollaborative interactions can provide learners with great opportunities to produce vernacular speech.

The design of a sociolinguistic variation study of interlanguage should also consider the issue of variable selection, especially if the researcher is considering using data from telecollaborative interactions. For example, it is necessary to think about the frequency of the linguistic variable. In early stages of acquisition, it is probably a good idea to analyze a phonological item whose occurrence will not be an issue even if the learner does not or is not able to produce a large amount of speech data. As Wolfram (1993, p. 205-206) advises us, "Items that are rare, either because of the relative infrequency of the structure in ordinary conversation or because of conscious suppression in an interview situation are not good candidates for variation analysis." In the case of this study, even though preposition-article contractions are fairly frequent linguistic features in the speech of even beginning learners, some of the participants did not produce as much data as it had been expected. This, as a result, compromises not only the analysis itself but also any possible generalization based on it.

The technical characteristics of the medium may also pose some challenges. One of them has to do with the instability of the Internet connection itself, which can jeopardize the quality of the data, especially if the researcher intends to analyze a suprasegmental feature of the speech, such as stress, tone, pitch, length of sounds, and word juncture. Moreover, fluctuations in the sound quality may compromise the researcher's ability to examine the formative elements of vowels and consonants, for example. A way to get around this challenge is to make sure that minimum requirements for audio recording are met in both ends of the interaction. It is also important to keep in mind that people will respond differently to the idea that their conversation will be mediated by a computer screen. In other words, talking with someone through a computer screen may be totally ordinary for some people but it may also be terrifying or intimidating for others, especially in a foreign language.

Final considerations

The present study investigated the sociolinguistic variation of contractions between the preposition *de* and the definite articles *o*, *a*, *os*, and *as* in the interlanguage of nine learners of Portuguese as foreign language from an American university. The analyzed data were collected from audio-recorded teletandem sessions among the Portuguese learners and native speakers of this language in Brazil. Out of the seven independent variables or group factors included in the quantitative analysis (preceding word category, gender

marking, number marking, learner gender, native language, immersion experience, and teletandem session), only gender marking was selected as significant. Within this group factor, feminine definite articles or noun phrases favored the occurrence of non-target like *de* contractions while masculine ones, disfavored it. Stated differently, articles in the feminine form influenced negatively the application of the contraction rule between the preposition *de* and the article. This was expected given the fact that articles in English, the native language of most of the participants, are not marked for gender, and so learners may have found it easier to apply the contraction rule in contexts with fewer elements to attend to. More research is needed to first determine the source of crosslinguistic influence in this case and then the specific patterns of use of contraction rules in the interlanguage.

Based on the experience gained with the realization of the project, it is possible to say that data gathered from telecollaborative interactions can be used as an additional task in the sociolinguistic variation analysis of interlanguage. As the data produced in such interactions tend to be more informal, they can be analyzed as a sample of the learners' vernacular speech, which may be difficult to get in academic settings. It is also important to consider some of the issues that may pose a problem during and after the data collection, including variable selection, what linguistic features learners will be producing more consistently and when, and technical limitations imposed by the nature of computer mediated communications themselves.

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Submetido em: 01/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 21/12/2018.

TEACHING SOCIAL ISSUES THROUGH CINEMA AND TELETANDEM

Ensinando questões sociais por meio do cinema e do Teletandem

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Abstract | Teletandem is an innovative learning experience that helps to connect foreign language students with native or competent speakers in a virtual context. Through a Teletandem project, students have the opportunity to learn a language while developing a new cultural dimension. This paper presents the pedagogical experience of using Spanish cinema and a U.S. – Chilean Teletandem project designed to promote linguistic skills while addressing sociocultural issues related to the target culture. Using Web 2.0 tools, students had monthly synchronous conversations that focused on cultural, racial, gender, and social-political problems associated with the Hispanic culture. The Teletandem project allowed students to compare information learned in class with the material collected from their partners. This exchange of information helped students to form their own opinions and gain new perspectives of the target culture.

Keywords | Teletandem. Telecollaboration. Language learning. Social issues. Intercultural learning. Hispanic cinema.

Resumo | O Teletandem é uma experiência de aprendizado inovadora que ajuda a conectar estudantes estrangeiros com falantes nativos ou competentes em um contexto virtual. Através do projeto Teletandem, os alunos têm a oportunidade de aprender uma língua enquanto desenvolvem uma nova dimensão cultural. Este artigo apresenta a experiência pedagógica do uso do cinema espanhol e de um projeto norte-americano – Teletandem chileno, desenvolvido para promover habilidades linguísticas, ao mesmo tempo em que aborda questões socioculturais relacionadas à cultura-alvo. Usando ferramentas da Web 2.0, os alunos tiveram conversas síncronas mensais focadas em problemas culturais, raciais, de gênero e sociopolíticos associados à cultura hispânica. O projeto Teletandem permitiu que os alunos comparassem as informações aprendidas em sala de aula com o material coletado de seus parceiros. Essa troca de informações ajudou os alunos a formar suas próprias opiniões e obter novas perspectivas da cultura-alvo.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem. Telecolaboração. Aprendizagem de línguas. Questões sociais. Aprendizagem intercultural. Cinema hispânico.

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Introduction

In the last decade, technology has increased the opportunities to revolutionize the design and implementation of innovative language learning experiences. The classroom environment has transitioned from a passive and formal learning place into a dynamic area where students can experience real language learning practices. One of those authentic experiences is learning *in-tandem*. Vassallo and Telles (2006) stated that the growth of virtual learning settings has shortened the geographical barriers allowing people from different cultures to communicate while providing new forms of learning languages *in-tandem*. Regarding the definition of learning *in-tandem*, Little and Brammerts (1996) observed that it is a way of opening learning where learners of two different native languages mentor each other on their language skills, learn about their culture, and exchange information about their lives or professions.

There are three types of tandem learning: face-to-face tandem, e-tandem, and Teletandem. The contexts in which tandem learning happens and the language skills are developed in each mode are the foundation that differentiates the kinds of tandem. In face-to-face tandem, learners share the same physical space and develop all four-language skills through different practices. In e-tandem, learners use their own digital space, which can be an email or a chat environment. The skills used in this tandem learning type are reading and writing with no practice of speaking and listening skills (TELLES; VASALLO, 2006).

The third type of *in-tandem* learning is Teletandem, a virtual Tandem communication context that is performed through digital technologies such as Skype, Google Hangouts, or Zoom and offers text, audio, and video resources. Telles (2015) explains that Teletandem is another way of telecollaboration for language learning based on a virtual, collaborative and autonomous environment. In this learning experience, students learn and mentor each other on their language acquisition process following three main principles: autonomy, reciprocity, and separation of languages (BRAMMERTS, 2003; TELLES; VASALLO, 2006). There are different ways of implementing Teletandem in the course curriculum: institutionally, institutionally non-integrated and institutionally integrated (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014; TELLES, 2015). A correctly implemented institutionally integrated Teletandem should include elements such as preparation of students and integration of tasks and assessment tools in the course curriculum (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016).

In this article, the author will focus on the implementation of institutionally integrated Teletandem in the language classroom as a means to address social issues of the

target culture. To achieve this goal, the instructor of the course incorporated three main elements: Spanish cinema, institutionally integrated Teletandem, and social issues. In the following sections, the author will describe the pedagogical experience of combining and using these three techniques in a language conversation course.

Teletandem and Language Learning

When talking about Teletandem, it is essential to review some of the benefits of using this learning technique in language acquisition. One element that is positively affected during a session is feedback. Consolo and Furtoso (2015) demonstrated that the feedback offered during the session is essential to give context, maintain the progress of interaction, and provide support to acknowledge the interlocutor's speech. When writing and giving peer feedback, students focus on language form when correcting their partners' written production using their beliefs and experiences as learners (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2015).

Teletandem is also considered an environment that increases independence and responsibility among students and teachers. It also promotes critical analysis and awareness of both student and partner's language and culture (CARVALHO; MESSIAS; DÍAS, 2015). It is also important to point out that using real language in context in a Teletandem session helps to promote the process of teaching-learning languages and decreases the space barrier among language learners (RAMOS, 2015).

Regarding culture learning, Teletandem makes it possible to experience real culture, to break stereotypes, and to acquire a more flexible and personal view of the target culture (SALOMÃO, 2015). Learning culture *in-tandem* gives the opportunity of being confronted with several forms of acting and thinking. It also allows learning new elements of the target culture and comparing the cultural similarities in those elements (SANTOS, 2015). Essentially, Teletandem offers learners the opportunity to become aware of the world's cultural differences giving them a variety of sources of knowledge and increasing learners L2 intercultural communicative competence (AL HASNAWI, 2013). Al Hasnawi also explains that there are other factors such as collaboratively well-trained instructors, correct selection of topics, appropriate participants, and the right tools that influence intercultural competence.

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Discussing Social Issues in Language Learning

Language teachers' responsibilities have increased in the last ten years, moving from teaching language content and developing language skills into more complex and more significant tasks. Pratama (2016, p. 719) states that

[...] we as educators should also pay attention to some problems occurring in the world and equip our students with knowledge and skills to actively participate in solving the problems or at least showing sympathy to those issues. It is morally far from good to only stick our mind in teaching the textbooks we are using without any care for the problems around us.

With that idea in mind and with the goal of exposing language students to some of the global issues in our societies, the UNESCO's Linguapax² program has developed a list of recommendations to language educators. One of the recommendations focuses on the implementation of international understanding in the language teaching and learning process with the goal of creating cooperation among countries. Another advice emphasizes the importance of promoting students' collaboration in the language classroom to develop an international partnership among nations. The program also suggests the use of extracurricular activities and resources such as videos, exchange programs, and activities to create international understanding (UNESCO, 1987).

Recent studies have demonstrated that the use of social justice-oriented practices gives students a foundation for their future professional settings. Students are better prepared to actively participate in a multicultural and multilingual society when exposed to such methods (DA CRUZ, 2017). Students who gain exposure to global education develop social responsibility that makes them better participants of the world (PRATAMA, 2016). It also promotes global awareness among students helping them to gain a better understanding of international issues and sparks an interest to contribute to a better world (KIP, 2005).

Although there is a strong rationale to why language instructors should integrate social issues in the language classroom, incorporating such cultural topics is seen as a problematic and complicated challenge (TEDICK; WALKER, 1994). Nevertheless, many

² Linguapax is an organization founded by UNESCO that focuses on the protection and revitalization of languages to promote peace.

instructors around the world have created cultural projects to promote intercultural learning and integrate social issues in language learning. As described by Kern (2006), cross-cultural projects are essential pedagogical approaches that can help to increase students' cultural knowledge and offer a setting to view students' culture from their peer's perspective. Even more critical, like Kubota, Austin, and Saito-Abbott (2003, p. 22) stated, is that "[...] by using community and technology resources, teachers and learners can begin to discuss socio-political issues underlying their diverse life experiences and call into question our commons assumptions about culture and society". With all these ideas in mind, the author of this article has designed and implemented an intercultural project that combines Teletandem learning, Spanish cinema, and social issues. In the following sections, the author will describe the project, its different stages and elements, and will mention her reflections based on her own experiences.

Description of the Project

The instructor implemented the project in Fall 2016 and carried it out for two consecutive Fall semesters. Unfortunately, it was not possible to incorporate the project during Spring semesters because of schedule differences between the U.S. college and the partner university in Chile. In Fall 2016, 15 students participated from each group, and in Fall 2017, 33 students from each group were involved in the project. Students from the U.S. group were English native or competent speakers majoring and minoring in Spanish, and students from the Chilean group were Spanish native or competent speakers mostly majoring in science and engineering fields. Students from the U.S. group were enrolled in an intermediate/mid-level (ACTFL³PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES, 2012) Spanish Conversation, and Diction course and the Chilean students were taking a B1 level (EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL RESOLUTION, 2001) Communicative English course.

When describing students' gender and race, it is possible to say that diversity played an important role in the American group. Both groups (Fall 2016-2017) were very diverse with the participation of Hispanic students, Spanish heritage students, African American students, LGBTQ⁴ students, and white students. On the contrary, most of the students in the Chilean group were Hispanic, white males with few females and one Jamaican student. Students' age in both groups ranged from 18 to 23 years old. It is important to point out that the U.S. group studies at a public Liberal Art College and the Chilean group studies at a traditional private research university.

³ ACTFL is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages that works to improve and promote language teaching and learning across all levels.

⁴ LGBTQ are the initials that stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

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Regarding the technology used in the project, the instructors of both universities initially selected the same online communication tools used by them in a previous project (CASTILLO-SCOTT, 2015). In that opportunity, the students used Skype and Google Hangouts tools to communicate. The instructors decided to use the same online communication tools because of students' familiarity with these Web 2.0 tools. Both instructors required students to video record the sessions of this project. For that reason, the instructors suggested video recording tools such as Quick Time and CallNote. However, some students experienced difficulties with those programs because of either compatibility issues (Mac vs. PCs) or having to pay extra cost to download the applications on their computers. Some students looked for other alternatives to avoid the additional cost, and they used their cell phones to record the sessions. Unfortunately, the sound and quality of the video was weak, which made it difficult for the instructor when reviewing and grading the sessions. For all those reasons, some students started using Zoom, a free online communication tool that facilitates the communication while recording the conversation. Zoom is a video conferencing service using Cloud computing. It offers many capabilities such as screen sharing and documents, chat, and video recording conversations. The video conversations used an mp4 format that facilitates saving space and uploading the material into a Learning Management System (LMS). As the instructor of this project, the author suggests using just one single program to avoid confusion among students and receiving a different type of formats and video recordings.

With respect to students session's submissions, the instructor used the college LMS where students could upload and store their video recordings. The differences in students' video formats slowed the uploading process in the LMS. In order to solve this issue, the instructor asked students to upload videos to YouTube or Vimeo and share their links through the LMS.

All the session in this Teletandem project followed the three main Tandem principles: separation of languages reciprocity, and autonomy (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006). The instructors asked students to complete four sessions in one semester. Each session was scheduled once a month and lasted sixty minutes. Following the separation of languages principle, each session dedicated thirty minutes to each language – English or Spanish – for a total of one hour. To guarantee that students followed this principle, instructors requested that they would record the video sessions. Each video recording should include thirty minutes in each language. All the meetings were held outside the classroom during students' own time to achieve the principle of autonomy. Students had to schedule the date and time they wanted to complete their sessions.

By assigning specific talking points (see Table 1 and Appendix A), it was possible to attain the principle of reciprocity. Both groups had their own set of topics that reflected their course goals and material. During the session, students had to discuss their talking points giving time to their partners to address the one assigned to them.

Selecting the topics for each session was one of the critical elements of the Teletandem project. Because the course goals and material were different for both groups, each group had its own set of topics. The instructor in the Chilean group decided to continue with the topics already used in a previous Teletandem project (CASTILLO-SCOTT, 2015). On the contrary, the instructor in the Spanish group selected social issues topics addressed in some of the movies included in the course textbook *Cinema for Spanish Conversation* (GILL; SMALLEY; HARO, 2014). The textbook has a total of 12 films and the instructor selected only nine movies for the semester because of time constraints. The instructor also tried to choose movies that represented different Hispanic countries (e.g., *No* - Chile; *Even the rain* - Bolivia). The films that were selected for the course were *Under the same moon*, *Tear this heart out*, *María full of grace*, *Even the rain*, *The motorcycle diaries*, *No*, *Flowers from another world*, *All about my mother* and *The sea inside*.

Then, the instructor selected the social issues of the movies *Under the same moon*, *Tear this heart out*, and *María full of grace* for the discussions in the Teletandem sessions. *Under the same moon* talks about illegal immigration in the United States and the struggles of illegal immigrants when crossing the border and living in the U.S., *Tear this heart out* discusses dictatorship, abuse of power and domestic violence, and *María full of grace* addresses the socio-economical crisis and battles that lead Colombian women to become involved in narco-trafficking.

To reflect the movies' social issues and to help students gain a better understanding of how those issues can be different in each Latin-American culture, the instructor asked students to focus on the issue from their partners' perception. The instructor also asked students to compare the issues in their own culture and their partners' culture. Table 1 shows the topics for each session and its social perspective.

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Table 1. Sessions' Topics

Session	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Topic 1	Immigration in Latin America and Chile. Compare immigration in Chile versus in the United States	Machismo and gender violence in Chile. Compare machismo and gender violence in Chile versus in the United States.	Narco-trafficking in Latin America and Chile. Compare narco-trafficking in Chile versus in the United States.	Open topic
Topic 2	Select one or more items from the Suggested Topics list.	Select one or more items from the Suggested Topics list.	Select one or more items from the Suggested Topics list.	Open topic

There was a total of four meetings with only three focusing on social issues. The fourth session had an open topic. In this last session, students could talk about any talking point they wanted. They had to negotiate the items they were interested in with their partners. To make the session topics exciting and not too repetitive, the instructor asked students to spend the first 15 minutes of the session discussing the social issue. Then, students could transition to other topics related to cultural aspects. For that reason, the instructor added a list of suggested items. Some of the proposed cultural issues were music, art, food, traveling, the life of a college student (Chile vs. the U.S.A.), traditions and festivities among the others.

Integrating the Teletandem Project in the Course

In this section, the author focuses on how to incorporate the Teletandem project in the course curriculum connecting class activities, textbook information, Spanish movies, social issues, and the project. To better explain the integration process, the author has divided the material into two groups: in-class and out of class activities.

The in-class activities started with the selection of some of the course textbook's exercises to introduce the Spanish movies and the social issue at hand. First, the instructor

presented the film, its main characters and the director through textbook readings, movie title discussion, and comprehension questions. Continuing with the textbook resources, the students completed vocabulary, storyline, and conversation question activities. During these practices, students identified some of the social issues addressed in the movies. Then, the instructor brought additional material such as newspapers' readings, songs, poems or short documentaries.

The students lead the last in-class activity. At the beginning of the semester and working in pairs, students selected one of the movies to lead a discussion. During this movie discussion, students addressed specific facts of the storyline and debated about the movie social issue(s). To conduct the debate, students had to research facts about the movie and the social aspect (s). Some of the research resources were the Internet, events in the film, own cultural experience, newspaper readings, and material from other courses.

In many of the discussions, students used their background knowledge, research, and own cultural experiences. For that reason, on some occasions, some conversations seemed biased without demonstrating critical analysis or target's culture point of view. As a consequence, the Teletandem project main goal was to help students to learn about specific social issues from the Spanish native speaker's perspective and cultural experience. This practice helped students to build a stronger foundation of social problems and open their eyes to the reality of the target culture.

The instructor organized the out-of-class activities in three different steps: review and select topics, prepare an outline or questions, and complete Teletandem sessions. In the first step, students reviewed the central theme stated in the Teletandem Guidelines (see Appendix A). They looked for the information the instructor wanted them to collect from their Chilean partner. Students had to create a list of some of the Additional Topics they wished to discuss adding any topic of their interest.

In the second step, using the primary and additional topics, students prepared an outline ordering the themes based on its relevance and interest. Students also wrote a set of questions for each item. These techniques helped students to maintain an organized conversation and keep track of the topics they have discussed.

Completing the Teletandem session is the last step. As explained before, students met in their date and time using the Web 2.0 tool of their preference. During the meeting, students discussed the topics selected for the session for both groups.

Integrating a Teletandem project in a course curriculum is not a daunting and complicated process. It requires planning and carefully structuring all the stages of the

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project. For that reason, in the following section, the author explains in detail all the steps, elements, and circumstances that should be taken into consideration when creating a Teletandem project.

It is necessary to follow an organized structure when implementing a Teletandem project. Therefore, the instructors divided the project in a set of steps. For the first stage, both instructors collected all the information about students participating in both groups: the number of students in each group, majors or minors, and emails. The instructors had to identify if international students were participating in the project. This practice was necessary because most students expected to interact with a native speaker. For that reason, the instructors had to inform some students that their partners were not English or Spanish native speakers but s/he was a competent speaker of the target language. In this project, only two students from both groups were not English and Spanish native speakers. In this first stage, the instructors also selected the date of the session. They integrated all meetings into the syllabus following their course schedules. The instructor in the Spanish group also connected the movies, the social issues, and the Teletandem sessions.

After their participation had been confirmed, learners on the U.S. and the Chilean sides were assigned to pairs based on their similar fields of study (i.e. majors, such as for instance engineering). Then the instructor grouped the still unassigned U.S. students with Chilean partners in related fields suggested by the U.S. students' minors. Finally the third group included students who did not share any similarities in their areas of study. In sum, learners worked in groups that reflected as much as possible their shared disciplinary interests.

In the second stage, the instructor handed the guidelines (see Appendix A), explained the project, topics and due dates for each session, assigned students' partners, explained grading criteria, suggested online programs to be used (Skype and Google Hangouts), described the screen video recording programs and explained uploading procedures in the LMS. At this point, the instructor clarified students' questions and received students' input regarding the additional cultural topics they wanted to add.

The third stage focused on students establishing first contact and instructors keeping track of the students who were not responding to their partners. For that reason, instructors asked students to copy them when sending the first email to their partners. This practice helped instructors to keep track of students who were late on establishing the first contact, who were not communicating with their partners, or who did not set up the date for the first session. Constant communication between the instructors was equally important. They sent emails to students who were getting behind and who had dropped out from the course.

The fourth stage was students' sessions and submission of video recording sessions in the LMS by the due date. Instructors in both groups asked students to report in class on their experiences in each meeting and to provide some feedback. Lastly, instructors discussed students' received feedback, commented on any issues and made necessary changes.

Assessment

There are many ways to assess a Teletandem project. As a general rule, in an institutionally integrated Teletandem, the outcomes of the project, tasks and course goals should connect directly to the assessment techniques (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016). In this Teletandem project, the instructor used two different assessment techniques. In the Fall 2016 project, both instructors used the same assessment approach. As explained before, both instructors asked students to record the 60-minute sessions and upload the video recordings to the LMS. In addition to this video recording, students had to record a self-video summary of the project at the end of the semester. They had to describe what they had learned from their partners during each session. Students in the Spanish group had to talk about each social issue, mention what they had learned from their partner, and compare it with their own culture. The Spanish instructor also requested students to give their feedback and suggestions on the project. This last self-video provided valuable information about the project. Students questioned the validity of having two different assessment techniques that were quite similar. They thought that the final video was repetitive and it had not given any extra value to the project.

Based on students' feedback, for the second semester of the project, the instructor decided to focus on just one assessment technique. For that reason, in Fall 2017, the Spanish instructor requested only the 60-minute video recordings of each session. At the end of the semester, students should have four 60-minute video recordings uploaded in the LMS. The instructor evaluated the videos focusing on the 30 minutes in which students had used the target language. Equally, the instructor asked students to share in-class their experiences in the sessions. Students talked about what they had learned from their partner about the social issue. They also included the additional topics discussed during that session. The instructor designed a rubric to evaluate students' videos. The criteria focused on students' intercultural competence, the content of the session, reciprocity between students, and students' linguistic discourse.

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Instructor's Reflections

The instructor based her reflections on two different aspects: students' attitude towards discussing social issues in Teletandem and difficulties experienced during the project.

Regarding students' attitude, it is possible to say that students in the U.S. group have very few opportunities to interact with Spanish native speakers. The college is geographically located in a rural area in the Southeast of the country, which makes it difficult to expose students to Spanish native speakers. For this reason, students found the Teletandem project to be an excellent opportunity to speak with native speakers of the target culture and collaborate with each other mentoring on their oral language skills. Most students thought that the project was beneficial and a useful language-learning technique.

As explained in the 5 C's⁵ of the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996), students can develop a better understanding of the studied culture when they investigate, explain, and reflect on the other culture and their own. Consequently, learners are more open to understanding the target culture's issues, as well as native speakers' opinions and perspectives. In this project, students were able to compare their previous knowledge on the social problems, their own culture's point of view with their partners' point of view. As a result, students realized that discussing social issues in a Teletandem project helped them to gain a better understanding of the target culture's social problems.

Before the beginning of the project, students expressed their concerns about the complexity level of the selected topics. Some students had doubts about their ability to reflect and explain social issues to a Spanish native speaker. However, by the end of the project, many students found that discussing social issues in a Teletandem project was not as complicated as they had initially thought. The instructor based this positive response on the proper integration of the Teletandem project into the course curriculum (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014; CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016; O'DOWD, 2007; TELLES, 2015), and the correct in-class preparation of students before each Teletandem session (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016).

Another aspect that the instructor had to reflect on was students' topics preferences. As it was mentioned before, each session had a specific social issue plus an additional open topic (see Table 1). Although there were only three social issues, students were specific on their choices of preference: immigration and machismo/gender violence.

⁵ ACTFL 5 C's are the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. They are divided in Communication, Culture, Connections, Communities and Comparisons.

Students' comments demonstrated that the current socio-political environment in their culture profoundly influenced those choices. They also reported being more exposed to those specific social issues through media or other courses they had taken before.

Another observation made by the instructor is that students seemed intimidated or uncomfortable to openly express their opinions and points of view when discussing social issues in class. On the contrary, when reviewing students' video recordings, the instructor could easily identify how comfortable students felt about expressing their opinions and political points of view with their partners. Students have more in-depth conversations openly discussing their ideas and opinions. They also demonstrated becoming more aware of the similarities and differences of socio-political issues and movements in both countries (e.g., #MeToo versus #NiUnaMenos movements⁶).

Difficulties Experienced

As in any other pedagogical project, it is necessary to recognize the challenges experienced during the project. Identifying those problems will help to improve the planning, integration, and future projects execution. One of the first problems found was how the use of different online programs brought confusion among students. Some students did not have experience recording video sessions, downloading programs to their computers or uploading video recordings in the LMS. To solve those issues and aiming at lowering students' anxiety, the instructor gave constant support installing programs on their computers. She looked for other options when students' computers were not available or suggested other options when uploading video recording in the LMS (YouTube or Vimeo). When working with technology and online programs, it is essential to keep in mind that even though millennials have grown up using technology, they are not experts in solving technical difficulties.

There were other difficulties students experienced regarding their interactions with their partners. Some of those difficulties were students not responding to emails, dropping the course, or not completing Teletandem sessions. As mentioned before, reciprocity is one of the principles of Teletandem (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006). For that reason, students' accountability is critical during the execution of the project. If a student does not respond to emails or forgets to attend the session without any previous notification, his/her partner's motivation will be affected by losing interest in the project. One more important aspect is a student unexpectedly dropping the course, which leaves a student without a

⁶ #MeToo is the movement to help survivors of sexual violence in the United States and #NiunaMenos is a movement that has risen up against violence towards women in Latin America.

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partner. To solve this issue, instructors should allow the student to work with another pair (group of three students) or find a target language native speaker in their community who is willing to work with that particular student.

In order to have a successful Teletandem project, both instructors need to keep track of students' performance, attendance, completion, and submission of assignments. Instructors have to promptly communicate with students when they do not submit the video by the due date or when their partners do not respond to emails. It is also critical that both instructors keep communicating with each other to solve any unexpected problem and to control the correct execution of the Teletandem project.

There are two more essential elements related to difficulties experienced: students' lack of vocabulary knowledge about social issues and the differences in groups' topics. As mentioned before, the *In-class Activities* section provided students with a vocabulary that was present in the movies they watched. The vocabulary practice included cognates, verbs, colloquial expressions, and words related to specific aspects of the film. Even though the *In-class Activities* should have prepared students with enough vocabulary to use in the discussion, few students felt they lacked the vocabulary to master the social issue discussion. Some students reported that their partners used advanced vocabulary and unknown Chilean expressions during the sessions. For that reason, some students struggled with comprehending their partner and the issue at hand. Students also mentioned they had to spend more time preparing and searching for some vocabulary before each conversation. As a result, some students thought it was overwhelming and time-consuming preparing their material for the Teletandem session.

With the idea of increasing students' vocabulary and giving students more tools to better perform in the Teletandem sessions, the instructor suggests adding a list of vocabulary words related explicitly to each social issue. Equally, the instructor recommends asking the instructor of the partner group for a list of the most used colloquial expressions in the target culture. The Spanish instructor can design and incorporate in-class activities using both lists of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions into the project.

In regards to differences in groups' topics, few students seemed unhappy with the difference between the topics for both groups. As explained above, the Chilean's group instructor decided to use the same topics she had used in a previous Teletandem project (CASTILLO-SCOTT, 2015). Those topics aligned better with her course goals and materials. For that reason, she did not want to make the change into new topics or explore discussing social issues. Therefore, some students thought that the Chilean group's topics were less complex than the U.S. group.

Consequently, few students felt their expectations were higher and more difficult to achieve. To avoid a feeling of unfairness among students, it is vital that the instructor reminds students of the learning goals before each session, prepare students well before meetings, have additional open topics for students to choose on, and be more flexible with the outcomes of sessions and when grading students' video recordings. Lastly, the instructor may also look for other partner-instructors interested in integrating social issues discussions into their course curriculum with the goal of creating a new Teletandem project.

Conclusions

This paper described the pedagogical experience of a Teletandem project that helps to improve students' linguistic skills while discussing social issues of both their own culture and the target culture. In this learning experience, students had monthly Teletandem sessions in which they discussed social problems with native or competent speakers of the target culture. Students developed not only their linguistics skills but expanded their intercultural competence. As in any other Teletandem project, students thought that Teletandem is a useful language learning technique that helps to improve their confidence when interacting with native or competent speakers of the target language. It also allows learners to mentor each other while being exposed to a wide range of knowledge (AL HASNAWI, 2013).

When the instructor properly integrates a Teletandem project into the course curriculum and prepares learners well before their sessions, Teletandem can be a viable pedagogical strategy that allows students to gain a better understanding of social-political issues of the target culture, increase students' intercultural competence, and openly express opinions without a sense of intimidation.

There were a few valuable lessons learned during this Teletandem learning experience. Instructors and students constant communication and feedback allowed adjusting some issues that could affect the project. Other issues were more difficult to control, but instructors' flexibility helped students to have a fruitful and vital learning experience. Lessons learned in this project provided valuable information for the appropriate integration of more social issues, cinema and Teletandem projects in the language-learning curriculum. The lessons also raised relevant issues and questions that are worthy studying in future research investigations.

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Submetido em: 14/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 21/12/2018.

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Appendix A

Guidelines for Teletandem Project

AMIGOS DE CHILE

Read the guidelines you need to follow when developing your Teletandem Project “AMIGOS DE CHILE.” You will also need to complete some tasks in each session and to report following the criteria described below.

Partners and establishing communication:

1. Your instructor will assign you to a student-partner(s) from Universidad de Concepcion in Chile.
2. Communicate with your student-partner(s) as soon as possible to exchange information such as Skype names and emails.
3. Report to your instructor the first Skype meeting you will have. Copy your instructor in the email sent to your student-partner. If your communication is through Facebook, copy your instructor in the email. In the message to your instructor, you should include the date and time of the first session you have scheduled with your student-partner.
4. Report your instructor any problem you have communicating with your student-partner. Ex: your student-partner doesn't respond to your emails, or his/her email is not working. You should establish the first contact five days after receiving the information on your student-partner.

Video sessions:

Sessions should be using a **video conference format**. You can use the video program of your preference (Skype, Google Hangouts or any other of your choice). The session should follow the criteria below:

1. You should use video and voice in your meeting. Sessions with only written chat are not allowed or accepted.
2. You have to record each video session (15 minutes in Spanish and 15 minutes in English-both students speaking the same language at a time) and upload a copy in the corresponding Dropbox in D2L. You should title each session following the format: **last name, session number, and language**. Ex: **Smith-S1-English** or **Smith-S1-Spanish**.

3. Each session should last at least one hour. At the same time, the conversation should be in both languages focusing on one language at a time. Ex: **First 30 minutes only English and the other 30 minutes only Spanish. !Your instructor will not accept session where languages are alternated!** Ex: You are speaking only Spanish, and your partner is speaking only English. I recommend negotiating with your partner which language use first and talk just in that language for 30 minutes. Keep track of the time so you can switch languages after 30 minutes (if your session is one hour). For more extended sessions, divide the time equally between both languages.
4. After finishing your session, upload it to Dropbox in D2L following the criteria explained before.
5. **!DO NOT EDIT YOUR SESSION!** Your instructor will not accept edited sessions, and she will deduct points from your Teletandem Project.
6. All Video Sessions should be turning in in Dropbox following the session number and topic. Ex: Session 1-La Inmigración
7. The video session should address the problem (s) selected for each session and any other item chosen from the additional list.

Topics:

Each session has a specific theme and other additional talking points. Talk about the topics selected for each session and discuss any different topic of your interest. Negotiate with your student-partner which additional subject (s) to talk about in each session.

Sesión 1:

Tema 1: La inmigración en Latinoamérica y Chile. Compara la inmigración en Chile contra la inmigración en Estados Unidos. Pregunta toda la información que puedas sobre el tema de la inmigración y crea tus propias preguntas.

Tema 2: Escoge uno de los Temas Adicionales y discútelo con tu compañero/a.

Sesión 2:

Tema 1: El machismo y la violencia de género en Chile. Compara el machismo y la violencia de género en Chile contra la violencia de género en Estados Unidos. Pregunta toda la información que puedas sobre el tema del machismo y la violencia de género y crea tus propias preguntas.

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Tema 2: Escoge uno de los Temas Adicionales y discútelo con tu compañero/a.

Sesión 3:

Tema 1: El Narcotráfico en Latinoamérica. Compara el narcotráfico en Chile contra el narcotráfico en Estados Unidos. Pregunta toda la información que puedas sobre el tema del narcotráfico y crea tus propias preguntas.

Tema 2: Escoge uno de los Temas Adicionales y discútelo con tu compañero/a.

Sesión 4:

Tema Abierto

Temas Adicionales:

1. La Música
2. El Cine
3. El Arte
4. La Educación o el Sistema Educativo (Elementary, Middle and High School)
5. La Vida Universitaria
6. Las Festividades
7. La Comida
8. Cosas para hacer en la ciudad
9. La Familia
10. Sitios Turísticos importantes de Chile
11. Viajando por Chile
12. El Matrimonio
13. La historia del País
14. Los indígenas y las comunidades indígenas en su país.
15. Las Tradiciones
16. El trabajo y las oportunidades de trabajo.
17. Las diversiones.
18. Cómo es la vida diaria de un chileno.
19. Tecnología
20. La Industria

A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS' IDENTITIES WITHIN HELLOTALK

Uma exploração crítica das identidades dos alunos de língua de herança por meio do HelloTalk

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Abstract | There is a need for critical, inclusive analyses that uncover the constraints that reinforce monolingual ideologies and reject the expression of multilingual and multicultural identities that are evident in eTandem applications (ORTEGA, 2017; VOLLMER RIVERA, 2017; VOLLMER RIVERA; TESKE, 2018). One population that may be affected by these constraints are Heritage Language Learners (HLL), who make up a diverse group of learners that have varying linguistic and cultural knowledge stemming from language and cultural exposure generally stemming from a more familial and community context (POTOWSKI, 2005). Drawing on identity theory (CUMMINS, 2001, 2009), this study investigates how HLL (N = 11) construct their identities within the constraints of the dichotomous eTandem learning environment *HelloTalk* by examining participant-reported reflections. Vis-à-vis content analysis (KRIPPENDORF, 1989) informed by Critical Applied Linguistics (PENNYCOOK, 2001) the results showed that although some features promote collaborative relations of power, in general the design of the application fosters coercive relations of power.

Keywords | CALL. eTandem. Heritage. Identity. MALL. Spanish. Telecollaboration.

Resumo | Nas áreas de pesquisa sobre a aprendizagem de línguas e identidades, há a necessidade de uma análise crítica que desconstrua a ideologia que reforça identidades monolíngues e rejeita expressões de identidades multilíngues e multiculturais, as quais são evidentes nas aplicações de eTandem. Um grupo de aprendizes que pode ser afetado por estas restrições são os falantes de herança, que constituem um grupo diversificado de estudantes com diferentes níveis de conhecimento linguístico e cultural, com a exposição linguística e cultural originárias de um contexto familiar e comunitário. Com base na teoria de identidades, este estudo investiga como estudantes de língua de herança constroem suas identidades nesta dicotomia do espaço de aprendizagem de eTandem *HelloTalk* através de reflexões relatadas pelos participantes. Por meio da análise de conteúdo (KRIPPENDORF, 1989) da Linguística Aplicada Crítica (PENNYCOOK, 2001), os resultados demonstraram que, apesar de algumas características promoverem relações colaborativas de poder, em geral, a configuração da aplicação promove relações de poder coercivas.

Palavras-chave | CALL. eTandem. Herança. Identidade. MALL. Espanhol. Telecolaboração.

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Introduction

With the burgeoning access to mobile language learning tools at little to no cost, there is a growing need for a critical and inclusive analysis of such technologies (ORTEGA, 2017; VOLLMER RIVERA, 2017). Although these Web 2.0 technologies open up digital spaces to include otherwise marginalized populations, there still exist certain constraints, such as the registration processes, creation of profiles, etc., that perpetuate monolingual ideologies (SKTUNABB-KANGAS; MCCARTY, 2008) and reject the expression of a multilingual and multicultural identity. These features may inhibit the construction of identity for language learners that do not fit the pre-prescribed molds of native-speakers (NS) or second language (L2) learners. One such population that has been overlooked in the current literature is Heritage Language Learners (HLL). The purpose of the current exploratory study is to examine how HLL deal with these affordances and constraints to co-construct their identities within the dichotomous eTandem learning environment housed within the free application *HelloTalk*.

Literature Review - Computer Assisted Language Learning and eTandem

Since its start in the 1960s, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has branched out well beyond its humble beginnings which focused largely on individual, mechanic activities (SMITH, 2015) (for a more comprehensive overview of the field of CALL, see CHAPELLE, 2007; THOMAS; REINDERS; WARSCHAUER, 2012). The advent of Web 2.0 technologies in the 2000s brought about more opportunities for human-to-human interaction, offering affordances that previously were not available through tutorial CALL (BLAKE, 2013). We can see that these technologies have the potential to “[...] shift control to the learner by promoting agency, autonomy and engagement in social networks that straddle multiple real and virtual learning spaces independent of physical, geographic, institutional and organisational boundaries” (MCLOUGHLIN; LEE, 2009, p. 639).

One such example of a CALL platform is eTandem language learning. Tandem learning is based upon the practice of creating a partnership of expert and learner by connecting speakers of different languages who are interested in learning their conversation partner's first language (L1) as an L2 (BRAMMERTS, 1996). Historically, it has existed in a variety of contexts (e.g. holiday camps, language schools, email, etc.). Today the current version of tandem learning is eTandem which often takes the shape of mobile applications (e.g. *Tandem* and *HelloTalk*) or desktop platforms (e.g. *WeSpeke* and *italki*) that purports to create a digital environment that fosters these partnerships (CZIKO, 2004). Research in

eTandem language learning has shown that in addition to fostering the development of formal linguistic features (NATION, 2009; SMITH, 2003) and learner autonomy (MCBRIDE, 2009), these virtual environments also have the potential to promote the development of intercultural competence (BELZ, 2003; O'DOWD, 2007).

Despite its argued benefits, these platforms are problematic when we extend the pedagogical model of NS-expert versus non-native speaker (NNS)-learner to users that do not fall within this dichotomy. Although this technology opens up language learning opportunities for these “non-traditional” learners, we can see that the definition of tandem learning in and of itself reinforces a monolingual ideology (SKUTNABB-KANGAS; MCCARTY, 2008), perpetuating the promotion of NS as the holy grail of language learning. This is further supported by Shoshana Zuboff’s assertion that “[...] computer-based technologies are not neutral. Rather, technology imposes as well as produces new patterns of information and social relations [...]” (MAJOR, 2015, p. 14). This further demonstrates that eTandem platforms may actually reinforce this dichotomous language learning environment and monolingual ideology, leaving little to no room left for learners with varying language backgrounds (VOLLMER RIVERA, 2017; VOLLMER RIVERA; TESKE, 2018).

Few studies have investigated how multilingual and multicultural users construct their identities in eTandem environments. The research that does exist focuses on the ways in which these users negotiate their identities. For instance, Tudini (2016) examined the role that repair and codeswitching play in the negotiation of identity of her two participants – a NS of English and a NS of Italian – within eTandem exchanges vis-à-vis MSN Messenger Sharedtalk. Through the analysis of nine text excerpts from these tandem exchanges, the author shows how the use of code switching in repairs allows the interlocutors to adjust to either the identity of expert or bilingual speaker. Specifically, the use of the participants’ L1 affects the expert-novice relationship within the exchange. For example, the expert may choose to give feedback using the learner’s L1 in order for both partners to maintain face within this interaction. Finally, she finds that the use of codeswitching explains that multilingual intercultural speakers hold great potential for language learning as they can help each other to co-construct reciprocity, understanding, affiliation and learning. This is key as it demonstrates potential resources that multilingual and multicultural users in digital spaces can employ to construct their identities.

Another study that illuminates potential resources for the construction of multifaceted identities comes from Yang and Yi’s (2017) focal cases studies pulled from a larger investigation they had conducted. They specifically use qualitative analysis to examine the ways in which two speakers, one Korean and one Korean-American

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HLL, negotiated and performed their multifaceted identities within their respective conversations. Both users, although one a NS and one a HLL, assumed the role of Korean language expert within their tandem partnerships that took place vis-à-vis blogs and *GoogleChat*. The researchers ultimately found that various factors fomented both users' ability to negotiate and perform their identities. These factors included taking on the role of Korean language expert, the reciprocity and relationship created between the users and their tandem partners, and the sense of community that they felt within the eTandem technologies.

The results of these studies suggest that eTandem technologies may indeed provide a space in which both traditional tandem pairs of NS/NNS (TUDINI, 2016) as well as non-traditional pairs of HLL/NNS (YANG; YI, 2017) can negotiate and construct multifaceted identities. The current study contributes to the body of research on eTandem by examining the ways in which HLL, non-traditional tandem learners, construct their identities based on identity theory (CUMMINS, 2001, 2009) within the dichotomous eTandem application *HelloTalk*. The results of this study provide further empirical evidence of both the resources and as such it is of special interest to both CALL researchers and HL practitioners.

Heritage Language Learners

HLL are a diverse group of individuals who have varying linguistic and cultural knowledge stemming, generally, from familial and community contexts (PARODI, 2008). Despite having a linguistic repertoire that may contain stigmatized features, such as extensions and borrowings (POTOWSKI, 2005), HLL tend to experience a deep cultural connection to the HL and their communities (POTOWSKI; JEGERSKI; MORGAN-SHORT, 2009). For many HLL, the first time that they were introduced to this term was as a label imposed on them via their classification within a language department at their university of study. The practice of "labeling" these learners extends beyond the four walls of the institution into digital spaces such as eTandem environments, in which the design features constrain the ways in which they can construct their multifaceted identities (VOLLMER RIVERA; TESKE, 2018).

Specifically, Leeman (2015, p. 104) notes that the term "[...] 'heritage language learner' is not simply an educational classification but also an identity, one constructed largely by researchers, educators, and administrators and assigned to a group of students, rather than by heritage language learners themselves". Although we note that this term is indeed a label that is imposed within a power structure (institution v. student), for the purposes of consistency with the university and the field of HL pedagogy, this population

will continue to be referred to as HLL in this study. We see the practice of “labeling” these learners extend beyond the four walls of the institution into digital spaces such as eTandem environments, constraining their construction of identity in these spaces as well. It is crucial to operationalize the term *identity* within a well grounded framework that aligns with the epistemological beliefs of this study.

Theoretical Framework: Identity Theory

In the study of bilingual and multilingual contexts several identity frameworks have emerged through the years, beginning with sociopsychological approaches (BERRY, 1980; TAJFEL, 1974, 1981) that suppose that identity is tied directly to the ethnic group in which they do, or would like to, belong. However, this framework has been criticized for oversimplifying the complex identities of individuals into a binary and often homogenous view of identity, perpetuating the hegemonic ideology of monolingualism and monoculturalism (HAMERS; BLANC, 2004; PAVLENKO, 2000; PAVLENKO; BLACKLEDGE, 2004). Working to move beyond these hegemonic ideologies, Interactional Sociolinguistics Interactionist approaches cite linguistic supports rooted in language contact, such as code-switching, as a resource for multilingual and multicultural speakers to express their social identity (FISHMAN, 1965; GUMPERZ, 1982). However, they continue to stress the connection between a language and specific national or regional groups, rather than acknowledging that a speaker may in fact utilize multilingual resources that do not originate from groups to which they explicitly belong (PAVLENKO; BLACKLEDGE, 2004).

The most recent theorization of identity that is most relevant to the present study are poststructuralist approaches (CUMMINS, 2001, 2009; PAVLENKO; BLACKLEDGE, 2004). They are based upon critical theories (BOURDIEU, 1977, 1982, 1991) that situate identity within relations of power in which “[...] languages may not only be ‘markers of identity’ but also sites of resistance, empowerment, solidarity, or discrimination” (PAVLENKO; BLACKLEDGE, 2004, p. 4). This specific critical conceptualization appropriately supports the population of HLL who were engaged in this study as they are speakers of a minority language that is often stigmatized in both academic and social spheres (PARODI, 2008).

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Methodology

Researcher Positionality

Considering that the researcher's identity and social position is a crucial part of the design in qualitative research (MAXWELL, 2013), here we delve into how we confronted our own researcher positionalities within the present study. We both teeter the line between insiders/outside in a variety of capacities related to the HLL that were the participants of this study, and as stated by Ravitch and Mittenfelner Carl (2016), researcher positionalities are not binary but rather form a wide range of possible roles fulfilled by the investigator. On one hand, much like these participants, we are tethered to the Spanish section as instructors that both participate in and facilitate activities within this section. However, even within these descriptions we see ways in which we are distanced from our participants, not only due to a lack of direct contact, but also due to the positions of power designated by our status as language learners and positions within the Spanish section.

Not only are we instructors in the same department as the participants, but we are instructors of L2 Spanish classes which are often treated as a separate entity from HL classes. In addition, although we have educational training in HL pedagogy and focus on implementing a sociolinguistically and critically informed approach within our own teaching, we ultimately are privileged English/Spanish bilinguals (L1 English, L2 Spanish) (CASHMAN, 2006) who have learned Spanish in a formal and academic setting. Taking into account this rather distanced positionality, time ultimately did not allow for us to create a trusting relationship with these participants that we felt would make them comfortable in sharing authentic and candid reflections with us. For this reason, we asked the instructor of the class to play a very involved role as a liaison between ourselves and the participants, as he has built strong relationships based on mutual trust with his students.

With our guidance, the instructor implemented the tasks specifically designed for the present study as required assignments in the class. In addition, when it came time to actually implement the registration survey and assign the *HelloTalk* task in the language laboratory, the instructor still introduced the researcher but facilitated the class and assigned the task himself. One researcher was present to answer questions and observe the process of participant registration.

Participants

Eleven participants (males $n=1$, females $n=10$) were recruited from an undergraduate Spanish class ($n = 25$), entitled Advanced Spanish Conversation and Composition for Bilinguals, the third in a four class series for HLL at a large university in the Southwest of the United States. It is stated in the course description that students of this class are expected to have an advanced level of speaking and listening skills in Spanish and the course aims to improve both written and oral skills as well as expanding the student's range of registers in the target language. All students enrolled in the course were given the opportunity to participate in the study and no extra credit or compensation was given to those who chose to participate. All students completed the same homework assignment designed for this study as part of their coursework, but only the data from those who gave consent were used for the purposes of this study ($n=11$). A more in depth description of these tasks will be provided in the Data Collection Methods section to follow.

The participants ranged in age from 18-26 (mean age of 19.73). Ten participants were born in the United States and one was born in Peru. When asked to list their native language(s), five participants listed Spanish as their native language, four listed English, and two listed both English and Spanish. The participants were also asked what language(s) they heard and spoke while growing up. See table 1 for description of this information. It should be noted that while nine participants said they knew no languages other than Spanish and English, one participant said they knew French and one listed Italian as a third language.

Table 1. Languages heard and spoken by participants at home while growing up

	Spanish	English	Spanish & English	Tarahumara
Language(s) heard while growing up	5	2	3	1
Language(s) spoken while growing up	4	3	4	0

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative data collection methods that elicited participant-reported responses and reflections were used to align with our ontological belief of critical realism, or the belief that there only exist approximations of truth that are determined by the unique

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experiences and interactions of each individual which are associated with the social relations, ideologies, and power positions that exist and may be imposed on them within the larger societal context. (FAIRCLOUGH, 2005). Based upon our institutions and previous literature regarding structures of power (MARTINEZ, 2003) and common misconceptions about HLL and the stigmatization of their variations (PARODI, 2008), we modified a demographic questionnaire and created surveys that elicited participant reflections related to the identity framework by Cummins (2001, 2009). Specifically, students were asked to complete three different surveys via *Google Forms* as well as a conversation task within *HelloTalk*. Transcripts from the conversation tasks were not collected in order to protect anonymity of users and foster opportunities for conversations more reflective of interactions “in the wild”, or “... arenas of social activity that are less controllable than classroom or organized online intercultural exchanges might be, but which present interesting, and perhaps even compelling, opportunities for intercultural exchange, agentive action and meaning making” (THORNE, 2010, p. 114). Having said this, there is a great opportunity for further research inquiries that aspire to focus on identity through analyzing naturalistic conversational data. In the sections below, these data collection methods will be described in the order in which they occurred in the present study.

Language Contact Profile

After consenting to participation, participants completed a modified version of the Language Contact Profile (LCP) (FREED *et al.*, 2004), which elicits information from participants regarding demographic information, language exposure, and in what contexts and through which media they have/had contact with the target language. The LCP, which was modified to elicit information regarding specific common characteristics of HLL (e.g. languages listened to and/or spoke at home), was implemented digitally.

Registration Survey

After participants had consented to participating in the study and filled out the LCP, one of the researchers met them and their instructor in a language lab in the same building where their class met. Here, the researcher supported the instructor in the administration of a registration survey that guided students through downloading and registering for the *HelloTalk* application on their own mobile devices. As participants completed this process, they were prompted to reflect on their decisions throughout this registration process (i.e. their decision to make selections for: *I'm from*, *Native language*, *I'm learning*, and *Language*

level). At the end of the session in the language lab, they received instruction regarding how to use the app over the course of the following week for the assigned *HelloTalk* task.

***HelloTalk* Task**

In addition, participants were required to complete three conversations through *HelloTalk*, each with a different conversation partner, outside of designated class time. Participants had to exchange at least 15 messages, excluding greetings and conversational closings, with each of their conversation partners. The assignment was based on one of the course readings, *Los puertorriqueños de aquí y de allá* (ROCA, 2011), which touches on issues of identity and discusses the turbulent relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Although they were free to choose their own topics of conversation related to this reading, participants were provided with some possibilities, such as creating and maintaining a multicultural and multilingual identity, ancestral and cultural pride, and relationships between the United States and other Spanish speaking countries. In the document containing the assignment instructions, participants were reminded to reflect on their experience throughout the conversations, specifically about their language use, perceptions of their conversation partners, and if they felt comfortable and/or confident during the conversational exchanges.

Reflection Survey

After participants completed the *HelloTalk* assignment, they were required to complete a survey in which they reflected upon their experiences communicating with their chosen conversation partners within this eTandem mobile application. The survey prompted reflections regarding patterns of interaction commonly found between NS and HLL (PARODI, 2008). Specifically the survey focused on information about their language partners, language(s) used, the role of grammatical feedback, the role of cultural feedback, language differences/variation, overall impressions of using the application, and design suggestions based on their experiences.

Data Analysis

Applying a poststructuralist framework (CUMMINS, 2001, 2009) originally from bilingual education, entitled *Coercive and collaborative relations of power manifested in*

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macro- and micro- interaction, the participant-reported data was analyzed using Content Analysis (CA) (KRIPPENDORFF, 1989) in which HLL construct their identities within *HelloTalk*. This framework, as seen in Figure 1, takes into account the relations of power that exist at the institutional level between dominant and minoritized groups. Although it specifically outlines how educators generally hold positions of power over (minoritized) students in an academic setting, these coercive and collaborative relations are appropriate for the present study as *HelloTalk* specifically promotes itself as a language learning tool in which native speakers become “teachers” (HELLOTALK, 2017). Therefore, using the participant-reported data, CA was used to identify issues of identity and power resulting from the design features of the application.

In this model, relations of power are an always present component within the interactions taking place between dominant and subordinate groups and/or individuals. These relations of power can take the form of *coercive* or *collaborative relations*. Coercive relations refer to the “exercise of power by a dominant individual, group, or country to the detriment of a subordinated individual, group or country” (CUMMINS, 2009, p. 263). These relations manifest in *HelloTalk* in the form of application design features and imposed language teaching and learning roles. Whereas collaborative relations refer to spaces in which individuals are “‘enabled’ or ‘empowered’ to achieve more” (CUMMINS, 2009, p. 263), in the context of *HelloTalk*, “teachers” refer to conversation partners and “schools” refer to the application itself. These relations influence the roles of educators and education structures.

These power relations impact the educator roles, which refer to the “expectations, assumptions and goals that educators bring to the task of educating culturally diverse students”, whereas *education structures* refer to a more broad context, including “policies, programs, curriculum, and assessment” (CUMMINS, 2009, p. 263). These definitions set the tone for the *interpersonal space* in which, as Ruiz (1991) explains, conditions can be created for individuals to empower themselves, via *knowledge generation* and *identity negotiation*. The interactions that take place in this space will either *reinforce coercive relations of power* or *collaborative relations of power*.

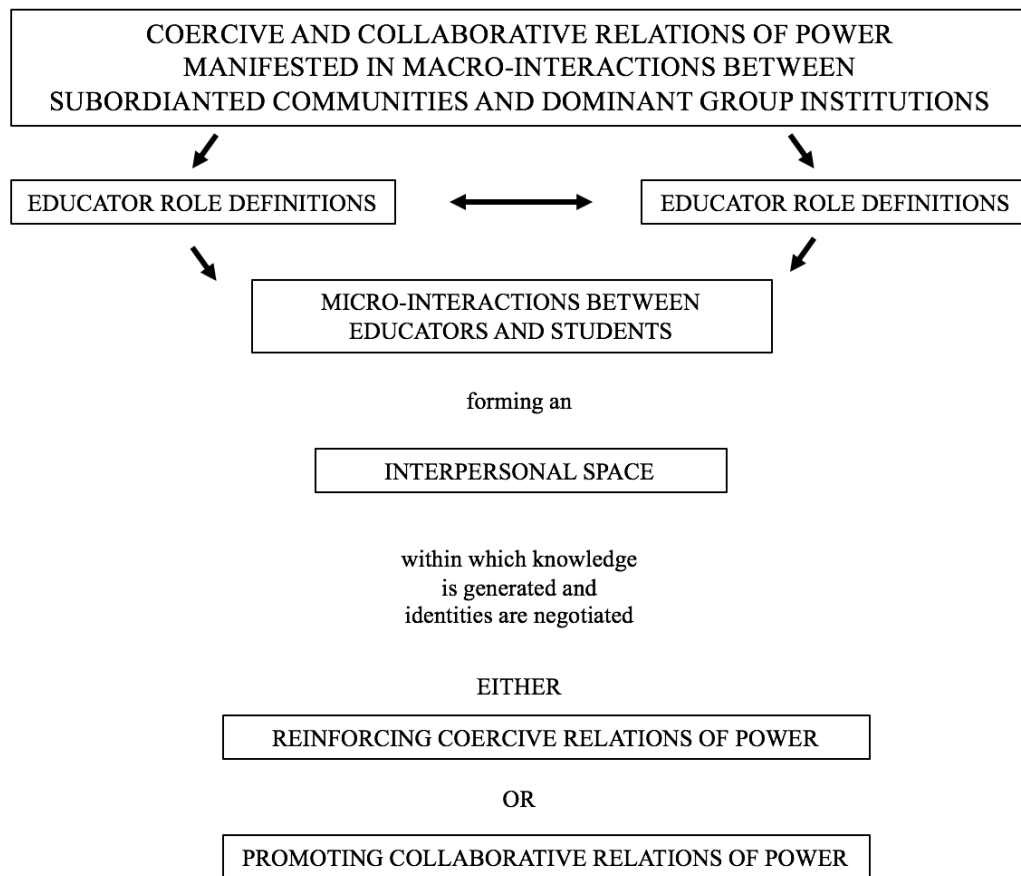


Figure 1. Coercive and collaborative relations of power manifested in macro- and micro-interactions (Adapted from CUMMINS, 2009)

Based on this framework, the following research questions were formed:

1. Taking into consideration that *HelloTalk's* registration process only allows for users to indicate one native language and one L2, how do HLL position themselves, as “language learners” or “language experts” of Spanish, within the constraints of this language learning environment? How do they arrive at this decision?
2. What macro-interactions (e.g. design features) and micro-interactions (e.g. collaboration with interlocutors) affect the way in which HLL are able to create and present their identity in this virtual community? Do these interactions reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power in this eTandem learning environment? If so, how?

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Findings

In order to answer these questions, data packets were created for each consenting participant that included their completed versions of all three of the surveys to more easily facilitate data triangulation. This triangulation across the different data collection instruments helped to understand the participants as individuals as well as their choices within the application in a more holistic manner (MAXWELL, 2013). The packets were analyzed in two phases: (1) individually by each researcher to get to know the data and identify possible themes and (2) participation in dialogic engagement to report what was found and to discuss possible categories and subcategories. All themes, categories, and subcategories were drawn from the data; preconceived labels were not utilized. Our findings will be presented in the following subsections in conjunction with each of the research questions.

Research Question 1

One of the researchers was present in the class during the administration of the registration survey and helped to walk students through the process of creating their accounts in *HelloTalk* alongside the instructor of the course. As the participants arrived at the screen in the application that required them to select their L1 and their L2 (identified as *I'm learning* within the application) (see figure 1), several participants asked either the instructor or the researcher what they should enter into the two fields. The participants were told that they should put whatever they felt best reflected themselves. One student went so far as to assume that something was wrong with her application as it would not let her enter in Spanish for both her L1 and her L2. It was a common theme for the participants to act very hesitant when selecting their L1 and L2.

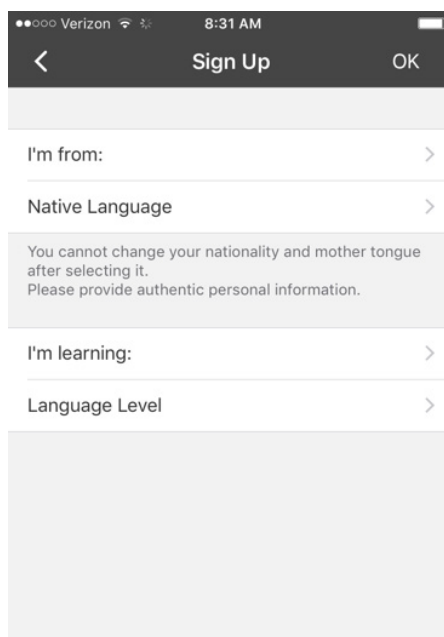


Figure 2. *HelloTalk* Registration Language Choices (HELLOTALK, 2017)

This conflict in selecting a single L1 and a single L2 is reflected in the results. Between the *LCP* and the *Registration Survey* in *HelloTalk*, a massive discrepancy was visible in how the participants identified their L1, as seen in table 2. When free from the application constraints and given the ability to report their L1(s) in short answer form, the participants reported a wider range of L1s, in contrast with the homogeneously reported L1 of English in *HelloTalk*. One explanation may simply be due to design features of the application restricting them from selecting more than one L1 or from selecting the same language for their L1 and L2, as seen in the example below:

What did you select for Native Language and why?

“English because it didn’t let me put Spanish.” (Participant #27)

However, it should be noted that one factor that may have influenced participants in choosing Spanish as the *I’m learning* option in *HelloTalk* is the simple fact that they were enrolled in a Spanish course, as evidenced in the quote below.

What did you select for “I’m learning” and why?

“I selected that I am learning Spanish because I am taking a Spanish class.” (Participant #1)

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Regardless of their reasoning behind their choices, by selecting English as their L1, these students appear to have positioned themselves as English experts and learners of Spanish within *HelloTalk*. This will be explored in more depth during the discussion of Research Question 2.

Table 2. Participant Reported Native Languages

	Native Language (LCP)	Native Language (<i>HelloTalk</i>)
Spanish	5	0
English	4	11
Spanish & English	2	N/A*

**Note.* *HelloTalk* did not allow its users to input more than one native language. Therefore, none of the participants listed Spanish & English as their native language within the application.

Research Question 2

At the macro-level, *educator role definitions* (the presuppositions that instructors/experts bring to the interactions) played an essential role in shaping users' opportunities to negotiate their identities within *HelloTalk*. Not only did the participants appear to choose to position themselves as experts of English, but through participant reflections it can be seen that this role additionally may have helped to define their digital identities as they strictly adhered to that role. One example comes from Participant 1, a female that had indicated in the LCP that she was born in Peru and her L1s were both Spanish and English but chose English as her L1 within *HelloTalk*.

Did you offer any feedback on your language partner's grammar or language use?

"No because we only communicated in Spanish." (Participant #1)

Although she reports herself as a NS of both languages, she appears to have stayed within her role of expert of English and only seems to have felt qualified to give grammatical feedback when her conversation partner used English, the language of which she had positioned herself an expert.

Educational structures, or the design features of the application, also appear to have an important role in shaping opportunities to negotiate identity at the macro-level. As mentioned in the discussion of Research Question 1, the application is designed in such a way that users are only able to select a language once, as well as input one NS and one L2. As participants indicated a wider variety of NLs in the LCP, it is possible that this feature actually coerced them into choosing a role and representation that they would not otherwise identify with in different circumstances.

As a product of these role definitions and structures, as seen in Cummins' model (2001, 2009), micro-interactions between educators and students served either to reinforce coercive relations of power or to promote collaborations of power, impacting the ways in which the participants negotiated their identities. These micro-interactions showed evidence of three prevalent themes: (1) the initiation of interactions, (2) the presence of male dominance and a dating culture within the application, and (3) reciprocity between users.

The initiation of interactions between users fell into two categories: opportunistic or seeking out conversational partners based on cultural and/or linguistic connections. The most common of the two by far was opportunistic interaction initiation. This most often took the shape of participants reporting that they simply conversed with whoever messaged them first. They did not actively seek out conversation partners based on any particular criteria. On the other hand, at times participants intentionally sought out partners based on a cultural and/or linguistic connection. For example, one user who stated that she was born in Peru selected other users from Peru for all three of her interactions.

Who did you converse with and where were they from?

"I chose Billy because I saw he was from Peru." (Participant #9)

This opportunistic or more selective choosing of conversation partners has the potential to either reinforce coercive relations of power or to promote collaborations of power. This will be largely dependent on the individual interactions.

The second theme in the micro-interactions was male dominance and a dating culture found within the application. Of the ten female participants, five reported feeling that the application was misused by other users at times and that the goal of other users may have not been to learn a language.

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What was your overall impression of using HelloTalk?

"...but there were times when I felt uncomfortable with guys sending me messages or audio messages and I didn't like that most of the time they were older men." (Participant #4)

This misuse of the application as a dating site made several female users feel uncomfortable, as evidenced in the previous quote, which unfortunately served to reinforce coercive relations of power. Two other female users reported more general concerns about privacy such as being unable to turn off location settings or the use of profile pictures. With seven out of ten female participants mentioning some sort of privacy and/or security issues, it is assumed that this actively worked against these women being able to participate in collaborative interactions within the application.

The final common thread through the data in regards to the micro-interactions was the importance of reciprocity between conversation partners, a principle first connected to tandem learning by Brammerts (1996) and additionally identified as an important factor in the work of Tudini (2016) and Yang and Yi (2017). Although the participants appear to have strictly adhered to their roles as experts of English and learners of Spanish, the individual micro-interactions with other users often rested largely on unstated agreements about what was expected of each interlocutor in regards to giving and/or receiving feedback. In some cases this resulted in the promotion of collaborative relations as both users were open to receiving feedback and also gave feedback to their partner:

How did you feel about giving feedback to your partner?

"It was fine because we were doing it back and forth." (Participant #16)

However, in some cases this lack of an explicit agreement resulted in coercive relations of power. In these cases one user often felt that they were receiving too much feedback or in some cases that they felt exploited as they were expected to give feedback and received nothing in return:

Did you note any language differences between yourself and your language partner? If yes, explain.

"Yes, I have a higher level of Spanish than he has in English and he won't stop insisting that I am his new English teacher." (Participant #9)

The implications of these findings will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion and Implications. Security and Dating Culture

One of the most glaring, and frankly, unexpected preliminary implications from this study is in relation to the security and dating culture of *HelloTalk*. This may not be exclusive to this particular application but rather a caveat to applications of this genre. For example, there are other eTandem applications that have encountered this issue and are actively taking steps towards resolving it. One such application is Tandem (2017) that makes users sign a “social contract” during the registration process in which they explicitly agree to use the application for language learning purposes and not dating purposes. Although this may not completely prevent these issues, it is a positive step forward in establishing an environment conducive to the promotion of collaborative relations of power. Potential safeguards that may result in a step toward reducing or eliminating the coercive relations of power that are present in the current structures of applications such as *HelloTalk* could be the creation of an application meant solely for female users or a co-ed application that requires women to send the first message. In order to work towards creating change that is appropriate for the targeted community of users, manufactures of *HelloTalk* or similar eTandem applications could invoke the participation of its members by conducting surveys or focus groups for both men and women. This may probe what types of additional security preferences and settings would lead to an environment in which all users feel comfortable and collaborative relations of power are encouraged.

User Training

As it is crucial when implementing any CALL technologies in the classroom, user training is of paramount importance (BEATTY, 2013). In this particular context, we found three facets of user training to be crucial to student success: user training to (1) help HLL negotiate their identities within the present dichotomous environments, (2) foster positive micro-interactions between all users, and (3) guide users in setting expectations within their eTandem partnerships.

While it is our hope that the field of CALL technologies will continue to develop to include a space for HLL, in the present eTandem technologies available to these students, they are faced with the dichotomy of NS/L2. User training relating to educational roles can help these users to navigate the negotiation of their identities within these spaces. One such training would be to familiarize users with all the tools available to them within the technology. For example, within *HelloTalk* students are required to select only one L1, however they have the freedom to fill in information in their profile in whatever ways they see fit in order to represent themselves as multicultural and/or multilingual individuals.

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In order to guide users to have positive micro-interactions, HLL need to be trained to value and know how to defend their linguistic variety (MARTINEZ, 2003), as these students often display stigmatized features in their language use. In addition, a quick tutorial that is required within the application to draw users' attention towards the concept of linguistic variation would be an additional positive step towards not only fostering positive micro-interactions within the application but also outside of this digital space.

Another step toward supporting positive micro-interactions within eTandem technologies is to train users in setting expectations within their conversation partnerships. As one participant explained, she and her conversation partner explicitly decided on their roles in giving and receiving feedback and which language(s) to use in their interactions. Encouraging users to be up front about these expectations may help them to avoid the feeling of exploitation that some other users expressed as well as give them the freedom to discuss a more fluid role of expert/learner within the partnership.

Limitations and Conclusions

The current study has attempted to further contribute to the research on the current state of eTandem by examining the ways in non-traditional eTandem learners, HLL, construct their identities utilizing a poststructuralist identity theory (CUMMINS, 2001, 2009) within the dichotomous eTandem application *HelloTalk*. Although a number of important conclusions and possible implications have been drawn from the current study, there are a number of limitations which should be addressed by future research.

For example, only participant-reported data from a relatively small number of individuals (n = 11) was used. In future studies, the conversation data from the micro-interactions between users should be examined in order to more fully explore the ways in which these HLL construct their identities within eTandem language learning environments. Collecting this type of data could potentially lead researchers to be able to examine other important components of construction of identity, such as the linguistic resources utilized by speakers during interactions. In addition, including a larger quantity of participants would be beneficial as all HLL have unique backgrounds that will shape the way in which they construct their identities in these digital spaces.

With all of these findings in mind, it should be recognized that language learning is not black and white nor has it ever been. It extends beyond the dichotomy of NS and L2 and is influenced by structures of power. Therefore, researchers and practitioners need to place the inclusion and advocacy of language learners of all types at the forefront of their scholarship and instruction.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: TESKE, Kaitlyn; RIVERA, Alexis Vollmer. A critical exploration of heritage language learners' identities within *Hellotalk*. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 279-301, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2399>

Submetido em: 11/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 12/12/2018.

DECONSTRUCTING LANGUAGE LEARNERS' FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY THROUGH TELETANDEM

Desconstruindo a sensação de inferioridade de aprendizes de línguas por meio do Teletandem

Paula A. ZULAICA-GÓMEZ¹

Abstract | Teletandem is based on principles of reciprocity, equality, collaboration, and autonomy between two participants who are eager to learn their target language and share their knowledge of the one in which they are proficient at the same time. While this is true, each party comes to the experience with their own context, perception, and attitudes towards their target language, and thus, their circumstances are unequal, particularly those pertaining to their motivation for enrolling in a foreign language class. In the case of Mexican learners of English as a foreign language, several sociocultural factors, resulting from the country's colonial history affect their motivation and attitude towards English. This article focuses on a) how perceptions and attitudes towards English affect the willingness of Mexican learners to participate in teletandem sessions by self-imposing a lower station within a preconceived social hierarchy, and b) how teletandem can break through these preconceived notions and change the way they perceive themselves and their partners. Results of post-session evaluations reveal how after participating in teletandem and reflecting on the experience, they report increased motivation and confidence in their target language skills.

Keywords | Teletandem. Telecollaboration. Student identity. Autonomy. Student inferiority complex.

Resumo | O Teletandem baseia-se em princípios de reciprocidade, igualdade, colaboração e autonomia entre os dois participantes, ansiosos por aprender a língua-alvo e partilhar o seu conhecimento daquele idioma em que são proficientes, ao mesmo tempo. Embora isso seja verdade, cada parte chega à experiência com o seu próprio contexto, percepção e atitudes em relação à sua língua-alvo e, assim, as suas circunstâncias são desiguais, particularmente aquelas relacionadas com a sua motivação para se matricularem numa aula de língua estrangeira. No caso dos alunos mexicanos de inglês como língua estrangeira, vários fatores socioculturais, resultantes da história colonial do país, afetam sua motivação e atitude em relação ao inglês. Este artigo enfoca a) como as percepções e atitudes em relação ao inglês afetam a disposição dos aprendizes mexicanos de participar de sessões de teletandem, auto-impondo uma posição inferior dentro de uma hierarquia social preconcebida e b) como o teletandem pode romper essas noções preconcebidas e mudar a maneira como eles percebem a si e a seus parceiros. Os resultados das avaliações pós-sessão revelam como depois de participar do teletandem e refletir sobre a experiência, eles relatam maior motivação e confiança em suas habilidades no idioma alvo.

Palavras-chave | Teletandem. Telecolaboração. Identidade dos alunos. Autonomia. Complexo de inferioridade dos alunos.

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Introduction

Reciprocity, equality, collaboration, and autonomy are the foundational characteristics of tandem language learning and its technology-mediated variation, teletandem. Literature in the field has focused on how these foundational characteristics work in the interaction between participants (BRINCKWIRTH, 2012; CAPELLINI, 2016; CONSOLO & FURTOSO, 2015; TELLES, 2015a, 2015b; VASSALLO, 2010). Since tandem interactions feature individuals who take turns both playing the role of *learner* (of their target language) and of *expert* (of their native language or one in which they are proficient) the concept of identity has risen to be one of critical focus. Due to the nature of tandem interactions and the link between language and identity, the emergence of identity studies regarding tandem learning is an obvious one. A logical result of the juxtaposition of the concepts of identity and reciprocity/equality is the tension between participants' national and personal identities confronted with the concept of equality of circumstances and reciprocal participation. How can equality of circumstances and reciprocity of effort exist, when the exercise of tandem and teletandem learning brings about two participants who share, not only their language of expertise (native or not), but themselves and their sense of identity? More so, what would happen when a natural occurrence of such interaction is the confrontation of preconceived notions about the target language and its speakers with real speakers of the said language?

The Literature Review & Theoretical Framework of this paper will recount some of the most important works on this topic. Still, there is a gap in the literature regarding self-imposed power dynamics and their effects in the willingness of participants to engage in teletandem, as well as the role that teletandem can play in breaking through the reluctance to participate and their confidence in their target language skills and the reorganization of their sense of self.

The present article closes this gap by analyzing how teletandem can break through the dichotomy of Mexican attitudes towards foreign language and culture, leading to increased motivation and autonomy among Mexican university-level English learners. The observed students participated in teletandem sessions with collaborating institutions in the United States of America and, to a lesser degree, Canada from 2012 to 2018.

The thesis of this paper is then, that a natural reluctance to participate in teletandem arises from students' self-imposed feelings of inferiority, though teletandem can break through the said feelings, increasing confidence and motivation, which in turn change their perception of the English language and their attitude towards learning it. This change,

then, generates linguistic and learning awareness, hence encouraging them to become autonomous learners.

Background

The teletandem program at ITESO, The Jesuit University of Guadalajara, Mexico (where the observed participants for this article are enrolled) started with sporadic attempts by a few of the English language teachers in their classrooms, using laptops and relying on WIFI connection in the 2010-2011 academic year, to poor results stemming from connectivity issues. In 2012, ITESO joined the official teletandem and telecollaboration program instituted by AUSJAL-AJCU (the Jesuit Universities Associations of Latin America and the United States, respectively), known as *Programa Inmersión Dual Virtual AUSJAL-AJCU*. From 2012 to the present, ITESO has had a consistent and structured teletandem and telecollaboration program; it started with in-class English-Spanish linguistic exchanges, and it has grown to include curricular courses telecollaboration projects in the vein of SUNY's Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) model (SUNY COIL CENTER, 2013). Furthermore, ITESO has extended its teletandem efforts to include collaborations with non-Jesuit institutions, and it is currently working on starting French-Spanish linguistic exchanges with Quebec, Canada.

Teletandem is a model of mutual language acquisition between two proficient speakers of different languages who, through collaboration, play the roles of teacher and learner simultaneously. Tandem learning, from which teletandem emerges, has its origin in Joseph Lancaster's "mutual system", developed at the beginning of the 19th century. This method was then used in the 60s between French and German schools. Michael Friederich and Jurgen Wolff coined the term *tandem learning* in the 70s, using the metaphor of the tandem bicycle, where both riders' effort is required to advance. Later in 1992, Helmut Brammerts and David Little introduced a new age in *tandem learning*, characterized by the introduction of technology, first with the asynchronous sessions via email and later, in the new millennium, with real-time exchanges taking advantage of online video conferencing platforms, known by different terms and with variations to their models: *etandem*, *telecollaboration*, *teletandem*. (WORLD HERITAGE ENCYCLOPAEDIA). The tandem sessions model in which ITESO participates follows the model of *Teletandem Brasil*, of Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), created by Dr. João Telles, who coined the term teletandem (TELETANDEM BRASIL: FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR ALL, 2015). Teletandem sessions at ITESO are 50 minutes long, with 25 minutes devoted to one language and the other 25 minutes to the other, with the emphasis in not mixing the languages.

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As stated before, tandem learning is characterized by the principles of reciprocity, equality, collaboration, and autonomy, which create a safe environment where both participants come eager to learn from a proficient speaker who is not a teacher. Participants seem at ease in a space free of criticism, acknowledging that both are learners and prone to mistakes. While this is true, it is essential to keep in mind that each party comes to the table with their own context, perception, and attitude towards their target language, and thus, their specific circumstances are not the same; particularly those pertaining to their motivation for enrolling in a foreign language class. The reasoning behind this statement is that the motivation to enroll in a foreign language class may follow a practical reason, such as it being part of the curriculum, a graduation requirement or both; or a less practical one, such as to diversify one's education or a personal preference for the language and culture. To understand the background of the students participating in ITESO's teletandem program we provide the following profile:

Mexican Teletandem Participants' Profile	Mexican private university students.
	18-22 years old.
	Contact with English from an early age.
	Enrolled in an English language class within the <i>English Certificate Program</i> , an integrated four-skills program of eight levels, designed to take English learners to a B2 level of proficiency, as stated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
	The <i>Institutional English Requirement</i> at ITESO states that a student must certify a B2 CEFR level. Students have a choice to complete the requirement: either by an international proficiency examination, such as TOEFL, IELTS or FCE; or by completing the program's eight levels of English. The objective of the <i>Institutional English Requirement</i> is providing students with a significant tool for academic research and access to international exchange programs. The <i>Institutional English Requirement</i> is also a prerequisite for students to obtain their <i>título profesional</i> .

Since the 1920s, the English language has been obligatory in the secondary school curriculum in Mexico, and since 2009 it has been obligatory at a familiarization level starting in preschool and as a formal language program beginning in 3rd grade of elementary school, as ruled by the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*, the government department in charge of education in Mexico. However, it is important to mention that since ITESO is a private university, the majority of its students come from private schooling, where the prevalence of English in primary education predated the 2009 National English Program reform (PNIEB) (SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA, 2009).

It is also important to note that, as opposed to the United States higher education model (and other international higher education ones), Mexican higher education makes a distinction between graduating from an undergraduate degree, understood as completing all the coursework required, and the *título profesional*, a government-sanctioned license to practice professionally. A Mexican student who completes all of his or her coursework is considered a *pasante* until they fulfill all the conditions needed by both their educational institution and the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*. Failing to do so means that they will earn significantly less when entering the workforce, have their employment options considerably reduced, or both. (MAGAZINER; MONROY, 2016).

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

As stated in the introduction, the research on identity and social dynamics in tandem/teletandem learning has centered mainly on how participants present themselves and their national identities, as well as the balance in power dynamics brought by the nature of tandem learning, where the lack of a sole teacher or language expert democratizes the social dynamics field.

Telles has written about the concepts of national stereotypes and self-perceived identity within teletandem interactions (TELLES, 2015a) as well as the concept of transculturality, understood as the permeability of culture, rather than the traditional concept of cultures as separated and static entities (TELLES, 2012).

K. A. H. P. Ramos studies the belief system held by teletandem participants before a session, as beliefs influence how people learn a language, but also the belief system that emerges during a session in participants' discourse. She also recognizes discourse as "*a field for exercising power*" (RAMOS, 2015).

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Helm explores the construction and reconstitution of identity whenever the participants in virtual exchanges interact. While the experience that she studies centers on technology-mediated interactions, they are not teletandem, but a broader kind of virtual experiences aimed towards foreign language learning such as online forums and blogs. Her aim is also the conception of self and the inequalities that arise in interactions between native speakers of a language with a large *cultural capital*, as Norton and Toohey define from Bourdieu's work as referring to "*the knowledge, credentials, and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups*" (in NORTON; TOOHEY, 2011), and their interlocutors, who are second, third or even fourth language speakers. (HELM, 2018). Helm also explores the hegemonies of language and technology in telecollaboration where English is the language of the project and states that there is a fluid dialogic third space, one where power transits from one interlocutor to another (HELM; GUTH; FARRAH, 2012). This third space is significantly relevant, as it points to the space free of criticism, which is a characteristic of tandem learning (in person or through technology), and it is in that space that the shift in perceptions and attitudes towards the target language and its speakers can be attained.

Vassallo's work on power relations in teletandem is based on qualitative analysis of data from interviews of teletandem partnerships, focusing on the source, transit, and dynamics of power (VASSALLO, 2010). However, Vassallo's study focuses on the power dynamics of the actual language negotiation in a teletandem session, while this paper centers in how participants' preconceived notions, fixed even before they set foot in the computer lab, affects how they self-impose a social hierarchy based solely on their own beliefs.

One point that must be made is that the studies that most resemble the thesis of this paper focus on telecollaboration, tandem and teletandem projects with non-expert parties who are not English language learners. For example, they were using English as a medium of collaboration (HELM, 2018) or were studying to become native or foreign language teachers (SALOMÃO, 2011; RAMOS, 2015). What is the relevance of this observation? On the one hand, that the perceptions and attitudes towards English of Mexican English learners participating in teletandem have implications beyond the reluctance or willingness to participate in the linguistic exchange, and thus, a more substantial potential to positively affect their language learning process; and on the other hand, that they do not possess the self and linguistic awareness that someone studying to become a language teacher does.

In order to explore the preconceived notions (or belief system, taking Ramos' term) of the self and the other, that Mexican English learners have, one must understand

the context of Mexican students coming to an English language classroom. Despaigne surveyed 300 Mexican university English learners in 2008, where 89.72% stated that they knew that English was extremely important (DESPAGNE, 2010). Along the same line, in 2015 the British Council performed a study on the status of English in Mexico and, of the 1,000 Mexicans between the ages of 16 and 35 years old who participated, 58% viewed English as a skill needed for greater employability, and 49% valued English as a pathway to a better job (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2015). There is no denying that Mexicans have extrinsic motivation for learning English, as 69% out of 110 Mexican employers surveyed by the British Council said they felt English was an essential skill when hiring new staff. This extrinsic motivation is what Gardner and Lambert called *instrumental motivation* (motivation with a utilitarian objective), in contrast to *integrative motivation* (motivation to study a target language to successfully integrate within the community that speaks it) (GARDNER; LAMBERT, 1972).

The question that arises then is, whether Mexican students possess intrinsic motivation. Norton Peirce finds the distinction of *instrumental* and *integrative motivation* (GARDNER; LAMBERT, 1972) insufficient and, instead, uses the concept of *investment*, understood as a more complex concept that includes both the historical and social contexts and their resulting contradictory desires in the learner. From Norton Peirce's definition, investment takes into account that the learner studies another language striving to acquire both material resources as well as symbolic ones (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995). From this point of view then, Mexican English learners' investment is determined by both the clear extrinsic motivation, stated by both Despaigne and the British Council studies, and by the complex perceptions and attitudes towards English and the United States by Mexican nationals. Despaigne makes a distinction between perceptions and attitudes towards English in Mexico, with the first being what English means to Mexican learners, and the second, the specific behavior that results from the learners' perceptions (DESPAGNE, 2010). Thus, in order to understand better the baggage carried by the Mexican students who participated in these teletandem sessions, we need to understand what their perception of their target language is, their attitudes towards it and their investment in it, taking into account social and historical factors.

Pennycook states that English is "*deeply interwoven with the discourses of colonialism*" because of historical British imperialism and the more recent United States cultural and political one (PENNYCOOK, 1998). While Mexico was not a British colony, but a Spanish one, Mexican perception of the language is heavily affected by many sociocultural factors resulting from the country's colonial history and its relationship with the United States of America, the country that by its proximity and influence they find synonymous with the English language. Furthermore, Despaigne states that: "[...] *negative perceptions are*

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predominant because learners automatically perceive English, consciously or unconsciously, as being related to economic, political and sociocultural problems between the US and Mexico" (DESPAGNE, 2010).

As mentioned in the introduction, the institutions collaborating with ITESO in teletandem are mainly from the United States, but a small number of sessions have occurred between ITESO and a Canadian university. Nevertheless, this has not had an impact in the attitudes and perceptions of ITESO's Mexican English learners, as even Canadian English is still seen through the same lens that relates the English language to the hegemonic power that the United States holds over Mexico.

It is also important to note that the negative attitude towards English is not just a result of the perception of the target language, but it also stems from Mexicans' complex feelings of national identity. Both S. Ramos (1934) and Paz (1950) talked about an unconscious feeling of inferiority among Mexicans, resultant from its colonial past and its external and self-imposed lower rank within Western civilizations. Moreover, Paz explains that Mexicans' never-ending search for identity defines this inferiority. Mexicans have even drawn from its colonial history when coining a term used to describe their attitudes towards what is national and what is foreign: *malinchismo*, from Malinche, the woman given to the *conquistador*, Hernán Cortés, as a mistress-slave-interpreter, who was a key figure in the Spanish colonization of Mexico. She is the symbol of betrayal to one's country and culture (COMISIÓN DE CONSULTAS DE LA ACADEMIA MEXICANA DE LA LENGUA, 2017). *Malinchismo*, in Mexico, describes the preference for what is foreign. The term has grown to describe not just this preference, but also, a degree of self-hatred, the assumption that whatever comes from another country, especially a *first-world* one, will always be better than what is Mexican. This has two connotations for Mexican students: on one hand, they expect the US students to be better than them, but also, it causes them to have a negative attitude towards learning English.

In 2011, Arias-Sais conducted a focus group comprised of students from the same university as the ones considered in this paper, and they expressed fear of speaking in English, of being judged, and of committing mistakes in the classroom (ARIAS-SAIS, 2014). This anxiety can be expected to be present in the teletandem session, especially when students are faced not only with fear of their shortcomings in the target language being witnessed by their teacher and peers, but also with them being observed by native or proficient speakers of English.

Another factor worth mentioning is Mexican students contact with the English language from an early age. Besides the strong penetration of English-language popular

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culture into Mexican culture, current Mexican students have been in a formal English language program since, at the very least, elementary school. Therefore, it is not surprising to think that those students reaching university without yet a B2 level of proficiency, display academic fatigue and lack of motivation. In the previously mentioned British Council study, 61% of participants stated that they had previously studied English. Of that 61%, when asked about their motivation for studying the language, 51% responded that it was mandatory during secondary school (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2015). This response highlights both the presence of English within the Mexican education system and, more telling, the perception of imposition. It is evident when contrasting the motivations given for learning English that followed in frequency "*being mandatory in secondary school*": "*To improve my employment prospects*" and "*I needed to acquire English skills for university.*" Even more so, the fourth motivation is "*It was mandatory during primary school.*" It is clear then that English is more widely perceived as a whim of Mexico's education policy-makers. (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2015).

The last factor to be explored is the role that English plays as a *titulación* provision. Many private universities in Mexico, including ITESO, have an English language requirement; it means that English can be a considerable obstacle in a student's social and economic mobility. When certifying proficiency in the language is a graduation condition, it can mean not graduating at all. Hence, the hostility towards learning English is understandable.

As a result of the factors that were stated above, Mexican English learners do not perceive their enrollment in English classes as an exercise of free-will, but as an imposition and, in many cases, a waste of time, effort and money. Consequently, a large number of students come into teletandem sessions with apprehension at best, or with a combatant attitude at worst.

Conversely, the circumstances bringing university-level Spanish learners to teletandem sessions is much different: with English being a *lingua franca*, they lack the urgency to learn a foreign language to ensure their socioeconomic mobility. When researching the graduation requirements of the universities and colleges that have collaborated in teletandem sessions with ITESO, most of them do include a foreign language one, but it goes from a minimum of one semester to a maximum of three for non-foreign language majors, of a freely chosen language, which could even include Latin in some cases. What becomes evident, when contrasting both participants, is that the (native or proficient) English speaker students possess a privilege of choice over their Mexican counterparts.

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For the analysis of the social interactions between the two participants in these teletandem sessions, this paper draws from Norton Peirce's work on the role of social identity and power relations within second language acquisition (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995); Pennycook's work on performativity and language (PENNYCOOK, 2004); and Telles work on teletandem and performativity (TELLES, 2015b).

Norton Peirce highlights the role of the social and historical background within the notions of identity, motivation, and investment in social interactions of non-native speaker groups, such as immigrant women in Canada (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995). She delves into concepts such as reluctance and the right to speak, which will be critical in the findings of this paper.

Pennycook explores beyond performativity within Austin's speech act theory (AUSTIN, 1962, 1971 *in* PENNYCOOK, 2004) and draws from Butler's work to examine the performative act of language in constituting identity (PENNYCOOK, 1998 & 2004).

Telles adopts performativity theory to the teletandem experience to elucidate how the participants of the linguistic and cultural exchange build their national identity engaging in the linguistic performance of discussing their cultural differences (TELLES, 2015).

Data Collection and Methodology

Since Fall 2013, ITESO has asked students participating in teletandem sessions to fill out a post-session questionnaire, with the aim of evaluating the experience and gaining insight to improve the program in both infrastructure and pedagogy. This study uses the data gathered in the span of four years (from Spring semester, 2014 to Spring semester 2018). Out of 4,066 ITESO students who participated in the teletandem sessions, from its inception to Fall 2018, 2,101 students filled out the evaluation instrument. It is important to note that it was not designed with the intention of gathering data for a research study, and thus, while the data is significant, it is necessary to modify the instrument to collect new data to further this research.

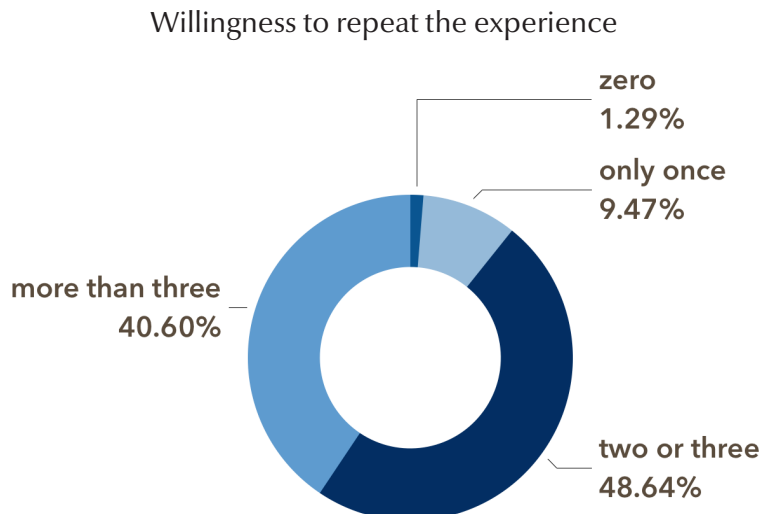
The instrument used to collect the data included both quantitative-oriented items as well as qualitative-oriented ones: it included rating scale questions as well as open-ended ones. The quantitative data is used in its entirety, but only the qualitative data from all the teletandem sessions of one semester, Spring 2017, is used, this due to just the evaluation instrument of that semester having an extra question which inquired if participants' view of their interlocutors had changed after the session, and how.

All the data was then analyzed using statistical analysis to correlate the shift observed by teachers and coordinators of the program in the attitudes of ITESO English learners towards both their linguistic partners and their target language.

Findings and Discussion

Before each session, participating Mexican English learners came into the computer lab displaying an evident reluctance, observed from their hesitation to sit down and put on their headphones to overt declarations of “*You cannot make me do this.*” This observable behavior is congruent with what Krashen defined, as the *affective filter* comprised of the learner’s motivation, self-confidence and anxiety state (KRASHEN, 1995).

In marked contrast, that affective filter appeared to have decreased at the end of the session, as it was evident, they were enthusiastic about repeating the experience. This change of attitude is demonstrated by the results of the post-session evaluation in the span of four years (SPRING, 2014 to SPRING 2018); out of 2,101 students who filled out the evaluation instrument, 97.48% declared that they wanted to repeat the experience, with the following spread of the desired number of sessions per term:



Distribution of responses of 2,101 participants

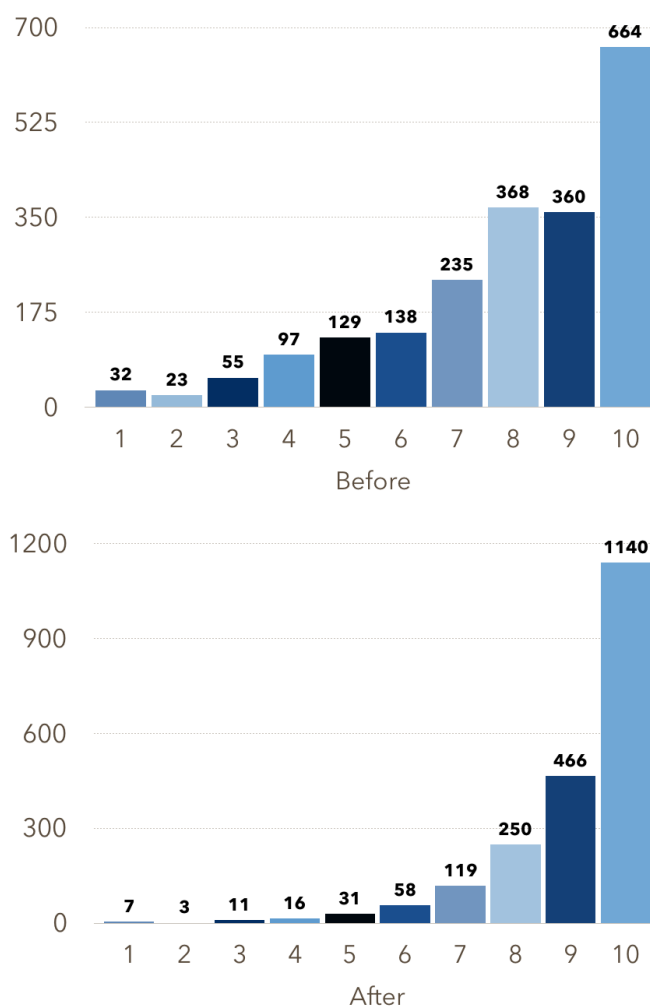
Remarkably 89.24% of participants wished to have two or more sessions per term. These figures attest to the willingness of Mexican participating students to repeat the experience. The increased willingness can be theorized to be intimately linked to the students’ self-perceived agency within their target language command. For this article, agency is understood as A. Bandura’s definition that “To be an agent is to intentionally make

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things happen by one's actions" (BANDURA, 2001). Therefore, this newly discovered *agency* could have a direct effect on student autonomy, as it changes the perception of the target language, from negative to positive. This shift stems from no longer perceiving learning English as an act of denying the importance of their self, but a part of a cultural exchange where their language and culture are highly valued. This is supported by mentions in the open-ended items in the evaluation instrument of finding their partners had a genuine interest in learning Spanish: "well, now I know that people from other countries want to learn my language and that they are open to help me, and for me to help them."

Norton Peirce talks about the reluctance to speak of immigrant English learner women in Canada and characterizes their decision to stay silent as a form of resistance in a power struggle where they are the weaker opponent (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995). The reluctance to participate in the teletandem session by the Mexican English learner can be interpreted as that form of resistance, as the only agency they can exercise (even if not a conscious decision). The contrast between student behavior before and after the sessions is evident from an anecdotal point of view, but it is also demonstrated by the results of the post-session questionnaire mentioned before. In this evaluation, they are asked about their level of confidence in their command of English both before and after the teletandem session by assigning it a score between 1-10, where 1 is the lowest level of confidence, and 10 is the highest. The results out of 2,101 students who responded are as follows:

Level of confidence in students' command of English before and after the session



Distribution of responses of 2,101 participants of confidence before and after the session

These graphs illustrate that lower confidence decreased while higher confidence increased. More specifically, high confidence (score of 10) rose from 31.3% to 53.9%, and strong confidence (score 9-10) from 48.3% to 76.4%. In contrast, low confidence (score 1-4) decreased from 9.9% to 1.8%.

What is the source of this surge in confidence in students' skills and command of the target language? The rise in confidence in the target language can be extrapolated as a boost in self-confidence. That, in addition to the 89.24% in willingness to participate in two or more teletandem sessions per term can be interpreted as what Norton Peirce calls *claiming the right to speak* (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995). If the refusal to speak was the only

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resource of agency target language learners could wield in a perceived unfavorable social interaction, then claiming the right to speak shows empowerment and an evening of the playing field in the social dynamics of language interaction.

It is essential to make a point here that the data does not demonstrate that the English learners participating in teletandem improved their linguistic abilities in their target language; a different study would have to include testing their skills before and after the sessions in order to gather data for such exploration. The presented data illustrates their perception of their confidence level before and after a session. While this information is not objective, it proves to be meaningful, since this study's concern is centered on the concept of identity and perception of self.

The teletandem session seems to change many of the students' preconceptions: for the first time, perhaps, the language they have studied for years is used in a real-life and practical context, and it is non-mediated by a teacher. After the session, most often than not, Mexican English learners report that their level in the target language tends to be higher than their partner's level of Spanish (due to English prevalence in their education and day-to-day life, while Spanish may be something more exotic in their counterpart's, something they may have chosen freely). This realization appears to increase the students' confidence in their language skills and even in themselves, and subsequently break longstanding negative preconceptions related to learning a foreign language. This is what students mentioned in the post-session questionnaire: *"I thought that I would not be able to understand anything, but I did understand almost everything, I learned more"* and *"I thought it would be more difficult."*

The post-session evaluation questionnaire of the sessions held in Spring 2017 had an additional question: *"Did the session change your perspective about the culture/context of your conversation partner?"* Out of 246 responses received that semester, 66.7% reported a change in their perspective versus 33.3% who said no. In the follow-up question *"How did the session change your perspective on the culture/context of your teletandem partner?"* only 139 out of 246 participants answered it, and their answers were coded into 21 categories as listed in the table below.

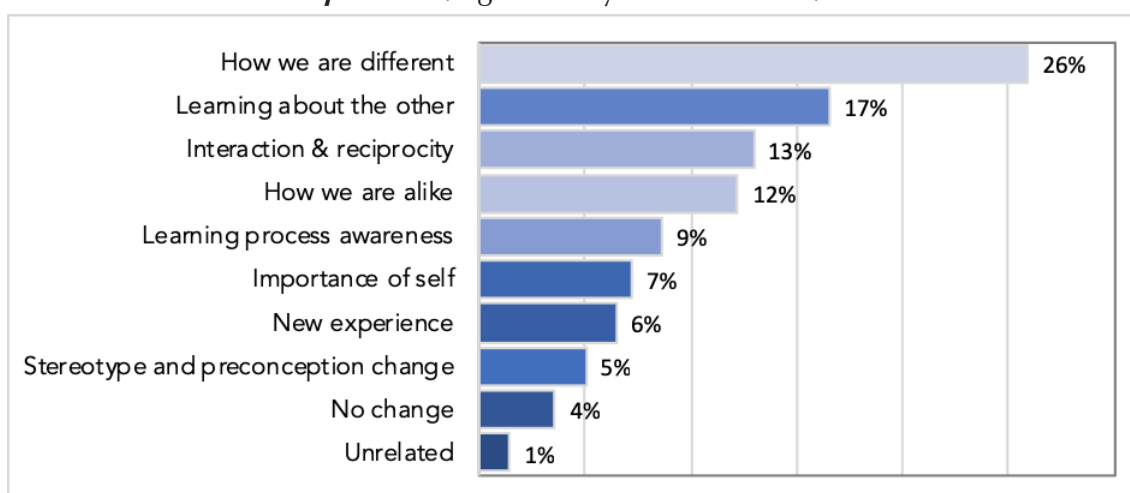
How did the session change your perspective on the culture/context of your teletandem partner?

Answer	Incidence	Percentage
I learned about cultural differences	28	20.14%
I learned new things about them and their country	14	10.07%
We exchanged ideas about different topics, and we learned what we each think about them	11	7.91%
We are not so different. We are alike in many ways	10	7.19%
I experienced something new, met new people and made friends	9	6.47%
I learned about their perspective/way of thinking	7	5.04%
We share the same struggles	7	5.04%
The experience changed preconceptions I had	7	5.04%
It was a way to learn English in a real context	6	4.32%
We are different people with very different perspectives and desires	6	4.32%
It increased my confidence in myself / my command of the language	6	4.32%
It was a reciprocal experience	5	3.60%
I learned about what they think about me/Mexicans	5	3.60%
There was no change in the way I think about "them"	5	3.60%
They are interested in my language and culture	4	2.88%
Opportunity to interact with people from different cultures	2	1.44%
They shared information about their identity with me	2	1.44%
I learned they are not required to learn another language the way I am required to learn English	2	1.44%
They did not criticize me	1	0.72%
I do not know	1	0.72%
I learned something new about technology	1	0.72%
Total	139	100.00%

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The results are then grouped by commonalities that are significant for identifying important aspects in which a paradigm shift can be elicited, such as identifying with the “other” by finding similarities; recognizing differences; and becoming more aware of reciprocity of the exchange, their individual and national identities and their learning process. The following chart shows those broader categories and their incidence:

How did the session change your perspective on the culture/context of your teletandem partner? (organized by commonalities)



The post-session evaluation questionnaire is in itself an opportunity for teletandem participants to reflect on the experience they just had, as by responding, students are forced to become aware of the process they just experienced and its effects in their perception of their teletandem partners (as an individual as well as symbolically); their target language; and themselves.

Students responded alluding to their partners as individuals as well as referring to them as a collective “they.” This is significant since both manners of address report a change in how they preconceived their partners would be, as individuals, but also that there was a shift in how they perceived the broader community of the speakers of their target language and of nationals of the country with whom they were interacting.

Direct quotes from the teletandem participants to the question: <i>How did the session change your perspective on the culture/context of your teletandem partner?</i>	
1	"You realize that they are in the same circumstances when learning another language, that pronunciation, grammar, and all of that is not easy, you see all that, and it is a good exercise for both by being able to practice both languages and it is a very didactical way of doing it."
2	"I learned a lot about my partner, how her life is at university and her major, we shared a lot! It was so much fun that it felt like 15 minutes."
3	<i>"They are interested in learning Spanish [more] than what I thought."</i>
4	"I thought that because she is from Miami she would party a lot, but she was very calm and cool."
5	"They are nice."

Translation of the original responses in Spanish

In his study of performativity and teletandem, Telles mentions the performative attribute of language, in a cultural and linguistic exchange, in constituting national identity. He warns of the risk of sessions becoming repetitive and remaining at a superficial level, because of participants' inclination for exploring their partner's cultural essentialisms, if the foreign language teacher does not properly mediate the implementation of teletandem (TELLES, 2015). Here lies the importance of preparation before the teletandem session and the reflection afterwards. ITESO participants prepare with their English language teachers in a class session before their linguistic exchange. There they share their thoughts on the experience on which they are about to embark and work on a questionnaire that they can use as a guide in case they run out of things to say. This questionnaire is critical for two reasons: a) it is a safety net that assuages their feelings of anxiety and b) it is not a questionnaire dictated by their teacher, but something prepared by themselves, which gives them a sense of agency, just prior to a daunting activity where they fear they will be stripped of power. After the teletandem experience, they also hold a reflective roundtable, where they discuss the experience in the subsequent class session.

Pennycook and Norton Peirce's work on identity and language both highlight how identity is not static but in flux: "[...] when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers but they are constantly

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organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world." (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995, p. 18) and "[Performativity] provides a way of thinking about relationships between language and identity that emphasizes the productive force of language in constituting identity rather than identity being a pre-given construct that is reflected in language use" (PENNYCOOK, 2004, p. 13).

Both authors state how identity is not something already defined and unchangeable: Mexican students coming to the teletandem session perceive their identity, and that of their session partner, as something written in stone that relegates them to an inferior place in the social interaction. However, what happens after the session is, as Norton Peirce and Pennycook state, that their identity is something that is constantly being reorganized through language. Making students aware of this will significantly enhance their motivation and investment in learning English and, it will encourage them to become autonomous learners.

In her book on the topic of new identities arising from telecollaboration projects, Helm notes the critical role that identity has in linguistic interaction: "shifting identity positionings influence interaction patterns as they can alter the power dynamics and have impact on participants' investment in the dialogue process" (HELM, 2018, p. 14).

There is no question then on the influential role teletandem has in heightening motivation and confidence in the target language, as well as impacting participants' sense of self.

Conclusion

As demonstrated with the quantitative data gathered by the post-session evaluation related to the willingness to repeat the experience, students express a desire to repeat the experience. This increased willingness clearly demonstrates that students are motivated to participate again in an activity in which they had been reluctant to engage initially. This motivation is important because what they achieved with the session concerning their language skills is derived from their work. They are, as Norton Peirce proposes, claiming the right to speak (NORTON PEIRCE, 1995).

Beyond the rise in motivation, the data also demonstrated a shift in participants perceived skills in the target language. The evaluation instrument was not concerned with revealing the linguistic growth of the English learners participating in teletandem, but having them rate their confidence in the skills they already possessed in the language,

taking into account what the session (and the reflection the evaluation elicited) did to their perception of selves. The results clearly showed a significant increment in high confidence and a reduction in low confidence.

The qualitative data, while significantly smaller in comparison to the quantitative dataset, should not be dismissed since it provides relevant information about the students' awareness of the change in perception they experienced through the teletandem session. Reviewing the categories used to code the responses, participants display linguistic and learning awareness, as well as elevated self-esteem and cultural aperture; all meaningful to vanquish the self-imposed limitations and feelings of inferiority that make Mexican English learners be predisposed to a power struggle where they expect to be the lesser party.

All stated above pinpoint to the potential of teletandem for being a gateway for participants to become autonomous learners. They discover that they can learn because of their actions and after a session, many of them continue to seek similar experiences on their own. One can only hope that by promoting teletandem opportunities and guiding students to procure them for themselves, they will work towards becoming highly invested and motivated autonomous learners.

There are limitations to what the collected data of this study, as extensive as it may be, can achieve, given that the instrument for collection was not designed for exploring the thesis of this paper, but for a more practical one: as formative assessment that would then be used to improve the program (a significant number of the items in the evaluation instrument dealt with quality of the technological mediation and ways to make logistics and processes for the procurement of the sessions more efficient). Thus, it is highly recommended that further research is done, with a new evaluation instrument that is better suited to further the thesis of this article, and with other data collection instruments, such as focus groups to conduct interviews with participating students and follow up on more long-lasting effects of teletandem sessions in ITESO's English learners language studies and real-context use of the target language.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: ZULAICA-GÓMEZ, Paula A. Deconstructing language learners' feelings of inferiority through teletandem. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 302-323, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2394>

Submetido em: 09/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 28/12/2018.

UNDERSTANDING TELETANDEM LANGUAGE LEARNING FROM AN INTERSUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

A aprendizagem de línguas em teletandem sob uma perspectiva de intersubjetividade

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Abstract | This paper is about an investigation on language description that focuses on the role of the establishment of intersubjectivity (MCCAFFERTY, 2002; MORI; HAYASHI, 2006; VYGOTSKY, 1995; DURANTI, 2010; SAMBRE, 2012) in the teletandem learning process. Intersubjectivity is understood as an experience of otherness between discourse subjects and is established between individuals as they recognize each other as individual subjects in social contexts. We report on analyses of teletandem data from one online interaction within the project *Teletandem: transculturality in online interactions via webcam* (TELLES, 2011). The data were generated in a context of institutional and integrated teletandem interactions (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016). The oral sessions were audio and video-recorded. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed according to a hermeneutic orientation. The categories focused in the study contemplate (i) verbal and non-verbal communication, (ii) the co-construction of conditions for responsiveness in the target-language; (iii) bodily mimesis; as well as (iv) the co-construction of a shared framework of reference. Among other findings, the establishment of intersubjectivity encompasses both an immediate partner-to-partner dimension as well as a broader discourse community-based dimension. It has shown to develop as partners perceive each other aesthetically through their voice and cinematic image, so that they can develop mutual responsiveness.

Keywords | Intersubjectivity. Language Education. Teletandem. Hermeneutics. Phenomenology.

Resumo | Este artigo consiste no recorte de uma investigação em descrição linguística que enfoca o papel do estabelecimento de intersubjetividade (MCCAFFERTY, 2002; MORI; HAYASHI, 2006; VYGOTSKY, 1995; DURANTI, 2010; SAMBRE, 2012) no processo de aprendizagem de línguas em teletandem. A intersubjetividade é compreendida como a experiência de alteridade vivenciada pelos sujeitos do discurso e é estabelecida entre eles na medida que reconhecem um ao outro como indivíduos inseridos em contextos sociais. Baseamo-nos na análise de dados de uma amostra correspondente a uma interação *on-line* em teletandem, no escopo do projeto *Teletandem: a transculturalidade das interações on-line em línguas estrangeiras via teleconferência* (TELLES, 2011). Os dados foram gerados no contexto de Teletandem Institucional Integrado (CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016). As sessões orais foram registradas em áudio e vídeo e, então, transcritas e analisadas segundo orientação hermenêutica. As categorias levantadas abrangem (i) a comunicação verbal e não verbal; (ii) a co-construção de condições de responsividade na língua meta; (iii) mimese corporal e (iv) a co-construção de um quadro de referências compartilhado entre os participantes. Entre os achados, verificou-se que o estabelecimento de intersubjetividade compreende tanto a dimensão imediata entre os parceiros quanto uma dimensão maior, fundamentada na comunidade discursiva a que se reconhecem pertencer. Verificou-se, também, que a intersubjetividade tende a se desenvolver na medida que os participantes reconhecem-se esteticamente por meio da voz e da imagem de *webcam* de modo que possam desenvolver responsividade mútua.

Palavras-chave | Intersubjetividade. Desenvolvimento Linguístico. Teletandem. Hermenêutica. Fenomenologia.

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Introduction

From the perspective of intersubjectivity, communication and discourse take place properly when it comprises the aspect of otherness that allows subjects to recognize each other as such, as well as the recognition of their selves. Intersubjectivity and thus language development can be well established when teachers (and/or other actors in a learning context, for example, peer students) make their linguistic and genre choices motivated by their perception and recognition of the other. This perspective is supported by the assumption (from both a scientific and a philosophical perspective) that otherness – understood as the intentional activism of the self towards the other as an equal individual person – might operate on mutual recognition so that communication and language development can be facilitated.

This aim of this article is to demonstrate how intersubjectivity can be observed in a context of teletandem language learning, to propose a few analysis categories and reflect on the impact of these categories upon the quality of oral interactions and the opportunities for developing language proficiency. In order to do so, we report on analyses of teletandem data from one online interaction within the project *Teletandem: transculturality in online interactions via webcam* (TELLES, 2011). The data were generated in a context of institutional integrated teletandem interactions (ARANHA; CAVALARI, 2014; CAVALARI; ARANHA, 2016), involving one practitioner from a language teacher education course in Brazil and one Portuguese as a foreign language student in a university in the USA. A more detailed definition of ‘teletandem’ is presented in the next section of this article.

The Brazilian teletandem practitioner was in her last year of a teacher education course that aimed at educating future teachers of the Portuguese and the English languages so that those teacher-candidates would be certified to teach in contexts of basic (primary and secondary) schools, as well as in language schools in Brazil. The undergraduate student’s experience in institutional integrated teletandem interactions, that is, teletandem sessions conducted as part of the language education program in Brazil, is expected to contribute towards her language development so that she will be linguistically competent to use the English language in her future lessons. This is the connection we intend to establish in this article, a connection between intersubjectivity in teletandem interactions and future teachers’ foreign language development.

In the following sections, we present a theoretical review on intersubjectivity and an explanation of teletandem contexts, followed by an analysis of teletandem data and intersubjectivity, and some final remarks about our reflections on these topics.

Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity can be broadly understood as the social phenomenon of mutual recognition between subjects through the languages (both verbal and non-verbal) they use in order to communicate. However, the concept of intersubjectivity is not yet consensually defined. It is often referred to in Phenomenological Philosophy, Developmental Psychology, Linguistics and Cognitive Semiotics, as well as other areas such as Neuroscience, Social Sciences, Anthropology, and Education, to name a few. In Applied Linguistics, it has become of an increasing concern despite the fact that studies on intersubjectivity in this area are relatively scarce.

For instance, studies by Mori and Hayashi (2006) describe how Japanese learners of English as a second language (L2) develop mutual repertoires of gestures to boost communication in that language. Besides mapping how gestures are established by pairs of learners as a common exclusive frame of reference to overcome occasional comprehension gaps, the authors also outline the practice of hybrid interactional moves, understood as the combination of verbal and non-verbal language, to provide each other evidence of comprehension and/or non-comprehension, thus enabling intersubjectivity to improve between the learners.

In a similar study, McCafferty (2002) investigates the co-construction of what the author calls a tool kit between L2 learners to overcome communication obstacles. According to the author, L2 learners under investigation co-construct a set of common resources, including body language, to turn to when they face difficulties in uttering verbally, thus enhancing their interpersonal territory and improving conditions of mutual comprehension and language development.

In these perspectives – set within studies in Applied Linguistics –, intersubjectivity is seen as a scaffolding resource to further language development. Once learners of an L2 may share different language backgrounds and/or language proficiency, the establishment of intersubjectivity – in which gestures are considered to play a central role – can ground communication while verbal discourse is developed.

However, the concept prior refers to the phenomenological branch of philosophy, especially in the works of Husserl (1969), Scheler (1971) and Merleau-Ponty (1996), among others, in pursuing a philosophical approach to understanding the constitution of the individual subjectivity, that is, the self-recognition of the person as an individual subject. There is an actual consensus that the self is only recognized after the individual intentionally and actively recognizes the other both aesthetically and ethically. Under this assumption,

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the subject is constituted socially before it develops an individual dimension (as opposed to Cartesian views).

Nonetheless, the phenomenological view of subjectivity – which is intersubjective by constitution – faces challenging implications, such as understanding how (in operational terms) the self experiences a foreign consciousness considering that immediate access to the other is unlikely. Philosophical solutions offered as answers to this problem include the processes of intropathy, analogical inference and subject transcendence. Intropathy refers to the mutual recognition of intentions and motivations manifested as specific language behavior and/or ethical orientation; analogical inference consists of perceiving from the bodily actions of others that they participate and experience the same concrete (and/or physical) phenomena as the self, so that they can recognize each other as equals; subject transcendence is conceived as an intentional activism towards participating in the other's experience. In sum, intersubjectivity is fundamentally associated to otherness, that is, in understanding one's own experience as extensive to another person's.

Phenomenological philosophy also understands the body as the aesthetic expression of the self, which means that individuals express themselves and recognize the other by means of how the body allows them to be aesthetically perceptual to the other, and vice-versa. Much of such recognition process occurs in the field of resemblance, that is, in the perception that bodily dynamics are similar among persons, which provides an evidence of similarity, equality and thus empathy – the principles of analogical reference.

Agreeing with Husserlian studies, Bakhtin (2015) suggests that the body holds the first dimension of dialogue in terms of emotional-volitional communication, between a baby and the mother, for instance. Moreover, the author assumes that the self is composed by both an interior body and an exterior body. The interior body is a dimension of self-experience – one with very important limitations for the constitution of the self. The exterior body is the physical perception of the other, which includes perceiving edges that shape the other as physically individual, delimited from the surrounding background and thus dynamically situated in the world – from a plastic-pictorial perspective. According to the author, the ego can only perceive itself as an individual through its exterior body – that is, the aesthetic appreciation of the other – and never from their interior body experience. Both in Phenomenology and Language Philosophy made by Bakhtin, intersubjectivity occurs as the body is perceived as an aesthetic expression, and subject transcendence allows a condition of otherness.

From these initial assumptions, the comprehension of intersubjectivity allows two (non-opposed) directions: one of an operational nature, to describe how intersubjectivity is established; and another, rather metaphysical, that pursues the relation between intersubjectivity and language, as well as language development and the development of linguistic proficiency.

In order to continue with the operational aspect of this discussion, for the cognitivist semiotic works of Zlatev (2007, 2008), Meltzoff and Brooks (2007) and Möttönen (2016), among others, the establishment of intersubjectivity is associated to the mutual development of verbal language, but not only. According to this view, verbal discourse development is preceded by bodily schemas and bodily mimesis: the former is related to body actions that are considered to be non-communicative (or at least unintentionally communicative) like blinking, yawning, sneezing and so forth; the latter is related to body action intentionally oriented to communicate, either on the iconic level (for example, moving an empty spoon towards the mouth to mean hunger, or moving hands in a hectic pace to mean hurry); or on the indexical level (for example, pointing a finger out towards a person or a place, for social reference or for a direction). Verbal language is considered a post-mimetic level of intersubjectivity, as the following extract from Zlatev (2008, apud MÖTTÖNEN, 2011) suggests. According to the author, studies reveal five levels of intersubjectivity, such as:

1. Proto-mimesis: associated e.g. with neonatal imitation, mutual attention and 1st order mentality
2. Dyadic mimesis: shared attention, understanding of other's intentions, 2nd order mentality (understanding others through projection)
3. Triadic mimesis: joint attention, having and understanding communicative intentions, 3rd order mentality (attention and intentions)
4. Post-mimesis1/protolanguage: semantic conventions, 3rd order mentality (expectations)
5. Post-mimesis2/language: (false) belief understanding, 3rd order mentality (beliefs) (p. 151)

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One important assumption from this perspective is that the verbal dimension of language is grounded in other levels of intersubjectivity, other ways in which subjects mutually transcend the individual domain towards otherness for their own constitution.

In the metaphysical field, a consistent definition of language refers to the debates proposed by Heidegger (2007) and Benjamin (2015). According to these perspectives, language expresses itself and is understood as a broad universal phenomenon in which everything – and everyone – expresses itself and himself. Similarly, in verbal discourse, understood as a type of language singularly manifested at the word level, speakers express themselves as they participate in discourse by no other means but dialogue (see, for example, Bakhtin, 2015).

In summary, L2 learners who seek for the development of verbal proficiency (because they do not share that competence) are allowed to ground their learning on other dimensions of language, all dimensions in which intersubjectivity is considered to occur. So if L2 learners face obstacles in communicating verbally to each other (dialogically – which means uttering, rather than simply producing sentences that would be clearly understood regardless of their communicative purpose within a dialogue), other levels of intersubjectivity may keep communication active and preserve opportunities to develop language at the discourse level.

The other – as opposed to the self – is not necessarily considered an individual. A definition of the other may also refer to whole communities, their culture, their history and their social organization. On this dimension, the individual transcends towards the collective other as a process of affiliation. The two dimensions of otherness – both individual and plural – are critical to constitute the intersubjective person and their communication competences. Otherness is not only the recognition of an immediate interlocutor. Also, it is the recognition of communities of individuals to which it is possible to self-consider a member – which is the case for the development of specific verbal languages and social varieties (for example, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Southern Brazilian Portuguese, American English, British English, Black English and son on).

Discourse and dialogue as approached from the intersubjective perspective refer to the concepts of Bakhtin's dialogism. In the author's view, communication takes place as individuals produce utterances – understood as the concrete unit of discourse (see, for example, Bakhtin, 2006). An utterance, to this view, encompasses both conditions of conclusibility and the alternation of speech subjects: the former assumes that utterances are regarded as such as the individuals involved in communication mutually recognize its conclusibility; the latter corresponds to the assumption that every utterance is responsive

to another – either an individual or a collective other – and is similarly produced to cause response. The conclusibility of an utterance is related to the possibility of (i) understanding its theme to the comprehensive level (semantic exhaustion); and (ii) understanding the speaker's intention, and (iii) recognizing the employed discourse genre. According to the author, since these conditions are met, the other can understand the utterance as concluded and be responsive to the utterance so that speech subjects alternate and the dialogue chain continues to develop. Thus, the concept of utterance is fundamentally based on the experience of reciprocity and intersubjectivity.

What is teletandem?

'Teletandem' contexts involve pairs of native or non-native speakers of different languages working collaboratively to learn each other's language. For example, Brazilian university students who study a foreign language and wish to develop their proficiency in this language, paired with students in other countries who are learning Portuguese. With tandem language learning, each partner is a student for one hour, learning and practicing a language from the other partner. Then they switch roles and switch languages.

Teletandem may be defined as a process of cooperative language learning by means of electronic communication. In a teletandem partnership, students are expected to help each other learn the languages in which they are proficient users.

Interactions in teletandem contexts are grounded on the principle of learner autonomy, that is, language learning is no longer the responsibility of a class teacher alone. Learners are responsible for their own process of language learning, and this responsibility requires that learners decide about their learning goals, the content of learning and the resources to be used. In this sense, learners benefit from the possibility of negotiating the aforementioned aspects with their partners – that is, decisions that can contribute - or not - to the success of a collaborative language learning experience, or that can possibly reduce the benefits of the teletandem experience, are the agents' prerogative.

Teletandem interactions occur by means of online chat, audio or video communication, with the help of communication devices and software such as Skype and Zoom, and generate a corpus of written and spoken data. Focusing on spoken language and for research purposes, oral data has been recorded by means of a software called Easy Recorder, which is available on the internet, free of charge.

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A full teletandem session usually lasts two hours. One hour is dedicated to each of the two languages used by the practitioners. In principle, each one-hour session comprises three parts: (a) conversation, (b) feedback on language and (c) evaluation of the session. In the first part of the session, the students engage in a conversation in the target language, about one or more topics, for around thirty minutes. In the second part, which takes approximately twenty minutes, the practitioners discuss the language used in their previous conversation and the most proficiency agent has the opportunity to provide linguistic feedback to his or her partner. The feedback is given with the help of notes written during the conversation or, in the case of written communication (chat), by referring to the previous lines of their interaction. The third part of the session lasts around ten minutes and is dedicated to evaluating the whole session, comprising a discussion about the difficulties faced by the participants while interacting in teletandem and suggestions for future action. Once the agents have completed an interaction period at least eight to twelve weeks, they may decide to continue or to end their partnership.

Before the 8-week period, both the foreign and the Brazilian practitioners are given instructions and orientations about TTDii by means of a tutorial session. On that occasion, each language teacher provides their respective teletandem group (in each country) with a calendar of activities, theoretical principles and instructions about practical procedures, as well as strategies on how to benefit from the work. Practitioners are also invited to verify their level of target language proficiency by means of self-assessment scales, and to set their learning goals accordingly.

What do Teletandem data indicate about intersubjectivity?

The teletandem interactions that constitute data in this study were audio and video-recorded as participants engaged in online conversations through Skype, making use of webcams. The recordings were then transcribed and analyzed by means of qualitative procedures – from a hermeneutic-methodological perspective – combined with quantitative procedures.

The hermeneutic perspective aims at approaching language learning in this context as a historical experience of participants seen as ever-ongoing constructing subjects. Quantitative procedures, on the other hand, are taken exclusively for mapping the events raised by qualitative interpretation along visual timelines, so that comparing different aspects of the qualitative analysis could be possible.

The categories focused in the study contemplate verbal and non-verbal communication, the fact that the practitioners are establishing the grounds for reciprocal language learning, and variations in discourse genres.

Interactions in a context of institutional integrated teletandem (TTDii interactions) observed in this preliminary analysis are held by Isabela – an undergraduate student of English and Portuguese in a Brazilian university, and also a language teacher-candidate in the context of a Letters course – and Sally – an undergraduate student of Portuguese in a university in the USA, in the context of a major unrelated to Education. TTDii means that an academic agreement was established between the Brazilian university and the university in the USA so that all the students from one class of the Letters course in Brazil were supposed to interact with a whole class of students who were learning Portuguese at the university in the USA. Conversely, the teletandem interactions were thus ‘institutionalized’ and ‘integrated’ in the course programs of both classes.

The sample data used in this analysis corresponds to their first interaction session (29 minutes and 26 seconds in length, transcribed in 294 turns) and therefore, their first contact with each other as well as their first teletandem experience. According to TTDii instructions, they were supposed to meet online weekly for a two-month period. The data analysis conducted in this study was based on the recording of the first interaction session.

In these initial circumstances, data show that participants resort mostly on a dimension of intersubjectivity related to the collective other (as opposed to the individual other) to establish communication: they recognize each other as members of communities based on a particular discourse and a particular social, cultural and historical background, so their linguistic choices (what they say and how they say) are motivated by the urge to keep the conversation active and meet formal teletandem instructions. In the sample below, from the beginning of an oral session, practitioners negotiate which language to start with (either English or Portuguese) as well as the written text correction, both actions comprised by the formal TTDii instructions the had been given before the first oral session. In the utterances, neither language negotiation nor topics of mutual interest can be seen, but actions to keep the activity organized accordingly.

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Excerpt 1

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Notes
19	Isabela	você quer: começar falando em português ou em inglês?	
20	Sally	ahm ++ it doesn't matter + whatever you wanna do [riso]	
21	Isabela	pode ser português então? ++ pode/ a gente pode começar com português aí depois a gente troca pra inglês?	
22	Sally	ahm + sim	Sally switches from a mostly smiling expression to a serious expression
23	Isabela	tá bom	
24	Sally	ahm tá bom	
25	Isabela	então + eu não recebi a sua redação	
26	Sally	++ a:hm na e-mail/ no e-mail?	

It is also assumed that no intersubjective territory has been constructed particularly between the two participants (as individuals) prior to their first interaction. Conversation topics (what they choose to talk about), in these circumstances, are almost exclusively selected by the Brazilian participant under two basic observable types of motivation: (i) responsivity internal to the partnership, which refers to a turn whose topic selection is, by surface evidence, motivated by the contents of the previous turn (i.e. by what the interlocutor said), and (ii) responsivity external to the partnership, which refers to a turn whose topic selection presents no surface evidence of motivation by the contents of the previous turn (i.e. it is likely organized to meet other type of uttering motivation such as to keep the conversation going, among others). A sample of these aspects can be observed in excerpt 2 below:

Excerpt 2

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Notes
163	Isabela	ahm this city where is my university is the same city that I live I was born in this city São José do Rio Preto + and the university is very close of my/ of my house + is five minutes by car + so it's very close + and I live with/ and I live with my parents + eh + but I didn't have sisters or brothers but I/ when I was a child I want/ I wanted very much to have sisters and brothers + but + I don't have	
164	Sally	oh [riso] + + but you can have false friends	
165	Isabela	yes + very close friends ++ but when I was a child I want to: + play with my/ with sisters and brothers not only with + friends + and I asked for my mother give me a brother but when my mother didn't give me brothers and sisters [laugh]	<i>Interlocutor smiles back.</i>
166	Sally	yeah I've my three older sisters and + they've always been my best friends so I don't know what I would do + as an only child I could not do it [laugh]	
167	Isabela	yes + when I was child I didn't like so much be a only child but now I/ I like + I + + how I can say: + eu estou acostumada? [<i>I am used to it?</i>]	
168	Sally	+ you're accustomed to it + you're used to it	
169	Isabela	[yes + yes + yes	
170	Sally	+ you get/ you get more attention from your parents probably [laugh]	
171	Isabela	yes + yes	
172	Sally	they just spend all their time [laugh]	
173	Isabela	ye:s	
174	Sally	is that ever annoying? Do they bother you too much?	
175	Isabela	yes [laugh]	

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176	Sally	[<i>laugh</i>]	
177	Isabela	+	
178	Sally	So do you live at home with them still?	
179	Isabela	“watch”?	
180	Sally	you / do you live at home with them still?	
181	Isabela	yes + I live because I don’t have a “jobe” + because my university is all the day + in the morning and in the afternoon so I/ I/ I worked two lat/ two years + before + e:h + but work for me is very difficult because I study all the day so I didn’t have a job and I didn’t can have my own house + because	
182	Sally	[oh yeah + no	
183	Isabela	because it’s difficult and I think that this is very expensive	
184	Sally	yeah it’s really expensive + I would live at home if I could + but it’s just too far + because + there are other universities closer and I could live at home but this school is better	
185	Isabela	o:h ok	
186	Sally	+ better to go to + to get a job	
187	Isabela	but I want to have my own house and have one “jobe” and be a teacher and be rich in the future [riso] + and have my house and + my family + because live with my parents is very difficult because I don’t have my/ my time and + sometimes my parents are very: + I don’t know they interfere so much in my life + I didn’t can + can + decide my/ my things my/ I didn’t have my ideas because all I/ I do is with my parents + so: this is very difficult	<i>Interlocutor smiles back.</i>
188	Sally	Yeah	
189	Isabela	[I don’t know but do you understand? it’s very difficult + for me + I love live with my parents but sometimes my mother is very protec/ I don’t know + protetora + he protect	

190	Sally	[protective
191	Isabela	yeah + he protects a lo:/ a los me + so this is difficult for me
192	Sally	uhum + + [riso] it sounds difficult ahm + they just/ yeah I can imagine + I was ready to leave I left ahm after high school so + when I was eighteen + I moved/ I moved up here
193	Isabela	Ok
194	Sally	[but I see them + I mean I just see them like every other weekend + every two weeks + and now I probably seem them once a month
195	Isabela	ah ok ++ yeah
196	Sally	[it's different [<i>laugh</i>]

Data show that when there is surface evidence that the topic initiated at one turn is motivated by the content(s) of the previous turn, the topic takes a larger amount of turns and is maintained for a longer extent of the conversation, and that discourse and communication are kept active as well. Excerpt 2, above, is a sample of such internal responsivity. On the other hand, topics initiated by rather an external responsivity move take fewer turns and tend to end shortly (aspect observable in excerpt 1). This information not only does reinforce the hypothesis that intersubjectivity and communication develop along with immediate otherness, but it also explores the operational aspect of responsivity quality over turn-taking dynamics.

For instance, 41 events of topic selection were recognized among the 294 total turns of the interaction session (i.e. participants changed their conversation topic 41 times). Sixteen of them are considered externally responsive (motivation type II) whereas the remaining 22 are categorized as motivated by internal responsivity (motivation type I). In the chart in figure 1 below, all events of topic selection are represented by squares and triangles over the full interaction timeline depending on the type of motivation they are related to.

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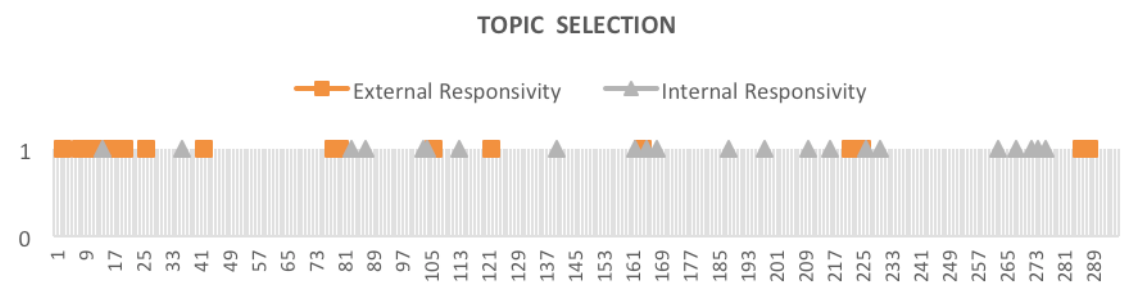


Figure 1. Turns and length of topic maintenance and change

Squares (type II – non-immediate responsivity) prevail in the initial turns of the conversation, where the short distance between one square and the next indicates that topics are ended briefly, so another topic is selected. With the passing of time (for example, from turn 78 forth), the longer distance between squares and triangles (represented by a straight line not covered by any form) reinforces the qualitative observation that participants maintain the conversation topics for longer without being motivated to select a new one (or losing conversational interest on a given topic). On the other hand, triangles (type I – immediate responsivity) prevail from that moment on, indicating that, as time passes, participants develop a rather immediate kind of responsivity to one another – as an individual-based experience of otherness – and resort less often on external responsivity – as a community-based experience of otherness. Moreover, triangles are more commonly followed by longer straight lines, which means topics tend to be more stable when initiated by internal responsivity. In fact, a qualitative interpretation of the interaction suggests that personal interest in a given topic is higher when its reference is mutually shared (that is, initiated internally) – and is not chosen apparently at random. For example, turn duration – the length of time one participant holds the speech turn – is increased within periods in which internal responsivity is more common, as illustrated in the chart in figure 2 below:

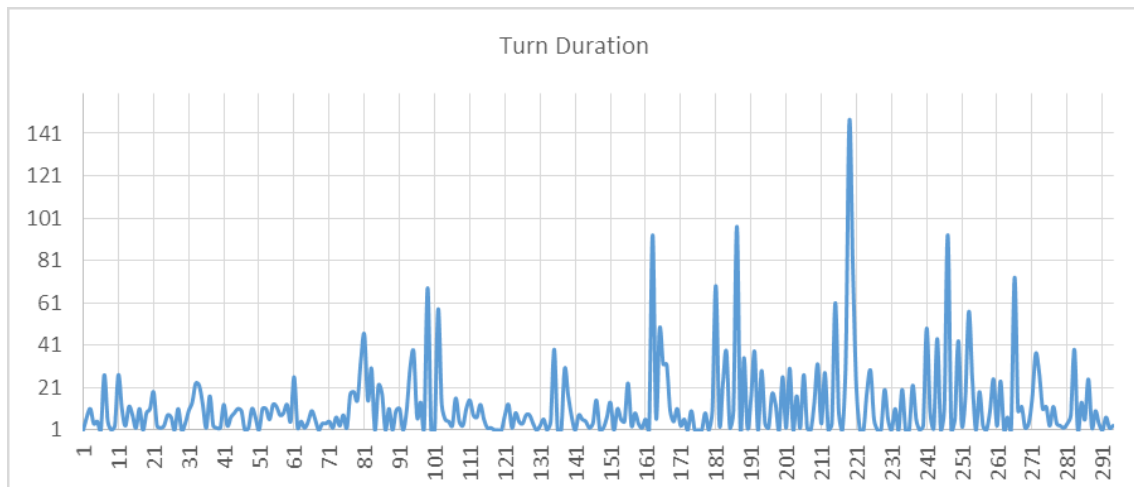


Figure 2. Turn duration

When information on topic maintenance and change, as shown in figure 1, is compared to the graph in figure 2, one realizes that turn duration peaks range over the same extent of the interaction in which internal responsivity prevails. That is, topic maintenance and turn duration are related to responsiveness and how it operates – either internally or externally. In other words, the way one participant responds to the other shows to have an impact over how long utterances become (and possibly the constructed participant's interest in it) and for how long they keep the same conversation topic (without changing it).

Three basic categories of discourse expression can be raised under the technical-methodological conditions in which TTDii activity takes place: (i) segmental (i.e. verbal communication that can be heard and transcribed); suprasegmental (i.e. prosodic components of verbal expression) and; (iii) paralinguistic (i.e. non-verbal expression that can be seen and categorized, both intentionally oriented to communicate – e.g. bodily mimesis – and unintentionally oriented to communicate – e.g. mimetic schemas). Furthermore, these categories can be perceived as part of the phenomenon of mutual aesthetic recognition, which, in the context of TTDii, encompasses both the visual and hearing perception of the other, as illustrated below:

At the non-verbal dimension of communication, synchronic cinematic image exchange via webcam in TTDii interactions is a technical feature that allows the aesthetic recognition of the other at the visual level both by means of composition and mimetic variability³. Composition refers not only to what elements are included within the borders of the image capture but also to how the subject (the other participant) is pictorially

³ During oral sessions, participants can see their partner's as well as their own image on the computer screen.

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contextualized. Mimetic variability refers to how body language is employed, either intentionally or unintentionally, in paralinguistic communication (e.g. how their moves relate to what they say). At the hearing level, participants perceive each other as segmental and suprasegmental articulation varies. Variation in the three levels – segmental, suprasegmental and paralinguistic – has shown to perform an important role in the quality of communication.

Qualitative interpretation combined with quantitative procedures show that the more varied body language is, the better the communication conditions concerning mutual comprehension and turn-taking dynamics are, especially considering the participants' expression of empathy via webcam. In order to illustrate that visually, the chart in figure 3 below indexes of mimetic variation are compared to occurrences of topic selection under both internal and external responsivity:

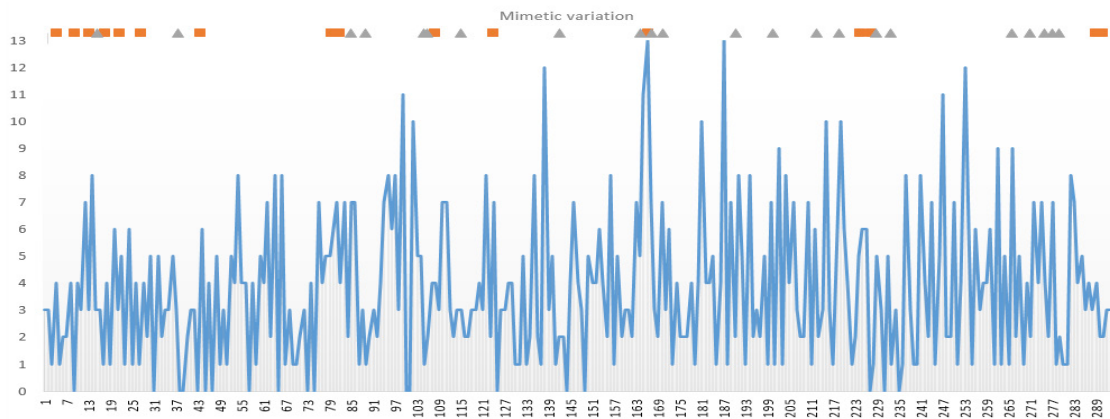


Figure 3. Mimetic variation

As in the chart in figure 1, squares refer to topic selection externally motivated and triangles to topic selection rather related to an internal type of responsivity (similar to the information in figure 1). The blue line represents the mimetic variation of participants' interactive actions over the oral session, which is curved towards the predominance of triangles, and indicates an association between body language variation, immediate responsivity and the quality of communication.

Most of the mimetic variation observed via webcam accounts for eye orientation and hand moves. Excerpts of the session in which participants' utterances reflect immediate responsivity tend to correspond to moments of mutual eye gazing (that is, both participants look for each other's and self image on the computer screen as they speak – not to the camera itself). On the other hand, excerpts of the session in which participants' utterances reflect non-immediate responsivity more often account for rather indefinite

eye orientation (e.g. participants look at printed material on the desk or lack visual contact with the partner due to technical problems).

When one participant sees the other on the screen, she can also see herself as well as to notice that she is seen by the other (that is how eye gazing could be described in this context). Since all the meanings shared through verbal spoken language are constructed under the perspective that both speakers recognize what each other look like simultaneously, meanings are enriched and communication is boosted compared to moments when participants do not perform mutual eye gazing. In fact, immediate responsiveness usually correlates to mutual eye gazing on the interaction timeline.



Figure 4. How webcams frame practitioners

Figure 4 (a screen capture), above, is a sample of how the two practitioners are framed by their webcams as well as of the cinematic images both of them can see onscreen. The screen capture was taken during oral session 1. At that moment, conversation showed signs of prevailing immediate responsiveness while the two participants kept their eyes gazed towards the computer screen, which enables them to see each other, see their own image and, furthermore, perceive whether they are seen by the interlocutor or not.

Some conclusions and final remarks

In this paper, we reported on an investigation on occurrences of both verbal and non-verbal language as produced by TTDii practitioners, illustrated by an initial description of how turn taking, topic maintenance and duration may occur. The selection of data samples and the discussion were grounded on a theoretical framework about intersubjectivity based on Bakhtin's dialogism (Bakhtin, 2006). Two perspectives included in the discussion about intersubjectivity were considered, one of an operational nature

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in order to describe how intersubjectivity is established, and a rather metaphysical perspective to allow the pursuit of relations between the establishment of intersubjectivity and language use, as well as language development towards linguistic competence in foreign languages.

We have so far concluded that turn duration and topic maintenance may correlate with the extent of the interaction in which internal responsivity prevails. When participants succeed in developing more immediate responsivity, their conversation turns are often longer, more meaningful and they approach the topic in a more interested manner (so no new topic is immediately necessary to keep the conversation active). Besides, in these circumstances, learner practitioners less often express difficulty in understanding or uttering in their target language.

As for visual communication and body language, the data indicate that the more evident and varied body language is – that is, non-verbal language which interactants produce, sometimes together with verbal language, and which is meaningfully perceived – the better communicative conditions are established. Particularly, moments in which both participants address their visual attention to the computer screen – that is, the space where the two cinematic images are displayed – often correlate to fragments of the oral session when the dialogue quality is raised. Mutual visual perception via webcam can be understood as part of an aesthetic recognition process that accounts for the construction of interlocutors' corporeality and intersubjectivity.

We tend to believe that occasions of more immediate responsivity and longer turns indicate not only engagement on the part of the practitioners but also more confidence and higher levels of language proficiency. Both verbal language and mutual vision perception contribute to the establishment of intersubjectivity and may therefore favor language practice that can lead towards language development.

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COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO: SANTOS, Gerson Rossi dos; CONSOLO, Douglas Altamiro. Understanding teletandem language learning from an intersubjective perspective. **Revista do GEL**, v. 15, n. 3, p. 324-343, 2018. Disponível em: <https://revistadogel.gel.org.br/>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21165/gel.v15i3.2396>

Submetido em: 09/11/2018 | **Aceito em:** 28/12/2018.

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