

Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe Ramos
Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de Carvalho *Editors*

Language, Culture and Literature in Telecollaboration Contexts



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ISBN 978-3-031-33829-8 ISBN 978-3-031-33830-4 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33830-4>

Jointly published with Editora Unesp, Brazil.

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Preface

This is a book of original chapters on current issues in the dissemination of language culture and literature in telecollaboration contexts written by well-known contributors to the international researches network by CAPES-PRINT-UNESP Project, most of whom have participated of the group named *Virtual Exchange and Teletandem*. Such researches have multiple facets. On the one hand, issues related to the democratization of access to foreign languages as well as their artistic and cultural products are discussed. On the other hand, studies on the processes of knowledge dissemination through telecollaboration have also provided reflections on the contributions of telecollaborative experiences to the training of language and literature teachers. The project also enabled the formation of a mediation network for telecollaboration actions and the organization of a database, composed of transcripts of telecollaborative interaction sessions and mediation sessions, as well as interviews and questionnaires with the interagents.

Telecollaboration is characterized as an approach that provides interaction between groups of learners from different countries, through the integration of a series of virtual and intercultural collaborative tasks into the curricula of undergraduate and graduate courses. O’Dowd and Lewis (2016) point out that an increasing number of telecollaboration models have been implemented in several universities around the world, connecting students with the most varied purposes.

The chapters discuss actions developed mainly in two specific telecollaborative contexts: BRaVE (Brazilian Virtual Exchange) Program and Teletandem Project. The BRaVE (Brazilian Virtual Exchange) Program, created by FAUBAI (Brazilian Association of International Education) in 2018, aims at fostering an online collaborative learning modality that promotes intercultural contact and the exchange of ideas by connecting Brazilian undergraduate or graduate students with students from different higher education institutions around the world. Implemented at Unesp as an institutional strategy for internationalizing the curriculum and using active methodologies, the BRaVE UNESP Program seeks to bridge learning and teaching to the interconnectedness of the real world (Salomão & Freire Junior, 2020). In this sense, class-to-class collaborations are encouraged (either in undergraduate or graduate courses) by tasks that engage students in multinational teams

to address tasks connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The contact established between classes can be entirely online, with synchronous or asynchronous interactions, or in hybrid formats, seeking to create a context that emphasizes learning through experience and joint knowledge construction.

According to Telles (2015), Teletandem is a mode of telecollaboration – a virtual, collaborative, and autonomous context for learning foreign languages in which two students help each other to learn their own languages or a language of proficiency. They do so by using the text, voice, and webcam image resources, and by adopting the three principles of tandem learning: autonomy, reciprocity, and separate use of both languages (Brammerts, 2003; Telles & Vassallo, 2006). Within this virtual context and under the supervision of a mediator, teletandem partners collaborate online and make their own choices regarding the path, rhythm, and content of learning the language and culture of each other. The actions have been developed in partnership with a Brazilian university and some foreign universities, especially the University of Miami and Georgetown University, in the United States, and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, with which there is already a history of activities related to the Teletandem Brasil project.

The Teletandem Project began in 2006, establishing partnerships between Brazilian university students from UNESP and from foreign universities. Over the years, many changes have taken place with regard to the format and effectiveness of partnerships and the way in which the sessions have been conducted. Aranha and Cavalari (2014) provide a very specific summary of the trajectory of teletandem activities in Brazil and their changes in this process, in the context of UNESP. According to the authors, teletandem appears facilitated by technology as a way of promoting the teaching and learning of foreign languages through regular and virtual meetings between pairs of speakers of different languages who live in different countries. One of the aspects that becomes part of its scope is the “trans-cultural contact” established in such interactions.

In relation to the Brazilian side, the difference between these partnerships lies in the way activities are carried out: whether or not they are part of the regular class schedule, and whether or not such activities are linked to foreign language subjects. According to Telles (2009), such experiences are configured in the institutional model, as they are agreed between two universities, with a certain pedagogical control and established guidelines. In this case, interactions take place with the support of professors, in laboratories at the university, with the help of mediators. When, however, the interactions are concomitant with the classes, configured as mandatory activities of curricular subjects, the integrated institutional teletandem model is established (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014). In some cases, teletandem can still constitute voluntary activity, generally counted as hours of complementary activities or as hours of language laboratory practice.

Currently, we observe that the partnerships established in the context of UNESP/ Assis can be defined as follows: on the foreign side, as institutional and integrated and, on the Brazilian side, as non-integrated institutional. We could not fail to mention that the changes that took place in the teletandem configuration, in this trajectory described so far, involved very relevant issues for the development of the project’s activities. Among them, we highlight: (i) the follow-up of the interactants

during the sessions; (ii) holding mediation sessions at the end of each group interaction; and, finally, (iii) deepening the research, as this new format, in addition to facilitating the collection and recording of data (notes, reflective diaries, audio recordings of mediations, recordings of interactions), allows everyone involved to participate. of your construction process.

The main aim of this book is to further the work of the research network in sharing the studies developed in dissemination issues about language, culture, and literature in these tellocollaborative contexts, providing information, ideas, and stimulus which will facilitate the application of current thinking and research to the practical realities of developing and exploiting virtual exchange in teaching and learning processes. It also aims to stimulate further experimentation and innovation and thus to contribute to the continuing development of the field.

Methodologically, this book assumes an intercultural perspective for studies on the diffusion of culture and language in telecollaborative contexts. According to Welsch (1999), the concept of transculturality outlines a different picture of the relationship between cultures. It is not isolation and conflict, but entanglement, mixing, and interaction. It promotes not separation, but exchange and applies to political, social, scientific, educational, and artistic spheres, subsidizing reflections that address emerging issues of contemporaneity.

The book also emphasizes the humanizing function of literature (Candido, 1972), considering that it can act directly in the formation of the subject, both with regard to psychological issues of ability or need to fantasize, and with regard to aspects of educational training and also with regard to the social dimension of identification of the subject with the universe represented in the literary work. In this sense, we agree with Candido (1995) that access to literature is an indispensable right of every human being, being a universal manifestation that transcends the borders of time and space.

The chapters are organized from general to specific, according to the focus implied by chapter subjects. The first chapter, named *Task Design within Virtual Exchange: The Case of Institutionally Integrated Teletandem*, by Solange Aranha, Suzi Marques Spatti Cavallari, and Jessica Nunes Caldeira Cunha discuss, from a task-as-workplan perspective, the design of the text exchange task that is implemented in institutionally integrated teletandem. The second chapter, named *Inclusive Learning: Perspectives on Virtual Exchange and Global Learning*, by Daniela Nogueira de Moraes Garcia, Abigail Bryant, and Ana Cristina Biondo Salomão deals with telecollaborative experience that combines access and opportunity for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. The third chapter, named *Democratizing Knowledge of Foreign Languages and Cultures in a Telecollaborative Context: Considerations Grounded on Critical Pedagogy*, by Rozana Aparecida Lopes Messias, Maisa de Alcântara Zakir, and Ana Luzia Videira Parisotto is about Teletandem practices as a means of democratizing knowledge of foreign languages and cultures among university students from less-privileged social classes. The fourth chapter, named *For a Decolonial Pedagogy in Telecollaborative Practices: Building a Research Agenda*, by Rickison Cristiano de Araújo Silva and Fábio Marques de Souza, reflects on language learning and teacher education mediated by Teletandem from a decolonial perspective. The fifth chapter, named *Portuguese Language Teaching, Lusophone Literature and Telecollaboration*, by Michael Jones Ferreira and Flávia de Azeredo Cerqueira, discusses an integrated

syllabus combining Portuguese language teaching, Lusophone literature, and telecollaboration to discuss one novel in Portuguese and one novel in English during the Teletandem sessions. The sixth chapter, named *Literary Genres and Teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language in Teletandem*, by Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe Ramos, Anelly Mendoza Días, and Mayara Nunes da Silva, discusses an experience of circulation of literary genres in the context of virtual exchange on Teletandem, observing how reading and sharing these *genres* can contribute to enhance interactions in this process. The seventh chapter, named *Spanish Teaching-Learning Process in the Teletandem Context: Dialogues About Literature*, by Kelly Cristiane Henschel Pobbe de Carvalho, Jheniffer da Silva Cruz, and Fernanda Tamarozzi de Oliveira deals with how reading and sharing literary texts, by Brazilian and Hispanic authors, can contribute to enhance interactions and improve the process of teaching and learning the Spanish language, as well as the Spanish teachers education. The eighth chapter, named *The Corrido Mexicano and the Cordel Pernambucano: Traditional Poetic Textures in Transit Through the Telecollaborative Network*, by Francisco Claudio Alves Marques, make some considerations about two traditional poetic traditions from the Iberian romancer, the Mexican *corrido* and the cordel produced in the Zona da Mata region of Pernambuco. Finally, the ninth chapter, named *Brazilian Perspectives on Italian Cinema: Outlook for Interfaces Between Literature, History and Audiovisual in the Context of Telecollaboration*, by Gabriela Kvacek Betella, offers ways to develop questions related to foreign culture through processes that facilitate verbal interaction, as well as the cultural formation of historically and politically situated subjects.

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Chapter 1

Task Design Within Virtual Exchange: The Case of Institutionally Integrated Teletandem



Solange Aranha , Suzi Marques Spatti Cavalari ,
and Jessica Nunes Caldeira Cunha 

1.1 Introduction

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the arrival and the rapid dissemination of digital technology have had a huge impact on newer generations. Young people, the so-called digital natives (Prensky, 2001), have grown up surrounded by computers and mobile phones, with many sophisticated functionalities and access to Internet connection. This scenario has resulted in a range of opportunities for innovation in many fields, including education. In fact, most areas of education have been incorporating digital devices and software into courses and classes, in a variety of ways (Kern, 2006; Thorne & May, 2017).

In language learning, a very successful and increasingly widespread application of technology has been the implementation of telecollaboration, or virtual exchange, terms which, according to O’Dowd (2018, p. 5), refer to the “engagement of groups of learners in extended periods of online intercultural interactions” that involve collaboration to develop tasks with partners that are not from the same cultural contexts or geographical locations, under the orientation of educators. Studies on various models of virtual exchange programs (Hauck & Youngs, 2008; O’Dowd & Ware, 2009; Dooly, 2011; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Kurek & Müller-Hartmann, 2017) revealed the centrality of task design and implementation for the telecollaborative language learning to develop. These studies shed light to pedagogical, technical, linguistic, and intercultural factors that are interconnected when a

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telecollaborative task (TCT) is designed and implemented. They also revealed (i) specific criteria that should be taken into consideration in TCT design (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Kurek & Müller-Hartmann, 2017), (ii) the main features of different types of TCT (O'Dowd & Ware, 2009), and (iii) the complex relationship established between what is supposed to happen (task-as-workplan) and what actually happens (task-in-process) (Hauck & Youngs, 2008; Dooly, 2011; Kurek & Müller-Hartmann, 2017). The distinction between “task-as-workplan” and “task-in-process” has long been established and has gradually become a relevant research topic (BREEN, 1987; Ellis, 2000). For Breen (1987), “task-as-workplan” is the task designed by the teacher, considering his/her expectations of its outcomes. “Task-in-process,” on the other hand, is what learners actually do during a task, which may go beyond the teacher’s plans and predictions.

In this chapter, based on the notion of task-as-workplan, we intend to characterize the tasks designed within the institutionally integrated modality of Teletandem (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014), a specific model of telecollaboration, consisting of a pair of native (or competent) speakers of different languages who meet virtually with the purpose of learning each other’s language. In Brazil, the project *Teletandem Brasil: Foreign Languages for All* (Telles & Vassallo, 2006; Vassallo & Telles, 2006), first implemented at São Paulo State University (UNESP), aims to pair up Brazilian and foreign students so that they can hold weekly virtual meetings for language learning. The integrated modality (Institutionally Integrated Teletandem, or iiTTD) happens when students from undergraduate courses at UNESP take part in the project during a standard, mandatory discipline of their majors in languages (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014; Cavalari & Aranha, 2016). The incorporation of teletandem into the course is characterized by a series of tasks designed and assessed by the professor¹ in charge, such as participation in the tutorial, in the oral sessions, and in the mediation sessions, response to questionnaires (initial and final), writing of reflective journals, and exchange of written texts. We are particularly interested in characterizing the features of the text exchange task. For that purpose, we will discuss task design, taking into consideration the specific types and features that are involved in the integration of technology and telecollaboration into the processes of teaching and learning.

1.2 Task-Based Learning and Teaching: From Task Design to Telecollaborative Task Design

Research on task design and task-based learning and teaching has generated an extensive literature with a vast impact on the practice of foreign language education. A task has been defined in different ways by a number of scholars, but researchers

¹In this chapter, the terms “professor,” “teacher,” and “mediator” are interchangeable and refer to the same role.

generally agree that a task engages learners in activities that are focused on meaning, with a clear goal to be achieved through language (Nunan, 2004; Ellis, 2006; Long, 2015). A task, then, is different from an “activity” or “exercise,” considering that students are prompted to “convey meaning rather than [...] manipulate form” (Nunan, 2004, p. 4). Müller-Hartmann and Schocker-von Ditfurth (2011) add that tasks require learners to *do* something with the language, a point also made by González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) and Ellis (2009). Task-based learning and teaching (TBLT) had its origins in the works of Dewey (1913, 1938), who emphasized exactly this importance of learning by doing and by making intelligent effort.

Based on these tenets, TBLT has been affected over the years by the emergence and evolution of digital technology. More generally, the use of technology for language teaching and learning has been researched in the fields known as “Computer-Assisted Language Learning” (CALL) (Chapelle, 2001; Beatty, 2010; Thorne & May, 2017) and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) (Salaberry, 1996, 2000; Thorne, 2008). Taking into consideration the technical advances, CALL has evolved from computer used as a tutor to computer used as a tool for interaction, mainly when Internet access allowed multimodal communication. In this scenario, technology takes a *medium* role and is used to provide “sites for interpersonal communication, multimedia publication, distance learning, community participation, and identity formation” (Kern, 2006, p. 192). Virtual environments based on CMC have limitless potential in involving students in creation processes and in conveying meaning, which makes the combination of TBLT and technologies an excellent match. As such, activities using technology as a *medium*, if well-designed, can be the very definition of a task, which promotes active learning and learning by doing (Dewey, 1938).

The multimodal features of CMC have been of particular interest in task design research (Salaberry, 2000; Hauck & Youngs, 2008; Stockwell, 2010) since, as Hauck and Youngs (2008, p. 06) remarked, “modes and affordances that the computer offers have to be factored in and the issue *how* meaning is made in new multimodal environments such as, for example, audio-graphic conferencing and blogs needs to be addressed.” This means that task design in such environments involves making decisions about how to arrange the various semiotic modes (textual, aural, visual, etc.) in relation to the temporality of the interaction, i.e., whether the resource allows synchronous and/or asynchronous communication. Salaberry (2000) emphasizes that task designers should assess not only the effects of the technological capabilities of CMC but also “the features that characterize a potentially new type of literacy” (p. 28).

This is especially true for telecollaborative task design if we take into consideration the key role communication plays when groups of students² from different geographical locations work together in a series of tasks for extended periods of online intercultural interactions (O’Dowd, 2018). According to Dooly (2011, p. 69),

²Also referred to as “learners,” “interactants,” “participants,” or “partners” in the context of telecollaboration.

a carefully designed task that requires “off-and-online co-construction of knowledge” provides not only opportunities for target language practice but also (and mainly) language use as the means of shared knowledge building.

The question “what is a well-designed task?” has already been answered in different ways. Breen (1987, p. 25), for instance, highlights the importance of making predictions about students’ behavior so that a task designer must “anticipate the reasons why, and the ways in which learners reinterpret a workplan during the task-in-process.” In the field of CALL, Chapelle (2001) answered this question by proposing a model that has become a reference in the field of telecollaboration and task design. The author describes criteria to be taken into account when assessing the appropriateness of a language teaching task in a virtual context, as shown in Table 1.1.

Although the criteria proposed by Chapelle (2001) have been commonly used in telecollaborative research design, they are not above criticism. Kurek and Müller-Hartmann (2017), for instance, state that Chapelle (2001) advocates too much of a focus on form over other criteria. In her own words, “language learning potential should be considered the most critical [of the criteria] for CALL activities” (Chapelle, 2001, p. 58). This means that even though she included pedagogical and sociocultural aspects, these are placed in the background. More recently, González-Lloret and Ortega (2014), recognizing the contributions of TBLT to the fields of CALL and telecollaboration, list five characteristics of a task in a technological context, as can be seen in Table 1.2.

As we can see from Tables 1.1 and 1.2, both the works of Chapelle (2001) and of González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) mention two basic characteristics of a task, the primary focus on meaning and the relation to “real-world” activities, which they call, respectively, “Authenticity” and “Holism.” When we consider all the possibilities a task can offer a learner, the concept of “Learner fit” by Chapelle (2001) can be compared to “Learner-centeredness” by González-Lloret and Ortega (2014), but the latter authors are more emphatic in their description of how learners can make decisions, according to personal preferences, during the execution of a task.

However, the researchers differ in some aspects. Chapelle (2001), as we mentioned earlier, prioritizes the opportunity for focus on form above other

Table 1.1 Criteria for CALL task appropriateness

Language learning potential	The degree of opportunity present for beneficial focus on form
Learner fit	The amount of opportunity for engagement with language under appropriate conditions given learner characteristics
Meaning focus	The extent to which learners’ attention is directed toward the meaning of the language
Authenticity	The degree of correspondence between the CALL activity and target language activities of interest to learners out of the classroom
Positive impact	The positive effects of the CALL activity on those who participate in it
Practicality	The adequacy of resources to support the use of the CALL activity

Source: Chapelle (2001), p. 55

Table 1.2 Key definitional features of a task in the context of technology-and-task integration

Primary focus on meaning	If there is a specific language focus, it should be “hidden from learners” or “implicit” because the conveying meaning should be more important
Goal orientation	A task must be oriented toward a goal, i.e., it must have a communicative purpose that requires students to act to produce an outcome
Learner-centeredness	A task should address learners’ needs and wants, “allowing for flexibility and diversity rather than uniformity in the task processes and means”
Holism	A task should also be holistic, or authentic, in the sense that it draws on “real-world processes of language use”
Reflective learning	A task should involve opportunities for reflective learning besides the opportunities of learning through doing

Source: Based on González-Lloret and Ortega (2014), p. 5–6

characteristics. In her perspective, the potential for learning language form is the starting point and the main aspect of a well-designed task for CALL. Besides, the author also considers the positive impact of the task and the practicality of the technological resources employed as important factors. On the other hand, González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) highlight the importance of the goals of a task. For them, a task should have a communicative purpose, instead of a focus on form. Moreover, the task should require students to produce a tangible outcome, such as producing an oral or written text, booking a flight, gathering knowledge, etc. The authors also emphasize the opportunities a task can provide for students to reflect, which is in alignment with the importance of reflection in learning by Dewey (1933).

The characteristics presented by González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) and organized on Table 1.2 are part of the first of the authors’ three requirements for integrating technology and tasks. In the first requirement, then, TBLT and technology are combined to describe the five definitional features we have just discussed. The second requirement has to do with the awareness, by the task designers, of the profound implications that the integration of new technologies into educational design brings about for the construction of knowledge and for any kind of learning. The addition of technologies to any context is not neutral. Technology itself “has created a whole new set of real-world target tasks,” such as sending an email, making a video call, writing on a forum, etc. As technology becomes a tool to mediate tasks, it also brings new demands that themselves become target tasks and part of the curriculum. The third and last requirement is the “programmatically thinking about both tasks and technologies as embedded in curricular contexts” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014, p. 7). That means that tasks are only justified by the educational purpose they serve, being a way of organizing learning cycles. Tasks and technology must be articulated in ways that are “optimal for language learning,” considering that learning “takes place over extended periods of time in accord with some kind of planning” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014, p. 7). Thus, these researchers defend an integration of TBLT and technology based on a critical view, describing key characteristics of a task, as well as how technology can affect tasks by also creating new demands and, ultimately, how tasks and technology should be integrated into the curriculum with a clear learning purpose, as to maximize learning potential.

The above discussion of what a well-designed task is built on publications related to the fields of CALL and CMC. Specifically in the realm of telecollaboration, O'Dowd and Ware (2009) have discussed a variety of tasks considered to be well designed and useful for different learning purposes. According to the authors, it is possible to design tasks that are either more informal or more structured. By the same token, tasks could require students to focus more on linguistic forms or aim to make students reflect on cultural aspects. The authors propose three main categories for tasks in telecollaboration: (a) information exchange tasks, which involve learners providing their partners with personal information about their lives, schools, towns, etc.; (b) comparison and analysis tasks, which require learners to compare and critically analyze cultural products from each of their cultures, such as books or movies; and (c) collaborative tasks, in which students should work together to create a final product (O'Dowd & Ware, 2009, p. 175, 178). They also remark the relevance of task sequence: information exchange tasks are usually proposed as an introductory activity for learners to know one another before they move on to other tasks. Comparison tasks go a step further, requiring comparison of cultural differences and similarities, and encourage negotiation of meaning and intercultural learning. Finally, because they require learners to agree on decisions about their final product, collaborative tasks tend to engage learners in more intense negotiation. Combining and sequencing these different types make it possible to attend to diverse learning objectives in a telecollaboration.

The features, requirements, and types of tasks discussed in this section represent the framework that will be used to characterize iiTTD tasks from the perspective of task-as-workplan, emphasizing the implications of the task “text exchange” for telecollaborative language learning.

1.3 Tasks in Teletandem

When teletandem was first implemented at UNESP, Brazilian university students voluntarily enrolled in the project and were then individually paired with foreign students who had also done so (TELLES, 2006). The interactants had the support of a teacher-mediator, that is, a professor of foreign language disciplines or a graduate student who offers pedagogical support to learners, “supervis[ing] and assist[ing], through face-to-face or virtual meetings, the pairs of interactants both in the learning and the teaching of languages that occur in this relationship³” (Salomão, 2011, p. 655). Nevertheless, interactants were not formally assessed and, most of the time, developed their learning independently, in a pedagogical arrangement called the “non-integrated modality” of teletandem (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014). Many cases of this type of partnership have been successful, although there have also been cases of

³Original in Portuguese: “[...] supervisionar e auxiliar, por meio de encontros presenciais ou virtuais, os pares de interagentes tanto na aprendizagem quanto no ensino de línguas que ocorre nessa relação.” Translated by the authors

failure, for various reasons, among which are demotivated participants (Luz, 2012) and lack of topics to be discussed (Garcia, 2013).

In iiTTD, which is our concern in this chapter, these problems were addressed through the implementation of more structured tasks, which were designed with the purpose of providing students with discussion topics to help them keep the conversation going. Aranha and Cavalari (2014) and Cavalari and Aranha (2016) are the first authors to describe the tasks that occur in the iiTTD context, calling them “integrating tasks.” The integrating tasks are (a) eight interactions (teletandem oral sessions, or TOSs); (b) three texts written in the student’s target language; (c) three revised texts in the student’s native language or language of proficiency; (d) reflective diaries written after each TOS; and (e) pre- and post-questionnaires.

Aranha and Leone (2016, 2017) present a description of the telecollaborative practice between UNESP, São José do Rio Preto, in Brazil, and Unisalento (Università del Salento), in Italy. To do this, the authors use the pedagogical scenario framework as a reference, which, according to Chanier and Wigham (2016), describes (a) the entire online environment, (b) the various roles of participants during the course, (c) each course activity and the role of each participant in them, (d) how the activities are organized in a sequence, (e) which resources will be used and produced, and (f) the instructions and guidelines that direct the learning activities. Figure 1.1 shows the arrangement of tasks in the iiTTD context. Aranha and Leone (2017) propose two macro-tasks that occur in the teletandem learning scenario: the oral exchange between partners and the mediation sessions that occur within each group mediated by the professor.

Considering the highest level of hierarchy, we can say that teletandem scenarios are composed of two macrotasks: the teletandem oral sessions (TOSs) and the

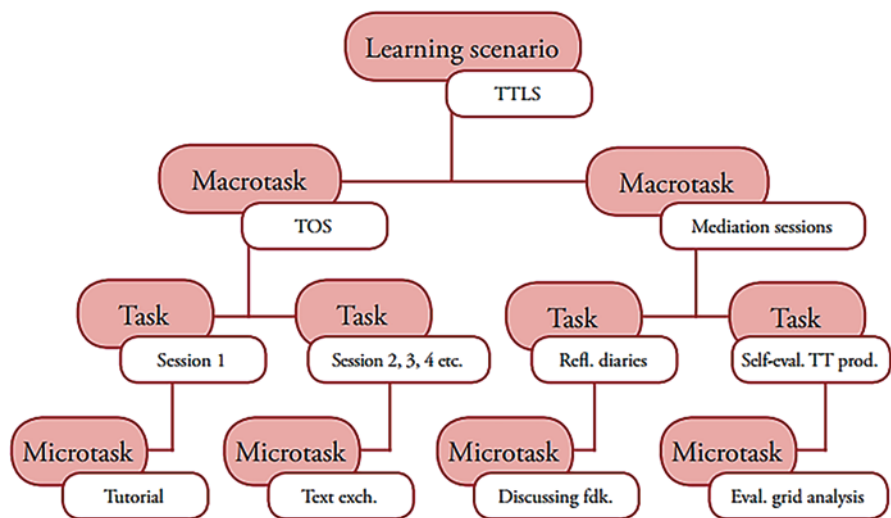


Fig. 1.1 The organization of a pedagogical scenario based on Teletandem. (Source: Aranha & Leone, 2017, p. 178)

teletandem mediation sessions (TMSs). The macrotasks are fixed and mandatory and are composed of smaller and more feasible steps that offer scaffolding to learners as they progress through the course. The microtasks are more flexible and can be adapted according to the learning context. Therefore, the teletandem general pedagogical scenario consists of two macrotasks, present in all learning scenarios and of greater scope, which are formed by tasks, which are, in turn, composed of microtasks that can be adjusted.

Related to the mediation microtask are the learning diaries written by students after each TOS with the purpose of reflecting on their learning objectives and the strategies adopted to achieve them. This is in accordance with the proposal of González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) for reflective learning, that is, to provide space for students to reflect as part of the task. According to Cavalari and Aranha (2019, 2022), as students write their diaries and reflect, the teachers in iiTTD read them and can bring questions and discussion topics to the language classes based on insights from the diaries.

In addition to diaries, learners must also answer questionnaires (“self-eval. TT prod.” in Fig. 1.1), usually one before starting the first TOS and one after finishing the last TOS. In the initial questionnaire, each student assesses their own language proficiency, according to a brief description of the levels of the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001), and set their learning objectives for teletandem practice. Lewis and Cavalari (ongoing) investigated the goals set by Brazilian learners in iiTTD and revealed that most goals are appropriate to teletandem setting (e.g., focused on speaking, listening, and/or interactive skills), but only approximately 10% of the goals were considered efficient/attainable goals, i.e., specific (because they are focused on particular learning item and/or ability), proximal (because they mention the exchange period), and moderately difficult (because they seem feasible but require some effort). In the final questionnaire, participants rate their experience in the project, whether they have fulfilled their objectives and if their linguistic level has changed after teletandem practice.

The mediation task is a development of telecollaboration, after the TOSs. It provides an opportunity for students to think about their experience in iiTTD with the teacher’s guidance and support. Besides, it is adjustable to learners’ needs, since they can discuss their own personal learning goals, strategies, and difficulties while deciding to write their experiences in their target language or mother tongue.

The TOS macrotask comprises all the TOSs that occur in a partnership in iiTTD (usually from 5 to 8), with the initial teletandem oral session (iTOS) being preceded by a “tutorial” meeting with the teacher. In our context, at UNESP/SJRP, the sessions after the iTOS are related to the text exchange microtask and require participants to produce texts in their target language on a genre and a topic defined by the teacher. After writing, students should share their texts with their partners, observing the due dates before each scheduled TOS so that partners have time to revise the texts and share their suggestions before the next TOS, in which both the writer and the reviser in each pair are expected to talk about the revision and discuss points of interest about the text and/or its topic. Table 1.3 shows an example of a table

Table 1.3 Example of an iiTTD calendar

Week Month	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Sept.	Sept. 05 interaction I (test: students get to know each other) Friday is the due date for UGA students to send text	Sept. 12 Academic event (interactions cancelled)	Sept. 19 interaction II (discussion of topic suggested by UGA) Friday is the due date for UNESP students to send text	Sept. 26 interaction III (discussion of topic suggested by UNESP) Friday is the due date for UGA students to send text
Oct.	Oct. 3 interaction IV (discussion of topic suggested by UGA) Friday is the due date for UNESP students to send text	Oct. 10 interaction V (discussion of topic suggested by UNESP) Friday is the due date for UGA students to send text	Oct. 17 interaction VI (discussion of topic suggested by UGA) Friday is the due date for UNESP students to send text	Oct. 24 interaction VII (discussion of topic suggested by UNESP) + evaluation of TTD experience

Source: File “2012_UGA3i_Tutorial” in MulTeC (MulTeC: Multimodal Teletandem Corpus (ARANHA; LOPES, 2019) comprises all tasks related to iiTTD from 16 cohorts from 2012 to 2015 and is available for researchers) (Aranha & Lopes, 2019), translated (The original text in Portuguese reads, from left to right, top to bottom, cells separated by commas: Semana Mês, 1^a, 2^a, 3^a, 4^a, SET, DIA 5 interação I (teste: alunos se conhecem) até sexta: alunos da UGA enviam redação, DIA 12 Semana de Letras - UNESP (cancelar interações), DIA 19 interação II (discussão do tema sugerido pela UGA) até sexta: alunos da UNESP enviam redação, DIA 26 interação III (discussão do tema sugerido pela UNESP) até sexta: alunos da UGA enviam redação, DIA 03 interação IV (discussão do tema sugerido pela UGA) até sexta: alunos da UNESP enviam redação, DIA 10 interação V (discussão do tema sugerido pela UNESP) até sexta: alunos da UGA enviam redação, DIA 17 interação VI (discussão do tema sugerido pela UGA) até sexta: alunos da UNESP enviam redação, DIA 24 interação VII (discussão do tema sugerido pela UNESP) + avaliação da experiência) from Portuguese

presented to students during a tutorial meeting with dates and instructions related to the TOSs and the text exchange microtask.

Table 1.3 shows how students alternate the roles of writer and revisor in each interaction, being expected, respectively, to have written a text or revised a partner’s text before each TOS.

O’Dowd and Ware (2009) define three types of telecollaborative tasks for virtual exchange projects, each type usually occurring after the other. In our context, the initial TOS can be classified as an information exchange task, because it is an introductory activity for partners to get to know one another. During the other TOSs, interactants can discuss their text revision and/or topic, if they wish to do so, but they can also make other choices according to their own learning goals and strategies. In that sense, we can say that all three task types proposed by O’Dowd and Ware (2009) can be covered in each TOS, because students may exchange information, critically compare and contrast, and act collaboratively. The task of text exchange seems to reinforce the intertwining of these actions, as partners may exchange linguistic and cultural information to correct/adequate the texts and may

compare and contrast diverse aspects of each language and culture, acting collaboratively toward a final text that will be submitted for the teacher's assessment.

In the next section, we look more closely at the text exchange task and its characteristics.

1.4 The Text Exchange Task in iiTTD

As we have discussed, students doing the text exchange task should, alternatively during each week of iiTTD, write a text in their target language and share it with their partner. The partner, then, reads the text and revises it before the next TOS, when the interactants are supposed to discuss the text's revision and/or topic. Finally, after this discussion, the original writer may rewrite the text considering his/her partner's comments and their negotiation during the TOS so that he/she can hand in an improved version to his/her teacher.

The first product of the task is the text itself is done individually, with the teacher's support, in accordance with the course program, but without interaction with the foreign partner.⁴ This stage, which involves the teacher's collaboration, can be called pre-telecollaborative, because it generates a product necessary for the telecollaborative microtask of text exchange. After this pre-telecollaborative stage, the task becomes telecollaborative when the student who produced the text (P1 for "partner 1") shares⁵ it with his partner (P2 for "partner 2"). P2 revises it, making comments and suggesting corrections. It is expected that the partners do this asynchronously, i.e., before the TOS in which they should discuss the text. For P1, checking the revision previously is recommended, but it is not a prerequisite to discuss the text during the TOS, and it is not uncommon that the writer only sees the revision during the TOS. Besides, after the telecollaborative discussion during the TOS, a post-telecollaborative task must be performed: the author of the original text should rewrite it, based on the comments and suggestions made by their partner and on the discussion made in the interaction so that an improved product can be graded by the professor.

Therefore, the text exchange task is formed up by three stages: pre-telecollaborative, telecollaborative, and post-telecollaborative. When thinking about the telecollaborative stage, we can also consider the synchronicity of the work performed by students: it is a telecollaborative asynchronous task as P1 shares the original text to P2 and as P2 shares the revision with P1; after that, during the TOS, it is synchronous telecollaboration when students discuss the text and its revision. We can observe a summarized scheme of the text exchange task in Table 1.3.

⁴For a telecollaborative task in which learners collaborate mostly synchronously, see Cavalari, 2016.

⁵There have been different ways of sharing the texts throughout the history of the Teletandem Brasil project in UNESP/São José do Rio Preto. Students used to be oriented to share texts via email or instant messaging. Nowadays, they usually share the files and make the revision work in Google® Drive.

Table 1.4 illustrates the proposal of the text exchange microtask, in which participants alternate the roles of P1 and P2 each week. As the weeks proceed, interactants take turns weekly being either the writer or reviser of a text. It is relevant to note that due to the nature of the teletandem context, which is based on students making autonomous decisions about their learning, each pair can negotiate how they will use their TOS time, as long as it is divided in half an hour for each language/partner. Thus, exceptionally, a pair of students may decide not to discuss the written texts during the TOS and work on that only asynchronously. Another pair could opt for using ideas and topics from the text as a starting point for informal conversation, forgoing the revision process. In general, however, it is expected that learners ask questions about the revision and discuss points of doubt and/or interest in each revised text. This variety of approaches provided by the task is in alignment with both “Learner Fit” (CHAPELLE, 2001) and “Learner-Centeredness” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014), categories that refer to the good quality of a task that allows adaptability to learners’ needs and preferences.

Another relevant feature of the task is that each text is a final product of joint collaborative work, but P1, the writer, is the one who decides to make modifications to the original text – or not – before submitting it to his/her professor. That is to say that as students work together to revise the text, it does not necessarily belong to both of them. The student who worked as P1 chooses whether to accept or disregard the suggestions made to the text during the revision process. By the principle of reciprocity, the other student will be P1 on the following week and will decide on what changes to make in his/her original text. Therefore, due to the reciprocal nature of teletandem with the inversion of roles each week, students know that every other week, they will be responsible for making decisions on their own text while counting on their partners’ support to improve it. When the project finishes for a group of students, there are six final versions of the texts for each pair, half of them written

Table 1.4 Stages of the telecollaborative microtask of exchanging texts in iiTTD

Stage	Collaboration	Synchronicity	Activity	Proceedings
1	Pre-telecollaborative		Writing	P1 writes a text in their target language
2	Telecollaborative	Asynchronous	Original text is shared	P1 shares original text with P2
		Asynchronous	Revised text is shared	P2 revises the text and shares the revision with P1
		Synchronous	TOS revision	Partners discuss the comments, corrections, and topic of the text during the TOS
3	Post-telecollaborative		Rewriting	P1 rewrites the original text, usually to be evaluated by his/her teacher, based on his/her partner’s revision and the negotiations during the TOS

Source: created by the authors

and possibly rewritten by a student (the one that was P1 in each particular week), with the help and revision of his/her partner (P2).

Each final version of a text is the goal of an instance of the text exchange task. The production of a tangible outcome in the form of a written text is in conformity with González-Lloret and Ortega's notion of "Goal orientation" in task design, engaging students in a "language-and-action experience" (2014, p. 6). Besides, both the activities of writing and revising a written text are relevant and authentic, especially to the audience of iTTD in our context. The cohorts in Brazil are formed by students of foreign languages, who are going to become either foreign language teachers or professional translators. The task, thus, has a holistic (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014) or authentic (Chapelle, 2001) component, since it corresponds to real-life activities that are of interest to the learners outside the classroom context.

When it comes to the relationship between autonomy and socialization, the text exchange task encapsulates teletandem principles, since students perform different roles at distinct moments, i.e., the writer/learner or the reviser/tutor. As Vassallo and Telles (2009) have argued, autonomy in teletandem is understood "with" and "in relation to" the partner, because pairs exchange roles, having a responsibility as a learner of their target language and as a tutor of their language of proficiency. Most contexts of language learning tend to focus on individualization at the expense of socialization, or the other way around. In teletandem, both can walk hand in hand, as learning is very individualized, attending to each interactant's personal learning goals, while, at the same time, learning is built through socialization, as partners interact and collaborate. Likewise, the text exchange task fosters autonomy at the same time that it fosters collaboration: each student is responsible for their text in the end, but the text is improved with help from the partner, both asynchronously and as the pair negotiates the revision. Going beyond the socialization in each instance of the text exchange task, we also have to consider an overview of the iTTD sequence of tasks, because it is based on reciprocity and alternation of roles. In that sense, we agree with Salomão, Silva e Daniel (2009) that, in tandem environments, a student should have the autonomy to recognize his/her own needs, determine his/her objectives, and come up with strategies and methods to reach them with collaboration from his/her partner.

Chapelle's concerns about how a task should have "Language learning potential," that is, "opportunity [...] for beneficial focus on form" (2001, p. 55) are also covered in the text exchange task. Previous research has shown that partners doing this task tend to focus on grammatical corrections (Brocco, 2014; Aranha & Cavalari, 2015). Although focus on form has not been valued by the literature in the currently popular communicative view, it still has a significant positive impact on language learning. Ware and Cañado (2007) provide a defense argument for tasks with a focus on form in the specific context of telecollaboration. For communicative approaches, language is often understood "as a conduit for carrying and encoding ideas [...] but rarely as an object of inquiry in and of itself" (Ware & Cañado, 2007, p. 108). That means that a preference for fluency in the target language often comes at the expense of developing students' linguistic accuracy and complexity, which is required at upper intermediate and advanced classes and also for selection

processes, such as for academic mobility programs. As such “[i]n many language teaching contexts at the post-secondary level, alignment with institutional and curricular goals alone provides sufficient justification for integrating a stronger focus on language form in telecollaboration” (Ware & Cañado, 2007, p. 108).

The peer feedback given in teletandem, however, is not exclusively related to linguistic form but also includes discussions about the language in use, such as lexical and discursive issues (Brocco, 2014; Aranha & Cavalari, 2015; Freschi, 2017). Research done by Ware and Cañado (2007) points to similar results: partners involved in telecollaboration may give feedback that goes beyond linguistic form, incorporating issues related to writing style, register, language use, and cultural aspects.

Teletandem’s text exchange task, therefore, combines complex features from a range of different models for tasks in CALL and telecollaboration. It may foster autonomy but also socialization and negotiation. It provides students with clear goals and steer them toward the creation of a product. It ensures students have a consistent environment for authentic language use and conversation while also encouraging them to inquire about the language itself or about cultural issues.

Final Remarks

The analysis we carried out in this chapter intended to offer some insights on the design of the text exchange task in teletandem and how its features can assist language learning in different ways. By looking at the task as a workplan, we discussed how it fits the categories of a well-designed task described by both Chapelle (2001) and González-Lloret and Ortega (2014). Firstly, the text exchange task allows students to make their own choices during the telecollaboration, according to their personal learning goals and strategies. As we have shown, this conforms with the notions of “learner-centeredness” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014) and “learner fit” (Chapelle, 2001). The possibility of choice unfolds into a range of opportunities for students to focus both on meaning and on form. Moreover, collaboration and reflection are encouraged by the task, as it associates with the possibility of asynchronous text revision and synchronous discussion of the revision with the teletandem partner. Besides, if we consider the production of learning diaries after each TOS, in a constant exercise of (re)thinking the choices made during the interactions, “reflective learning” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014) seems to be ensured by teletandem learning scenario. Finally, students are involved in an activity that is compatible with their future jobs. Because they are going to be foreign language teachers or translators, writing and revising in a foreign language are crucial practices that are connected to life outside the classroom, characterizing “authenticity” (Chapelle, 2001) or “holism” (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). Besides, the revision is done in collaboration toward a tangible goal, that is to say that the task is goal-oriented (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). The goal is to have an improved version of the text to submit to the teacher’s evaluation. The production of a tangible outcome in the form of a written text is in conformity with González-Lloret and Ortega’s notion of “Goal orientation” in task design, engaging students in a “language-and-action experience” (2014, p. 6). The analysis of features of task-as-workplan contributes

with an understanding of the affordances of text exchange microtask for language learning that may inform task design within virtual exchange. However, other research should examine the task-in-progress, that is, scrutinize choices actually made by students during the telecollaboration.

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Chapter 2

Inclusive Learning: Perspectives on Virtual Exchange and Global Learning



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2.1 Introduction

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has provided different scenarios in the most diverse sectors of life. In education, it has disrupted face to face pedagogical teaching and created challenges in the continuity of the teaching/learning process. Digital technologies have allowed contexts and possibilities to connect people, languages, and cultures beyond geographical borders and financial and sanitary restrictions. The pandemic put a pause on in person classes and completely changed the college experience. Students were switched online for an undetermined period of time.

This chapter aims at sharing how the virtual exchange/telecollaboration/collaboration online/collaborative online international learning allowed us to engage in an opportunity to bring together students while exploring different cultures and international learning in a virtual setting. We hope to highlight this collaboration involving Brazilian and US American students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in higher education.

At the start of this collaboration, Brazilian students were eager to engage in an international linguistic and cultural experience. English Language learners from

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Brazil were provided the opportunity through Brazilian Virtual Exchange Program (BRaVE-Unesp) and SUNY COIL to establish meaningful intercultural conversation in sustained tasks and discussions with students from Jefferson Community College. While the students were the main focus in this collaboration, the course instructors were given the opportunity to engage in creative and innovative course development to address students' needs to quickly connect, converse, and collaborate.

Globalization and internationalization have become more visible and desired during the pandemic, in which home mobility programs were being fostered. Assuming that "Internationalization processes challenge the very notion of autonomy, reshaped as interconnectedness and interdependence" (Gimenez, 2020, p. 9), it is feasible to embrace possibilities as such to foster motivation and engagement toward global learning.

Arthur O. Eve (2017) stated in an interview that "Education is the number one issue today, tomorrow and forever." The Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) combines access, academic support, and supplemental financial assistance to make higher education possible for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Codified in New York State Education Law §6452, the Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program, formally established the intent to ensure provision of access to the University for low-income students among other intents to go above and beyond for student success. Disadvantaged students are defined as students who experience historical economic and cultural deprivation. Indicators include, but are not limited to, students who have endured long-term economic deprivation, membership in a group underrepresented in higher education, a record of inadequate schooling, little or no accumulation of assets, and so on. The Arthur O. Eve EOP has proven to be one of the most successful opportunity programs in New York State, graduating more than 80,000 students who continue to live in New York, enriching its economic and social fabric.

Global learning and international learning are among those actions that create and ensure student success. The Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program will continue to be successful as we look for ways to be innovative and forward-thinking in our program development. High Impact Practices (HIPs), according to the American Association of Colleges and Universities, are evidence-based teaching and learning practices that show significant educational benefits for students who participate in them (AAC&U, 2022) – especially for those students in programs such as EOP. Students who qualify for EOP would rarely be afforded the opportunity to study abroad, as this opportunity is fairly expensive and at times viewed as a disruptor of the path toward completion. The State University of New York (SUNY) COIL provided the EOP an opportunity to engage students in intercultural and meaningful online engagement. EOP works toward ensuring that students who already lack the resources necessary to navigate higher education are provided the opportunity to elevate their college experience.

Much like their American EOP peers, Brazilian students lack opportunities to engage in international learning due to geographical and financial issues, which were exacerbated during the pandemic. Implemented at Unesp, since 2018, as a way to foster internationalization at home, the BRaVE Program aims to promote the

resignification and reconceptualization of teaching-learning spaces, including virtual interactions that can enrich student training in soft skills, such as empathy, collaboration, flexibility, and ability to communicate interculturally (Salomão & Freire Junior, 2020). According to Salomão (2020), the class-to-class format of collaboration in the BRaVE Program encourages professors and their university partners abroad to work collaboratively to plan tasks that engage students in learning together through digital technologies, using active methodologies and preferably connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The contact established between classes can be entirely online, with synchronous or asynchronous interactions, or in hybrid formats, seeking to create a context that emphasizes learning through experience and joint knowledge construction.

BRaVE/SUNY COIL was the best opportunity to expose students to international learning through authentic scenarios for teaching/learning. This collaboration provided EOP pre-freshman and second-year UNESP students the opportunity to engage in virtual exchange. Students engaged in soft skill development, enhanced their viewpoint of the world, clarified their place in the world, encouraged active listening, linguistic development, boost in self-confidence, and directly impacted their self-motivation and interest in higher education. Immediately, students in this collaboration discovered overlap in their experiences and cultures, discussed their concerns about college education, and explored the various ways they were searching for themselves and who they will be in the future through education.

In this chapter, we will share the outcomes of this pilot collaboration between Brazil and the United States. We will present the theoretical frameworks that guided our pedagogy, discuss virtual exchange, telecollaboration, teacher education in Brazil, and also the importance of global learning as a High Impact Practice for student success. Additionally, we will expand on the collaboration design utilized throughout the collaboration. Then, we will share material/activity that was produced during the experience as well as the students' reports in order to highlight their perspective. Readers will see the impact that this short collaboration had on students and the importance of global learning in the teaching/learning process.

2.2 Global Learning

Global learning is not an opportunity afforded to every student in higher education. Students are encouraged to engage in international experiences, but as of recently, opportunities afforded to students to do so generally require social and economic capital. For many students, global learning has been limited to studying abroad, which has yet to be an equitable experience in which all students can partake. However, the skills gained by participating in global learning are what employers are searching for in new graduates.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers outlined eight career competencies of which a career-ready student should exhibit post-graduation: career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion,

leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021). This collaboration provided students the opportunity to begin to develop four of the eight competencies over the course of 5 weeks. In addition to this, our institutions were given the opportunity to make global learning equitable, inclusive, and accessible for students.

The pandemic has exposed the fragilities and needs of today's learners and changed the way digital and technological advances, along with the internet, can be utilized to ensure learning. The use of computers and mobile devices has greatly increased in the teaching and learning process worldwide. We cannot deny that globalization and opportunities for transcultural access, education, and communication have broadened perspectives.

According to Vassallo and Telles (2009), broader perspectives are offered to professors of foreign language students through the new learning environments that are mediated by the computer. As Ware and Kramsch (2005) state, web-based technologies have become promising examples of computer-based learning, providing language students with interactions across geographic, linguistic, and cultural lines. The authors have argued that the increasingly complex technological landscape fosters cross-cultural communication and creates scenarios that extend language teacher roles.

Belz states that "telecollaboration is characterized by institutionalized, electronically mediated intercultural communication under the guidance of a language cultural expert (i.e., teacher) for the purposes of foreign language learning and the development of intercultural competence" (2003, p.2). According to her:

Telecollaboration involves the application of global computer networks to foreign (and second) language learning and teaching in institutionalized settings. In telecollaborative partnerships, internationally dispersed learners in parallel language classes use Internet communication tools such as e-mail, synchronous chat, threaded discussion, and MOOs (as well as other forms of electronically mediated communication), in order to support social interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchange. (Belz, 2003, p.2).

It is clear that telecollaboration can optimize practices performed in classrooms in linguistic, cultural exchange and also allow students to dive into a hands-on experience while learning a language or sharing knowledge. The process of teaching and learning foreign languages can go beyond classes as the students take part in the structuring and constructing of knowledge.

Ware and O'Dowd (2008) note that online communication tools have been taken up eagerly by the foreign language teaching community and that studies have explored the ways different configurations of telecollaboration have impacted students' language development through online interactions in the target language.

Telecollaboration/collaboration online/virtual exchange can also help students to become responsible for his/her learning goals, to develop reflexivity and intercultural competence when paired with foreigners, and to be aware of issues concerning identity, language, and culture, we agree with the authors when they affirm:

[...] VE has great potential to foster a range of twenty-first-century employability skills including media and digital literacy, communication skills, global awareness, empathy, critical and analytical thinking, foreign language skills and intercultural competences, and

it can also be used to supplement and enhance universities' physical exchange programmes. (Beaven, & O'Dowd, R., 2019, p.15).

The sociological theory of cultural capital introduced by Bourdieu (1986) also informed the reasoning to engage Brazilian and American students in this project. Capital is not only economic but also social and cultural.

Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediate and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242).

The cultural and social capital gained by the practice of global learning provides students with an undeniable opportunity of meaningful intercultural interactions, which is necessary for advancement. There is an urgent need to provide students with the tools necessary to compete in the job market. By introducing global learning, students gain a valuable education that will elevate their student success and begin to create equitable outcomes for low-income students.

The students who participated in this collaboration entered higher education at a disadvantage. Mantsios (2007) expands on how these disadvantages occur when he says, "People do not choose to be poor or working class; instead, they are limited and confined by the opportunities afforded or denied them by a social and economic system." Higher education is expected to provide those from low-income households upward mobility, but the doors are barely cracked open.

In this collaboration and many others, our EOPs seek to create limitless opportunities that would otherwise not be afforded to our students. Global learning in a virtual space opens up the door to collaboration and engagement on a global scale. Class status is a clear indicator on whether students attend college and graduate from college. This collaboration was intended to reduce the gaps of educational attainment for students from low-income households and to increase success both in college and beyond.

This collaboration helped students gain an understanding of self, society, and history. C. Wright Mills stated that:

The individual can understand her own experience and gauge her own fate only by locating herself within her period, that she can know her own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in her circumstances... By the fact of this living, he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove. (MILLS, 1959, p. 5).

Throughout the summer, students were encouraged to share parts of themselves and to learn about each other's cultures. Additionally, students were transported past their borders and into the lives of their peers. Students engaged in meaningful conversations that encouraged them to learn about themselves and the global world. Furthermore, global learning is fundamentally necessary for all students. The National Association of College and Employers stated that student graduates should

“seek global cross-cultural interactions and experiences that enhance one’s understanding of people from different demographic groups and that leads to personal growth” (NACE, 2021, p.5).

2.3 Critical Thinking Skills and Storytelling

At the core of this collaboration was the opportunity for students to engage in two key elements necessary to encourage learning: critical thinking and storytelling. Critical thinking is essential to ensuring students are actively engaged in learning and engagement. “Critical thinking requires us to use our imagination, seeing things from perspectives other than our own and envisioning the likely consequences of our position” (Hooks, 2010, p. 10).

Brazilian and US American students were pushed to use their sociological imagination and to see the world through a brand new perspective. Most importantly, students were encouraged to engage in storytelling throughout the collaboration. Most importantly students were encouraged to engage in storytelling throughout the collaboration. Storytelling is a technique that sparks and ignites students to connect and engage in critical thinking. Stories help us connect to a world beyond ourselves (Hooks, 1994).

Global learning is inherently focused on engaging students with the world beyond themselves and their community. In this collaboration, instructors and students alike shared their unique stories. Storytelling and critical thinking are necessary, as we develop our students into critically conscious adults who are dedicated to deep learning. Each of these theories and theorists provided the foundation for the development of our collaboration. The intricate ways all of these theories intersect throughout the collaboration allows us to develop the young adults over the course of five weeks.

2.4 Methodology

The collaboration started with the introduction of the main professors for the courses from Brazil and America. The professors utilized the COIL methodology to design the course, that is, two classes in different higher-education institutions collaborate during a period of time, as shown in Fig. 2.1.

The SUNY COIL office provided guidance for the ways in which institutions can engage in collaboration online. Figure 2.1 is an example of how COIL collaborations take place across the system.

Figure 2.2 shows the progression of a virtual exchange collaboration. Planning usually includes a sequence of activities to be carried out by mixed teams addressing real-world issues. It usually begins with an “icebreaker” so that students introduce themselves and get to know each other and explore intercultural elements. Then the

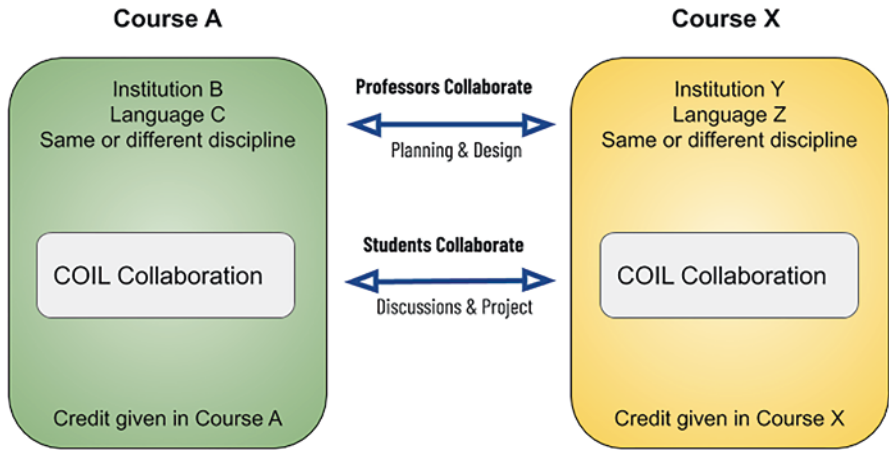


Fig. 2.1 SUNY COIL image on how a COIL Collaboration gets started, retrieved from <https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/> 2022

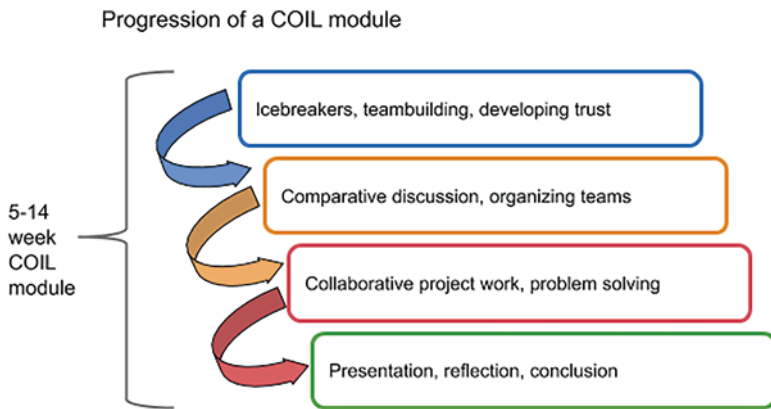


Fig. 2.2 The SUNY COIL model, retrieved from <https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/> (SUNY COIL, 2022)

next tasks proposed should be linked to the common content that teachers intend to explore, usually developed from a problem-solving perspective. The final outputs can take the form of a report, slide show, video production, or creation of a product or campaign.

The instructors set out to address the following learning outcomes: Linguistic and Cultural Development, Exploration, Experience, Learn Yourself, Navigate JCC, Get Connected & Stay Connected, Problem Solving, and Global Awareness. The COIL methodology helped the professors design the course in four stages: team building, discussion, project, and conclusion. Outlined below are the methods

utilized in each stage and how we were able to accomplish it throughout the course. The collaborative online international learning interactions were conducted for 5 weeks for an hour and a half every Friday. The purpose of the classes was to allow students the opportunity to participate in cultural exchange. In this stage, students were encouraged to spend the class time analyzing and discussing images from both cultures.

Class time was dominated primarily through discussion. The course utilized a seminar style, giving students control of the conversation while allowing instructors to interject when necessary such as to avoid misunderstandings on specific cultural issues for students at both institutions or to redirect students to the main discussion points and questions. Zoom technology was used to create small groups, which encouraged conversation. Discussions were facilitated by the instructors who took turns going to each small group and giving feedback on their work and discussion. This methodology allowed BR and US students to go beyond the English language and engage in conversations surrounding cultural differences and similarities.

Afterward, students were given prompts for additional discussion about higher education. Finally, students were provided the opportunity to create a project collaboratively, which was presented at the last meeting. Based on these stages, the virtual exchange experience we share in this chapter will be reported utilizing a qualitative methodology (André, 2013; Burns, 1999). Data collection instruments involved field notes and students' weekly written reports.

Collaborative Journey

After several meetings between the professors, assistance from BRaVE, and SUNY COIL trainings, our collaboration began on July 8, 2021. Prior to the Brazilian and American peers meeting the professors set up a time to meet with their new students. EOP Students met their Brazilian instructor and the Brazilian students met with the EOP instructor. At this meeting, the professors introduced themselves to their new students and shared the goals and expectations of the collaboration. Students were reminded that their excitement was welcome and encouraged them to completely immerse themselves in this experience. Professors utilized growth mindset language by encouraging students to hold on to the joy of the project and release the fear and anxiety that comes with meeting someone new. Students were motivated to dive headfirst into this collaboration and to be open-minded.

By the first collaborative class, the students were familiar with the foreign professor, which helped them bond and feel more comfortable to get started. The professors restated the purpose of the collaboration and also some ground rules such as the "one mic rule" (reminding students to leave space for the person holding the mic to speak without interruption), respectfulness, and the confidence to make mistakes and be corrected. Students were presented with maps of each country and locality in order to help students visualize where in their respective countries they were from.

The first meeting focused on breaking the ice between the student groups. The icebreaker activity was intended to foster the first of many conversations that they would have with each other while simultaneously imparting knowledge from their culture.

Students were asked to share their names and career goals, then prompted to go through a slideshow of pictures that represented something from each respective country. Students were divided into small groups to ensure every student was given a chance to speak and interact with each other. In the small breakout rooms, students were provided popular images from their respective nation that could be easily described, providing a space for students to exchange cultural knowledge. Additionally, the professors were hopeful that the images would spark additional conversations around values and cultural significance.

While the photos were intended to allow for students to see the similarities and differences in daily life in Brazil in comparison to the United States, students from Northern New York, Central New York, and New York City found that even within hours of each other, there were fundamental differences in the way they experienced the images on the screen. Some students highlighted the differences in climate, class, buildings, farming, and even the ice cream truck and music associated with it.

After interacting with the pictures, students were asked to select a speaker in the group to share and report out with the larger class. They were given prompts to have further discussion about their school and other questions such as: *How do you make friends in the virtual world? What are your favorite phone apps? What do you do just for fun? Do you have a job? What do you do?* The prompts were utilized to encourage a speedy connection between students in their first meeting as we didn't have many more meetings before the next stage. At the conclusion of the session email addresses were exchanged before leaving the virtual classroom.

After every session students were expected to share their thoughts on the experience. Throughout this analysis, we will be sharing student feedback. Charts 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 below show Brazilian and American students' feedback after the first meeting.

It is important to note that Brazilian students were in English II classes, so their proficiency was not very high as they are learners of the English language. Besides their fear of not being able to communicate with native speakers, they overcame difficulties in order to take part in the virtual exchange. The comments on Chart 2.1 express their motivation towards the experience as well as expectations to learn.

Chart 2.1 Brazilian feedback on the first session

BR Student	How do you evaluate the DAY 1 experience? Comment. Explain
C	That was an amazing experience, I learned a lot with them, especially something that we already saw in American movies; even if I don't understand some words that they say, I loved the way that they talked with us; they were very sweet people. I hope that we can learn a lot of things with them, and they can learn with us, bringing the culture of their country, and we taking our culture to them
G	The first day came up to be better than I expected. The JCC students were very patient with us, and we had an exchange of knowledge. It's pretty nice to get the chance to introduce my country to other people
N	The first day of the collaboration was good! At first, I was scared to talk because I'm not fluent, but in the end, I was feeling more confident, and I think this experience will be great to get better in this subject and to get to know the students from JCC

Chart 2.2 American feedback on the first session

AM Student	What is the name of your Brazilian peers? What did you learn about students from UNESP? That is, favorite movie, career goal, friendships, etc. What was an unexpected similarity that you found with your partners? Did any of your fears come true? If so, which one? How did you deal with it? If not, how did it feel?
K	(...) they really are outgoing and amazing people. It was awkward at first, but i eventually got to know them and realized they were so fun. I learned that they dont have school buses or ice cream trucks. (...) I learned that mostly all of my classmates from Brazil are studying the english language in some way, shape, or form. Some of them stated they wanted to be an english teacher one day. For some reason, I didn't think they would be as outgoing as they were. None of my fears came true (...)
A	(...) I learned about how a lot of the Brazilian students wanted to be English teachers. I also learned simple things like how most of the student have never eaten a bagel. An unexpected similarity that I found with my partners is that in Brazil, they normally do not eat a large breakfast and wait until lunch and/or dinner to have a big meal, and I also do this. I did not have any fears about the COIL class, but my microphone did not work properly during that meeting, so I solved it by typing in the chat but keeping my typing minimal so that I did not overflow the chat box
M	I don't remember all of my Brazilian peers names yet, but I am going to do my best to learn them! I remember (...) because we all got onto the discussion of snow a lot. We didn't really get onto the topics of personal life because they were all very excited to help explain the differences between Brazil and New York, but I do remember one or two of them stating that they liked playing football, which is our soccer. It never occured to me that they would also be nervous about our interactions. However, after a short span of time, we all warmed up to each other and started talking more; some of my peers even began to tell me some jokes. One of my fears did come true. I was the only one speaking at the start, which made me very anxious because I can be a very shy person sometimes. Yet like I said, after awhile, we got comfortable with one another to the point that I wasn't the only one talking. I also wanted to share the fact that I absolutely love this great experience that you're giving all of us students. This class is by far one of my favorites that I've ever taken, and we've only had one class

Chart 2.3 Brazilian feedback during second session

BR A	People can take loans to pay their college/People value the private education more than the public one/You can do extracurricular activities
BR G	We both take tests to get into college, the amount of time we spend in university is the same (except for courses such as medicine and law), and the high school is pretty much focused on preparing the students to get into college
BR M	When we were talking about what our family says about education, AM student said that his family always said to him that education is very important, just like my family says too. Students finish high school around 17 years old, in both countries. Besides that, they think that college is very expensive, and I think that too

Their first contact was very positive as they mention “sweet people” and “very patient” to describe their international peers. They felt included and a sense of belonging, and this feeling fostered the success of international learning.

American students also provided their feedback after the session by answering a variety of questions as stated below.

Overwhelmingly, each American student shared that the things they were most concerned about did not come true. They were provided the opportunity to be

fearless in this collaboration of which many didn't believe they would be able to handle. However, the first meeting was extremely successful, giving students a confidence boost to do it again. Students from both Brazil and America were energized by this first meeting. Their vigor and excitement to continue this experience permeated our regular class hours respectively. Students asked for more meetings and sessions with their new peers.

At the second meeting with the Brazilian and American students, the professors shared their experience using storytelling. Each professor shared their personal journey through higher education, what they expected it to be like, and the realities that they encountered. After modeling the conversation, professors created small groups for students to share their own journey through education, their expectations, and the realities they have encountered thus far. Student responses to the questions *What do your friends and family say about education/college? Do they encourage you to go? Do they discourage you? Why or why not? What are the similarities of education in both countries? and Why did you choose to go to college?* represent their summary of the experience during our second meeting (Chart 2.3).

Both groups have realized similarities and differences in the educational system between countries. This helped raise cultural awareness and develop intercultural competence. As for Brazilian students, they shared facts that called their attention such as the concept of private and public schools, extracurricular activities, entrance exam tests, and courses length.

Chart 2.4 presents the AM comments, as follows.

By the second meeting with each other, students were more comfortable discussing their ambition and desire to attend higher education. They expressed many

Chart 2.4 American feedback during second session

AM C	In Bazil, they do not have to necessarily pay for college if they pass a test at the end of the year; if they do not past that test, they can either attend to a private college, which they must pay for, or they can wait until the next year and take the test again. What is similar between here and Brazil is that teachers are undervalued and underpaid for. One thing that stood out the most to me was that college is free for them
AM K	The education system in Brazil is a lot different than the education system in America. In Brazil, they have private and public colleges as do we, but in Brazil, the public colleges are free. As for me, I'm going to be in debt for a long time just by going to a community college. In Brazil, you need to take a test to get into college and get a passing grade on it. You want to score the highest you can because you are in competition with everyone around you who also wants to get into college. In comparison to here, where anyone can go to college at a certain cost. What stood out to me was that your high school GPA doesn't matter for the test. But for most college in America, you need to have a good high school GPA to be accepted to their school. Also, what stood out to me was when we were discussing the amount of support, we get from our families most of them said their parents didn't want them to become teachers because they don't get paid enough and they are undervalued. That is very similar to how most teachers are viewed in America
AM L	Brazil is very different in education and how things are done. Some similarities are that both have many opportunities and have many different things. We all talked about how college gets a bad reputation and how everyone makes it seem like it's 100% work all the time and no time for anything else. It just made me realize that we all have different goals and different reasons on why we want to attend college

similarities in their motivations from familial pressure to the need to be successful as an adult. Students throughout this session were more vulnerable as they shared their fears of letting their families down. They talked about the joy that their families had when they were admitted to college and how they hope to hold on to those happy moments when they begin to struggle in college.

Brazilian students who were well into their second year of college also provided words of wisdom to their American peers who were only in the early stages of their higher-education journey. Students were warned to avoid procrastination and to pick the right friends. Brazilian and American students also discussed holding on to their dreams and to not allow difficulty to get in the way of their goals.

At this point of the collaboration, the professors were well into weeks of collaboration and meetings. Our role as instructors shifted to more listening and less facilitating because the students were taking the reins. Students were engaging in deep conversation touching on some issues that affect them and the impact they hope to have on the world.

For the third session, students were asked to choose a social problem and engage in discussion to how they, their peers, and people around them were affected by it. Chart 2.5 shares Brazilian students' reports.

The comments here, even shy, show unemployment and climate change as their chosen social problems in the collaborative discussion. It is important to highlight that critical thinking skills were expected in this activity, but as mentioned before, Brazilian students did not have a high level of English proficiency as it can also be seen in their writing. Even if the instruction was to write in either Portuguese or English, many chose to do it in the foreign language, and those are the comments brought to this study. Overall, their bravery to do so is already a huge achievement as expressing in the written modality of language is a great step for English learners. The collaboration opened up the opportunity for us to boost the self-esteem of our learners, which is crucial for their well-being and future endeavors.

By the end of this session, students were engaging in deep conversation while drawing from their previous educational training on topics. While they were learning from one another, we found that some students were also teaching each other.

Chart 2.5 Brazilian feedback during third session

BR F	Unemployment is something that exist in the whole world, so everybody should discuss about it and try to find solutions. In the pandemic, the number of unemployed people had increased, because a lot of people were fired and couldn't find another job, as the companies in general were afraid to hire people and have to fire them right after because of the uncertainty of how much this pandemic would last
BR AL	Lots of young people graduate in high school or do some vocational course in the hope to get a job right after, but they don't. There're a lot of reasons why the unemployment do exist, and there are a lot of other social problem linked to this. People strive to have a good curriculum in intention to be hired as soon as possible, but jobs are hard to find
BR A	Everyone suffers with climate change. Right now, we have snow in Brazil and 50° degrees celcius in Canada, and it's just an outcome of our everyday actions. So this problem affects every living being on the planet

Often students would share articles, their own completed projects and other items in the chat for other students to review.

Chart 2.6 shows AM students' comments on the social problem they chose in their group work.

Embarking on the second to last in person class meeting, we found that students were attending both the morning and evening sessions, though students were only expected to attend one session a day, so that they may have more time talking with their peers. Students also began to turn their cameras on and show their pet dogs and cats.

It became tradition for a Brazilian student to turn their mic on so that the class could hear the church bells signaling the start of the group discussion. The chat box became full of curious questions and comments about Zoom profile pictures and best movies to watch. By this class session, students did not want it to end. Each class began to run over five, ten, and sometimes fifteen minutes past our usual meeting time. Students shared their thoughts about the experience after that class below (Chart 2.7).

The positive experience is registered in the Brazilian students' sharing both in our synchronous sessions and in writing. The international experience provided

Chart 2.6 American feedback during third session

AM A	The social problem we focused on was education. We discussed that a lot because its confusing/amazed that if you pass an admission test, you can go to college for free. We chose this social problem because I feel like many people were intersted on how their education works compared to our education here. To me, it means a lot because I feel it's useful information to learn about how education differs from other counties. It effects everyone who chooses to go to college because its a big decision to decide to go into student loan debts and be in debt for a while in your lifetime. It effects my life because me and people's lives around me by possibly creating student loan debt for me and my family would maybe help me pay for these loans, and I feel it would affect my determination to finish college so I don't waste money, and it is useful to help me become sucessful in my eyes
AM M	I brought up women's rights, which then escalated to our social topic, equality. We chose this problem because it's a current ongoing issue, which has been going on for centuries. It means a lot to me because there are so many different topics that make up equality as a whole. The most prevalent thing that I can think of was that most of my group is made up of women, and especially in Brazil, women's rights are still a problem. There will always be people who treat others wrongfully just because they're seen as "different," so no matter how you look at it, everyone is treated wrongfully at some point in their lives. Thus why we chose this topic; it's a huge problem that needs to be solved
AM T	The social project that I wanted to focus on was poverty and homelessness. My group came to the same conclusion as me. I chose this issue because I already did a project on homelessness for my government/economics class in twelfth grade. The subject was fresh in my mind, so I hoped to share my thoughts on it. Some of my peers stated that their families had a low income; while not being on the cusp of poverty, it is still a constant issue. In terms of the people who live around me specifically, homelessness is an urgent problem that must be dealt with immediately

Chart 2.7 Brazilian feedback during fourth session

BR Students	Write about your experience, and remember to share something positive and also something you learned. Provide suggestions of what we can do better if necessary
G	The fourth day experience was really cool because I got the chance to talk to (...), and I really liked her. We all agreed that it would be great to have another experience just to get to know each other better, to share our tastes, and to become friends. In general, the collaboration made me realize I need to practice more my speaking and listening skills, and it brought me joy because I could talk to native speakers
C	My experience at the telecollaboration was amazing; they shared a lot of good things, about their school, haha. They've said that we wake up very early to have classes; we said too about what singers do we like. I said that I like so much of American singers and a girl, for now I can't remember her name. She said that she likes our country and our music; I think they like of something new, and we are new for them, we learned about their culture, and they've learned about our country too
N	My experience was really good. I had never talked with native speakers, so this was a new thing for me. I think I could learn a little more about their culture, and now I'm more confident to talk in English. I wish that we could have talked more freely about ourselves to be able to know each other on a personal level. I honestly liked this experience, and I hope to have more opportunities to do it again

them with some self-evaluation perspectives as well when they pointed out what they could have done differently or what they aim to do.

Having some real conversations with their partners and working collaboratively made them feel a part of a significant learning process in English. Brazilian student G also said that the experience brought her joy. This fact also brought joy to educators as they realized that all the time invested in planning the COIL was really worth it and highly impacted the students.

Chart 2.8 presents the American students' comments.

The group project showed us as instructors that our students already understood the value in collaboration. Students were providing solutions to social issues that were timely and showed that students began to develop critical thinking skills and team building skills throughout the summer collaboration. Some students also showed a high degree in applying previous knowledge to the contemporary global context by mentioning projects they completed in high school and assignments they were working on in their summer class with EOP. What was more remarkable and important as an instructor was the ways in which our young, college aged adults recognized the faults in our society and had creative, forward-thinking plans to ensure an equitable future.

Chart 2.8 American feedback during fourth session

AM Student	Write about your experience, and remember to share something positive and also something you learned. Provide suggestions of what we can do better if necessary
M	I personally like our solution of teaching young children how to treat people the correct way. When children tend to soak up more information and will tend to model behavior that they're shown. I like how we all came up with some sort of a solution and shared with each other, everyone participated equally, and it was really nice. Like I've said before, I absolutely love this class, so participating in the project was a lot of fun, and all of the topics the Brazil students brought up were very interesting! (in one word) amazing. (I would like to) create better bonds with everyone and get to know them better. Waking up so early...and the discussion boards. It's not that I minded them; it's just that I had a hard time remembering about them
A	Teaching people to treat others how they would want to be treated. Everyone kind of put their thoughts in, and it was nice to hear from them. Awesome experience. I wish we had time to learn their language and culture from them more. I wish we didn't have to answer these discussion boards if I'm being honest
I	The solution was to just talk to one another; the experience was good, it was nothing too out of control. The group dynamic was that there was one talkative person, and everyone would just add on to what she was saying. It was kind of interesting and fun at the same time, but at the end, everyone got together and did everything smoothly. My experience was chill, and one thing I wish I had time to do is visit Brazil; one thing I wish I didn't have to do is turn in my camera

2.5 Conclusion

This collaboration between Jefferson Community College (SUNY COIL) and UNESP (BRaVE) is necessary for all students because we want our students to thrive. We want them to experience all that there is in higher education, and that includes global learning. Our students, despite coming from extremely diverse backgrounds, benefit from global learning in many different ways: from engaging in soft skill development, enhancing their viewpoint on the world and their place in it, to directly impacting their self-motivation and interest in higher education. Higher education is fundamentally interested in educating global citizens who can and will make a positive impact on the world.

This collaboration started with a small idea. Opportunities to provide students with global learning by utilizing technology instead of traveling seemed far-fetched. After finding a community of people who understood the vision and the urgency to provide students with this opportunity, we found that what seemed to be a small idea has grown into a collaboration of creative minds invested in making a large impact on the student experience, learning, and programs.

The collaboration was not easy. Merging teaching styles, adjusting to student needs, and concerns throughout the weeks was challenging. The true planning began when we were paired. We had to quickly set the foundation of getting to know each other just as our students had to adjust during their classes. We spent multiple meetings getting to know each other, exchanging cultural experiences and discussing the similarities. After hours of sharing details about our personal lives and academic journey, we dived into developing a course that flowed nicely with our already designed course to synchronous Fridays. We needed to engage our students during

regular class sessions and weaving the global learning component throughout the course. This prepared students for the live meeting every week.

This collaboration was an immense success that cannot be quantified. Our students, despite proficiency level, engaged in meaningful dialogue about their education and what drives them to their degree programs and to college overall. Remarkably, our students found themselves with similar familial motivations and economic motivations. Many of our Brazilian and American students saw higher education as the vehicle to freedom from the cycle of poverty. Very quickly, around week 2, they found that they were more similarities than differences and that revelation is what made this collaboration extremely successful. Students found through global learning and conversation that despite being many miles away, they can find commonality and exchange in meaningful discord with people across the globe. This is the start of global citizenship and community.

One of the concerns that was overwhelming during this collaboration was that students would not enjoy the experience because it was virtual. In the midst of the pandemic, many educators were dreading the challenge of keeping students engaged through a camera. The professors put that fear completely to the side and jumped headfirst into this experience. What we found is that while some students took more from the experience than others did, not one of the students regretted it. Just as no one would ever say, studying abroad was a big mistake of their academic career. COIL can be something that sticks with students forever or be an anchor that reminds them of their wonderful college experience. Students who participated in this collaboration today feel limitless. They are seeing that despite their background, nothing is out of reach including one day studying or traveling abroad. Greetings from São Paulo, Brazil, and New York, United States.

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Chapter 3

Democratization of Knowledge of Language and Culture in a Telecollaborative Context: Reflections Based on Critical Pedagogy



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3.1 Introduction

The issue of the access of the popular classes to a globalized context, in decision positions, different from those assigned to them historically, has been discussed more widely in the last two decades. This showed that the concern with the processes of teaching/learning of foreign languages in Brazil has gained new perspectives, especially from the internationalization processes that have spread in university contexts. The awareness that knowing a foreign language can represent the power to enjoy social and cultural goods protected for a Brazilian elite is the motto that mobilized us to develop this study, which is part of broader investigations that constitute a tenure-track research study and a postdoctoral internship by the Institutional Program of Internationalization of the São Paulo State University (UNESP).

More than 20 years ago, Leffa (1999) presented an overview of foreign language teaching in the Brazilian context from the time of the empire to LDB 9394/96, Law of Lines of Direction and Bases of the Education, (Brasil, 1996), and there was also the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) in 1998 (Brasil, 1998). According to the data presented by Leffa (1999), *the status* of language teaching had a significant reduction in workload during the different public policies implemented over these years. Currently, after the publications of such a law and the

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text of Leffa (1999), foreign language classes continue with a minimum workload within regular schools and still prethinks the idea that to learn to speak a foreign language, it is necessary to pay for a private course. This idea was even ratified by the PCN for the Teaching of Foreign Language, a document that guides the teaching of foreign languages from the skills of reading and comprehension of written texts. At the time, in 1998, they defended the idea of the role that the foreign language played in society, with the claim that the possibilities of oral communication in a foreign language were quite remote:

[...] considering the development of oral skills as central to foreign language teaching in Brazil does not take into account the criterion of social relevance for their learning. With the exception of the specific situation of some tourist regions or some multilingual communities, the use of a foreign language seems to be, in general, more linked to the reading of technical or leisure literature (Brazil, 1998, p. 20).

More recently, with the expansion of the internationalization policies of universities, the need to master languages for effective communication with foreigners, whether for economic, scientific, or educational interests, has emerged as one of the agendas of postmodernity. In the social sphere, the advertising of private language schools has turned to this slogan, reviving myths such as the importance of native teachers for the effective learning of students, for example. With the advancement of information and communication technologies, online language courses have proliferated enormously, and more recently, companies selling such courses have been attacked by teaching languages (especially English) to children, based on the idea that the sooner children become bilingual, the more chances they will be in the world of work. If we use an Internet search tool, we will find a multitude of paid sites focusing on teaching languages supported by this ideal.

Although we question the idea of learning a language for the world of work (as widely defended by the media), since this proposition is grounded on a neoliberal view of social organization, based on the purpose of exploration and servitude to capital, we do not ignore that all this movement drives reflection on the role of foreign language in the curricula of Brazilian education. For this reflection, we have as reference the university space, more specifically a public university in São Paulo State that has established, since 2006, a telecollaborative practice of teaching/learning languages known as Teletandem, context in which, through free webconferencing applications, Brazilian students interact with foreign university students helping them to learn Portuguese and receiving help to learn a foreign language (mainly English and Spanish). In this context, we observed to what extent this possibility of intercultural interaction can impact on the lives of students from popular classes as a cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) of access to knowledge and social contexts to which they would hardly have access.

Based on a critical view of Brazilian education (Saviani, 2006), to develop our study, we based on a questionnaire applied to students of the various courses (Letters, History, Psychology, Biological Sciences, and Biotechnological Engineering) of the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of Assis-SP, São Paulo State University (UNESP), who make or were part of groups that interact with foreign

university students in order to develop their proficiency in foreign languages through intercultural contact. As a way to deepen our observations, we analyze the profile of these students, specifically those belonging to the Course of Letters, since, for this professional, the proficiency in foreign language is part of their basic education in graduation.

We relate the capital in an objectified state (Bourdieu, 1986) to the Teletandem practices offered at Unesp/Assis, with regard to its potential for the language teacher education. In this sense, we defend the idea that Teletandem has constituted itself as a democratic space, facilitating access and transformative potential in the education of students of Letters, future language teachers, since it is configured as a telecollaborative practice from which Brazilian students can interact with other foreign university students, synchronously, exchanging their knowledge of language and culture.

In order to reflect on the social role of interaction practices with foreigners, enabled by Teletandem, we organized this chapter as follows: in “The (Anti) Democratic Teaching of Foreign Languages in Brazil,” we present a brief overview of what proclaims the LDB 9394/1996 (Brasil, 1996), on the selection of languages to be taught in Basic Education, as well as what the legislation of the state of São Paulo deals with, with regard to the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages. We also present a reflection on the ideas of students of the popular classes about their potential for language learning (Moita Lope, 1996), the impact of internationalization processes on language teaching (Souza, 2014), and the view of language knowledge as an embedded cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In “Teletandem and Language Teacher Education,” we explain about the configuration of this telecollaborative practice (Telles & Vassallo, 2009) and relate it to the processes of democratization of the access of the popular classes (Saviani, 2006) to the knowledge of languages for effective communication in situations of real interaction. In “Study Methodology,” we report the process of application of the questionnaire that supported our qualitative-based analyses and present the data organized in the form of graphs and categorized thematically, according to the answers obtained. Finally, we bring the analyses of the collected data, the final considerations, and the possibilities of continuity of studies related to the theme on screen.

3.2 The (Anti-) Democratic Teaching of Foreign Languages in Brazil

As we explained in the introduction of this work, the issue of the teaching of foreign languages in Brazil is configured as one that is not always considered important in the full education of the student. We resume the study carried out by Leffa (1999), in which the author presents, in addition to questions of methodology, the interferences of public education policies regarding the number of hours dedicated

to the teaching of foreign languages in the curriculum of basic education, as well as those of the languages offered. We observed that over time, the number of foreign languages has suffered significant strangulation, both by the number of languages offered and by the reduction of hours destined for such classes. In a process of updating the study presented in 1999 by Leffa, we observed that there has been little change since 1996, with the promulgation of the last Law of Lines of Directions and Bases of the Education (Brasil, 1996). Over the years, despite so many changes made to the law itself, in article 26, paragraph 5, already with the interference of Law No. 13,415, of 2017, we observe the following wording: “In the curriculum of elementary school, from the sixth year, the English language will be offered.” Similarly, for high school, in Article 35, paragraph 4:

The high school curricula will necessarily include the study of the English language and may offer other foreign languages, on an optional basis, preferably Spanish, according to the availability of supply, places and times defined by the education systems (Brasil, 1996, LDB 9394/1996, amended by 13.415/2017).

It adds to the question of English as a foreign language to be taught, together with a timid openness to the teaching of Spanish in an optional character in high school, the number of hours dedicated to language teaching in the Basic Education Curriculum. Considering as an example the state of São Paulo, we observed the mandatory two weekly classes, both in SEDUC RESOLUTION No. 97, of 08-10-2021, which deals with the organization of high school action, and in RESOLUTION SEDUC 107, of 28-10-2021, which deals with the guidelines for the organization of elementary school, restricting this teaching to the final years.

Adding to the issue of limited supply to the English language, which moves the capitalist world, is the development of a culture of devaluation of its teaching, in a process parallel to the democratization of the access of the popular classes to school education. In this context, several myths were gaining space and becoming “truths.” Among them, we highlight the idea that it is not in school that one can learn to speak a foreign language or even other myths related to the very capacity of public school students with regard to the competence of people from popular classes to learn languages. These ideas were and are much debated by scholars of Applied Linguistics and Education, such as Moita Lopes (1996), which portrays a study, although ancient, very current of the thought that is nourished in relation to students of public schools:

In 1984, when I was doing an evaluative research of an English teaching program in schools in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Moita Lopes, 1986), I noticed a series of judgments by teachers regarding students who seemed symptomatic of the unconscious/conscious of foreign language teachers (LEs) of public schools: since “poor things, are very weak”, even the phrase that gives title to this section “They do not learn Portuguese, let the more English” (Moita Lopes, 1996, p. 64)

The table shown succinctly demonstrates that those who have in public school the only space in which they can access language knowledge will have major obstacles to constitute sufficient proficiency to maintain a synchronous conversation in real context. Thus, we have the devaluation of the foreign language discipline marked by

the restricted offer and the ideal that is nourished about the students of the popular classes and the very question of the quality of the classes offered. This last factor goes through the processes of training of foreign language teachers who work in primary education schools, and in this sense, university contexts have been attacked by these demands, especially from the processes of internationalization of universities.

Among the issues that should be observed is the need to transform the processes of foreign language teaching-learning (LE), especially for the popular layers of the community involved, whose access to this teaching has been precarious and ineffective. Although there are public policies for the creation and maintenance of public Language Centers, access to them is restricted, and there is also a major obstacle to the professional education of teachers: the insufficient (or non-existent) use of computer labs properly equipped for effective use in language classes, among other issues. Of the problems suggested, we believe that the education of the foreign language professional is the most worrying. Reality shows that there is a cycle in which the public school student returns to the teaching function in the public school. At some point, this current that distances the student from the competent learning of the language must be broken. Without this happening, the distancing of the popular classes from the knowledge of foreign languages will remain, and there is no way to sustain internationalization policies by linguistic education. In this sense, Souza (2014, p. 57) reinforces that:

Throughout the history of Brazilian language policies, the foreign languages offered in schools have not only changed but also undergone changes in the methodology implemented, in the workload and in the program followed in different school stages. Such transformations did not necessarily favor multilingualism in elementary and high school, something that is now necessary in the context of academic mobility with the current context of internationalization.

Thus, once again, the issue of teacher education becomes the center of a tangle of threads that, in order to be deinterlaced, needs an understanding of the Brazilian educational reality. More than that, it is necessary to assimilate deeply nuances that permeate the teaching of languages: language/culture, language, the other, and the understanding of oneself in the relationship with these elements.

Regarding the internationalization processes of Brazilian public universities, we resumed the situation observed when the Brazilian government opened possibilities for exchanges for students of public universities and the question of the level of proficiency of such undergraduates began to be configured as an access problem. The most famous of all programs, “Science without borders,” between 2011 and 2014, paid for the stay of many Brazilian undergraduate students in universities abroad. On the occasion of this program, for example, the “Language without Borders” was created with a view to offering language courses to undergraduate and graduate students of public universities, in order to boost the advance in the proficiency levels of these university students. With the change of government in 2019, such a program no longer received federal support. This, without a doubt, is another sign of how public policies function historically as a force that hinders the access of the popular classes to certain symbolic goods.

To know a foreign language represents that he has a prestigious good. Based on Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), this knowledge can be considered as an objective state capital. According to him, "The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc. is transmissible in its materiality" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). To think that the process of appropriating the knowledge of a foreign language, with special attention to the English language, presupposes conditions that, in most cases, are tied to monetary factors (payment of private language schools, contacts with foreigners, either via technology or travel, etc.) is undoubtedly one of many factors that drive the popular classes away from such knowledge.

According to Bourdieu, a capital in an objectified state:

it exists as symbolically and materially active, effective capital only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and, beyond them, in the field of the social classes struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247).

We relate this objectified capital to what offers the UNESCO Letters curriculum, specifically for the language teacher education. This is undoubtedly an instigating question: do we offer enough to a foreign language teacher? In this sense, we defend the idea that Teletandem is a space that facilitates access and transformative potential in the education of students of Letters, future language teachers, since it is configured as a telecollaborative practice, implemented since 2006, in which Brazilian students can interact with other foreign university students, synchronously, exchanging their knowledge of language and culture.

3.3 Teletandem and Language Teacher Training

Teletandem is a telecollaborative practice in which, for a period of 1 h, a pair of students talk, via free Web conferencing applications, dividing time evenly between the languages of their proficiency. Thus, for about half an hour, they talk about various topics (usually decided by the pair of interagents) in one language and the other half an hour in another language. While speaking, students establish mutual correction agreements, as well as develop strategies for inserting various contents (on the structure of the language, on aspects of language culture, etc.).¹ This interactive practice is usually accompanied by the figure of a mediator who can be a student at a more advanced level (undergraduate or graduate) or a language teacher.²

¹To find several works on the theme Teletandem and its potential as a context of teaching-learning of language and culture, visit the page <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/>

²During the pandemic period, the mediation sessions of the Teletandem groups began to occur remotely, through videoconferences previously scheduled for the interagents to share their experiences. Previously, when most interactions occurred in Teletandem's laboratory, mediation sessions were also in-person.

The concerns that originated this idea, in the *context of the Unesp/Assis campus*, are thus described by Telles and Vassallo, creators of the practice, when they report:

[...] located in the southeastern region of the State of São Paulo, near the border with the state of Paraná and Mato Grosso do Sul, it is far from tourist paths and international trade. Its students have little possibility of contact with universities abroad or with foreign students. For them to achieve communicative and cultural competence in a foreign language in such contextual conditions is quite difficult. This applies particularly to undergraduate students in Letters, graduating in one of the six foreign languages taught: English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Japanese (Telles & Vassallo, 2009, p. 43).

The description presented demonstrates the concern of Telles and Vassallo, at the time, to expose the importance of Teletandem as a practice that, made possible by technology, could enable the communication of students of Letters in Assis with foreign students from universities in other parts of the world. The care with the cultural and linguistic development of future teachers of foreign languages is undoubtedly what mobilizes teachers of language and methodology to seek strategies to overcome the difficulties observed in the classes followed. In this sense, as demonstrated in the course of this text, the Teletandem met the expectations of its creators, considering all these years in which the practice remains the motto of the work of UNESP professors, as well as trainees and undergraduate and graduate students who organize and accompany practicing groups, every 6 months.

In the description of Telles and Vassallo (2009), the emphasis on the idea that the distancing of conditions of access to communicative and cultural competence in a foreign language afflicts, above all, undergraduate students in Letters portrays the social reality from which such students come from. This, in turn, refers to what we have already observed about the difficulty of access to certain objectified cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986), in this case, the foreign language. Given the feeling of incapacity and the lack of perspective of learning languages throughout their stay in elementary and high school, many of these students ignore the possibility of teaching foreign language classes, directing their interests exclusively to the alternative of acting with the Portuguese language (their mother tongue), since the bachelor's degree from Unesp/Assis is, compulsorily, double (the student graduates in Portuguese and its literature and a foreign language and its literature).³

A deeper understanding of the social intricacies that contribute to the construction of this framework can mobilize possible ways around it. We associate this situation with the theme of marginalization in school, which, although old, is still current. Saviani (1999), when dealing with this issue in educational processes, does so by associating it with several pedagogical theories, which he names as non-critical and critical. Among the critical theories, Bourdieu and Passeron's thesis about the school institution as a system of symbolic violence at the service of maintaining the social differences that sustain the longings of the bourgeois class resumes:

³On the Unesp/Assis campus, there is the possibility for the student to choose to graduate in one of the following languages: English, Spanish, German, Japanese, Italian, or French.

[...] According to this theory, marginalized are the groups or classes dominated. Socially marginalized because they do not have material force (economic capital) and culturally marginalized, because they do not have symbolic force (cultural capital). And education, far from being a factor of overcoming marginality, is a reinforcing element of it (Saviani, 2006, p. 21).

This finding, to some extent, is related to the development of this work, since our hypothesis is that the Teletandem context offers opportunities for the overcoming of marginality pointed out by Saviani (2006). Due to its democratic and free character, Teletandem makes possible for the majority of participants, as the analyzed data show, the first intercultural contact with a native speaker of the foreign language, thus constituting as the cultural capital to which many had not had access before entering the program. In this sense, we highlight the fundamental role of Teletandem for students of the popular classes, in this case, students of Letters, in their development and in their initial education process.

3.4 Study Methodology

The research reported in this chapter is based on the methodological principles of qualitative research, since we seek, above all, to understand the context in which we perform it (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) through reports of the participants about the role of the Teletandem context in their education. However, considering that the analyses are based on a questionnaire that also allows us to quantify some responses of the participants, we will present the percentages related to this context, since the numerical data contribute to trace the profile of the Teletandem interagents who are the group established by the outline of this investigation: students with degrees in Letters at UNESP-Assis.

Participants answered a questionnaire prepared by the *Google Forms* app that was emailed to them at the beginning of the first half of 2022. This is a methodological section chosen from the information of the undergraduate course of these participants, since the questionnaire also included the other courses of the institution (History, Psychology, Biotechnological Engineering, and Biological Sciences). It is important to note that the records of students practicing Teletandem at UNESP-Assis have been organized since 2015 in folders of the *Google Drive* application of the Teletandem program account and that all emails reported have been considered. However, several email addresses were possibly no longer valid and the messages returned. Even considering that many undergraduates did not receive the questionnaire for the reasons already mentioned, we observed a relatively low response, which may have occurred by suggesting that the form be filled out within 4 days, after receiving the email. Although the intention was to obtain as many responses as possible in the suggested time interval, this may have limited the number of entries. About 1000 emails were sent, and the response rate was 99 Teletandem interagents, of which 42 listed “Letters” as a graduation course.

The questionnaire was elaborated with a focus on the profile of students who practice Teletandem, who answered questions regarding personal information (name, date of birth, telephone number, email address), undergraduate course, year (or forecast) of graduation, name and type of school where they attended elementary and high school, obtaining a scholarship, entrance exam courses and language courses before graduation, reasons that led to the non-realization of language courses, education and profession of parents, exchanges (virtual or face-to-face) held before participating in the Teletandem Program, number of groups and languages in which they performed Teletandem, and the role of participation in their own training.

Considering as the object of study the personal and educational profile of the students of the Course of Letters, we developed a qualitative research of descriptive-analytical character, because, according to Martins (2008, p. 56), “The main merit of a description is not always its accuracy or its details, but the ability that it may have to create a reproduction as clear as possible for the reader of the description.”

The data obtained through the questionnaires were interpreted in the light of content analysis (Bardin, 2011; Franco & Barbosa, 2008). The content analysis technique comprises three stages: pre-analysis; exploitation of the material, and the processing of the data and interpretation. Categories can be defined a priori or a posteriori. In the case of this study, we chose to define *some categories* a priori (established from a theoretical framework, in the case of closed questions) and *others* a posteriori (defined from the analysis of the material, more pertinent to open questions). The categorization comprises the grouping of raw data for data organized according to some principles (mutual exclusion, homogeneity, pertinence of the transmitted message, fertility, and objectivity), with subsequent regrouping according to common characteristics. After the final categories, we analyzed the data, considering the theoretical framework to support the interpretations.

For this study, we present an analysis of the answers to the following items to trace the profile of the study participants: type of school attended in elementary and high school, entrance exam and language courses before graduation, parents' education, previous contact with native speakers of the language studied, and presence of face-to-face or virtual exchange before participation in the Teletandem program. In the last stage, we also analyzed the answers to the open question about the role of participation in the Teletandem program in the education of the students of Letters.

3.5 Note on the Data

We started the discussion of the data, describing the profile of the study participants by presenting the answers to the closed questions present in the questionnaire. Regarding the type of school they attended, the participants predominantly studied in public schools in the stages preceding the undergraduate course in Letters. In elementary school, 59.5% stated that they studied in public schools, while 16.7%

reported that they studied *with* a scholarship in private schools and 23.8% studied without a scholarship in private schools. In high school, there was the same percentage for students who studied in public schools (59.5%), but a small variation of 19% for students who attended this stage of training *with* a scholarship and 21.4% *without* a scholarship in private schools. Although it is not possible to know whether the scholarships were full or partial, we have a rate of 76.2% and 78.5% if we join the answers of elementary and high school, respectively, in public schools and *with* scholarships in private schools. The other answers, related to those who attended elementary and high school *in private schools without* scholarships, appear in a much lower percentage (23.8% and 21.4%, respectively).

Regarding the performance of an entrance exam course, of the 42 respondents, only 28.7% reported that they had gone through this context. Of this group, most attended elementary and high school in private schools as scholarship holders. In this case, it is not possible to correlate the fact that they participated in entrance exam courses with a greater socioeconomic condition of these subjects.

The level of family education of the subjects surveyed was diversified: 50.4% of the mothers had a higher education degree (adding the answers to higher education and graduate education); however, with regard to fathers, only 31.7% attended the third degree, as we found in Figs.⁴ 3.1 and 3.2.

It is worth mentioning that “parents’ schooling can be taken as an important indicator of the cultural baggage of the families from which the students come” (Gatti, 2010, p. 1363). In the case of the mothers of the subjects of our research, there is a significant number of women with a level of education that goes beyond high school, which can be considered relevant, since it is common for people who have had the opportunity to advance in studies to value school knowledge.

Still with regard to the parents’ education, Ribeiro et al. (2015), p. 103) assert that:

[...] the effect of the mother’s schooling on the chances of completing higher education is the most stable among all the transitions analyzed, indicating that the higher the mother’s schooling, the greater the chances of completion, especially for children of mothers with high school and complete higher education.

Something that also draws attention to graphs 1 and 2 is that 7.3% of the participants stated that they did not know the level of education of *the father* or guardian, while there was no mention of the answer “I don’t know” in relation to *the mother* or guardian. To some extent, the answers portray a reality observed in Brazilian society: the fact that, predominantly, women are responsible for their children. In this sense, we understand the mention of the *mother’s* schooling about the chances of the children completing higher education in the study by Ribeiro et al. (2015). We know that, in Brazil, young people who enter a university, especially in the public, such as UNESP, are part of an intellectual elite and are still a minority in the country. Thus, we also noticed that a significant part of the students (54.8%) who answered the questionnaire reported having taken a language course before graduation, while

⁴Fonte: All graphs were elaborated from data organized by the researchers, based on the results of the research (2022).

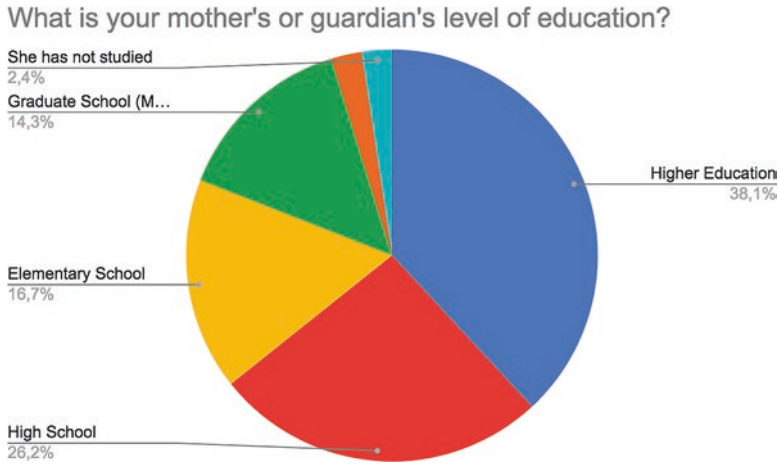


Fig. 3.1 Level of education of the mother or guardian

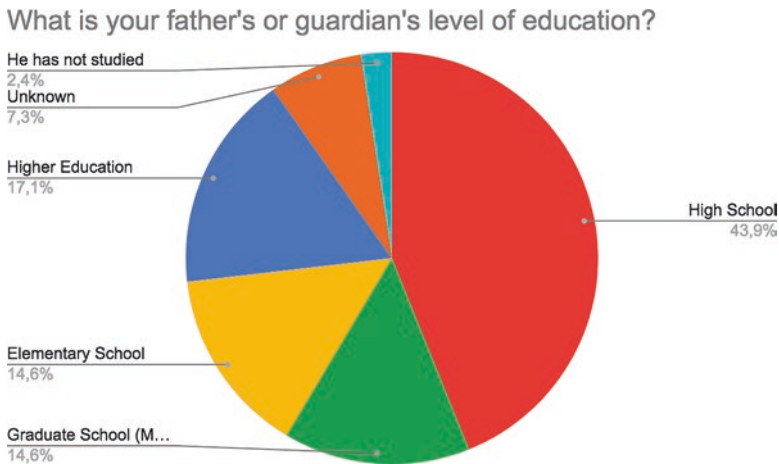


Fig. 3.2 Level of education of the father or guardian

45.2% announced that they did not. This data indicates a concern with the possibility of having access to knowledge that, as we stated earlier, is practically restricted to this context of private language courses. Among those who stated that they had taken a language course, the majority (68.2%) reported that they went to a private school *without* a scholarship, as illustrated in the graph in Fig. 3.3.

Among those who reported that they had not taken a language course, the majority attributed to socioeconomic conditions the reasons why this occurred.

Of the 42 students who answered the questionnaire, 19 stated that they had not taken any language courses and presented some justifications for not performing

In what type of school did you take a foreign language course?

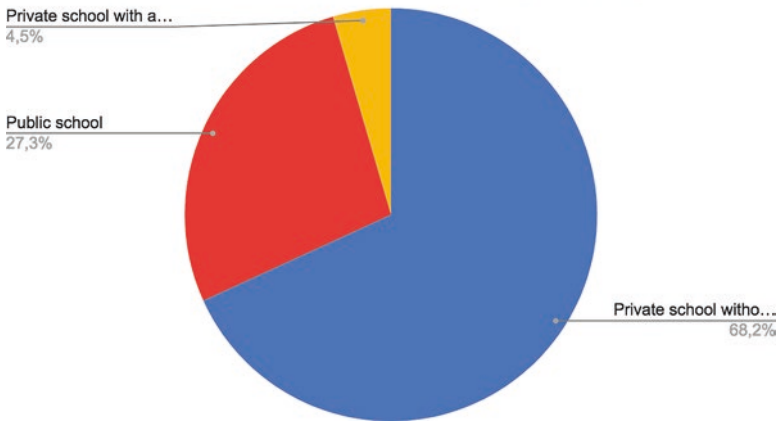


Fig. 3.3 Type of school where you took a language course

Justification for not taking a foreign language course

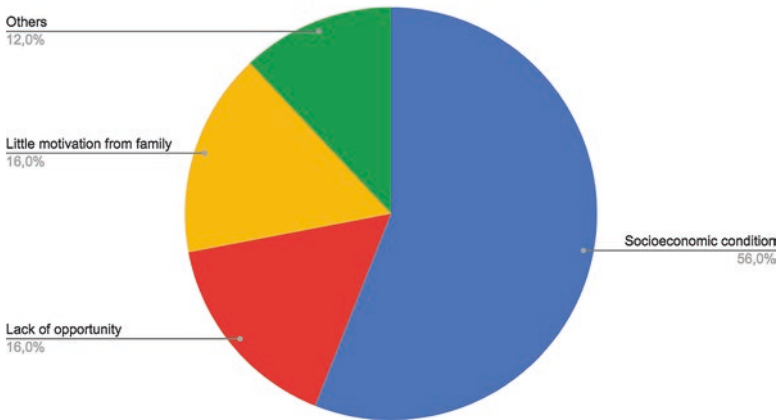


Fig. 3.4 Justification for not taking a language course

this study, as shown in the graph in Fig. 3.4, in which the mentions are explained in percentage values:

It is noteworthy that students could mark more than one option as a justification for not having participated in a language course or, still, add others that had not been selected. Thus, the percentages are related to the mentions received in each response item. Among the 19 students, 56% pointed to socioeconomic status as a difficulty for access to language courses. There were also four mentions (16%) for the categories *Lack of Opportunity* and *Little Family Incentive*. It is also worth mentioning the occurrence of answers marked as *Other* (12%), through which two students justified the non-performance of language courses. In these cases, the justifications presented were about preference for other types of activities and

disinterest in the methodology used in language courses. There was also an occurrence in which the student only pointed out the alternative *Others* without adding a justification.

One question that drew attention among the participants' answers was that the majority (57.1%) stated that they had never talked to a native foreign speaker who was studying, while 42.1% answered that they had already had this opportunity in the following contexts: travel, online games, teachers, exchange students in the campus, etc. However, what most evidences the role of Teletandem in the education of research participants is the high number of students (88.1%) who answered that *they had* never participated in any type of exchange (face-to-face or virtual) before having the opportunity to perform these telecollaborative exchanges provided by the Teletandem project. Of the other, 4.1% reported that they had done virtual exchange, and 7.8% had been in person, as illustrated in the graph in Fig. 3.5:

It is interesting to compare the percentage of students who had never done any type of exchange (virtual or face-to-face) and students who had taken language courses, 88.1% and 54.8%, respectively. It is noted that although the access of participants to language courses outside the regular school was relatively high (54.8%), the intercultural contact provided by virtual or face-to-face exchange experiences had not occurred for the vast majority of them before. In this sense, we recover the commitment to Education from the perspective that Saviani provokes us to assume, by proposing a critical theory of education: “[...] it is a question of vigorously resuming the fight against selectivity, discrimination and the lowering of the teaching of the lowering classes. Fighting marginality through school means engaging in an effort to ensure workers have the best possible teaching in current historical conditions” (Saviani, 2006, p. 31). We understand that access for the first time to a virtual exchange experience to provide intercultural contact and learning

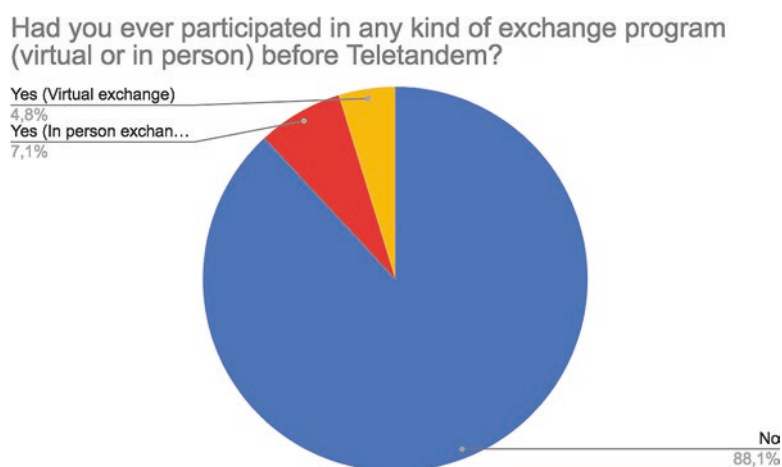


Fig. 3.5 Participation in some type of exchange before Teletandem

of a foreign language via Teletandem corroborates the quality of initial education of students of Letters at the university.

After showing the data related to closed questions, we move on to the analysis of the open question (12): *Briefly describe the role of Teletandem in your education and in your experience in communication in a foreign language*. For this, we are based on the recurrence of some statements and terms as materialization of our hypothesis that telecollaborative practices represent access to an international context of speech to which the student of Letters coming from a less favored social class, in most cases, has difficulty in experiencing. Below we portray very significant excerpts regarding two specific themes: (a) the distancing of the student from the regular school from oral communicative competence and (b) the relevance of telecollaborative practice for the development of the language teacher.⁵

(a) The distance of the student from the regular school from oral communicative competence:

For me, speaking a foreign language was something almost "supernatural", a gift or a super intelligence. Even taking the three-year Spanish course during high school I did not have much contact with the oral part of the language, because we saw much more grammar [...] (student 4).

The teletandem made me lose the fear and insecurity I had when speaking English to anyone, especially nativespeakers. The experience is unique, it really is an exchange of information and culture [...] (student 9).

I am the first and only person in my family who has knowledge of a second language, so the only opportunity I had to train my English was in class, and when I finished the course there was no way to practice conversation and when I heard about Teletandem I saw this **as an opportunity to practice my speech and still help others to practice Portuguese** (student 12).

As I had never had the opportunity to practice the theory learned in the classroom, Teletandem provided this experience, which is essential to the language learning process (student 22).

We observed, in relation to the distancing of the student from the regular school from communicative competence, the fact that the supporting documents of such teaching themselves can be configured as a representation of the identity that this knowledge, although relevant, is not necessary for all. Returning to the issue of the democratization of teaching, which we have previously exposed, and the role that foreign language plays in the curriculum of public schools, the only context to which the popular classes have access to such knowledge, we portray what the PCNs (1998) proclaim about the inclusion of this subject in the curriculum:

The inclusion of an area in the curriculum must be determined, among other factors, by the role it plays in society. In relation to a foreign language, this requires a reflection on its effective use by the population. In Brazil, taking as an exception the case of Spanish, especially in the contexts of national borders, and that of some languages in the spaces of immigrant communities (Polish, German, Italian, etc.) and native groups, only a small portion of the population has the opportunity to use foreign languages as an instrument of oral communication, inside or outside the country. Even in large centers, the number of

⁵All excerpts are transcribed in the same way the participants wrote them.

people who use the knowledge of the oral skills of a foreign language at work is relatively small (Brasil, 1998, p. 20).

Our questioning lies in the idea that learning to speak a foreign language, whatever it may be, should not be based on purely utilitarian purposes. This ideal of language, built throughout the history of linguistic education in Brazil, which despises indigenous languages and African languages, directing the use of foreign languages to situations of domination or servitude, led to the payment of our history as a multilingual people and created the complex of monolingualism, understood to be a myth by Bagno (2002). On this subject, much has been debated in the context of language policy studies. Those who have financial conditions can generally overcome this barrier, experiencing opportunities for effective use of other languages, such as traveling, taking paid courses, consuming foreign culture through their own family life, etc. Meanwhile, students from the popular classes end up at the mercy of what the school offers. Although this statement of the PCNs was made almost 25 years ago, this situation has undergone little change, and as we have previously portrayed, what mobilizes the idea of knowing foreign language, currently, remains the world of work.

More recently, the National Common Curriculum Base, BNCC (Brasil, 2018), reinforces the need to teach the English language as a foreign language and emphasizes its transnational character in a globalized world. It mentions, in a direction of competencies and skills to be developed, the production of oral texts and the need to train the student for communicative engagement:

Thus, face-to-face oral language practices, with face-to-face contact – such as debates, interviews, conversations/dialogues, among others – constitute oral *genres* in which the characteristics of the texts, of the speakers involved and their “particular ways of speaking the language,” which sometimes mark their identities, should be considered (Brasil, 2018, p. 243).

and:

In addition, orality also provides the development of a series of behaviors and attitudes – such as risking and making oneself understand, give voice and time to another, understand and welcome the perspective of the other, overcome misunderstandings and deal with insecurity, for example (Brazil, 2018, p. 243).

Nevertheless, despite the criticisms that can be made of this document, we do not observe, in the data collected, so far, significant changes regarding the engagement in oral communication of students who enter the Course of Letters, from public schools and, often, from private schools, as revealed by the answers to the questionnaire we apply. The idea that learning to speak a language requires an investment beyond what public educational policies can offer still persists.

Regarding the second theme of the analysis, we highlight the following excerpts from the answers to the open question about the role of Teletandem in the education of participants:

- (b) The relevance of telecollaborative practice for the development of the future language teacher.

Teletandem was **important to insert more confidence** in my speech and to learn new vocabularies [...] (student 2).

My experience with Teletandem was **very positive and enriching** in every way, especially with regard to learning/improving the foreign language, intercultural exchange and the expansion of linguistic awareness. The latter was made possible by the always very well-supported **and well-founded interactions with the group of experts in the field of Applied Linguistics and Education** (student 11).

The teletandem was **extremely important** in my academic background and in my relationship with the English language and Portuguese [...] (student 13).

Teletandem has been **very important both in my academic life** and in my personal life because it helps me develop the language, clarify my doubts, **lose shyness and feel safe** when I speak in another language (student 16).

Teletandem will help me improve the foreign language I chose in graduation, in which (sic) I will have the opportunity to meet people from different cultures, and with that, become fluent. In which (sic), **will add both in my personal life, as a future professional in the area of Letters** (student 28).

The Teletandem was **very important to my professional education**. When I started in the interactions **I was very ashamed to speak in English**, but over time I was risking more and trying to communicate more in English (student 30).

It **contributed a lot to my teacher training** and as an English language student. **It was a great experience** that I had the opportunity to participate in (student 31).

Teletandem **has contributed greatly to my foreign language teacher education**. I say this because, through it, I have known other realities and improved my fluency in the English language. These aspects undoubtedly **reverberate positively in my teaching practice** (student 41).

The first observation of the excerpts highlighted in this theme is in relation to the recurrence of the words “importance/important,” which appears in four of the eight excerpts. In the other four excerpts, although the term does not appear, the participants make clear the relevance of Teletandem when using verbs such as “contribute,” “aggregate,” and “help” and adjectives as “positive” and “enriching” to characterize the experience. It can be observed a practically consensual character of the importance of the Teletandem program among the study participants, since they all mention their role in different aspects of their professional training and also in personal life. The consensual character can also be corroborated by the fact that unfavorable aspects are not mentioned, such as those that have a relationship with possible problems and difficulties observed during the Teletandem sessions. This fact is still noted, since the question was open and did not indicate, therefore, that the participants mentioned only what they considered valuable.

It is worth noting, however, that the highly complimentary responses to the participation of students in the Teletandem program do not mean no difficulties but that, possibly, the experience of intercultural communication in mother and foreign language has played such a marked role in their trajectories that possible problems have not even been mentioned. The high number of people who claimed to have done Teletandem with two groups or more (64.3% of the students of Letters who answered the questionnaire) is also an indication that the practice is highly valued by the participants.

One question that arises when we evaluate the profile of university students is the fact that they represent a socially privileged group, simply because they have entered higher education, even if, in the context of this study, it is a bachelor's degree course.

Diniz-Pereira (2014) seeks to differentiate the paradigms of teacher education that have guided formative practices and policies in Brazil, thus presenting three rationalities. Thus, it discusses three models: (1) model of technical rationality, (2) model of practical rationality, and (3) model of critical rationality. In this chapter, in line with our data presentation section, we will highlight only the characteristics of the critical rationality model. In such model, the view of education is historically localized as a social activity, intrinsically political and problematic; a vision of critical formation is taken, and the role of theory is related to knowledge derived from practical reflections and does not have a technical character to be applied; the teacher is the figure responsible for creating opportunities to learn from his experience and plan his own learning. Thus, the central objective of this model is the transformation of education and society, with a curriculum that values collaborative work. We can associate this idea with the configuration of the Teletandem context itself in the sense that this telecollaborative practice, as explained earlier, contributes to attention to the very learning process and autonomy of the participants during intercultural contact sessions.

For Diniz-Pereira (2014, p. 41):

[...] the challenge continues to be to break with conservative and simplistic proposals of teacher education based on the model of technical rationality and continue dreaming of the possibility of initiatives that are inspired by the models of critical rationality aimed at transforming society and the incessant struggle of educators for social justice.

It is not possible to affirm that a teacher education course, whether initial or continued, will contemplate the totality of knowledge that a professional should consider in the exercise of the profession; however, it is relevant that it awakens in them the understanding of the complexity of the knowledge base inherent to their teaching practice. With regard to the profile of the alumni of a course of Letters with double qualification (a foreign language and Portuguese language), as occurs in FCL/Assis, the students, upon entering the course, should be aware of this double qualification, and therefore, it is expected that they will build sufficient proficiency to act as a foreign language teacher. Teletandem is therefore an important pillar for students of Letters, especially those of English and Spanish, languages in which partner universities contribute the most by enrolling students for telecollaborative practice.

3.6 Final Considerations

From the theoretical framework and data analysis, we try to demonstrate how the participation of students of Letters in the Teletandem context can contribute to overcoming the difficulties of the popular classes of accessing the knowledge of

foreign languages, an objective cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), through intercultural contact with students native to the languages they study.

We argue that the understanding of the processes of school marginalization are supported not only by public educational policies but also by the pedagogy that conducts our teaching actions in the scope of bachelor's degrees.

For this, it is necessary to discuss this theme in the sphere of language teacher education courses so that an effective perception is constructed that certain knowledge is cultural goods to which, by maintaining the current social structure, the poorest social classes can hardly access and, mainly, that this framework is realized in primary school. Only in this way, we envision the possibility that similar action will not be perpetuated in the university, a fact that will imply the preservation of the system of marginalization in force, in the case of our observation, the difficulty in the communicative and cultural proficiency of language teachers. That said, we emphasize our agreement that we should not forget the social differences and the functioning of the capitalist society in which we operate. According to Saviani:

[...] the educational process is a shift from inequality to equality. Therefore, it is only possible to consider the educational process as a whole as democratic on the condition that democracy is distinguished as a possibility at the starting point and democracy as a reality at the point of arrival (Saviani, 2006, p. 78).

From this perspective, Teletandem practices, carried out within the FCL/Assis, represent, especially for students of Letters, a way to mitigate the inequalities observed at the starting point. This, we believe, may change the point of arrival for those who do not have the same access opportunities. In line with this ideal, we have the chance to refer to primary school a professional who can minimally overcome the obstacles imposed on the teaching of foreign languages.

This study is configured as an initial reflection to identify the profile of the participants and think about the role of Teletandem in the education of the students of Letters. The opportunity to develop oral communication in a foreign language through interactive exchanges with native speakers transposes the conditions to which the majority of Teletandem participants had access in their school career. Although the relatively low response to the questionnaire submitted has set a limit for us to outline the discussions presented here, we hope that future research will be able to advance in a massive analysis of the profile of the students who perform Teletandem and the role of virtual exchange in their education process. Different methodological frameworks can certainly establish a more specific look at the responses of each participant and broaden the perspective of the analysis by conducting interviews or writing narratives of students from certain Teletandem groups.

The preparation of a questionnaire to trace the profile of students who have already carried out this virtual exchange has led us to consider that this type of data can be crucial for the selection of participants in each Teletandem group with the respective foreign institutions partners of the project. On the campus of Assis, context of the research reported here, currently, the vacancies are filled in order of

registration. If we consider that the democratization of access to foreign languages is the primary factor that inspired the realization of the Teletandem, perhaps what should guide the selection of participants was an analysis of profile information, with priority for students who were more deprived of opportunity for study and intercultural contact during their school career. In this sense, not only the completion of the registration form but also the analysis of the profile and the performance of a previous interview could be part of the selection process of the participants. In addition, the expansion of the number of vacancies and partnerships to meet the growing demand of students interested in performing Teletandem is something that is on the agenda when we think of the proposition of including telecollaborative practices in the curriculum of the Course of Letters. We hope that this study will be one of the steps in the construction of this horizon of expanding access to intercultural contact via Teletandem, so important to the training of foreign language teachers.

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Chapter 4

For an Intercultural and Decolonial Pedagogy in Telecollaborative Practices



Rickison Cristiano de Araújo Silva  and Fabio Marques de Souza 

4.1 Building Early Reflections

In this chapter, we will build our reflections on how the telecollaborative context of teaching learning of foreign languages, as well as that of teacher training (Telles, 2009; Kfoury-Kaneoya, 2009; Vieira-Abrahão, 2010; Benedetti, 2010; Silva, 2020), Teletandem, through interaction and mediation sessions, with an intercultural and decolonial agenda, can promote the *suleamento* (SOUTHing) of voices from the South (Santos, 1995, 2018; Moita Lopes, 2006, 2013; Kleiman, 2013) in the training of Spanish language teachers (Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019; Matos, 2020a, 2020b). We assume that Teletandem, by enabling Brazilian learners, future Spanish teachers, and Hispanic learners, to interact with each other by performing linguistic and cultural exchanges, also promotes visibility and contact with the voices of the South, thus generating a teacher training attentive to narratives and non-hegemonic knowledge about Latin Hispanic identities, neglected in the formative contexts (Silva, 2020).

In this context, we believe that the curricular component “Practices of linguistic-cultural exchange via Teletandem,” offered in the course of Letters – Spanish of the

This chapter is the result of the initial reflections developed in the doctoral research, entitled “SOUTHing the formation of Spanish teachers: linguistic-intercultural and decolonial practices in the Teletandem”, developed in the Graduate Program in Language and Teaching, at the Federal University of Campina Grande, involving the two authors in the condition of mentoring and guiding, respectively. We thank the Research Support Foundation of the State of Paraíba (FAPESQ) for the financial support given to this research, Term Number 07/2021.

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State University of Paraíba (UEPB), Campus Campina Grande, by offering the undergraduates, within their curricular activities, interaction sessions, and mediation in the Teletandem with Hispanic-speaking students of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), presents an excellent context to provide to all students, specific to future Spanish teachers, language education, and teacher training with and based on the voices of the South.

The discussions held here, in its major scope, aim at analyzing whether and how the interaction and mediation sessions in the Teletandem enhance the understanding of the voices of the South and the intercultural and colonial practices of use and teaching of language in the training of Spanish teachers. To this end, we bring to this chapter a clipping concerning the theoretical reflections about intercultural and decolonial pedagogy and the voices of the South in telecollaborative practice, aiming to build a research agenda that, by producing thematic materials for the interaction sessions, can SOUTHing the formation of future Spanish teachers through the Teletandem.

To achieve our goal, we focus our discussions on the following scopes: (i) telecollaboration (O'Dowd, 2018; Dooly & O', 2018); (ii) Tandem and Teletandem (Telles, 2009; Vassal & Telles, 2009; Benedetti, 2010; Messiah & Telles, 2020; among others); and (iii) decolonial thinking and the voices of the South in the formation of Spanish teachers (Santos, 1995, 2018; Kleiman, 2013; Moita Lopes, 2013, 2016; Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019; Matos, 2020a, 2020b), among others). After the theoretical reflections, we will present a proposal of interaction that envisions SOUTHing telecollaborative practice, raising and developing in the learner intercultural and decolonial practices by highlighting during the interaction issues related to Latin America.

4.2 What Is Telecollaboration?

Telecollaborative practices have gained space and evidence over the last decades in research groups, academic literature, and proposals for institutional internationalizations of higher education. However, despite this current popularity, according to Dooly and O'Dowd (2018), telecollaboration has been held for a long time in the educational context. That is, this practice, as scholars say, has existed for at least a century, being practiced since the late 1800s and early 1900s. These first practices and experiences were effected through the exchange of letters between learners who were geographically distant.

Currently these practices are carried out, thanks to technology and *the Internet that* open the possibility of performing collaborations and interactions at distance mediated by the computer, breaking boundaries between people of different languages, places, and cultures, placing them in an interaction with a view not only to collaborative learning of foreign languages but also in teacher training and research development.

In this context, with the *advent of the Internet*, telecollaborative practice has been presented and conceptualized in several ways, and it is necessary, therefore, to review its connotations. O'Dowd (2018) presents us with some of the terms we can find, including telecollaboration, online intercultural exchange, virtual exchange, intercultural education in a foreign language measured by the Internet (internet-mediated intercultural language language education), e-tandem, and Teletandem, among others. According to this researcher, this terminological tree triggers positive and negative points, since, in recent years, virtual exchange approaches have passed through different contexts, consequently modifying their pedagogical objectives and the ways in which practices are organized (O'Dowd, 2018).

The positive point is presented in the dissemination and application of the basic methodology of collaborative learning among geographically distant learners and from different cultures, thus resulting in several adaptable practices considering pedagogical objectives and learning contexts. The negative point is mainly due to the heterogeneity of telecollaborative activities, since several researchers and professionals are dedicated only to one of the ways of performing virtual exchange, thus not knowing other practices and similar initiatives, developed in other areas (O'Dowd, 2018). This perspective causes there to be no standardization in the term, resulting from the lack of communication and collaboration between educators and researchers. O'Dowd (2018) also asserts that this diversity of terms and approaches has been one of the difficulties in promoting activities among educators who are often not familiar with the concept of telecollaboration.

In this way, *UNICollaboration*, an interdisciplinary organization for telecollaboration and virtual exchange in Higher Education, created in 2016, has been sought to find a term, which is acceptable and used by a greater number of professionals and researchers (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018). One of the terms currently found in the area and especially in the context of teaching-learning of foreign languages is telecollaboration. However, according to O'Dowd (2018), this term, when used outside the context presented earlier, is totally unknown. Nevertheless, we visualize that virtual exchange *or Virtual Exchange* has been used by researchers, government agencies, foundations, and scholars in place of telecollaboration, being considered an "umbrella" term to welcome all intercultural interactions carried out online and collaboratively with partners from different places and cultures (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018).

By adopting the concept introduced by O'Dowd (2018, p. 1), we understand that "telecollaboration, or 'virtual exchange', are terms used to refer to the engagement of groups of learners in online intercultural interactions and collaboration projects with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of their educational programs."

Based on the above discussions, in this work, we chose to use telecollaboration because it is a term which is commonly used and accepted in the context of foreign language teaching (O'Dowd, 2018). Moreover, we point out that in the performance of these telecollaborative activities, it is necessary that the participants have their actions and their purposes very evident so that the interactions between the learners, geographically distant, from different languages or institutions, do not become any more virtual meeting.

4.3 Tandem and Teletandem: Resuming Some Basic Concepts

The term *tandem*, according to its etymology, is of Latin origin and refers to a bicycle, used by two or more people simultaneously, who pedal collaboratively toward a common destination. In this sense, by bringing to the context of learning foreign languages, tandem presents itself as a “exchange and sharing of knowledge between individuals from different cultures, with purposes of learning languages in a collaborative way” (Benedetti, 2010, p. 21).

First used in Germany in the late 1960s, the practice of tandem was carried out in intensive bilingual courses, which aimed at revolutionizing the teaching-learning of foreign languages. This practice consisted of placing two learners from different mother tongues face to face to learn each other’s language collaboratively and autonomously. Subsequently, tandem became popular throughout Europe, arriving in Spain in 1970, incorporating the way it is currently performed, that is, the face-to-face tandem, a “learning context that includes two native speakers of different languages who learn and teach the language to each other autonomously” (Vassalo & Telles, 2009, p. 23). In the 1980s, the collaborative practice of language learning reached foreign and Brazilian universities and began to be studied theoretically (Telles, 2009).

According to Benedetti (2010), the learning of foreign language (FL) in the tandem modality has undergone significant changes with the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and, mainly, with the incorporation of the Internet, promoting an evolution in tandem face to face for e-Tandem, that is, a modality fully carried out at a distance. In this model, learners practiced foreign languages through synchronous and/or asynchronous interactions, depending on the technology that was used: letter, emails, telephone, and/or chats.

In mid-2006, Telles and Vassalo (2006) idealized Teletandem, a new virtual context for language teaching-learning. This new modality, unlike face-to-face Tandem and e-Tandem, inserts the Webcam as a possibility to perform a real-time interaction, through applications and instant messaging programs, such as Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, and Hangouts, among others.

Taking into consideration what was said, we understand Teletandem as a virtual, collaborative, autonomous, and intercultural context of teaching-learning and training of foreign language teachers (Silva & Souza, 2019, 2022), for transcending the geographical and financial limitations existing between learners living far away and outside border areas, as well as the possibility of learners, in addition to sharing beliefs and ideas and performing linguistic and intercultural exchanges during the interactions (Silva, 2020).

As a consolidated practice at São Paulo State University (Unesp), initiated through the project “Brazil’s Teletandem: Foreign Languages for All,”

telecollaborative activity has expanded in all regions of the country¹ (Silva & Souza, 2021), thus presenting some variations in the procedures for performing interactions and mediations in the Teletandem. Therefore, generally, the interactions in the Teletandem last for 60 minutes, allocating 25 minutes for each language, so that the learners alternate the languages and perform different roles, that is, learner of the foreign language and teacher (tutor) of their mother tongue or of that which is proficient. After these moments, the last 10 minutes are intended for learners to perform feedback.

Mediation sessions are held soon after interactions. This moment presents itself as a unique opportunity for learners to share their experiences and doubts, so that they can obtain support from the mediator, teachers, students, and researchers with experience in the Teletandem (Salomão, 2008).

Mediation, depending on the context, institution, and situation, can be performed in different ways, including individual, group, and/or through the writing of reflective diaries. Mediation sessions are usually held in classrooms and language laboratories of institutions and can happen virtually, through WhatsApp, Google Meet, and Zoom, as has been the case, since 2020, due to the social isolation caused by COVID-19.

4.4 Decolonialize Epistemologies

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009, 2018) proposes the participation and construction of knowledge by those who have been marginalized, oppressed, silenced, and excluded throughout history. That is, the Portuguese researcher, who maintains a close relationship with Latin America, advocates the need to learn from the South, that is, proposes the Epistemologies of the South, a concept created by him in 1995. In the words of Santos (2018, p. 300):

The epistemologies of the South refer to the production and validation of knowledge based on the experiences of resistance of all social groups that have been systematically victims of injustice, oppression and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy.

The epistemologies of the South are visualized as a way to identify and legitimize the knowledge generated from the experiences, social struggles, and resistance of those who have suffered from the three forms of domination, namely, capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Santos, 1995, 2018). In addition, its goal is “to enable oppressed social groups to represent the world as their own and on their own terms, because only then can they transform it according to their own aspirations” (Santos, 2018, p. 301).

¹For a knowledge and deepening of telecollaborative practices carried out in other regions of the country, we suggest reading by Silva e Souza (2021) “A brief mapping of (tele)collaborative language teaching-learning practices in the Northeast.”

In this sense, we share the idea of Santos (1995, p. 508) by inferring that it is necessary to “learning that there is a South...learning to go South... learning from the South.” The South presented here refers to an epistemic perspective, and not necessarily geographical perspective. This perspective causes us to go to Moita Lopes (2006, p. 90), when the applied linguist presents the need to “renarrate social life” as one of the fundamental projects of contemporary Applied Linguistics, so that the “Voices of the South” is taken into account, “the subjects who constitute and are constituted in the socio-historical practices in which we are located in the Southern Hemisphere” (Moita Lopes, 2013, p. 21).

Nevertheless, corroborating the prepositions presented by Moita Lopes (2006) and Kleiman (2013) proposes “to bring other Latin American voices, in order to ‘SOUTHing’ (guide the South) the debate and question the Western hegemony of the North, still imposing in the definition of our research problems” (Kleiman, 2013, p. 40). Having said that, we understand Latin America throughout our discussions as one of these voices of the South, because, according to Alexandre (2019, p. 142), “it is a historical periphery that is unbeknownst to this very important and that carries consequences of this exploitation with it.”

In view of these considerations made to date, in line with Matos (2020a, 2020b) and Silva Júnior and Matos (2019), we believe that decoloniality (Quijano, 2005; Mignolo, 2010) and critical interculturality (Walsh, 2010; Paraquett, 2018) are possible ways to SOUTHing the teacher training of Spanish language teachers and, consequently, the teaching-learning process of Spanish. This perspective makes there a visibility and protagonism of non-hegemonic identities, silenced and forgotten in our contexts.

Thus, when we start inserting these questions in language teaching-learning and in the training of Spanish language teachers, we certainly seek to accomplish what has been called a decolonial or decolonial turn. The decolonial Giro, a term coined by Nelson Maldonado-Torres (Mignolo, 2010), points out the need to realize in the most different contexts of our society an epistemological change, that is, a turning point. Thus, we start valuing the knowledge produced by “others,” giving visibility to “feminist movements, ethnic/racial movements, gay movements, the landless, homeless, illiterates, or as in the case of literate and teachers, those without social movements that welcome and strengthen them” (Kleiman, 2013, p. 43).

Decolonial thought, as a field of knowledge, emerged around the end of the 1990s, when researchers from different fields, such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and sociology, formed the group “Modernity/Coloniality” (M/C). The network brought together at the beginning of its formation some of the main intellectuals, mostly Latin American, such as Arturo Escobar, Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Quijano, and Fernando Coronil (Ballestrin, 2013). Later, new researchers were incorporating the group’s discussions such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Catherine Wash, and Marcelo Fernández Osco, among others.

Decoloniality, in the light of the intellectuals of the M/C group, is understood as the “radical questioning and the search for overcoming the most distinct forms of oppression perpetrated against the classes and the subordinate groups by the set of agents, relations and mechanisms of control, discrimination and denial of

modernity/coloniality” (Mota Neto, 2016, p. 17). According to Ballestrin (2013, p. 89), these researchers advocate “the ‘decolonial option’ – epistemic, theoretical and political – to understand and act in the world, marked by the permanence of global coloniality at different levels of personal and collective life.”

Nevertheless, we emphasize that decolonial thinking should not be used to necessarily refer to the modernity/coloniality network (Mota Neto, 2016). It is necessary, in addition to conceptual understanding, to understand the political, ethical, and epistemological idea that sustains it, since this conception has been created and lived since the process of colonization in Latin America. That is, the group contributed to its visibility in the academic-intellectual contexts. In this sense, we corroborate Mota Neto (2016, p. 44) by presenting decoloniality as a:

[...] radical questioning and a search for overcoming the most distinct forms of oppression perpetrated by modernity/coloniality against the classes and subordinate social groups, especially of the regions colonized and neocolonized by the Euro-North American metropolises, in the planes of human existence, social and economic relations, thought and education.

Thus, it can be inferred that it is a conception that takes into account autonomy, since decoloniality is born from the ruins and wounds caused by the colonial situation. Still according to the scholar, “it is from existential pain, from denial of rights (including the most elementary, such as the right to life), from the submission of bodies and forms of thought, from the prohibition to an autonomous education that the decolonial conception is born” (Mota Neto, 2016, p. 44).

The decolonial thought throughout our reflections meets the considerations instilled by Walsh (2005, 2009, 2010) and Matos (2020a). In other words, we understand decoloniality from a perspective that goes beyond concepts, to be understood as a project to be followed, a praxis, an agenda that seeks to combat the coloniality present in us and in our society. Matos (2020a) understands it as a way of directing and (re)thinking about life, a perspective also adopted by us throughout our reflections.

In this direction, Catherine Walsh (2005, 2009) advances with our discussions by presenting critical interculturality as a decolonial pedagogy and, above all, a political-social-epistemic-ethical project that enables the development of different praxis. Thus, these two epistemologies would “transgress, intervene, in-emerge and focus. The decolonial denotes, then, a path of continuous struggle in which we can identify, make visible and encourage ‘places’ of exteriority and alternative constructions” (Walsh, 2009, p. 25).

In this way, we add interculturality as an extra way to promote the southing in teletandem interactions. Thus, we share the notion of critical interculturality presented by Walsh (2005, 2009), which has its roots in the struggles of Latin American indigenous social movements against hegemonic power, questioning, mainly, the colonialities of power, knowledge, and being. In the author’s words, critical interculturality:

It must be understood as a pedagogical tool, which continuously questions racialization, subalternization and inferiorization and their patterns of power, makes visible different

ways of being, living and knowing, and seeks the development and creation of understandings and conditions that not only articulate and make differences dialogue in a framework of legitimacy, dignity, equality, equity and respect, but also – and at the same time – encourage the creation of “other” ways of thinking, being, learning, teaching, dreaming and living that cross borders. Critical interculturality and decoloniality, in this sense, are projects, processes and struggles – political, social, epistemic and ethical – that are conceptually and pedagogically interwoven, encouraging a strength, initiative and ethical-moral agency that make question, disrupt, shake, rearm and build. This force, initiative, agency and its practices lay the foundation for what I call decolonial pedagogy. (Walsh, 2010, p. 15).

That is, Walsh (2010) understands critical interculturality as a form of decolonial pedagogy, necessary to recognize the “other,” to foster dialogue between cultures, among the most diverse social groups and to build a democratic and plural society.

4.5 Tracing Intercultural and Decolonial Telecollaborative Practices in Teacher’s Training

Teletandem, in addition to presenting itself as a context of foreign language teaching-learning (TELLES, 2009), is also understood as a space for teacher training, enabling undergraduates the opportunity to establish linguistic-intercultural exchanges (Kfourri-Kaneoya, 2009; Vieira-Abrahão, 2010; Silva, 2020; Souza & Silva, 2022). In this sense, Messias and Telles (2020), when considering Teletandem as the “third space” of training for foreign language teachers, start from the premise that this telecollaborative context, in addition to providing linguistic and intercultural development, can promote and arouse reflections in the undergraduate students of Letters on aspects related to the pedagogy of foreign languages.

We understand that these spheres, external to the classroom, are triggering reflections by future teachers of foreign languages and essential for their teacher education. Such experiences can often lead to coping with concrete situations of practice that often end up restricted to moments when the student fulfills his mandatory internship hours, not always with adequate supervision (Messiah & Telles, 2020, 733).

Thus, Teletandem enables undergraduate students, by establishing an interaction with foreign students, learners of the Portuguese language, mediated by digital technologies and the Internet, “different opportunities for reflection on (a) the content which is taught and learned (Portuguese and a foreign language), as well as (b) the content of the methodology of teaching these languages” (Messiah & Telles, 2020, p. 734). In this perspective, Carvalho, Ramos, and Messias (2017) had already mentioned the Teletandem as a hybrid and complex formative space, expanding the context of classroom instruction, because:

[...] it inserts students in a differentiated environment, so important and necessary for the development of multiple competencies: linguistic-discursive competence, methodological didactic competence, intercultural/sociocultural competence and technological competence (which is equally relevant in educational environments, due to the social transformations we go through). (Carvalho, Ramos & Messias, 2017, p. 81).

Thus, based on these considerations about Teletandem in the training of Foreign Language Teachers, we believe that this telecollaborative context allows undergraduates, as well as foreign students, learning from the South and with the South (Santos, 1995; Moita Lopes, 2006, 2013; Kleiman, 2013). Our belief is justified that, when we perform the Integrated Institutional Teletandem for future Spanish teachers with Hispanic Latin American students, we will opportunize the *Suleamento* (SOUTHing) in their teacher education. It is also because we believe that the formative curricula of the courses are still thought from colonial perspectives, presenting a reinforcement of Western hegemonies and an extremely plastered structure (Matos, 2020a, 2020b).²

Thereby, this SOUTHing will be carried out through the themes of interactions, specifically prepared by teachers with an intercultural and decolonial perspective that will permeate the sessions of interactions between Brazilians and Hispanics Latin American, as well as the mediation sessions held after the interactions. In this sense, strategic mediation will be an excellent time for the teaching students to be raised, specifically in Spanish undergraduate students of letters, reflections about their experiences in the Teletandem, of that walk toward a possible *suleamento* (SOUTHing) in their teacher education, from the intercultural and colonial themes that will permeate the interactions.³

To this end, the elective Curricular Component “Practices of linguistic-culture exchange via Teletandem” was offered in the 2022 academic semester.1, which occurred from November 2021 to April 2022, taught by us, authors of this article, in the context of Emergency Remote Education, due to the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As previously presented (Silva & Souza, 2020; Souza & Silva, 2022), the discipline, according to its syllabus, arranged in the Political Course Project (PPC), aims at developing in the undergraduate⁴:

Interactive and collaborative learning between students of Letters-Spanish of UEPB (Spanish learners) and students from foreign educational institutions (learners of Portuguese). In it, people with different mother tongues help each other – with the support of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICTs) and with the mediation of language teachers – by working to improve linguistic and cultural knowledge in the foreign/additional language with a view to interculturality. (UEPB, 2016, p. 127).

In this sense, the objective of the curricular component in this offer was to provide graduates in Letters-Spanish authentic interactions in the target language, with mediations of DICTs, partners, and teachers, in order to enhance their processes of

²At this moment, our considerations will be specifically focused on future Spanish-speaking teachers. However, we believe that this “Suleamento” also occurs in the language education of the Portuguese language for Hispanic Latin American learners.

³As mentioned in the previous topic, our goal is to make graduates in Letters-Spanish from the State University of Paraíba, Campina Grande campus, develop intercultural and colonial telecollaborative practices, together with their Hispanic Latin American partners in the Teletandem.

⁴If you want to know more about this discipline offered in the Course of Letters-Spanish of the State University of Paraíba, Campina Grande campus, we recommend reading Silva e Souza (2020) and Souza e Silva (2022).

teaching-learning languages and teacher training toward an intercultural and decolonial pedagogy. To do so, the discipline took place on Fridays, starting at 2:00 p.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. in remote mode, with synchronous activities on Google Meet and asynchronous in the Virtual Classroom.

For the development of interactions, a partnership was established with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), so as to enable Mexican and Brazilian students a space for teaching-learning languages, as well as teacher training, specifically for the Brazilian context, since it is about future Spanish teachers. The interactions are carried out by the Mediateca, installed in the Language Learning Center of UNAM, a learning center aimed at undergraduating and graduate students from various areas of knowledge and university staff, envisioning the autonomous learning of several languages (English, Portuguese, German, Italian, French, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian). Students who seek the Mediateca are guided by language advisors, that is, language teachers who provide academic support for them to learn taking into account their goals, needs, and rhythms.

Thus, we verified that the Teletandem carried out in the Mexican context is centered on the modality of Non-Integrated Institutional Teletandem (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014), since the interactions are recognized and planned by UNAM, with the mediation of a teacher of Portuguese as a foreign language of the Medialibrary but are not necessarily part of the formative curriculum or a course. However, in the Brazilian context, in UEPB, by providing the Teletandem from the activities of the curricular component presented previously, we are located in the integrated institutional teletandem modality (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014), because the interactions are recognized by the university and are mandatory for the undergraduates.

Following the academic schedule of the university, we proposed the weekly realization of interactions at the time of the course, totaling six interactions from themes previously selected by us teachers of the discipline, with the objective of SOUTHing these sessions. These interactions took place, both for Brazilian and Mexican students, from their homes with their own equipments, following the protocols of social isolation. Thus, weekly, all interagents previously received the theme of the interaction, with a material prepared by us (teachers) containing videos, reports, news, cartoons, synopsis of films, and poems among others, along with some questions that raised reflections and debates throughout the session.

The interactions took place in Zoom, in which all the learners, Brazilian and Mexican, met 10 minutes before for an initial conversation so that we mediators could present some instructions, solve possible doubts, and, above all, perform the pairing between the students. Later, the students, identified by an ID, were connected with their interagent pair and redirected, through the Breakout Rooms tool, to private rooms, so that they could perform their Teletandem sessions that lasted for 1 hour. After this moment of interaction, everyone returned to the initial virtual room, for the mediation session, with the Mexican teacher and the Brazilian teachers.

In view of this, we believe that the Integrated Institutional Teletandem modality presents itself as an excellent context for us teachers to plan telecollaborative activities, so that it will fill some possible gaps present in language learning and in the

training of language teachers, here necessarily, those of Spanish language. In this way, we thought of promoting interactions that could enable intercultural and decolonial discussions, that is, a teaching-learning process and teacher training that highlights the “[...] subjects subordinated by coloniality: indigenous and Afro Descendant peoples, quilombolas, sex-gender diversities and other markers of differences operate to hegemonic educational logics” (Walsh, Oliveira & Candau, 2018, p. 6), a necessary theme in our society.

4.5.1 *Latin America in Focus on Teletandem Interactions*

To illustrate and report our proposal and experience of *suleamento* (SOUTHing) of Teletandem interactions, with a view to developing intercultural and decolonial practices, at this moment, we will discuss the material prepared by us for the first session of interaction. For the first interaction performed by the students of the Course of Letters-Spanish together with the Mexican students of the Mediateca, we selected the theme “¿SOMOS LATINOAMERICANOS?” so that it would bring the learners the initial reflection on the Latin American identities that permeate the two countries.

With a view of “SOUTHing” these interactions, our choice for this theme was initially the possible silencing of Latin America in the training courses of Spanish teachers in Brazil (Irineu, 2014). As Lessa (2013, p. 23) presents, silence refers to one of the “colonialist discursive actions, which is the one that hides, the face of the unspoken, the ignored, the erased, silenced and forgotten – everything that should not be commented on or taught/learned.”

From these issues, when we silence, we hide these voices of the South in the curriculum, and we are going against our commitment as Teachers of Spanish and the social function of language in basic education, that is, to train citizens. In addition to these questions, Alexandre (2019, p. 145) points out that:

[...] to ignore elements of The Hispanic culture of Latin America within the initial teaching education is also to ignore the possibility of sensitizing future students of this language, within the basic school, to the elements of Hispanic culture that dialogue with Brazilian culture, with Argentine culture, with Chilean culture, with Colombian, with Ecuadorian, with Costa Rican and many others. Ignoring Latin America in Spanish classes in its intercultural – and not just multicultural – bias means silencing once again the voice of the periphery of this macro-region that is still so discriminated against and homogenized.

These reflections about Latin America in Spanish language teaching and in the training of Brazilian Spanish teachers ratify the need to perform the *suleamento* in the interactions that present itself as an excellent opportunity to think not only with but from the voices of the South Latin American, including the political character that is inherent to the (re)creation of new epistemologies, concerned with invisibilized discourses, marginalized and subalternized by traditional models of science and, consequently, of education (Matos, 2020, p. 95).

Chart 4.1 First interaction: ¿Are We Latin Americans?

First moment: Listen to the song “Latinoamérica,” by Calle 13.

The song chosen for this first interaction belongs to the Puerto Rican reggaeton and hip-hop group Calle 13, made up of Residente (René Pérez Joglar), Visitante (Eduardo Cabra Martínez), and ILe (Ileana Cabra Joglar). This song had the participation of Toto la Momposina, from Colombia; Maria Rita, from Brazil; and Susana Bacca, from Peru

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkFJE8ZdeG8>

2nd moment: Reading the report: Our people, our story: What do you make of someone Latino?

Link: <http://www.editorialj.eusoufamecos.net/site/noticias/reflita/nossa-gente-nossa-historia-o-que-faz-de-alguem-latino/>

3rd moment: Reading and discussion from the questions:

After listening to the song, watching the video clip and reading the report, reflect and discuss with your partner about the questions:

1. What caught your attention most in the song, in the video clip, and in the report?
 2. What do you understand by Latin America and being Latin American? Do you consider yourself Latin American? Why?
 3. In the song, Calle 13 makes a social critique regarding the history of Latin America, discussing (i) the struggle of the people; (ii) historical exploitation in the territory; and (iii) the strength of nature. Have you thought, read, or debated about it before? Do you agree? Why?
 4. Music can become an important ally when making social criticisms, as Calle 13 did. In this way, do you know any song(s) from your country (Brazil/Mexico) that also present protests and social concerns? If yes, present it to your partner. If not, find some, and present it to your partner as well.
 5. For you, what can be understood by the phrase best known and used in social networks of the song “Latin America”: “I am Latin America, a people without legs, but who walk...”
 6. What other aspects (songs, movies, places, holidays, foods, clothes, symbols, and others) can represent the identity of your country, origin, and/or region? Present them to your partner.
 7. Have you met any Latin American country? Talk to your partner about your experience. If you haven’t met, which one would you like to visit, and why? What do you know so much about Latin American countries and their cultures?
 8. Is Latin American identity discussed in your country? What space is there for this discussion in schools? What actions should be taken so that there is a reflection on this issue and that highlight the aspects that characterize us and identify us as Latinos?
-

Source: The authors, 2022

In addition, Alexandre (2019) reported from his teaching experience that there is still a certain ignorance and, consequently, the payment of Latin America in the training of his students, future Spanish teachers, noting that “graduates of Letters who, although they have embraced this language as part of the profession, seem to present gaps in the extra-university education when it comes to Latin America” (Alexander, 2019, p. 143).

In this sense, in view of the considerations presented above, we previously prepared the material of the interaction that was divided into three moments, as we visualized in Chart 4.1.

As we perceived in Chart 4.1, the students, Brazilian and Mexican, should prepare before the interaction happened so that they could listen and analyze the song

“Latinoamérica” of the Puerto Rican group Calle 13, read the report that dealt with the problem that existed among Brazilians regarding the (not) recognize themselves as a Latin person and eight questions that led the learners to reflect on the whole theme, and know what are the perceptions of their interagent, as well as their culture.

With the elaboration of this material for the first interaction, we aim at making the undergraduates think about Latin America, since promoting decolonial practices is no longer accepting the invisibility of Latin American identities but rather stimulating their protagonism in our classes (Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019). In the interaction, from the theme, the undergraduate had contact, for example, with the inferences brought by his Mexican interagent who presented, from his point of view, how this possible Latin American identity is seen by him and, above all, represented in his country. Advancing a little further, the two participants had the opportunity to present to their partner cultural aspects that could represent their country and, in addition, perspectives that identify them according to their regions, cities, and countries, thus bringing an intercultural perspective to the interaction (Silva, 2020). In the words of Alexander (2019, p. 144), interculturality can be understood as:

[...] the reception of foreigners beyond their stereotyped culture – that is, the extrapolation of aspects such as gastronomy, clothing and typical festivals – which focuses on the particular understanding of which elements of the culture of the Other approach our culture, what unites them and makes them, more than local, global.

Based on that, it is precisely in the intercultural perspective, in this dialogue, and in this democratic relationship established between cultures and, above all, of the rapprochement between cultures that, from the recognition and identification with the similarities and differences, we believe that the formation of Spanish-speaking teachers should be inserted. Furthermore, corroborating the thoughts of Pizarro (2004), from Paraquett (2018), we visualize Latin America as a space that holds a production of its own character, also inferring that from the contact with these cultural productions, we Brazilians will get to know the other better and also to ourselves “in order to change their postures and practices, with respect, above all, to the understanding of the differences that constitute us as Latin American subjects” (Paraquett, 2018, p. 76).

Final Reflections

In this chapter, we set out to reflect on the development of an intercultural and decolonial pedagogy in telecollaborative practices, in order to SOUTHing, that is, to bring the voices of the South to the formation of Spanish teachers in training. In this way, we confirm that carrying out an intercultural and decolonial teacher education, mediated by Teletandem, which is capable of promoting epistemic ruptures and contributing to the decolonization of pedagogical conceptions and practices, is challenging for all the participants involved.

As a way to provide such an agenda, we believe that the practice of Integrated Institutional Teletandem to the Course of Letters-Spanish presents itself as an excellent opportunity, leading teachers of the discipline to think strategically what themes Brazilian and foreign students, in this case Mexicans, will interact in order to raise intercultural and decolonial practices. In this sense, without pretensions of

presenting a recipe, we brought a theme, among the numerous possibilities that teachers and mediators can produce, so that the interactions happen around the proposal presented and discussed here.

These telecollaborative practices with a view to developing an intercultural and decolonial pedagogy in teacher education are justified by believing that, as Messias and Telles (2020, p. 746), “teletandem, when practiced by students of Letters, who learn/teach languages, is a ‘cross’ between the university curriculum and the practice of the teacher who will work in Basic Education.” Thus, we hope that future Spanish teachers will be aware of these issues and, from their experiences, can, in the future, during their teaching practice, no longer accept the invisibility of Latin American identities, stimulating their protagonism in classes.

Moreover, we also hope that our initial reflections throughout our study, based on intercultural pedagogy and, above all, on decolonial pedagogy in the context of Teletandem in the training of language teachers, can contribute to the dissemination and realization of more telecollaborative practices and investigations that meet what we have proposed here. Thus, we want teachers and mediators to develop thematic materials or encourage themes for the interaction sessions in the Teletandem, which allows the learners to look critically for those who have been and are still being silenced and invisible.

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Chapter 5

Portuguese Language Teaching, Lusophone Literature, and Telecollaboration



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5.1 Teletandem: What it Is, and What it Is Not

Teletandem is one of the many types of telecollaboration. It is defined by Telles and Vassallo (2006) as a virtual context of foreign language teaching/learning within which pairs of native (or competent) speakers of different languages work collaboratively in order to learn each other's language. By means of online, computer-mediated, and videoconferencing software, each student plays the role of learner for 30 minutes by speaking and practicing the partner's language. Then, the roles are reversed, and the languages switched. It is important to note that several other terms have been used for this type of telecollaboration, not necessarily with the same exact definition, such as eTandem, Virtual Tandem, Online Intercultural Exchange, or InTandem, among others.

Some of the common misconceptions about Teletandem, and telecollaboration in general, are that it is just a shoot-the-breeze style interaction, a simple conversation between language partners with no direction, objective or specific purpose, and, perhaps more absurdly, it makes the instructor's job easier.

Quite the contrary, Teletandem is strongly rooted in Brammerts' (1996, 2003) three principles of in-tandem foreign language learning: one language at the time, reciprocity, and autonomy. It is a directed interaction with guidelines and instructions that allow the interactors to move within those parameters creating a conversation that will flow and develop freely. The autonomy principle provides ample space for the creativity and spontaneity that are natural to conversation. Reciprocity, on

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the other hand, allows the interactors to negotiate how feedback will be given for grammar, vocabulary, or cultural items that arise during the interaction. It is an excellent complement to task-based language teaching (TBLT), which, according to Broady (2006), may at times not provide sufficient interaction opportunities in addition to, as Bruton (2005) points out, yielding little acquisition of new grammar or vocabulary features. Finally, the approach of one language at a time for 30 straight minutes each increases the student's level of comfort and ease over time, which in turn will improve fluency.

5.2 The Use of Literature as Linguistic Development in Telecollaboration Studies

Telecollaboration has been part of the foreign language field for decades now (Brammerts, 1996). The Teletandem Brasil Project began in 2006 at São Paulo State University (UNESP) in an area where some of the concerns were of grassroots nature: relative weakness in foreign language education; quality of foreign language teacher education; digital literacy exclusion due to limited access to technology; hegemony of English in relation to other languages; geographic isolation, both linguistic and cultural; restricted access of economically challenged students to world languages and cultures; general social and educational exclusion; and above all, the need to develop oral competence (speaking and comprehension) along with writing and reading abilities in FL learning.

The Project pairs up Brazilian university students who wish to learn foreign languages with students in other countries who are learning Portuguese. Telecollaboration is an important and useful tool to help students develop their language skills and promote intercultural contact and critical cultural awareness. It encourages an inclusive environment of education and educational collaboration, in addition to creating the opportunity for students to have multicultural contact and to practice the language with a native, or competent, speaker of the target language.

When examining the literature on telecollaboration, one will find that there are many aspects within the language learning/teaching process, which have been researched and studied, for example, corrective feedback (Freschi & Cavalari, 2020; Cavalari & Freschi, 2018; Garcia, 2017), use of dictionaries and translators (Sartori, Alves & Salomão, 2020), assessing oral proficiency (Consolo & Furtoso, 2015), language-related episodes (Fernandes & Telles, 2015; Garcia et al., 2012), communication strategies (Silva-Oyama, 2010), learning strategies (Campos & Salomão, 2019), implementation (Souza, 2020; Kaneko-Marques & Garcia, 2019; Cavalari, 2018; Garcia & Souza, 2018; Telles & Ferreira, 2011), teacher's role (Cavalari et al., 2019), teachers' beliefs about culture and language (Salomão, 2019), and self-assessment (Gontijo & Salomão, 2019; Cavalari & Freschi, 2018; Furtoso & Ferreira, 2018), among others. Some of these studies can be categorized into language-related, interaction-related, and cultural episodes. According to Swain

and Lapkin, language-related episodes (LREs) are described as “any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others” (1998, p. 326). Zakir, Funo, and Telles (2016) describe cultural-related episodes (CREs) as any part of a dialogue in which language learners discuss their own or their partner’s culture (adapted from Swain & Lapkin’s, 1998 LRE definition) and “instances of spoken classroom discourse that concentrates on the collaborative construction of cultural understanding and cultural knowledge” (Zhu 2012).

There are no studies concentrating on the role of literature and literary readings in the telecollaboration environment. The first attempt to endeavor in this area is the case study conducted by Ramos and Carvalho (2020), which proposed the use of telecollaboration to promote the discussion of readings in L2 using the Teletandem model. The study was conducted with the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) and the *Universidade Estadual Paulista* (UNESP) *Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Assis* (FCL) in fall 2019. For this study, students were encouraged to choose the literary work they wanted to read and discuss it after the sixth teletandem session. The authors reported their findings based on the analysis of one participant. The findings indicate that literature discussion was not spontaneously initiated by the participants. It required an extra incentive to help participants engage and start discussing the literary work they chose, a text entitled “Carioca” from a contemporary author, João Doederlein (2019), published on Instagram as a post. During the discussion, participants talked about the content of the text, and it also triggered a debate on tangential topics.

The current study aims to expand on the study of Ramos and Carvalho (2020) and proposes the new dimension concentrating on literature in a telecollaboration context. This new dimension will be literature-related episodes (LitREs) following the work of Swain and Lapkin (1998) and the work of Zakir, Funo, and Telles (2016). LitREs are any part of a dialogue in which language learners discuss literary texts of their own language or their partner’s language.

The excerpt below brings an example of part of an interaction in which the participants are discussing the novel *My sweet-orange tree* (*Meu pé de laranja lima*) by José Mauro de Vasconcelos (1968). From the transcription, one can notice that both participants are thrilled when they realize that they had both read the book and had quite a positive experience.

Example 1: Excerpt of LitREs (A: American Participant, B: Brazilian Participant)

B: [eh]... you know any Brazilian authors /, have you read anything from a Brazilian author?

A: aw, no. The only thing I read from a Brazilian / was well... *Meu pé de laranja lima*. [My sweet-orange tree].

B: [aw no] [laugh] That’s one of my favorite books / Oh my / that’s amazing.

A: [then] It is / is a great / wonderful book. I was surprised / ah I thought it was a children’s book / but it was not. My experience was great reading this book.

B: [aw, Oh my]... this is the book that I most love. I always cry / I cry a lot with this book. The first time I read it / I cried for a week / I was suffering with the story and crying / it was ... I swear. You know? [then] I remember... I read it again, I watched the movie. Then, I read it one more time... I don't know but I think I will still like this book when I am 50, 60 years-old. I believe this book will have the same impact or maybe even more ... more than when I was a child ... teenager. Anyway, if I am speaking too fast, please interrupt me.

A: No, go ahead. I am following everything.

The use of literary readings in the telecollaboration context offers the students involved the opportunity to be exposed to different registers, discuss authentic texts, negotiate understanding and meaning of the literary reading, connect discussions with their own realities, enhance their linguistic skills in L2, and tie linguistic, interactive, and cultural spheres together. In addition, literary texts feature an extensive variety of lexical and grammatical items. Through reading, interpretation, and discussion, students are exposed to features of written language, such as a variety of syntactic functions, linguistic structures, ways of connecting ideas and developing argumentation, and essential factors for the development of linguistic and communicative competence (Reichter, 2013).

Therefore, the present chapter proposes to investigate in a cross-sectional study the benefits of bringing together literature and telecollaboration for foreign language development.

5.3 Methodology

The data collection for this research project was conducted yearlong. Due to the limited number of participants, a qualitative, interpretive case study approach was used, which includes qualitative instruments, such as interviews, questionnaires, audio and video recordings, as well as discussion sessions.

As discussed in Duff (2007), this model is robust, as it allows triangulating instruments and data and examining the same object from different angles. The details about the methodology, research questions, materials, and procedures are explained below.

5.3.1 Research Questions

As mentioned previously, this study looks at the relevance of using literary texts for linguistic development through telecollaboration. Thus, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. Does the use of literature in telecollaboration offer a neutral ground for both learners to participate and collaborate without constraint?

2. Does the use of literature in telecollaboration add knowledge and contribute to learning?
3. Does the use of literature in telecollaboration lead participants to discuss other topics related to literary works?
4. Does the use of literature in telecollaboration enhance virtual intercultural communication?

These questions will be addressed in the results section.

5.3.2 Participants

Eighteen students from each institution participated in the study. Participants were selected voluntarily from two courses in a Portuguese program at a university in the United States. The students were at the intermediate and advanced levels of Portuguese, at the beginning of the second and third years of formal learning or the equivalent of the levels B1/B2 in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001). This was the second year that the Portuguese program participated in a Teletandem project. Most of the students at the university are full-time students. The language courses are small and tailored to promote maximum language development.

The American university students carried out the telecollaborative practice with counterparts from a state university in Northeastern Brazil, which has been part of the Teletandem Brasil Project since 2018. It currently has 27 undergraduate majors, 9 masters, and 4 doctoral programs. Most of the students who participate in Teletandem are majoring in Language and Arts and come primarily from lower middle-class households. The majority of the students work two or more jobs, and they view a college degree as a passport for social mobility.

Given the socioeconomic disparity in Brazil and in the USA, Teletandem is a tool to make language learning equitable and to promote intercultural exchange.

5.3.3 Procedures and Materials

For this specific study, the data was collected during fall 2021 and spring 2022. Students filled out a questionnaire to collect demographic data, such as age, major, goals for language course, and previous experience with Portuguese.

Teletandem was an integrated activity, meaning that it was embedded in the syllabus during both terms, and it was a mandatory activity. Students could choose not to participate; however, if they started the project, they were required to continue until the last session. Participants had to meet for a minimum of eight 60-minute sessions. One person of the pair had to provide evidence of participation and duration of the encounters through submission of session recordings. Participants were

required to have a computer (desktop or laptop) or a mobile phone with access to the Internet and Zoom platform. These were necessary to participate in the meetings, to record the sessions, and to access the digital copy of the books at the library.

Participants were guided to discuss the literature books, 30 minutes in one language and 30 minutes in the other. They were also instructed to alternate the starting language each meeting to avoid code-switching issues as per UNESCO's original recommendation. After using the dominant language, it takes the brain some time to adjust to the non-dominant language. Therefore, the methodological reason behind this maneuver is to avoid benefiting one language over the other. It is important to note that this recommendation comes from over 15 years of observation and discussion with Teletandem participants.

Adjustments had to be made from fall to spring semesters to overcome issues experienced in the latter. Meetings were autonomously scheduled by students in the fall, which is the original method for Teletandem practice, also known as Institutional non-integrated Teletandem (TTD). In the spring, however, the weekly sessions were scheduled by the instructor and took place during class time, which is known as Institutional integrated Teletandem (iiTTD). Both TTD and iiTTD are described in Aranha and Cavalari (2014). In the first semester, there were many points of miscommunication and students not being able to meet their partners. As a result, WhatsApp groups were created in order to facilitate communication between the participants and their partners as well as faculty. Another challenge was partner assignment. We began working with fixed partners, which became an issue since most of the Brazilian counterparts also had formal jobs, some with two or three, which caused some sessions to be canceled. Therefore, in the spring, students were paired up at the beginning of each session. This allowed for even more diversity of opinions in the conversations, getting to know other students, and being exposed to different accents. Students were excited, and it was a clear motivating factor.

The weekly required readings followed the course syllabus. This way, students knew what was expected from them. All the sessions were recorded, and the videos were shared with the instructors from both institutions and later transcribed for analysis. There were weekly discussions, known as mediation sessions, in which students and their respective instructors could talk about their experience and socialize information with the entire group. Transcriptions of the discussion sessions and students' questionnaires will be presented in the results section.

Students were also required to fill out a questionnaire focusing on literature. The objective was to capture, on one hand, if literature was discussed or not, what the conversations were about, if the experience provided a better understanding of the novels as well as if the discussion about literature led to other topics, such as culture, politics, or society. On the other hand, we were interested in the students' self-assessment on their language progress in vocabulary, grammar, and fluency through these discussions about the readings.

The next section will present and discuss the case study results.

5.4 Analysis

The data was carefully examined to see how the literary discussion was approached by the participants, if discussions concentrated on the novels for the entire duration of their meeting or if it triggered conversations about other topics. For the purposes of this study, the analysis presented will be of the first, fourth, and eighth interactions, the questionnaires, and mediated discussions. The research questions will be addressed and discussed in this section.

Overall, examining the interactions, we found many instances of LREs, CREs, and LitREs. It was interesting to observe the dynamics of the encounters. Usually, the conversations started with a warm-up topic: the weather, vacation, holiday, or school. The duration of this warm-up was between 2 and 3 minutes and then discussion moved to the readings. All participants reported having a positive experience with discussing the literature during their teletandem sessions. Some of their comments were in relation to language skills (more fluency, less pauses, more accuracy, less L1 interference), cultural aspects, confidence, and motivation. Although this study does not aim at identifying or assessing the participants' LREs, CREs, or LitREs, it is important to note that these episodes originated from literary discussions. Below are American participants' comments on these aspects:

Example 2: Mediation Discussion – American Participants' Comments Language Abilities

I thought that the sessions helped me work on my speaking abilities. I feel I am much better now. I am able to articulate my ideas better. I also noticed that my vocabulary is better and my fluency as well.

Confidence

I think the very first thing for me when I started learning Portuguese was dealing with my insecurity, my lack of confidence. I wanted to participate in teletandem but I was not sure I could do it. Then, the weekly meetings helped me “unlock”. I saw I was able to communicate and my partner could understand me. This experience really had an impact on my confidence.

Motivation

I really liked speaking with my partner and learning colloquial language from him. Our discussions would start with the book, we would connect the social aspects present in the book, compare historical facts or talk a lot about the social consequences of poverty in Brazil.

Example 2 shows how participants felt about the interactions, their language development, and their confidence in the course of the 8 weeks of Teletandem. It is clear that the participants felt that their oral skills improved and that there was an increase in their lexical knowledge and an increase in their motivation, confidence, and attitude toward the language.

Below in Example 3 is an excerpt of a recording session in which participants end a discussion on *Capitães da Areia* by Jorge Amado (2008) and begin discussing *Comédias para se Ler na Escola* by Luis Fernando Veríssimo (2001). There are several aspects in this interaction that are worthy of further discussion. It is rich as

both participants contributed to it and shared their beliefs, difficulties, and frustrations without barriers. This is relevant since this phenomenon hardly manifests itself in the classroom. Students often feel intimate with their peers and are afraid to make mistakes. Participant B shares their desire to improve their language skills and tells Participant A that she/he doesn't have a friend who finds practicing the language and having an opportunity like teletandem important. Similarly, Participant A shares their experience about Luís Fernando Veríssimo's book that she/he enjoyed the reading but could not fully understand it. The humor in the short stories made it a bit complicated to make sense out of the joke. This level of negotiation shows that participants were comfortable in the environment and with their partners.

There is also an informative conversation about *Comédias para se Ler na Escola*. In this LitRE, participant B elaborates on the author's style and choices to use humor as a critical tool. This kind of exchange is relevant as it offers participants opportunities to better understand cultural norms and conventions. It also allows participants to communicate their ideologies and beliefs.

Example 3: Excerpt of LitREs - Teletandem Meeting (A: American Participant, B: Brazilian Participant)

A: [Warm-up conversation about the weekend] I've just arrived from Miami. The temperature was 35 degrees. It's like 1.5 degrees. But now I am back to school.

B: I am from Juazeiro do Norte, Ceará, Northeast region of Brazil. So it is always very hot here. (laugh). This moment is very important for me because I want to practice my English with you/. I want to speak with you because it is very difficult to speak with another person because I don't have a friend to talk in English with me. Understand?

A: Yes, sure. We will practice both languages / in Portuguese and in English. We have just finished reading *Capitães da Areia* and now we started to read the book *Comédias para se Ler na Escola*. The book is cool and funny. There are some comedies that I read, but I don't understand much like the "O Homem Trocado". I see why it's funny, but... you know... I do not know...

B: Well, Veríssimo always describes his texts with a hint of comedy, but he also makes a lot of criticism, social criticism through humor. They are light texts that approach everyday themes, Brazilians and the *carioca* lifestyle.

A: *Carioca*?

B: Yes, people from the state of Rio de Janeiro. It is interesting to exchange these ideas because this is the most interesting thing about how he [Veríssimo] develops his texts. He enables the reader to have a critical look at society, but also without the harsh criticism.

A: He makes social criticism with a little humor. That makes it easier to talk about the topics, right?

B: That's it!

These findings confirm RQ1: does literature in telecollaboration provide a neutral ground for both learners to participate and collaborate without constraint? Our data indicates that during the 8 weeks, participants tend to feel more comfortable

with the telecollaboration experience and with their peers, which lead to a neutral and learning conducive place. As stated by McCarthy: “for some learners, interacting online is less threatening and stressful than the more ‘public’ arena of the face-to-face classroom” (Azeredo-Cerqueira & Bértoli, 2021: p. 376).

Examining RQ2: Does literature in telecollaboration add knowledge and contribute to learning? There are several instances of LitREs that are worthy of analysis. Let’s start by looking at aspects of literature that occurred during the interactions. Students discussed the following aspects:

- Characters.
- Main plot and subplots.
- Passage(s)/chapters.
- Related literary work(s).
- Genre.
- Author.
- Language register and variation.
- Cultural aspects in the book.
- Visual aspects on the book cover.

As we can see in Example 4, during the mediated discussion, participants mentioned they had learned or developed the following aspects: new vocabulary, expressions, regional words, speaking (pronunciation, confidence), sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and historical information. Some of these aspects were already mentioned on Example 1, specially the LREs.

Example 4: Mediation Discussion – Participants’ Comments (A: American Participant)

A1: I learned a lot of new vocabulary, a lot of colloquial words.

A2: In one of the meetings, I discussed with my partner regional vocabulary, words and terms that we read in the literature book that were common in Bahia and not so much in the rest of Brazil.

In Example 5, we witness another layer to support RQ2, above, and to answer RQ3: does literature in telecollaboration lead participants to discuss other topics related to literary works? It also addresses RQ4: does literature in telecollaboration enhance virtual intercultural communication?

Example 5: Excerpt of LitREs - Teletandem Meeting (A: American Participant, B: Brazilian Participant)

B: It’s all about survival. Everything they do is about survival... like we were saying, they’re not afraid of society because it only sees the negative in them. So much so that in that one instance when they go to the restaurant to eat some *feijoada*, some *vatapá*, a little something, the people at the restaurant immediately say that those kids are going to rob us. They need to gain their own space in society and the only way they can is through illegal actions, doing bad things. Speaking of *feijoada*, have you ever seen it? Have you ever heard of it?

A: Yeah... I was going to ask about that. *Feijoada*? What is in a *feijoada*?

B: *Feijoada* has black beans in it... I'm not sure you all eat beans much from what I see in the movies. Not really, right? Do you like beans?

A: Yeah! Sure!

B: You do? Great. *Feijoada* has beans, some people put ribs in it, sausage, some spices until the stew is nice and thick. You may ask why?

While discussing the social stigma and difficulties homeless children struggle with in Amado's novel, the Brazilian partner mentions local food that may be unknown to the American counterpart, thus changing the course of the discussion. Participant B goes on to explain the history behind *feijoada*, a black bean stew, and its origins in slavery, shows images, and elaborates on its ingredients. B then takes Participant A through no less than four local foods from northeastern Brazil, among them *mungunzá* and *vatapá*, their ingredients, and the social contexts in which one might eat such dishes. B finishes this culinary tangent in the conversation describing *acarajé*, a common street food in the city of Salvador, Bahia, where Amado's story takes place:

B: I'm going to show you one last dish. I swear it's the last one because it will show up in Jorge Amado's story... This dish is local to Salvador, Bahia where *Capitães da areia* takes place. You might have heard of it. It's *acarajé*.

A: *Acarajé*?

B: Have you heard of it?

A: Yeah, yes....

B: *Acarajé* is made with seafood. It is like a... fish... cake.

A: A fishcake?

B: It's like a fishcake. A type of bread with fish. They usually split it in half and fill the middle with the ingredients. They like to eat it with hot peppers. Actually, hot peppers from Bahia are no joke!

A: Oh... Interesting....

B: It's delicious! Delicious! One thing I like to do is to talk about food!

A: (Laughs) I love food! I exercise just to be able to eat more!

B: (Laughs) I should do that too, but my exercise is chewing!

The talk of local food from the northeast of Brazil, mainly the states of Bahia and Ceará, triggered a geographic clarification from A, which led B to talk about the region's geography, the history of Portuguese colonization in the area, the exploitation during colonial times of the rich northeast, the current state of the economy in the region in comparison to the rich southeast, and how northeasterners suffer prejudice from other regions because of the current poverty, health, and education levels. The discussion about the economy and the elites in the northeast reminded B of a character in Amado's novel as can be seen below.

B: During this period in *Capitães da areia* there is a historical period in which a hero emerges that you might remember. It's *Bem de Vida*, I think?

A: Isn't it *Volta Seca*?

B: That's it. *Volta Seca*, sorry... *Volta Seca* is the godson of Virgulino Teixeira, known as *Lampião*.

A: *Lampião*, yeah, *Lampião*. I saw *Lampião*, but I was a little confused....

B: Quem é ele, né?

A: Who is he?

The poverty and the prejudice displayed by other regions toward the northeast triggered a historical figure in the conversation who is mentioned in *Capitães da areia*. B explains to A a period in Brazilian history, when landowners and the elite controlled the food in the northeast, in which a figure emerges to fight back.

B: Virgulino Ferreira was like an avenger to people in the northeast because he would rob the landowners and give food to the poor, like a northeastern Robin Hood. You know? [*Lampião* and his band] may seem like heroes at first, but they were bloodthirsty. They would rape, rob and pillage towns, but also fight the elite to help the poor. He did all this because he was very religious, actually he respected and feared a famous priest. His name was *Padre Cícero* and he founded the city where I live.

A: Really?

Participant B relates the relationship of these two famous historical figures; shows images of *Lampião*'s *cangaceiro* band and his love, Maria Bonita; and describes the semi-nomadic *cangaceiro* culture, its values, and its way of life. The conversation continues on to how *Lampião* and his band were killed and their heads displayed in a museum.

B: It is very confusing... At the same time, they were killers and helped the poor. They helped people. That's why when we talk about *cangaceiros*, sometimes people imagine villains and sometimes heroes.

A: Oh, wow. I got it. Very cool. Very interesting.

B: Check this out. This is the *cangaço* and the *cangaceiro* life. When you talk about *cangaço*, it's all about the lifestyle. To live lawless. You live according to your own beliefs. You take what you want and the path you want.

A: Their attire looks like a mix between a cowboy and a pirate. (Laughs).

The conversation flows toward the leather clothing they wore and the semiarid environment they lived in, known as the *caatinga*. In the interest of space, this 30-minute interaction does not end here. It still covers how and what history is taught in Brazilian middle schools versus the USA, the Paraguayan War, or the War of the Triple Alliance in the nineteenth century and how today's politics in Brazil seem to be reviving the ideas of two centuries ago. It is important to note that at the end of this interaction, Participant A says: "Thank you for all this new information. It gives me a much deeper context to consider in my readings."

During the interaction, both participants embark on a serious and long discussion about cultural, historical, philosophical, geographical, and political aspects of the northeast and Brazil itself, all triggered by Jorge Amado's novel and specifically by the troubled character *Volta Seca*.

Example 6 brings participants' comments during the mediation session. These observations are relevant as they show how participants are benefiting from the interactions and emphasize the richness of including literature (in the broad sense) in language programs. Naturally, this requires planning and balancing many methodological factors.

Example 6: Mediation Discussion - Participants' Comments (A: American Participant, B: Brazilian Participant)

B: The most important thing was to connect with people who have a different vision of my culture. I consider this very enriching because interacting with someone who is abroad (in another country), ends up enriching and valuing the way I see my culture, the literature of my country. (Appreciation for the partner's culture).

A1: We talked a lot about the book and discussed many of the social issues addressed in the book. For example, I grew up with the reality of the Paraná region ... I know almost nothing about the other regions of Brazil. So those meetings and conversations were very....

A2: For me, when we talked about books, we made many connections with Brazilian culture and society in general. It was very interesting to see Brazil from before and currently through literature. I learned a lot.

A3: I found it fascinating to know that Brazilian students like English literature, and even more so that my colleague likes Sally Read - the same writer I like.

As can be observed from these findings, literature in the context of telecollaboration is a fruitful tool that can broaden students' horizons and enhance many different aspects of their learning trajectory. In addition to the linguistic arena, there is a globalizing world where students need to learn how to navigate, not only by speaking the other's language but also by being proficient in cultural aspects, traditions, and norms. Literature in telecollaboration can help close the gap in foreign language learning and teaching to promote a more just and equitable language learning experience.

5.5 Conclusion

This cross-sectional research demonstrated that the use of literature in telecollaboration proved to be positive as it facilitated language development and language use, students' engagement and motivation, fostered conversation in diverse topics, and promoted literary reading, comprehension, and discussion. Even with the limitations, this initial study showed that the combination of literature in telecollaboration is needed.

Nevertheless, this combination requires careful planning before its implementation. A great amount of preparation is necessary in order to define a partner institution, coordinate the institutions' calendar, choose the appropriate literary works, prepare all the logistics (dates, time, partners, etc.), and organize orientation and

mediation sessions, and tasks, to name a few. Therefore, telecollaboration is not a mere free chat; there are many pedagogical, methodological, and theoretical aspects involved so that students may benefit from it. Then, it depends on the teacher's skills and resourcefulness to take advantage of telecollaboration and facilitate this opportunity for the students. However, the possibilities for multicultural exchange of ideas are limitless, and the same applies to language development.

Finally, telecollaboration can be a powerful tool to help programs achieve internationalization and create global citizens. Technology is an ally to help shorten distances and create a more equitable and socially inclusive environment.

5.6 Limitations and Future Studies

Future research concentrating on the role of literary-related episodes (LitREs) in telecollaboration should consider the following aspects to overcome methodological issues, to better understand the complexity and the characteristics of the exchanges in the interactions, and to be able to run more robust statistical tests.

Therefore, future studies should have a larger n in order to apply quantitative methods. Thus, with a larger sample size, more robust statistical tests can be applied, for example, when statistical significance between variables is evidenced, regression tests or a R^2 test can be performed. New studies should examine the longitudinal effects of teletandem interactions. It is relevant to understand the long-term benefits of telecollaboration compared to cross-sectional results.

Future research concentrating on LitREs should also consider the use of diverse literary works, other than novels and canon classics. We would suggest short stories and contemporary writers. Studies should also investigate the social and cognitive aspects of teletandem interaction for the communities involved. There is so much happening in the interactions that it is extremely relevant to examine aspects related to individual differences in the cognitive and affective area. In the cognitive domain, for example, we can highlight aptitude, working memory capacity, intelligence, awareness, and noticing (Mota & Azeredo, 2009; de Silva, 2011; Azeredo-Cerqueira & Mello, 2011). In the affective domain, we can mention attitude, anxiety, and motivation, for example (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Long & Doughty, 2003; Azeredo-Cerqueira & Badger, 2015). Finally, future studies should examine the outcomes of collaboration with one fixed partner versus multiple partners. This is one aspect that showed a positive potential through classroom observation, but more studies are required for conclusive results.

Despite its limitations, our study hopes to encourage more research into the use of literature in telecollaboration and bring further contributions to the understanding of this rich exchange on L2 development, cultural awareness, and language equity.

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Chapter 6

Literary *Genres* and Teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language in Teletandem



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6.1 Introduction

This study was developed within the scope of the *Teletandem Brasil project*¹ (Telles & Vassalo, 2006) and based on the initial results of the master's research of one of the authors. One of the central objectives of the research in question is to verify the contributions of reading and discussion of literary texts, in teletandem interactions, for the development of an intercultural teaching of the Portuguese language that emphasizes the symbolic dimension of intercultural exchanges. Thus, the reflections that we will present here are fundamental to achieve this goal and seek to demonstrate the relevance of the literature to potentiate discussions in teletandem.

Following the principles of *language separation*, *autonomy*, and *reciprocity*, the teletandem is a virtual modality of the tandem learning method, which, at first, was carried out only in person and, mainly, in places where foreign-language speakers were in frequent contact, such as in tourist cities, border regions, and universities (Telles & Vassalo, 2006).

¹ Official project website: <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/>

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According to Telles and Vassalo (2006), while in Europe, face-to-face tandem activities are common and easy to perform; in Brazil, this face-to-face activity is little practiced, especially due to the geographical conditions of the country and the high cost of international travel. However, with technological and Internet advances, tandem practices have become possible in countries such as Brazil through *e-tandem* – a tandem mode by e-mail, restricted to writing and reading – and *Teletandem*, a computer-mediated virtual tandem, whose idealization and creation are the responsibility of Dr. João Antonio Telles, retired professor at the São Paulo State University (UNESP).

Telles (2009) states that the teletandem came about with the purpose of conducting an extensive distance tandem program that could be useful to undergraduate students and future language teachers at UNESP. The project *Teletandem Brasil: Foreign Languages for All* (TTB) – implemented on the campuses of Assis and São José do Rio Preto, with the construction of two laboratories, from March 2006 – made this possible, and since then, the activities of teletandem have been intensified and expanded to other campuses of UNESP and universities in different Brazilian states.

In teletandem, Brazilian students and students from foreign universities meet regularly, through online applications with reading, writing, and audio and video resources, to learn each the language of the other and also to teach the language in which they are proficient. From this contact, teletandem participants can not only learn and practice another language but also know the culture of the other, share experiences, and develop an intercultural perspective that encompasses the ways of being and acting socially in the language (Kramsch, 2017; Mendes, 2011).

Moreover, in the teletandem, the Portuguese language occupies a prominent place, and its teaching as a foreign language has been widely disseminated. Portuguese learners from different parts of the world, for example, may experience situations of real language use; and Portuguese language teachers in training may have the experience of teaching their mother tongue, in a different context from the traditional classroom (Ramos, 2012).

The numerous partnerships maintained with universities from different countries – the project's official website, *Teletandem Brasil*, presents a list of 23 partner institutions, including the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), *the Georgetown University*, and *the University of Miami* – highlight the expansion of this project and also the importance that the teaching of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) has acquired worldwide.

Currently, the teletandem project is in a new phase, called *Teletandem and Transculturality in online interaction in foreign languages by webcam* (Telles, 2015a, b), and is configured as a continuity of the TTB project. According to Zakir (2015), the several studies developed during the initial phase of the project brought important contributions to the area of Applied Linguistics. Most of these studies did not focus on the cultural dimension of interactions, dealing with topics related, for example, to the characteristics of interactions and the autonomy of learners (Zakir, 2015). In the current phase, it is precisely the cultural aspect that is at the center of

research so that one of the objectives of this project is “[...] to obtain an in-depth description of the cultural dimension of online interactions in foreign languages through the voice and image capabilities of instant messaging applications with webcam” (Telles, 2015a, b apud Zakir, 2015, p. 34).

The recent focus on the cultural aspect of teletandem interactions shows, in a certain way, the differential of this process that consists of promoting to the participants, in addition to learning another language, a rich, productive, and complex intercultural contact, whose cultural aspects need to be further studied, understood, and discussed, since in this environment, although “culture” presents a multiplicity of meanings, often, its conception is still associated only with the idea of “nation,” that is, related and limited to geographical boundaries (Zakir, 2015).

Therefore, this study aims to reflect on practices of reading and discussion of literary texts in teletandem, observing, in general, how literature can contribute to potentiate discussions. Thus, in Sect. 6.1, we will explain how it is the dissemination of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) in the Mexican university and the relevance of teletandem to this. In Sect. 6.2, we will present some considerations about the circulation of literary texts in the teletandem context, relating the importance of literature in this context to the theoretical framework that underlies this investigation. In Sect. 6.3, we will present the methodology used in this study. And in the last section, we will do a data analysis in order to demonstrate the relevance of the literature for this context.

6.2 The Dissemination of the Teaching of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) at the Partner University: *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)*

Today, the Portuguese is one of the most requested languages in Mexico’s foreign-language teaching centers. The *Escuela Nacional de Lenguas Lingüística y Traducción* (ENALLT) of UNAM, campus of the University City, concentrates a large part of those interested in learning the Portuguese language. In the first semester of 2022, there were 588 students enrolled in regular Portuguese courses, and in the second semester, 623 enrolled.

The Portuguese courses at ENALLT are semiannual with a workload of 70 h and are divided into six levels. Every year, approximately 10 first-level groups with 30 students are opened. In addition, students are offered complementary courses, such as reading comprehension, and different workshops in order to assist them in their learning of Portuguese.

The profile of the learner who studies Portuguese as a foreign language at ENALLT is varied and covers the different audiences, such as undergraduate and graduate university students, usually between 18 and 26 years old, workers of the institution, and people from the external community who have completed high school from the age of 18.

In particular, UNAM's Portuguese learners come from different careers and areas: Latin American Studies, Biology, Communication Sciences, International Relations, Architecture, Hispanic Language and Literature, and Economics, among others. It is worth mentioning that, in general terms, Portuguese is the third or fourth foreign language they study, the second being English or French.

The main purposes for interest in learning Portuguese are academic exchange in Brazil or Portugal, tourism to Portuguese-speaking countries, cultural interests, and the search for job and graduate opportunities (González & Galicia, 2014).

ENALLT students have the services of the *Camões Institute*, the library, and the *Mediateca*, a center with resources to learn and practice languages autonomously. The Mediateca is responsible for performing the interactions of teletandem and thus allows independent Portuguese learners and students of regular courses of ENALLT to practice the Portuguese language in a context of real use of the language. Since 2012, every semester of the year, a teletandem group is opened with approximately 15 students, in partnership with São Paulo State University (UNESP), campus of Assis.

Students who participate in the teletandem are always very involved with interactions and regularly ask to repeat practices. However, due to the high demand each semester, often, these students cannot repeat the interactions in teletandem. Thus, the teletandem practices have contributed greatly to the students' Portuguese learning, as well as to a growing interest in the Portuguese language and its literature.

6.3 Literary Genres, Teletandem, and Interculturality

In teletandem interactions, the reading and discussion of literary texts are not so frequent and common practices. The study by Telles (2015b), conducted with 134 teletandem participants, showed that only 10.44% of the students, when asked about what activities they performed during the interactions, answered having practiced, for example, the "poetry reading." Also according to this study, the conversation about themes that emerge spontaneously in the interactions was pointed out as the favorite activity of the participants (86% of the answers) (Telles, 2015b).

We consider some recurring characteristics presented by the teletandem conversations as a possible explanation for the occurrence of few practices of reading and discussion of literary *genres* in this context. According to Telles (2015a, p. 4), conversations in teletandem sessions are often focused on contrasting cultural aspects, daily lives in partners' countries and grammar discussions as well as marked by differences, often configuring themselves as generalizations.

For Telles (2015a), although the positive aspects of intercultural contact in tandem are recognizable, these characteristics can be seen as problematic for language teaching and learning projects that aim to promote intercultural communication and intercultural citizenship of students, mainly because they are marked by a certain "essentialism" or, as we can perceive, because they are linked to a static notion of culture as belonging to a specific nation. Therefore, Telles (2015a) states that in

order to promote deeper and more critical understandings of intercultural interactions and differences, critical approaches to intercultural communication must be adopted.

In this direction, we believe that the circulation of literary texts in teletandem interactions can ensure participants constructive, reflexive, and critical intercultural experiences, as well as foster the emergence of more diverse and broad themes, which are not just restricted to “generalizing” comparisons between cultural aspects and daily life in the countries of the participants. Thus, we assume a discursive intercultural perspective for language teaching and emphasize the humanizing function of literature (Candido, 1972, 2011).

In the discursive approach, intercultural communication and culture are seen as “discourse.” Thus, culture is understood as historical and discursive processes, constructed in the interaction between subjects who can identify themselves not only by their nationalities but also by their gender, age, race, or ethnicity, consequently affecting their ways of using language and constructing meaning (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). In this way, intercultural communication is considered as an “interdiscourse” communication, that is, the interaction of multiple discourse systems, such as gender, profession, ethnicity, and age, which “[...] intersect with each other and sometimes contradict each other, as a reflection of the multiplicity and scope of identities that people bring along to or bring about through interactions” (Kramsch & Hua, 2016, p. 44).

In view of this, for Kramsch (2011), communicating interculturally demands of students an intercultural competence that cannot be understood only as the ability to put oneself in the place of the other, being tolerant and empathetic, but also “[...] as a matter of looking beyond words and actions and embracing multiple, changing and conflicting discourse worlds [...]” (Kramsch, 2011, p. 356).

This being said, Kramsch (2011) proposes the development of an intercultural competence that considers the subjectivity and historicity of the subjects with the purpose of leading them to the understanding of the symbolic and historical components behind intercultural exchanges. According to the scholar, this understanding is only possible if we consider symbolic competence as a dimension of intercultural competence, which focuses on the process of meaning itself. In this perspective, the interculturally engaged and competent individual is understood as “[...] a symbolic self that is constituted by symbolic systems like language, as well as by systems of thought and their symbolic power” (Kramsch, 2011, p. 356).

According to Kramsch (2006), literature, by allowing the understanding of “the full meaning making potential of language,” can foster the development of this symbolic competence, and through it, “[...] learners can communicate not only with living others, but also with imagined others and with the other selves they might want to become” (Kramsch, 2006, pp. 250–251). In addition, Kramsch (2006) states that literature can act on the three major components of symbolic competence, that is, the *production of complexity*, which is related to engagement in productions that enable the construction of meanings; the *tolerance of ambiguity*, related to the multiple, conflicting, and diverse realities and discourses of societies; and the *form as meaning*, which “[...] focuses on the meaning of form in all its manifestations

(e.g., linguistic, textual, visual, acoustic, poetic) [...]” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 251) and is related to how learners become sensitized to the sounds and rhythms of a foreign language.

In relation to the first component, literature makes possible the perception that human communication is more complex than simply knowing how to use words and knowing their meanings. Moreover, by the symbolic use of the language, a literary work also allows learners to find “[...] alternative scenarios of possibility for life in the real world, other ways of desiring and belonging” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 251). As for the second component, literature can stimulate discussions about contradictions, for example, between words and deeds, as well as can provide the understanding that the “[...] language can be used to support conflicting and historically contingent truths” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 251). In relation to the third component, literary works, by means of their highly meaningful linguistic forms, can motivate the expression into words of emotional experiences that can be recalled later in the various situations of life.

Thus, in general, for Kramersch (2006), literature can contribute to the development of a symbolic competence by providing a greater perception of “the full meaning making potential of language” and the understanding that “[...] communicative competence does not derive from information alone, but from the symbolic power that comes with the interpretation of signs and their multiple relations to other signs” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 252).

Kramersch’s (2006) considerations about the contributions of literature to the development of a symbolic competence and, mainly, the idea that literature makes a symbolic use of language, lead us to understand the literary text, above all, from the concept of “literariness,”² that is, based on certain qualities and characteristics that distinguish literature from other texts. More specifically, we believe that the poetic function of language³ – defined by Jakobson (1987, p. 69) as the “[...] focus on the message for its own sake [...]” – presents itself as an important attribute for the construction of the “literariness” of a literary text and, thus, for the elaboration of a “[...] complex and intense organization of language” (Culler, 1995, p. 58, our translation).⁴

²According to Culler (1995), “literariness” is a difficult concept to define and delimit. In general, literariness can be understood as what makes something be considered “literature.” Culler (1995) states that there are two main criteria on which discussions about literariness are centered: one that relates literariness to fictionality and literary language acts and another that emphasizes certain organization and properties of language. On this basis, the theoretical considerations of our research (Kramersch, 2006; Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000) point to an orientation more centered on the second criterion. However, it is important to note that, like Culler (1995), we believe that these two criteria have points of contact and are important for literary studies.

³According to Jakobson (1997), the poetic function of language can not be reduced to poetry and, thus, to the field of literature, as it is present in all other verbal activities. In addition, Jakobson (1997, p. 7, our translation) states that a “[...] poetic work is not confined to aesthetic function alone, but has in addition many other functions.”

⁴In the original: “[...] organização complexa e intensa de linguagem” (Culler, 1995, p. 58).

We consider that this understanding of literature allows us to recognize the specificities and the great potential for meaning of literary texts. Thus, in order to better understand the specificities of literary works and also their characteristic of acting in the formation of the subject, we can resort to the studies of Candido (2006, 2011) about the relationship of literature with the social environment and its humanizing role. According to Candido (2011, pp. 178–179), in the complex nature of the literary work, it is possible to identify three determining aspects to explain the function of literature: “[...] (1) it is a construction of autonomous objects with structure and meaning; (2) it is a form of expression, that is, it manifests emotions and the worldview of individuals and groups; (3) it is a form of knowledge, including as a diffuse and unconscious incorporation.”⁵

As pointed out by Candido, it is common to think that literature acts on readers because of the third aspect by transmitting, in a certain way, a knowledge that would result in learning. However, he states that the effect of literary productions occurs due to the simultaneous performance of these three aspects. For the scholar, the first aspect, although we usually reflect little on it, is crucial for literature to play its role, since it determines whether communication is literary or not.

Still according to the author, a literary work is a construction in which words are articulated in such a particular way that they become more than the presence of a code and communicate something that touches us because it represents a model of coherence proposed by the writer. Candido (2011, p. 179) states that even if we do not realize this organization of words in a text, through it, we can become “[...] more able to ordain our own mind and feelings; and, consequently, better able to organize the vision we have of the world.”⁶

Thus, according to Candido (2011), the content of a literary text only acts on the subject due to the form, which attributes its greater meaning. Hence, the impact that a literary production can generate on the individual results from the fusion of the message with his organization. Therefore, the formal and content aspects of literary texts maintain a constant relationship, and together, they can increase the ability of individuals to see and feel, since they elaborate a symbolic system that conveys a certain worldview through expressive instruments (Candido, 2006, 2011).

Considering the above, we understand that the contributions of literature to the teletandem context are linked to the potentiality of literary texts to act on subjects, mainly through the highly meaningful poetic language of literature.

It is worth mentioning that in our research, we do not aim to define “levels of intercultural competence” of the students but rather to present evidence that demonstrates the importance of literature for the construction of teaching and learning processes of foreign languages, which provide the learners with broader and more reflective understandings about intercultural communication.

⁵In the original: “[...] (1) ela é uma construção de objetos autônomos com estrutura e significado; (2) ela é uma forma de expressão, isto é, manifesta emoções e a visão do mundo dos indivíduos e dos grupos; (3) ela é uma forma de conhecimento, inclusive como incorporação difusa e inconsciente” (Candido, 2011, pp. 178–179).

⁶In the original: “[...] mais capazes de ordenar a nossa própria mente e sentimentos; e, em consequência, mais capazes de organizar a visão que temos do mundo” (Candido, 2011, p. 179).

6.4 Data Collection Methodology

As already mentioned, the actions of this study were developed between a Brazilian university and a Mexican university. Thus, the data were collected from teletandem interactions between Spanish students, from the Brazilian side, and Portuguese students, from the Mexican side. In both universities, interactions are configured in the modality of *Non-Integrated Institutional Teletadem* (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014), that is, they are agreed between two universities, have a certain pedagogical control and the mediation of a teacher-counselor, and constitute themselves as a voluntary activity, not linked to any discipline and not formally inserted in the curriculum of a course.

In this partnership, there are always eight interactions every semester of the year. The sessions take place once a week, last 1 h, and are followed by a mediation session lasting approximately 30 min. From 2020 to the first semester of 2022, due to the pandemic situation experienced worldwide, the interactions between Sao Paulo State University and National Autonomous University of Mexico were conducted entirely virtually through the Zoom videoconferencing application. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, students and mediators used to meet in the universities' language laboratories to carry out the interactions. In this new configuration, the teletandem participants, together with the project mediators, meet in a main virtual room at the appointed time and are then directed to breakout rooms, virtual rooms restricted to each pair of students. After the end of the session, all participants return to the main virtual room where the mediation session is held, in which participants are invited to reflect on the important points of the conversation held.

Through mediation – understood as a complex process that is developed before, during and after interactions, which is not limited, thus, to mediation sessions (Ramos & Carvalho, 2018) – we helped the participants in the action of integrating literature into the content of interactions, encouraging them to reflect on literary issues and also share their interpretations and reading impressions with their partners.

The process of inserting literature in teletandem interactions took place as follows: we selected some literary texts (short stories and poems), in Portuguese and Spanish, from different authors, and made them available to participants in a *Google Drive* folder, as reading suggestions. Thus, they could choose some of these texts to discuss in interactions with their partners or even share other literary texts according to their preferences.

All teletandem participants were aware of the proposal for discussion of literature during interactions and signed a consent form, authorizing or not the use of recordings and questionnaires for the development of our study. The students of UNAM were undergraduate and graduate students, from different courses and areas, who sought in teletandem practices a way to facilitate and enhance the learning of the Portuguese, and most of the Brazilian students, in this particular case, were students of *Letras* (Languages and Literature).

The data that we will analyze below were collected in the mediation sessions and teletandem interactions of the second semester of 2022 and are thus configured as a sample of the initial results of the master's research already mentioned here.

The data were collected and registered through recordings of interactions and mediation sessions and transcripts of these recordings.

6.5 Data Analysis

We chose to analyze here two reports of participants about their experiences of reading and discussing literary texts and excerpts from the interaction of a pair of students. As this study is aimed at teaching Portuguese as a foreign language in the teletandem, the analysis will focus on the considerations of participants about literary texts in Portuguese.

The first testimony is from Luiza,⁷ a Brazilian student of Languages and Literature (Portuguese and Spanish). Her partner, Isabel, is Mexican and has a degree in Spanish Languages and Literature. Luiza reported her experience in the mediation session that occurred after the fifth teletandem interaction.⁸ At the time, the mediators asked the participants if they had discussed literary texts with their partners, and Luiza shared her testimony in the following terms:

I'm talking to Isabel and we first read a short story about..., in Portuguese, about **violence**. It is the tale "Maria" that was there in the classroom, and we discussed a lot. We saw some things that are similar between Mexico and Brazil, referring to the issue of **urban violence**, the issue of **racism**. It was really cool to have this exchange *of*, to talk and we are wanting to bring more of these types of *topics* to our next interactions. And the other short story we read was in Spanish, "La Señorita Julia", by Amparo Dávila. And it was really cool. It's a fantastic tale that we read. There was no time for us to finish reading because we had 40 seconds to finish our interaction, but it was a slightly different tale *with*, than Maria's, but it was really cool. It was a fantastic tale that we even managed to relate to "La Casa Tomada" by Julio Cortázar. And that's what we did today. It was really cool this exchange that we had, especially in Maria's tale, that we talked about violence and that was it. (Luiza, 5th Mediation Session, April 26, 2022)⁹

⁷For the sake of confidentiality and to preserve the identities of the students, all names of the research participants are fictitious.

⁸In so that students could practice more the foreign language they studied, mediation sessions took place each week in one language (in Spanish or Portuguese), in a relay system.

⁹In the original: Eu *tô* conversando com a Isabel e::: a gente primeiro leu um conto sobre..., em português, sobre **violência**. É::: o conto "Maria" que estava lá no classroom, e a gente discutiu bastante. A gente viu algumas coisas que são parecidas entre o México e o Brasil, referente a questão da **violência urbana**, a **questão do racismo**. Foi muito legal a gente ter essa troca de:::, pra conversar e a gente está querendo trazer mais desses tipos de temas *pras* nossas próximas interações. E o outro conto que a gente leu foi em espanhol, "La señorita Julia", de Amparo Dávila. E::: foi muito legal. É um conto fantástico que a gente, a gente leu. Não deu tempo da gente terminar de ler porque faltava 40 segundos para acabar a nossa interação, mas era um conto um pouco diferente com, do que o da Maria, mas foi muito legal. Era um conto fantástico que a gente conseguiu até relacionar com "La casa tomada", de Julio Cortázar. E foi isso que a gente fez hoje. Foi bem legal essa troca que a gente teve, principalmente no conto da Maria, que a gente falou sobre violência e foi isso (Luiza, 5ª Sessão de Mediação, 26 de abril de 2022).

In this brief report, Luiza tells details of the interaction with her partner Isabel and shows satisfaction with the experience she had. We found that they read and discussed literary texts in Portuguese and Spanish and that each text referred the discussions to specific topics. From the reading of the short story “Maria,” by the Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo, it is possible to notice that Luiza and Isabel talked about different topics, such as racism and urban violence, identifying “similar things” between Brazil and Mexico. According to Luiza, the “exchange” she had with Isabel was very “cool,” so that both intended to talk about more topics “of these types” in future interactions.

We observed, then, that the participants had the common interest of discussing social issues and were engaged in talking about more literary texts and, thus, engaging in productions that would enable the construction of meanings (Kramersch, 2006). We consider that such engagement reveals the possibility of literature acting in the first component of symbolic competence, *the production of complexity* (Kramersch, 2006), since Luiza and Isabel not only identified social themes present in the short story but also related them to their realities and reflected on them, constructing meanings together from the text.

Thus, Luiza’s report demonstrates the importance of literature in the teletandem context so that discussions acquire a certain complexity and for a diversification in the theme of conversations. The next testimony, now by Isabel, confirms the relevance of the circulation of literary *genres* in the teletandem sessions, as well as presents more details about their interaction:

Well, it is. I started my interactions last week with Luiza and I’m very happy with these interactions, because... It’s always in the tandens I’ve been in, there have always been **cultural exchanges**, but now in this focused on literature, it is... I love it, because I can share my passion, that is... what I studied with someone who also **likes the same thing**. And we can analyze texts by looking at the contexts, *it is if very distant*, but at the same time, so **similar**. It is as well, it is said my colleague, we talk about the text of Mary, bringing to the conversation the theme of **violence in both countries**. And we ended up with a fantastic text, it’s... that also talks about a **certain reality of women**. Although it is a text of 50 years ago, it can continue to **talk about social pressure and how it affects people**. Because it is a fantastic text that *mak* a mixture (correcting), it is... makes a mixture, a mixture of reality and fantasy. So, I don’t know, **I was very happy** because it’s been a long time since I had a conversation like this, because it’s been a long time since I finished *mine, mine... my career. Then well, well nothing*. Thank you very, very much for this. (Isabel, 5th Mediation Session, 26 April 2022)¹⁰

¹⁰In the original: Bem, é. Eu iniciei minhas interações na semana passada com Luiza e eu estou muito feliz com essas interações, pois... É sempre nos *tandens* que eu estive, sempre houve **trocac culturais**, mas agora neste focado em literatura, é eu adoro porque posso compartilhar minha paixão, é aquilo que eu estudei com **alguém que também gosta da mesma coisa**. E podemos analisar textos vendo os contextos, é se **bem distantes**, mas ao mesmo tempo, **tão semelhantes**. É como bem, é disse *meu* colega, falamos do texto da Maria, trazendo para a conversa o tema da **violência nos dois países**. E terminamos com um texto fantástico. É que fala também **de certa realidade das mulheres** que embora seja um texto de 50 anos atrás, pode continuar a falar sobre **a pressão social** e como isso afeta as pessoas, porque é um texto fantástico que *fa* uma mistura (corrigindo), é faz uma mistura, uma mistura da realidade e da fantasia. Então não sei, **eu fiquei muito feliz** porque fazia muito tempo que eu não tinha uma conversa desse tipo, porque já faz muito tempo que eu terminei o meu, meu... minha *carreira*. Então pois, pois nada. Muito, muito obrigada com isto (Isabel, 5ª Sessão de Mediação, 26 de abril de 2022).

In this excerpt, we noticed that, like her partner, Isabel was also very enthusiastic and content with the teletandem meetings, especially because the interactions focused on literature, which did not happen in “other tandens” that she had participated in. We consider that when Isabel says “other tandens,” she is referring to teletandem sessions that did not have as a proposal the insertion of literature in the content of interactions, since the focus on reading and discussing literary texts in teletandem between partner universities is recent, starting in 2019 and consolidating in 2021.

According to the Mexican student, she “loves” interactions focused on literary discussions, because she can share her “passion,” that is, what she studied (literature), with “someone who also likes the same thing.” We realized, then, that the “passion” for literature brings Isabel and Luiza closer and is responsible for promoting an identification between them. Thus, we can understand that the participants share a common interest, which is fundamental for them, although geographically distant, to feel close and have such significant intercultural exchanges.

Therefore, considering intercultural communication as an interaction of multiple discursive systems, such as profession, ethnicity, and age (Kramsch & Hua, 2016), we find, in the experience of Isabel and Luiza, the example of how subjects manifest in their intercultural exchanges not only identities restricted to their nationalities but also broader and diverse identity factors, such as in the case of Luiza and Isabel, the “passion” for literature and a certain identification by gender, since they also discussed the issue of the reality of women in society.

Moreover, according to Isabel, based on the literary discussion, she and her partner were able to analyze texts observing “the contexts,” which she considers very similar, although distant. We understand that “the contexts” mentioned by Isabel refer not only to the contexts of the texts but mainly to the contexts in which both of them are inserted, since they talked about “violence in both countries,” “the reality of women in society,” and “the issue of racism.” Therefore, we notice that Isabel and, in a way, Luiza, realized that in addition to the place and the “walls” of a nation, it is possible to have identifications between people from different nations and also realities in common between countries.

Thus, the analysis of Luiza and Isabel’s reports shows that literature can contribute, especially, to the diversification of themes in teletandem sessions and so that conversations are not limited to cultural comparisons marked by differentiation and “essentialism” (Telles, 2015a). Now, with the analysis of an excerpt of the interaction of the participants Miguel and Rosa, we seek to demonstrate the potential of the literature to also stimulate reflections on its symbolic and highly meaningful language.

Miguel is a Brazilian student of Languages and Literature (Portuguese and Spanish), and Rosa is an Early Childhood Teacher and a Mexican student of Portuguese as a foreign language. The two were also very enthusiastic about the interactions and practices of reading and discussing literary texts, so that literature was present in several meetings of the duo. Some of Rosa and Miguel’s interactions

were recorded by them and made available to the researchers in a folder in *Google Drive*.

Miguel was very fond of reading and writing literary texts. In the second interaction of teletandem, he had the initiative to read two poems by the Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade to Rosa. The first poem was *Mundo Grande* (Big World) and the second *A Flor e a Náusea* (The flower and the Nausea). After reading both poems, Rosa and Miguel commented on the parts they found important and discussed the meaning of a few words. In particular, after reading the poem *A Flor e a Náusea*, Miguel explained to Rosa that the poems of Carlos Drummond de Andrade usually have many figures of speech, and therefore, it is necessary to be a little attentive not to be confused with the meaning of some words. To exemplify this characteristic of the poet, he chose a verse from the poem, and they dialogued in the following terms:¹¹

Miguel: Yea, for example. Here, let me just take an example. Yea, there's a verse of him, which he talks like..., vomiting, it's "vomiting that boredom over the city." It's..., in this case, it's, he uses a figure of speech about the question... Yea, in this case, vomiting would be throwing it out, right? Like... he, when he, he. Yea, in this case, vomiting would be vomiting, right? Like you end up vomiting something. But when we talk, we have..., sometimes we have some figures of speech that we can use, which is to talk like, for example, ah I'm going to... (correcting), "vomiting what's inside you". I've heard, I've heard a lot about this from, from my grandfather. *Mi abuelo decía* (my grandfather used to say): 'vomit this, vomit, vomit, vomit it out that is inside of you, that is you put out what is hurting you', you know?

Rosa: *Estás como, hum, saca lo que traes, lo que te hace daño, lo que::: quieres decir? O algo así?*

(You're like, hum, take out what you bring, what hurts you, what do you mean? Or something like that?)

Miguel: Yes, it's something that *puede* a:::h, that are hurting you, what *you're getting bored of*. Then, it's you, *tú puede* (you can) pull this out to feel more relieved, *para tú ficar más leve* (to feel more relieved), *para tú ficar mejor* (to keep you better), you can say *así* (so). *Entonces* (Then), it's *una* (a), *puede* (can), in this case, in this case, it is *just a* figure of speech. *La parte de* (The part of) vomiting. But, however, *la* (*the*), in this part of "vomiting this boredom over the city", he's trying to say something else, right? He's trying to talk about the question of his feelings about the city, where he's inserted, there, you know?

Rosa: *Rosa: Eh, como, como decir expresa tus sentimientos, puedo decirlo?* (Huh, how, how to say express your feelings, can I say it?)

Miguel: Exact, exact (smiling).

Rosa: *Aunque* (Although), *aunque* we say *nausea fades*, vomit, like, like *si estuvieras enfermo* (if you were sick), sick, right?

¹¹ In the original excerpt, it is possible to notice that the participants, several times, mixed the foreign languages. We consider that this occurred because both had only been studying the foreign language for a short time, being at the beginning of their learning process. Thus, due to this mixture of languages, we opted to do a translation from Portuguese to English, since it was the language that predominated in the discussion. Moreover, the translations were made in order to maintain a certain proximity to the characteristics of the participants' speech. Therefore, we decided to keep the sentences said in Spanish and present in parentheses a translation into English in order to preserve the particularities of this dialog. However, we consider that this mixture of languages did not harm the participants' discussion and their interpretation of the poem.

Miguel: *Sí, sí, porque cuando guardamos mucho las cosas* (because when we keep a lot of things) to ourselves, *para nosotros* (to ourselves), it's... we stay, *como puedo decir?* (How can I say?) It's... we are *mucho* (very), *mucho, tal vez* (sometimes) **restrained** from the situation. And, and *esto es importante para nosotros nos abrimos con las pessoas, con, con nuestros sentimientos* (this is very important for us, we open up with people, with, with our feelings). *No sé si estou hablando* (I don't know if I am speaking) correctly, I'm sorry.

Rose: Correctamente. Sí, cierto. (Correctly. Yes, right)¹²

We observed, in this excerpt that, in order to explain to Rosa the meaning of the word “vomiting” in the poem, Miguel first presented his partner with a metaphorical sense that the word “vomiting” can also acquire in our daily speech. According to the Brazilian student, his grandfather said a lot to him “vomit it out that is inside of you,” that is, “put out what’s hurting you.” This attitude can be understood as a teaching strategy that Miguel used to lead Rosa to understand the metaphorical meaning of “vomiting” in the literary text of Carlos Drummond de Andrade, also demonstrating that in our daily speech, it is common to use metaphors and, thus, a symbolic language.

It was precisely based on this explanation that Rosa asked Miguel if “vomiting” would have the sense of “taking out” within us what harms us. The Brazilian student confirmed yes and added that “taking out” what hurts us is also a way “to feel more relieved.”

Then, Miguel began to explain to his partner the meaning that “vomiting” would have in the poem. According to him, the expression “vomiting this boredom over the city” referred to the feeling of the “lyrical subject” about the city, that is, about the place where he was inserted. To check if she had understood the meaning, Rosa asked Miguel if she could say that such an expression would have the meaning of

¹²In the original: **Miguel:** É, por exemplo. Aqui, deixa eu só pegar um exemplo. É, tem um verso dele, que ele fala assim..., vomitar, é “vomitar esse tédio sobre a cidade”. É:::, no caso, é::: ele faz um pouco da figura de linguagem sobre::: questão... É, no caso, vomitar seria pôr pra fora, né, tipo... ele, quando ele, ele. É, no caso, vomitar seria vômito, né tipo você acabar vomitando alguma coisa, mas quando a gente fala tem, às vezes, a gente tem algumas figuras de linguagem que a gente pode usar, que é falar tipo, por exemplo, ah:: vou é (corrigindo), “vomita isso que está dentro de você”. Eu já escutei, eu escutei muito isso do, do meu avô, mi *abuelo decía*: vomite isto, vomite, é vomite, é vomite isso que está dentro de você. Que. é você colocar para fora o que está te magoando, sabe? **Rosa:** Estás como, hum, saca lo que traes, lo que te hace daño, lo que::: quieres decir? O algo así?. **Miguel:** Sí, é::: algo que *puede*::: ah, que *estás te* magoando, o que *estás te aburrindo*. *Entonces, é::: você, tú puede* tirar isto para fora para ficar mais leve, para *tú* ficar *más* leve, para *tú* ficar *mejor, puede* se dizer *así*. **Miguel:** *Entonces, é una, puede*, neste caso, neste caso, é apenas *una* figura de linguagem. *La parte* de vomitar. Mas, porém, *la*, nesta parte de “vomitar esse tédio sobre a cidade”. Ele está querendo dizer outra coisa, né? Ele está querendo dizer sobre a questão do sentimento dele sobre a cidade, de onde ele está inserido, ali, sabe? **Rosa:** Eh, como, como decir expresa tus sentimientos, puedo decirlo? **Miguel:** Exato, exato (sorriendo). **Rosa:** Aunque aunque se fala náusea, vomito, como, como si estuvieras enfermo, doente, no?

Miguel: *Sí, sí, porque cuando guardamos mucho las cosas para nós, para nosotros, é:::, ficamos, como puedo decir é:::, ficamos mucho, mucho, tal vez, ressabiados de la situación, e, é::: esto es importante para nosotros nos abrimos con las pessoas, con, con nuestros sentimientos. No sé si estou hablando* corretamente, peço perdão. **Rosa:** Correctamente. Sí, cierto

“expressing our feelings.” He said yes “smiling,” as if he was glad that his partner had understood.

In asking this question, Rosa not only showed that she was interested in the observations and corresponding to the explanations of her partner but also complemented Miguel’s interpretation and constructed meanings about the poem together with him. Thus, the expression “vomiting this boredom over the city,” from the considerations of the two participants, would have the sense of “expressing feelings,” more specifically, the feeling of boredom that the “lyrical subject” presents about the place in which he was inserted.

For a better understanding of the expression “vomiting this boredom over the city,” it is valid to present some information about the poem by Carlos Drummond de Andrade. *The Flower and Nausea* portrays the situation of a subject who once, walking along the gray street of a city, feels nauseous. It is what is around the lyrical speaker that seems to cause the nausea and the discomfort he feels. The impression we have is that this individual, during the journey he makes through this city, seems to manifest and express his feelings of dissatisfaction with the world. In his view, society seems to be dirty and sick. However, in the midst of this social context of desolation, the poetic subject witnesses something unexpected, the birth of a flower on the asphalt, which can represent hope in the face of the situation experienced by him.

We note, then, that the expression “vomiting this boredom over the city” is one of several metaphorical meanings present in the poem by Carlos Drummond de Andrade and only one of the different feelings that the lyrical subject has about society. Even though the participants focused their dialogue, especially in this metaphor, their interpretation of the poem contemplates, in a certain way, the general meaning of this text, since it can be understood as the manifestation and expression of someone’s feelings, as in a situation of “getting something off one’s chest.”

In view of this, we noticed that Miguel and Rosa constructed meanings about the expression in question, from the “isotopies”¹³ of the poem, that is, they made interpretations about the meaning that the word “vomiting” can present in the context of the text, based on the readings (interpretations) inscribed in the text as possibilities (Fiorin, 2008). In this sense, the association between “vomiting” and “expressing” (in this case, feelings), made by them, was only possible because the students perceived in the syntagmatic of the poem something that connected these two words, that is, they noticed that between the meanings of these two terms, there is a relationship of similarity or intersection (Fiorin, 2008), since both express the idea of “throwing out” or “externalizing” something, thus forming a metaphor. Moreover, we understand that, in the construction of this understanding, the word “boredom” associated with the word “vomiting” was of great importance, since

¹³Fiorin (2008), when analyzing the metaphorical and metonymic relationships in association with the reading plans of “pluri-isotopic” texts (those that admit several readings/interpretations), states that the readings that can be made of a text are established by isotopy, defined as “the recurrence, along a syntagmatic chain, of semic categories, which guarantee unity to discourse” (Fiorin, 2008, p. 84, our translation).

“boredom” is a human feeling. Thus, by the interpretation of Miguel e Rosa, the term “vomiting” has the metaphorical sense of “expressing feelings.”

We also consider that this interpretation was fundamental for both to take the initiative in seeking to understand other metaphorical meanings of Carlos Drummond de Andrade’s poem. At the end of the above excerpt, for example, the Mexican student suggests that the issue of nausea, a recurring theme in the poem, could also be related to illness, that is, a characteristic of a sick person. Agreeing with Rosa’s idea, Miguel states that when we “keep our feelings to ourselves,” we can sometimes become too restricted to the situation, so that we avoid opening up to others. This speech adds other meanings to the association between “nausea” and “illness,” made by Rosa, and suggests the idea that often by not “getting something off our chest” and expressing our feelings with others, we can damage our mental health and become ill. Miguel’s speech also suggests that “opening up” with others and expressing what we feel can be a way to avoid illness.

In addition, after the dialogue kept in the excerpt analyzed above, Rosa and Miguel talked more about the poem and made an interpretation about the birth of the flower on asphalt, which we believe is important to mention. Rosa’s attention was drawn to the fact that the flower has pierced the asphalt, because, in her view, for something to pierce the asphalt, it needs to be strong as a machine. Thus, Rosa’s thought indicates that the flower that was born on the street was not an ordinary flower but a flower that would have, for example, the strength of a machine. Miguel, then, agreed with his partner and presented his interpretation of the last verse of the poem:

Miguel: And::: when, it’s when Drummond *habla* (talks) in this, in this is, in this part here that, it’s, “pierced the asphalt, boredom, disgust and hatred”, it’s, it’s, it’s, he says, I see, I interpret it in this way, as:::

Pink: Uhum (confirming).

Miguel: I interpret it as if he were saying that the flower took it all away. It not only pierced the asphalt, it also “pierced” the boredom.

Rosa: *El tedio* (the boredom) (nodding in confirmation gesture).

Miguel: So, it (the flower) was a novelty. So, because it’s a novelty, it took away the boredom, took away the disgust and hatred that he probably had for the city, there, right? Like, it changed the city’s air for him, right? So, I see a little bit of that from there.

Rosa: Sure!

In this excerpt, there is again a reflection of Miguel on an expression of the poem that has a symbolic meaning. For the Brazilian student, when the flower “pierces” the asphalt, boredom, disgust, and hatred, it is as if she “takes away” (puts a stop/makes cease) all these feelings that the lyrical subject probably had about the city, because it is a novelty. This interpretation not only demonstrates how willing Miguel was to share his literary perceptions with Rosa but also shows that his ideas and his partner’s thoughts are strictly related. Thus, considering Rosa’s previous idea, we can understand that the flower, quoted in the poem, is a flower that not only has the “strength” to pierce an asphalt but also to put an end to the negative feelings of the poetic speaker.

It is important to mention that after the conversation transcribed in the excerpts above, Miguel asked Rosa if she wanted to know the meaning of any more words of the poem. Then, the Mexican student asked him to explain the meaning of the word “faded.” At the end of the interaction, at Rosa’s suggestion, the duo translated the poem *A Flor e a Nausea* into Spanish, in a very productive collaborative practice. This activity shows that both Rosa and Miguel had a great interest in learning the foreign language they were studying, as well as the importance of interactions to enhance the teaching and learning process experienced and developed by them.

Therefore, Rosa and Miguel’s considerations about some metaphorical meanings, present in the poem, once again demonstrate how literature can stimulate reflections and act on the first component of symbolic competence, in *the production of complexity*, especially, by engaging subjects in situations that provide the construction of meanings (Kramersch, 2006). The data show how the duo interpreted some metaphorical meanings of the poem, as well as created meanings from the highly meaningful poetic language of literary texts, which evidences the importance of the first aspect present in the complex nature of a literary work explained by Candido (2011), that is, the fact that a literary text is “a construction of autonomous objects with structure and meaning” (Candido, 2011, pp. 178–179). This aspect, as seen, is fundamental for the literature to perform its humanizing function and thus become the subjects more able to organize their vision of the world (Candido, 2011).

6.6 Final Remarks

In this study, we present some reflections on reading and discussion practices of literary texts in Teletandem, especially, observing how literature can contribute to potentiate discussions in this context. Data analysis showed that literature can intensely influence language learning, enrich discussions, stimulate the reflection of issues related to participants and human existence, and also contribute to the emergence of more diverse themes.

In general, we noticed that reading and discussing literary texts contributed to the conversations of the two pairs not only focusing on cultural issues marked by differentiation and linked to a static notion of culture but also unfolding into discussions about social issues and literary interpretations.

Data analysis also presented the possibilities of action of the literature in one of the three major components of symbolic competence: in the “production of complexity” (Kramersch, 2006). However, we believe that future analyses of our research will demonstrate that literature can also act on the other two components of symbolic competence: “tolerance of ambiguity” and “form as meaning” (Kramersch, 2006).

In addition, we understand that the contributions of literature to the construction of teaching and learning processes of foreign languages, which provide learners with constructive, critical, and reflective intercultural experiences, are strongly

linked to the potentiality of literary works to act on subjects, mainly through their highly meaningful poetic language.

Finally, we emphasize the relevance of the teletandem project for the dissemination of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) and also for Portuguese language teachers in training to have the opportunity to teach their mother tongue in a different context from the traditional classroom. Miguel, for example, was able to share his literary perceptions with Rosa and use pedagogical strategies to explain to his partner the metaphorical meanings of the poem. From the data analyzed, we also noticed Miguel's concern with Rosa's learning and his great interest in teaching her Portuguese.

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Chapter 7

Spanish Teaching-Learning Process in the Context of Teletandem: Dialogues on Literature



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7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents partial results of the development of research projects at master's and scientific initiation levels, which have been undertaken since mid-2020. Such studies are based on reflections about the dissemination of culture, language, and literature through virtual exchange, since this practice has become an important tool for the development, among its participants, of linguistic, discursive, and interactional skills, as well as for the expansion of their knowledge through the exchange of scientific and cultural knowledge.

From this perspective, the research aims to reflect on the circulation of literary texts in the context of virtual exchange of the Teletandem (Telles, 2009), more specifically, to observe how reading and sharing these texts can contribute to enhance interactions and improve the process of teaching and learning Spanish language, as well as the training of Spanish teachers.

It is important to highlight that this experience is linked to an international network research project (CAPES PrInt Program – UNESP), which develops studies on the processes of dissemination of culture, language, and literature in the context of telecollaboration.¹

¹“Dissemination of culture, language and literature in contexts of telecollaboration.” Project linked to the CAPES/PrInt/UNESP agreement - PROPG 02/2019 – International Research Networks, under the coordination of Dr. Karin Adriane Henschel Pobbe Ramos (UNESP).

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The scope of studies of this network has multiple facets. On the one hand, issues related to the democratization of access to foreign languages as well as their artistic-cultural products are discussed, especially in the context of a course in Letters of a Brazilian university, located in the interior of the State of São Paulo, whose students, for the most part, have never had an experience of cultural exchange. On the other hand, studies on the processes of dissemination of knowledge through telecollaboration also provide reflections on the education of readers, in a broad sense, as producers of meaning. There is also a research strand that encompasses the contributions of telecollaborative experiences to the training of language and literature teachers (Ramos & Carvalho, 2020, pp. 131–132).

In this context, the research considered here unfolds based on the following objectives:

1. To investigate the concept of telecollaboration, as well as to characterize the Teletandem.
2. To monitor and participate in the mediation process of the Teletandem Portuguese x Spanish sessions, developed between Brazilian and Hispanic students, from our university and partner universities.
3. From this context, collect data (through questionnaires and interviews with the interactants) to investigate how/if questions related to the literature emerge in these contexts.
4. To investigate how the circulation of literary texts can contribute to the exchange of knowledge and, consequently, enhance the Teletandem sessions.
5. To discuss about the results, based on data observed in this mediation process, also considering its implications in the teaching and learning process of Spanish/foreign language and in the training of Spanish-language teachers and their literatures.

For its development, we are based on studies already conducted on the Teletandem, as a context of virtual exchange, considering its principles and the mediation process, besides also considering the conception of Candido (1972) about the humanizing function of literature and the cross-cultural perspective, according to Welsch (1999, p. 7), which proposes a relationship of mixture and interaction between cultures.

Methodologically, the projects are based on qualitative research, of an interpretive character, in the terms explained by Lüdke and André (2013), when they state that in this type of research, there is emphasis on the process and concern to portray the perspective of the participants, besides the natural environment being a direct source of the data. These characteristics fit our objectives, since we developed a research in the context of the Teletandem, focusing on the process of mediation of interactions in the context of initial training of Spanish-speaking teachers, as well as the production of their independence and the development of their reflexive capacity. Thus, the qualitative methodology, besides allowing us to observe every movement of the process, is characterized by this emancipatory character.

The reflections we present here are due to the activities of Teletandem developed in the partnership between the Universidade Estadual Paulista (São Paulo State

University – UNESP, FCL/Assis) and the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (National Autonomous University of Mexico – UNAM, Mediateca/ENALLT), in interactions that occurred during the second half of 2021.²

Thus, the chapter is organized as follows: initially, we present the theoretical references that support our reflections; then, we describe the context of the investigation, in addition to explaining methodological aspects of the actions in the Teletandem UNESP-UNAM; and then discuss and analyze the data observed in the development of these studies until then.

7.2 Theoretical Discussion

Virtual exchange has been growing a lot in recent years, both in the field of research and teaching, as well as in the construction of partnerships between universities around the world and, thus, has occupied an important place for language teaching and learning. Telecollaboration has already been defined by several scholars. In 2011, O’Dowd refers to this term as “the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their foreign language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work” (O’Dowd, 2011, p. 342). What’s more, virtual exchange can refer to a variety of contexts such as learning environments in global networks, *online collaborative international learning*, global virtual teams, e-tandem, and teletandem.

In-tandem learning proposes that two apprentices work together according to their goal, which in this case is to learn a foreign language. Teletandem, in turn, consists of a form of virtual exchange; recently, O’Dowd and O’Rourke (2019, p. 4) has presented a summary table with an overview of the terminologies used to refer to the main research contexts on virtual exchange, spread around the world. According to this scenario, the general term *virtual exchange* encompasses the contexts of telecollaboration, online intercultural exchange, learning environments in global networks, *international collaborative learning online*, global virtual teams, e-Tandem, and Teletandem (Ramos & Carvalho, 2020, pp. 134–135).

The reflections we undertake here refer, therefore, to the context of virtual exchange of Teletandem, defined by Telles as follows:

Teletandem is a mode of telecollaboration – a virtual, collaborative and autonomous context for learning foreign languages in which two students help each other to learn their own languages (or language of proficiency). They do so by using the text, voice and webcam image resources of VOIP technology (such as Skype), and by adopting the three principles

²A medialibrary is a center for self-directed language learning that has the resources to learn and practice German, Russian, French, Chinese, Portuguese, etc. The media library offers advice, workshops, materials for learning languages, teletandem sessions, and a wide range of printed and digital resources to support the learning of an additional language (<https://mediateca.enallt.unam.mx/>)

of tandem learning: autonomy, reciprocity, and separate use of both languages. [...] (Telles, 2015, p. 604)

As noted, the Teletandem is defined by three basic principles. The first is *the separation of languages*, which suggests that time is divided between languages in a balanced way; however, the alternation between them can be a strategy for communication at times. The second principle is that of *reciprocity*, which presupposes a commitment on the part of the interactants to participate and contribute to the partner also achieving its objectives, thus seeking to meet each other's expectations. The principle of *autonomy* can have different definitions, according to the teletandem modality, whether institutional or not institutional. Our context is a non-integrated institutional Teletandem partnership, so, in this case, autonomy proposes that each participant be responsible for the decisions and management of their own learning.³

Teletandem should also be understood as a context in which interactants have as a common objective, the teaching and learning of languages; that way, it can not be confused as a simple chat. The word *tandem*, in this sense, refers to the idea of two apprentices working together according to their objective, which, in this case, is to learn a foreign language.

[...] *tandem* is performed through frequent bilingual sessions, with didactic purposes. They are meetings established in consensus by two speakers of different languages who are not necessarily native, nor professors with degrees. Both are interested in studying the foreign language in which the other is more proficient. (Telles, 2009, p. 21)⁴

In addition to these aspects, it is important to consider that Teletandem in the way it has been establishing itself in recent years, in our institution, encompasses in *its configuration not only* the virtual interaction sessions strictly but also the entire *mediation process*. Thus, mediation is understood here as a broader process that, although it includes the *mediation session* in its strictest sense (Telles, 2015), as a moment of group discussion held after the interactions (shared meeting, held jointly in the laboratories themselves or in virtual environments, as in the context of the pandemic), includes several procedures: “[...] it is a whole process that begins in the first contacts with foreign institutions and extends to organization, monitoring, supervision and evaluation” (Carvalho & Ramos, 2019).

In view of the objective of this proposal presented here, namely, that of inserting dialogues on literature in the context of Teletandem, it is also necessary to observe the perspective from which we leave in this regard. With regard to literary education, we emphasize the humanizing function of literature (Candido, 1972), considering

³Mode of *Non-Integrated Institutional Teletandem* (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014): when interactions are agreed between the two institutions, through mediators, but are not necessarily integrated into the curriculum or course, in both contexts

⁴Original in Portuguese: “[...] o *tandem* é realizado por meio de sessões bilíngues frequentes, com finalidades didáticas. São encontros estabelecidos em consenso por dois falantes de diferentes línguas que não são necessariamente nativos, nem professores com licenciatura. Ambos estão interessados em estudar a língua estrangeira na qual o outro é mais proficiente. (Telles, 2009, p. 21).” Translated by the authors.

that it can act directly in the formation of the subject, both with regard to psychological issues of capacity or need to fantasize and with regard to aspects of educational formation and also with regard to the social dimension of identification of the subject with the universe represented in the literary work.

Now, if no one can spend twenty-four hours without diving into the universe of fiction and poetry, the literature conceived in the broad sense to whom I have referred seems to correspond to a universal need, which needs to be satisfied and whose satisfaction constitutes a right. (Candido, 2004, p. 175)⁵

In this sense, we agree with Candido that access to literature is an indispensable right of every human being, being a universal manifestation that transcends the boundaries of time and space. Therefore, this study developed within the scope of research projects seeks to reflect the extent to which literature can contribute to language learning in the Teletandem, considering these aspects.

For this, a cross-cultural perspective is also assumed, according to Welsch (1999, p. 7), which proposes a relationship between cultures. Thus, it is not a relationship of isolation and conflict but of entanglement, mixing, and interaction. It promotes, therefore, not separation but exchange and applies to the political, social, scientific, educational, and artistic spheres, supporting reflections that concern issues emerging from contemporaneity.

The importance of these discussions lies in the constitution of a space for studies on the processes of dissemination of culture, language, and literature in contexts of telecollaboration, using technology for the reason being language learning as well as literary education, that is, verbal interaction, with subjects historically situated in concrete language practices, discussing subjects that concern the interactants, from literary texts, and assisted by the mediators.

7.3 Research Context

For the development of this study, data from the interaction and mediation sessions in Teletandem between UNESP and UNAM are observed and analyzed, which took place during the second half of 2021. It is a partnership between our university and the Mexican university, which promotes the teaching and learning of languages, in this case, Portuguese and Spanish, as well as contributes to the process of teacher training (as Spanish/foreign language teachers), with regard to the Brazilian context. It is important to note that the Brazilian participants are mostly students of Letters/Spanish; Mexican participants are students from various careers of higher education, including Administration, Philosophy, Geography, History, and Engineering.

⁵Original in Portuguese: Ora, se ninguém pode passar vinte e quatro horas sem mergulhar no universo da ficção e da poesia, a literatura concebida no sentido amplo a quem me referi parece corresponder a uma necessidade universal, que precisa ser satisfeita e cuja satisfação constitui um direito (Candido, 2004, p. 175). Translated by the authors.

The sessions were held on Tuesdays, once a week, in 1-h and 30-min meetings over 8 weeks, during October, November, and December. For UNAM students, Teletandem's activities are part of the Portuguese/foreign language course, whose activities are considered part of the Mediateca classes. For UNESP students, Teletandem was a voluntary activity; thus, the students enrolled according to their interest in the project; in general, they were encouraged by the teachers of Spanish language and literature.

Both the interaction sessions and the mediation sessions were performed via *the Zoom application*, and each student's access to the⁶platform took place from their homes and their own *equipment, usually notebooks* and mobile phones, in view of the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it impossible to access the laboratories of the institutions involved, due to the need for social isolation due to sanitary issues. The proposal was to make up this group of 30 interactants, 15 Brazilians (students of the bachelor's degree course in Letters with qualification in Spanish) and 15 Mexicans (students of Portuguese as a foreign language at Mediateca/UNAM). The entire process of organizing the activities was under the responsibility of the mediators: on the one hand, the Portuguese professor who works at the Mexican university and, on the other, the professors of Spanish and methodology at the Brazilian university and their research mentors.

During this period, each weekly session, all participants initially entered the same virtual environment (in a single *Zoom room*) a few minutes in advance. This moment was dedicated to the reception of students, presentations, instructions on the practice of Teletandem, its principles and objectives, clarifications related to technical questions, information about questionnaires and forms, etc. This room was then subdivided into 15 others, through the *Breakout Rooms tool*,⁷ where the pairs were virtually displaced in private environments. For this moment of interaction itself, an hour was reserved, in which the alternation of languages should occur, being dedicated 30 min for each of them.⁸

After the *interaction session*, all students were again virtually relocated to the home room, when the last 20 min were used for the *mediation session*, which was also used for information recording and data collection. This moment was, in fact, a great differential in the sessions of this semester, since all students, both Brazilian and Mexican, participated in the discussions together, which was made possible by the synchronous virtual context. Based on this follow-up and discussions, the mediators had access to peer information, and this allowed a greater understanding of the whole process, especially about what occurred in the interactions.

⁶<https://zoom.us/meetings>

⁷Small-group rooms allow you to divide the meeting of *Zoom* up to 50 separate sessions. The meeting host can split meeting attendees into independent sessions automatically and manually and can switch between sessions at any time (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/es/articles/206476093-Introducci%C3%B3n-a-las-salas-para-grupos-peque%C3%B1os>)

⁸We try to keep the same pairs in all interactions throughout the semester; however, due to some of the options, substitutions of participants were necessary.

In the mediation sessions, the members could talk about the contents worked, their difficulties, and the positive and negative points, as well as observe the objectives outlined for the interactions, besides reflecting on their language learning process in teletandem. Also, at this moment of mediation, there was the alternation of languages, 1 week in Portuguese and another in Spanish; this allowed the interactants to express themselves in the foreign language before the whole group, which constituted for them a very challenging aspect. Through this conversation, the mediators passed orientations as well as outlined some strategies with the objective of potentiating interactions so that the interactants could deepen their discussions and, consequently, expand their linguistic and cultural knowledge.

We also asked the students to record their interaction, through Zoom's own tool; to do so, their authorization as well as the participants' consent form was required so that all the data generated in these sessions could be used for research. The mediators also took responsibility for explaining to the students how the use of the recorded material and the responses of the forms would be used, ensuring their confidentiality and the secure storage of such data.

All these recordings, both of the mediation sessions, made by the UNAM technician, and those of the interaction sessions were stored in *Google Drive folders*, created by the mediators. These folders were identified with the name of each pair, and weekly, participants should insert the videos.

7.4 Data Analysis: “Teletandem with Literature”

As we already pointed out, the edition of Teletandem between UNESP and UNAM, related to the second half of 2021, focused on promoting the exchange of literary texts and their discussion among pairs of interactants. The proposal aimed to enhance interactions in order to contribute to the process of teaching and learning foreign languages, in the case of Spanish and Portuguese.

In this context, the mediators played a fundamental role in the forwarding and supervision of the activities suggested to peers, during interactions, especially in order to promote the reading and sharing of literary texts. It is necessary to point out that mediation, in the partnership considered here, is understood as a broader process that includes beyond the moment of group discussion, carried out after the interactions (shared meeting, made jointly in the laboratories themselves or in virtual environments, as in the context of the pandemic), various procedures, which begin from the first contacts and negotiations with foreign institutions and extend to the organization, planning, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of all actions throughout the process (Carvalho & Ramos, 2019).

Thus, the mediators on the Brazilian side, in partnership with the mediating professor of the Mexican university, previously selected some texts, in Spanish and Portuguese, from both Brazilian and Mexican authors, which were presented to the group initially. It is important to note that all participants were aware of the proposal since its disclosure, according to an invitation conveyed by the institutional email:

Teletandem UNESP – UNAM (2nd. semester 2021)

Teletandem with literature

Public: Students of Letters/Spanish

This semester, the interactions between Unesp and Unam teletandem will focus and aim at the exchange of literary texts and their discussion among pairs of interactants. There will be a pre-selection of texts in Portuguese and Spanish. The proposal is to contribute to the process of teaching and learning foreign language is very productive and enriching!

Fill out the form with your information and wait for confirmation e-mail from the Teletandem Brasil team. Interactions will be performed at home, via zoom, due to restrictions and security measures arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. Initial guidance on the interactions available in the link below.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1np_OT7lmt8OcJJoXjiGu2Nmfvx00wGwRqs_hYdNmZu0

In case of questions, please contact us by e-mail: teletandemassis@gmail.com. Do you want to participate? Write down the days of the interactions, fill out the form with your information and wait for confirmation e-mail from the Teletandem Brasil team. Interactions: duration of the interaction 60 minutes + 20 minutes of mediation.

Chart 7.1 lists the literary texts presented: in the first column, the selected authors are included; in the second and third columns are their respective works and *genres*.

The sharing of the selected literary texts was carried out through *Google Classroom*, a digital platform that is easy to access students. In the activities tab, two themes were created, the first of Brazilian literature and the second of Mexican literature; thus, in these fields, the interactants found the texts and made their options for reading and discussion, according to their preferences and interests.

For the analysis of the data presented here, we considered, according to the objective of this study, to observe some aspects related to the learning process of Spanish/foreign language by Brazilian students. Thus, initially, we examined a transcribed excerpt from one of the mediation sessions; then, we observed some transcribed fragments of the interactions themselves between one of the pairs of interactants that remained fixed from beginning to end; and finally, we commented on some answers extracted from a questionnaire sent to the participants at the end of the process.

The mediation sessions, as already explained, took place together with Mexican and Brazilian interactants, with the supervision of the mediating teachers, all in the same virtual environment, alternating languages each week, in a period of 20–30 min, after interactions in pairs. In this context, the students were encouraged to report about their experience, talk about the chosen texts, and the subjects discussed and, in particular, present those triggered by shared literary reading, in addition to observing their difficulties and facilities, expectations, and learning objectives. These moments constituted an important space for the monitoring of the process and the conduction and referral of actions, in order to enhance the participation of those involved as well as to observe their motivation and engagement in the activities of “Teletandem with Literature.”

From the participation in the mediation sessions, we observed the potential of Teletandem, because it allows, through literary reading, the discussion about social, historical, and cultural contents and contact with another reality, which contributes greatly to the development of linguistic competence in the foreign language, in a cross-cultural perspective (Welsch, 1999). To illustrate, we present an account in

Brazilian Literature		
Author	Literary work	Literary genre
Carlos Drummond de Andrade	<i>A flor e a náusea (1988)</i>	Poem
	<i>Mundo Grande (1988)</i>	Poem
Cecilia Meireles	<i>Retrato (2016)</i>	Poem
	<i>Canção (2016)</i>	Poem
Conceição Evaristo	<i>Olhos d'água (2016)</i>	Short story
	<i>Vozes-Mulheres (2017)</i>	Poem
	<i>Fêmea-Fênix (2017)</i>	Poem
	<i>No meio do caminho: deslizantes águas (2017)</i>	Poem
Ferreira Gullar	<i>Bananas podres 4 (2010)</i>	Poem
João Cabral de Melo Neto	<i>A educação pela pedra (2006)</i>	Poem
	<i>O Sertanejo Falando (2006)</i>	Poem
Lygia Fagundes Telles	<i>O dedo (1981)</i>	Short story
Marina Colasanti	<i>A moça tecelã (1999)</i>	Short story
Mexican Literature		
Author	Literary work	Literary genre
Juan Rulfo	<i>El llano en llamas (2005)</i>	Short story
Horacio Quiroga	<i>Cuentos de amor, locura y de muerte (1917)</i>	Short story
Sor Juana	<i>Redondillas (2021)</i>	Poem
	<i>Poemas de amor (1998)</i>	Poem

Chart 7.1 Suggestions of literary texts for “teletandem with literature”. Colasanti (1999), de Andrade (1988), de la Cruz (1998), de la Cruz (2021), de Melo Neto (2006), Evaristo (2016), Evaristo (2017), Gullar (2010), Meireles (2016), Quiroga (1917), Rulfo (2005), and Telles (1981)

which a pair of interactants comment on their experience of reading literary texts in this context.

Interactant (Br) – First of all I wanted to thank you for this opportunity, because I was lucky enough to be there on a pair with a philosopher. In the **first meeting I had the idea of passing the poem “No meio do caminho”, by Drummond and, well, she read this week and told me that she was thinking all week. We then discussed in counterpoint with the poem “No meio do caminho: deslizantes águas” by a writer, Conceição Evaristo, and we were able to make a counterpoint to the original poem and this other one that talks a lot with him.** Talking a little about the context and how incredible she had another different look, which I had not had yet. And well the time is very short, if we had two hours we would be there talking, but **that’s how we talk about social issues and as she is a philosopher she has many reflections about the moment we are going through and we were able to reflect on these issues** and, well, it is being something incredibly profitable and, well, I wanted to thank you for being part of that.

Mediator 1 – Very well, thank you very much for the interest. How cool! Where is the philosopher?

Interactant (Mx) – Here I am. I think I liked this session a lot, I mean, I think we just read something in common, and I like that something, that is, from the same point we are both starting and adding our reading, he told me just how the poem was made from the life of the author’s biography and I tell him, well, precisely this poem he tells me that it is quite well known in Brazil that is a classic, we gave it as a political reading, where the stone can be the same government, that **precisely the river of water that is spoken with Conceição Evaristo we can be the same society and it is something that we can travel beyond, We just review a little of the social history, of the social problems, of the current problems that each of us has and that still converge in a way, right? Precisely maybe because of this Latin American experience in which we are and because for next week we plan to talk about 1968,** in which there are many literatures and so we are learning poems and so also our history and where we come from. I liked it very, very much.(Excerpt extracted from mediation session, 26/10/2021).

According to the report of the interactants, transcribed here, we confirm that the reading of literary texts allowed a discussion not only restricted to aesthetic and linguistic issues (more punctually) but, above all, about social and historical themes, which led to a better understanding of the world and its relations, especially on issues with which we identify ourselves as Latin Americans, which corroborates its humanizing potential. The pair discussed about social aspects of their countries, entering into problems of the past and present, resignifying them, including, as in the construction of meaning attributed to the word “stone,” from one of the analyzed poems, to refer to the difficulties faced in relation to the established governments. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how the report of these interactants complements itself; in this sense, we believe that the mediation session with the participation of both groups can favor both the scope of learning, teletandem practice, and research in Teletandem.

By entering more specifically the data from the interaction sessions, we observed that literature could also trigger deeper conversations, providing the learning of the Spanish language in a more significant way. We present an excerpt in which the interactants discuss their perceptions of reading the poem *Hombres necios que usáis*, by the Mexican writer, popularly known as *Sor Juana*. This pair chose to make a previous reading before the interaction and mark parts of the text to make

the discussion of what seemed most interesting to them; also the Brazilian interactant pointed out in advance words and expressions in which he had difficulty understanding. In the following excerpt, extracted from this interaction, we observe that their discussion triggers conversation on topics related to very relevant issues, such as the condition of women in society, especially in the Mexican and Brazilian context, which leads participants to a reflection on gender inequality and abusive relationships, based on their perception:

BR. I think the ending is very interesting. Ah, the **part you underscored “la que peca por la paga/ o ¿el que paga por pecar?”** The sense of sin, because sin may be of a more sexual connotation, but sin is error, then it can be any attitude other than that which is put as good. [...]

ME. Yes, because... I mean, **even if the situation is bad if it's a woman, it's worse, even if a certain man does badly, for a woman it's much worse**, and I think so, this is what you want to express in this part, right?

BR. Yes.

ME. I think the text in general speaks to you like... **In other words, it is a criticism of machismo, a macho society** as well, but **also of inequality**, right? That there is, not so much gender, but also inequality within the power of relationship that people have, even more a loving relationship.

BR. Yes.(Excerpt extracted from interaction session, 09/11/2021).

We noticed that although the initial concern of the pair was to deepen the linguistic aspects to ensure a better understanding, this fact did not prevent them from advancing in the study of the content, since the reflection expressed by them started from the recognition of their structure/form in search of meaning, at the same time. This is precisely due to the characteristic of the literary genre of awakening in its reader the interest to observe lexical choice, the mode of expression, and how this is configured in the reconstruction of the senses, in the composition of the poem, for example. We also confirm the potentiality of the literary text in telecollaboration interactions, since the issues addressed by the interactants move from a more superficial level of comparison of the differences between countries and their cultures and ways of life to lead to reflection on the convergent aspects, such as the issue of gender inequality, present in both cultural contexts represented here.

Thus, we identified the humanizing potential of literature, which has both the ability to represent man and to contribute to his own education (Candido, 2002). In the excerpt discussed and analyzed by the duo, it is possible to perceive that fiction is part of a real situation (the woman who is marginalized), and this allowed the interactants to create a bridge that connects the explanatory imagination, identified in the interpretative discourse of the literary text of the interactants, and the fictional imagination, that of the author of the poem, recognized through the literary text itself.

Candido (2002) argues that literature can be understood mainly as a way to achieve knowledge, since the literary work develops through the author's observation of the world and the personalities he finds in it, that is, its context, which demonstrates that the fact that literature is inspired by the real does not minimize its ability to influence it. In the following excerpt, we have an example of how one of the

interactants was influenced by this literary inspiration, after reading the short story “Olhos d’Água,” by the Afro-Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo:

BR: Why, there is, I don’t know if it’s like that in Spanish, but it’s because it talks about, ah. Sensitive matters and made me remember a little of my mother, then, my mother already, as they say. My God, I do not know how to say in Spanish but, she died in two thousand thirteen, so, ah... I remember her, you know? And it was a very interesting read.

ME: Ok.

BR: So, sometimes the character talks about ... She speaks that she remembers the color of her mother’s eyes and sometimes I keep thinking that I don’t remember much of my mother’s voice. So, I have in my head but it is not clear, and I do not have many recordings of her because at the time she was “starting” whatsapp, so she still did not have and then I do not have audios or recordings of her to remember what her voice was like, **and I think that’s why I got very excited.**

ME: I understand, what you know is like... I don’t know how what happens but if the memories become blurred, not then...

BR: Yes.

ME: Yes, that, hum.

BR: And what do you think if we start reading, can it be?

ME: Hum.

BR: Do you want to start reading?(Excerpt extracted from interaction session, 16/11/2021).

We realized, in the discourse of the Brazilian interactant, how much his relationship with the chosen text had a great socioaffective impact, causing him to identify with the main character of the narrative, who did not remember the color of his mother’s eyes; likewise, he shares with the Mexican interactant the gaps in his memory as to the timbre of his mother’s voice, who has already died. Thus, we observe how such readings can add values to subjectivity in an unconscious and subconscious way, and this is because literature is capable of representing life indiscriminately, moving paradoxes, which allows the reader to identify the existing clash between the conventional idea of fiction and its representation of the real, and such characteristic can be considered as one of the ways to experience its profound humanizing role.

With this, we agree with Candido (2002), because the author points out that the educational character of literature will always be beyond the pedagogical field; this occurs because it would not be committed to pedagogical training, nor is it constituted by virtue of political groups, precisely because it has no interest in meeting the interests of dominant groups but, rather, to provide the reader with ways to better interact with the social environment and appropriate this understanding, through expressiveness in the reality presented.

We also observed, through the excerpts of the interactions, moments in which reflections about specific linguistic uses are triggered, configuring itself as a very fruitful foreign language learning strategy in the Teletandem environment, which contributes greatly to the understanding and awareness about the functioning of the language, from an authentic context of virtual interaction. As an illustration, we observed, not in the following passage, that the interactants, while sharing their perceptions of reading about the *poem Redondillas*, by *Sor Juana*, discuss the use of the future form of subjunctive, absent in the Spanish language, one of the difficulties of Brazilians in learning the language to express conditional construction, as he

himself states. Upon receiving rectification, he reveals to his partner this aspect of grammatical difficulty with the language, demonstrating the receptivity to the correction received as well as his understanding:

BR. And it is that even in this time of the pandemic the cases of, I do not know if in Spanish it is the same but, the femicide.

ME. Yes, it's the same.

BR. It's the same. They went up in this period. Because women had to stay locked up with their...

ME. Couples, right?

BR. Couples, then, because of this, it is a question that although there are some changes, the situation is far from no longer a situation, to be, to be resolved, yes?

[...]

BR. Yes, I think it's a struggle that... It is a struggle that... A great struggle that has a lot to happen, but it is a struggle that we have to start now, now, and that makes the ... Hum...

If we want that to improve, we need to start ah... then and start in some village and

ME. True, **yes we want**, uhum

BR. Yes, **we want** that. **Want... Want... is we want... It's because we study the subjunctive and sometimes I ... I'm wrong** with the conjugation of... that requires more time that is a bit difficult for us, ah... put into practice.⁹

ME. Yes, why?

BR. Oh, I don't know, I don't think we use much in Portuguese, in oral language, no. We use, but it's a little different because now I'm not going to know how to explain to you, it's a little different (laughs).

ME. Yes, **I think I understand you**, it is, for example, I suffer with the personal infinitive and this future of subjunctive we really do not have. That is, the subjunctive future is already in disuse and the other we do not have then. **Well, as without a doubt one always resorts to what** you already know, no, that is, the verb tenses that already have your fixed, then this is given so that we get a little confused but stay calm. You know a lot, you talk a lot. Well, there you can ask me "**Oh, how am I going to be a writer and Spanish teacher?**", (couples laugh) **because I don't know, everything is calm, because I continue studying.**

BR. Uhum. (Excerpt extracted from interaction session, 16/11/2021)

When the interactions ended, we sent students, also through *Google Forms*, a questionnaire with the objective not only of gathering data but, above all, with the purpose of encouraging, once again, that participants reflect on the experience, throughout this period of interactions, and to observe, eventually, the contributions of literary reading in the context of telecollaboration. Through the answers, we verified, first, that the proposal of "Teletandem with literature" triggered, in addition to the discussion of suggested texts, the sharing of many other texts of various authors, not only of Brazilian and Mexican literature, which allowed the expansion of their reading and knowledge repertoires. Among the authors mentioned, we

⁹BR. Sí, yo creo que es una lucha que... es una lucha que... una gran lucha que tiene mucho que ocurrir, pero es una lucha que tenemos que empezar ahora, ya, y que hace la ... hum... **si queremos** que eso mejore, necesitamos empezar ah... luego y empezar en algún pueblo y

ME. Cierto, **si queremos**, uhum

BR. Sí, **queremos**, eso. **Queremos... queramos... es queremos... es porque estudiamos el subjuntivo y a veces me... me equivoco** con la conjugación de... que requiere un tiempo más que es un poco difícil para nosotros, ah... poner en práctica.

record the following: Alexander Soyen Itzin, Edgar Allan Poe, Elena Garro, Flora Figueiredo, Inés Arredondo, José Martí, José Revueltas, Lau Siqueira, and Pablo Lugones, among others.

The answers to the questionnaire also corroborated what we have already observed in the interactions, the fact that these readings promoted conversations on other topics, in addition to the most common and predicted, related only to daily life, way of life, the narrower environment of pairs of interactants, and their perceptions and worldviews. In the following excerpt, we observe this thematic progression caused exactly by the shared reading of one of the suggested short story:

Question: What cultural aspects did you and your partner discuss during the interactions?

Interagent 1 (BR): I believe that the aspects mainly related to our life in our countries: we were able to talk about what our daily life is like; climate differences; the geographical differences from where we live; the differences in our experiences in our universities; **social issues in common such as the rate of paternal abandonment (due to reading *Olhos d'água*) and other topics.**

In this sense, we reiterate that the discussion on literary texts motivated the discussion on social issues and could enhance interactions, since such subjects boosted the development of orality, advancing to deeper levels of conversation, contributing to language learning from a critical literacy perspective. Among the themes mentioned in the questionnaires, the following were pointed out: the role of women in today's world, especially their living conditions in Brazil and Mexico, feminism and feminicide, racism, and machismo, in addition to issues related to historical issues, such as the colonization process in both countries, the *Tlatelolco* massacre, periods of dictatorship, etc.

In relation to the language learning process, more specifically, we confirm that the interactions were very successful, in order to provide the experience of language as a social practice, besides enabling the construction and deepening of culturally relevant knowledge, from the literary texts, as observed in the answers:

Question: What were the contributions of reading and discussing literary texts for their learning and teaching of language in the teletandem context? Comment.

Interagent 1 (BR): I believe that the main contributions were to be able to perceive the literary text and especially the language from the perspective of a native speaker. At times when my partner or I did not understand any expression/word, we could ask and explain to each other from both the meaning and the context in which the expression/word was within the text. In addition, from a dialogical posture, we were able to build knowledge that referred to the culture of both parties and that were present in the literary text.

Interagent 2 (BR): The practice of reading texts beyond the mandatory undergraduate texts and the historical and human deepening on Mexican customs and beliefs.

Based on these data, we also reaffirm the idea of *in-tandem learning being compared to the two-seat bicycle* (Telles, 2006), in which the pairs of interactants, as well as in their movement, build knowledge together, dialoguing about their cultures, their histories, their customs, and beliefs, perceiving the literary text from the perspective of native speakers of the language, in this case.

7.5 Final Considerations

In the context of the development of this study, inserted in a broader research context, whose objective is to reflect how the sharing of literary texts can be a potentiating means of Teletandem's interactions, it is possible to confirm, to date, that the literature has contributed significantly in this sense.

In the position of mediators, we had the fundamental role of making the proposal of sharing literary *genres* since the dissemination of the sessions, in the context of teletandem with literature, with the previous selection of texts. Throughout the mediation process, it was also essential to motivate them not only to discuss the suggested texts but also to resort to others of their preferences, respecting their autonomy in interactions.

As we observed through the analysis of some data extracted from the transcriptions of mediation sessions, interaction sessions, and also the final questionnaire, these readings triggered the discussion on various topics, enabling the expansion of knowledge about cultural, historical, and political issues of Mexican and Brazilian societies, as well as Latin American, among the participants, which, of course, requires deeper and therefore more significant levels of conversation. In addition, we confirm the humanizing role of literature in this process, establishing not only the possibility of confrontation about cultural divergences but especially the reflection about the identification about social problems experienced by all of us.

Thus, in relation to the learning of Spanish/foreign language by Brazilian participants, more specifically, such discussions constituted an important strategy to improve the linguistic and intercultural development of students, at each reading and interaction and, above all, for their constitution as social subjects. Consequently, such experiences will be reflected in their actions in initial training as Spanish teachers.

Thus, we believe that, for teletandem participants, telecollaboration has contributed significantly not only to provide proficiency in a foreign language but also to promote the exchange and sharing of knowledge about cultural and literary issues between partnerships, in a context distinct from the traditional classroom, in order to contribute to their training and action in the world.

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Chapter 8

The Mexican *Corrido* and the Cordel Literature: Traditional Poetic Tessitures in Transit Through Telecollaborative Network



Francisco Cláudio Alves Marques , Gabriel da Silva Conessa ,
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8.1 Introduction

The transmission of knowledge through telecollaborative networks allows cultures located in distant geographies to approach and, in many respects, to recognize themselves as cultures derived from a common poetic aspect but which have differentiated themselves by virtue of the new contexts of reception, recreation, and diffusion, a phenomenon perceptible when placed in confrontation literary, poetic, and musical productions that, despite referring to the old traditions and keeping similarities between them, ended up developing its own characteristics in the new sociocultural reception scenario.

When the coordinators of the project “Capes/PrInt/UNESP: diffusion of culture, language and literature in contexts of telecollaboration” invited me to discuss Brazilian popular culture to students at the University of Mexico, I thought of a clipping that would discuss poetic pieces that would hold sociocultural and historical affinities and common ancestry so that two manifestations typical of Latin American folklore came to mind: the Mexican *corrido* and the cordel literature.

Due to the complexity and vast thematic universe in which the following are immersed in the flow and cords, this work was given the task of limiting itself to pointing out thematic confluences and compositional procedures that allowed them to somehow relate information about both *genres* so that the reader less familiar with these poetic aspects can glimpse horizons of understanding of the universe that allowed them to thrive in Latin American contexts.

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8.2 The Mexican *Corrido* and the Cordel Literature: Confluences

Motivated by the idea of confrontation between the letters inherited from the Iberian Peninsula, I suddenly thought that it would be productive to relate historical and sociocultural references capable of shedding light on the conditions of production of such texts and, in a way, determined the adoption of themes that became part of the main characteristics of the genre. For reasons of historical and genetic similarities, the clipping fell on popular poetic texts produced in the early twentieth century, in Brazil and Mexico, especially because they thrived in contexts of strong political and social instability, and the poetic instrumentalization of these historical occurrences began to determine the very physiognomy of the compositions of the *genres* on screen and to suggest new contents to them.

The *corrido* and the cordel literature have in common the fact that they proceed from the Iberian novelist; despite being written, they were and are generally composed to be read aloud or sung with accompaniment to a musical instrument, usually the *viola*, equivalent to the “guitar” of Iberian troubadours. Such writings are similar to the modes of apprehension of historical facts; they also have in common the relationship with the printed media and with the texts of the erudite tradition, as well as the fact that they renew themselves to contact with other narratives, to absorb, over time and space, literary elements and ways of characterizing their heroes and determining new paths and actions for them, in the light of context, experiences, wills, and collective needs.

Due to its potential to renew each performance, it can be affirmed, with Menéndez Pidal (1948), that both the Mexican *corrido* and the cordel literature can be characterized, within the scope of the literature transmitted orally, as traditional poetic productions, since they are always open to the influences of the context and the moment in which they are conceived. In the wake of the Spanish folklorist, both *genres* can be considered as traditional poetry since their texts are remade with each performance and live and propagate in waves of collective character.

In an article published years before Pidal’s text, and originally published in German, Bogatyrev and Jakobson ([1929] 2006) had already defended the idea that the poetic work of oral tradition is of a collective nature, despite many mistakenly imagining the “creator of folklore” in the image of the “literate.” Russian scholars were absolutely right to defend the thesis that the oral poet does not create any new environment, since he recreates from other poetic traditions that were transmitted word of mouth through time and space, even as the poets who sing their *corridos* as the northeastern poets, who rhyme from old stories of the romancer, have in common the creativity, imagination, and knowledge, in the background, of their contexts, which serve as a revitalizing setting of ancient and consecrated narratives.

Both poetic forms are always strophic and can usually be musical. According to Vicente T. Mendoza (1937), the Mexican *corrido* can present four, six, or eight verses; however, the most common form is that of four octosyllabic verses, which preserve the same Spanish form of the novel, more precisely the Novel Corrido of Andalusia, in which the four verses were sung purely and simply without further additions.

As for compositional, performative, and musical poetics, the cordel literature is situated on the trail of a tradition not far from that historically traveled by Mexican popular poetry. Among the singers and cordel poets of the Brazilian Northeast, the sextiles predominate, especially in the poetic narratives of epic character, such as those who sing the deeds and exploits of bandits and cangaceiros of the order of Antônio Silvino and Lampião, like the sextiles that make up the cordel *Antônio Silvino no Júri*, of the early twentieth century, authorship attributed to Leandro Gomes de Barros (1865–1918), poet who consecrated the rhythmic model in ABCBDB.

Regarding compositional, performative, and musical poetics, cordel literature finds itself firmly rooted in a tradition closely aligned with the historical trajectory of Mexican popular poetry. Among the esteemed singers and cordel poets of the Brazilian Northeast, the sextiles assume a dominant role, particularly in the poetic narratives of an epic nature, celebrating the heroic deeds and exploits of bandits and cangaceiros belonging to the order of Antônio Silvino and Lampião. Notably, these sextiles, exemplified in works like the cordel “Antônio Silvino no Júri” from the early twentieth century, are attributed to the renowned poet Leandro Gomes de Barros (1865–1918), who firmly established the rhythmic model as ABCBDB:

Em vinte e seis de outubro (a)
o dia designado (b)
para o célebre cangaceiro (c)
no tribunal ser julgado (b)
perante a justiça pública (d)
e o seu advogado. (b)

Já na torre da Igreja (a)
anunciava meio dia (b)
então Antônio Silvino (c)
cabisbaixo triste ia (b)
ouvir na última sentença (d)
que sorte lhe caberia. (b) (de Barros, 1957)

Similar to the Brazilian *cangaço* leaflets, the Mexican *corrido* follows a traditional octosyllabic structure comprising four verses, distinguished by interleaved rhymes, most commonly aligning the second and fourth verses. This poetic form serves as a vehicle for singing and extolling the courage of their “bandoleros,” individuals characterized as both brave and heroic. A prominent example of this formula can be observed in the *corrido* dedicated to Benito Canales, a rebel who met his demise in 1912 at the hands of the “Rurales,” a type of cavalry that operated during the Mexican Revolution (1910) with the mission of safeguarding rural communities.

Like the Brazilian *cangaço* leaflets, the Mexican *corrido* uses the traditional octosyllabic structure of four verses, with interleaved rhymes in which coincide, in most cases, the second and fourth verses, to sing and praise the courage of their “bandoleros,” brave and heroes, a formula that can be found, for example, in the *corrido* of Benito Canales, rebel killed in 1912 by the “Rurales,” a kind of cavalry that acted in the context of the Mexican Revolution (1910) with a view to the defense of rural populations.

8.3 The Sociocultural Context of Diffusion

As for the sociocultural context that favored the emergence and dissemination of this type of literature, the *corrido*, despite belonging to an older literary and musical tradition, became popular in the context of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, when peasants rebelled against the system and had their courage and actions transformed into poetry. In addition to transmitting traditional values and customs, assuming a more conservative and moralizing touch, the Mexican race prospered under the auspices of the contestatory movements that marked the revolution in 1910, having fallen into popular taste for his news and novelistic vocation and also by the fact that it constituted a favorable space for the exaltation of popular heroes who stood out in the struggle for land and in defense of Mexican mixed minorities. For these and for other reasons, the *corrido* stands out as the most important literary-musical genre of the Mexican folk and popular tradition.

In northeastern Brazil, the cordel literature emergency occurred more precisely between Paraíba and Pernambuco, a region that prospered most under the Colony and which, by the end of the nineteenth century, had already met the material conditions necessary for the establishment of gears capable of producing printed forms of every order, including the first cordel leaflets. In this region, the cordel literature also suffered strong influences from the historical and sociocultural context, having contributed, quite a way, “the organization of patriarchal society,” “the emergence of messianic manifestations,” “the appearance of flocks of cangaceiros or bandits,” “periodic droughts,” “family struggles,” and the strong oral tradition favored by the performance of singers and repentists, representatives of collective thought and manifestations of popular memory (Diégues Júnior, 1977).

On the other hand, the *corrido* and the cordel have in common the fact of exalting “bandoleros” and cangaceiros who acted as rebels in their contexts, probably because their authors and readers felt and still feel, in some cases, represented by such figures, on the other, revolts and contestatory movements, especially around the struggle for land, did not escape the traditional chords of both countries. In Mexico, for example, the struggles that took place between the peasant and the government at the beginning of the twentieth century were sung and reenacted from the perspective of the actors involved, in a kind of open series. In addition to extolling the courage and prowess of “bandoleros” and rebels such as Macario Romero, Heraclio Bernal, and Benito Canales, among others, the first Mexican sings the deeds and courage, sometimes in protest, of communities and groups that acted against the established order in favor of the less favored and the right to land, like *Corrido del Agrarista*, written by Lorenzo Barcelata (1898–1943), a poem in which the Veracruz composer invites the peasant community to march for progress and the right to property.

Elissa Rashkin (2017) notes that the discussions about Mexican agrarian struggles and the heroes who acted in it provide us with the visions of these struggles from the perspective of the participants or those who heard reports from it. In the *agrarista’s corrido* aforementioned, the poet-singer gives voice to the country man who rebels against the forces in power to claim the right to land in the context of the agrarist movement. There is a criticism of the government of dictator Porfirio Díaz, for having ignored, throughout his government, the “grievances” of the people. He complains

about the systematic indebtedness to the landowner and the emporium of the usurped harvest to the meeiro and of the brutal life that takes place in the midst of so much wealth.

In Barcelata's song, "Agrarista," in the course of describing so many losses and scourges, the emergence of Emiliano Zapata, a Mexican rebel who, under the motto "La tierra es de quien la trabaja" – "The land is from those who cultivate it" – led indigenous and mixed-race peasants in the struggle for land in the context of the Mexican Revolution, lending the movement a fundamentally agrarian orientation, having been treacherously murdered by porphyrist forces.

María del Carmen Garza Ramos (1968) points out that the corridos do not sing to all men but only those whose lives and actions belong to the poetic world of the corrido as a literary form, systematically responding to a previously established psychological and social pattern. As with Mexican popular poetry, in the context of northeastern cordel poetry the deeds, exploits and historical facts are sung from the perspective of those who knew, saw, heard, or lived the facts narrated.

The belief that the hero is an invulnerable being gains ground both in the corrido and in the cordel, and bravery is a characteristic present in both literatures. Here and there, the hero takes the leading role by virtue of courage and bravery, skill with the handling of weapons, and especially for entering the world of crime in defense of honor, whether of family or of his community.

Also treating bravery as one of the main characteristics of the bandit corrido, Enrique A. Eguiarte Bendímez (2000) notes that he is almost always presented as an extraordinary man, fearless, but who ends up being cowardly murdered, as occurred to the Mexican soldier Macario Romero, whose death to betrayal, "for one love," is still sung in the verses of the many corrido ones that exalt him.

The writing of the Northeastern cordel, as in the *corrido*, constitutes a collective writing: the poet speaks from and from its context, transmitting to the reader/listener, through his verses, an opinion about the sung object that is also the worldview of his community. Thus, if the Mexican Revolution gave vent to the emergence of hundreds of poetic texts in which it is possible to hear the voice of those involved in the process, the Brazilian social issues that gave rise to several revolts were also portrayed in the people's literature.

From the Northeastern wood zone, more precisely from the capitals, they left for the hinterland, themes that had been cultivated in the mouths of the singers since Gregory de Matos, in the sixteenth century; others who came to the northeastern coast in the luggage of European settlers between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: stories of contradicted loves, such as the History of Zezinho and Mariquinha; of brave people who do not bend to the system, like Vilela; of chaste wives maligned with adultery and saved from death by intervention of the Virgin Mary, such as Geneva and Alzira; of paladins and medieval knights who would later inspire the singers in the heroic characterization of Antônio Silvino and Lampião; of wise women, such as the slave maiden and wise Theodora, a character who began to frequent the Spanish *pliegos* from the sixteenth century; of cunning heroes of the order of Pedro Malasartes and so many others who would lend enough motifs to the Brazilian picaresque in the manufacture of lading figures such as Cancão de Fogo, Pedro Quengo, João Leso, the *negro* Benedito, character from the Brazilian puppet theater called Bumba-meu-boi, between others.

Most of these figures mentioned comprised the gallery of legendary characters who traveled throughout Europe, in the mouths of the singers, and were transported to the New World in a cultural misceour. Favored by a series of equivalences, such figures and their formulating actions would soon serve as a model for the creation of new compositions and new stories.

8.4 Final Remarks

The pioneering poets, both in Brazil and Mexico, left a legacy so solid that they would not be lost in the dust of time or by virtue of the advances of modernity. Even today, cordel poets appropriate the themes and traditional sextilhas to recount facts and historical achievements from the perspective of minorities, often contradicting the versions told by official historiography.

An example of this type of manifestation can be seen in the brochure *A Guerra do Contestado*, from 2011, by the Paraíba poet Luzimar Medeiros Braga. Despite having been published recently, in this opuscle, the poet preserves the traditional metric and deals with the theme of the Contestado from the perspective of the silenced, as did the pioneers of the Zona da Mata pernambucana, among them Leandro Gomes de Barros, who, in his satirical poetry, used to give opinions about politics and customs from the perspective of people gathered in the square and in the market. In Mexico, even today, between one fingering and another, the corrido of Benito Canales and the song of the “agrarista” can be heard, probably because, both in Brazil and Mexico, as well as throughout Latin America, violence and dismay for the less favored still remain as current affairs.

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Chapter 9

Brazilian Perspectives on Italian Cinema: Perspectives for Interfaces Between Literature, History, and Audiovisual in the Context of Telecollaboration



Gabriela Kvacek Betella 

9.1 Creating Skills

In the experience of teaching Italian language, literature, and culture, our starting point has always been intercultural bias, that is, the construction of spaces capable of housing the coexistence of different cultures and the possibility of studying foreign culture from this space and from possible and productive comparisons. With the development of telecollaboration and online interactions governed by a didactic proposal, there is a need for effective mediation, systematic action, and the strengthening of collaborative networks in the training of students in the area of Letters with qualification in Italian language and literature. Our study seeks to offer means to develop issues related to foreign culture through processes facilitating verbal interaction, as well as the cultural formation of historically and politically situated subjects. We have encouraged the experience of apprentices in different countries to emphasize social issues whose desired overcoming may be the result of a democratization of education and knowledge about the other.

Edward T. Hall (1959, 1966, 1976) was a pioneer in establishing the foundations of intercultural analysis, by constructing categories that allow the approximation of cultures through a process of cultural relativism. Thus, certain cultures characterized by systems and instruments can also be studied in contact. This type of assumption of analysis has been practiced at least since the 1950s. It is worth remembering that post-relativistic anthropology, in which Hall is included, is opposed to certain reified descriptions of cultures and a cultural analysis practically dominated by romanticization, exoticization, and commodification capable of producing decontextualized stereotypes. The most poignant and innovative lesson established

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by the American anthropologist and cultural researcher is linked to the definitions of culture in an elaborate way, within contexts, and, above all, as far as possible, from the terms of our own categories and observation systems. Thus, when we reformulate intercultural interaction in terms of the construction of observation of other cultures, we move away from reification and ethnocentric projection (Hall, 1998, p. 54).

From the constructivist and specific point of view of cultural identity, it can be seen simply as a dynamic act of observation. More than that, it is a question of self-observation, of self-knowledge through culture. In the exercise of cultural identity, individuals observe themselves in cultural terms, associating *self-boundaries* with certain *cultural boundaries* (Bennett, 1998, p. 12). Therefore, it is possible to speak of the role of cultural identity in the processes of construction of self-knowledge. And such processes can be greatly benefited from intercultural communication. In the field of education, nowadays, beneficiary of the practical influence of procedures capable of facilitating experiences, there is not only contact with other cultures – currently, it seeks to teach how to adapt behaviors and take advantage of contacts, without the concern with the mere absorption of information.

Milton J. Bennett (1998) highlights the dependence between intercultural communication and the wisdom to deal with difference, understanding it, appreciating it, and respecting it, in order to provide a true intercultural dialogue, in a context of tolerance and flexibility. Bennett points out about the possibilities of understanding between people who do not share the same cultural experience, addressing diplomats, travelers, and also foreign language students and teachers, including, in this way, all individuals willing to live in multicultural societies.

If the purpose of intercultural communication is adaptation, observation is a fundamental strategy for entering into the experience of another culture. With good and penetrating observations, interactions are much more fruitful. When observation leads us to strangeness, it is worth adapting the perception to understand, inclusively, the subtext of communication, a gesture, an expression, a way of acting. Communication styles or ways of organizing messages need to be the focus of observations about another culture. Perceiving a direct or indirect mode of expression, for example, understanding the most appropriate level of emotional expression, is as important as lexical-grammatical knowledge. Therefore, it can be inferred that linguistic aspects constitute a part of observation for the learning of a language that, in turn, is one of the cultural aspects that justify immersion.

The experience in another culture should be broad, to the point that cultural knowledge is part of the communicative situations of interactions that facilitate the learning of a foreign language. In this sense, the knowledge produced will also be broad. We believe that some theoretical perspectives can be approximated for the proper enjoyment of teaching and interculturality, so we discuss some possibilities. In addition, we take advantage of our experience in Italian language, literature, and film teaching to offer important arguments for discussions of cultural aspects present in chosen objects for an analysis willing to serve as motivation for communication.

Our objective is to evaluate, through the investigation of the relations between literature and cinema, the peculiarities of contemporary literary and audiovisual

discourse, particularly included in the filmography of Gianni Amelio, an Italian filmmaker whose work maintains singular contributions to literature, especially with two novels by contemporary Italian authors, *Nati due volte* (published in 2000), by Giuseppe Pontiggia, and *Lorenzo Marone's La tentazione di essere felice* (2015), first-person narratives whose narrators give way to the perspective of the films *Le chiavi di casa* (2001) and *La tenerezza* (2017), respectively. Aware that the analysis of each narrative process requires instruments appropriate to the means, our proposal includes the discussion about the strategies of contemporary literary and audiovisual works to represent cultural particularities. We also intend to highlight strength points in the dialogue between literature and audiovisual with the analysis of ideological, historical, and social aspects – at the confluence of family relationships. Our intention is to expand the possibilities of investigating the constructive factors of films made from literary works or inspired by free narrative strategies, providing ways to explore basic and aesthetic and political scope of each stage of the relationship based on the common discursive practice, the narrative.

We believe that intercultural communication develops more successfully as critical knowledge is incorporated into observation, immersion, and analysis of cultural products. This work provides substrate for this process, using as examples our objects of qualitative analysis. We consider our results effective contributions to the development of skills that facilitate communicative relationships for apprentices of Italian culture. We believe that cinema can facilitate such skills and add critical sense in relation to different cultures, so we present enough material for a successful communication proposal.

9.2 Universalize and Particularize

If we take into account the fact that globalization, however much it is imposed on the contemporary state of things, does not erase differences, we can choose as the basis for this study the particularization of certain situations common to all societies. Through the fictions examined, we have access to the problematization of family relationships, prejudices, life projects in bankruptcy, and new affective possibilities. The subjects are attractive to interlocutors who, in a communicative situation that is willing to comment on the stories narrated by literature or cinema, can assume the awareness of their own identity and culture, as well as can give their opinion, revealing to others what they think, perceiving how they are seen and accepted in terms of critical and ideological formation.

A situation of high intercultural communication at this level is only possible with the supply of new perspectives to the individual approaching another culture. Thus, the subjects addressed in a foreign language class, for example, do not need to be distorted in model situations and dull staging, with audiovisual support being merely illustrative. And if foreign literature and cinema can constitute the reference material for discussions, choices can elect more poignant objects for the benefits of cultural learning, more narrowly, when we refer to certain linguistic constructions and the

style of literary and audiovisual works, as well as benefit from the ideological and political breadth of the raised debate. In addition, it proves with all intensity some ways of combating the conception that “the cultural identity of a group (...) can be seen by foreign language learners in a stereotyped way, because the individual’s perception of the social identity of the other is directly linked to the way he interprets culture itself” (Hanna, 2013, p. 5).

As observed, in the intercultural approach, the idea of generalization has a lot of affinity with that of stereotype, and in an attempt to avoid these mishaps, we have to keep in mind, whenever possible, the timely concept linked to interstice between cultures, formulated by Homi Bhabha (1998), according to which the traditions or values of different cultures in contact can be recreated in a dynamic and flexible way, within a border area, in a kind of intercultural polyphony, the between-place, the *in-between*. Bhabha understands interculture as a space of dialogical encounter-confrontation between various cultures, which can produce transformations and deconstruct hierarchies, because in this space, all cultures can manifest themselves.

More than overcoming and forgetting stereotypes, the teaching of foreign languages and literature should not be neutral on cultural issues. Just as the examination of a foreign culture needs to provoke reflection in apprentices, teachers should be committed to dealing with their own stereotypes so that the presentation of the questions does not suffer any kind of influence. For these reasons, our argument goes along the line of immanent analysis of texts and films, providing the learners with the examination of structures and dialogue between works and opening the possibilities of understanding the contents.

Hanna (2013, p. 167) states that “teaching a language is also teaching a complex system of social customs, ways of thinking and acting, which makes social contextualization imperative.” In relation to the teaching of the language to contexts and intercultural encounters, it is essential to visualize the needs for intercultural contact, and far beyond linguistic structures, the material offered to learners can incite current issues. Thus, alongside the competencies related by Byram et al. (2002), that is, intercultural attitude, ability to interpret and relate, ability to know, ability to discover and interact, and cultural critical awareness, we can add a baggage of analysis, criticism, and interpretation of works of foreign culture under study. This reserve would constitute more than an addition, since the capacities awakened can be decisive for an effective critical education.

The ways of using audiovisual in the classroom were addressed by some areas of research, especially those that favor the opportunity to develop social and political issues. Regarding contemporary teaching of foreign languages, it is also worth noting that works in the field of visual literacy point to the advantages of the methods aided by the films to the extent that they lead the apprentices to increase their previous knowledge to elaborate consistent interpretations. Thinking about films based on literary works, our proposal broadens the spectrum of discussion about learning, because it is possible to think of our essayistic material as a facilitator of reading competence and audiovisual competence of learners.

As Byram et al. (2002) express, our commitment to the intercultural dimension does not mean the creation of a new method of teaching foreign languages and

cultures. We try to demonstrate a complementary vision, an extension of what may be important for teachers and apprentices in order to increase the repertoire of elements for oral production in verbal interactions. With regard to learning experiences that connect students with native speakers in a virtual context, we believe it is appropriate to suggest the substrate so that the cultural dimension can contribute to linguistic competence, promoting skills, thanks to stimuli on sociocultural issues of the target culture. As Aurora Castillo-Scott (2018) demonstrated, a project that includes cinema and telecollaboration can promote an appropriate integration of social issues to language learning, through the relevance of the points raised.

9.3 Crossed Stories

Literature has always offered inspiration to screenwriters and directors, from the origins of cinema and during the development of different aspects of audiovisual. It is worth remembering that cinema came at a time when the structure of the nineteenth-century novel was in crisis and, by taking advantage of the space filled by various experiments, continued to promote links with literary sources, provoking debates about the limits and freedoms that filmic images could assume in relation to textual origin. Since then, the most opportune means and instruments for the transposition of one narrative medium to another have been studied with great interest in areas that have taken into account, to a greater or lesser extent, the autonomy of the audiovisual work in relation to its sources.

If today the issue of adaptation can be addressed in many ways, all interesting for a discussion in a classroom group or in contexts of telecollaboration, it underlies the fact that the debate has long remained focused on the degree of fidelity of the result (Stam, 2008). In other words, there was a time when research focused on the meaning sought by films in the literary works of origin, and fortunately, the direction of investigations was reversed, leading scholars to explore the idea of dialogue as the basis of audiovisual creation (based on adaptations or not), as clarification of the choices of the filmmakers and, above all, assuming literary texts “as a starting point, not of arrival” (Xavier, 2003, p. 61–62). This is an extremely motivating tipping point for a lasting debate.

In Italy, the twentieth century revealed a debate nothing unusual to other nationalities. While some literati raised suspicions against the new art form, accusing it of not being cultured, other men of letters such as Giovanni Papini, Giovanni Verga, and Guido Gozzano actively collaborated with cinema. By the 1930s, many authors had already had narratives on screen, and one of the most fruitful cases is the work of Luigi Pirandello who, ironically, had been inspired by cinema to criticize it as mechanization of art when writing the novel *Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio operatore* (1915).

If the number of Italian works and authors in dialogue with the audiovisual is endless, singular relations between literary text and cinematographic work are now

established from the post-war period, recomposing a distinct movement of rereading and revisitation of the past through the use and revitalization of literary plots during the times lived by a more combative cinema. Thus, when a work of literary tradition is reread by the process of transposition to the audiovisual, the plot can be revisited to contribute to the understanding of the present of film production and, more optimistically, to intervene in the social process.

The late 1960s leaves some very fruitful aspects in the field of Italian cinema. *Commedia all'Italiana* had asserted itself as a genre, and the collaboration between writers, screenwriters, and directors transits from Alberto Moravia and Vasco Pratolini, among others, to Leonardo Sciascia who, in the 1970s, will be one of the authors appreciated by the themes developed with political engagement. Sciascia was the master of the exploration of human contradictions, pessimism, and disillusionment with the sense of justice, but focusing forces on the representation of the unfolding of organized crime. More than a dozen of his texts was transposed to the screens, and several films integrated or came close to the so-called Italian political cinema, which peaked in the 1970s.

In the decade that sees the premiere of films marked by impeccable dialogues with literary works (such as, in 1971, *Death to Venezia*, by Luchino Visconti, to name just one example), a question was imposed, that of author cinema. Since the 1960s, when Italian cinema entered a complex phase, witnessing the consolidation of the national film industry with the longing to compete with American films, an internal crisis has arisen. In very general terms, the path toward what was called author cinema in Italy involves the representation of new metropolitan existential models, as well as warns of a gap in dialogue with the public. The answer comes under the choice of author cinema, which, in turn, promotes a distance between production and the fully industrial rhythm, under a scenario in which some names inevitably embody the new situation of authorship. Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni have autonomous, original paths and form a kind of crossroads that some directors have passed through and have had to decide the road to travel as an influence or as a “party,” as Nanni Moretti (Ulivi, 2018) declared.

The 1980s aggravates the significant reduction in Italian film production, the massification of films through private television channels, the closure of many movie theaters, and the lack of support from government institutions. Most of the great living authors were in creative crisis, and some consecrated *genres* went into the process of degeneration or disappearance. Private television networks followed the obligation to invest in film productions, creating a virtually hybrid format of films. Moreover, alongside purely commercial production, there was still resistance on the part of author cinema. However, filmmakers of the generation who had begun to produce their feature films in the mid-1970s or at the beginning of the next decade were sometimes undervalued, although certain modes of intellectual abstraction may be highlighted, on the one hand, and immersion in culture itself, on the other.

9.4 A Filmmaker and his Challenges in Contemporary Times

Gianni Amelio had a fruitful television career before debuting his first feature film. *Colpire al cuore* (1982) is the film that represents, still in the heat of the hour, the impact of the passage of the *Brigate rosse* (Red Brigades, or simply Br) as the most expressive manifestation of the Italian extra parliamentary Left post-1968 on the life of a family and, in particular, on the relationship between father and son. Mariarosaria Fabris points out that the film uses in a fruitful way the ambiguities that characterize the relations between the protagonists and their behavior in the face of terrorism, through the events that punctuate the relationship between Darius, a left-wing university professor, and his teenage son, Emilio. The film “makes the father-son relationship the central theme of his inquiry into those years of widespread contestation” (Fabris, 2007, p. 190). By promoting a constant exchange of roles, insinuating projections of one protagonist in another, and showing how “there is always something unexplained” in the relationship between them, the film “reflects the impossibility of a univocal focus of a slippery issue” (Fabris, 2007, p. 191). Thus, Gianni Amelio promotes an approximation between the theme of the work and its structure. The viewer remains with the understanding of the plot that includes the misunderstanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of the Red Brigades.

In *Porte aperte* (1990), Amelio returns to touch on a sensitive theme for contemporary society and for Italian in particular, capable of promoting ambiguity in the construction of the plot, based on the novel of the same name by Leonardo Sciascia, published in 1987, whose title alludes to the much-vaunted security with which Italian houses could count, day and night, according to fascist propaganda (the story takes place in 1937), since the death penalty became a deterrent agent of crimes. With a leading judge opposed to capital punishment in full force of the so-called *leggi fasciostissime*, his situation of conflict worsens as he pursues his convictions to free a convicted (and confessed defendant) for triple murder. The criminal will be shot, and the judge is punished for not having applied the penalty immediately, but the complex relationship between the individual and the law is the central issue. By bringing the novel to the screen, Amelio gives attention to the intellectualized dimension of the literary work, that is, allows the discussion of what Sciascia proposed, despite the setting that contributes to the accentuation of a typically Sicilian character, recognizable by the spectator. The film therefore achieves greater pretensions than an adaptation. Detecting this particularity in the contributions that Italian cinema makes in literary works (especially Italian) is what encourages us to expand the objectives of our research to the proposal of themes for discussions from the adaptations of Gianni Amelio.

We seek to focus on a crucial period of Italian culture, especially regarding literature and audiovisual. The choice of the work of Gianni Amelio, one of the most significant authors of contemporary Italian cinema, drives discussions about his ways of interacting with literature as a basis for significant examples of his filmography and as a support for the writing of his original scripts. It is possible to insert in the suggestions for argumentation the relationship with literary works since

the television phase of Amelio, namely, *La città del sole* (1973) and the homonymous work (1602) of the Dominican Calabrian friar Tommaso Campanella; *La morte al lavoro* (1978), elaborated from Hanns Heinz Ewers' novel *Il ragno* (*Die spinne*, 1908); *Il piccolo Archimede* (1979), based on the novel by Aldous Huxley (*Young Archimedes*, 1924); and *I velieri* (1983), from Anna Banti's novel.

However, we draw attention to the examination of the later phase of filmography through the two achievements based on contemporary Italian novels, which we have already mentioned. There are two feature films of greater international distribution: *Le chiavi di casa* (*The Keys to the House*, 2004) and *La tenerezza* (*Tenderness*, 2017). Both deal with family relationships overturned by external and internal events, which provides us with an excellent approximation with the constant theme in the work of the authors in focus. It is worth saying that the representation of family relationships can be seen as a repository of the contemporary situation in various social spheres, from the deterioration of the subject, of his relationships themselves, to the failure of ideologies and collective proposals as a decisive factor in novels and films.

Directors such as Gianni Amelio, Michele Placido, Carlo Verdone, Francesco Nutti, Nanni Moretti, Roberto Benigni, Maurizio Nichetti, Massimo Troisi, Gabriele Salvatores, Mario Martone, Giuseppe Tornatore, Mimmo Calopresti, Marco Tullio Giordana, and Carlo Mazzacuratti are some names that coexist in the last 20 years of the millennium and of changes, trying to deal with the heritage of the filmmakers who represented the same society, in their previous transformations. If it is true that new filmmakers bring renewed strength to new ideas, new processes of visual representation, and new ways of building images for storytelling, we should also consider that the 1980s brought a crisis that led most film professionals in Italy to attitudes aimed at ensuring their own space in the new media, leaving aside the concern about the fate of Italian cinema, which would appear, with all intensity and more union among the filmmakers, in the following decade (Fabris, 2008, p. 91).

9.5 The Literary Challenge in Contemporary Italy

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, writers like Tom Wolfe were busy with the literary representation of sharp humor to account structurally and critically of the exaggerations and decay of the Reagan Era in America. *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987) may be a paradigm novel of the 1980s. However, it is difficult to trace a perspective view of the literature of that time and select more significant exponents, because it is practically impossible to frame transformations, continuities, and discontinuities of a time that saw both the renewal of *new journalism* and the innovation of the form of the novel, with the exploration of various aspects of postmodernism.

According to Peter Bondanella (2003, p. 185), the term "postmodern" raised uncomfortable critical questions, including with respect to the meaning of "modernism" to which postmodernism was related and, perhaps very cautiously,

Italian literary history departs, in some respects, from the standard treatment of twentieth-century literature in other European literature and American criticism, because of an important current of Italian critical thinking that employed the term *decadentism* to define what other literary cultures would have called modernist. In any case, there is some unanimity in Italian and foreign criticism when considering Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco as postmodernist masters, because the international reach in popularity of their works attested to a public perception of the exemplary expression of the postmodern trend in contemporary culture, a cosmopolitan literary style that seems to transcend national borders (Bondanella, 2003, p. 187).

The generalization under the tutelage of the postmodern has missed particularities of a period that, in Italy, was crossed by a series of remarkable events, such as terrorism – which offered the qualifying “Years of Lead” for the 1980s in the country. A significant strand of Italian authors of the last decades of the Novecento preferred to express themselves through narrators who seem to turn to more intimately realistic experiences, embedded in the field of everyday life (Perolino, 2012, p. 289), who presented less potential to stimulate the reader’s imagination and, however, arrived with impressive fluidity to maintain lightness so expensive to literature at the end of the millennium, in the conception of Italo Calvino. On the other hand, it is possible to recover the selections made by the main literary awards, Strega, Viareggio and Campiello, and highlight, in general, a common tendency to discard extreme expressive solutions and a desire to restore a more level, relaxed readability, as well as precise stylistic codifications and autonomy of literary space, as noted by the record of winners of the three awards from 1980 to 1990 (Perolino, 2012, pp. 296–297). The fullness of meaning obsessively pursued by literature will continue under a humanist tradition, largely, but in the world of highly unpredictable changes, which leads us to revisit the Italian literary production *a cavallo dei due secoli* (between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries) not as a serene representation of the world, but as a dramatic warning of conflicts, of the impacting exhaustion of certainties, either at the formal and stylistic level or in existential content.

It is possible, at this time of the assimilated information, stimulate the investigation of aspects of the Italian narrative in the third millennium and the confrontation with the critical approaches, from the essays of Italo Calvino to the most recent authors, such as Moretti (2008), Francucci (2009), Magris (2009), Donnarumma (2014), and Marchese (2014), among others, whose interpretations cross the considerations about the new forms and contents developed, enriching the repertoire of the scholar of contemporary narratives, especially in apprentices of Italian literature inserted in the undergraduate curriculum of Letters.

Giuseppe Pontiggia (1934–2003) and Lorenzo Marone (1974–) are authors of different generations, but two novels, one of each writer, narrated in first person, provided bases for Gianni Amelio’s films with narrative solutions and thematic recompositions that interest us closely to explore the coherence and continuity in the insertion of authors (Amelio, Pontiggia, and Marone) in the representation of aspects of contemporary society through their failures and attempts to overcome the difficulties of times and facts, mostly due to mishaps in human relations, especially between parents and children. It is worth mentioning the courageous decisions of

the authors when putting on the agenda such problems with very timely intersections, including the issue of people with disabilities, immigration, madness, old age, loneliness, and ethics, dispersed in the most everyday events.

Nati due volte, a novel released by Pontiggia in 2001, chronicles the experience of Frigerio, a father who has a disabled son, Paolo. The novel tells a sequence of episodes after the birth of the child, describing the limitations and challenges in their enormous complexity. Paolo's humanity and the father's tormented relationship with his son's disability shape Frigerio's most everyday experiences and transformation process. The narration continues from beginning to end of the story with the father who recalls in the first person the most significant episodes of his experience, taking advantage of the literary opportunity to offer the reader deep reflections on himself, about the people around him, and on his own life.

The plot originates from an autobiographical core of the Lombardian writer and follows a chronological order of events. However, the writing is filtered by the narrator's memories and, therefore, evokes a path of suffering, from pauses to reflections, in order to provoke intense affective conclusions. One of the central issues is the set of medical facts and procedures relating to children with disabilities and the consequences that arise for their families. But the greatest difficulties are expressed in the title of the novel, explained in two passages. If, on the one hand, these children must learn to turn around in a world where their "first birth" was very difficult, due to the risks of oxygenation loss (as in the case of the character Paolo), they have also lost the notion of their own body and need to build that knowledge only with the mind. Reeducation is a "second birth" in a world where we are all becoming people with disabilities, where almost everything has become increasingly complex, especially for people who are aging. If Pontiggia's novel refers to the young disabled person and his challenges, he also reflects much on aging, also seen as a deficiency in progression – there is no shortage of references to memory loss, anomie, and above all the parallelism between the difficulties of movement of the character Paolo and the elderly.

In a sense, we can justify with property our choice of the second pair of relationships between contemporary literary works and the films of Gianni Amelio, because the novel *La tentazione di essere felici* (2015) seems to continue what was strongly insinuated in *Nati due volte* with respect to old age. *La tentazione di essere felice* is practically the first successful novel by Neapolitan author Lorenzo Marone. The protagonist narrator, Cesare Annunziata, a retired accountant, is an elderly man full of bitterness and resentment. His wife died, and the two children moved away: Dante does not reveal homosexuality to his father, and Sveva, in his opinion, erred in all decisions in life: studies, work, and husband. Cesare lives in his own way, without expressing affection, with a peculiar neighborhood, until a family moves into the condominium and Cesare begins to live and get involved with Emma and her problems. The narrator changes throughout the narrative, exposing to the reader the growth of the cynical protagonist and, at the same time, his greatest weaknesses.

9.6 Proposal for Intercultural Communication

Considering the frame exposed, we have instigating material for debates on the relations between literature and audiovisual in Gianni Amelio's work, at least the necessary cutout for the first approaches that could be discussed in Italian culture classes. Our choice, we have already said, also goes through two contemporary writers (one of them in activity), whose works offer matrix for feature films liable to the treatment of various levels of the narrative, among which we can favor the narrative focus, which certainly does not free us from the investigation of other levels, thematic or structural.

Our experience with the immanent analysis of an audiovisual work based on literary work suggests an adequacy of processes and, at the limit, a care with terminology to increase the validity and accuracy of the use of theory in debates conducted for the learners. When considering the narrative as a discursive basis common to literature and audiovisual, certain concepts can be examined in operation for both forms, possible reason for the exchange of concepts and procedures of analysis between literary theory and audiovisual studies. However, if the methodology of analysis became common and benefited the area of cinematographic interpretation at the beginning of its consolidation in Brazilian universities, on the other hand, the theoretical framework related to point of view studies (from Anglo-Americans, Russian formalists, and French structuralism) was overcome by the fruitful methodological contribution offered by the work of Gérard Genette (2017), whose narrative discourse theory, in turn, revalues the Aristotelian term "diegeses" from the 1950s film theory.

We can establish a broader approach, in order to take advantage of instruments of narrative studies for a narrative analysis as a specific organization and semiotic structuring, which can be updated by different means. This organization, which we can call discourse, presupposes narrated story, producer, organizer, threshold of beginning and end, with one or more points of view, development on a double timeline – the time of the narrative act and the time of action. Thus, the events go through transformations, which are of great interest to the analysis of the unfolding of events as much as the examination of how they are narrated.

These premises of narrative analysis could have been reworked by different lines of analysis over the last few years. Gaudreault and Jost (2009) synthesize in five points the characteristics of the narrative (presence of beginning and end, sequence with two temporalities, discourse, "derealization," and set of events) and, according to the position of Christian Metz, introduce the notion that the perception of the narrative "derealizes" the narrated thing, to the extent that the mere act of narrating implies that the product does not coincide with reality itself, because it is not told to itself, even if it is a story based on real facts (Gaudreault & Jost, 2009, pp. 31–35). In the cinematic narrative, the authors consider the hypothesis of treating the plan as equivalent to the statement of the narrative, which would allow analyzing it as any narrative. The biggest challenge, however, is to separate the processes of construction of images in text and audiovisual. In the first, the mental image is freely formed

from the construction in which the author makes known a fact with all the load of written expressiveness of a sentence, for example. On the cinematic plane, the image is ready for our eyes, and does not denote a single statement at a time. A single plane can bring countless visual information, and all of them matter for our perception: as explained by Gaudreault and Jost, every plan contains virtually a plurality of narrative statements that overlap and can be covered when the context is favorable to us (Gaudreault & Jost, 2009, p. 36).

The discussion about the narrativity of the film plan is old, and the debate has gone so far as to question the extent to which it is possible to admit that audiovisual is a language. However, it is more productive to think that moving images may fall short of the narrative and, therefore, would be more interested in understanding how one plane or another means.

Although a general theory of narrative can encamp literature and audiovisual, the more we consider the peculiarities of the audiovisual image, the more enriching the process of analysis becomes. The exchange of notions between literary and audiovisual studies can demonstrate the insufficiency of some fixed concepts, which is why it is necessary to broaden these notions to keep care in the characterization of narrative instances in one artistic form and another, whose processes take place in specific media, with exclusive resources of each construction.

Such factors, little alluded to in most studies involving adaptation of literary works to the audiovisual, hinder comparative analysis but better illuminate the dimensions that are of interest to identify, such as the forms assumed by the point of view. In the audiovisual, the look of the camera, the organization of *mise-en-scène*, and the post-assembly effects (including the possibility of a voice of an extradiegetic narrator or a character) define a diversity of foci for the same action that, in a literary work, could have been narrated in the first person, which, technically, would reduce the scope of perspective. We can take advantage of the plurality of overlapping channels, increasingly complex in modern cinema, to favor the opening of dialogue.

With regard to considerations about contemporary Italian literature, the agenda needed to examine the starting point of the themes involved in the suggested discussions, it will be inevitable to read the symptoms of contemporary society in the novels but anchored in the heterogeneity of the forms reflecting such symptoms. We count on the critical examination of literary works from the construction of the point of view, but the elements of the narrative are relevant as contribution to the analysis.

The expected results for the interactions start from the perception of the intercultural dimension in Gianni Amelio's films and in the novels. The stages of the analysis of the relationship between literature and audiovisual and the particularities of the dialogue that the filmmaker's work establishes with the literature are highlighted, and the stages of discussions can provide elements for a broader work, always focused on the essayistic nature.

With regard particularly to the work of Gianni Amelio, we count on our academic production as support, thanks to research on one of the first feature films of the director (Betella, 2013), *I ragazzi di via Panisperna* (1987), driven by the story of the disappearance of Ettore Majorana, narrated by Leonardo Sciascia. While the

novel debates on the traces and exposes some theories about the fate of the mysteriously disappeared character, Gianni Amelio's film, also inspired by the facts, retraces another journey, that of the history of the boys of Panisperna Street, emphasizing the enigmatic figure of Ettore Majorana and the vibrant episodes involving some of the greatest physicists in the world. When Leonardo Sciascia publishes the novel in which he uses the real fact of Ettore Majorana's disappearance to frame what he called a "philosophical novel of mystery," the public had probably forgotten the intriguing occurrences of 1938: the young and brilliant physicist disappeared, it seems, voluntarily, without leaving evidence of his death or reliable indications of his whereabouts. In 1972, Sciascia became aware of mysterious clues through Erasmo Recami, he considers the reasons that could have made Majorana leave Italy and abandon life almost in a way fictionalized by Pirandello. From this integration with the modern forms of fiction, permeated by a hybrid character, resulting and provoking of information and interpretations about historical facts and modes of representation, our work with Amelio's oeuvre deserved a continuity.

The space of discussions tends to explore a significant fraction of the filmography, and taking into account the experience with the history of Italian cinema, one can establish thematic and structural relationships between the filmmaker's films, based on inferences that we can already make, for example, when we think of the spatial displacements fulfilled by the characters of *Il ladro di bambini* (1992) and *Le chiavi di casa* (2004) in the reconstruction of their lives and affective relationships, as well as in the different destinies of relationships between parents and children shaken from the inside out (although the ambiguity of the discourse leads us to assume that external tragedy is the focus of ruin), as in *Colpire al cuore* (1983) and *La tenerezza* (2017).

9.7 Pedagogical Experience

Discussing the interrelations between cinema and literature, Italo Calvino wrote: "It remains the fact that cinema is continually being drawn to literature. Despite having so much power of its own, cinema has always been afflicted by jealousy of the written text: it wants to 'write'" (Calvino, 1987, p. 57). The stories of the romance and Italian cinema of the twentieth century more than merely intersect; they are tied and, therefore, nothing more relevant than to bring to light some examples of this trajectory for communicative interactions in Italian culture classes, especially in telecollaboration contexts. We can appraise the instruments for a methodology of analysis of the parts of a modern dialogue and of the products generated.

With the exploration of the moments when these historical aspects intersect, it is possible to deal with the most complex, fluid, and multifaceted dialogues that exist in any culture. To evaluate its full scope, it is necessary to recognize it at various interrelated levels, and the first involves the most immediate and most discussed question of adapting Italian novels to the cinematic form (Caputo, 2003, p. 185).

Regarding structural research, the discussions dialogue with some areas of Literary Theory, Comparative Literature, and Cinematographic Interpretation, to mention those that have been affirmed for a long time in the Brazilian academic environment. It will be possible to establish contact with the fields of study on narrative theory, especially on the point of view, of which stand out the lines of research that address self-fiction, the inclusion of memories and autobiography disseminated by fiction, the new hybrid *genres*, and the new forms assumed by contemporary novel.

The themes outlined in the field of fiction of our objects carry a rather evident political sense, and from which, one cannot maintain a conformed distance. The internalization of coping processes and the construction of quality relationships with regard to problems often kept hidden, arising from prejudices and psychological situations not favorable to individuals, make our inferences to themes and contents of interactions in telecollaboration contexts and other communicative situations in the teaching of foreign culture an important contribution for the expression of the most sensitive issues, such as the inclusion of people with disabilities, emotional imbalance, and aging.

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