

Chapter 4

For an Intercultural and Decolonial Pedagogy in Telecollaborative Practices



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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

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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?
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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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