

## Thematic Volume

### *Telecollaboration in Education for Foreign Language Teaching*

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*In memoriam Ana Mariza Benedetti.*

#### 1. Introduction

We begin our introduction to this thematic issue by placing Teletandem as the guiding theme of the works herein presented. We understand that, despite being widely publicized and implemented as a context for telecollaborative learning in Brazil and abroad, as shown by published and ongoing research, it is still necessary to return to its essence, its origins and its principles, in order not to lose sight of its epistemological bases. In this sense, several of the works published in this dossier confirm the definition and/or description of Teletandem as this context of telecollaborative learning which began at UNESP (*Universidade Estadual Paulista*) in 2006 to promote linguistic and cultural contact between its participants. We emphasize that in each scenario, however, there are different perspectives for discussion and new proposals for thinking about the principles of autonomy, reciprocity and separate use of languages, described by Brammerts (1996) in the context of face-to-face tandem and, by extension, appropriate for teletandem (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006).

The publication of this collection of articles in *The Especialist*, the first Brazilian journal to publish works by the founders of Teletandem in Brazil (TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006), represents a symbolic movement in this process not only of consistency, but also of continuity of studies on the impacts and perspectives for Teletandem in the context of linguistic-cultural education in Brazil and in the world.

This thematic volume is an offshoot of the 1st GUTelOnX (Georgetown-UNESP Teletandem and Online Exchange Symposium)<sup>5</sup>, an event held remotely on October 8th and 9th, 2020, based on a partnership between the research group "*InViTe (Virtual Exchange and Teletandem): foreign languages*

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<sup>5</sup> <http://telonx.georgetown.domains/>

for all<sup>6</sup>,” from UNESP, and Georgetown University. The event brought together thirty-eight presentations by researchers and professors from universities and other types of educational contexts from around the world, to share their research and/or experiences in implementing telecollaborative language learning practices. This thematic issue brings together seventeen articles, which consist of works presented at the event and other studies from the academic community also focused on the role of technologies in foreign language teaching in promoting telecollaboration projects in several institutions around the globe.

Teletandem, as a context for teaching/learning languages/cultures, was incorporated in principle by several universities in Brazil and abroad that, based on their structures and objectives, implemented this practice as a curricular or extra-curricular activity. Its success is marked by the continuity of partnerships on UNESP’s campuses and also by the establishment of new groups every year in various institutions that implement it in their units. In this sense, each experience is unique and important to be shared, as has been done through several publications of the research group in book form (TELLES, 2009; BENEDETTI; CONSOLO; VIEIRA-ABRAHÃO, 2010), special editions of journals<sup>7</sup>, in addition to publications by its researchers gathered on the official Teletandem website<sup>8</sup>.

Teletandem is a practice based on democratic principles, with a focus on access to knowledge of foreign languages and cultures. Thus, the research carried out in the context of the experiences lived in the environment created before, during and after the interactions is a scenario of revisits, with each new partnership established between universities around the world. In this sense, in addition to the diversity of theoretical perspectives that permeate the observation of Teletandem interactions, the implementation processes, even though they have already been experienced and studied in other places, are always unique and carry the essence of the sociocultural space to which it is linked.

This thematic issue is based on this perspective of valuing epistemological diversity, directly linked to the experience of the actors (professors, undergraduate and graduate students) involved in the architecture of Teletandem interactions. In this way, the dossier includes articles that portray initial studies on the processes and consequences of the implementation of Teletandem practice in new contexts, specific investigations on aspects of linguistic development of the interactors, specific questions of the dynamics of interactions, to representative investigations of refinement from previous research.

For the organization of the articles published here, we base ourselves on thematic lines that are broad enough to encompass the plurality of issues discussed by the authors. The first line, composed of the first seven articles, brings different methodological perspectives in the Teletandem context and innovative proposals for research in telecollaboration. The second, from the eighth to the eleventh article, includes investigations whose data come from mediation sessions and focus on teaching/learning/assessment processes of foreign languages based on the experiences lived in the interactions in teletandem. The articles on this line also highlight the potential of such practice in the training of language teachers. The third and last line, composed of the twelfth to the seventeenth article, portrays, in general, studies developed in contexts of implementation of teletandem practices, linked to the curriculum of language courses or research projects.

Below is a summary of themes addressed by the authors in each of the thematic volume’s texts:

Paola Leone, one of three plenary speakers at the 1st GUTelOnX, is author of “*Teletandem and Intercomprehension*”, in which she describes a telecollaboration project developed at the *Université Lumière Lyon 2*, France, and by the *Università del Salento*, Italy. The project titled *Intercompréhension Orale et Teletandem (IOTT)* aims to develop the receptive, productive, and interactive skills required to

<sup>6</sup> InViTe (Virtual Exchange and Teletandem, in the acronym in Portuguese) is a continuation of “Teletandem Brazil: foreign languages for all” and gathers researchers from Brazil and other countries who implement and investigate the Teletandem context. <http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/2209139477462677>

<sup>7</sup> DELTA. *Documentação de Estudos em Linguística Teórica e Aplicada* 2015: 31.3, accessible at: <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/delta/issue/view/1533>; *Revista do GEL* 2018: 15.3, accessible at: <https://revistas.gel.org.br/rg/issue/view/64/60>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/>

communicate with a speaker/writer of a different but related language to one's own (i.e., Romance Languages). Leone analyses the learning potential in this learning scenario, highlighting how students troubleshoot and solve communication issues and develop meaning negotiation tactics during their oral teletandem sessions.

The second article, "*Research methods in teletandem context: approaches and possibilities*," Solange Aranha, also a plenary speaker at the 1st GUTelOnX, e Laura Rampazzo discuss methodological approaches that are applicable to teletandem, from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives while emphasizing the particular characteristics of each approach. The authors also discuss the feasibility of individual data collection and show how MulTeC (*Multimodal Teletandem Corpus*) may help researchers and become a model for future data collection.

Also using MulTeC, the third article "*Peer Corrective Feedback: Face-saving Strategies in Teletandem Oral Sessions*," written by Suzi Marques Spatti Cavalari, Ana Carolina Freschi and Sidnei Antonio Pereira Júnior, investigates oral feedback by peers in the context of teletandem in relation to facework theories. The authors demonstrate the differences between the more explicit and implicit types of reformulations that may be face threatening and are compared to some strategies to save the face of others.

In the fourth article, "*Teletandem vs. Face-to-Face in the L2 Classroom: The Effect of Type of Media on Complexity and Accuracy*," by Gabriela Derobles and Chrissy Bistline-Bonilla, present a comparative study on whether the medium (Teletandem vs. FTF) has an effect on the learner's lexical accuracy and global complexity, in a group of L2 learners of Spanish.

The fifth article, "*Does Medium - Teletandem vs. Face-to-Face Make a Difference in Advanced L2 Spanish Learner's Oral Fluency?*" by Angela Donate, presents the results of a cognitive interactionist study on the benefits of the teletandem context when compared to FTF exposure for the development of fluency in a group of L2 Spanish learners.

In the sixth article, "*Telecollaboration and Linguistic Gains in Postsecondary Non-Native Portuguese Learning*," Luciane Maimone and Ariel Zach investigate linguistic gains and crosslinguistic influence (CLI) from English and Spanish on the oral production of postsecondary L3 Portuguese learners, comparing the effects of two pedagogical approaches: oral synchronous telecollaboration between Portuguese learners and native speakers in teletandem, and group work among learners in L2 classroom. Results showed significant improvement in proficiency and all CAF measures over time, but no differences between groups. Spanish CLI was significantly higher than English CLI for both groups and the only type of CLI to significantly decrease. Participants' perceptions and beliefs, and the lack of differential performance across groups is discussed, considering different pedagogical and theoretical approaches to telecollaboration.

The seventh article, "*Does um, the medium, uh, matter? Measuring fluency through filled pauses in Face-to-Face and Teletandem communicative groups*," by Celia Chomón Zamora and Abbie Finnegan, presents the results of a comparative study on hesitational phenomena, such as Filled Pauses (FP), in FTF vs. teletandem contexts with a group of L2 Spanish learners all with L1 English.

Starting the second thematic line of this issue, the eighth article, entitled "*As sessões de mediação em teletandem como um espaço de formação de professores de línguas estrangeiras*," Edson Rezende Jr., Rozana Ap. Lopes Messias and Ana Luzia Videira Parisotto present discussions held by the teacher-mediator after the teletandem sessions and characterize this moment of reflection as a space for training foreign language teachers.

The ninth article, "*Ocorrências da (não) separação de línguas no Teletandem*," authored by Daniela Nogueira de Moraes Garcia, Victor de Oliveira and Douglas Cunha Santos, analyzes the process of (non)-separation of languages during teletandem interactions, based on the guiding pillars of teletandem

(reciprocity, autonomy and equity in time) as well as studies on mediation, investigate how this practice can impair the learning process and reinforce the relevance of the mediation context.

Based on sociocultural theory, the tenth article, entitled “*Mediation in Teletandem: a locus to experience teacher learning and reflection*,” investigates the role of mediators in Teletandem as more competent peers in the scaffolding process and the strategies used to conduct the sessions. The authors, Ana Luiza Guisso de Moraes and Ana Cristina Biondo Salomão, present results that point to mediation sessions as a context of collaborative pedagogical practice in which teacher educators can develop teacher learning and reflection.

In the eleventh article, entitled “*Computer-aided assessment in teletandem interactions*,” Douglas Consolo discusses computer-mediated assessment (CMA) in foreign language learning, focusing on data from a partnership of the project “*Teletandem Brazil: foreign languages for all*.” Excerpts of a teletandem interaction are analyzed, considering the evaluation moments of linguistic performance between the interactors, in which different types of feedback are provided by a dominant partner.

The third thematic line in this volume begins with the twelfth article, “*Virtual exchange and communication in English as a lingua franca: a case study from the State University of Northern Paraná*.” Authored by Micheli Gomes de Souza and Neri de Souza Santana, the text presents the first experience of implementing a virtual exchange partnership in English as a Lingua Franca between a Brazilian and a Mexican university, considering the challenges and contributions of telecollaborative learning described for the development of linguistic and intercultural awareness and for the policies of internationalization at home.

In the thirteenth article, “*Telecolaboração em uma rede de pesquisa internacional*,” Karin Adriane HP Ramos and Kelly Cristiane HP de Carvalho describe an initiative developed within the scope of an international research network of the Capes-PrInt-UNESP Program, to discuss a cooperation between UNESP-Assis (Brazil) and UNAM (Mexico) on the dissemination of culture, language and literature through virtual exchange.

The fourteenth article, “*Promoting the development of autonomy in the context of teletandem in language teacher education*,” by Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado, Hilda Hidalgo Avilés and Norma Angélica Espinosa Butrón, reports the results of a study carried out in 2018 on the implementation of teletandem in a bachelor's degree program in English language teaching in Mexico, as part of an autonomous learning course.

The fifteenth article, “*Learning experiences in a virtual exchange project: the University of California, Davis' and Federal University of Acre's first partnership*,” by Queila Barbosa Lopes, Rodrigo Nascimento de Queiroz and Eugênia Magnólia da Silva, presents an account of the first teletandem experience between the Federal University of Acre and the University of California, Davis, initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the partnership formation processes, challenges and contributions of telecollaborative practice for apprentices and professionals involved.

In the sixteenth article, “*A formação (trans)cultural no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de Teletandem: uma análise de relato de experiência*”, Remerson Bezerra Menezes, Guilherme Mariano Martins da Silva and Ludmila Andreu Belotti Funo address cultural learning in a partnership between a Brazilian interactor from the Universidade Regional do Cariri (URCA, Ceará) and his US partner from Georgetown University.

Finally, in the seventeenth article, “*Práticas de Intercâmbio Linguístico-Cultural via Teletandem no curso de Letras – Espanhol*,” Fábio Marques de Souza and Rickson Cristiano de Araújo Silva describe the incorporation of teletandem as an elective curricular component in a subject called “*Linguistic-*

*Cultural Exchange Practices via Teletandem*”, integrated in a Spanish Language and Linguistics course at the State University of Paraíba (UEPB).

It is our goal that the works published in this thematic issue will contribute to the debate on telecollaborative practices which gain increasing prominence every year in Foreign Language Education. The various themes and institutions portrayed in the articles published in this dossier represent the scope of the Teletandem Program and the role that telecollaboration contexts have played over the years between partner universities in Brazil and abroad.

We end our presentation by dedicating this thematic volume to Professor Ana Mariza Benedetti, a great researcher from the “*Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all*” group, who died on March 1, 2021. Ana Mariza left a legacy of friends and actively participated in the implementation of Teletandem at UNESP, directing master’s and doctoral students, publishing and participating in events. The memory of her excellence and companionship will remain alive in the history of the Teletandem Brasil group.

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