

Research Results on Telecollaboration

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1 RESEARCH RESULTS ON TELECOLLABORATION: GENERAL PART

Petra Hoffstaedter & Kurt Kohn (Steinbeis Transfer Center Language Learning Media)

1.1 PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In the general part of the TILA research report, the overall objectives, methodological procedures, research outcomes and pedagogic implications are briefly sketched out to provide a comprehensive picture of what has been achieved. The research studies reported on in chapters 2 to 10 offer more detailed and complementary insights into the impact of telecollaboration on intercultural communication practice and competence development in foreign language learning.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

Telecollaboration exchanges in TILA serve pedagogic objectives in connection with enabling pupils (= younger learners) in secondary schools to engage in communicative interaction with peers from other lingua-cultural backgrounds in order to practise and further develop their intercultural communicative competence in their respective foreign (target) language. The very same telecollaboration exchanges are also used to pursue TILA's research objectives regarding the impact of telecollaboration on intercultural foreign language learning with a focus on pupils' attitudes and behaviour and their intercultural communication practice and competence development as well as on the attitudes and involvement of (student) teachers. With pedagogic and research objectives as an overall orientation, TILA telecollaboration exchanges were designed, implemented and evaluated in close collaboration between teachers and researchers from the TILA project consortium and the wider TILA network.

The telecollaboration environments and tools used in the TILA intercultural exchanges include 3D virtual worlds based on OpenSim, the video communication platform BigBlueButton as well as chat and forum/blog in Moodle. The interaction focus was on intercultural conversations in pairs or small groups under either tandem or lingua franca conditions. The tandem condition refers to a pedagogic language constellation in which each of two interacting school classes has the native language of the other as target language, e.g. a French class learning German and a German class learning French. Under the lingua franca condition, the two interacting school classes have different native languages (e.g. a Spanish and a Dutch class) while sharing the same target language (e.g. French). Telecollaboration exchanges are pedagogically designed and implemented as blended learning ensembles typically consisting of a telecollaborative main phase combined with preparatory and follow-up phases in the classroom and Moodle as required. The physical locations from which the telecollaboration exchanges are carried out mainly include computer labs in schools as well as pupils' computers and internet connections at home.

Empirical data compilation included the following procedures:¹

- participant observations during the implementation process
- performance recordings of telecollaboration exchanges

¹ Questionnaires and interview questions can be found in the appendix.

- questionnaires for pupils concerning background information, user experience and motivation/anxiety
- questionnaires for teachers concerning teacher roles and their views on the telecollaboration and intercultural communication
- feedback interviews with pupils and teachers

The data resulting from the evaluation of the intercultural telecollaboration exchanges carried out in TILA provided a rich basis for a range of case study analyses of complementary thematic orientation. Guided by TILA's research objectives, sub-sets of data were selected and triangulated to gain insights into the pedagogic impact of telecollaboration. Special attention was given to pupils' user experience profiles, issues of task design and implementation, intercultural communication practice under tandem and lingua franca conditions, negotiation of meaning, pupils' linguistic self-confidence and language anxiety, as well as (student) teachers' perspectives and roles.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Following the structure of the research objectives specified in the TILA project proposal, this chapter presents and integrates results from the TILA research studies (see chapters 2-10) to show how the insights gained address all relevant research questions the TILA project set out to answer.

1.3.1 General impact on pupils (= younger learners)

- How do pupils experience telecollaboration with peers?
- Do pupils have preferences for using a specific telecollaboration tools?
- Is there an impact of telecollaboration on pupils' motivation and attitudes?
- What is the impact of telecollaboration on content and learning activities?
- What is the impact of telecollaboration on learner roles and group dynamics?
- Do individual differences regarding age and proficiency have an effect on telecollaboration and on how telecollaboration is appreciated?

Across all studies, pupils are generally quite enthusiastic about being able to communicate with peers from other countries and cultures. This goes hand in hand with a preference for synchronous and oral communication tools and with a certain robustness margin when faced with sound problems. Pupils' preferences, however, are also individual: some feel more at ease with written chat, others find voice more exciting. Familiarity with Skype or WhatsApp on their mobile phones has a strong influence as well. Intercultural telecollaboration fits into the emerging networking culture and is clearly seen as a natural extension of the physical classroom.

An outstanding advantage of telecollaboration is the facilitation of authentic intercultural contact and communication. In this connection, topics and tasks seem to work best that enable pupils to draw on their own experiences and opinions. The authentication potential of telecollaboration has a strong motivating effect. At the same time, however, it needs to be emphasized that seemingly attractive tools

like video communication platforms and virtual world environments are not motivating per se. Pupils who are intrinsically motivated and more proficient and active are also clearly better able to profit from these environments. It is quite evident that competence for autonomous collaboration needs to be developed and supported through careful scaffolding. In this connection, initial explorations in the TILA OpenSim environment seem to provide evidence that telecollaboration exchanges with gamification components might have a positive impact on the motivation of less competent young speakers.

Learner roles are generally positively affected by intercultural telecollaboration with a trend towards pupils being active and feeling responsible for others. The telecollaboration approach seems to be suitable across proficiency levels and age groups. An important prerequisite, however, is the pedagogic embedding of telecollaboration activities in a blended learning ensemble that provides pupils with the encouragement and guidance they need to feel comfortable with the new conditions for learning, to reduce initial anxieties over a sequence of exchanges, and to find their own roles. Learner preparation and “learning to learn” need to be given sufficient room.

1.3.2 Impact of telecollaboration on communicative competence

- Are communicative skills in the target language enhanced through telecollaboration activities with peers?
- Are there differences according to the tools being used: asynchronous (blog, forum) or synchronous (video communication, virtual worlds or chat)?
- What is the comparative impact of telecollaboration on tandem and lingua franca communication?

The impact of telecollaboration on pupils' communicative competence is highly encouraging. Pupils are provided with opportunities for spontaneous and authentic written and spoken communication. They also may become aware of and develop communication strategies including topic management, meaning negotiation, accommodation, and handling of misunderstandings. Telecollaboration should, however, be used on a regular basis. In the case of oral communication, exchanges from pupils' homes should also be envisaged in order to avoid network overload in the school's computer lab and to ensure a sufficient degree of communicative privacy.

The various tools greatly differ in their communicative characteristics and qualities. This should be seen as an advantage and opportunity for complementary pedagogic exploitation. A multimodal telecollaboration approach offering tool options from virtual worlds and video communication to chat and forum is ideally suited for providing practice opportunities for all skills relevant in foreign language learning from reading and writing to listening and speaking. In addition, the availability of multimodal options can be used for scaffolding purposes by e.g. leading pupils from asynchronous forum posts to short text chat conversations to more complex spoken interactions in BigBlueButton or OpenSim. Another advantage of a multimodal set-up was observed in connection with offering pupils telecollaboration from home in order to avoid shortcomings of the computer lab for spoken communication because of limited network capacities and lack of communicative privacy. The

availability of multimodal options made it possible to cater for different infrastructures and preferences and thus provide satisfactory access to telecollaboration for all pupils in a class.

As regards pedagogic language constellations, teachers' initial preference was for tandem pairings, i.e. for exchanges in which the native language (e.g. German) of one of the two communication partners was the target language (e.g. English) of the other and vice versa. This was to be expected because of the traditional focus in foreign language teaching on a native speaker orientation. In the course of the project development, however, teachers' preferences changed, with the result that the majority of the telecollaboration activities (73%) were implemented in a lingua franca format, i.e. as exchanges between pupils of different native languages sharing the same target language (e.g. English or German) for both interacting parties. Only 27% of the exchanges were set up as tandems. While initially the principal reason for this move towards lingua franca was influenced by the general lack of required target languages in schools, the lingua franca format gradually gained pedagogic credibility as a natural medium for authentic non-native speaker communication. Pupils felt being "in the same boat", were less anxious to make mistakes, and focused more on content and interaction than on form. The tandem format proved valuable because of two complementary pedagogic benefits: learners profited from contact with their native speaker partners, and native speakers themselves were required to accommodate to their non-native partners' proficiency level and to engage in supportive collaborative production. The need for more pedagogic guidance was obvious.

1.3.3 Impact of telecollaboration on intercultural (communicative) competence

- Is intercultural awareness enhanced through telecollaboration sessions? And how?
- What kinds of tasks are best suited to enhance intercultural communicative competence?
- How can intercultural communicative competence be assessed in telecollaboration?

The impact of telecollaboration on intercultural (communicative) competence can be traced in pupils' gains in their intercultural awareness when engaging in everyday conversations, exchanging their views on similarities and differences, or discussing critical incidents. They showed openness towards one another and were curious about other ways of doing things, e.g. when talking about holidays and festivities or when moving beyond the conversation task to explore topics of their own choice. An overall cooperative communication attitude seemed to prevail with many occurrences of agreement and comfort, collaborative comprehension and production, and tenacious engagement in clarifying misunderstandings. Because of the speakers' visual presence and the immediacy of spoken language, interactions in BigBlueButton seemed to be more conducive to enhancing intercultural openness curiosity and awareness.

TILA's focus on ordinary conversation tasks involving soft intercultural topics such as "Christmas", "fashion", "eating habits" or "use of modern technology and social media" very much emphasized the interactional quality of intercultural communication. These topics enabled pupils to draw on their own experience, opinions and preferences and helped them to raise their awareness and appreciation of different lifestyles and points of views. The evaluation analyses, however, make it convincingly clear that

success depends on guidance and scaffolding. The conversational telecollaboration part must therefore never be seen in isolation. It needs to be pedagogically embedded in a blended learning ensemble that includes preparatory and follow-up activities as necessary constituents. Besides setting up the telecollaboration teams and providing support for technological and thematic learner induction, the preparatory phase proved particularly relevant for “warm up” activities concerning empathy, openness and flexibility. Substantial follow-up tasks turned out to be quite indispensable in connection with “digesting” the telecollaboration experience. More often than not, the pupils’ awareness for communicative and intercultural issues is only raised in the follow-up phase when they (collaboratively) reflect on the telecollaboration exchange they had been engaged in.

Follow-up activities easily blend into self and teacher assessment. Suitable methodological instruments include peer feedback, learning diaries, and portfolios. The assessment value of a more substantial portfolio is obvious: it would for instance be possible to ask pupils to add passages they consider particularly felicitous from their recorded written and spoken exchanges and to provide them with an accompanying comment. The TILA experience shows that a more extended assessment approach involving rich portfolios is an important pedagogic asset which, however, requires long-term involvement of intercultural telecollaboration exchanges in the regular foreign language curriculum.

1.3.4 Impact of telecollaboration on (student) teachers

- How do (student) teachers experience telecollaboration in blended learning?
- Do (student) teachers have preferences for specific telecollaboration tools?
- What is the impact of telecollaboration on teacher-roles and teacher-student interaction?

The overall impact of telecollaboration on teachers and student teachers can be described as a conflict between perceived pedagogic potential and adverse conditions for implementation. Teachers generally experienced the telecollaboration exchanges they were involved in as a great pedagogic opportunity for intercultural competence development. At the same time, however, they were challenged and frustrated by technical and organisational problems. In this connection, it must not be overlooked that for most teachers and pupils the telecollaboration exchange in TILA was a first-time experience. It can be confidently expected that in the course of long-term involvement technical and organisational shortcomings will become less frequent and pedagogic gains will increase.

Similar to their pupils, teachers and student teachers showed a particular preference for oral communication in BigBlueButton and OpenSim. Despite this general preference, telecollaboration exchanges were by far more frequent in BigBlueButton than in OpenSim. An important reason for this imbalance seems to be the necessity to install a separate OpenSim viewer on the individual computer that is used in the exchange. Ease of access simply is a key factor; and there is evidence that in future more mobile solutions involving pads and smartphones will be of strategic importance. As regards teachers’ preference for oral communication, it needs to be emphasized that on the whole they appreciated the pedagogic potential of written chat and forum activities a lot. From a comprehensive foreign language learning perspective, a multimodal approach seems to be the answer. A most

important and initially not expected trend among teachers was their increasing appreciation of the lingua franca setting.

Teacher-roles were affected in interesting ways. Most noticeably, new procedures needed to be found and implemented for collaborating with a colleague from another country, embedding the telecollaboration exchange in a sustainable blended learning framework, getting the technology in place, and making sure that pupils had robust access either from the computer lab or from home. Concerning and teacher-student interaction, some teachers found it difficult to step back from their omnipresence in the face-to-face classroom. Guiding and scaffolding pupils to communicate autonomously with peers from other lingua-cultural backgrounds in telecollaboration exchanges and to assess their online communication and learning outcomes clearly is a great challenge. Teachers are required to develop a new perception of their professional self and to adjust tried and tested teaching practices to the conditions and pedagogic affordances of intercultural telecollaboration.

From a pedagogic-organisational perspective, it should be added that telecollaboration, quite obviously, does not naturally fit into the common school routine of face-to-face class teaching. To move from the odd intercultural telecollaboration pilot to implementing such exchanges as a pedagogically sustainable element of foreign language learning in schools requires adaptation processes that go well beyond the telecollaboration event itself.

1.4 PEDAGOGIC IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Despite computers and social media increasingly permeating our societies and lives, the implementation of telecollaboration for intercultural communication practice and competence development in foreign language learning contexts in secondary schools is by no means a “self-starter”. The TILA research outcomes give rise to a number of implications and suggestions for change.

In order to be successful, intercultural telecollaboration exchanges require:

- long-term involvement to build up familiarity and preferences as part of a new pedagogic culture;
- a multimodal approach integrating all (available) tools to ensure communicative and pedagogic diversity and richness;
- pedagogic embedding of tasks and activities in a normalising blended learning structure;
- a sufficiently powerful technological infrastructure including technical support staff;
- pedagogic incorporation and deployment of different physical locations (as required and suitable) from classroom to computer lab to pupils’ homes;
- learner preparation, scaffolding and continuous guidance as well as clear learning requirements and responsibilities;
- continuous teacher education, networking and collaboration.

All in all, TILA research outcomes provide a wealth of empirically grounded insights for professionals in school education including in particular teachers and student teachers, teacher educators and researchers as well as educational policy makers.

2 LEARNERS' BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE TILA PROJECT

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2.1 SUMMARY

In the present report we show the results of questionnaire data² provided by different groups of pupils who engaged in telecollaboration activities during September 2014 and May 2015. Pupils filled in two different surveys: the background and the user experience questionnaires. In the background questionnaires, pupils offered information about the languages they learn at school, which are particularly English and French, and reported not to use any technical apps and devices they would like to in the foreign language classroom. However, the responses show that most pupils are used to technology and use it extensively at home. As to the results from the learners' experience questionnaires that pupils completed after undertaking telecollaboration activities, they show that most pupils enjoyed the telecollaboration sessions; they liked to meet peers from other countries; some tools seemed to be easier to use (forum) than others (the video communication environment BigBlueButton); and although the pupils of all language constellations were positive about their telecollaboration experiences, scores were slightly higher for those engaged in tandem sessions with native speakers (as opposed to Lingua Franca exchanges). Finally, the data from those pupils who filled in the survey after completion of more than one telecollaboration activity seems to indicate that anxiety diminishes with the frequency of sessions, as pupils become more familiar with telecollaboration practices.

2.2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

For this report, we perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of both background and learners' experience questionnaires. On the one hand, we seek to know who the pupils participating in the telecollaboration exchanges are: what is their background, whether they like learning languages, which ones they learn at and outside school, etc. In addition, we discuss the use of technology and digital tools when learning languages at school.

On the other hand, we aim to describe how pupils experienced the telecollaboration activities within the TILA framework: which aspects played which role in their interactions, which problems arose in telecollaboration exchanges, pupils' feelings regarding the use of ICT in education and other issues concerning communication with foreign peers. Additionally, we present the results concerning the modality of communication used (Lingua Franca versus Tandem) and the role that frequency of sessions performed and the tool used plays on how pupils experience telecollaboration activities.

² This data belongs to the follow up period.

2.3 RESEARCH RESULTS

2.3.1 TILA background questionnaires: General information

Information from background questionnaires was provided by five groups of pupils: French, English, Spanish, German and Dutch, coming from twelve different institutions. In total, we gathered 287 responses. Table 1 and Figure 1 show specific information on questionnaire responses and their division by groups; as we see, most information (54%) comes from French and Dutch institutions.

Table 1: Total background questionnaire responses

	N	Gender		Age	
		Female	Male	Mean	Range
Spanish	50	27	23	15.86	14 – 19
French	88	61	27	14.42	11 – 17
English	35	35	0	15.43	14 – 17
German	48	16	32	13.81	12 – 16
Dutch	66	34	32	12.24	11 – 18
Total	287	173	114	14.35	11 – 19

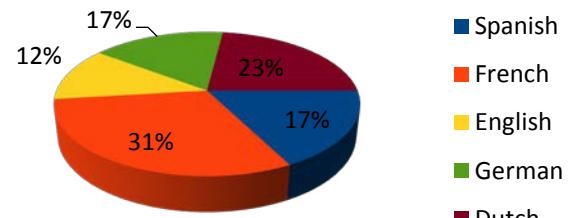


Figure 1: Division of responses by groups

2.3.2 TILA background questionnaires: You and language

Results in this section show that most pupils had some knowledge of foreign languages before starting their Secondary Education and that, in general terms, they like learning languages. Concerning languages taught at school, English, Spanish and French are the most frequently learned languages (83 %). A 10 % is devoted to other languages (Latin, Catalan or Gallego). Figure 3 shows that, among the pupils who learn languages outside school, English is the most learnt one (41%), although French (24%) and some others (as Russian, Arabic or Turkish) are also widely specified (17%).

Pupils were also asked about the activities in learning a language they like the most in class (see Table 2). A 5-point scale was used for these items, high values indicating positive attitudes. Table 3 shows the activities pupils undertake when learning languages outside school. As we observe, the most favourite activities in the classroom are speaking ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.0$) and learning about other people ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.1$) and the least favourite one is grammar ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.0$). Furthermore, the most undertaken activities outside school are those related to listening ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.2$). It is also worth remarking that pupils specify getting, in general terms, good results, above all in English and Spanish.

Table 2: Likes on language learning (at school)

	Mean	SD
Listening	3.3	1.0
Reading	3.1	1.0
Speaking	3.7	1.0
Writing	3.1	1.1
Grammar	2.7	1.0
Vocabulary	3.1	1.0
Pronunciation	3.3	1.1
Learning about other people	3.8	1.1

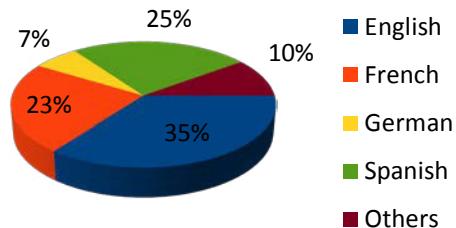


Figure 2: Languages learnt at school

Table 3: Activities outside school

	Mean	SD
Listening	3.5	1.2
Reading	3.1	1.1
Speaking	3.4	1.2
Writing	3.1	1.2

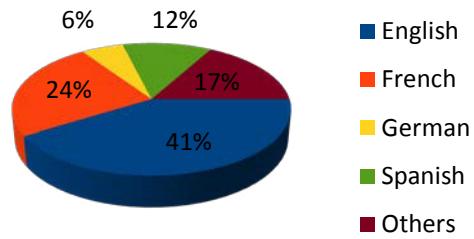


Figure 3: Languages learnt outside school

To conclude this section, pupils report to have generally travelled to those countries where the languages they study are spoken, particularly England and Spain. Furthermore, they specify liking meeting and speaking to people from other cultures and point the experiences with them as very positive ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.9$). Finally, the foreign language does not seem to be a barrier to get to know people from other countries ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.1$). As pupils reported in the open question, they try to gesticulate to be understood or use the translator to overcome the communicative problems.

2.3.3 TILA background questionnaires: Technology at your school

In this section, we discuss the results related to the use of technology and educational apps and programs when learning foreign languages at school. Using again a 5-point scale, pupils were requested to answer on the use of some specified tools in learning languages in their educational institution, 1 meaning 'never' and 5 meaning 'always'. As we can observe in Table 4 below, Facebook is hardly ever used in educational contexts ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.1$), whereas Google + and Google Drive are the most used ones ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 1.3$; $M = 1.8$, $SD = 1.0$, respectively). However, there are differences in the use of these environments depending on the countries and language groups. Instagram, for instance, is more used among Dutch pupils ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.5$) and WhatsApp, among Spanish, Dutch and English ones ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.5$; $M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.7$ and $M = 2.1$, $SD = 1.6$, respectively).

Table 4: Tools used in class by pupils (1 'never', 5 'always')

	Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Facebook	1.5	1.1	Blogs	1.6	0.8
Twitter	1.3	0.8	Wikis	1.7	1.1
Instagram	1.6	1.1	Google +	2.1	1.3
Snapchat	1.5	1.0	Google Hangouts	1.1	0.6
Skype	1.4	0.9	Google Drive	1.8	1.0
WhatsApp	1.9	1.3	Edmodo	1.0	0.2
Touch	1.1	0.4	Mahara	1.1	0.2
Ping	1.1	0.3	Moodle	1.9	0.9

Furthermore, among those pupils using educational apps at school, we can observe that this use is not frequent ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.1$). In addition, when asked if educational tools should be used more at school, results are very high ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.0$). This idea is related to the last item shown in Table 5, as most pupils think that the use of digital tools may contribute to learn languages better and more ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.0$).

Table 5: The use of technology by pupils at school (1 'never', 5 'always')

	Mean	SD
Do you use educational apps at school?	2.4	1.1
Do you use mobile devices at school?		
· Smartphone	1.8	1.0
· Tablet/Ipad	2.3 ³	0.7
· Ipod	1.1	0.4
Do you think that digital applications should be used more at your school?	3.8	1.0
Do you think that the use of digital tools may contribute to learn languages better and more?	3.9	1.0

2.3.4 TILA background questionnaires: You and technology

Results in this last section show that most pupils have an Internet connection (99%) and a computer at home (98%) as well as a smartphone (91%), a tablet, an Ipad or an Ipod (78%). Furthermore, background questionnaires provide us with information about the wide use pupils make of technology devices to be in touch with friends and family. As we see in Table 6, the most used tool is WhatsApp ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.2$) and the least used ones are Touch and Ping ($M = 1.1$, $SD = 0.5$ each). Nevertheless, in this case there are also differences regarding language groups. As it could be expected, Spanish pupils use very frequently WhatsApp ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 0.5$) and almost never Touch and Ping ($M = 1.2$, $SD = 0.8$ in both). The high

³The Spanish group did not have results concerning this item.

frequency in using WhatsApp is the general rule, although in the French group, particularly, Skype ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.6$) is more used than WhatsApp ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 1.4$).

Table 6: Tools used by pupils to communicate with friends and family (1 'never', 5 'always')

	Mean	SD		Mean	SD
Email	2.8	1.3	Blogs	1.2	0.6
Facebook	3.0	1.3	Google Hangouts	1.2	0.6
Twitter	2.2	1.4	Google Drive	1.3	0.7
Instagram	3.1	1.7	Google +	1.6	1.2
Snapchat	3.2	1.6			
Skype	2.9	1.5			
WhatsApp	3.8	1.2			
Touch	1.1	0.5			
Ping	1.1	0.5			

2.3.5 TILA learners' experience questionnaires: General information

The total number of learners' experience questionnaires is 234 (122 from Spanish pupils, 60 from French pupils, 34 from English pupils and 18 from Dutch pupils) embracing several sessions. Table 7 presents the number of questionnaires filled in and provides additional information about age (Mean: 14.63) and gender (120 male versus 114 female). Figure 4 shows that most responses were from Spanish and French pupils, these two groups constituting 78% of the total population. Figure 5, shows that the modality of communication most frequently used in these tasks was Lingua Franca (73%). Finally, Figure 6 shows the most frequently used tools in the overall project: BigBlueButton (79 %), followed by forums (8%) and chats (6%).

Table 7: Total feedback questionnaire responses

nº	Gender		Age	
	Male	Fem	Mean	Range
Spanish	122	76	46	16.41 15 – 19
French	60	25	35	14.33 11 – 16
English	34	9	25	15.57 15 – 20
Dutch	18	10	8	12.22 12 – 13
Total	234	120	114	14.63 11 – 20

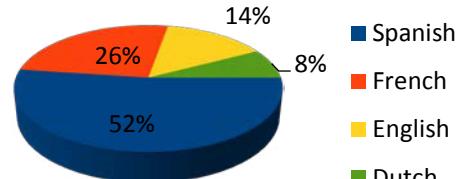


Figure 4: Division of responses by groups (n = 234)

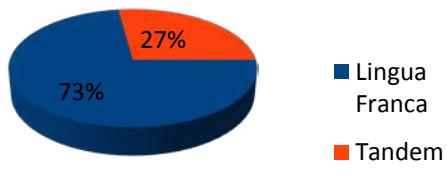


Figure 5: The most used interaction format

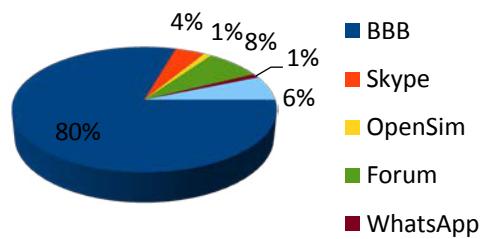


Figure 6: The most used tools

For next section, some pupils' responses have not been taken into account, as they did not perform any telecollaboration activities and their responses could affect the whole set of results. Therefore the information provided here refers to 224 useful responses⁴.

In general terms, the results in the items of the questionnaire vary regarding the group of pupils. Although a lot of pupils scored high in the parameters of the questionnaire, there are some pupils that scored very low in particular items; this can be seen in the high values for standard deviations.

Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations for each item of the pupils' experience questionnaire according to language group and, the last column includes the overall figures across languages⁵. Results worth noticing are highlighted in blue. Overall pupils liked very much to communicate in the virtual environment ($M: 4.0$; $SD: 0.9$) and particularly meet pupils from other countries ($M: 4.1$; $SD: 4.1$) as pupils enjoyed communicating with peers ($M: 4.0$; $SD: 0.9$) and felt this to be very motivating ($M: 3.0$; $SD: 0.8$). The telecollaboration project as a whole was very positively valued, for being interesting as they have the opportunity to communicate with peers abroad ($M: 3.8$; $SD: 0.9$) and for being useful for their language learning ($M: 3.8$; $SD: 1.0$). They shared their wish to use online tasks more often ($M: 3.8$; $SD: 0.9$). Sound problems were reported by those pupils collaborating with the video communication platform BigBlueButton ("sound was good" $M: 2.5$; $SD: 1.3$). This was corroborated by pupils who included remarks and comments regarding difficulties and problems with technology: 19 comments come from Spanish pupils and 15 from French pupils. Some read as follows: *Muy mala calidad de sonido, que provocó falta de entendimiento; Se oía muy mal. Se escuchaba más ruido de fondo; On entend pas très bien, Je n'ai pas pu me connecter.*

There were also very positive remarks on the telecollaborative experience. Among Spanish pupils, for example, we can quote comments like *Es una buena idea para mejorar el idioma* that clearly state the

⁴ Telecollaboration sessions did not take place due to technical problems, or because their partner did not appear at all. Curiously, most technical problems were reported by Spanish and French pupils, who, as we will see, present the lowest means on satisfaction.

⁵ There are slight differences according to the country engaged in TC sessions. English and Dutch pupils seem to be extremely positive about the TC experience.

difference between what has been called *traditional teaching* and these innovative practices promoting intercultural communication in the foreign language. French pupils also provide comments like: *Cela était amusant de parlé avec avec des étranger par ordinateur.*

Table 8: Means of a 5-point scale user experience questionnaire items by language groups and overall ones

		EN		SP		FR		DU		OVERALL	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Technical quality</i>	It was easy to start the tool	3.6	1.0	3.1	1.1	3.9	1.1	3.9	0.8	3.6	1.0
	It was easy to use the tool	3.5	1.1	3.4	0.9	3.9	1.1	3.6	0.8	3.6	1.0
	Sound was good (if applicable)	2.8	1.3	2.6	1.1	2.5	1.4	2.1	1.3	2.5	1.3
	Video was good (if applicable)	3.7	0.8	3.1	1.0	3.3	1.5	2.2	1.3	3.1	1.2
<i>Preferences and likes</i>	Communicate and interact (...)	4.0	1.0	3.7	0.8	3.8	1.0	4.2	0.6	4.0	0.9
	Meet stud. from o. countries (...)	4.3	0.8	3.9	0.8	3.9	0.9	4.4	0.6	4.1	0.8
	I like to learn in this tool (...)	3.9	0.8	3.8	0.8	3.7	1.1	3.6	0.6	3.8	0.8
	I like to be visible in a video	3.6	1.0	3.5	0.8	3.4	1.2	3.5	0.7	3.5	0.9
	I like to see others in a video	4.0	0.9	3.7	0.8	4.5	0.7	3.0	1.4	3.8	1.0
	I like to be an avatar	4.0 (2)	0.0	[no data]		[no data]		[no data]		4.0	0.0
	I like to speak with an avatar	4.0 (2)	0.0	[no data]		[no data]		[no data]		4.0	0.0
<i>Feeling while interacting</i>	I felt comfortable (...)	3.8	0.9	3.4	0.9	3.4	1.2	3.9	0.5	3.6	0.9
	I felt in the same place (...)	3.4	1.2	3.1	1.0	3.3	1.2	3.6	0.9	3.4	1.1
	I felt satisfied (...) I communicated	3.7	0.9	3.4	1.0	3.4	1.3	3.5	0.9	3.5	1.0
	The tool env. affected (...) positiv.	3.7	1.0	3.2	1.0	3.5	1.2	3.6	0.8	3.5	1.0
	I felt part of a group	3.2	1.2	3.4	0.9	2.9	1.3	3.6	0.9	3.3	1.1
	I enjoyed comm. stud. (...) country	4.4	0.7	3.8	0.9	3.7	1.1	4.1	0.8	4.0	0.9
	Could h. d. better (...) time to think	3.3	1.1	3.3	1.0	3.9	1.1	3.1	1.3	3.4	1.1
	I could have done better in my NL	3.5	1.1	3.7	1.1	3.9	1.1	3.0	1.0	3.5	1.1
	Motivating to comm. students (...)	4.2	0.7	3.8	1.0	3.8	0.9	3.9	0.7	3.9	0.8
	Nervous when speaking in the TL	3.1	1.1	2.9	1.1	2.9	1.3	2.4	1.3	2.8	1.2
<i>Importance</i>	Important to be understood	4.3	0.4	3.8	1.0	3.9	1.0	3.5	0.9	3.9	0.8
	Important to und. o. student(s)	4.3	0.5	3.8	0.9	4.0	0.9	4.1	0.6	4.1	0.7
	Important to speak/write corr.	4.0	0.6	3.8	0.9	3.9	1.0	3.5	0.8	3.8	0.8
	Important to express (...)	4.2	0.6	3.8	0.9	3.8	0.9	3.7	0.8	3.8	0.8
	Important to speak fluently	3.9	0.7	3.6	0.9	3.7	1.0	3.6	1.0	3.7	0.9
	Important to learn (...) life & cult.	3.9	0.8	3.4	0.9	3.6	1.0	3.8	0.8	3.7	0.9
	Important to know students (...)	3.9	0.7	3.7	0.9	3.6	1.0	3.9	0.6	3.8	0.8
<i>Performance</i>	Make myself understood	3.8	0.9	3.6	0.9	3.4	1.2	3.6	1.3	3.6	1.1
	To understand what student said	3.9	0.9	3.5	1.0	3.5	1.1	3.6	1.3	3.6	1.1
	I was able to speak correctly	3.8	0.8	3.6	0.9	3.4	1.1	3.8	1.0	3.7	1.0
	Express what I wanted to say	3.9	0.8	3.6	0.9	3.4	1.1	3.8	1.0	3.7	1.0
	I was able to speak fluently	3.6	0.9	3.4	0.9	3.2	1.1	3.7	1.2	3.5	1.2
	Learn about (...) life & culture	3.7	1.0	3.3	1.1	3.1	1.2	3.1	1.4	3.3	1.2
<i>Overall assessment</i>	I enjoyed the online task	3.8	1.0	3.6	1.0	3.6	1.0	3.9	0.6	3.7	0.9
	Interesting for interac. with peers	4.0	1.0	3.6	0.9	3.7	1.0	3.8	0.6	3.8	0.9

Useful for my language learning	3.9	1.0	3.7	0.9	3.5	1.0	3.8	0.9	3.8	1.0
Disc. new things about o. culture	3.5	1.0	3.3	1.0	3.2	1.2	3.6	0.7	3.4	1.0
I would suggest to a friend (...)	4.0	1.0	3.6	1.0	3.2	1.1	3.8	0.9	3.7	1.0
Like to use onl. tasks more often	3.9	1.0	3.6	0.9	3.5	1.0	4.0	0.7	3.8	0.9

Table 9 displays the results according to communicative formats (Lingua Franca and Tandem). As we can see, both groups of pupils (those interacting in tandem with native speakers and those using the foreign language as lingua franca) seem to be very positive about the interaction. Although the mean values for most items within the categories “preferences & likes” and “importance” of those interacting in a Tandem setting are slightly higher, differences are in general negligible. As for “performance” pupils in Tandem seem to have the impression that they cannot speak fluently (M: 3.2; SD: 1.1), while pupils in Lingua Franca constellations feel they can communicate quite fluently (M: 3.5; SD: 0.9) pointed lower on the issues related to their performance and considered themselves less able to speak fluently (M = 3.2, SD = 1.1). Finally, not surprisingly pupils in a Tandem setting seemed to feel more nervous (M: 3.1; SD: 1.1) than pupils in a Lingua Franca constellation (M: 2.8; SD: 1.2), although they seem to be equally comfortable in the interaction (M: 3.5).

Table 9: Means of a 5-point scale user experience questionnaire items by communication format

		Lingua Franca		Tandem	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Technical quality</i>	It was easy to start the tool	3.4	1.1	3.5	1.1
	It was easy to use the tool	3.6	1.0	3.4	1.1
	Sound was good (if applicable)	2.6	1.2	2.6	1.3
	Video was good (if applicable)	3.1	1.1	3.4	1.1
<i>Preferences and likes</i>	I like to communicate and interact in this tool environment	3.7	0.9	3.9	0.8
	I like to meet students from other countries in this tool env.	4.0	0.8	4.1	0.8
	I like to learn in this tool environment	3.7	0.9	3.9	0.7
	I like to be visible in a video	3.4	1.0	3.7	0.9
	I like to see others in a video	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.7
	I like to be an avatar (n = 2)	4.0 (1)	0.0	4.0 (1)	0.0
	I like to speak with an avatar (n = 2)	4.0 (1)	0.0	4.0 (1)	0.0
<i>Feeling while interacting</i>	I felt comfortable in the interaction	3.5	0.9	3.5	1.0
	I felt I was in the same place with the others	3.2	1.0	3.4	1.2
	I felt satisfied with the way I communicated	3.5	1.0	3.4	1.1
	I felt the tool env. affected in my communication positively	3.4	1.0	3.3	1.2
	I felt part of a group	3.3	1.1	3.3	1.1
	I enjoyed communicating with students from another country	3.8	0.9	3.9	1.0
	I could have done better with more time to think	3.4	1.0	3.2	1.1
	I could have done better in my native language	3.7	1.1	3.7	1.1
	I found motivating to c. with students from another country	3.8	0.9	3.9	1.0
<i>Importance</i>	I felt nervous when speaking in the target language	2.8	1.2	3.1	1.1
	It was important to me to be understood	3.8	0.9	3.9	0.9

Performance	It was important to me to understand the other student(s)	3.9	0.8	4.0	1.0
	It was important to me to speak/write correctly	3.8	0.8	3.9	1.0
	It was important to me to express what I wanted to say	3.9	0.8	3.8	1.0
	It was important to me to speak fluently	3.7	0.8	3.6	1.0
	It was i. to me to learn about the other students' life and culture	3.6	0.9	3.6	1.1
	It was i. to me to get to know students from another country	3.7	0.8	3.7	1.0
	I was able to make myself understood	3.6	1.0	3.5	1.1
	I was able to understand what the other student(s) said	3.6	1.0	3.5	1.1
	I was able to speak correctly	3.6	0.9	3.5	1.1
	I was able to express what I wanted to say	3.7	0.9	3.5	1.1
		Lingua Franca		Tandem	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I was able to speak fluently		3.5	0.9	3.2	1.1
I was able to learn something a. the o. students' life and culture		3.4	1.1	3.2	1.3
Overall assessment		3.6	0.8	3.6	1.2
		3.5	0.7	3.7	1.2
		3.6	0.9	3.7	1.1
		3.3	0.8	3.2	1.1
		3.4	1.0	3.7	1.1
		3.7	0.8	3.6	1.1

Table 10 shows the results for the different environments being used in the exchanges (BBB, Skype, chats, forums and OpenSim). Pupils using forums scored higher in the items being easy to use and start the tool compared to those using BBB. Regarding preferences and likes, BBB seems to be the least liked tool while OpenSim seems to be the most liked tools, although cautions has to be taken when interpreting results, as only 2 pupils reported to use OpenSim in the Telecollaboration exchanges. Preferences and likes are also higher for uses of this tool. Chat, also presents high means in general terms, although pupils using it score lower in suggesting a friend to take part in telecollaboration using this tool ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.2$).

Table 10: Means of a 5-point scale user experience questionnaire items by environment⁶

		BBB/Skype		Chat		Forum		OpenSim (n=2)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Technical quality	It was easy to start the tool	3.4	1.2	3.3	0.9	4.0	0.8	2.5	0.7
	It was easy to use the tool	3.5	1.1	3.9	0.5	3.6	1.1	4.0	0.0
	Sound was good (if applicable)	2.5	1.2	[no data]		[no data]		4.0	0.0
	Video was good (if applicable)	3.2	1.2	[no data]		[no data]		4.0	[0]
Preferences and likes	Communicate and interact (...)	3.7	0.9	4.0	0.7	4.2	0.9	4.5	0.7
	Meet students from countries (...)	4.0	0.8	4.0	1.0	4.4	0.6	4.0	1.4
	Learn in this tool environment	3.8	0.8	3.8	0.8	4.4	0.7	4.5	0.7
I like to be visible in a video		3.5	1.0	[no data]		[no data]		[no data]	

⁶WhatsApp (n=2) has not been included in this section.

	I like to see others in a video	4.0	0.8	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	4.0	0.0
	I like to be an avatar	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	4.0	0.0
	I like to speak with an avatar	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	[no data]	4.0	0.0
Feeling while interacting	I felt comfortable in the interaction	3.4	1.0	3.8	1.1	4.1	0.8	4.0
	I felt I was in the same place with the oth.	3.1	1.1	3.4	1.0	3.6	1.0	4.0
	I felt satisfied with the way I comm.	3.4	1.0	4.1	0.7	3.6	1.2	4.5
	The tool env. affected in my comm. positiv.	3.3	1.1	3.8	1.1	3.8	0.8	4.0
	I felt part of a group	3.2	1.0	3.4	1.4	3.7	1.0	2.0
		BBB/Skype		Chat		Forum		OpenSim (n=2)
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M
Importance	I enjoyed comm. stud. from a. country	3.8	1.0	4.3	0.7	4.1	0.6	5.0
	Could h. d. better with more time to think	3.3	1.1	4.1	0.8	3.7	1.0	2.0
	I could have done better in my NL	3.7	1.1	4.5	0.7	3.6	1.2	3.5
	Motivating to comm. with students fr. a. c.	3.8	0.9	4.1	0.5	4.3	0.7	4.5
	I felt nervous when speaking in the TL	2.9	1.1	3.0	1.3	3.1	1.5	2.0
Performance	It was important to me to be understood	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.7	3.7	1.3	4.0
	Important to understand the o. student(s)	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.7	4.0	1.0	4.5
	Important to me to speak/write correctly	3.9	0.9	3.8	0.6	3.9	0.8	4.0
	Important to express what I wanted to say	3.9	0.9	4.0	0.6	3.9	1.0	4.5
	It was important to me to speak fluently	3.7	0.9	3.4	0.7	3.9	0.9	4.5
	Important to learn about o. st.' life & cult.	3.5	0.9	3.8	1.0	3.8	1.0	3.0
	Important to get to know st. from a. coun.	3.7	0.9	3.8	0.8	3.0	0.9	3.5
Overall	I enjoyed the online task	3.6	1.0	3.9	0.7	4.0	0.9	4.5
assessment	I f. the o. t. int. for interacti. peers of o. c.	3.7	1.0	3.9	0.7	3.9	1.0	5.0
	I f. the o. t. useful for my language learning	3.6	1.0	3.9	0.5	3.8	0.9	4.5
	The o. t. disc. new things about t. o. cul.	3.3	1.0	3.2	1.3	3.5	1.3	4.0
	I would suggest to a friend to take part in c.	3.5	1.0	2.6	1.2	4.1	0.8	4.0
	I would like to use online tasks more often	3.6	1.0	3.6	0.8	4.1	0.8	4.0

Finally Table 11 shows results regarding the pupil's perceptions regarding the number of sessions performed. As can be seen pupils reporting on four and more sessions score higher on the issues concerning "preferences & likes" (they like to communicate and learn in the specific environment they use), slightly lower in "feeling while interacting" (feeling comfortable in the interaction, enjoying communicating with peers), "importance" (to understand and be understood, to express what they want to say, to speak fluently) and "performance" (to be able to make oneself understood, to understand what the other says, to express themselves). This can have various explanations. The "newness" factor might have disappeared and pupils experience the exchanges as being normal. It could

also be that pupils become more critical about their language competence. Tasks might become more complex. However it must be highlighted that pupils continue being enthusiastic.

Table 11: Means of a 5-point scale user experience questionnaires (1 and more sessions)

		1 S (n = 58)		2 S (n = 51)		3 S (n= 30)		4 & + S (n= 81)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Technical quality</i>	It was easy to start the tool	3.4	0.9	3.5	1.2	3.7	1.1	3.2	1.2
	It was easy to use the tool	3.5	0.8	3.6	1.1	3.8	1.1	3.5	1.2
	Sound was good (if applicable)	2.8	1.2	2.5	1.3	2.2	1.2	2.7	1.1
	Video was good (if applicable)	2.7	1.1	3.6	1	2.9	1.3	3.3	1.1
<i>Preferences and likes</i>	I like to comm. and interact in this t. env.	3.8	0.9	3.6	0.9	3.7	0.9	3.9	0.8
	Il. to m. stud. from other c. in this t. env.	4.1	0.8	4.0	0.8	4.1	0.7	4.0	0.9
	I like to learn in this tool environment	3.6	0.8	3.8	0.7	3.6	1.0	4.0	0.8
	I like to be visible in a video	3.0	1.0	3.8	1.0	3.2	1.1	3.6	0.9
	I like to see others in a video	3.5	1.1	4.2	0.6	4.2	0.7	3.9	0.8
	I like to be an avatar	[no data]		4.0 (1)	0	[no data]		[no data]	
	I like to speak with an avatar	[no data]		4.0 (1)	0	[no data]		[no data]	
<i>Feeling while interacting</i>	I felt comfortable in the interaction	3.7	0.8	3.7	0.9	3.3	1.2	3.3	1.0
	I felt I was in t. same place with the others	3.3	0.9	3.1	1.2	3.1	1.3	3.3	1.0
	I felt satisfied with the way I comm.	3.5	1.0	3.6	1.0	3.1	1.2	3.4	1.0
	I felt the tool env. affect. in my comm. pos.	3.4	1.1	3.0	1.0	3.2	1.1	3.2	1.1
	I felt part of a group	3.2	1.1	3.4	1.0	3.1	1.2	3.3	1.0
	I enjoyed comm. with stud. from a. c.	4.1	0.7	4.0	0.8	3.6	1.1	3.7	1.0
	I c. h. done better with more time to think	3.5	1.2	3.4	1.0	3.5	1.0	3.3	1.1
	I c. h. done better in my native language	3.7	1.1	3.8	1.0	3.7	1.2	3.6	1.1
	I f. motivating to comm. with st. from a. c.	4.0	0.8	3.9	0.8	3.8	0.9	3.7	1.0
	I felt nervous when speaking in the TL	2.7	1.2	3.2	1.1	2.9	1.2	2.9	1.0
<i>Importance</i>	Imp. to me to be understood	4.0	0.7	3.9	1.0	4.0	0.6	3.7	1.1
	Imp. to me to und. the other st.(s)	4.0	0.6	4.0	0.9	4.2	0.5	3.7	1.0
	Imp. to me to speak/write correctly	3.8	0.7	4.0	0.8	4.0	0.8	3.7	1.0
	Imp. to express what I wanted to say	4.0	0.7	3.9	0.9	4.0	0.7	3.7	1.0
	Important to me to speak fluently	3.7	0.8	3.9	0.9	3.7	0.8	3.5	1.0
	Imp. to learn about st.' life and cul.	3.8	0.8	3.5	0.9	3.5	0.7	3.5	1.1
	Imp. to get to know stud. from an. c.	3.8	0.7	3.7	0.8	3.7	0.7	3.6	1.1
<i>Performance</i>	I was able to make myself understood	3.8	0.9	3.6	1.0	3.3	1.2	3.5	1.0
	I w. a. to understand what o. st.(s) said	3.8	1.0	3.6	1.1	3.5	1.1	3.4	1.1
	I was able to speak correctly	3.7	0.8	3.6	0.9	3.3	1.1	3.5	1.0
	I was able to express what I wanted to say	3.8	0.7	3.7	0.9	3.3	1.1	3.5	1.0
	I was able to speak fluently	3.7	0.9	3.4	0.9	3.1	1.0	3.3	1.0
	I w. a. to learn som. about st.' life and cul.	3.5	1.1	3.5	1.1	2.9	1.2	3.2	1.1

<i>Overall assessment</i>	I enjoyed the online task	3.7	0.8	3.6	1.0	3.5	1.2	3.6	1.1
	I f. the o. t. int. for inter. w. peers of o. c.	3.8	0.7	3.6	1.0	3.6	1.1	3.7	1.0
	I found the o. t. useful for my lang. l.	3.8	0.8	3.7	0.9	3.4	0.9	3.7	1.1
	The o. t. h. me disc. new things a. the o. c.	3.4	0.9	3.4	1.0	2.9	1.0	3.4	1.1
	I would sugg. to a friend to take part in o. c.	3.6	1.0	3.7	0.9	3.2	1.1	3.6	1.1
	I w. l. to use o. t. w. stud. from o. c. m. oft.	3.8	0.8	3.7	0.9	3.4	1.1	3.6	1.1

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

Pupils seem to embrace telecollaboration practices as they are felt to be motivating and useful for intercultural language learning. They like to meet pupils from other cultural backgrounds and learn about their culture and life by engaging in task driven communication using the target language meaningfully either in a tandem constellation or in a lingua franca setting. The differences regarding these interaction constellations seem to be negligible. Pupils like to communicate in the specific virtual environment they have been using (BBB, chat, forum, OpenSim), although they experience sound problems with the video communication platform BigBlueButton. As to the impact of frequency of online sessions on pupil's perceptions of telecollaboration as a whole, there seems to be a slight influence probably due to the experienced "lack of novelty" in later sessions or pupils becoming more aware of communication demands or more critical about their foreign language competence. This however should be further analysed in future research studies.

We would like to end up quoting one of the English pupils participating in the TILA exchanges.

I really love meeting pupils from other countries in this way - it is a lot of fun, and also very informative!

3 TELECOLLABORATION FOR INTERCULTURAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONVERSATIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTEXTS: TASK DESIGN AND PEDAGOGIC IMPLEMENTATION

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3.1 SUMMARY

This report addresses issues of task design and pedagogic implementation for intercultural telecollaboration exchanges between secondary school pupils from different countries. It is based on case studies of three telecollaboration scenarios: tandem conversations in 3D world environments in OpenSim, lingua franca conversations in 3D world environments in OpenSim, and lingua franca conversations in a multimodal environment combining video communication in BigBlueButton with chat and forum in Moodle. These scenarios are distinguished by relevant task design features including topic selection, blended learning task ensemble, tandem and lingua franca constellations, telecollaboration tools and communication modes, and physical locations. Pupils' performance data, feedback comments from teachers and pupils as well as participant observations provide insights into the workings of these task design features and their affordances for intercultural communication practice:

Topics that enable pupils to talk about their own experiences, likes and dislikes, and opinions are generally well suited to foster authentic communication. Worksheets or posters with guiding questions, keywords or controversial statements help stimulate the interaction. Pupils should also be encouraged to discuss topics that come up spontaneously.

Telecollaboration exchanges require embedding in blended learning ensembles. In a preparatory phase, teachers need to make sure that their pupils are sufficiently familiar with the tools to be used. As regards the conversation topics, an evenly balanced preparation on both sides is of key importance. In a follow-up phase (in class or in a forum), pupils should be guided to reflect on their telecollaboration experience with the aim of raising awareness for the challenges of intercultural interaction, fostering openness and curiosity, and critically revising one's own attitudes. Learning diaries and portfolios help them become more autonomous in both intercultural communication and learning; they help teachers improve pedagogic assessment and feedback.

Tandem constellations are in line with a general preference in foreign language teaching for communication with native speakers. Challenges were observed regarding organisation of matching school classes, helping pupils to act as native speaker experts, and switching between the two languages involved. It seems advisable to adopt the "one session, one language" principle at least in the initial stages of pupils' tandem telecollaboration experience. Lingua franca constellations, on the other hand, can be highly motivating since they offer authentic communication on an equal footing. Pupils seem to feel more confident and less worried to make mistakes; focus is on getting the message across.

The telecollaboration tools available in TILA support all communication modes relevant for intercultural foreign language communication. As regards intercultural communicative competence development,

oral communication seems to be particularly strong and attractive particularly because of its positive effects on pupils' fluency and confidence. It should be emphasized, however, that the various communication tools and modes have their respective strengths and pedagogic values. A multimodal approach, including telecollaboration from home, thus seems to be best suited for serving the full range of intercultural communicative skills required as well as for coping with adverse conditions in schools' computer labs for spoken interactions.

The pedagogic affordances offered by telecollaboration exchanges open up new ways for intercultural foreign language learning beyond the limitations of the physical classroom. For pedagogically sustainable solutions, however, it is essential to make telecollaboration part of the regular curriculum. At the same time, teachers should be aware of the scaffolding needs of weaker and intrinsically less motivated pupils as well as of their own needs for continuous professional development.

3.2 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

In the context of our study, it is helpful to distinguish between pedagogic objectives and research objectives. In all TILA telecollaboration exchanges, the overall *pedagogic objective* is to enable pupils from different countries and cultural backgrounds to meet in pairs or small groups and to engage in communicative and intercultural foreign language interaction. This objective is based on the insight that communication should not only be the goal of learning but also its medium. Opportunities for authentic and spontaneous intercultural communication practice are thus considered to be of key pedagogic importance; and telecollaboration tasks are designed and implemented for creating such opportunities beyond the natural limitations of the physical classroom. Our study's overall *research objective* is to try out and explore various options for TILA task design and implementation in a series of telecollaboration exchanges (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2014; Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2015) in order to reach a better understanding of the issues involved and to be able to formulate guidelines for teachers. Concerning task design for intercultural telecollaboration also see O'Dowd & Ware, 2009 and Thomas & Reinders, 2010.

When designing tasks and activities for intercultural telecollaboration between pupils in secondary schools, a network of complementary and interacting shaping forces needs to be considered (Figure 1). To facilitate case study glimpses into the workings of these forces and their impact on the nature and quality of the pupils' intercultural communicative interactions, various manifestations of telecollaboration exchanges were set up that incorporate relevant manifestations of topics and task ensembles, communication modes and telecollaboration tools, pedagogic language constellations, and physical locations.



Figure 1: Features influencing task design for intercultural telecollaboration

The following sets of empirical data⁷ were available for analysing the telecollaboration exchanges of this study with regard to the impact of the respective shaping forces they incorporate:

- recordings and transcripts of pupils' oral and written communicative performances,
- results from pupils' user experience questionnaires,
- feedback interviews with the teachers and pupils,
- participant observations during implementation and coaching of the telecollaboration exchanges.

3.3 TELECOLLABORATION SCENARIOS

This study focuses on three different telecollaboration scenarios in which pupils communicate in a 3D world environment based on OpenSim (scenarios A and B), or in a multimodal set-up combining the video communication environment BigBlueButton with chat and forum/blog facilities on the TILA Moodle (scenario C).

⁷ The user experience questionnaire and the interview questions can be found in the appendix.

The telecollaboration exchanges involved tandem interactions between native and non-native speaker pupils (scenario A) or lingua franca interactions between pupils who were all non-native speakers of the respective target language and language of communication (scenarios B and C). The physical location varied as well: in scenario A, the OpenSim environment was accessed from the schools' computer rooms during class hours; in scenarios B and C, pupils met outside class hours either from a computer in school or from their home computer.

The thematic focus of the telecollaboration exchanges was on everyday topics of rather low intercultural saturation such as "was disposal and prevention", "eating habits and vegetarian diet", "fashion", "Christmas" or "new technologies and social media". This orientation is in line with an interactional understanding of intercultural communication. Pupils should mainly draw on personal experiences, likes and dislikes, and opinions in order to be able to engage in preferably spontaneous and natural conversations similar to the ones in private encounters.

All telecollaboration tasks are embedded in a blended learning ensemble that generally consist of a preparatory phase, a telecollaborative main phase, and a follow-up phase. In the *main phase*, the primary focus is on intercultural telecollaboration exchanges in the respective telecollaboration environment. This may include e.g. synchronous spoken communication in a 3D virtual world environment in OpenSim or in a video communication room of BigBlueButton, synchronous written communication in a Moodle chat room, or asynchronous written communication in a Moodle forum/blog. The *preparatory phase* involves tasks that help prepare the ground for the main telecollaborative event. Preparatory tasks may in particular concern a selection of the following pedagogic objectives:

- knowledge development within each country/culture group
- introduction or exploration of relevant means of expressions
- exploratory discussions within each country/culture group
- induction to the technological environment and tools
- introduction of the telecollaboration task and procedures

Preparatory activities usually take place in the classroom and may be combined with forum posts and upload of resources in the Moodle course. In the *follow-up phase*, pupils are typically engaged in activities designed to securing learning results. They present and discuss outcomes from their telecollaboration activities in class and reflect on their experiences individually or in small groups, with or without teacher involvement. In this connection, learning diaries and e-portfolios have their place.

The table below provides an overview of the telecollaborative pilot units analysed and discussed in this report.

Overview of telecollaboration scenarios					
	Physical environment	Language constellation		Topics	Communication tools
<i>Scenario A</i>	During class hours PC lab at school	Tandem	German and French	Unit 1: Waste disposal and prevention	OpenSim
			German and French	Unit 2: Eating habits and vegetarian diet	
			German	Unit 3: Fashion	
<i>Scenario B</i>	Outside class hours PC at school	Lingua franca	German	Unit 1: Planning an international Christmas party	OpenSim
<i>Scenario C</i>	Outside class hours At home	Lingua franca	German	Unit 1: Choice of 9 different discussion topics	multimodal communication options: BigBlueButton and forum
			English	Unit 2: New technology and social media	Multimodal communication options: BigBlueButton, chat and forum

3.3.1 Scenario A: Tandem conversations in OpenSim

A tandem exchange was implemented in three telecollaboration sessions in OpenSim, each involving a French class learning German and a German class learning French. The pupils were between 14 and 15 years old and their level of proficiency was A2/B1. The topic of the first unit was waste disposal and waste prevention; the second unit was dedicated to questions concerning food with a special emphasis on a vegetarian diet; and the third unit had a fashion topic. Each unit consisted of a preparation phase in class, a telecollaboration session in OpenSim and a follow-up phase during which experiences from the telecollaboration session were presented and discussed in class or in a forum in Moodle.

For their telecollaboration session, the French and German pupils met in pairs during class hours and accessed OpenSim from the school computer room. The conversations were stimulated by posters, which served as “learning stations” displaying topic-related pictures, images and texts. Whereas the poster content for the first two sessions was selected or created by the teachers, the posters for the fashion unit consisted of pictures the participating pupils took of themselves in their favourite outfits.



A French and a German poster from the session on waste disposal and waste prevention

IV. A la cantine – qu'est-ce qu'on mange?



1. Est-ce que tu manges à la cantine ? Si oui combien de fois dans la semaine / Si non pourquoi ?
2. Qu'y a-t-il au menu cette semaine ?
3. Comment juges-tu les repas servis à la cantine ? / les plats que tu manges chez toi ?
4. Qu'est-ce que tu aimerais changer ?

V. Veggieday – Ein Tag ohne Fleisch ! ?

DONNERSTAG IST VEGGIETAG

1. Könntest du für eine bestimmte Zeit auf Fleisch verzichten? Warum (nicht)?
2. Was hältst du von der Idee, einen Tag ohne Fleisch zu verordnen?
3. Wie könnte ein Veggieday aussehen?



A French and a German poster from the session “Veggieday – a day without meat”.

Pupils were asked to take notes during their telecollaboration session to be able to discuss the results of their exchange in the follow-up phase in class and in a forum. For the fashion topic, pupils had a worksheet with keywords that provided guidance for their conversation in OpenSim.

Arbeitsblatt für dein OpenSim-Treffen¶

Mit·deinem·-/deiner·Partnerin·unterhältst·du·dich·über·Mode·und·Klamotten·. Notiere,·was·du·über·die·verschiedenen·Rubriken·erfahren·hast.¶

Mein(e)·Partner(in)·heißt:¶

Lieblingskleidungsstücke·und·Farben¶	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outfit·für·die·Schule¶	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regelung·an·der·Schule¶	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outfit·zu·besonderen·Anlässen¶	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haltung·zu·Marken¶	<input type="checkbox"/>

Worksheet for the OpenSim session on “fashion”

To avoid sound problems, presumably caused by network overload, the number of parallel telecollaboration pairs had to be reduced so that only 4 to 6 pupils were able to take part in the actual telecollaboration in OpenSim (see 3.4.6].

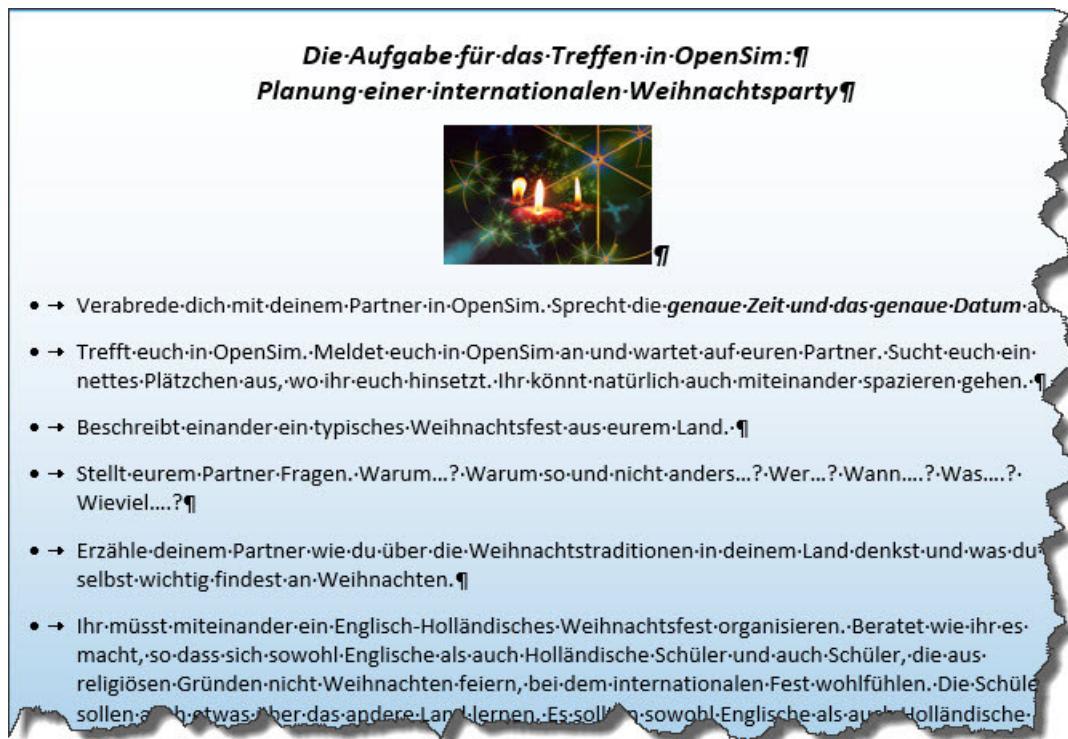


Regarding the two tandem languages involved, two options were explored. In the first two telecollaboration sessions, pupils switched between German and French during the respective session. The language switch was triggered by the language of the posters set up in OpenSim. Three posters in German and three posters in French were placed in the environment; the pupils went from poster to poster and were required to communicate in the language of the respective poster. The third session did not have an internal language shift. It was entirely dedicated to German as the target language for the French pupils.

3.3.2 Scenario B: Lingua franca conversations in OpenSim

Telecollaboration scenario B represents a lingua franca constellation in which pupils from the Netherlands and the UK meet in an OpenSim environment to communicate in their common target language German. The pupils were 17 years old and their level of proficiency was B1. The session took place before the Christmas break, and the pupils were asked to talk about whether and how they celebrate Christmas and to plan a "virtual" international Christmas Party. As in scenario A, pupils began with a session in class with preparatory tasks; they then met in pairs or small groups of three in a relaxed café environment in OpenSim. The discussion was not supported by posters; the pupils used a worksheet instead.

For the OpenSim session, the pupils met outside class hours working from a computer or laptop in school. They were matched in pairs by their teachers and were then asked to use the Moodle forum to arrange a date for their meeting. In the OpenSim environment, the pupils were accompanied by a member of the TILA team who recorded the conversation and also provided support in the case of technical problems.



Worksheet with a task description for the OpenSim meeting (scenario B)

3.3.3 Scenario C: Lingua franca conversations using a multimodal approach

Telecollaboration scenario C was implemented for two different telecollaboration exchanges in the lingua franca format but with German or English, respectively, as the target language. In both exchanges, the pupils met in pairs outside class hours accessing the telecollaboration environment from home. The available communication tools were bundled in a multimodal set including the video communication platform BigBlueButton as well as chat and forum/blog in the TILA Moodle.

In the first telecollaboration unit (C1), a class of French pupils (who had already taken part in the scenario A sessions, see chap. 3.3.1) and a class of Dutch pupils interacted in their common target language German. The pupils were 14 or 15 years old and their level of proficiency was between A2 and B1. To accommodate their technological preferences and/or technological infrastructures available at home, the pupils could choose between synchronous oral communication sessions in BigBlueButton or asynchronous written communication in a Moodle forum.

The pupils were given a list of conversation topics to choose from (see below). They were matched in pairs according to their thematic and technological preferences. Pupils who met in BigBlueButton were supposed to choose and talk about five different topics; pupils communicating in the forum were asked to address three topics.

Topic options:

1. Selling alcohol to teenagers: at the age of 16, 18 or 21 – opinion + argument(s)
2. Buying clothes: should you consider where clothes are produced – yes / no – Why?
3. Compulsory school attendance: should one be more strict with kids who skip school – yes / no – arguments
4. School life: what I like and what I don't like about my school – examples and suggestions
5. My school outfit: Who should decide what you wear in school? – you? Your parents? the school? What about a school uniform? pro/ con - arguments
6. New media: a day without a mobile phone or computer? – why not? / impossible? - arguments
7. Meals: food in the school canteen – opinion – suggestions
8. A vending machine in school (e.g. for hot and cold drinks, snacks or sweets: good idea? / better not? – arguments
9. Homework: less? – more? – what kind of homework? – opinion

List of topics for pupils to choose from

Pupils who met in BigBlueButton were also required to arrange a time for their meeting by email.

The second telecollaboration unit (C2) was in the lingua franca format as well. It involved pupils from a school in Germany and a French school in Spain communicating in their common target language English. The topic was about new technologies and social media. The pupils talked about the social media they used, how important computers and mobile phones were for their daily lives, and whether new technologies and social media were a curse or a blessing (see below). They were provided with a worksheet, in which they were asked to note down their own answers and the answers of their partners as input for the follow-up discussion in class.

- A. Which social media do you use and how? What do you like or dislike about them?
- B. What would it mean to you to be without a computer or smartphone for a day/week/month or longer?
- C. Are the new technologies (Smartphones, I-Pad) and social media and communication tools (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, email) a blessing or a curse? Discuss problems and benefits.

Questions for the discussions on new technologies and social media

The pupils had to contact their partners by email and arrange a time for their meeting in BigBlueButton or in the Moodle chat room. Those who tried to meet in BigBlueButton but encountered technical problems were asked to switch to their chat room in Moodle. Partners who were not able to agree on a time slot for an online meeting in BigBlueButton or the Moodle chat were supposed to use the Moodle discussion forum. This multimodal arrangement of three different telecollaboration options ensured that all pupils were able to participate in the telecollaboration task.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF TASK DESIGN AND PEDAGOGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Based on an analysis of the available empirical data including performance recordings, pupils' user experience questionnaires, feedback interviews with teachers and pupils, and participant observations, the three telecollaboration scenarios will now be discussed with regard to relevant issues of task design and pedagogical implementation. Particular emphasis will be given to topic selection, topic and conversational interaction, the intercultural dimension, preparatory and follow-up tasks, tandem and lingua franca as well as telecollaboration tools, modes of communication and locations.

3.4.1 Topic selection

When trying to engage pupils in authentic communication with an emphasis on intercultural interaction, it is of crucial importance to find and create topics pupils can relate to and engage with spontaneously. These were the topics addressed in the three telecollaboration scenarios under investigation:

- Waste disposal and waste prevention (scenario A)
- A vegetarian diet (scenario A)
- Fashion (scenario A and C)
- Christmas festivities (scenario B)
- New technologies and social media (scenario C)
- Favourite meals and meals offered in the school canteen (scenario C)
- Selling alcohol to teenagers (scenario C)
- School life (scenario C)
- Homework (scenario C)

Apart from "Waste disposal and waste prevention" and some aspects of "A vegetarian diet" and "New technologies and social media", the topics did not require any specialized background knowledge. It was generally sufficient for the pupils to draw on personal experiences, likes, dislikes, habits, and opinions. In

addition, results from the user experience questionnaires provide evidence of an overall positive self-assessment. Pupils who participated in the French-German tandem exchange (scenario A) on the topics “Waste disposal and waste prevention”, “A vegetarian diet” and “Fashion” said that they were satisfied with their communicative interactions; they were able to make themselves understood; and they managed to speak fluently and to express what they wanted to say (Figure 2).

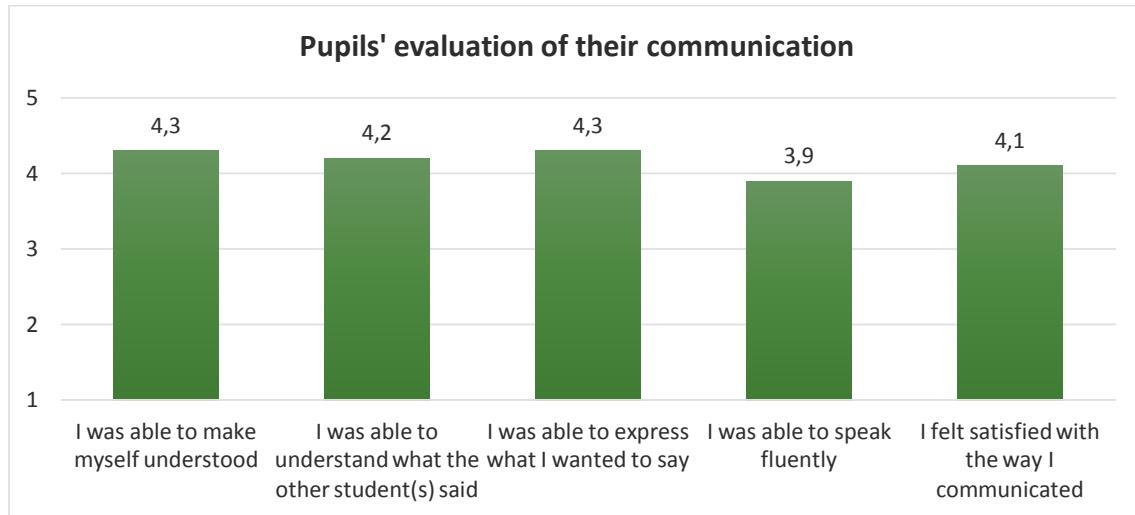


Figure 2: Self-assessment of pupils participating in the OpenSim French-German tandem exchange in scenario A (Value range: 5 = I agree; 1 = I do not agree)

Overall, there was no difference between pupils' assessment of their communication with regard to the three topics. One of the French pupils, however, said that even though the topic on waste disposal and waste prevention was very interesting, he found it easier to talk about a topic like fashion because it enabled him to talk about himself.⁸ His view was echoed by the Dutch teacher, who confirmed that pupils liked to talk about topics they could personally relate to.

Both teachers involved in telecollaboration scenario C/unit 1 (in which pupils were given a selection of topics to choose from) emphasized that it was positive for the pupils to be able to select from a range of topics, and they agreed that the number and choice of topics was just right:

„Ja, das war genau richtig. Also es war nicht so viel, dass sie sich nicht entscheiden konnten. Aber sie hatten eine bestimmte Wahl. Also ich fand das echt goldrichtig. Genau die richtige Form, richtigen Themen, richtige Menge.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_NL)

The French teacher commented that pupils found the questions very interesting and, quite importantly, that the discussion continued even later in class:

„Ja, die Themen haben sie interessiert. Also es gab auch später dann in der Klasse so Diskussionen darüber. Also das waren schon Themen, bei denen sie viele Fragen und auch viele verschiedene Meinungen hatten. Also insofern glaube ich, dass es gut war.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_FR)

⁸ See interview with a French pupil (Scenario A_student_FR1) from French-German tandem exchange

3.4.2 Topic and communicative interaction

Posters in OpenSim with pictures, questions or controversial statements (scenario A) or worksheets with keywords or questions addressing certain aspects of the respective topic (scenarios A, B and C) were intended to stimulate the communicative interactions. Did this prove successful? In their communication, all pupils used the communication prompts provided; and these prompts also seemed to help them start a communication and keep the interaction going.

In the BigBlueButton conversations about new technologies and social media (scenario C, unit 2), one of the pupils would usually start the communication by reading the first topic question, which was then followed by a spontaneous reply from the other pupil. In the same way they would then read and discuss the other questions.

Question 1:

ES3: So, what do you want to start?

DE3: Well, which social media do you use?

ES3: (laughs) I use erm, well, Google erm well all kind of like YouTube, Google, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr. I mean everything.

*DE3: Ok (laughs). Well, I only use Google and Facebook because my father doesn't want us to use things like Twitter or WhatsApp. *He is <break>**

etc. (12 follow-up turns)

Question 2:

DE3: Yeah. Erm I have another question. What would it mean to you to be without a computer or smartphone for a day, week or month, or longer?

ES3: I could be a week without a phone because I went with friends erm out of country. There was no internet, so we were like for a week and I mean it was great. But for a month I don't think I could be a month without a computer or phone.

DE3: Well, yeah. For a week maybe without a computer or maybe for two weeks and when I am erm vacation or camp or something but for a month I am not sure. Because me too like <break> I watch a lot movies and without a computer it would be (ES3 laughs) pretty hard. (end of exchange on this question)

Question 3:

ES3: Yeah. Mm. Do you think new technologies, social media communication (?) choose (?) blessing or curse or a curse?

DE3: (?) It is true (?). I see a lot of kids in the first grade with their iPhone and it is bigger than their own head and I think that is pretty crazy.

ES3: Yeah, yeah. Like I see <break> yeah like children like eleven years old and they have an iPhone and they have an IPad and they have a computer. I mean at that age I didn't even know how that worked, so.

... (7 follow-up turns)

Example 1: Extract from Scenario C2, EN11_BBB3_DE3_ES3

This kind of procedure of going through the various topic questions could also be observed in the written chat conversations on the same topic some pupils engaged in because BigBlueButton was not accessible for them. Pupils would pose a question from the worksheet, discuss it, and then move on to the next question (Example 2 below).

15:09: Mariya has just entered this chat

15:09: Jana has just entered this chat

15:10 DE6: Hello

15:10 ES6: Hi

15:11 DE6: **Let's discuss the questions**

Question 1

15:11 DE6: **Which media do you use?**

15:12 ES6: I use lot's of social medias

15:12 ES6: and you?

etc (6 follow-up turns)

Question 2

15:17 DE6: **What do you like or dislike about these media?**

15:20 ES6: About Facebook I don't like mostly the ads and that in your news feed you have so many posts of your friends, there is one thing I don't like about whatsapp that the first year it's free but than you have to pay

etc (3 follow-up turns)

Question 3

15:26 DE6: **What would it mean to you to be without a computer or smartphone for a certain period of time?**

15:28 ES6: I am so addicted to my phone, not so much to my computer

etc (3 follow-up turns)

Question 4

15:42 DE6: **Next question: do you think new technologies and social media are a blessing or a curse?**

15:45 ES6: In my opinion it's blessing because you can communicate with the people all over the world but it's also a curse because you can be addict

15:46 ES6: what do you think?

etc (14 follow-up turns)

16:15 DE6: I have to finish soon. **I think we've discussed the important things**

16:18 DE6: Goodbye!

16:18 ES6: Bye!

Example 2: Extract from Scenario C2, EN11_Chat2_DE6_ES6

The pupils' communicative performance in these two environments differed in interesting ways. Whereas the written chat communication tended to be very much focused on completing the actual task by discussing the specified topic questions, the oral communication environment BigBlueButton usually encouraged spontaneous exchanges on additional topics. Such thematic digressions occurred before, after or while discussing the questions set in the task. In the following example from a discussion

in BigBlueButton on “New technologies and social media”, the communicative exchange between a girl from Spain (ES3) and a girl from Germany (DE3) about the given topic lasted less than 10 minutes. During the remaining 35 minutes, the pupils talked about other topics they seemed genuinely interested in.

After the end of the “official” part, the Spanish girl asks a personal standard question:

*ES3: Erm, (laughs) *so* where do you live? Well, where do you live in Germany? I can *(unclear)*.*

The German girl answers her partner’s question and then immediately directs the conversation towards movies:

*DE3: *Well.* South and well in Baden-Württemberg. It is like something like a big part of Germany. In the south west, I think. Well. Yes. (They both laugh). I am not good at Geography. So. Erm, you like watching movies, or?*

With this question they plunged into a very lively and enthusiastic conversation about movies, TV series and books. They told each other what they liked or didn’t like and then continued to touch on questions around school, family background and holidays. At the end of their conversation, they befriend each other on Facebook.

In her feedback interview, the German pupil said she was very happy with the conversation. She emphasized that she and her partner got along very well and that they were less focused on the original task but talked more about themselves and private things instead:

“Also ich war sehr zufrieden. Ich mein', wir haben uns echt gut verstanden und es war zwar eher so, dass wir uns weniger auf die Aufgabe konzentriert haben, sondern mehr auf uns selber und so über private Sachen geredet haben, aber <break> Also ich war sehr zufrieden mit dem Gespräch.” (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

Concerning the worksheet with specified questions she said it gave them a certain structure, which she found very helpful. But she also made clear that it was good that the structure was not too tight so that they could also talk about other things as well.

“Ja hätt, hätte ich jetzt <break> also hätte ich das Blatt nicht gehabt, dann hätten wir wahrscheinlich überhaupt nicht über das Thema geredet, also es war schon gut so ein Blatt zu haben. [...] wir hatten halt wirklich nur dieses Blatt, was uns so ein bisschen Struktur gegeben hat und eine Zeitangabe, wie lange wir se reden sollen und dann ging das halt einfach ganz leicht, man hat halt die Frage gestellt, dann hat der andere seine Meinung gesagt, man selbst hat seine Meinung gesagt und dann konnte man noch ein bisschen darüber reden und <break> also ein bisschen Struktur ist gut, aber zu viel Struktur wäre dann glaub wieder zu schlecht gewesen. [...] Also, ich weiß jetzt nicht so genau, was man noch verbessern könnte, aber ich fand's eigentlich recht gut so wie's ist, einfach, dass man ein Thema hat, worüber man reden soll, aber ja man trotzdem irgendwie auch über andere Dinge reden soll.” (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

Other pupils also commented on switching to their “own” topics:

“And we well mostly talked about ourselves instead of doing the task. But I think it is a good thing.” (Scenario C2_pupil ES2)

The pupils were also asked whether they had the feeling that the tasks had a positive effect on the development of their communicative skills. In connection with oral communication in BigBlueButton, several pupils mentioned the advantage of being immersed in authentic conversations:

“It does helps us to learn English because we use it in real situation, I would say. Like in class you know that it is like with friends nothing will happen, but here ... I think it is good because it puts us in a real situation. So just to see how we will be able to talk in a real situation.” (Scenario C2_pupil ES2)

Another pupil mentioned that communicating with peers from another country had a positive effect because they had to speak English since it is the only language they both had in common. She compared this with speaking English in the classroom and said that it feels strange to her because everybody knows German:

„ich komme jetzt nicht so oft dazu Englisch zu reden, nicht mal im Englischunterricht, weil da da können alle Deutsch, warum soll ich da auf Englisch mit denen reden? Und jetzt so bei dem ging's halt wirklich nur über Englisch, weil ich kann jetzt auch kein Spanisch oder Französisch“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

The same pupil also noticed that they communicated more fluently and without thinking too much about how to express what they wanted to say. They just started and tried to get their message across.

*„Das hat einen schon weiter gebracht, wenn man einfach dieses Denken und Reden dann schneller eingeübt hat und das einfach schneller ging als sonst, weil sonst sitzt man so da: ‚Warte, wie heißt das nochmal? Wie heißt das?‘ und *dann* <break> und dann sagt man’s erst. Und deswegen es hat schon was gebracht.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)*

Other pupils mentioned that in the course of the telecollaboration they became more confident with their English despite inevitable mistakes

„Auch wenn dann am Anfang einfach Fehler dabei sind, aber irgendwann wird man so ein bisschen sicherer, find ich.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE1)

Being understood by their conversation partner also had a positive effect on pupils' confidence:

„Auch so mit dem Selbstbewusstsein, weil man gemerkt hat: ‚Oh, okay man versteht mich, wenn ich Englisch rede. Ich kann jetzt Englisch reden‘.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

Pupils were, however, aware that telecollaborative exchanges would need to take place on a more regular basis to have a real impact on learning outcomes:

„.... wenn das man es öfter wiederholen würde, dass sich dieser Effekt einfach weiter einfach ausbauen würde. Es war einfach jetzt mehr ne Erfahrung als dass es jetzt viel gebracht hat.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE2)

„Also so <break> Ich mein, wie gesagt, das Selbstbewusstsein steigt einfach mit jeder Unterhaltung und man fühlt sich immer sicherer in der Sprache und das Denken geht

auch immer schneller und irgendwann ist es dann denk ich mal so wie einfach noch eine zweite Sprache, die man kann, einfach flüssig sprechen können und ich denke das bringt schon echt viel.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

The learning potential of regular telecollaborative interactions was seen by teachers as well:

*“[It would have a positive effect] if we can make it a routine ** yeah yeah. Um of course anything like this can always work on individuals if it if it sparks a new friendship or some new interests or something.” (Scenario C2_teacher_DE)*

But teachers also noticed that stronger and more proficient pupils seem to profit more than less motivated or less eager ones. They emphasized the importance of finding ways to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the opportunity to communicate with peers from another country:

“Seeing the names [of pupils who participated in the oral communication in BBB as opposed to others who did not meet] & also from the feedback I got in class, an unpleasant -but not new - thought is occurring to me is that such projects involving personal motivation outside class will benefit the best pupils, the most serious or capable ones. As such it jeopardises some of our objectives.” (extract from an email feedback exchange with the teacher; Scenario C2_teacher_ES)

*“... and of course it is very good but in terms of linguistic improvement. I would very much wish that the others the ones who are not so able would find a motivation eh with you know having an authentic contact with a with a speaker and you know wanting to do more. ** But that’s still to come, I think.” (extract from a feedback conversation with the teacher - Scenario C2_teacher_ES)*

A more diversified and individualized pedagogic approach is obviously needed to help weaker and less motivated pupils to become involved in and to profit from intercultural telecollaboration exchanges. Suitable scaffolding may, for instance, include moving from clearly defined short tasks to more open and spontaneous ones, starting with controlled written exchanges in a forum or chat before tackling spoken exchanges in BigBlueButton, or teaming pupils up with a more proficient classmate before asking them to engage in a telecollaboration on their own.

3.4.3 The intercultural dimension

In TILA, conversations are generally considered intercultural because of the communicative involvement of pupils from different countries and lingua-cultural settings. Intercultural content is not in the foreground; it is considered a means to an end, which is the intercultural interaction. Preference is thus given to topics that are within the reach of pupils' own experiences and opinions, and have a natural potential for triggering spontaneous conversations without the need for additional knowledge development phases. An orientation towards soft intercultural topics such as “fashion”, “eating habits” is, however, of value since it makes pupils curious about their partners and helps them to discover and become aware of interpersonal and intercultural differences and similarities.

Not surprisingly, the Christmas topic in telecollaboration scenario B was ideal for this purpose. Because of pupils' different religious backgrounds and family routines within the same country, this topic already

triggered animated intercultural discussions during the preparatory session in class. Yet, pupils were also able to discover intercultural differences when discussing the topics in telecollaboration scenario A. All pupils said they learned something about the other country or culture when talking about vegetarian diet and eating habits or fashion. Only with regard to the topic on waste disposal, one pupil indicated in the questionnaire that she was not able to learn anything about the other pupil's life and culture (value: 2). This opinion might be due to how the topic was actually discussed, since the issue of waste disposal is generally likely to raise intercultural controversies. All pupils, however, expressed their communicative satisfaction: they enjoyed communicating with their partners and found the communication motivating. (Figure 3).

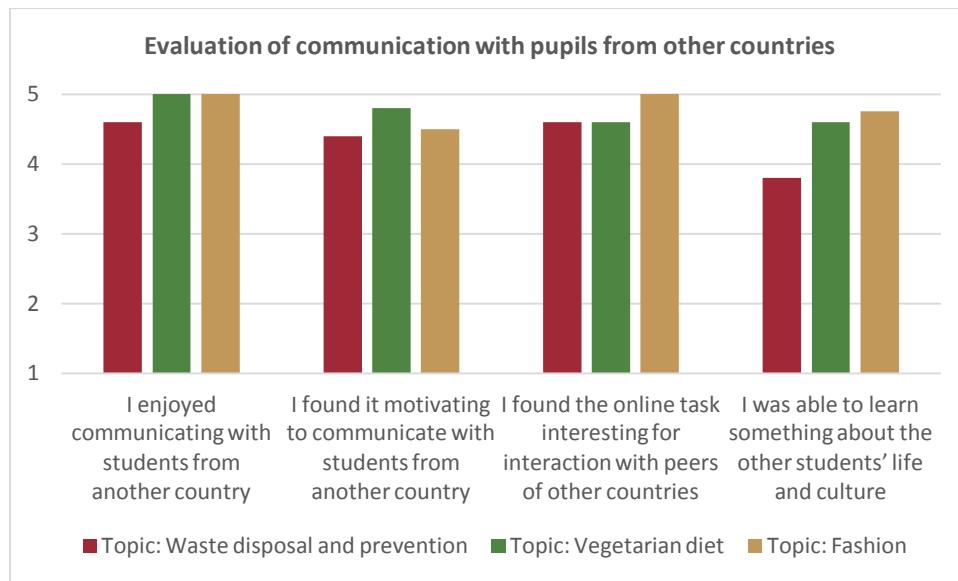


Figure 3: Evaluation of variables connected to intercultural aspects; French-German tandem exchange (scenario A); Value range: 5 = I agree; 1 = I do not agree

According to the French teacher, the pupils were very interested in the topics and continued asking questions in the follow-up sessions in class. She even had the impression that most of the intercultural differences were discussed in the follow-up session and not so much in the telecollaborative interaction between the pupils. This was the case in the units on waste disposal and vegetarian or vegan diet:

„Und das war das Gleiche mit Ernährung, also dieses Vegan-Konzept. Die haben so viel dann gefragt, also was soll das heißen und wie ... und ich glaube nicht, dass sie in der Interaktion davon gesprochen haben. Also wir haben uns dann noch ein Video angeschaut [...] über so einen veganen Jungen; und das hat sie super interessiert.“ (Scenario A_teacher_FR)

It seems that some pupils became aware of intercultural differences during the interaction with their partners and then wanted to learn more afterwards.

3.4.4 Preparatory and follow-up tasks

The TILA telecollaboration exchanges confirmed that it is crucially important that the actual telecollaboration sessions are embedded in blended learning ensembles (Kohn, 2009) with substantial preparatory and follow-up activities in class.

The amount of preparation for the main telecollaboration phase varied depending on the pupils' familiarity with the topic and their level of proficiency. A topic like "waste disposal and prevention" usually required additional background knowledge and thus more preparation than a topic like "fashion", which pupils could easily discuss drawing on their likes and dislikes and personal opinions. The extent of preparation also depends on the level of language proficiency. Pupils at A2 level might need preparation for any topic because they lack useful words and phrases, whereas pupils at B1 are already proficient enough to tackle unfamiliar topics. Preparatory tasks might also be helpful for broadening pupils' views on a certain topic and for encouraging them to think about questions and possible replies.

The pupils themselves have relatively clear ideas about the kind of preparation they need. Two pupils who took part in the tandem telecollaborations in scenario A were asked whether they found it important to be prepared for a telecollaboration exchange. One of them said that for him the preparation for the unit on "waste disposal and prevention" was particularly helpful because he did not know enough about this topic and was not familiar with the required vocabulary. Even for a topic like "fashion", however, which he considered more easily accessible because of being able to talk about his personal likes and dislikes, he considered a preparation in class quite useful since it gave him ideas and an orientation for the conversation. Another pupil from the same telecollaboration exchange also said it was important to be prepared, but she added that the preparation should be such that it would not inhibit a natural and spontaneous conversation.

Due to time restrictions, it was not always easy to cover all phases in both participating classes. Sometimes, for instance, one of the teachers did not have enough time for the preparatory phase because of an upcoming exam. A lack of preparation, however, tended to have negative effects on the telecollaboration. It happened, for instance, that the communication became one-sided because one of the pupils did not know what to say. When asked why the communication in two of the sessions did not go very well, one of the French pupils said it was because her partner was not sufficiently prepared. On the other hand, pupils who lacked preparation sometimes felt uncomfortable when they noticed that their partner was better prepared for the task than themselves. One pupil mentioned she would have preferred being on the same level with the other pupil so that they would both either know something about the topic or nothing:

*„Also bei uns war's ja jetzt so, dass sie halt echt schon Einiges im Unterricht hatte und ich
halt nicht und deswegen waren wir so auf unterschiedlichen Stufen, aber <break> Es
<break> Also hät <break> ich hätte es nicht schlimm gefunden, wenn sie auch nichts
gewusst hätte, weil's, wie gesagt, ein Thema ist, da muss man jetzt nicht in der Schule
lernen, wie's funktioniert, ** aber einfach vielleicht ein paar Infos mehr oder so wären
vielleicht schon ganz gut gewesen, oder sie halt auch weniger“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE1)*

Some of the pupils who participated in the telecollaboration on "New technologies and social media" in BigBlueButton (scenario C, unit 2) and who were all able to communicate fluently in English said they found it better not to prepare too much so that the communication would be spontaneous. One pupil

mentioned that it was difficult to prepare for this kind of conversation and pointed out that in real communication people needed to be able to communicate without being prepared and also had to learn to cope with a lack of vocabulary:

“Im normalen Alltag muss man ja auch damit umgehen können, dass man ein Wort nicht weiß.” (Scenario C3_pupil DE2)

Another pupil expressed the view that preparing for the task would make the conversation less spontaneous and authentic:

„dann wird das so eine steife Unterhaltung und das ist ja nicht echt und das ist ja auch nicht Zweck der Sache quasi“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

“hätte der [Lehrer] uns jetzt noch drauf vorbereitet dann <break> wie gesagt, dann wäre es so unecht geworden und so steif, deswegen. Ich fand's eigentlich so gut.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE3)

For the respective teachers, it seems necessary to find a good balance regarding how they prepare their pupils; they need to agree on how they want to proceed; and they should involve their pupils in the process.

Besides the thematic preparation it is also essential to familiarise the pupils with the learning platform (e.g. Moodle) and the telecollaboration tools they are going to use. Teachers and pupils often underestimated the amount of induction required. A pupil who participated in the German lingua franca exchange in OpenSim (Scenario B_pupil_NL1) complained about the lack of technical preparation and support. She said she liked the thematic support they got in class but would have needed more help with the technical side of the project.

In addition to facilitating communicative practice, telecollaboration activities create a relevant potential for incidental language learning, in particular when pupils notice communication problems and try to solve them. Most of these opportunities, however, are rather fleeting; they tend to fade away unless measures are taken to pick them up and further explore the issues involved. This is where the follow-up phase has its place, whose overall function is to reflect on the pupils' experiences from the intercultural interactions and to secure and consolidate learning results. The need for following up on the telecollaborative exchange became most evident when teachers reported that pupils continued asking questions after the telecollaboration and that most of the intercultural differences were discussed in the follow-up session in class (see 3.4.3). Sharing and discussing outcomes of the conversation with classmates (in small groups or with the whole class) seems very important for enlarging upon and consolidating issues addressed during the interaction. In all scenarios, the tasks required pupils to take notes during or immediately after the conversation. They were, for instance, asked to note down the gist of what their partners said. These notes, and maybe also occasionally looking at recordings, help to support and enrich the collaborative explorations and reflective discussions in class or in a forum.

It is generally important to talk about pupils' experiences and help them to make best use of the opportunities provided in their interactions. A Spanish pupil, for instance, who had participated in the discussion on new technologies and social media (scenario C2) mentioned in the feedback interview that his German partner was very curious and had asked many questions that had nothing to do with the

actual task. He said he was not sure whether this was okay; but when he later talked about this issue with his teacher, she explained that it was good to be curious:

"He wanted to learn things about me very fastly but I think he is just curious and I think it is just a bad thing like we talked with this <break> about this with my teacher and she said that on the opposite, it was good to be curious. So I think yeah it is good. Me too, I wanted to know things about him. I was maybe little bit more reversed." (Scenario C2_pupil ES2)

This incident indicates how important it is for pupils' to reflect on their telecollaboration experiences. Follow-up sessions give teachers the opportunity to address attitudes like curiosity, openness and empathy and to help pupils develop their intercultural awareness and competence. Reflective explorations and clarifications also enable pupils to develop responsibility for the development of their linguistic, communicative and intercultural competence (also see the concept of "languaging", Swain, M., 2006) . In this connection, learning diaries and portfolios play a key role. They can guide pupils' reflection and also give teachers the opportunity to better assess their pupils' learning outcomes, potential and needs.

Since telecollaboration tools often include recording options, pupils' performance data are generally available for enriching self-reflection, assessment and feedback. Teachers could look at selected chat discussions, forum posts or recorded BigBlueButton sessions and provide a summary feedback on issues that might be relevant for the whole class. Performance recordings could also be part of exams. Pupils, on the other hand, could be asked to include successful passages from their conversations in their portfolios combined with reflective comments.

Generally, there was often not enough time for substantial follow-up sessions during the telecollaboration exchanges run in the TILA project. This was mainly because only few teachers managed to make these activities part of their regular teaching. To ensure a lasting impact on pupils' intercultural communicative competence, however, it would be necessary to integrate telecollaboration as a regular component into the curriculum.

3.4.5 Tandem and lingua franca constellations

In TILA pilot courses, intercultural exchanges make use of two different types of target language constellations, tandem and lingua franca. Scenario A represents a tandem constellation, in which each of the two participating school classes has the native language of the other as their target language, i.e. the French class is learning German and the German is learning French. Scenarios B and C represent pedagogic lingua franca constellations in which two classes with different native languages share the same target language. In scenario B, pupils of a Dutch class and a British English class learn German and use it as their lingua franca; in scenario C1 pupils from France and The Netherlands also use German as their lingua franca and in scenario C2, pupils from Germany and Spain learn English and use it as their lingua franca.

These two language constellations differ in their pedagogic affordances for intercultural communication practice. In a tandem constellation, the interacting pupils switch from one of the two languages to the other either within or between sessions, thus changing from native speaker expert to learner role and back. As learners, they profit from having communication with a native speaker, whom they can also ask

for lingua-cultural help and feedback as needed and desired. As native speaker experts, they provide a lingua-cultural role model and act as a kind of teaching assistant. In addition, they can also practice accommodating their native speaker performance to the proficiency level of their respective exchange partner (Carey, 2010).

In a lingua franca constellation, the interacting pupils are non-native speakers of the same target language they want/have to learn; they are thus all in the same boat. From a traditional foreign language teaching perspective, this might easily be perceived as a disadvantage. However, when taking into account the communicative conditions under which non-native speakers are usually required to perform in real life, the lingua franca constellation appears quite close to reality. And what is more, communication with other non-native speakers, preferably of different lingua-cultural origins, also has the distinct pedagogic advantage of creating authentic and relevant opportunities for intercultural communication learning (Kohn, 2015).

In the school context, implementation of a tandem format is generally confronted with the organizational task of finding a matching partner class with the required opposite native/target language constellation. Because of a strong imbalance across Europe regarding required target languages, this task can be quite challenging. In addition, only around 50% of the time available for communication practice is in the pupils' target language; the other half is in their native language. Considering the usually rather small number of hours devoted to foreign language learning, many teachers might see this as an obstacle for making tandem a substantial and sustainable part of their teaching. From a wider intercultural competence perspective, however, tandem has relevant pedagogic advantages: pupils are enabled to become aware of non-native speakers' communication problems and needs, to develop and practice strategies for accommodating their native language performance to the proficiency level of their non-native communication partners, and to hone their interpersonal skills by using their native speaker expertise in collaborative processes of comprehension, production and conversation management.

Another challenge connected with tandem concerns the organisation of the language switch. In telecollaboration scenario A, two different language switch options were explored and tested: within a session (scenario A, unit 1 and unit 2) and between sessions (scenario A, unit 3).

- (A) Within a telecollaboration session: pupils were supposed to speak German in front of a poster in German and they were asked to speak French when they came to a poster in French (scenario A, unit 1 and unit 2).
- (B) Between telecollaboration sessions: only one of the two tandem languages, in our case German, was used throughout the entire session (scenario A, unit 3).

Despite very clear instructions, the language shift within the same session did not work very well. Pupils got easily confused and were often not sure which language to use; weaker pupils tended to resort to their native language instead of using the target language. Switching languages between sessions proved to create a more stable and immersive situation. Pupils were able to concentrate on German during the whole session, and the communicative exchange was more focused, more engaged and more fluent. From a pedagogic point of view, it thus seems advisable to adopt the "one session, one language" principle at least in the initial stages of pupils' tandem telecollaboration experience. Once the tandem procedure has been sufficiently practiced and pupils are more familiar with how these things work,

switches within a session might be used, with pedagogic advantages for helping pupils develop their language flexibility.

A tandem constellation is clearly in line with the still prevailing preference of foreign language teaching for native speaker standards and conventions and communication with naive speakers. In this vein, the teacher from France emphasized that for her it was very important that her pupils communicated with native speakers.

„Ja, also diesen Kontakt mit Muttersprachlern finde ich schon wichtig. Also deswegen machen wir auch den Austausch.“ (Scenario A_teacher_FR)

Pupils participating in the French-German tandem in scenario A also said they liked to communicate with native speakers of their target language; and they liked their role as native speaker experts in their communication with pupils from another country.

The same teacher and three of the French pupils later participated in the German lingua franca exchange with Dutch pupils in scenario C1. It is very interesting to notice that the unfamiliar lingua franca condition positively affected and changed both the pupils' and the teacher's attitude. The previously sceptical teacher was surprised by the nature and quality of her pupils' lingua franca communication. Her fears that her pupils might switch to their more familiar foreign language English were not confirmed. They rather liked to talk with other learners in German and were less worried to make mistakes.

„Also ich hatte befürchtet ja, dass sie auf Englisch zurückgreifen. Also viel mehr als das eigentlich war. Insofern bin ich total zufrieden mit dem, was passiert ist. Dass sie trotzdem sich auf Deutsch unterhalten haben. Also das fand ich sehr positiv. [...] Ja, also die Schüler fanden das auch sehr gut, sich mit anderen unterhalten können, die die Sprache auch lernen. Also die hatten, sagen sie, weniger Hemmungen, Fehler zu machen und haben sich gegenseitig helfen können. Und ja, es war für sich wirklich gut. Also was sie mir gesagt haben dazu.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_FR)

A pupil who participated in the German lingua franca telecollaboration between a Dutch and an English class (scenario B) commented in the feedback questionnaire that "it was nice to speak in a language that was not native for both of us so we had that common ground and I felt we were all in the same boat" (Scenario B_pupil UK1). Some pupils seemed to feel more confident and less worried to make mistakes; it was more important for them to get the message across. A pupil from the English Lingua franca discussion in BigBlueButton on new technologies and social media (scenario C, unit 2) explained:

„Man war sicherer. Ich weiß nicht, wenn ich jetzt mit einem gebürtigen Engländer, Amerikaner oder so gesprochen hätte, dann hätte ich glaube ich die ganze Zeit so gedacht: „Oh Gott, hoffentlich ist das richtig, hoffentlich mache ich jetzt nicht total Mist!“ und so. Und jetzt halt dadurch, dass sie halt Spanisch gesprochen hat [...] und das ja auch nicht ihre Muttersprache war, war's dann schon so: „Okay, es ist eigentlich egal, [wenn ich Fehler mache], sie kann mich verstehen“. (Scenario C2_pupil DE3).

When asked whether she would have felt more uncomfortable talking to a native speaker, a pupil from the same exchange said she would probably have dared less and spoken less because she would have been much more afraid to make mistakes and the native speaker would have spoken a lot more.

„Ich weiß nicht, ob ich mich nicht sogar noch weniger getraut hätte, weil ich einfach noch viel mehr Angst gehabt hätte vor Fehlern irgendwie [...] ich glaub da hätt ich einfach mehr Angst gehabt, selber was zu machen und ich denk da wär's dann halt auch so gewesen, dass der Engländer deutlich mehr geredet hätte vielleicht, weil's für ihn ja die Muttersprache ist. Also ich glaube da wäre ich dann deutlich schüchterner gewesen und hätte deutlich weniger geredet, denke ich mal.“ (Scenario C2_pupil DE1)

Another pupil emphasized his preference for speaking with a non-native speaker on the same level of proficiency. He agreed that a native speaker could help and provide corrections, but he added that native speakers sometimes used sophisticated words, spoke fast or had a strong accent and might thus be difficult to understand. When asked whether he preferred to communicate with a non-native speaker, he confirmed:

“Yes, it is easier and we understand ourselves better because you know ... I don't think he have such a good level as a native speaker, so we both like have same level. So it is easier.” [...] “They (native speakers) can help me like correct me if you want, but sometimes they use very sophisticated words that are difficult to understand or they have their own pronunciation of the special place they were living fr <break> in. Erh they can help me but I think it is better to speak with non-native. Well, I prefer it.” (Scenario C2_pupil ES2)

Lingua franca constellations can also stimulate pupils to try to perform well. The Dutch teacher from the German lingua franca exchange between Dutch and French pupils (scenario B) said her pupils were impressed by the other pupils' level of proficiency and made a special effort to communicate well and seriously.

„Und bei meinen war es halt schon auch der Anreiz des Niveaus. Also zu sehen, wie gut deine denn Deutsch sprechen. Und dann haben die sich schon auch hingesetzt und versucht, das gut zu machen.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_NL)

In conclusion, feedback from teachers and pupils suggests that lingua franca constellations can be highly motivating for pupils since they offer authentic communication on an equal footing. Pupils are generally challenged and encouraged at the same time.

3.4.6 Telecollaboration tools, modes of communication, and locations

The telecollaboration tools used in TILA exchanges include BigBlueButton and OpenSim for synchronous oral conversations, Moodle chat for synchronous written communication, and Moodle forum for asynchronous written communication. User experience data collected from the pupils involved in telecollaboration scenarios A, B and C provide insights into how the respective tools are perceived and evaluated with regard to their intercultural communication and learning potential. Data from the German lingua franca exchange between French and Dutch pupils (scenario C1) shows a preference for synchronous oral conversation in BigBlueButton compared to an asynchronous forum discussion in Moodle (Figure 4).

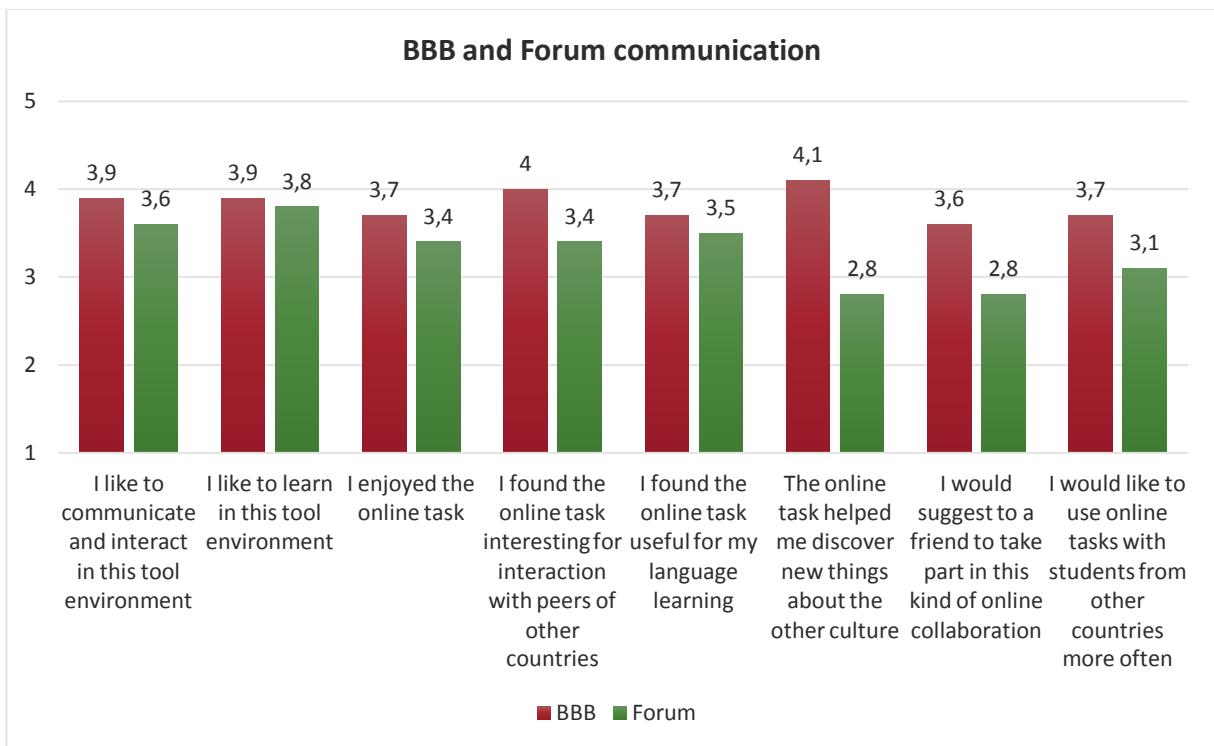


Figure 4: Comparison of BBB and forum discussion – results from 7 BBB participants and 8 forum participant from the German lingua franca exchange between French and Dutch pupils (scenario C); value range: 5 = I agree and 1 = I do not agree.

The higher values for oral conversation correspond to one of the teacher's feedback regarding how she perceived her pupils' preferences. She observed that the forum was okay for her pupils but they preferred communicating in BigBlueButton, where they could see each other and were able to interact in direct contact.

"Naja, also es war schon so, dass sie lieber mit BigBlueButton gearbeitet haben. Das finden sie ansprechender, den anderen dann zu sehen und direkt reagieren zu können. Nur diese Buchstaben schreiben, das ist nicht so... ja das hat Minderwert oder Minderqualitäten. Man sieht den anderen nicht, man hat keinen direkten Kontakt. Also das fanden sie auch ok, aber sie hätten es lieber direkt gemacht." (Scenario C1_teacher_NL)

In the forum exchange, pupils also seemed to require more encouragement to participate, whereas pupils in BigBlueButton were more motivated to continue on their own once they had made an appointment with their partner.

"Sobald der Kontakt gekommen war, brauchte ich bei BigBlueButton nichts mehr zu machen. Dann waren die da echt motiviert, um das selber zu regeln. Aber bei diesem Forum, da musste ich echt auch hinterher sein. Sonst hätten die da nicht genug geschrieben." (Scenario C1_teacher_NL)

The situation was slightly different in the English lingua franca exchange between German and Spanish pupils (scenario C, unit 2), in which pupils used Moodle chat as an alternative to BigBlueButton. According to their user experience data, the pupils seemed to experience synchronous written communication quite similar to synchronous oral communication (Figure 5). This might be due to fact that in both environments contact was direct with immediate replies.

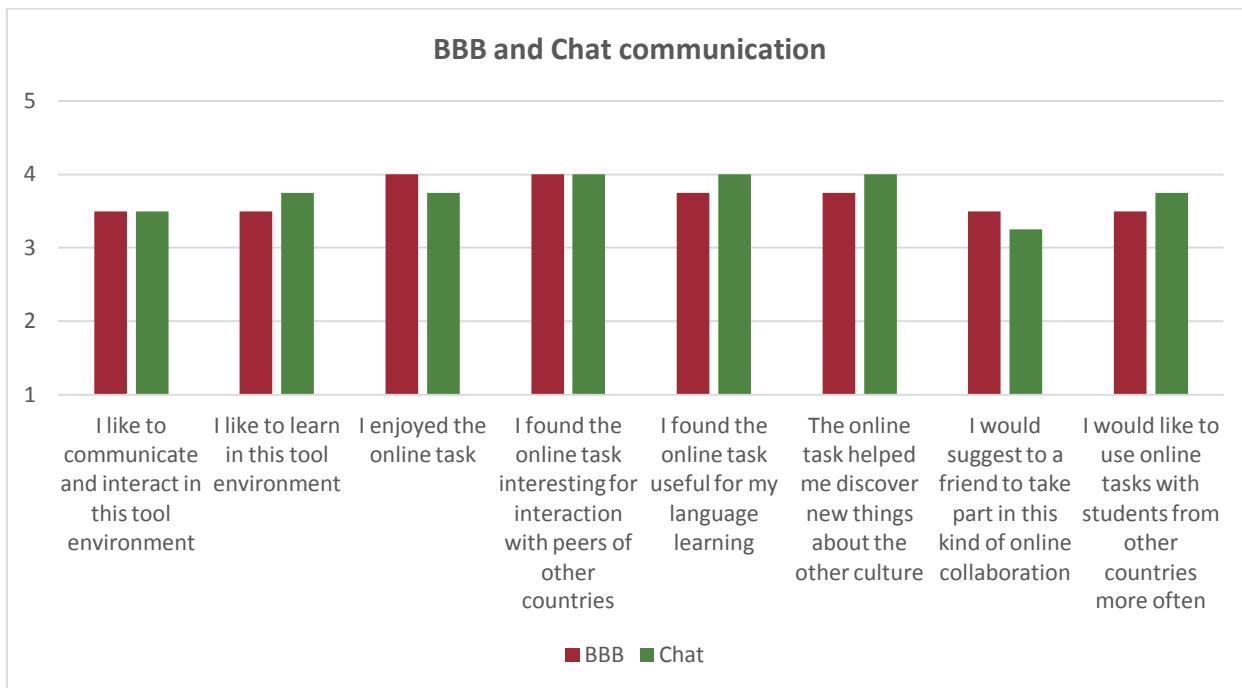


Figure 5: Comparison of BBB and chat discussion –results from 4 BBB participants and 4 chat participants from the English lingua franca exchange between pupils from Germany and Spain (Scenario C); value range: 5 = I agree and 1 = I do not agree.

As mentioned above there is, however, an interesting difference between the two environments as regards performance. Whereas written chat communication was usually very much to the thematic point and focused on completing the task, oral communication in BigBlueButton was considerably richer: pupils engaged in longer turns, expanded on themes, and spontaneously switched to topics beyond the original task (also see 3.4.3).

It is important, however, not to place the various tool environments in competition with each other. They should rather be seen as complementary options. Foreign language learning in school generally aims to cater for a fairly broad and comprehensive range of learning objectives including all relevant skills dimensions from reading and writing to listening and speaking. Each of the telecollaboration tools used in TILA has its specific pedagogic affordances for enabling pupils to engage in communication modes relevant for practising and developing their intercultural communicative competence in their respective foreign language.

In addition to available telecollaboration tools and related communication modes, it is also essential to consider the physical locations from which the respective telecollaboration activities are being carried out. In telecollaboration scenario A, the French-German tandem exchanges took place during class hours in the participating schools' computer labs. Due to limited network capacity and resulting sound problems, efficient use of synchronous spoken communication in OpenSim (and BigBlueButton) was only possible with a small number of pupils. To ensure sufficient sound quality, the number of participating pupils per school class was reduced to six and later to three.

Having only few pupils actively participating in the telecollaboration exchange, however, created a problem of pedagogic class organisation with regard to what to do with those pupils who were not actively involved in the telecollaboration activities. This was not a problem for the French teacher since she had a teaching assistant from Germany who would carry out other tasks with the rest of the class while the telecollaboration was going on. The German teacher, who did not have this kind of support, had the whole class present in the computer room. To engage more pupils in the OpenSim exchange, he asked some of his pupils to provide background support for their telecollaborating classmates. This, however, proved to be quite distracting because of the German pupils being less focused on their French partners and, more often than not, talking to their classmates instead. Other German pupils were engaged in group work activities in the same room but separate from the actual telecollaboration. All in all, the communication quality suffered significantly because of background noise from classmates who were interfering or communicating with other partners at the same time as well as because of a general lack of communicative privacy (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2014).

In scenarios B and C, the telecollaboration exchanges were carried out outside class hours either during pupils' lunch break in school (scenario B) or from pupils' home environment (scenario C). To cater for pupils' (and parents') technological preferences and available infrastructures and to ensure that all pupils in a class were able to participate in the telecollaboration event, a multimodal set-up was offered. Pupils were allowed, and required, to choose between different communication tools and modes from oral communication in a video conference environment, to synchronous written communication in a chat and asynchronous written communication in a forum. They were then matched in pairs by their teachers according to their choice.

The multimodal home approach, which can be seen as a manifestation of "flipped learning" (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2015), proved highly successful. Communicating from their home environment solved the problem of background noise from other pupils and ensured communicative privacy. Both teachers from the German lingua franca exchange between Dutch and French pupils in scenario C agreed that the home environment had a very positive effect on pupils' communication in terms of lack of distractions and time pressure and also because of a more relaxed atmosphere without the teacher being present:

„Ja und auch die Tatsache, dass es von zu Hause war. Das fanden sie auch entspannter. Und keinen Zeitdruck, keinen Lehrerdruck. Also das war dann für sie viel lockerer und ja, es hat sich positiv ausgewirkt auf die Kommunikation.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_FR)

„Ja, auch keine Störungen. Weil sonst sind sie ja immer zu viert, zu fünf im Raum und dann gucken sie halt, was die anderen machen und jetzt war man halt alleine zu Hause. Ich meine dass jemand aufsteht und was holt, das hast du nicht, wenn du das in der Klasse machst.“ (Scenario C1_teacher_NL)

Individually arranged telecollaboration sessions outside class hours but from a school computer (scenario B) had similar advantages, but the difficulty of finding a suitable time-slot between regular class hours was quite a drawback. Pupils could only meet during lunch breaks; because of the limited time, the meetings tended to be rather short and pupils felt the time pressure. If the conditions at school are such that the pupils do not have enough free time for independent work, the multimodal home approach seems to be a better option for telecollaboration exchanges involving synchronous oral communication.

A multimodal approach should, however, not only be seen as a solution for handling different technological preferences and availabilities. It can also be successfully deployed for enabling pupils to explore and practise oral and written modes of communication under different technological conditions as pedagogically required.

It can also be successfully deployed for enabling pupils to explore and practise the full range of oral and written modes of communication under different technological conditions and to develop the required digital literacy skills (Fuchs, Hauck, & Müller-Hartmann, 2012).

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

This report has addressed issues of task design and pedagogic implementation for intercultural telecollaboration with a focus on (a) the interactional dimension of intercultural communication and (b) the initial stages of teachers' and pupils' experience. Relevant task design features were considered and analyzed with regard to their impact on intercultural communication practice as well as challenges and limitations for pedagogic implementation.

All in all, intercultural telecollaboration exchanges have a great potential for innovating and empowering the foreign language classroom. Necessary prerequisites, however, include

- blended learning integration of telecollaboration units in the regular curriculum and teaching routine,
- a multimodal approach offering telecollaboration options across physical locations and tools for pupils to choose from depending on pedagogic requirements, individual preferences, and availability,
- provision of a sufficiently strong technological infrastructure and support service in schools,
- attention to both learner preparation and continuous professional development for teachers.

Once a consolidated practice of intercultural telecollaboration has been implemented with a sufficient degree of pedagogic sustainability, the emphasis can be shifted beyond intercultural interaction to include exchanges about more specialized intercultural topics. The blended learning blend with preparation and follow-up activities will have to be adapted and expanded to ensure a common ground of thematic expertise as well as appropriate portfolio-based assessment procedures. All this may then also move in the direction of content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

4 THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC SELF-CONFIDENCE AND LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN TELECOLLABORATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS

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4.1 SUMMARY

The main aim of this study is to explore the motivational dimension in secondary school pupils' foreign language interactions. A total of 202 foreign language learners from Spain, France, the Netherlands and the UK took part in this study between September 2013 and June 2015. All participants completed an average of four foreign language interaction sessions either by written chat or by video communication. They worked in either lingua franca, tandem or mixed constellations. A questionnaire including 21 items to be rated on a 5 point Likert scale was circulated to all participants after every session. A small number of pupils were also interviewed on aspects related to motivation and anxiety when using the foreign language in their exchange sessions. The data collected shows relevant findings that provide new insights to this particular field of research. Pupils that interacted via chat and in tandem constellations tend to show higher self-efficacy beliefs. With regards to anxiety levels, they seem to decrease significantly as sessions progress. There are also statistically significant differences between the different language constellations, with the lingua franca group presenting systematically the lowest anxiety scores. The chat environment seems to be less anxiety-provoking as compared to video communication. Regarding the use of webcam, participants seem to feel more at ease when their partner cannot see them through the webcam only during the first sessions. The data gathered shows that as sessions progress the privacy offered by not being seen does not impact to a significant extent on the pupils' anxiety levels.

4.2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

1.2.1 Objectives

This study intends to analyse the motivational dimension involved in telecollaboration by looking at pupils' self-efficacy and anxiety levels as well as their attitudes towards native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) interaction in the foreign language either via written chat or via video communication and with or without a webcam. Pupils will work either in a tandem (with a NS of their target language, who was in turn learning their partner's mother tongue), lingua franca (interactions between NNS of the target language) or mixed constellation (tandem with lingua franca) and all three conditions will be compared in the study. It is expected that the qualitative data gathered will support the quantitative data obtained via the pupil surveys circulated.

1.2.2 Methodological approach

Participants

We got a total of 321 reactions from pupils from 3 secondary schools in Spain, 2 in France, 2 in the Netherlands and 1 in the UK⁹. The participants' ages ranged from 11 to 17 years old and they were all learners of English or Spanish at A2, B1 or B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001).

Instructional methods

Every pupil was paired up with a peer from another country in order to carry out regular telecollaboration sessions during class time. 44% of the survey reactions came from pupils' telecollaborating in a Lingua Franca constellation (see Figure 1). 17% of the reactions belong to pupils interacting in Tandem constellations. In those cases, teachers could choose between asking pupils to practise both languages during the same session, therefore dividing the session's time between both languages, or focusing on one language in alternate classes. Finally, 39% used a mixed approach. A group of Spanish pupils interacted in English with a group of Dutch pupils who played the role of "English experts". Despite the fact that Dutch pupils are not NSs of English, their high proficiency in this language compared to that of the Spanish group enabled them to play an "expert" type role in this partnership. For the Dutch pupils, the interaction mode was the tandem approach, as they practised their Spanish with NSs of that language.

Figure 1: Language constellation in which pupils telecollaborated (LF: Lingua Franca)

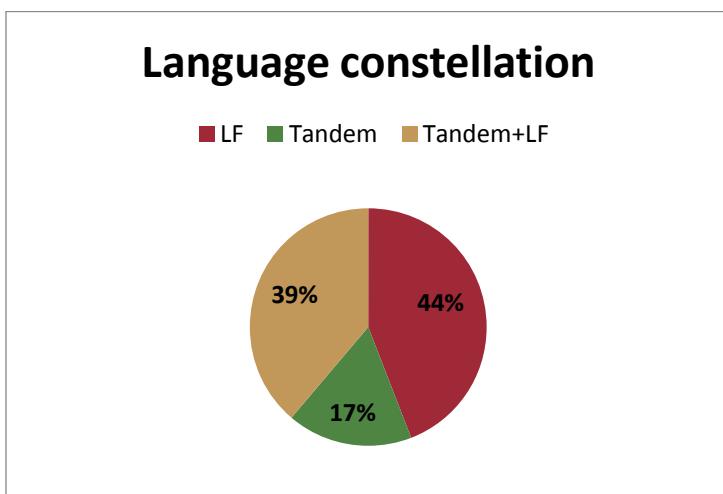


Figure 2: Tools used in the telecollaboration exchanges.

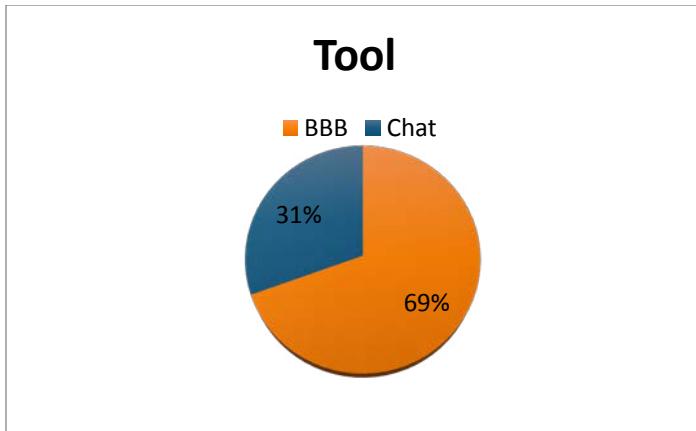
⁹ Participating schools in this research study:

Spain: IES La Garrigosa, Colegio Apóstol Santiago & IES L 'Eliana.

France: Pierre et Marie Curie & Collège De La Montagne Noire.

The Netherlands: Nijmeegse Scholen Gemeenschap Groenewoud & Willem de Zwijger.

UK: Leicester High School.



Instruments

The questionnaire distributed, which includes 21 statements, is an adapted version of the instrument used in Jauregi *et al.* (2012). It includes 8 items that refer to demographic and background information such as age, gender or languages practised, 3 items on pupils' self-efficacy beliefs, 3 items about their attitudes toward NS and NNS interaction, 4 items adapted from Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986) regarding language anxiety and, finally, 2 items about the use of webcam during their interactions. Most items were to be scored by participants on a 5 point Likert scale, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree". Pupils were instructed to complete this questionnaire after every session.

Questionnaires were devised in English and translated into Dutch, French, German and Spanish so that all participants could take them in their mother tongue. They were circulated electronically via the platform SurveyMonkey.

A small sample of pupils was interviewed following a list of guiding questions.

Data analysis

The quantitative data collected was coded for analysis and imported into SPSS. Descriptive statistics were obtained, including tendency and distribution values. Significance checks were carried out in terms of language constellation (tandem, lingua franca and tandem+lingua franca) as well as the mode of communication used (BigBlueButton video communication versus chat).

The qualitative data was analysed by identifying different coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) related to the topics being researched in the present study.

4.3 RESULTS¹⁰

We will first present results of the survey analysis per category: (1) self-efficacy, (2) willingness to communicate with native or non-native speakers and (3) communication anxiety. We will present under

¹⁰ The results will be further elaborated and published in an academic Journal.

each category the total results across sessions and differences according to language constellation and tool being used for the telecollaboration exchanges.

1.3.1. Self-efficacy

Significant values were obtained for the three self-efficacy items comparing language constellation formats (see Table 1). Pupils participating in tandem exchanges showed the highest mean scores for language competence and expressing themselves correctly (3,8) closely followed by the Lingua Franca group (3,7). As for the last item, understanding the speech partner, the Lingua Franca group showed the highest mean scores (4,6), followed by the Tandem group (3,8). The pupils participating in the mixed language constellation (Tandem+LF) got the lowest mean values across sessions for the three items (3,1; 2,9; 2,9).

Table 1: Results for self-efficacy (significance levels at $p<0,05$). In red the group outperforming the others

Item	General	Language constellation	Tool
I think that my foreign language competence is good enough to communicate with native speakers.	No significant differences across sessions	Significant differences: Tandem	No significant differences
I can express myself correctly in the foreign language.	No significant differences across sessions	Significant differences: Tandem	Significant differences Chat
I understand (almost) everything that my partner says in the foreign language.	Significant differences across sessions	Significant differences LF	Significant differences Chat

Regarding the differences in use of tools, significant values were reached for two of the three items: correction of expression and understanding the telecollaboration partner. Pupils collaborating in chat were much more confident about being able to express themselves correctly (3,6) and particularly understanding the partner (4,5) than those interacting by video communication (3,3; 3,4 respectively).

The differences across sessions for the last item (understanding the speech partner) proved to be significant as well. In the first session the item scored average (3,5) while in the 6th session the mean values reached a 4,2 mean score.

1.3.2. Willingness to communicate with native or non-native speakers

Table 2 shows the results of pupils' attitudes towards learning by communicating with native or non-native speakers. Those communicating with native speakers in the telecollaboration exchanges got much higher mean scores for the first item (learn by communicating with native speakers) (4,1) than the mixed language constellation group (3,4), while the Lingua Franca group obtained the lowest mean values of all (3,1).

The differences according to the tool being used did also reach significant values for the same item. The pupils performing in BBB video communication, think that they learn a lot by communicating with native speakers (3,5) compared to the chat group (3,1).

Table 2: Results for willingness to communicate with (N)NSs (significance levels at p<0,05). In red the group outperforming the others

Item	General	Language constellation	Tool
I learn a lot by communicating in the foreign language with native speakers	No significant differences across sessions	Significant differences Tandem	Significant differences BBB
When I communicate in my foreign language with students from other countries, I learn more than when I communicate with native speakers.	No significant differences across sessions	No significant differences	No significant differences

1.3.3. Anxiety

1.3.3.1. Anxiety with communication

Significant differences were measured for most items across conditions (see Table 3). Anxiety diminished as pupils got more familiar with telecollaboration. For instance for the first item (I get nervous when I communicate) the first session got a mean score of 3,1, while the 6th session obtained a mean score of 1,5. The same tendency was observed for worrying about making mistakes (2,9 > 1,7) or getting nervous for lack of understanding (2,7 > 1,7).

As to the language constellation, differences were significant for the 3 anxiety items, the Lingua Franca group showing significantly lower anxiety scores and the mixed Tandem+LF group the highest ones.

Regarding the tool being used for the exchanges, significant values were booked for all items, the pupils communicating by chat showing significantly lower anxiety scores than those communicating by BBB video communication environment.

Table 3: Results for anxiety with communication (significance levels at p<0,05). In red the group showing lower anxiety values.

Item	General	Language constellation	Tool
I get nervous when I communicate in the foreign language.	Significant differences across sessions	Significant differences LF	No significant differences
I worry a lot if I make mistakes when I	Significant	Significant	Significant

communicate in the foreign language.	differences across sessions	differences LF	differences Chat
I get nervous when I don't understand every word that my exchange partner says.	Significant differences across sessions	Significant differences LF	Significant differences Chat

1.3.3.2. Anxiety with the speech partner

It is interesting to notice that for pupils the idea of communicating with a native speaker does not seem to generate more anxiety than the possibility to communicate with non native-speakers as score differences do not reach any significant values (first item). Remarkably, the second item, the idea of being laughed at, does reach significant values for language constellation, [the Lingua Franca group showing the lowest anxiety scores (1,3) and the mixed group showing the highest ones (2,3)] and tools (learners interacting in chats feeling more at ease).

Table 4: Results for anxiety speech partner (significance levels at p<0,05). In red the group showing lower anxiety values.

Item	General	Language constellation	Tool
I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language with someone who is also learning it, than with a native speaker.	No significant differences across sessions	No significant differences	No significant differences
I am afraid that my exchange partner will laugh at me when I communicate in the foreign language.	No significant differences across sessions	Significant differences LF	Significant differences Chat

1.3.3.3. Anxiety with the webcam

As to the anxiety caused by the use of the webcam only the first item, (the partner seeing myself through the webcam) showed a significant decrease comparing the first with the 6th session (3,3 > 2,4). No other conditions proved to be significant.

Table 5: Results for anxiety with webcam (significance levels at p<0,05).

Item	General	Language constellation	Tool
I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language when my exchange partner cannot see me through the webcam.	Significant differences across sessions	No significant differences	No significant differences
I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language when I don't see myself on the	No significant differences across	No significant differences	No significant

webcam.	sessions		differences
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Notes from pupil interviews

3 pupils from Colegio Apóstol Santiago (Vigo, Spain) were interviewed individually following the interview guidelines designed for the TILA research studies. They are all 15 years old and they are learning English at B1 level.

Summary of comments:

- The TILA activities undertaken are highly valued by the pupils, who rate them 9 out of 10 in enjoyment. The specific activity that they completed on the day of the interview, on French and Spanish stereotypes, is rated by all three pupils with 4 points out of 5. In fact, one of the pupils said that sessions should be longer and more often.
- What they value the most is being able to get to know someone their age, from a different country, and who is also learning English. They are interested in learning about how other people from different countries speak English. One of them pointed out that this is very important because in real life they will not always have to interact with native speakers of English.
- None of the three pupils interviewed is worried about learning wrong structures from a non native English speaker. In fact, two of the pupils mentioned that this was a more challenging and interesting activity, as he would identify mistakes in his interlocutor's speech, which helped him reinforce the correct structures that he had learnt. None of the 3 pupils expressed a preference towards NS interaction.
- BBB voice seems to be more appealing to them, although they prefer to start with written chat. One pupil mentioned that he prefers to start with written chat and that, after a few sessions, they would feel ready to start using voice. Another pupil said that he would prefer to continue using just written chat because he defines himself as a shy person. Two pupils expressed a preference towards not using a webcam, as they would feel more at ease when their interlocutor cannot see him. However, this does not seem to be connected to speaking in the foreign language but rather to shyness.
- One of the pupils interviewed said to be a little bit nervous because it was something new, but not too much. Another pupil said that he was nervous at the beginning but that he felt more confident in later sessions, as he already knew his partner.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The present study provides new insights into motivational issues related to self-efficacy, interactions with (non-)native speakers and anxiety.

Regarding the self-efficacy items, pupils interacting with native speakers seem to be the most confident as far as their perception of competence (communicate and express correctly) is concerned, closely followed by the Lingua Franca group, while the Lingua Franca group outperforms the other groups

regarding their perception of understanding the speech partner. The confidence in their competence seems to be higher by those engaging in chat sessions.

As far as Willingness to communicate is concerned, those communicating in a Tandem constellation with native speakers are significantly more positive about the learning potential of communicating with native speakers than the other groups and so are the pupils communicating in BBB.

Anxiety: a significant decrease was noticed as sessions progressed across conditions. Pupils engaging in Lingua Franca constellation show the lowest anxiety levels while the mixed language constellation group shows the highest ones. The chat group shows significantly lower anxiety scores than pupils performing in BBB video communication.

5 INTERCULTURAL TANDEM COMMUNICATION IN CHAT AND VIDEO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SECONDARY EDUCATION PUPILS

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Kristi Jauregi (Utrecht University & Fontys University of Applied Sciences).

5.1 SUMMARY

In this paper, we present the results of a case study where we analyse Secondary Education pupils' productions when performing intercultural tasks in chat and video communication tools within a tandem communication constellation. This data helps us to set up specific patterns characterising communication in each environment. While chat sessions generally show *a-straight-to-the-point* communication format, with little elaboration, few instances of meaning clarification, in video communication there is a less rigid scheme: topics are more elaborated and rich with lateral topics and interesting intercultural aspects emerging more frequently and with pupils engaging in clarifying meaning in order to reach mutual understanding. Native speakers in video communication sessions tend to show more often their willingness to help their online partner, which in turn has a very positive effect on the foreign language speaker who shows greater interest to take an active role in the conversation, trying hard to make himself/herself understood. However, silences, overlaps and misunderstandings arising from technical problems with sound, are quite often present in the video communication environment.

5.2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Within TILA Telecollaboration (TC) sessions have been organized using different tools. In this paper we carry out a qualitative analysis on Secondary Education pupils' discourse when communicating with BigBlueButton (BBB), a video communication environment, and chat tools. There are three main research objectives:

- a) To analyse written and oral production of pupils using video communication and chat tools. We look at how communicative exchanges start and end in both environments, how speaking turns are managed, how topics and subtopics are developed in interaction, how meaning is negotiated, how interlocutors collaborate in order to understand intercultural aspects and how interlocutors negotiate power relationships in interaction.
- b) To identify which patterns are the most usual ones in synchronous online communication comparing both formats.

We address three specific research questions (RQ) in this study:

¹¹ Summary of the final report for the Master's Degree on Spanish and Catalan as Second Languages, University of Girona, named "Analysis of Secondary Education pupils' discourses in chat and video communication format within the Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition (TILA) framework".

(RQ1): Does interaction in the TL differ when using one tool or another?

(RQ2): Which are the interaction patterns characterising chat and video communication among Secondary Education pupils?

(RQ3): In which environment can communicative intercultural exchange be better achieved? Why?

5.3 RESEARCH PROJECT

5.3.1 METHOD OF RESEARCH

Our method of research is qualitative and analyses the discourse produced by pupils at secondary schools engaging in TC activities using BBB and chat tools. We compare how they communicate in both environments and apply discourse analysis criteria.

5.3.2 Participants

Participants are 9 Spanish and 9 English pupils from secondary schools in the UK and Spain who carried out TC activities within the TILA project (see Table 1). Half of them undertook the tasks in chat and the other half in BBB. They interacted according to the Tandem language constellation, as they carried out tasks with native speakers in English and in Spanish. In this case study we analyse pupils' productions in Spanish.

Table 1: Participants in this research project

Pupils	Institution	Number of pupils (18)	Codes for pupils
English	Godolphin and Latymer School, London	9 (all female)	EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4, EN5, EN6, EN7, EN8, EN9
Spanish	Clot del Moro High School, Valencia (Spain)	9 (5 male and 4 female)	SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP8, SP9

The task pupils carried out in both environments required them to exchange information about holidays and festivities. The task was carried out at school.

5.3.2.1 *Corpus description*

The research corpus consists of 6 sessions of chatlogs, lasting 88 minutes, and 6 sessions of BBB sessions, (81 minutes of recordings), (see Table 2). The oral sessions in BBB were all transcribed using the Val.Es.Co transcription system. In order to respect pupils' privacy, we use codes when referring to them, being EN for English pupils and SP for Spanish ones.

Table 2: Corpus description

Environment	Sessions and duration	Dates	Subjects interacting	
Chat	6 (88 minutes)	February 24 th , 2014	Session 1: SP1-EN1 Session 2: SP2-EN2 Session 3: SP3-EN3	Session 4: SP4-EN4 Session 5: SP5-EN5 Session 6: SP6-EN6
BBB	6 (81 minutes)	January 27 th - March 10 th , 2014	Session 1: SP1-SP8-EN2 Session 2: EN1-SP2 Session 3: EN8-SP8	Session 4: EN1-SP1 Session 5: EN2-SP2 Session 6: EN9-SP9

5.3.2.2 Data analysis

Chat logs and BBB transcriptions were analysed applying criteria from discourse analysis. Table 3 shows the variables being investigated and the criteria been applied for their analysis. We looked at how conversational topics were developed in the discourse, how meaning was negotiated, how power relationships were managed and how politeness marks arose in the conversation when beginning or ending the conversation. The analysis of power-relationships is very relevant as Tandem communication constellations are impregnated by the presence of a native speaker in the interaction, who obviously has “more power” as s/he masters the language they are communicating in and knows the culture the conversation partner is trying to acquire and develop.

5.3.3 RESULTS

This section shows the results of the analysis of chat logs and video communication transcriptions. We divide this section in four subsections: (1) target language use in topic development, (2) conversation beginnings and endings, (3) power relationships and (4) intercultural meaning negotiation.

Table 3: Variables and criteria for analysis within the present research project

Analysed variable	Criteria for its analysis
Dealing with intercultural aspects	A general variable to be analysed through all the following criteria.
1. Target language use in topic development	1. Topic development (topic scheme including task topic, lateral topics & negotiation of meaning) in both environments 2. Utterances and interaction turns for a topic or subtopic 3. Use of paralinguistic features (i.e. emoticons) in topic development
2. Conversation beginnings / endings	1. Politeness and courtesy when starting and leaving the chat/ BBB room or when changing into another language 2. Which student starts and ends the conversation (also related to power relationships)
3. Power relationships in discourse	1. Who introduces the topic 2. Who makes the questions and asks for doubts 3. Amount of production (written and oral) in terms of interaction turns 4. How speaking turns are managed (conversation patterns)

- | |
|--|
| <p>5. How decisions are made (e.g. changing language)
 6. Engagement in sequences of negotiation of meaning. How are pupils engaged in checking and clarifying meaning and overcoming communicative problems
 7. The role of the NS
 (A)symmetric relations:
 (a) Discourse control, &/or
 (b) Accommodation: Help to the non-native speaker</p> |
|--|

5.3.3.1 Target language use in topic development

Chat sessions generally show a *very straightforward* communication pattern with pupils engaging in a quite rigid discourse structure with short questions being followed by short answers mostly related to the task general topic (see example 1). There are very few instances of lateral topics (topics that emerge spontaneously in the discourse and which might not be directly related to the task topic) and instances of negotiation of meaning emerging in the discourse.

As for BBB the analysed interaction excerpts present, in general terms, a less rigid scheme in which interlocutors collaborate to contribute to richer topic elaboration. In BBB sessions more lateral (not task specific) topics emerge in which pupils actively negotiate intercultural meaning. However, silences, overlaps and misunderstandings arising from technical problems with sound are noticeable in this communication format. Yet, pupils try to solve these difficulties by repeating or rephrasing utterances, and showing a clear interest to perform well in the TC task.

Example 1: Chat session 6 & BBB session 1

<p>12:23: EN6: cuantos anos tienes? 12:24: EN6: tengo 14, mi cumpleanos es el 30 de abril 12:26: SP6: Que piensas hacer en vacaciones de verano? 12:28: EN6: que haces normalmente en tu tiempo libre? 12:29: SP6: Hago deporte por las noches y tu 12:31: EN6: me gusta montar a caballo, pero soy perezosa, normalmente veo la tele! me encanta salir con mis amigas todos los dias. eres deportista?12 12:32: SP6: Antes jugaba a baloncesto, pero ahora salgo a correr por las noches</p>	<p>Translation 12:23: EN6: how old are you? 12:24: EN6: I'm 14, my birthday is April the 30th 12:26: SP6: What are you going to do on summer holidays? 12:28: EN6: What do you normally do in your free time? 12:29: SP6: I play sports at night, and you? 12:31: EN6: I like horseback riding, but I am lazy, I normally watch tv! I love going out with my friends every day. Are you sporty? 12:32: SP6: I used to play basketball, but now I go running at nights</p>
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¹² High number of sentences in the foreign language in an only time.

<p>37:39: EN2: Ahm (2''), ahm, c / con quién pasaste pa / ↓</p> <p>37:51: SP8: Eh, repi / ¿Puedes repetir, por favor?</p> <p>37:54: EN2: Ahm, / con quién pasaste la Navidad ↓</p> <p>37:59: SP8: Yo la pasé // la Navidad la pasé con mi (())</p> <p>38:07: EN2: ¿Tus amigos?</p> <p>38:09: SP8: Sí // Mis (()). Yo soy de / de un pueblo de V</p> <p>38:15: EN2: Ah, sí.</p> <p>38:18: SP8: - Y // estuve con mis amigos en mi pueblo.</p> <p>38:23: EN2: Sí.</p> <p>38:25: SP8: Y después estuve el día de Navidad...</p> <p>38:26: [EN2: Bien.]</p> <p>38:27: SP8: = con mi familia.</p> <p>38:29: EN2: Sí...</p> <p>38:33: SP8: Ehm, el dia de antes de Navidad (3'') me fui de fiesta / con mis amigas.</p> <p>38:41: EN2: Ah, sí, sí. Vale. (LAUGHS) (2'') ¿Y, y tú / (SP1b's name)?</p> <p>38:52: SP1: ¿Dime, dime?</p> <p>38:55: EN2: Ahm, con quién pasaste la Navidad ↓</p> <p>39:00: SP1: Ah, yo // estuve mis navidades / las navidades con mis amigos...</p> <p>39:04: [EN2: Sí, sí.]</p> <p>39:04: SP1: = y con mi, y con familia.</p> <p>39:07: EN2: Y mi, ahm, (3'')...</p> <p>39:13: SP8: ¿Tú?</p> <p>39:15: EN2: Ah / a todos la familia / de mi padre // hm, vino a mi ca sa, ahm, mi tía, mi tío, mi abuela, mi primo mi prima y // su novio... Muchas personas (LAUGHS)</p> <p>39:33: SP1: Mucha gente.</p>	<p>37:39: EN2: Who did you spend Christmas with?</p> <p>37:51: SP8: Can you repeat please?</p> <p>37:54: EN2: Who did you spend Christmas with?</p> <p>37:59: SP8: I spent it, // Christmas I was with...(())</p> <p>38:07: EN2: Your friends?</p> <p>38:09: SP8: Yes // my,(()) I'm from a town in Valencia...</p> <p>38:15: EN2: Ah, yes</p> <p>38:18: SP8: And // I was with my friends in my town</p> <p>38:23: EN2: Yes</p> <p>38:25: SP8: And then on Christmas Day I was...</p> <p>38:26: [EN2: Ok]</p> <p>38:27: SP8: = With my family</p> <p>38:29: EN2: Yes...</p> <p>38:33: SP8: The day before Christmas, I had a good time with my friends</p> <p>38:41: EN2: Ah, yes, ok. (LAUGHS) (2'') And you...?</p> <p>38:52: SP1: Sorry, sorry?</p> <p>38:55: EN2: Who did you spend Christmas with?</p> <p>39:00: SP1: I // spent my Christmas with my friends...</p> <p>39:04: [EN2: Yes, yes]</p> <p>39:04: SP1: = And with my family</p> <p>39:07: EN2: Me, ahm (3'')...</p> <p>39:13: SP8: And you?</p> <p>39:15: EN2: Ah, all my family, from my father, ahm, came to my house, ahm, my aunt, my uncle, my grandma, my cousins, my cousin's boyfriend... A lot of people (LAUGHS)</p> <p>39:33: SP1: Yes, a lot of people</p>
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Table 4 specifies for each environment (chat and BBB) the task topic for the session, the quantity of lateral topics that emerged during the interaction and who (SP or EN) engages more frequently in checking and clarifying meaning. The table also shows in which environment utterances and interaction turns for the same topic or subtopic are higher, as indication of topic elaboration.

As we can see interaction in BBB elicited a more dynamic discourse structure with more lateral topics being generated across interaction dyads (excepting dyad 4) and pupils being more engaged in negotiating meaning. In four of the 6 dyads the native speaker was the one more frequently engaging in checking understanding and clarifying meaning.

Table 4: Topic development in both environments.

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	*S7 (chat)
Task topic	Talking about holidays and festivities (what to do on holiday, Christmas, Fallas, etc.)*					
Lateral topics	Chat: 1	Chat: Ø *	Chat: 2	Chat: Ø	Chat: 2	Chat: 4

(total number)	BBB: 7	BBB: 8	BBB: 3	BBB: Ø	BBB: 3	BBB: 8	
Negotiation of meaning by...	Chat: SP BBB: BOTH	Chat: Ø BBB: BOTH	Chat: Ø BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: Ø BBB: SP	SP
Utterances and interaction turns for the same topic or subtopic are higher in the environment...							
*S7 (chat)	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	
In this chat, there are a maximum of nine interaction turns for the same piece of meaning (talking about both students did on Christmas).	BBB (e.g. 23 about people they spend Christmas with)	BBB (e.g. 19 about playing instruments and music, a lateral topic)	BALANCED (chat: 8 about Valencia; BBB: 9 about birthdays)	BALANCED (chat: 8; BBB: 9, both about Fallas)	BBB (e.g. 18 about Sant Jordi or "el Día del Santo")	BBB (e.g. 10 about London and the London Eye)	

*Note1: Depending on the date of each session, pupils focus more on a festivity or holiday embraced on the main topic. On chat sessions, students focused more on Christmas, while on BBB pupils normally focus on different holidays and festivities (*Fallas*, "*el Día del Santo*", etc.).

*Note2: Neither lateral topics nor important misunderstandings arising in sessions with symbol Ø.

Table 8. Excerpts of chat and BBB sessions with lateral topics

5.3.3.2 Conversation beginnings and endings

Politeness markers were used by all pupils in both communication formats to begin and end conversations. Each interaction session started with greetings (*hola*, *qué tal*, *cómo estás*). In chat sessions, emoticons and in BBB sessions gestures (smiles, hand waving) and intonation were used to reinforce solidarity and express enthusiasm for meeting the peer (see examples 2 & 3). The chat sessions were organized in such a way that pupils carried out half of the interaction in Spanish and the other half in English. In many chat logs pupils indicated the language in which they would start the interaction (*¿empezamos en español?*).

Example 2: Chat session 5

```
12:20: SP5: hiiiiiii :))
12:22: SP5: hey :(
12:22: SP5: holaaaaa
12:24: (EN5 has just entered this chat)
12:24: EN5: hola
12:24: SP5: empezamos en español?
```

Example 3: BBB session 2

18:56: SP2: <i>Hi hi hi hi</i> →	
19:02: EN1: ¡Hola!	Hi
19:05: SP2: ¡Eeeh! ¡Ya está!	Oh! Now it works!
19:18: SP2: ¿Hola?	Hello
19:22: EN1: ¡Hola! ¿Qué tal?	Hi, how are you?
19:34: EN1: ¿Qué tal?	how are you?
19:40: SP2: ¡Buenas! ¿Va?	Hi! Does it work?

The chat sessions in Spanish ended up with pupils requesting to change languages mostly introduced by SP (*can we change to english now?*), while pupils in the BBB sessions often indicated that they had to go to another class and said goodbye among laughter (see example 4).

Example 4: BBB session 1

46:52: SP1: Que //Tenemos que cambiar de clase y ya nos veremos, ¿vale?	46:52: SP1: We have to switch class; see you soon, ok?
46:58: EN2: Sí, ahm, (()). You have, you have to go? // You have to go?	46:58: EN2: Sí, ahm, (()). You have, you have to go? // You have to go?
47:07: SP8: (())	47:07: SP8: (())
47:09: EN2: Ah, sí, sí. (LAUGHS) ¡Hasta luego! ('Bye!')	47:09: EN2: Ah, sí, sí. (LAUGHS) See you! ('Bye!')

As to who takes initiative in beginning and ending a session or in changing languages, we notice that the native speaker (SP) is more active in the chat tool than in the BBB environment.

5.3.3.3 Power relationships in discourse

This section is devoted to present the results of power relationships in both communication environments, BBB and chat sessions, and how these affect the general discourse development. We look at who introduces the topics, who makes the questions, who engages in clarifying meaning, who makes decisions and presents a higher amount of production (see Table 5).

Table 4: Who initiates, ends or changes languages in sessions

		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7 (chat)
Chat	Beginnings	EN	SP	EN	SP	SP	SP	SP
	Language change	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	EN	SP
BBB	Beginnings	EN	SP	EN	BOTH	EN	EN	Ø
	Endings/language ch.	SPs*	SP	SP	SP	EN	SP	Ø

*Note1: SP = Spanish student (SPs = Spanish students, in BBB S1), EN = English student.

Although one might expect power relations in discourse in a tandem constellation to be asymmetrical, as result of the native speaker controlling discourse processes, the results in Table 5 show this not to be the case particularly for communication carried out through BBB. In BBB video communication sessions the non-native speaker (EN) seems to take more initiative in discourse elaboration by introducing most topics, asking most questions, being actively involved in clarifying meaning and by producing more talk. In contrast, in chats, the native speaker (SP) seems to take more the lead in discourse construction.

Table 5: Power relationships in discourse

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	*S7 (chat)
Who...							
Introduces the topic	Chat: EN BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: EN BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	EN
Makes the questions and asks for doubts	Chat: SP BBB: BOTH	Chat: SP BBB: BOTH	Chat: BOTH BBB: BOTH	Chat: EN BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: BOTH BBB: BOTH	BOTH
Engages in clarifying meaning	Chat: SP BBB: BOTH	Chat: Ø * BBB: BOTH	Chat: Ø BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: Ø BBB: SP	SP
Makes decisions (e.g. changing lang. & leaving)	Chat: SP BBB: SPs	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: SP	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: EN BBB: SP	SP
Presents a higher amount of production	Chat: EN BBB: SPs*	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: EN BBB: EN	Chat: EN BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	Chat: SP BBB: EN	SP

*Note1: No important misunderstandings arising in sessions with the symbol Ø.

*Note2: Total SP in BBB S1: 72; however, SP8 participates more than SP1 (SP8: 47, SP1: 25). EN2, at his/her turn, communicates well and produces a lot (n = 70).

The following examples show who initiates topic change and the way it happens in both chat and video communication environments. In the excerpts corresponding to chat session 3, we can see that after the initial chitchat, that functions as rapport building, the native speaker (SP3) is the one introducing the task topic asking her speech partner, whether she is going on holidays to Spain.

Example 5: Excerpts of chat and BBB sessions regarding topic introduction

Chat session 3	
12:22 SP3: que tal? 12:23 EN3: bien, pero un poco cansada porque es el primero dia de colegio 12: 23 : EN3: y tu? 12:24: SP3: bien, tambien estoy un poco cansado 12:25: SP3: vas a viajar estas vacaciones a españa? [main topic]	12:22 SP3: how are you? 12:23: EN3: fine, but a bit tired because it is the first day of school' 12:23: EN3: and you? 12:24: SP3: fine, I'm also a bit tired 12:25: SP3: are you going to travel these holidays to Spain? [main topic]
1 BBB session 5	
09:12: EN2: Em, ¿empezamos? 09:16: SP2: Sí, eh / ¿quieres que empecemos en español o en inglés? 09:19: EN2: Eh, no sé. Ok, ¿en español? 09:26: SP2: (()) 09:27: EN2: ¿Sí, ok? (3") Ahm, hm (3"), ¿qué tal fallas? [main topic]	09:12: EN2: shall we start? 09:16: SP2: Yes, eh, do you want to start in Spanish or in English? 09:19: EN2: Eh, I don't know. Ok, in Spanish? 09:26: SP2: (()) 09:27: EN2: Yes, ok? Ahm, how were Fallas? [main topic]

As to the BBB session the foreign language learner is the one introducing the main topic by asking the speech partner about Las Fallas, a well-known regional festivity in Valencia.

Generally speaking chat conversations turned to be very straightforward. There were fewer instances of collaboration and negotiation of meaning than in BBB interactions. Native speakers in BBB clearly showed their willingness to help their online partner, which in turn, motivated the non-native speaker to be more engaged in the conversation by showing interest, by producing more discourse and by making more efforts for being understood.

5.3.3.4 Dealing with intercultural aspects

Intercultural aspects are essential elements in the analysed conversations both in chat and in VC interactions. However, intercultural issues (festivities like Christmas, San Fermínes, Fallas, Saint name, food, presents, etc.) are more frequently negotiated in BBB conversations than in chats. It is interesting to notice that these intercultural elements seem to attract pupils' attention and interest as they become engaged in describing or clarifying those intercultural aspects which are not known by the peer. This is illustrated in Table 4 where we can observe the behaviour of the non-native speaker and his/her interest on the native-speaker's explanations on intercultural aspects related to festivities, food, music, free time, sports etc. These conversations contribute to make pupils aware of the intercultural dimension of communication and help them develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997). They show curiosity and openness towards the other culture, share and develop knowledge of both cultures, try to interpret the information they get and relate it to their own cultural framework and start developing a critical cultural awareness.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

After presenting the previous results, we are able to answer our research questions.

(RQ1): Does interaction in the TL differ when using one tool or another?

(RQ2): Which are the patterns characterising chat and VC communication among Secondary Education pupils?

Interaction seems to differ according to the tool being used to communicate:

- *Chat tools.* Chat sessions generally show *a-straight-to-the-point* communication following the scheme *question-answer* (one student asks a question(s), the other student answers it) and without serious problems and silences hindering communication. Furthermore, courtesy and politeness in starting conversations and changing into another language are remarkable. In general terms the conversations in chat are quite shallow; topics take very few turns, there is no in depth topic development but a dynamic topic exchange structure. Meaning is developed quite superficially and if misunderstandings arise these are dealt with in a quite simple manner.
- *BBB sessions.* The analysed BBB excerpts present, in general terms, a less rigid scheme in which lateral topics and interesting intercultural aspects are introduced. Besides, there are normally more interaction turns for a (sub)topic with repetitions, reformulations and rich sequences of negotiation of meaning emerging. Native speakers in BBB clearly show their willingness to help their online partner, which in turn, motivates the non-native speaker to be more engaged in the conversation by showing interest, producing more discourse (in terms of interaction turns) and to make efforts for being understood. Nevertheless, silences, overlaps and misunderstandings arising from technical problems with sound are remarkable in this communication format.

However, students try to solve these difficulties by repeating or rephrasing things, showing interest in performing well. Finally, politeness and courtesy strategies are widely used.

As to the third research question:

(RQ3): In which environment can communicative intercultural exchange be more easily achieved? Why?

Each environment presents strengths and limitations. If we look at the conversations from a discourse analysis point of view, the video communication environment seems to promote greater discourse engagement among participants: topics are more elaborated, there is more negotiation of meaning, intercultural issues are better shared, clarified and developed, pupils present an engaged and positive attitude. So this VC environment seems to be better to promote rich interactions.

However, we consider essential to work on technological matters (sound, webcam, Internet connection and tools) to avoid problems and enrich this kind of projects; as we can see in the transcripts, remarked with symbols [((...))], [(())] and [((word))], communication in BBB presents many technical problems, generally related to sound, which makes mutual understanding difficult to achieve.

The results of this case study are interesting for the research field but the limitations are obvious. The sample data analysed is quite small and we need additional studies focusing on the discourse patterns of chats and video communication environments with a larger groups of pupils, carrying out more than one task and see how discourse patterns develop across sessions.

6 COOPERATIVE LINGUA FRANCA CONVERSATIONS IN INTERCULTURAL TELECOLLABORATION EXCHANGES BETWEEN PUPILS IN SECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Petra Hoffstaedter und Kurt Kohn (Steinbeis Transfer Center Language Learning Media)

6.1 SUMMARY

This research study analyses written and spoken communicative interactions in eleven lingua franca conversations between pairs or small groups of pupils in different home-based telecollaboration environments: text chat, video communication and 3D virtual world exchanges. Special attention is given to topic development, comprehension and production problems, and aspects of interactional intercultural competence. In addition to the assigned conversation tasks, pupils tend to introduce their own personal topics, in particular in video communication encounters. This is an indicator of increased autonomous authenticity and a move beyond school towards real-life communication. Comprehension and production problems are addressed on the fly in highly cooperative and efficient ways. The pupils' attention is on ensuring successful communication: they want to be understood and convey their message. Any focus on form serves the communicative ambition. In particular in video conversations, pupils show a high degree of social presence by expressing empathy and rapport. The conversational interactions are thoroughly cooperative and supportive. Creating common ground and negotiating a shared line of argumentation seems to be more important than engaging in controversies.

6.2 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

TILA telecollaboration exchanges engage pupils from different countries and lingua-cultural backgrounds in spoken and written conversational interactions using mainly four tool environments: 3D virtual worlds in OpenSim, video communication in BigBlueButton and Skype as well as text chat and forum in Moodle. The overall pedagogic objective is to offer pupils rich opportunities for authentic intercultural communication practice and competence development. Pupils are matched in pairs to talk about soft intercultural topics; the main intercultural focus is on interaction, not on content. Depending on teachers' pedagogic objectives and preference, pupils communicate in native speaker/non-native speaker tandems or with other non-native speakers under lingua franca conditions. Following an overall blended learning design, the main telecollaboration task is generally sandwiched between preparation and follow-up phases in the classroom supported by accompanying Moodle activities.

The present study takes a closer look at eleven lingua franca conversations between pairs of pupils in text chat, video communication or 3D virtual world exchanges (Table 1). Access to the telecollaboration environments is from pupils' homes. The main motivation for this decision is to ensure communicative privacy, to have more flexibility for making appointments, and to avoid sound problems due to network overload in the computer room.

Three written English lingua franca conversations in Moodle chat (A) and four spoken English lingua franca conversations in BigBlueButton (B) all belong to the same telecollaboration exchange between a German and a Spanish school class. The pupils talk about new technologies and social media. The chat or

BigBlueButton environment is chosen depending on technological accessibility and/or preference. Two other spoken BigBlueButton conversations involve Dutch and French pupils (C). In this case, the pupils use German as lingua franca. For their conversations, they choose from a list of topics concerning issues around school, fashion, media etc. While the conversations in groups A, B and C are all embedded in a classroom context, the two English lingua franca conversations in group D are voluntary class-independent activities. The first conversation is between a male pupil from Turkey and a female pupil from Bulgaria. They meet in a cafe in OpenSim and talk about school-related topics and plans for the future. The second conversation takes place in Skype between a male pupil from Turkey, two female pupils from Bulgaria and one female pupil from Portugal. They address the pros and cons of using Facebook. In these two class-independent conversations, preparatory and follow-up tasks concerning technological, thematic and feedback issues are conducted online in BigBlueButton or Skype or via email.

Session code ¹³	Lingua Franca (LF) and native languages (NL)	Assigned topic(s)	Duration (min.) / no. of words
(A) English lingua franca conversations in Moodle chat			
EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5	Chat	LF: English NL: German, Spanish	New technologies and social media
EN11_Chat2_DE6_ES6			60/750
EN11_Chat3_DE7_ES7			70/760
			30/500
(B) English lingua franca conversations in BigBlueButton			
EN11_BBB1_DE1_ES1	BBB	LF: English NL: German, Spanish	New technologies and social media
EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2			25/2400
EN11_BBB3_DE3_ES3			50/6500
EN11_BBB4_DE4_ES4			45/5900
			40/6100
(C) German lingua franca conversations in BigBlueButton			
GER2_BBB_NL1_FR1	BBB	LF: German NL: Dutch, French	School, fashion, media etc. (10 topics to choose from)
GER2_BBB_NL2_FR2			35/3600
			50/2900
(D) Class-independent English lingua franca conversations in OpenSim and Skype			
ENx_OS_ELF_BG1_TR1	OpenSim	LF: English NL: Bulgarian, Turkish	School, plans for the future
ENx_Skype_ELF_TR1_BG2&3_P_T1	Skype	LF English NL: Bulgarian, Portuguese, Turkish	Facebook
			20/1900

Table 1: English and German lingua franca conversations in BigBlueButton, OpenSim and Moodle chat exchanges from home

The general research question across all eleven conversations is about how written and spoken lingua franca communication unfolds in chat, video communication and 3D virtual world exchanges, in

¹³ Code explanation: "EN11" etc. = TILA course code, "DE1_ES5" etc. = native speaker code and number of the pupils involved in the conversation

particular under conditions of home access. Special attention is given to topic development, comprehension and production problems, and aspects of interactional intercultural competence. The analyses of the conversations are based on performance recordings.

6.3 TOPIC DEVELOPMENT IN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN TELECOLLABORATION FROM HOME

It is a common characteristic of natural conversations that speakers do not necessarily stick to a given topic; more often than not, they seamlessly move on to issues arising spontaneously and dynamically in the course of the interaction. In school contexts, pupils are faced with the task to discuss assigned topics. They are usually expected not to digress – at least not too much – so that the ensuing conversation will be about the topic(s) specified in the task. In telecollaboration exchanges from home, assigned tasks and topics are embedded in a private environment. It is assumed that this has an effect on the communicative interaction in particular on the nature of the topic development.

The following analysis focuses on this issue. Evidence will be drawn from the English lingua franca conversations in Moodle chat (group A) and BigBlueButton (group B). In both environments, the pupils' assigned discussion topic "New technologies and social media" was further specified by three questions:

1. Which social media do you use and how? What do you like or dislike about them?
2. What would it mean to you to be without a computer or smartphone for a day/week/month or longer?
3. Are the new technologies (Smartphones, I-Pad) and social media and communication tools (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, email) a blessing or a curse? Discuss problems and benefits of new technologies.

In addition to task-related topic(s), conversations are expected to also touch on topics introduced by the pupils themselves. Such topics are termed "personal". Four types of triggers are considered:

- **a lexical/propositional element in the preceding conversation about a task-related topic**, e.g. when talking about the use of social media, one pupil says "I only post my drawings". Leaving the task-related topic "Use of media", her partner shifts to a personal topic: "Wow you draw ... what do you draw?" (Figure 2 below);
- **a lexical/propositional element in the preceding conversation about a personal topic**, e.g. when one pupil asked the personal question "And about your English, did you learn everything you know at school?", her partner's reply ("I learned by watching too many series") triggered a topic shift to "movies" (Figure 2);
- **a spontaneous question raised by one of the pupils**, e.g. "I know this doesn't have to do with the topic but how excited is your class about this project?" (ES5);
- **an external stimulus**, e.g. sound problems, a ringing phone, or a person entering the room.

The distribution of task-related and personal topics throughout a conversation can be interpreted as an indicator of where the conversation is placed on a continuum from school-focused to private.

In two of the three written chat conversations, the pupils only address task-related topics (Figure 1) by more or less going through the different questions from the worksheet they received from their teachers.

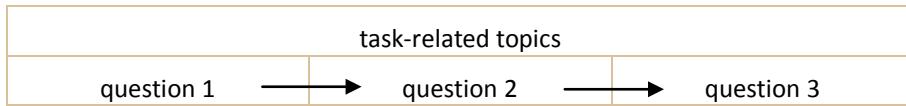


Figure 1: Task related topic development in two chat conversations
(EN11_Chat2_DE6_ES6 and EN11_Chat3_DE7_ES7)

In chat conversation EN11_Chat2_DE6_ES6 between a German and a Spanish girl, the German girl takes the lead and makes sure that she and her partner work through the list of questions specified in the worksheet. Right at the beginning, she refers to their task ("Let's discuss the questions") and raises the first question:

*15:10 DE6: Hello
15:10 ES6: Hi
15:11 DE6: Let's discuss the questions
15:11 DE6: Which media do you use?*

Whenever she feels a question has been answered, she continues to the next question on the worksheet. When the last question has been dealt with, she closes the conversation:

*16:15 DE6: I have to finish soon. I think we've discussed the important things
16:18 DE6: Goodbye!
16:18 ES6: Bye*

Chat conversation EN11_Chat3_DE7_ES7 between a German and a Spanish boy is an example of a more balanced distribution of conversational responsibilities (Example 1) since both pupils introduce topic questions. Like the two girls, they cover all questions from the worksheet, but these questions develop more naturally as a response to what was said before.

Starting conversation	19:02 ES7: hy 19:02 DE7: Hello 19:02 DE7: Have you some media you use regular
Introducing the next topics/questions	19:03 ES7: and how many time do you use it? 19:05 DE7: Do you think you could live a day/week/month without it? 19:12 ES7: okay and do you think that the new technologies, social media and communication tools are blessing or curse?
Closing the conversation	19:29 DE7: Ok I think we have talked about all questions or not 19:30 ES7: yes

Example 1: Balanced initiation of topic questions in a chat conversation between two boys
(EN11_Chat3_DE7_ES7)

In chat conversation EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5 between a German and a Spanish girl, topics develop more spontaneously and often drift away from the questions specified in the assignment (Figure 2).

Task-related topics	Personal topics		
	Lexical/propositional trigger in task-related conversation	Spontaneous question by one of the pupils	Lexical/propositional trigger in personal topic conversation
Topic question: use of social media (DE5) "I only post my drawings" (DE5)	<p>Drawings "Wow you draw ... what do you draw?" (ES5)</p> <p>Languages "And about your English, did you learn everything you know at school?" (ES5)</p> <p>"I learned by watching too many series" (DE5)</p> <p>Movies "What do you watch?" (ES5)</p> <p>TILA project (ES5)</p>	<p>Drawings "Wow you draw ... what do you draw?" (ES5)</p> <p>Languages "And about your English, did you learn everything you know at school?" (ES5)</p> <p>"I learned by watching too many series" (DE5)</p> <p>Movies "What do you watch?" (ES5)</p> <p>TILA project (ES5)</p>	<p>Drawings "Wow you draw ... what do you draw?" (ES5)</p> <p>Languages "And about your English, did you learn everything you know at school?" (ES5)</p> <p>"I learned by watching too many series" (DE5)</p> <p>Movies "What do you watch?" (ES5)</p> <p>TILA project (ES5)</p>

```

graph TD
    DE5[DE5] --> SocialMedia["Topic question: use of social media"]
    SocialMedia --> Drawings["Drawings  
\"Wow you draw ... what do you draw?\" (ES5)"]
    Drawings --> Languages["Languages  
\"And about your English, did you learn everything you know at school?\" (ES5)"]
    Languages --> Movies["Movies  
\"What do you watch?\" (ES5)"]
    Movies --> TILA[TILA project (ES5)]
    TILA --> TaskReturn["(returning to the task)"]
    TaskReturn --> GoodBad["Topic question:  
\"Do you think social network is good or bad?\" (DE5)"]
    GoodBad --> MobileAddiction["Topic question:  
\"Are you addicted to your mobile?\" (DE5)"]
    MobileAddiction --> Reading["Reading  
\"I'm addicted in reading\" (DE5)"]
    Reading --> Stories["Writing stories (ES5)  
\"Do you write?\""]
  
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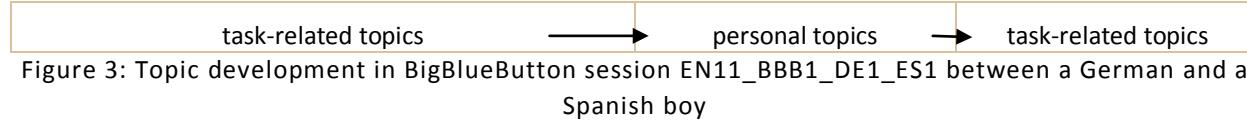
Figure 2: Topic development involving task-related and personal topics in a chat conversation
 (EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5)

While the German girl (DE5) tries to cover the questions from the worksheet, the Spanish girl (ES5) spontaneously shifts the topic to issues beyond the task. They actually talk very little about the task-related questions. It seems they are more interested in TV series or in drawing, reading and writing than in new technologies and social media. After the spontaneous thematic excursion from "I only post my drawings" to "what do you draw" and "watching movies", the German girl finally returns to the task by addressing the next question from the worksheet. Soon afterwards, they move again to a topic beyond

the task, i.e. from “Are you addicted to your mobile?” to “I’m addicted in reading”. This conversation is an example of topic development that shifts from task-related questions to personal topics outside the task. The main triggers for topic development are lexical/propositional ones.

In the oral BigBlueButton conversations, all pupils spontaneously switch to personal topics beyond the actual task; this happened either before, after or during their discussion of task-related topics. The ease with which pupils introduce personal topics in BigBlueButton may be partly due to the fact that in oral conversation pupils can usually exchange a lot more information than in written chat. The chat exchanges last between 30 and 70 minutes and consist of 500 up to 750 words, while the oral conversations, lasting between 25 and 50 minutes, comprise 2400 up to 6500 words (Table 1 above). Even though a chat communication might last as long or longer as some of the oral exchanges, in the oral mode, communication is much faster. There is just more room for elaborations of the individual task-related topics including exchanges of information and opinions as well as for excursions beyond the questions specified in the original task.

Topic development and the relation between task-related and personal topics are different in each of the oral exchanges. The two girls in BigBlueButton conversation EN11_BBB_DE1_ES1 only talk for 25 minutes. They start with the assigned topic and go through the different topic questions in a similar way as the pupils in the strictly task-related chat conversations described above (Figure 1). Only after having covered all topic questions, do they shift to a personal topic beyond the task and start talking about their schools and the languages they learn. Not knowing what else they should talk about, they briefly return to the last question of the assignment until they finally decide “We answered all the questions and I think is good” (Figure 3).



The other three BigBlueButton exchanges are characterized by very long, lively and spontaneous conversations; the pupils did not seem to run out of personal topics. In BigBlueButton session EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2 (Figure 4) between a German and a Spanish boy, the first 20 minutes of the conversation are about personal topics. They talk about their age and hobbies and how they spend their free time, about their siblings, and about travelling. The Spanish pupil (ES1) finally shifts the conversation to the assigned task (“I think the teacher wanted us to talk about some questions in special”) and after some clarifications, they start discussing the task-related questions. During this discussion some thematic excursions to personal topics are evoked by an external stimulus (a ringing phone), by lexical-conceptual triggers in the task-related conversation similar to ones in the chat example discussed above (Figure 2), or by unrelated questions spontaneously brought up by the German pupil DE2, e.g. a question about playing games (“Do you play Clans?”). The Spanish pupil ES2 always tries to shift the conversational focus back to the assigned task (e.g. “So, well I think we could move to the second question”).

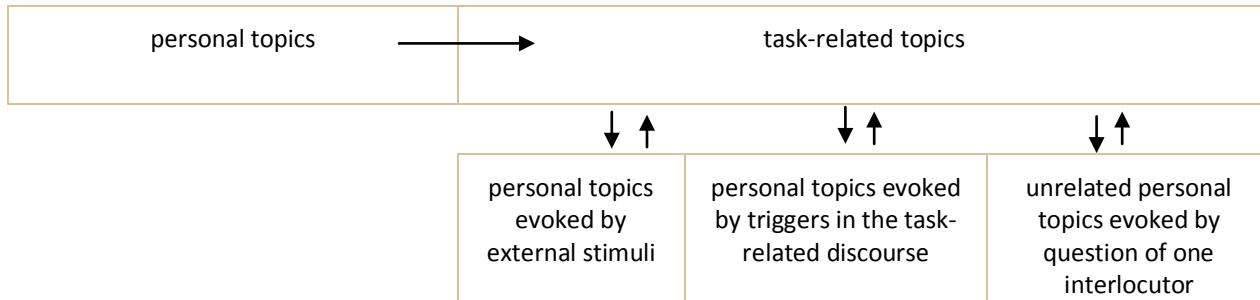


Figure 4: Topic development in BigBlueButton session EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2 between a German and a Spanish boy

In the very animated BigBlueButton conversation EN11_BBB3_DE3_ES3 (Figure 5), the two girls involved discuss only two of the three task-related questions. The German girl (DE3) expresses that she does not know how to continue the conversation because they both are of the same opinion. She thus seems to assume that the discussion should be more controversial ("Yeah, well, that's pretty much my opinion too. I don't know how we should discuss this."). Her Spanish partner (ES3) then spontaneously introduces a personal topic ("Where do you live in Germany?"). The German pupil answers the question and immediately introduces "movies" as the next personal topic ("Do you like watching movies?"). This question triggers a lively and animated exchange about movies, TV series they watch, or books they read. The fact that the Spanish pupil read a book in French leads to questions about the French school in Spain she attends and about the languages they both learn. They continue with a rich variety of other personal topics concerning family background, travelling, sports, and school days in Spain and Germany. Before saying goodbye, the two girls befriend each other in Facebook.



Figure 5: Topic development in BigBlueButton session EN11_BBB3_DE3_ES3 between a German and a Spanish girl

Finally, in BigBlueButton session EN11_BBB4_DE4_ES4 (Figure 6) between a German girl and a Spanish boy, the two pupils first address and solve some technical problems. They then start with the task-related questions. This stretch is briefly interrupted when the German girl out of the blue brings up a personal topic: "I've got a question. Is your school a French speaking school ...?" She then returns to the assigned task: "Okay. Back to the questions." After having discussed all task-related questions, the German girl initiates a small talk phase ("Okay, now a little time for small talk") during which they talk about their common hobby (taekwondo) and other areas of interests.

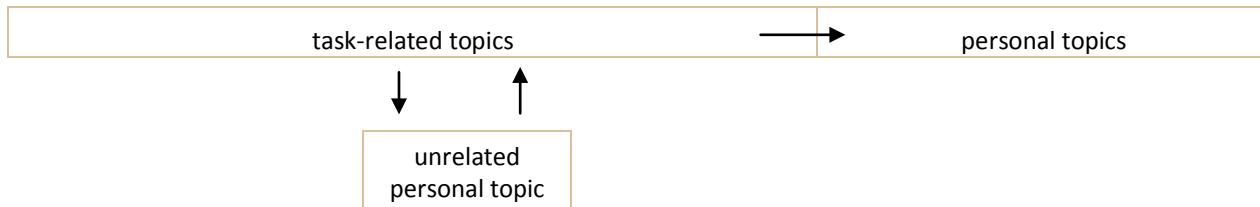


Figure 6: Topic development in BigBlueButton session EN11_BBB4_DE4_ES4 between a German girl and a Spanish boy

Two conclusions can be drawn from the analyses. First, in intercultural telecollaboration exchanges from home, pupils tend to go beyond the topics specified in the assigned task. Just like they would do in ordinary communication, they bring up topics they are personally interested in. This shift towards thematic issues outside the actual conversational assignment bridges over from school to real life. Very much in line with a call for more learner autonomy and Widdowson's (2003, p. 115) argument for authentication, the pupils manage to make the conversation authentic for themselves. Second, thematic excursions to personal topics outside the assigned task occur in both spoken BigBlueButton and written chat exchanges. But there is a striking difference regarding frequencies. While in chat conversations personal thematic extensions occur sporadically as in chat EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5 above, they are an all-pervasive feature of conversations in BigBlueButton. Pupils' readiness to venture beyond assigned topics is thus, arguably, the same for chat and BigBlueButton. The opportunities for open and flexible topic development are, however, considerably richer under conditions of spoken communication.

6.4 DEALING WITH COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION PROBLEMS

Being involved in intercultural telecollaborative conversations from home and talking about various dynamically arising topics outside the assigned task, pupils did of course encounter many comprehension and production problems. In this chapter, some examples will be analysed that throw some light into how pupils interact when trying to solve such problems.

In their conversations, pupils were faced with different kinds of comprehension problems; the following causes were particularly noticeable:

- acoustic comprehension problems
- label-related comprehension problems
- lexical comprehension problems
- propositional (= content-related) comprehension problems

Acoustic comprehension problems occur in all video communication conversations in BigBlueButton or Skype as well as in the 3D virtual world exchanges in OpenSim. These are some of the indicators pupils used to refer to acoustic comprehension problems:

"What? My – the connection is- I don't know, it is really bad." (DE2)

"What? Sorry, I didn't understand". (ES4)

"Sorry?" (Moves closer to the screen) (DE1)

"Again please." (Moves closer to the screen) "I didn't understand you, because I didn't hear you." (Points to her ear) (DE1)

As a reaction, partners usually repeat what they said before, sometimes they speak louder or move closer to their microphone.

In the following passage from a chat conversation (Example 2), one interlocutor (DE6) has a label-related comprehension problem; she does not know what "Viber" refers to. She signals her problem with a request for an explanation ("What is Viber?"). Her partner (ES6) provides the explanation ("It's a social

media like whatsapp but you can call people"), and DE6 confirms having understood ("Okay. I didn't know this.").

15:14 ES6: Well I'm practically everywhere: I have Facebook, I have whatsapp, I have **Viber**, Instagram and so on

15:15 DE6: **What is Viber?**

15:15 ES6: **it's a social media like whatsapp but you can call people**

15:17 DE6: **Okay. I didn't know this.** I know Instagram and Facebook but I don't use them. Some of my friends use them.

Example 2: Label-related comprehension problem in a chat conversation (EN11_Chat2_DE6_ES6)

In the next example from a BigBlueButton conversation (Example 3), pupil ES2 asks a question, which his partner DE2 does not fully understand because of a lexical problem with the word "curse". DE2 signals his problem by repeating the part of the utterance immediately before the unknown word with a raising intonation ("Blessing or?"). In his response, ES2 repeats the word "curse" along with a description of its conceptual meaning: "like if it is good for us, or if it is bad". DE2 confirms understanding ("Ok.") and replies to the original question.

ES2: Are the new technologies, smartphones or iPads and social media communication tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, Email are a blessing or a **curse**? Discuss problems and benefits of new technologies.

DE2: **Blessing or?**

ES2: **A curse, like if it is good for us, or if it is bad?**

DE2: **Ok.** Erm, I think it is good for us because we could communicate better and so this wouldn't be able without it so, yeah.

Example 3: Lexical comprehension problem in a BigBlueButton conversation (EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2)

Example 4, which is taken from a chat conversation, illustrates an interesting interaction between a lexical production and a propositional comprehension problem. The Spanish pupil (ES6) is not sure whether her lexical choice "comprise" is suitable for getting the propositional content (message) of her utterance across. She checks for comprehension ("if you know what i mean"), and her German conversation partner (DE6) indeed confirms that she was unable to understand the message ("What do you want to say? I don't understand it."). The lexical production problem thus results in a propositional comprehension problem. Pupil ES6 rephrases and elaborates her message. DE6 signals understanding of the rephrased propositional content and immediately agrees with ES6's argument.

15:58 ES6: yes and like then when you want to work for exemple in the big companie there are people who are payed to search different information which is comprise on you **if you know what i mean**

15:59 DE6: **What do you want to say? I don't understand it)**

16:02 ES6: In the big companies there are people who are payed to dig some dirt up on you like some old photos which you posted on facebook or whatever when you were 8

16:05 DE6: **Yes, now I understand.** This isn't right because it shouldn't be important for your job what you posted when you were a teenager.

Example 4: Lexical production and propositional comprehension problem in a chat conversation
(EN11_chat2_DE6_a_ES6)

In Example 5 from a German lingua franca conversation in BigBlueButton, lexical, pronunciation/spelling and propositional comprehension problems interact in interesting ways and are eventually solved in a complex collaborative effort of meaning negotiation.

A French (FR1) and a Dutch girl (NL1) are talking about homework, and the French girl tries to convey that homework is usually quite boring and that in her opinion homework should be more interesting and fun. She uses the German word "lustig" [= fun]. As an example of homework she considers "lustig", she mentions theatre projects or telecollaboration exchanges like the one they are currently engaged in ("mit anderen Personen sprechen, wie wir jetzt" [= speaking with other people, like we do right now]. The Dutch girl (NL1) indicates that she does not understand her ("Entschuldigung, ich verstehe du nicht."), and they start a longer negotiation process. The two girls identify the word "lustig" as the trigger of a lexical comprehension problem, which is further complicated by a misunderstanding regarding pronunciation/spelling: the Dutch girl mishears "lustig" as "lüstig" (with "Umlaut"). Once the pronunciation/spelling problem is clarified, she looks up the word ("lustig") in a dictionary and is able to solve the lexical comprehension problem.

When continuing the conversation, however, it becomes clear that communication is also hindered by a propositional comprehension problem. Applying her newly acquired lexical knowledge for "lustig", NL1 misinterprets the entire utterance; she thinks the French girl argues that homework is fun: "Warte! Du findest Hausaufgabe Spaß? Toll?" [= Wait! You think homework is fun? Great?]. FR1 manages to clarify this issue, confirms that she finds homework boring ("Ich denke, dass Hausaufgaben langweilig sind."), and explains that she would like homework to be different and more fun ("Und es sollte lustiger Hausaufgaben *sein.*"). The Dutch pupil now finally understands what her French partner wanted to say at the very beginning, and she confirms agreement: "*Oh,* ja und um die Hausaufgabe lustiger zu machen, sollte es Projekte *geben. Okay, ich verstehe dich. [= Oh, yes, and to make homework more fun, there should be projects. Okay, I understand what you mean"].

FR1: [...] Also ich denke, keine Hausaufgaben nicht eine gute Idee ist, aber Hausaufgabe zu machen <break> Non! <break> Hausaufgab <break> lustige Hausaufgaben, **wie zum Beispiel so dieses** <break> also es kö <break> wie <break> **oder Projekte?** *Einverstanden?*

[...]

FR1: Es sollte <break> Nein! (looks something up) <break> es sollte <break> es sollte mehr **lustige** Hausaufgaben wie, also Theater lernen, oder wie wie diese <break> wie die wir wir jetzt machen, sie <break> mit anderen Personen sprechen, wie wie jetzt.

NL1: Entschuldigung, ich verstehe du nicht.

FR1: Es ist wie <break> Ich denke, dass es mehr lustige **lustig** *also*

NL1: ***lüstig**,* ja (looks the word up)

FR1: **L-u-s-t-i-g**

NL1: Ja, mit einer Umlaut?

FR1: Nein.

NL1: Oh, lus (pause) <break> Oh, fröhlich? Sp (pause) wie Spaß-Hausaufgabe?

FR1: Ja. Also ich weiß nicht ob es

NL1: Warte! **Du findest Hausaufgabe Spaß? Toll!**

FR1: Nein.

NL1: Nein, okay. (they laugh)

FR1: Ich denke, dass Hausaufgaben langweilig sind.

NL1: Ja, ich bin damit einverstanden.

FR1: Und es sollte lustiger Hausaufgaben *sein.*

NL1: *Oh,* ja und um die Hausaufgabe lustiger zu machen, sollte es Projekten *geben* geben. Okay, ich verstehe dich. (pause)

Example 5: Meaning negotiation in a German lingua franca exchange in BigBlueButton between a French and a Dutch girl (GER2_BBB_NL1_FR1)

The same cooperative attitude and behaviour can be observed in connection with (mainly) lexical production problems.

When communicating with his Spanish partner in an English lingua franca conversation in BigBlueButton (EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2), a German pupil notices an echo effect that is disturbing the communication. When trying to convey this to his partner, he encounters a lexical production problem. He uses the German word "Echo" and also offers a paraphrase in English ("something repeats and the audio"):

DE2: Ok. There is a little "Echo" (uses German pronunciation: ['ɛçø]). I don't know how you call it in English but it did something repeats and the audio.

Confirming understanding, his Spanish partner provides a solution by telling him that he thinks the word "Echo" is also used in English:

ES2: Yeah, I understand. I understand. Yeah I understand. Echo (uses English pronunciation: ['ekəʊ]). I think it is the same way in English.

In another example of successful co-construction of meaning, the same German pupil talks about his sister. He wants to express that little sisters are sometimes a bit annoying, but he doesn't have a word for "annoying". He explicitly states the lexical gap ("I don't know how you call it in English you know.") and unsuccessfully struggles to close it ("how little sisters of ours are most of the time, yeah. She is -"):

*DE2: Sometimes my sister wants to play with me and free evening: "Would you like to play Minecraft with me" (in a high pitch). "No!" But (unclear) always do something like *(unclear).* [...] and sometimes she is a little <break> I don't know how you call it in English you know. How little sisters of ours are most of the time, yeah. She is <break>.*

His partner offers a lexical option, requesting confirmation of his suggestion by using a rising intonation ("Annoying?"). When his partner does not understand what he says, he repeats the word in a full sentence ("they are annoying") and also offers a descriptive clarification:

ES2: Annoying? (Laughs)

DE2: What?

*ES2: (?) Really (?) they are annoying *you mean like* erh they are always everywhere you want to like play in your corner and no <break> nobody who is here.*

DE2 confirms that this was what he meant:

*DE2: *Yeah, annoying.* Of cour <break> ja, genau <break>.*

Later in the conversation (Example 6), the German pupil DE2 is again struggling with a lexical gap: "100 Watt Whatt Vatt". His partner understands what he wants to say and offers a reformulation ("Just the like a unity of a measure like you measure with it"). The German boy unsuccessfully tries again to get his message across. He explicitly addresses his production problem ("I can't talk about it in English, because I don't know the words"). He keeps trying to overcome the problem and his partner shows social presence by expressing sympathy and rapport: "Just don't care about it", "Doesn't matter", "I know like we are beginners (laughs) of English, we haven't got such a level to speak about everything we want". Finally the DE2 abandons the topic he originally wanted to talk about. He responds to his partner's comment regarding languages learners' production problems instead: "Yeah, small talks is ok but if it got little bit more and some topics are little bit different".

DE2: Yeah. I hear that in (unclear) they are really cool because I don't know because erm climatic (?) engines (?) are really <break> yeah, they are not so environmentally friendly and friend told, for example, it is a (unclear). There are erm lights over 1000 Watt Whatt Vatt , I don't know how do you call it in English. Erm, it is a really -.	Struggling for closing a lexical gap; Explicit statement of the problem
ES2: Just the like a unity of a measure like you measure with it	Provides a reformulation of the problematic item
DE2: Erm, I mean yeah and this fuel stations <break> the lights were really <break> it needs really hard <break> ohh Gott. I can't talk about it in English because I don't know so words (laughs)	Confirmation; Struggling for a suitable expression; DE2 explicitly states the difficulty of closing a lexical gap
ES2: Just don't care about it. (laughs)	Social presence: sympathy and rapport (face management)
DE2: Little bit <break> yeah (pause) yeah it need a lot of power from the <break> yeah <break> (pause) no I can't talk about it in English.	Attempts to reformulate and overcome the problem, but he gives up and emphasizes his struggle
ES2: Doesn't matter. (laughs)	Social presence: sympathy and rapport (face management)
DE2: (unclear) I can't <break> it is a little bit stupid, erm.	Reflects on his struggle to express himself in English
ES2: I know like we are beginners (laughs) of English, we haven't got such a level to speak about everything we want.	Tries to comfort DE2 by making a generalizing comment about learners' limitations
DE2: Yeah, small talks is ok but if it got little bit more and some topics are little bit different *(unclear).*	Agrees

Example 6: Production problems in an English lingua franca conversation in BigBlueButton
(EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2)

Some students solve their lexical production problems by looking up words in a dictionary:

"I did (pause) like a (pause) <break> wait wait a minute please. I'm I'm searching the translation. (types; looks something up) I did a a a conce compe <break> I did a competition of maths" (ES4)

The dictionary strategy is extensively used in one of the German lingua franca exchanges in BigBlueButton (GER2_BBB_NL1_FR1). Both the Dutch and the French girl look up words several times to make the conversation work. The pupils' visual presence in a video communication makes it possible for them to keep the conversational contact while consulting a dictionary. In a chat conversation, explicit signals might be necessary.

The way pupils try to activate their linguistic knowledge – including their native language knowledge and dictionary look-ups – and to use it in creative and patient ways to come to grips with their comprehension and production problems, clearly shows that successful communication is in the foreground of their attention and ambition. In both types of telecollaboration environments, chat and video communication, the pupils want to be understood and convey their message. For them, a focus on form is not an end in itself. Attention to form becomes important, however, to the extent that it helps them to solve a communication problem. Quite obviously, the pedagogic lingua franca condition creates a communicative challenge that pushes pupils to engage in collaborative “languaging” interactions (Swain, 2006) and to extend their “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978). Their struggle for natural and relevant (i.e. authenticated) communication offers the potential for them to “experience themselves as speakers of their target language, not merely as learners, with a right to their own criteria of success” (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2015, p. 342; also see Kohn, 2015).

6.5 TOWARDS INTERACTIONAL INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Speakers engage in collaborative dialogues in order to solve problems and build knowledge; they use “language as a cognitive tool to mediate their own thinking and that of others” (Swain & Watanabe, 2013, p. 3219). This is what pupils in telecollaboration exchanges do when they express and discuss their opinions concerning a certain topic. In some English lingua franca sessions they are, for instance, required to discuss whether new technologies and social media are a blessing or a curse. It is most noticeable that in all chat and video conversations this question is discussed in a highly cooperative manner (Examples 7).

ES3: Yeah. (pause) Are the new technologies, social media and communication, feels blessing or a cu <break> or a curse? (reading question)	Raises the issue: blessing or curse
DE3: I'm not sure, because I see a lot of kids in first grade or so with their iPhone and it's bigger than their own head and (ES3 laughs) I think that's pretty crazy!	Argues for curse
ES3: Yeah, yeah. Like I see <break> Yeah, like children they are like eleven years old and they have an iPhone, they have an IPad, they have a computer, I mean at that age I I didn't even know how that worked, so	Agrees and elaborates the argument
DE3: Yes! And that's <break> Well, or six years old, I know a six year old pors person, a kid and he asked me if I have Clash of Clans and WhatsApp and I was, whoa, in your age I I didn't even know that those things existed ** so that's <break> I think that's a	Agrees and elaborates the argument

bit a curse, because they don't play outside, or do anything but twittering and sending messages and well, yeah.	
ES3: Yeah	Agrees
ES3: I I think it's great to have like (?)the(?) phone, computer to	Starts arguing for blessing
DE3: What?	Checks
ES3: What? (moves toward screen) No, I I think that it's great, but it's also that I think that nowadays everybody is al always with the phone and like too much like you <break> like you can lose like <break> I think you can <break> you have to sometimes be with your friends, not always be with the phone and talking via WhatsApp or Facebook or whatever.	Argues for a balanced view: both positive and negative
DE3: Yeah, well DE3: Yeah. Well, that's pretty much my opinion, too (laughs).	Agrees

Example 7: Collaborative dialoguing in an English lingua franca BigBlueButton conversation
(EN11_BBB3_DE3_ES3)

Rather than engaging in controversial arguments, the pupils focus on creating a common ground and a friendly, cooperative and supportive atmosphere. They try to find out what their partners think and tend to develop an argument collaboratively. Both partners contribute their opinions; they usually agree and at the same time enrich the discussion with additional aspects.

The extract from an English lingua franca chat discussion (Example 8) provides more insights into how pupils collaborate in negotiating a common ground of views and arguments: they state and substantiate their opinion ("In my opinion it's blessing because ..."), ask for their partner's opinion ("What do you think?"), show agreement (e.g. "Yes, I have exactly the same opinion"), acknowledge the partner's view and simultaneously add a new aspect ("It's very useful but ...").

15:42 DE6: Do you think nwe technologies and social media are a blessing or a curse?	Raises the issue
15:45 ES6: In my opinion it's blessing because you can communicate with the people all over the world but it's also a curse because you can be addict	Gives a balanced argument: both blessing and curse
15:46 ES6: What do you think?	Asks for opinion
15:47 DE6: Yes, I have exactly the same opinion. It's very useful but you can use it too often and became addicted.	Agrees and elaborates on negative aspects
15:48 DE6: And on the internet and with these media, there's sometimes no privacy.	elaborates on negative aspects
15:50 ES6: Yes and if you post a picture of something it belongs to the internet and you're not the owner of this picture anymore	Agrees and elaborates on negative aspects
15:51 DE6: Yes	Agrees
15:52 ES6: Yes there is no more privacy because there are other person like the owners of social media who can see all the things you are writing that's	Agrees and elaborates on negative aspects

why I think that if you write something on the internet it's not really private	
15:54 DE6: Yes and so many information about the people are saved on the internet and are sometimes sold to companies.	Agrees and elaborates on negative aspects
15:56 DE6: I meant saved	Corrects her spelling
15:58 ES6: YES and like then when you want to work for example in the big companies there are people who are paid to search different information which is compromise on you if you know what i mean	Agrees and elaborates on negative aspects
15:59 DE6: What do you want to say? I don't understand it	Signals non-understanding and asks for clarification
16:02 ES6: In the big companies there are people who are paid to dig some dirt up on you like some old photos which you posted on facebook or whatever when you were 8	Rephrases
16:05 DE6: Yes, now I understand. This isn't right because it shouldn't be important for your job what you posted when you were a teenager.	Confirms understanding and signals agreement
16:08 DE6: I also think that some people use the new technologies too often. For example, 3 years ago almost nobody in my class had a good smartphone. Now on my school there are many younger people who already have iPhones and in the breaks they don't play like we did, they use their smartphones and if they talk, they talk about things on their phones.	Elaborates on negative aspects
16:12 ES6: I understand you because I had my first phone when I was like 8 or something and it was a very small phone without even bluetooth and know I see kids which are 6 years old and they already have iPhones	Agrees and elaborates
16:14 DE6: I also had a very simple phone when I was younger	Agrees and elaborates

Example 8: Collaborative dialoguing in an English lingua franca chat conversation
 (EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5)

Here are some of the phrases pupils used throughout the lingua franca conversations for confirming and agreeing or for adding their own opinion or view, e.g.

(examples from English lingua franca conversations)

“Yes, I think so too” (DE3)

“Yeah. Well, that’s pretty much my opinion as well” (DE3)

“Well, I agree with you” (DE2)

“Yeah, but I don’t think ...” (DE2)

“Yeah, but scientists have found.” (ES2)

(examples from German lingua franca conversations)

“*Ja.* Ja. Ja, ich auch. Ich denke, also,” (FR1) [=

„Ja, ich verstehe dich.“ (NL1)

„...also ja ich bin mit dich einverstanden“ (FR1)

„Ja. Ja, ich *verstehe. * Ja, ich bin einverstanden und ja.“ (FR2)

„Ich versteh das, aber findest du, dass ...“ (NL1)

In all these lingua franca telecollaboration exchanges, the atmosphere is open, friendly, and supportive. As was shown above, pupils want to find out what their partners like, dislike or think and helped each other with comprehension or production problems.

Openness and curiosity are particularly reflected in **personal topics** beyond the assigned task. Pupils ask questions aiming to start an exchange of interpersonal information and to get to know each other. The questions they raise usually address topics around school, hobbies and interests or family, e.g.

“How old are you?” (ES2), “What do you do in the holidays or vacation?” (DE2), “What do you do in your free time?” (DE2), “Do you have brothers and sisters?” (DE2), “Have you been to America?” (DE2), “So where do you live in Germany?” (ES3), “Do you like watching movies?” (DE3), “What is your favourite movie” (ES3), “When do you have to go to school?” (DE3), “Do you do any sports or something?” (DE3), etc.

Because of a rather low level of conflict potential, these questions provide the conversation partners with the opportunity to talk about themselves, their own experiences, preferences and opinions in a friendly, open and uncompetitive atmosphere. Any touch of disagreement is generally embedded in a broader perspective that makes it possible for both pupils to find themselves understood and acknowledged. Focus is thus very much on trying to establish an intercultural “third space” (Kramsch, 2009), in which views and arguments from different cultural “camps” are integrated and balanced out rather than placed against each other. In this respect, telecollaboration exchanges in TILA emphasize the interactional quality of pupils’ intercultural competence.

The generally relaxed and supportive atmosphere is also manifest in pupils’ expression of empathy, compliment and encouragement as essential ingredients of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). In the following English lingua franca conversation in BigBlueButton (EN11_BBB2_DE2_ES2), the German pupil DE2 talks about a competition he is involved in concerning the development of a robot for soccer. The Spanish pupil ES2 reacts on the social level by wishing him luck and ensuring him that he will be successful:

ES2: I mean, I haven’t idea for this but the only thing I can say is <break> I wish you a luck <break> to be lucky (laughs). I hope you win.

[...]

DE2: But I don’t I don’t think so because the robot works since week so.

ES2: Well, don’t don’t think that you are going to lose. It is a bad way to win to lose sorry.

DE2: (unclear).

ES2: Just think maybe we are not the best but trying to do our best. This is what you must be thinking.

*DE2: *Yeah.**

A similar interactional quality can be observed in an English lingua franca conversation in OpenSim between a boy from Turkey and a girl from Bulgaria (ENx_OpenSim_ELF_BG1_TR1). The Turkish boy is very anxious about an exam he is going to take and the girl expresses that she sympathises with him and encourages him (“I think you’re going to do great.”). He accepts the encouragement, thanks her (“I hope, thank you.”) and confesses that it is very hard for him (“it’s so hard for me especially”):

TR1: Ja I'm I'm going to.. have exams on November next year[overlap BG1: uff], and as I said I'm so nervous about IB and we have another exam about our national education system

BG1: I think you're going to do great.

TR1: I hope, thank you. And in fact it's the first year for me about economics, we have economic lesson too, and it's so hard for me especially.

In a passage from an English lingua franca conversation in BigBlueButton (EN11_BBB4_DE4_ES4), the German pupil enthusiastically expresses her compliments on her Spanish partner’s achievement in a math competition:

*ES4: I did a competition of maths like a an exam to like 7,000 of people *(unclear)* I was into the two 205th from 7,000.*

*DE4: *Whoa!* That's awesome.*

The following example from an English lingua franca chat conversation (EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5) shows a Spanish pupil expressing her admiration for her German partner’s ability to draw:

DE5: I don't use facebook. But I have instagram

DE5: I only post my drawings.

ES5: Wow you draw! i envy you because im the worst..like really and what do you draw?

This chat example is an exception. Generally, the chat conversations analyzed in this study tended to be quite “unemotional” compared to the BigBlueButton conversations. Sometimes messages might even come across a bit “rude” like in the opening phase of the English lingua franca chat session EN11_Chat1_DE5_ES5, in which the Spanish pupil ES5 was two minutes late and the German pupil DE5 rather dryly comments with “finally”.

19:14 DE5: hello?

19:16 ES5: hi!

19:17 DE5: finally!

19:17 ES5: yes sorry!

In this connection, it should be noted, however, that in chat conversations it is usually more difficult than in oral or video communication to add appropriate nuances of e.g. politeness to the meaning one wants to convey. Even though young people are used to instant messaging in everyday life (mostly in their native language), the example above shows that pupils need to be made aware of how they might

be perceived in the target language and which means of expressions they could use to make sure not to offend their partner. In the case of chat communication, an appropriate use of emoticons is certainly part of the answer. Pupils familiarity with the more powerful emoticon/emoji support in WhatsApp and other social media tools might have prevented them from using less attractive punctuation marks as required in a Moodle chat.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

The following extract from an English lingua franca conversation in Skype between a Turkish boy and three girls from Bulgaria and Portugal (ENx_Skype_TR1_BG2_BG3_PT1) aptly concludes this study about the pedagogic value of intercultural telecollaboration. In their conversation, the pupils talk about using Facebook and Skype. The Turkish boy points out that online communication tools facilitate intercultural communication. He emphasizes that without these tools they would not be able to communicate with each other right now. While expressing concerns about communicating with strangers in Facebook, they all agree that a school project would offer a safe environment for getting in touch with peers from other countries.

*TR1: In in fact as I..things as like Facebook make us more international and ah..**by using them we can know another cultures. As like we do we are doing now.***

BG2: I don't think that helps us so much to get to know another cultures, because most of the people don't accept people they didn't know or if they do.. you can't learn so much about anybody's culture through Facebook by watching photos or playing games.

*TR1: I I [unclear/probably "mean"] not by photos or playing games. I mean to communicate with others. For example **if there is no Skype or Facebook I couldn't talk with BG3, or PT1 or you***

BG2 [laughs] But it's really risky, you can't be sure that the person with this picture [overlap by PT1] in real life is actually this person, so I wouldn't risk

TR1: I dunno

BG3: hm, yeah but actually I have recen...when I have spoken with TR1 for the first time..that was one of project so we didn't know each other, but we started to communicate and later hm to to call and to make discussion.

*BG2: **But this is different because it's project..it's not..just chatting on Facebook***

BG3: Ja maybe ..maybe you have right.

Telecollaboration exchanges are ideally suited to facilitate foreign language contact between peers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Pupils engage in communicative interactions they can authenticate for their own needs and purposes beyond school. And most importantly for intercultural competence development, they pay attention to one another and cooperatively explore a common intercultural ground ("third space") of views, opinions and attitudes.

7 COMPARING NEGOTIATION OF MEANING IN INTERCULTURAL TELECOLLABORATION EXCHANGES UNDER ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA AND TANDEM CONDITIONS

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7.1 SUMMARY

Research objectives

- To analyse aspects of the negotiation of meaning in synchronous telecollaboration tasks in BBB.
- Our analysis will focus on the importance of the students' cultural background when interacting with peers and we will observe differences such as the provision of feedback when comparing tandem interaction between native and non-native speakers and interaction in the context of English as a lingua franca.
- We will also pay special attention to the differences, if any, in verbal strategies in the negotiation of meaning between non-native speakers of English as a lingua franca and native and non-native speakers of English in a tandem situation.

Approach:

- Analysis of a sample recording of interactions between non-native speakers using English as a lingua franca
- Analysis of a sample recording of tandem interactions between native and non-native speakers of English

Findings:

We have found no conclusive evidence that, at least in our small sample, the negotiation of meaning is very different when we compare tandem and lingua franca constellations. Similar strategies are used in both the tandem and the lingua franca constellations.

7.2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The main objective of this research report is to describe the analysis of the negotiation of meaning found in exchanges between students in synchronous tasks in the BBB environment comparing the similarities and/or differences (if any) between the students' discourse in the case of lingua franca situations and in tandems.

We have analysed the video recording of one a complete session between where Spanish and German students engage communicate first in Spanish and then in English. We have transcribed the conversations between these students and analysed it in order to identify the different ways that meaning is negotiated. We offer the transcription of the episode in an annex at the end of the report.

7.3 INTRODUCTION

The TILA project involves several tandem partnerships and, interestingly, several lingua franca ones too. Tandems, as is well known, involve students with different mother tongues taking turns to learn each other's mother tongue. However, in TILA we have several partnerships that are neither tandems nor lingua franca constellations. For instance, we have groups made up of Spanish students learning English and German or Dutch students learning Spanish. Of course, the German or Dutch students are not native speakers of English but their level of proficiency is much higher than the Spanish students' and so they act as *de facto* native speakers. In the partnership we are analysing here the students are from a Spanish secondary school and a German Gymnasium. The students are sixteen years of age.

7.4 THE USE OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION AND TELECOLLABORATION IN L2 LEARNING

Following Lee (2001, p. 232), it can be said that "online interactive exchange offers learners many opportunities to use the target language to negotiate both meaning and form in a social context that is crucial for second language acquisition (SLA)". It is precisely this type of interactive exchange that we find in the context of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and more particularly in Telecollaboration (TC). We agree with Lee (2001) that this type of synchronous electronic communication can provide learner with the opportunity to receive input and to produce output in the context of negotiation of meaning (these aspects are dealt with in section 1.5). The ultimate goal would be to facilitate the creation of collaborative conversations on the part of the students while promoting the use of a series of communication strategies to guarantee interaction. We believe that CMC can encourage learners to participate and to learn from each other in an environment whose main characteristic would be the provision of scaffolding allowing students to produce sufficiently complex language structures.

The importance of CMC and TC is reflected in the significant increase in the number of studies in this field. Several of them have paid attention to interaction online (Hewitt & Brett, 2007; Su, Bonk, Magjuka, Xiaojing, & Lee, 2005). We can also find quite a large number of studies focusing on intercultural aspects of communication and the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2003, 2007, Ware & Kramsch, 2005). Other studies are devoted to an interactionist perspective and aim at analyzing participant interactions (Blake, 2000; Blake and Zyzik, 2003; Kötter, 2003; Smith, 2003, 2005; Sotillo, 2000). Not so many studies have focused on language form (Ware & Cañado, 2007) or corrective feedback and the focus on form in telecollaboration (Iwasaki & Oliver, 2003; Lee, 2006; Sotillo, 2005; Ware & O'Dowd, 2008). Even less attention has been paid to the adequateness of the use of conversation logs as a teaching tool for learners (Schwienhorst, 2003; Sotillo, 2005).

It is therefore evident that further research is needed in this area and that studies that can shed light on aspects such as the negotiation of meaning among participants, corrective feedback and interaction are particularly necessary. Not enough attention has been paid to establishing an empirical relationship between measurements of learning and online learning environments that promote interaction and this is probably because learning is an aspect which is very difficult to quantify. Furthermore, we need to identify the quality of negotiation of meaning in the completion of tasks carried out in a video-conferencing environment and the relevant factors (for instance, interactional modification and

modified output) that can promote focus on form and that may happen in those learning environments (Wang, 2006).

7.5 NEGOTIATION OF MEANING AND INTERACTION

Following a growing body of research (Gass & Varonis, 1985, 1986; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Pica, 1994; Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun, 1993; Scarella & Higa, 1981; Varonis & Gass, 1985a; 1985b), it can be stated that the type of interaction identified as “negotiation for meaning” provides optimal conditions for language acquisition because it provides learners with the opportunity to produce both input and modified output (Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaitz, 2002: 282). It is a common claim that the process of input, including both comprehensible and non-comprehensible, promotes comprehension and facilitates L2 learning and there have been several attempts to explain how this happens (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1996; White, 1987). According to Lee (2001), “receiving input itself without negotiated interaction is not sufficient. Learners must have the opportunity to take note of particular parts of linguistic structure and make an attempt to provide input modification”. What is more, if we take a look at the output perspective, we must acknowledge the fundamental role of modified output together with negative feedback (Mackey, 1995; Schmidt, 1994; Tomlin & Villa, 1994). Pushed output can help learners to acquire the L2, particularly in the case of syntactic structures (Swain, 1995).

If we take this theory of negotiation of meaning as a central argument which posits that interactional modifications make input more comprehensible and thus facilitate L2 acquisition, we must now find out how this can be carried out in distance learning environments. We will probably see that online learning settings can provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning as often as or even more frequently than what happens in traditional classroom settings. Therefore the use of new technologies can help recreate the right environment for such interactional modifications to take place.

Regarding the type of model that we consider appropriate for learner interaction, we have chosen the one proposed by Varonis & Gass (1985b, p. 74):

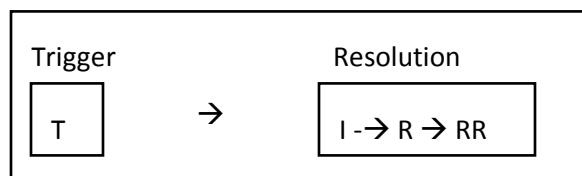


Figure 1: Proposed model for non-understandings (Varonis & Gass, 1985b, p. 74)

According to the authors, this is a two-part model consisting of a trigger and a resolution. The resolution consists, in turn, of an indicator, a response and a reaction to the response. Therefore, the trigger is the utterance or part of an utterance on the part of one of the speakers that results in some indication of non-understanding on the part of the hearer. The hearer, then, can either ignore the trigger or react to it somehow. Then, the resolution, as stated before, normally consists of an indicator, or an utterance on the part of the hearer that stops the horizontal progression of the conversation and starts the downward progression, the response, or the speaker's response to the indicator, and finally the reaction to the response, which is an optional element.

This model has been applied to numerous studies of conversation analysis and it is particularly common in classroom discourse analysis. It is our belief that the negotiation of meaning that arises when a problem is posed in an interaction, is at the heart of the process of learning a foreign language facilitating a wide variety of strategies, such as comprehension checks, clarification requests, repetitions, reformulations, among others, that can guarantee successful understanding and mutual comprehension.

7.6 COMPUTER-ASSISTED CLASSROOM INTERACTION

According to Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaitz (2002, p. 280), “[a] few studies that have examined computer-assisted-classroom discussions (CACDs) suggest that the electronic environment provides optimal opportunities for language development (Beauvois, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996)”. What is more, there are other studies that have highlighted the advantages of instruction centred on the learner and the particular benefits of small group work since it provides opportunities for the learners to engage in discursive moves such as clarification requests, discussion initiations, interruptions, competition for the floor and joking. This is something that can be easily found in telecollaboration, where pair work and group work are usually the norm, and some examples of the use of these strategies are given in the results section. Online environments have been found to offer the potential to change the traditional roles performed by teachers and learners and to provide opportunities for learner output.

In this context, the choice of tasks is essential for the facilitation of this type of interaction and therefore task design should be given the necessary importance in order to facilitate negotiation of meaning which would in turn result in acquisition of the target language. In our project, task design and implementation is considered of upmost importance. We follow a three-phase design model partly comparable to that proposed by Willis (1996):

1. Pre-Task

- a) Introduction to topic and task
- b) Exposure to real language
- c) Use of texts, and activities with those texts

2. Task Cycle

- a) Task
- b) Planning
 - i. draft and rehearse
 - ii. teacher helps with language
 - iii. emphasis on clarity, organization, accuracy
- c) Report

3. Language Focus

- a) Analysis
- b) Practice

Tasks that are carefully designed and that can become a challenge for our students will probably lead to motivation and will at the same time provide the right setting for interactional strategies to be used more effectively by learners.

Finally, we must take into account Walsh's (2002) perspective that points to the direction that we should maximize learner involvement in order to promote second language acquisition through the choice of language made by teachers. It is his view that teachers can either construct or obstruct learner participation in face-to-face classroom communication. We cannot think of a better way to let learners cooperate and collaborate in search of learner involvement than to provide them with adequate tasks in an adequate setting for them to engage in negotiation of meaning and this can be very effectively be done through TC. According to Walsh (2002, p. 10-13) some of the features that characterize teacher's language use which facilitates learner involvement are: direct error correction, content feedback, checking for confirmation, extended wait-time and scaffolding. In the results section, we will offer some examples of how the teachers and students in the transcripts engage in learning involvement and negotiation of meaning making use of some of these techniques.

7.7 METHODOLOGY

Our methodology takes the form of qualitative analysis in which a complete transcription of one of the telecollaborative exchanges has been examined. The triggers in the transcription were located and they can be found, together with the different types of strategies used as resolutions, in the annex. Although our analysis provides interesting insights into the differences between the two types of language constellations, further quantitative analysis of other exchanges that took place in the context of the TILA Project is required to compare results and to offer more substantial statistics.

We have studied a specific interaction where both lingua franca and tandem situations occur. The interaction occurred between Spanish and German students. In the first part of the transcript the students use the target language of the German students which is at the same time the native language of the Spanish ones. Therefore, the Spanish students acted as experts providing possible comprehensible input to the German learners. In the second part of the interaction, English is used by both groups of students and thus we find an example of the use of a lingua franca although the German students are much more proficient in this language than the Spanish ones. We observed the similarities and differences in the students' use of strategies to negotiate meaning in both situations.

The main methodology of our study has involved several steps:

1. designing and implementing an adequate task for our students that would promote interaction and participation.
2. video- and audio-recording participant talk during task implementation
3. transcribing the talk
4. coding and examining the instances of negotiation
5. comparing both situations

We were mainly interested in finding processes related to assistance (co-construction and other-correction), self-correction and encouragements to continue or continuers, using Foster & Ohta's (2005) terminology, which is also related to Walsh's (2002) teacher's construction of learner participation (including direct error correction, content feedback, checking for confirmation, extended wait-time and scaffolding) as stated above.

7.8 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

When both parts of the transcription are analysed, the differences between both of them are obvious with regard to who is in control of the flow of discourse. With respect to the initial part of the session in which Spanish is the target language, S1, who speaks for 95% of the time, takes the initiation although the reasonably good level of the German student's Spanish allows them to participate quite interactively and they are capable of understanding and answering most of his questions. Nevertheless, it is S1 who takes it upon himself to be the guide throughout the interaction and also tries to maintain the flow of communication by reformulating, repeating and clarifying all the utterances that he thinks might be causing a problem. He attempts to guarantee that the German students understand everything he says and uses repetition and a slower tempo as techniques to facilitate comprehension quite often throughout his intervention. However, in the second part of the transcript, when the Spanish student faces the situation where his English is not good enough to understand everything the German students are asking him, he finds himself at a disadvantage and loses the floor to a certain extent. It is then the German girls turn to reformulate and repeat their questions so that he can understand, especially G1. There are also cases of misunderstanding in this second part and the German students cannot help laughing at the Spanish students (albeit in a well-meaning way) and their efforts, on one of the occasions, to make the second Spanish speaker realise that he had misunderstood the question are fruitless.

In the first part, the Spanish student uses different techniques when a trigger occurs: mainly repetition, reformulation, translation and expansion. He also uses strategies to avoid problems in communication when he thinks a trigger could occur. In those cases he uses confirmation check, topic continuation, repetition and translation. It is noticeable here how the students use some of these as strategies to solve a problem when it has already occurred or as a technique to prevent possible misunderstandings.

We have also observed that linguistic mistakes are not corrected by a peer unless it is seen as an obstacle for communication. We see that the German teacher does give some feedback, which is normally accepted by the German students so that we see that uptake is quite frequent in those cases. There are also a few instances of peer-feedback that take the form of recasts:

S1: Eh... ¿Cuántos años tienes XXXX? ¿...XXXX?

(S1: Eh... How old are you, XXXX? ...XXXX?)

G1: ¿Sí? [TRIGGER]

(G1: Yes?)

S1: ¿Cuántos años tienes? [REPETITION]

(S1: ¿How old are you?)

G1: Tengo *diesciséis* años. ¿Y tú?

(G1: I'm sixteen. And you?)

S1: Dieciséis también. Tenemos la misma edad... Dieciséis años. [PEER-FEEDBACK: RECAST]

(S1: Sixteen too. We're the same age. Sixteen....)

On one of the occasions, peer-feedback serves as reinforcement after teacher feedback has been provided:

S1: XXXX (name of G1), ¿cuándo es tu cumpleaños? Tu cumpleaños. [REPETITION]

(S1: XXXX (name of G1), when is your birthday? Your birthday.)

G1: Mi cumpleaños es, es en el *ventiocho de diciembre*. [ERROR]

(G1: My birthday, es en el *the twenty-eighth of Desember*.)

GT: Diciembre. [TEACHER FEEDBACK]

(GT: December.)

S1: Diciembre. [PEER-FEEDBACK]

(S1: December.)

S1: Diciembre. Muy bien. [REPETITION OF PEER-FEEDBACK AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT]

(S1: December. Very good.)

We can also find instances of scaffolding where the Spanish student tries to help his German counterpart when she has a problem expressing herself in Spanish. Furthermore, he praises her formulation or checks comprehension once she overcomes her problem and produces a correct utterance:

(She shows them the picture).

S1: ¿Cómo se llaman?

(S1: ¿What are their names?)

GT: Explica quién es. Quienes son.

(GT: Tell them who it is. Who they are.)

G1: Eh... Son...

(G1: Eh... They are...)

S1: Cómo se llaman. [SCAFFOLDING]

(S1: What their names are.)

G1: Son XXXX y XXXX. Eh... Son mis amigas y estamos *a* Roma *a* la foto.

(G1: They are XXXX y XXXX. Eh... They are my friends *at* Rome and we are *at* Rome *at* the photo.)

S1: Muy bien. [PRAISING/CONFIRMATION]

(S1: Very good.)

Another significant characteristic of this episode is the use of humour by the Spanish student. We believe this is partly because it is part of his nature, he probably wants to impress the German students, but this resource also acts as a way to keep the flow of conversation going and as a technique to maintain the attention among the participants. Here is an example of this:

S1: XXXX (name of G1), ¿tienes alguna mascota, en tu casa?

(S1: XXXX (name of G1), do you have a pet, at home?)

G1: No, no *tiene* una mascota... ¿Y tú?

(G1: No, she doesn't have a pet... And you?)

S1: Yo tampoco, pero tengo a mi hermana, que es suficiente. [USE OF HUMOUR]

(S1: Neither do I, but I have my sister, that is enough.)

(G1 laughs).

Apart from the use of humour, we can see that the Spanish student is very willing to maintain the flow of communication using as many techniques as he can find to facilitate interaction. On some occasions, he even reprimands his classmates when they are talking and/or laughing because he can't hear the German student. He also goes back to the previous topic after an interruption by one of the German students because he wants to finish his utterance where he praises the good use of Spanish of the German girls.

We must admit that sometimes his efforts go a bit too far and on a particular occasion he uses different techniques to maintain the flow of communication where a trigger has not even occurred and the German student makes him see that she had understood from the beginning:

S1: Vale, pero bien. XXXX (name of G1), ¿cuántos años tiene, cuántos años tiene tu hermano? Tu hermano. Edad. Años. [REPETITION-EXPANSION-REFORMULATION]

(S1: Ok, but yeah. XXXX (name of G1), how old is, how old is your brother? Your brother. Age. Years.)

G1: Sí, comprendo. Tiene *vientidós* años. [THE GERMAN STUDENT MAKES IT OBVIOUS TO THE SPANISH STUDENT THAT HIS EFFORTS TO MAKE HIMSELF UNDERSTOOD IN THE PREVIOUS UTTERANCE WENT TOO FAR. SHE WANTS HIM TO KNOW THAT SHE HAD UNDERSTOOD AND THAT SHE DID NOT NEED SO MANY EXPLANATIONS. SHE REALISES HE IS DELIBERATELY EXAGGERATING]

(G1: SYes, I understand. He is twenty-two.)

It is clear from the transcript that the students are the real protagonists of the interaction and that the German teacher's interventions are not very frequent. He only intervenes at the beginning to ask Spanish students to speak more slowly, then to solve a technical problem related with sound, to reprimand them on the use of an inappropriate photo and to correct a couple of linguistic mistakes. We do not believe his interventions are disruptive and the students are able to maintain the conversation without much help from the teacher. However, we must highlight a particular mediation by the teacher:

(Teacher speaks German with his students).

GT: XXXX está buscando sus preparaciones. Os quiere contar algo sobre su familia. [TOPIC SHIFT INTRODUCED BY THE TEACHER. IT REFERS TO THE PRE-TASK]

(XXXX is looking for the stuff she has prepared. She wants to tell you something about her family.)

S1: Vale, muy bien. [CONFIRMATION]

(S1: OK, very good.)

Here we can observe how the teacher helps students with topic shift and resorts to information that they have previously prepared in the preparatory phase of the task. We assume that he wants them to

use the vocabulary and structures that they have worked on during the pre-task. This serves both as scaffolding technique and as topic shift.

If we turn our attention to the second part of the episode, we will observe that the Spanish student loses the floor here and due to his problems with the English language he cannot be in command anymore. We find that some of the same techniques and strategies employed in the first part are also used here, but by the German girls, like for instance, repetition and confirmation checks.

However, the efforts on the part of the Spanish student to scaffold the conversation are worth mentioning here. It seems that as his English is not good enough to ask all the questions as he did in the first part, he now asks the German students to ask him more questions. This might be one way of maintaining some sort of control over the discourse:

G2. Sorry (they laugh) [GERMAN STUDENTS MAKE FUN OF THE S1 BECAUSE HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A SIMPLE QUESTION]

S1. Ehm, ask me, please. [SCAFFOLDING-TOPIC CONTINUATION]

G1. What are your hobbies?

S1. My hobbies ... eh, I like play eh basketball and football. And tennis. Other sports I like it.

We can tell that the students engage in active conversation and that they enjoy the topic because they use different strategies to keep it going and there is no topic shift. At a certain point, you could even say that the teenagers are flirting and they are very interested in finding out if each of them has a girl-friend and a boy-friend respectively. G1 says that she is not beautiful enough to have a boyfriend and then admits when S1 says his friend thinks she is beautiful that she was only fishing for that particular compliment.

S1. Eh, eh, my friend has a question (friend lifts finger) that is if you, eh. Do you have a boyfriend?

G1. Yes. (smiles) I don't (puts on glum face)

S1. Why?

G1. I think I am not beautiful enough (smiles – friend smiles too).

S1. Ok. (looks at friend)

G1. Laughs

S1. He thinks (points to friend) that you are beautiful. [FLIRTATIOUS BEHAVIOUR]

G1. Thank you. That is what I wanted to hear (smiling) [GERMAN STUDENT REACTS TO FLIRTING-NEGOTIATION OF MEANING]

This shows how they negotiate meaning and how they help to build the conversation in a collaborative way.

It is also worth mentioning that the German students have a better command of English and they can see that the Spanish students are not as good as they are. They poke fun at some of the mistakes they

make and they even try to point out to S2 that he has made a mistake, but as he doesn't seem to understand, G1 has to switch to Spanish to highlight his error:

G1. How old are you?

S2. What (S1 leaves) [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G1. How old are you? [REPETITION]

S2. I'm fine. [TRIGGER-THE SPANISH STUDENT MISUNDERSTANDS THE QUESTIONS AND GIVES A DIFFERENT ANSWER]

(the German girls laugh. S1 comes back with a cloth over his head)

G1. ¿Cuántos años tienes? (How old are you?)

S2. He says he lives in Morocco. [USE OF HUMOUR]

G1. I asked how old are you. Not how are you (laughs). [CLARIFICATION-EXPLANATION OF MISTAKE]

S2. What? [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G1. . ¿Cuántos años tienes? [TRANSLATION]

S2. Dieciséis. (Sixteen) [THEY SWITCH TO SPANISH AS HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND]

Finally, we would like to highlight the fact that due to the nature of this part of the exchange, where both groups of students are using a foreign language to communicate, there are more linguistic mistakes (most of them made by the Spanish students). However, we cannot find much feedback for those mistakes. The Spanish teachers are busy looking after several students to take an active part in the proceedings—they can be seen moving around the classroom in the background. The German teacher does not intervene, probably because the flow of communication is guaranteed thanks to the students' efforts to maintain the interaction, and the mistakes do not seem to obstruct comprehension. This might be due to the fact that neither the German nor the Spanish students' vocabulary and structures are very sophisticated. Here the probably causes of interruptions during the discourse are pronunciation problems.

7.9 CONCLUSIONS

We have not found any conclusive evidence that the negotiation of meaning is very different during the lingua franca and tandem constellations that we have analysed. However, in both cases one set of students is vastly superior to the other. This would be expected in a true tandem with native speakers of both target languages but here, although during the Spanish session we are dealing with a true tandem situation, in which the Spanish are native speakers and the Germans are non-native, in the lingua franca interactions the German students act as de facto native speakers when English is spoken. Normally one would expect two sides of a lingua franca to be at more or less the same level – this was at least attempted during the planning of the TILA sessions. However, as the German students' English is much better than their Spanish counterparts, we actually have something akin to a Spanish/English tandem

constellation. We hypothesise that, in fact, many lingua franca interactions would probably involve students with different levels of English, French, German, Spanish, or whatever the lingua franca was. This would mean that they would be in the final analysis rather akin to tandems.

It is clear that a much larger corpus is needed to discover whether there are differences between tandems and lingua franca interactions. This is not only true because lingua franca constellations may involve students with very different proficiency levels but also because of the fact that we may be dealing with interactions involving people with very different goals – not always purely academic – as we have seen our very small sample. The gender factor, especially considering the age of the learners we have been looking at, cannot be ignored nor can other factors such as ethnic origin or social class.

Annex with Transcription

Transcript of a telecollaborative exchange belonging to a partnership between German and Spanish students

Spanish in tandem:

S1: ¿Qué tal?

(G1 talks to G2 in German and they laugh).

S1: Hola.

G1: Hola.

S1: Hola... ¿Qué tal?

(G1 has problems with the connection and the sound does not reach her)

S1: ¿Cómo te llamas?

G1: Me llamo XXXX, ¿y tú?

S1 Yo XXXX y él XXXX.

G1: ¡Hola! ...Esta es XXXX.

S1: ¿En qué instituto estudiáis? Es que están gritando y no escucho. (refers to other students in the classroom who are not seen on camera)

G1: No comprendo. [TRIGGER]

S1: ¡Eh! ¿Os podéis callar ya de una vez...? Parecéis críos de prescolar tío...

G1: ?¿

S1: A ver, eh... ¿en qué instituto estudiáis? [REPETITION]

(G1 talks to G2 in German).

S1: ¿Me entiendes? ¿...No? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

(G1 and G2 laugh).

S1: ¿Se escucha bien? ¿Se escucha bien...? ¿Se es-cu-cha bien? (splits the words into syllables) [REPETITION]

S1: ¿Puedes escucharme? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G1: Eh, sí.

S1: Eh... ¿Me podéis repetir vuestros nombres, por favor?

(G1 is laughing).

S1: Va, jeh! Vuestros nombres, por favor. [REPETITION AND REFORMULATION]

G1: Yo me llamo XXXX y esta es XXXX... XXXX.

S1: XXXX y XXXX, ¿no? [CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

S1: XXXX y XXXX. [REPETITION]

G1: Sí.

S1: Eh... ¿Cuántos años tienes XXXX? ¿...XXXX?

G1: ¿Sí? [TRIGGER]

S1: ¿Cuántos años tienes? [REPETITION]

G1: Tengo *diesciséis* años. ¿Y tú?

S1: Dieciséis también. Tenemos la misma edad... Dieciséis años. [PEER-FEEDBACK: RECAST]

S1: XXXX (name of G2), ¿cuántos años tienes?

G1: Eh... Ella no *puede oír a vosotros*.

S1: Tu compañera. Cuantos años tiene.

G1: Eh.. dies... iséis... Tiene dieciséis años.

S1: Vale, muy bien, perfecto. Tenemos todos la misma edad.

G1: Sí.

S1: ¿Practicáis algún tipo de deporte? Futbol, baloncesto...

G1: No comprendo. [TRIGGER]

S1: Eh, do you practice any sport? ...Algún deporte. [TRANSLATION]

G1: Sí (laughs). Bailo y hago (name of sport in German). ¿Sabes qué es? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

S1: No, no sé qué es. [TRIGGER]

G2: Es una disciplina deportiva con *veinti* o diez piragüistas, un piloto e una *camboa*.

S1: No comprendo... Tu XXXX (name of G2), ¿qué deporte practicas? [TRIGGER AND CONTINUATION]
(The teacher comes and talks to G1).

S1: ¿XXXX (name of G2)...?

(G1 is speaking to the teacher).

GT: Ok. Un poco más lento, ¿ah? Que no son hispanohablantes. [THE GERMAN TEACHER RECOMMENDS NATIVE SPANISH STUDENT TO SPEAK MORE SLOWLY]

S1: Vale, vale. Perdón. [SPANISH STUDENT ACCEPTS ADVISE AND APOLOGIZES]

S1 ¿Tu compañera practica algún tipo de deporte?

G1: Eh... No lo sé.

S1: No sabes...

S1: ¿En qué curso estás? ¿Qué estudias? Curso. [CONTINUATION] [THE LACK OF ANSWER IS A NEW TRIGGER]

S1: Level... Level of your studies. [TRANSLATION]

GT: ¿Qué te gusta en la escuela? ¿Qué materia te gusta? [CONTINUATION]

13.48: Nicole: Eh... Me gusta el español.

G1: Español. Muy bien. Muy bien.

GT: (Asks in German, then in Spanish) ¿Tienes alguna foto? ¿Sí? A ver, busca alguna foto. Un momento, ¿vale? One sec. Nicole va a buscar alguna foto y *la os va a enseñar*.

S1: Vale muy bien.

(They speak in German).

GT: Ok. Tiene unas fotos de sus... ¿mascotas? No sé... ¿No? ¿De la familia?

G1: De mis amigos.

GT: De sus amigas.

(She shows them the picture).

S1: ¿Cómo se llaman?

GT: Explica quién es. Quienes son.

G1: Eh... Son...

S1: Cómo se llaman. [SCAFFOLDING]

G1: Son XXXX y XXXX. Eh... Son mis amigas y estamos a Roma a la foto.

S1: Muy bien. [PRAISING/CONFIRMATION]

S1: Qué te gusta hacer en tu tiempo libre. Qué haces en tu tiempo libre.

G1: Ah... No lo sé. Voy con mis amigas a *parties*... [TRANSLATION]

S1: In the disco? [HE SWICHES TO ENGLISH AFTER HER TRANSLATION]

G1: Mi amiga Anika va así.

GT: Aquí. [TEACHER FEEDBACK]

G1: Aquí. [STUDENT UPTAKE]

G3: ¿Hola?

S1: ¿Cómo te llamas?

G3: Me llamo XXXX, ¿y tú? [TRIGGER]

S1: Tú ya sé que te llamas XXXX. Tu compañera. [EXPLANATION AND REFORMULATION]

S1: A ver, eh. A qué... ¿En qué curso estás? ¿Qué estudiáis? [CONTINUATION]

G3: Estudiamos inglés.

G1: Estudiamos mucho.

S1: ¿Sí? Sois muy inteligentes.

S1: ¿Habla más despacio? ¿Queréis que hable más despacio? ...Slowly? [TRANSLATION]

G1: ¿Qué es despacio? [TRIGGER]

S1: ¿Quieres que hable más despacio yo? [REPETITION-EXPANSION]

G3: ¿Qué significa des...pacio? [GERMAN STUDENT ASKS GERMAN TEACHER]

GT: ¿Despacio? (He explains in German). [TEACHER FEEDBACK]

S1: Vale. Eh... ¿De qué nación, nacionalidad eres? ¿De qué país? [REFORMULATION-EXPANSION]

G1: Soy alemana.

G3: Soy alemana también.

S1: Muy bien. ¿Dónde vives? ¿En qué ciudad alemana vives? ¿En qué ciudad alemana vives? [REPETITION]

G1: Eh... Vivemos en (name of the city). [ERROR]

S1: No lo he entendido, pero sí. [POSSIBLY, USE OF HUMOUR OR IRONY]

G3: Es en el sur oeste. [ERROR]

S1: Nosotros dos somos de un pueblo de Valencia. Sagunto se llama. En España. Sagunto. [REPETITION]

G1: Sí, nos... Sí, oh... Eh... El profesor ha, ha dicho eso.

S1: ¿Cómo se llama tu profesor? Cómo se lla-ma tu pro-fe-sor. [REPETITION]

G3: Él llama eh... Señor Jacob. [ERROR]

S1: Señor Yago, muy bien. [CONFIRMATION]

G3: ¿Y tú?

S1: ¿Te gusta ir al cine? [IGNORES PREVIOUS QUESTION BY GERMAN STUDENT AND ASKS ANOTHER QUESTION]

G3: ¿Qué? [CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

S1: ¿Te gusta ir al cine? [REPETITION]

G1: Sí.

S1: Pero, ¿tú sola? O con, ¿o con tus amigos?

GT: ¿Os estáis riendo de las chicas? ¡Qué malo! [THE GERMAN TEACHER HIGHLIGHTS THE FACT THAT SOME SPANISH STUDENTS MIGHT BE MAKING FUN OF THE GERMAN GIRLS]

S1: No. Mis compañeros de aquí que son un poco traicioneros. [THE SPANISH STUDENTS BLAMES HIS CLASSMATES]

(Teacher speaks German with his students).

GT: Anika está buscando sus preparaciones. Os quiere contar algo sobre su familia. [TOPIC SHIFT INTRODUCED BY THE TEACHER. IT REFERS TO THE PRE-TASK]

S1: Vale, muy bien. [CONFIRMATION]

G1: ¿Tienes hermanos?

S1: Tengo una hermana. Yo tengo una hermana de veintiún años. Su nombre es XXXX. Eh, XXXX, tío, ya vale... Se llama: XXXX. [SPANISH STUDENTS REPRIMENDS ONE OF HIS CLASSMATES]

G3: Tengo una hermana *mejor*.

GT: También. También.

S1: ¿Tienes una hermana? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G3: ¿Qué? [trigger]

S1: ¿Tienes hermanos o hermanas? [REPETITION]

G3: Tengo una hermana.

G1: Y yo tengo un hermano.

GT: (speaks in German): ¿Ahora escucháis mejor o peor? [THE GERMAN TEACHER TRIES TO SOLVE PROBLEM WITH SOUND]

S1: Eh, ahora un poco peor.

S1: Vale, pero bien. XXXX (name of G1), cuántos años tiene, cuántos años tiene tu hermano? Tu hermano. Edad. Años. [REPETITION-EXPANSION-REFORMULATION]

G1: Sí, comprendo. Tiene *vientidós* años. [THE GERMAN STUDENT MAKES OBVIOUS TO THE SPANISH STUDENT THAT HIS EFFORTS TO MAKE HIMSELF UNDERSTOOD IN THE PREVIOUS UTTERANCE WENT TOO FAR. SHE WANTS HIM TO KNOW THAT SHE HAD UNDERSTOOD AND THAT SHE DID NOT NEED SO MANY EXPLANATIONS]

S1: Veintidós, muy bien. Eh, y tu hermana, ¿cuántos años tiene? Tu hermana. [REPETITION]

G3: Tiene diecinueve años.

S1: ¿Seguro? [PROBABLY USE OF HUMOUR]

G3: ¿Qué? [trigger-clarification request]

S1: Vale... Eh... XXXX (name of G1), ¿cuál es tu asignatura preferida?

G1: Eh...[trigger]

S1: Preferida. Subject. [REPETITION-TRANSLATION]

G1: Eh... Pienso que es el inglés.

S1: Inglés. [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G1: Sí. [CONFIRMATION]

S1: Es un idioma bonito el inglés. ¿No?

G1: Sí. Es muy fácil.

S1: ¿Piensas que el español es fácil?

G1: Ah... Más o menos.

S1: En mi opinión, estás hablando...

G1 (interrupts him): *Tenemos estudiar* mucho. [INTERRUPTION]

S1: Pero, en mi opinión, estáis hablando bien el in, el español, lo habláis bien. Mejor que mi compañero. [SPANISH STUDENT GOES BACK TO THE COMMENT HE WAS MAKING BEFORE THE INTERRUPTION, PRAISES THE GERMAN STUDENT AND USES HUMOUR]

(They laugh)

G1: gracias. [ACKNOWLEDGES PRAISE]

S1: XXXX (name of G1), ¿qué tipo de música te gusta? Qué tipo. De música. Te gusta. [REPETITION]

G1: Me gusta mucho... *Muchas músicas*, ah...[ERROR]

S1: ¿Rock?

G1: Escucho mucho. No... No tengo *una*... (teacher's intervention), *una grupa preferida*. [ERROR]

S1: Vale. Muy bien.

(G3 shows a photo on her mobile phone)

S1: ¿Es tu gato? ¿...Es tu gato? ¿Qué es eso? [REPETITION]

G3: Sí, ese es mi gata. [ERROR]

S1: ¿Gata? ¿Cómo se llama? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G3: Se llama X y tiene catorce años.

S1: XXXX (name of G1), ¿tienes alguna mascota, en tu casa?

G1: No, no *tiene* una mascota... ¿Y tú?

S1: Yo tampoco, pero tengo a mi hermana, que es suficiente. [USE OF HUMOUR]

(G1 laughs).

S1: Nuestros amigos. Nues-tros a-mi-gos. [REPETITION]

G1: ¿Qué se llaman? [ERROR]

GT: ¿Cómo se llaman? [TEACHER FEEDBACK]

G1 (repeats): ¿Cómo se llaman? [STUDENT UPTAKE]

S1: A ver, el chico de azul se llama XXXX, XXXX, el del medio XXXX, y el de la izquierda, XXXX, XXXX. ¿Vale? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

(No answer). [TRIGGER]

S1: A ver, ¿cuándo es tu cumpleaños? A ver...

G3: *Esto* es mi grupo de fútbol.

S1: Ah, juegas a fútbol. ¿De qué equipo eres?

G3 ¿Qué? [TRIGGER]

S1: ¿Cuál es tu club favorito? Tu club favorito de fútbol. [REFORMULATION-REPETITION]

G3: (name in German).

S1: ¿Y tu jugador favorito? ¿...Christiano Ronaldo?

G3: ¿Qué? [TRIGGER]

S1: Tu jugador favorito. XXXX: Favourite player. [REPETITION-TRANSLATION]

G3: (name in German).

G1: ¿Conoces?

S1: ¿Fernando Torres? ¿No te gusta? ¿No te gusta Fernando Torres? [SPANISH STUDENT IGNORES PREVIOUS QUESTION AND ASKS A QUESTION] [REPETITION]

G3: Es muy bonito.

S1: Ese es el equipo de fútbol de mi compañero... Repito –ñero. Corto y cambio. [USE OF HUMOUR]

S1: XXXX (name of G1), ¿cuándo es tu cumpleaños? Tu cumpleaños. [REPETITION]

G1: Mi cumpleaños es, es en el *ventiocho* de *diciembre*. [ERROR]

GT: Diciembre. [TEACHER FEEDBACK]

S1: Diciembre. [PEER-FEEDBACK]

S1: Diciembre. Muy bien. (they show the girls a rude photograph) [REPETITION OF PEER-FEEDBACK AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT]

G1: El profesor es (speaks German).

GT: Al lado. Está al lado,

S1: Está al lado.

GT: Yo lo veo todo, ¿eh? Mucho cuidado. [GERMAN TEACHERS TELLS THEM OFF. HE HIGHLIGHTS THE FACT THAT HE IS OBSERVING AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE CAREFUL]

S1: Eh... ¿qué día, de la semana, es tu preferido. Viernes, jueves... [TOPIC SHIFT]

English as a lingua franca:

S1. Now, speak English?

ST: Can you speak English now?

G1. Yes, we speak English

S1. Speak English. Ok. Now we speak English? Now? (talking to teacher) [REPETITION-CONFIRMATION CHECK]

ST. Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

S1. Ok. Now speak English. (laughs. Yo te he preguntado todo) [USE OF HUMOUR]

G1. (speaks German to teacher)

GT. (speaks to student)

S1. What do you think? What do you think about your country? Speak English now. OK? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G2. Our country is not that very beautiful (laughs)

G1. but it's much better here than in other countries ... so here aren't that much poor people so maybe it's better than in other countries but for us it's ok.

S1. Eh, eh, my friend has a question (friend lifts finger) that is if you, eh. Do you have a boyfriend?

G1. Yes. (smiles) I don't (puts on glum face)

S1. Why?

G1. I think I am not beautiful enough (smiles – friend smiles too).

S1. Ok. (looks at friend)

G1. Laughs

S1. He thinks (points to friend) that you are beautiful. [FLIRTING]

G1. Thank you. That is what I wanted to hear (smiling) [GERMAN STUDENT REACTS TO FLIRTING-NEGOTIATION OF MEANING]

S1. Oh, oh (laughs) Disco, disco!

G1. Laughs.

S1. Eh, eh, what is the name of your parents? The name of your parents. [REPETITION]

G2. Wilma and Hans.

S1. Your mother and father.

G2. Hans.

S1. What is their name?

G2. My mother's name is Wilma and my father's name is Hans.

G1. My mother's name is Timea and my father's name is Wolfgang.

S1. Ok. My mum is Begoña and my father is Tony. Ok? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G1. Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

S1. One question for me, please. Question any. Any question for me, please. [REPETITION]

G1. How old are you? I forgot.

S1. No problem, no problem. [trigger]

G1. (laughs and looks around at classmates) Do we get an answer?

S1. What [trigger]

G1. (talk to each other in German)

G2. Sorry (they laugh) [GERMAN STUDENTS MAKE FUN OF THE SPANISH STUDENT BECAUSE HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A SIMPLE QUESTION]

S1. Ehm, ask me, please. [SCAFFOLDING-TOPIC CONTINUATION]

G1. What are your hobbies?

S1. My hobbies ... eh, I like play eh basketball and football. And tennis. Other sports I like it.

G1. Ok. In your free time or at school?

S1. Oh, eh. I go to the cinema on Fridays. [trigger]

G1/G2 (they laugh) [GERMAN STUDENTS MAKE FUN OF SPANISH STUDENT'S PROBLEMS WITH ENGLISH AGAIN]

G2. Do you have a girlfriend?

S1. What? [trigger-clarification request]

G2. Do you have girlfriend? [REPETITION]

S1. No. No way-oh.

G1. That's good.

S1. Yes, ok. Yeah.

G2. (unintelligible)

S1. What? (holds headphones) (eh, que si tengo novia –to friend) [CLARIFICATION REQUEST- HE ASKS ANOTHER SPANISH STUDENT TO CHECK IF HE UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY]

G2. Why don't you have a girlfriend?

S1. Eh, because I think that the studies is more important than have girlfriend.

G1. (laughs) What?

G2. What's more important?

S1. (noise from classroom –he looks back and laughs) I prefer study first, I prefer study and after that the studies prefer have girlfriend. You understand me? [CONFIRMATION CHECK]

G1. (looks puzzled) Why do you think school is more important than a girlfriend (G2 laughs) (all her classmates laugh)

S1. Because, because in Spain the girls are very –cambian de novio– of the boyfriend very quickly. [USE OF THE L1]

G1. Ah, ok and you don't like this?

S1. Eh, they don't love me (laughs). OK. Eh,

G2. Do you have sisters or brothers?

S1. ¿Cómo? [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G2. Do you have sisters or brothers? [REPETITION]

S1. I have sister, her name is Andrea. Ask me more (gestures). Or for Pedro (points to him)

G1. Have you been already in Germany?

S1. What? (gets closer to screen and holds microphone) [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G1. Have you already been in Germany? [REPETITION]

S1. Repeat again, please. [ASKS FOR REPETITION]

G1. Have you already been in Germany? (repeats more slowly) [REPETITION]

S1. Eh, no. I ... no. No sé cómo explicarlo. (passes headphones to S2) [TRIGGER-USE OF L1-ASKS FOR HELP]

G1./G2 Hello/hi!.

G1. How old are you (pause) Hello.

S2. Oh, hello.

G1. What's your name?

S2. My name is XXXX.

Another German girl approaches the screen laughing and saying something in German.

G1. How old are you?

S2. What (S1 leaves) [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G1. How old are you? [REPETITION]

S2. I'm fine. [TRIGGER-THE SPANISH STUDENT MISUNDERSTANDS THE QUESTIONS AND GIVES A DIFFERENT ANSWER]

(the German girls laugh. S1 comes back with a cloth over his head)

G1. ¿Cuántos años tienes?

S2. He says he lives in Morocco. [USE OF HUMOUR]

G1. I asked how old are you. Not how are you (laughs). [CLARIFICATION-EXPLANATION OF MISTAKE]

S2. What? [TRIGGER-CLARIFICATION REQUEST]

G1. . . ¿Cuántos años tienes? [TRANSLATION]

S2. Dieciseis [THEY SWITCH TO SPANISH AS HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND]

G1. Bien.

S2. Toma, XXXX (name of S1) (hands him the headphones)

S1. Sorry. We leave this class. OK?

G1. OK.

S1. This moment was very funny for me. [ERROR]

G2. Yeah, nice to meet you.

S1. Goodbye.

8 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF TILA LEARNERS

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8.1 SUMMARY

Nowadays, the intercultural dimension in language learning and teaching has become a key educational issue. However, the very notion of intercultural communication is not settled and requires more empirical studies. As an intercultural educational environment, TILA provides a possibility for such an empirical research. Hence, this case study presents what intercultural communication is from the perspectives and experiences of TILA learners. Based on interviews of thirteen learners from different countries and languages, we acquired insights into how they experienced the intercultural dimension they participated in. First, they concretely discovered how others are different from and similar to them, which helps to de-centre, and as such, is the beginning phase of developing intercultural awareness and competences. Second, they discovered more about language learning either through tandem or lingua franca situations, and as a result, they greatly valued the importance of interaction and exchange - a key element of language acquisition. Finally, the whole TILA experience works as the evident way of completing language learning for them, as they are eager to communicate with others through the language they learn. An intercultural environment is, however, not sufficient to develop learners' intercultural communicative competences as these competences can only be fostered through the feedback and awareness activities of language teachers.

8.2 BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

As we were interested in presenting an analysis of the intercultural dimension of TILA (for an overview of TILA, see Jauregi et al, 2013; Pol, 2013) through two case studies, one focusing on teachers (see case study of teachers) and one focusing on learners as they complement each other, the theoretical framework supporting the research objectives and questions is basically the same. TILA's environment with its challenges and complexities will be outlined through the intercultural dimension and from the perspectives and experiences of learners.

So, the question of TILA's "impact" as an intercultural environment will not be addressed as the term "impact" may imply a direct cause-effect relation, which cannot be so simply expressed and extracted from any kind of intercultural setting. There are so many parameters to account for in approaching what interculturality or the intercultural dimension is. The concept of "Intercultural communicative competence" is still questioned and belongs to the fascinating debate about ICC, IC (Byram, 1997, 2008) or just interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2011, 2012) or pluriculturalism (Zarate et al, 2008; 2011; Moore, 2006; Martinez et al, 2008; Kramsch, 2009) (see case study of teachers).

Inscribed in this enlarged theoretical framework, the case study presented is based on the use of technologies (O'Dowd 2007, 2013; O'Dowd & Waire, 2009; Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Potolia & Zourou, 2013), of a task-based approach (Peterson, 2010) and of the telecollaboration of learners viewed as

social actors (Council of Europe, 2001; Kern & Liddicoat, 2008) from different languages and countries and addressing the larger issue of plurilingual/pluricultural education in Europe (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Beacco et al, 2010; Byram, 2008; Starkey, 2002, 2011; Zarate et al, 2008, 2011). Only through a broadening of concepts could we present a clearer and more refined picture of the TILA intercultural dimension as a learning environment foreseeing one key aspect of the future of language – culture education in Europe and the world: addressing the plurilingual and intercultural dimension of individual and collective encounters (CEFR, 2001).

8.3 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

8.3.1 Research objectives and questions

The research questions are also similar in both case studies as they are empirical investigations informing “interculturality”, the first one through the teachers and the second one through the learners. How is interculturality – defined as a process of “inter” between cultures (see Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986; Abdallah-Pretceille & Porcher, 1999; Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Deardorff, 2009; Dervin, 2010, 2011, 2012; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013) – perceived and experienced through TILA? What are the parameters to enhance the intercultural dimension within a European learning environment aimed at intercultural language acquisition? How can the intercultural dimension be developed in order to foster intercultural communicative competence and the intercultural skills of learners?

8.3.2 Approach and methodology

In order to answer the research questions, an analysis of individual or (group) interviews of learners about the TILA environment was conducted with regard to its main objective of intercultural enhancement. The interviews are related to the multimodality of documents produced by the learners (chats, posts, BBB etc.). There are thirteen learners from TILA class telecollaboration: nine in ELF partnerships and four in TANDEM. Recordings were carried out through BBB or mp4 with hand transcription.

Either quantitative or qualitative data collections proved to be difficult to obtain in the given period of time (see case study of teachers), notwithstanding the fact they were complementary and resulted in a better understanding of what intercultural telecollaboration is and could be within a European educational space (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Beacco et al, 2010, Starkey, 2002, 2011). Data collection from learners proved especially difficult, as researchers had no direct access to them and depended on their teachers for the learners' agreement in participating in an interview, arranging a suitable time, carrying out the interview, and transcribing-translating the content from the learners 'mother tongues'¹⁴.

Choosing the learners? It was not possible to stick to a protocol as information came very late. First, we wanted to pick up learners after reading their BBB or chat productions for what could be described as some kind of intercultural communicative incident. We managed that only with the Spain/France ELF partnership. For the other partnerships, we managed to get the Dutch learners corresponding to the French ones chosen by the French teacher on the basis of a “good” learner and a “weaker” learner. The

¹⁴ The guide questions had to be translated into Spanish and Dutch to help the interviewer-teacher. In the Netherlands, the learners were not interviewed by their teacher but by a TILA university member.

corresponding English learners were chosen just out of convenience for the teacher-interviewer. Teachers proved to be valuable interviewers because of their closeness to their pupils, who thus perhaps shared their TILA experience more readily with them. However, teachers are not trained interviewers.

This means that for collecting sound qualitative data under the circumstances, we would have needed time to make a first analysis of the learners' productions, select them carefully according to the intercultural communicative incidents, and take time through the teachers to organise the interviews carried out by researchers who would have gone to different parts of France and Europe. This would also have implied having a common session with researchers from other countries participating directly in this research i.e defining "intercultural communicative incidents" from the communicative production of learners, selecting them through the same grid, designing common guide questions and interview protocols, then carrying out the interviews, transcribing them in the same way, and translating them accordingly to the languages mastered by the researchers¹⁵.

Or, had we maintained the teachers as interviewers, we would have had to train them in their L1 in interviewing pupils for research purposes, in particular, in not inducing answers of the respondents, while creating a favourable communicative situation. However, reaching that level of understanding and know-how in the task of interviewing requires time, even more so as some teachers thought that an interview could just be like a questionnaire, asking the pupils questions and reporting key words on the sheets. One teacher even repeated this approach with the selected learners¹⁶. Furthermore, interviews were conducted either individually or in pair or groups of pupils even though we had explicitly stated the need for individual interviews.

However, guiding questions proposed by WP3 were used as to facilitate potential comparisons when using the same tools and were translated and "adapted" into Spanish, French and Dutch¹⁷.

Interviews and the productions of learners are invaluable data to understand what was done, undertaken and understood about intercultural telecollaboration: a more ethnographic kind of methodology should have been carried out as we needed the learners' intercultural communicative productions to select them for interviews and would have even used their tasks to make them reflect further if interviews had been planned not too far from the experience. Consequently, the format of the case study seems much more compliant with the multimodal set of data produced and collected, even if it was sometimes sparse, and with all the flaws and limitations mentioned. However, this kind of research is also the most appropriate way to get insights into the construction and the observation of an emerging intercultural learning environment for intercultural language acquisition from the experience of learners.

¹⁵ All researchers have a good command of English except two researchers in France.

¹⁶ As reported in the case study of teachers, we are incredibly grateful to all the teachers who spent so much time and energy in the project.

¹⁷ What we mean by "adapted" is that we made it clear as instructions to teachers that the questions underlined within this interviewing guide should be carefully addressed as they dealt more with communicative and intercultural issues.

To sum up, data collected through a wide variety of instruments (questionnaires, interviews, tasks) proved to be invaluable for a better understanding of the possibilities offered by an intercultural learning environment that TILA provides and what this means for learners.

8.3.3 Corpus

The learners interviewed present a sample of learners' representations of the intercultural dimension of language acquisition and we were careful to select learners of different languages and countries.

Population interviewed: the thirteen learners aged from 14 to 16 years old, come from four different countries (England, France, the Netherlands, Spain) and the languages they learn are English, French and Spanish. There are two ELF partnerships (Spain/France with two French learners and two Spanish learners, and Holland/France with two French Learners and three Dutch learners). There is also a TANDEM partnership (English/French with two English learners and two French learners).

Codes used to refer to learners:

FL1-ELF-SP (to be read as French Learner 1 doing ELF with Spain), FL2-ELF-SP, SL1 -ELF-FR (Spanish Learner 1 doing ELF with France), SL2 –ELF-FR, FL3 –ELF-NL, FL4-ELF-NL, DL1-ELF-FR (Dutch Learner 1 doing ELF with France), DL2-ELF-FR, DL3-ELF-FR, FL5-Tandem-EN, FL6-Tandem-EN, EL1-Tandem-FR, EL2-Tandem-FR

Learner productions ranged from one task completed in Tandem French/English to four and five tasks in ELF. All the tasks started with "introductions" and topics varied such as "food habits", "organising a party", "discussing", "finding out false information", "stereotypes". It is worth noticing that there is coherence in the development of tasks (more guided first to more complex achievements in terms of learners' autonomy):

- introduction and exchanging about tastes
- speaking about tastes (food) and organising a party
- speaking, negotiating, compromising about finding out a common topic to be presented

These tasks require either class or home activities, synchronous and asynchronous, different tools such as Moodle, wiki, BBB etc.

All the learners were interviewed in their mother tongue and the transcription was then translated into French to be analysed by the French team of researchers, except for the English from the English learners. The extracts selected from the learners' interviews illustrate the analysis and they are mainly in French.

To sum up, the learners' case study presents a variety of languages and countries, of language combinations through ELF or TANDEM situations with synchronous and asynchronous tasks, all performed during class time.

8.4 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS' INTERVIEWS

Learners are all extremely motivated and enthusiastic about TILA as they are eager to meet other learners from different countries and to communicate with them using the language they learn.

They find telecollaboration an obvious way of practising language and can be very frustrated when technology fails to operate. What is implicit all throughout the interviews is that learners cannot see why TILA has to be an exploratory environment and why this is not the way of practising language as part of the language curriculum. In fact, the “practising” of any textbook should be replaced by TILA telecollaborative engaging activities with “foreign” learners.

The analysis will be organised into three parts, how they discover the “other” is different through collaborative or individual working cultures and through intercultural awareness, how they discover the “other” is similar and then how they discover more about language learning and the importance of interaction and exchange either through ELF or TANDEM situations.

8.4.1 Discovering the “other” as being different

From the interviews, there is a clear awareness of the “other” as being different, which can be exemplified by the overuse of “us” and “them”.

8.4.1.1 *Differences can be interpreted as collaborative or individual ethos*

The partnership between Spanish and French pupils clearly illustrate two educational, learning cultures:

I : Avez-vous aimé cet échange ?¹⁸

[...]

FL2-ELF-SP: moi, j'ai l'impression qu'on donnait plus, nous, en tout cas on donnait plus qu'eux, ils donnaient... c'est comme si eux, ils avaient pas envie de faire le projet... même si après... en fait à la fin, ils ont fait leur travail mais nous, pendant le travail, on a fait plus d'efforts... on a TOUS essayé de faire des efforts et puis, quand il fallait montrer le travail, on voit qu'eux, ils ont fait leur travail et nous, on avait rien fait

FL1-ELF-SP: ils ont pas travaillé en équipe, en fait

[...]

I: Dans le cadre de la communication interculturelle (entre 2 cultures), avez-vous l'impression que vous avez appris quelque chose sur l'autre pays ?

FL1-ELF-SP: honnêtement, ils ont pas l'habitude de travailler en groupe, ils ont une manière de travailler

FL2-ELF-SP: oui, c'est vrai ; parce que nous, en France, dans toutes les écoles, souvent le travail, c'est en groupe ; après c'est plus facile ; mais eux, on a vu, c'était pas bon...

FL1-ELF-SP: ils connaissent pas ; ils savent pas s'organiser

vous voulez dire qu'ils travaillent plus individuellement ?

¹⁸ All transcripts are in French, the common language for the research team, except for the English learners. The questions asked by the teacher-interviewer are in bold letters. I = teacher-interviewer and see above codes for respondents.

FL2-ELF-SP: voilà

(*Group interview*)

These extracts are rich in pronouns such as “on”, “nous”, “ils”. “We” refer to some kind of group work, which is familiar in the FL classroom in France, expressing some kind of educational culture opposed to a more individual way of working, which would be more familiar in the FL classroom in Spain. French pupils made a judgment about the difficulty of working collaboratively with Spanish pupils in order to work together for a common goal. There is some distance taken by the French interviewees, reflecting on the experience and suggesting an explanation about educational learning cultures. It seems that what counts more for the French pupils here is the process whereas the results might have been the priority for the Spanish pupils, casting aside at the end, the others.

The French pupils also became tired of asking questions with no answers and lost interest in the project:

I: Est-ce que vous êtes satisfaite(s) de VOTRE contribution, de votre apport à cette communication ?

FL1-ELF-SP: oui

FL2-ELF-SP: un petit peu... oui, pas complètement... parce que j'avoue que... parfois comme j'avais aucune réponse, j'insistais pas davantage... à envoyer une tonne de messages... au bout d'un moment... (**FL1-ELF-SP c'est sûr que quand une personne répond pas, cela donne plus envie**), oui, ça donne plus envie après...

(*group interview*)

However, the Spanish learners insist more on the quality of connection, which hampered smooth communication. They therefore seem to show a more pragmatic attitude towards the tasks to be completed:

I: Qu'est-ce que tu n'as pas aimé ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Les pannes qu'il y a eu pendant les télécollaborations parce qu'il y a eu trop de problèmes avec la technologie.

I: Tu as d'autres préférences ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Eh bien... qu'on pourrait le faire d'une autre façon avec laquelle on n'ait pas autant de risques de pannes technologiques.

I: La qualité technologique a été suffisante pour la tâche ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Eh bien... comme je disais, elle n'a pas été vraiment adéquate parce que la connexion à Internet ne fonctionnait pas très bien et ça compliquait beaucoup la tâche.

(...)

I: Quels aspects de l'échange de télécollaboration devraient être changés et améliorés ?

SL1-ELF-FR: La qualité de la technologie devrait être assez meilleure pour ce type de tâches et pas grande chose d'autre réellement

(...)

SL2-ELF-FR: On devrait améliorer et changer, euh... améliorer, dans ce cas-ci, la technologie. Car parfois ça ne marche pas trop, autant la nôtre comme parfois la leur peut aussi ne pas fonctionner, mais je ne sais pas si c'est ainsi. Et c'est tout. Le reste, je crois que ça va.

(Individual interviews)

We can notice there was much frustration due to technology on BBB, which was apparently not the case with the pupils who used chats, even though they regretted not being able to speak to and see the partner:

I: Et est-ce que ton correspondant ... est-ce qu'il t'a fait des propositions ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Euh ben ... je ne sais pas, il voulait m'entendre de vive voix ou même en caméra
(...)

I: Est-ce que tu aurais une préférence pour une technologie différente ? Comment on peut faire pour que ce soit encore mieux ?

FL4-ELF-NL: je ne sais pas (rires)

I: Tu ne sais pas ! est-ce que tu aimerais par exemple, les voir et les entendre tes correspondants comme sur skype ?

FL4-ELF-NL: oui

I: Tu penses que ça serait encore mieux ? ou pour toi, ça n'a pas de différence ?

FL4-ELF-NL: oui ça peut être mieux

Oui ! le fait de les voir, tu ne serais pas timide ?

FL4-ELF-NL: non

I: Non ! et tu penses que de les entendre, ça serait mieux que de leur écrire ?

FL4-ELF-NL: ben oui ... c'est bien aussi de leur écrire

C'est bien de faire les deux

FL4-ELF-NL: oui

EL1-Tandem-FR: Video could be added to help with on the spot thinking and speaking

FL5-Tandem-FR: La vidéo, se voir

(individual interviews)

Summary: Synchronous tasks are the added-value for motivating learners and allow intercultural communication and exchanges. Frustration due to technological problems is increased with BBB (speaking interaction with camera): under these circumstances, pupils might feel even more rejected or excluded when interaction is constantly interrupted. Two interesting behaviours emerged to tackle the

problem: the Spanish learners opted for a pragmatic approach of getting the results and completing the task. This attitude could be perceived as an individual attitude ingrained within an educational, cultural context. Conversely, the French learners opted for the group *ethos* of doing whatever was possible even if the task was partially completed, something they phrased as being more used to group work than their Spanish partners. They showed some degree of intercultural awareness in the interviews, something that could be exploited further through post-tasks or experience diaries.

8.4.1.2 Differences as emerging awareness to be worked on

Through interviews, different judgements about the “others” are reported, proving that journal experiences or diaries would be relevant tools to explore perceptions along with feedback sessions of intercultural telecollaboration as to challenge and reflect on them.

In the following extract, the French pupils find the Dutch partners more direct, not always “polite” when they do not answer to “hello”, a bit less friendly, but this is not “important”:

I: Est-ce que tu as l'impression que les autres élèves, les élèves néerlandais communiquent de façon différente ? par exemple, elles sont plus directes, plus polies, moins polies, plus amicales, moins amicales ?

FL4-ELF-NL: elles sont plus directes

I: Et par rapport à la politesse, tu les trouves plus ou moins polies ?

FL4-ELF-NL: des fois, elles ne répondent pas quand je leur dis bonjour mais sinon, en général oui

I: Pour toi, c'est impoli qu'elles parlent quand on leur dit bonjour ? toi, tu vas le percevoir comme une impolitesse en fait ?

FL4-ELF-NL: oui, mais ça ne me dérange pas

I: Ça ne te dérange pas ! donc tu les trouves donc plus amicales ou plutôt pas amicales ... ou moins amicales ?

FL4-ELF-NL: moins amicales mais pas trop ... non ...

(individual interview)

Another French pupil finds the Dutch partner rather cold, more “down to earth” and more “direct”:

I: Est-ce que tu as rencontré des problèmes de communication avec ton correspondant ?

FL3-ELF-NL: En ben ... du coup oui, il était assez froid

I: Tu le trouves froid ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Oui

(..)

I: Mais par rapport à ta façon de communiquer ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Euh ben oui ... comme je l'ai dit, il était froid quoi

I: Tu l'as trouvé plus froid ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Oui vachement ... vachement

I: Plus froid et plus direct ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Plus terre à terre

I: C'est-à-dire ? qu'est-ce que tu veux dire par terre à terre ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Euh ben plus ... je ne sais pas plus direct enfin

(individual interview)

Conversely, the Dutch express some judgements on their French partners, some of them based on pre-conceptions (serious and stubborn) and show how these perceptions have changed through the intercultural telecollaboration:

DL2-ELF-FR: Eh bien, au début je pensais qu'elle était très sérieuse, mais plus tard, plus tard il n'en était plus ainsi, mais c'était un peu la première impression que j'avais d'elle, et je l'ai vue aussi sur Facebook et Instagram et Snapchat je l'ai vue aussi et oui, elle était beaucoup plus gentille que je n'avais pensé au début.

I: Ok, L, est-ce que tu peux en dire quelque chose ? Qu'as tu pensé ? Est-ce que tu l'as trouvé directe ou aussi gentille ?

DL3-ELF-FR: Au début, il s'agit juste de demander et de regarder la réponse mais ensuite elle a commencé à dire plus des choses, plus demander, elle commençait aussi à envoyer des smileys et des choses pareilles {...}

I: Ok, donc, au début un peu standard et neutre et plus tard elle s'est sentie plus à l'aise et elle est devenu plus personnelle, est-ce que je le comprends bien de cette façon ?

DL3-ELF-FR: Ja

I: Ok, S, est-ce que tu as eu une expérience spéciale comme celle-ci ou euh remarqué des choses ?

DL1-ELF-FR: Oui je, je pensais que les Français étaient toujours un peu têtus etc mais il s'est alors avéré qu'il n'en était pas ainsi, ils étaient beaucoup plus gentils que je n'avais pensé.

(group interview)

Summary: In order to work on emerging judgments of others, regular feedback on telecollaboration as a post-task, along with the use of experience diaries, is necessary to develop intercultural skills when interacting with others. Time is needed to reflect on the communication, to capitalise on one's own attitudes and preconceptions as well as on others'.

8.4.2 Discovering the “other” as being similar: an age group culture connected to Internet, social networks and “world” cultures (popular singers)

Pupils find it easy to communicate with people the same age as they have a common culture

For example, social network and food habits typical of teenagers (snacking) are reported to be part of this common culture:

I: Et est-ce que vous avez trouvé en revanche des similitudes ?

FL1-ELF-SP: non, à part qu'ils sont adolescents comme nous et qu'ils font un peu les mêmes choses... par rapport aux réseaux sociaux et tout ça

[...]

FL2-ELF-SP: il y a des points en commun ; comme on est tous les deux adolescents, on va parler de grignotage, et voilà... après...

FL1-ELF-SP: non, il y a pas eu de grosses différences

(group interview)

The informal way of communication between teenagers is also reported:

I: Tu as la sensation que toi et les autres élèves vous avez communiqué de manières différentes ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Non, plus ou moins nous avons communiqué au même niveau en ce qui concerne le respect, la manière de parler et tout le reste.

SL2-ELF-FR: Non, nous avons communiqué d'égal à égal, avec respect et tout.

(group interview)

EL1-Tandem-FR: It was mostly the same¹⁹

(individual interview)

EL2-Tandem-FR: No, I think everyone was generally informal and friendly

(individual interview)

FL5-Tandem-EN: Amicales. Il y a une jeune fille avec qui j'ai parlé, on a échangé sur facebook et sur les autres réseaux sociaux ... on ne parle pas mais on a échangé.

(individual interview)

The analysis of chats clearly supports the common popular culture they share as pupils. As soon as they get in contact, they suggest their accounts on facebook, instagram, whatsapp. They know the same singers and watch the same American series. It is worth noting that sharing a common culture does not

¹⁹ The English pupils answered on paper with very limited words so we kept their answers in English.

necessarily imply communicating through language as FL5-ELF-EN mentions: “*we have shared things on facebook and other social networks ... we do not speak but we have shared things ...*”.

Summary: Pupils find it easy to exchange and interact with other European pupils of the same age as they share a common “global” culture.

8.4.3 Discovering more about language learning: the importance of interaction and exchange

Motivation is enhanced with synchronous activities allowing real-time exchanges with others and the variety of language constellations offers more opportunities to develop and transfer these intercultural skills when communicating with others.

8.4.3.1 *In ELF situations*²⁰

A way to learn about people from other cultures through the medium of English was reported by all interviewees:

I: Tu as aimé communiquer avec un autre locuteur non-natif ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Oui, c'est une chose qui m'a toujours intéressée, parler avec d'autres personnes qui ne sont pas anglaises natives mais qui le parlent aussi et pouvoir connaître d'autres personnes qui communiquent aussi avec cette langue.

I: Comment le système « lingua franca » a influencé ton interaction communicative ?

SL1-ELF-FR: Euh...bien, voyons, la plupart des fois je pouvais comprendre ma partenaire, et les autres fois que je ne pouvais pas la comprendre, c'était simplement parce que la connexion à Internet ne fonctionnait pas et les mots étaient hachés.

I: Tu as la sensation que tu as appris quelque chose de l'autre pays, la culture et ou les autres élèves ?

SL1-ELF-FR : Oui, j'ai pu apprendre des choses sur la culture de... bon... dans ce cas musulmane, parce que ma partenaire était musulmane, et bon, sur la France, son pays où elle habite.

(individual interview)

I: Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le mieux dans tout cela ?

DL2-ELF-FR: Eh bien, je ne sais pas, justement, euh, oui je sais pas, justement chatter avec cette personne, surtout parce que elle habite aussi un autre lieu et vit une autre vie etc. et j'ai justement trouvé assez agréable pour chatter avec

(...)

DL1-ELF-FR: Je trouve assez drôle de connaître une nouvelle langue et que euh on peut également avoir des conversations avec des personnes d'un tout autre pays et d'une autre culture etc.

(...)

²⁰ See Kohn, 2011, 2014.

DL3-ELF-FR: Eh bien, j'ai trouvé assez drôle de savoir ce que la France, ou en tout cas cette fille, pense de nous et euh sait de nous, et ce qu'elle veut savoir de nous.

(group interview)

I: Est-ce que tu as trouvé intéressant de parler, en anglais à quelqu'un d'autre qui n'est pas anglophone non plus ?

DL2-ELF-FR: Bien, j'ai bien aimé, et euh, c'était aussi une fois, c'était assez drôle, parce que à ce moment nous avons, Lara et moi, nous avons appris à C, c'était la fille avec laquelle nous avons parlé, nous lui avons appris aussi quelques mots en néerlandais, c'était vraiment drôle.

(...)

DL3-ELF-FR: Oui je trouvais, oui, c'était bien agréable, parce que comme ça on apprend tous les deux quelque chose de cela [de cette expérience], sinon, on a le sentiment de : « elle le peut déjà, elle est beaucoup mieux que moi ».

DL2-ELF-FR: ... qu'il a à peu près le même niveau d'anglais que toi, et ça j'ai trouvé une idée assez agréable...

(group interview)

Reflecting on the experience, which is one of the objectives of the interview has helped learners to figure out some misunderstanding during the interaction:

DL1-ELF-FR: Non, elle a compris tout ce que j'ai dit, mais je pense qu'ils n'ont pas compris une question, et moi je n'ai pas compris de, euh, à un moment où ils ont posé la question, est-ce que tu aimes bien le gouda, et moi je pensais qu'il s'agissait de la ville, mais mon impression maintenant est qu'il s'agissait du fromage, qui vient de là.

(group interview)

A way to be more adaptive to different accents when communicating with others was also reported:

SL1-ELF-FR: Parce que parler avec des personnes qui parlent anglais mais avec un autre accent à cause de leur pays, ça développe ton oreille à cette façon de parler anglais et ça augmente tes connaissances de la langue.

SL1-ELF-FR: Parce que parler avec d'autres personnes en anglais aide, c'est-à-dire aide à comprendre l'anglais de différentes façons et ainsi à la fin on s'améliore.

(individual interview)

A way to make learning easier through gaining different experiences of intercultural communication was also mentioned:

I: Sur l'apprentissage de la langue étrangère : tu as l'impression que la tâche de télécollaboration a eu des effets positifs sur ta compétence linguistique et communicative ?

SL2-ELF-FR: Oui, parce que, ainsi, on pourrait dire que l'anglais d'un natif est plus difficile à capter que celui de quelqu'un qui ne parle pas anglais avec autant de fréquence qu'eux. Donc oui.

(individual interview)

(...)

FL1-ELF-SP: ben, ça nous a permis de savoir à quel point on peut parler, sans lire quelque chose et se préparer

(...)

FL1-ELF-SP: ben oui... on se sera plus à l'aise à parler, on aura déjà de l'expérience

FL2-ELF-SP: voilà ; s'il y a un voyage à faire par exemple et qu'on doit aller dans une famille d'accueil, par exemple, c'est vrai... ce sera plus facile... en tout cas pour ceux qui ont réussi à avoir un bon dialogue... ce sera plus facile

FL1-ELF-SP plus tard, quand on voyagera...

I: Vous pensez que c'est en termes d'expérience... le fait d'avoir vécu une fois le contact

FL1-ELF-SP: qu'on a moins peur... on a plus d'assurance... ça nous donne de l'assurance en fait

(group interview)

I: Est-ce que tu as l'impression que ce genre d'activités, les tâches de télécollaboration ... ça va t'aider à progresser en anglais ? est-ce que tu penses que si tu en faisais plus souvent, ça peut être quelque chose qui t'aide ou pas ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Ah oui ... vraiment

I: Oui ... toi tu penses que oui ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Oui ... euh ben j'ai même vu la différence ... même on n'en fait pas beaucoup, mais j'ai vu la différence ... déjà l'anglais maintenant, ça m'intéresse beaucoup plus

I: Donc, c'est une sorte de motivation et tu penses que ça peut t'aider à progresser ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Oui

(individual interview)

Telecollaboration offering interaction with foreigners maximises learning as one is forced to interact in the FL and cannot escape it, a context that the traditional FL classroom allows when all learners share the same L1, thus minimising L2 interaction:

I: Est-ce que vous avez aussi l'impression que vous, cela vous a aussi apporté quelque chose de positif, pour ce qui est de votre compétence linguistique ou communicative ?

DL2-ELF-FR: Bon oui, parce que on ne peut pas alors pour ainsi dire, avec cette personne on ne peut pas parler néerlandais pas un instant, parce que pendant le leçon d'anglais normalement je parle le plus souvent, avec la personne qui se trouve à côté de moi, je parle normalement le néerlandais, mais avec elle on ne peut pas parler le néerlandais parce qu'elle ne comprend pas donc on doit parler forcément l'anglais et c'est vrai que c'est mieux.

(...)

DL1-ELF-FR: Oui, oui un peu, comme F l'a dit déjà, oui, on ne peut pas parler néerlandais avec eux quand on le veut, ce qu'on peut faire normalement, mais euh, oui, on doit parler l'anglais, et de ça on apprend déjà quelque chose.

(...)

DL3-ELF-FR: Oui je le trouve aussi, on ne peut pas parler une autre langue quand on le veut, on doit euh.

(...)

DL1-ELF-FR: Oui, sûrement mieux, parce que normalement on apprend l'anglais dans le livre, mais maintenant on fait des vraies conversations, euh, alors tout cela est un peu la pratique du livre.

(group interview)

Chats are also reported as making communication and learning easier as writing gives you time to think about words:

DL2-ELF-FR: Oui, en fait je trouve que c'est un bon moyen, seulement, j'aurais peut-être aussi aimé vraiment parler de l'un à l'autre, mais euh, ensuite c'est aussi plus difficile, quand on va parler à quelqu'un d'autre, de trouver les mots justes pour dire en anglais, et quand on tape, je trouve alors que c'est un peu plus facile.

(group interview)

We have to point out that the notions of ELF or Tandem can be in themselves new concepts for pupils, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

I: Est-ce que ça t'a plu de communiquer avec quelqu'un qui n'est pas un natif ? de communiquer avec un hollandais qui apprend l'anglais ?

FL3-ELF-NL: Euh ben ... je n'ai pas vu la différence en fait ... on n'a jamais parlé avec des anglais ... donc voilà

(individual interview)

8.4.3.2 In TANDEM situations

Tandem constellations also allow pupils to become more confident in speaking the other language and to know more about the way it is really spoken. Just like for ELF, the screens (BBB or Chats) provide time to reflect and learn and help in boosting learners' confidence in communicating with others. This process of time during communication has to be pointed out and monitored by teachers to help the learning process through communication.

EL1-Tandem-FR: to learn about colloquial languageto learn how French people actually speak it

EL2-Tandem-FR: longer time to be spent chatting

FL5-Tandem-EN: on était quand même derrière un écran ... on avait le temps de réfléchir à ce qu'on allait mettre ... demander si on ne comprenait pas

(individual interviews)

Just like LF, tandem telecollaboration offering interaction with foreigners maximise learning as one is forced to interact in the FL and cannot escape it, a context that the traditional FL classroom allows when all learners share the same L1, thus minimising L2 interaction:

FL6-Tandem-EN: oui voilà, on est obligé de parler anglais ... donc, ça nous met des barrières et donc on apprend (rires)

(individual interview)

Summary: Either ELF or TANDEM constellations support the development of intercultural skills and this variety when on offer should help in transferring these intercultural skills. Through intercultural language acquisition, learners gain some intercultural capital that will prove useful in the more multilingual, multicultural world they will live in. Synchronous activities are favoured for interaction and therefore for intercultural communication. They sustain interest in others and motivation in language and culture learning. To develop reflection concerning intercultural experiences, feedback on tasks from critical communicative incidents and from experience diaries has to be worked on precisely by the educational community and should be part of any teacher training on intercultural telecollaboration.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS

Learners are as enthusiastic about TILA as the teachers. We could even say the kind of environment TILA offers is obvious for them, as they have integrated what technology²¹ allows them to do in terms of language learning. Practising with the textbook in the traditional FL classroom seems odd to them when they can practice with real young people through synchronous and asynchronous activities. Synchronous activities are even more valued for the right-now language practice they offer, which means that schools have to invest in the appropriate technology and technical support. Moreover, language learning is enhanced through motivating collaborative tasks, but also through tasks allowing getting to know about others, exchanging ideas, ways of doing things and lifestyles. So telecollaboration enhances language acquisition as learners are put in a situation in which they have to speak the target language (they are forced to), and through these language acquisition activities, communicative skills and repertoires are also enhanced thanks to a variety of experiences either LF or tandem constellations. It is important to provide long-term intercultural telecollaborations (either in class or outside class) in order to measure some “impact” as intercultural communicative competences are best developed through sustained interactions with others and with a variety of LF and Tandem constellations fostering these skills and their transferability. Feedback with post-tasks are a prerequisite of any intercultural

²¹ All the following authors have discussed the integration of technology into language learning and teaching: Bertin & Narcy-Combes, 2010; Boughnima, & Narcy-Combes, 2011; Garda 2012; Guichon 2012 ; Guth, 2012; Jauregi & Banados, 2008; Jauregi et al, 2011; Reinders 2012; Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Potolia & Zourou, 2013.

telecollaboration to help learners reflect on critical communicative incidents and to distance themselves from preconceived ideas and false perceptions. Along with the writing of experience diaries or journals (Molinié, 2006; Moloney & Genua-Petrovic, 2012; Wang, 2013) which could be written in L1 if the level of the target language is not sufficient (A1-A2)²², teachers' feedback on post-tasks is essential to foster a benevolent, open-minded attitude when speaking with others having different cultural and language backgrounds. These benevolent, open-minded attitudes are part and parcel of any educational objective that pervades all subject matters. Language teaching and learning is nevertheless the key subject matter to let learners reflect and explore, in the safe environment of the classroom, on communication and intercultural communication across any borders. Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition should not replace the traditional FL language classroom based on language structure, but should be given more space and as much space as the traditional FL language classroom, as this is a space for practicing, maximising language acquisition and above all for reflecting on the intercultural dimension of all human encounters. Developing trans-lingua-cultural skills is something that only education and school can help foster in a much more diverse, complicated and multilingual, multicultural world (Alao et al, 2012; Derivry-Plard, 2014a, 2014b; Zarate et al, 2008/2011).

To conclude, TILA should be the stepping-stone for the setting up of a European educational space in language learning and teaching as it provides authentic language acquisition and helps enhance intercultural, plurilingual competences as a process.

²² The L1 teacher could be associated as to help inter-disciplinary activities among languages expanding bridges towards disciplines.

9 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF TILA TEACHERS

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9.1 SUMMARY

Intercultural communication is much a debated issue in education and language learning and teaching nowadays, but as a scholarly field it is still quite recent. In fact, the very notion of intercultural communication is not settled and requires more empirical study. TILA as an intercultural educational environment provides a possibility for such empirical research. Hence, this case study presents what intercultural communication is from the perspectives and experiences of TILA teachers. Based on interviews with nine teachers from different countries and languages, we gained insights of what interculturality means for them and how they were able to experiment with it in their own teaching situations. First, they understand how important teachers are in fostering intercultural competences through language learning. Second, they have different interpretations of interculturality, which are not exclusive and lead to a more refined and comprehensive scope of teaching intercultural communication through language learning and practising. Finally, training and coaching teachers in telecollaboration activities with their peers seems to be as important as training them to use intercultural telecollaboration activities with their pupils. Support in task design using a variety of tools and language constellations is needed.

9.2 BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The challenges and complexities of TILA's environment will be outlined through the intercultural dimension. We will not question the "impact" of TILA as an intercultural environment as the term "impact" may imply a direct cause-effect relationship, which cannot be so simply expressed and extracted from any kind of intercultural setting. There are so many parameters to account for in approaching what interculturality is, or rather what the intercultural dimension is. In fact, the concept of "Intercultural communicative competence" is still questioned. The issue is part of a continuous, rich and fascinating debate about ICC, IC (Byram, 1997, 2008) or just interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2011, 2012) or pluriculturalism (Zarate et al, 2008; 2011; Moore, 2006; Martinez et al, 2008; Kramsch, 2009) as all these concepts differ from multiculturalism and the last one only provides the notion of plurality within "inter".

Consequently, the case study presented here is based on an enlarged theoretical framework that would integrate the whole TILA project, founded on the use of technologies, of a task-based approach and of the telecollaboration of teachers from different languages and countries, and addressing the larger issue of plurilingual/pluricultural education in Europe (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Beacco et al, 2010; Byram, 2008; Starkey, 2002, 2011; Zarate et al, 2008, 2011). Only through a broadening of concepts could we

present a clearer and more refined picture of the TILA intercultural dimension as a teaching environment foreseeing one key aspect of the future of language – culture education in Europe and the world: addressing the plurilingual and intercultural dimension of individual and collective encounters.

In the Common European Framework for Languages (CEF), plurilingualism is a key word (CEF, 2001, chapter 1, p. 11) and is also clearly associated with pluriculturalism (CEF, 2002, chapter 8, p. 129). So the notion of plurilingual, pluricultural repertoires is stated as an important dimension of language learning that cannot be reduced to languages *per se*. However, following the notion of the “didactic” triangle (Houssaye, 1988), teachers present linguistic and cultural variations to learners and this knowledge is transmitted to learners through the process of comparing, managing representations and helping learners to de-centre from their own linguistic and cultural views. Social representations can be addressed through different disciplines (sociology, psychology, history ...), but can be apprehended by our interpretation (*Noûs*) of true realities (*Gnose*) validated through conversational and dialectical practices (Plato).

9.3 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

9.3.1 Research Objectives and questions

We were interested in teachers' views as they are mediators of expected knowledge, of learners' needs and of classroom circumstances (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; O'Dowd, 2007, 2015; Deardorff, 2013; Olmedo et al, 2010; Pol, 2013; Kohler, 2014; Potolia & Jamborova Lemay, 2015). Our broad questions were: how do teacher encourage the plurilingual, pluricultural competence of learners? What are teachers' representations in the different educational contexts? What discourses do they have concerning their practices? Are there variations in the way they mediate the intercultural dimension? What can we learn as researchers from the teaching experience presented in the TILA environment?

We were also interested in finding out if such an environment could foster hybrid or intercultural practices among language teachers having different educational cultures and practices. Were they able through common task design and its implementation to create their own professional and intercultural communicative voices?

These questions are drawn from French research on the “teacherly actions” (*agir professoral*) of language teachers (Cicurel, 2011), and from interactional theories (Goffman, 1991, Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1990). They are also in accordance with FREPA and its Pluralistic approaches²³, and are embedded in the broader plurilingual/pluricultural conceptual approaches (Byram, 1997, 2008, 2013); Coste et al, 1997; Beacco & Byram, 2007; Beacco et al, 2010; Zarate & Gohard-Radenkovic, 2005, Molinié, 2006; Zarate et al, 2008; Alao et al, 2012; Byrd-Clark & Stratilaki, 2013; Byrd-Clark & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2010, 2011, 2012; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

²³ <http://carap.ecml.at/CARAPinEurope/tabid/3045/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

The aim is to present an analysis of the intercultural dimension of TILA (see for an overview of TILA, Jauregi et al, 2013) through a case study focusing on teachers. How is interculturality – defined as the process of “inter” between cultures (see Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986; Abdallah-Pretceille & Porcher, 1999 for meanings of interculturality) – perceived and experienced through TILA? What are the parameters to enhance the intercultural dimension within a European learning environment aimed at intercultural language acquisition? How can the intercultural dimension be developed in order to foster intercultural communicative competence and the intercultural skills for teachers?

9.3.2 Approach and methodology

In order to answer the research questions, an analysis of individual (or group) interviews about the TILA environment was conducted with regard to its main objective of intercultural enhancement. Relevant productions (task descriptions and handouts) of teachers with regard to the intercultural dimension of the telecollaboration were analysed. The interviews are related to the multimodality of documents produced. Nine participating teachers were interviewed: four teachers during the pilot phase and five teachers during the follow-up phase²⁴. Recordings were carried out through BBB or mp4 with hand transcription. A content analysis of teachers’ experiences and productions was conducted and the teacher questionnaires (“Background and Views”) helped to categorise the different perceptions of teachers considering the intercultural dimension for the analysis grid.

The main objective of the interview was to know more about teachers’ representations of the intercultural dimension in language teaching and what their practices are as far as the intercultural aspect is concerned. As European teachers, they have a role in sharing culture through language learning for the future European citizens that young learners are (Coste, 2013).

The guide questions were organised into 5 subtopics as the interview was intended to be semi-structured. The 5 subtopics were about the intercultural dimension:

- in their teaching
- within TILA
- in their TILA task development and practice
- about telecollaboration and language teaching/learning

²⁴ TILA provided us with valuable support for creating questionnaires online and for interviewing teachers face-to-face or with BBB recordings. However, the demands placed on teachers were particularly heavy (innovative teaching and participating in research), and they were overwhelmed by the different instruments we asked them to apply. In addition, unforeseen circumstances like consortium teachers being ill, promoted or having to move, and schools that did not comply with the agreement to let teachers have some dedicated time for implementing TILA or let them deal with unresolved connection problems - led to a very unstable environment, particularly for P9 and the French cluster. Either quantitative or qualitative data collection proved to be difficult to obtain during the given period of time, notwithstanding the fact they were complementary and resulted in a better understanding of what intercultural telecollaboration is and could be within a European educational space.

The questionnaires (“Background and Views”), the guide questions, the interviews and the tasks designed by teachers are invaluable data for understanding what was done, undertaken and understood about intercultural telecollaboration. A more ethnographic kind of methodology (Bennett, 1993; Bagnall, 2005; Wang, 2013) was carried out to obtain insights into the construction and the observation of an emerging intercultural teaching environment for intercultural language acquisition.

To sum up, data collected through a wide variety of instruments (questionnaires, interviews, tasks designed by teachers) proved to be invaluable for a better understanding of the possibilities of the intercultural teaching environment that TILA offers

9.3.3 Corpus

The teachers interviewed had volunteered to participate in the TILA project and we were able to interview pilot and follow-up participants to get an overview of a sample of teachers’ representations of the intercultural dimension of language acquisition. For this sample, we were careful to include teachers of different languages, countries and positions (consortium and associate).

Population interviewed: the nine teachers come from three different countries (France, Germany and Spain) and the languages they teach are English, French, German and Spanish. Four teachers were consortium partners (they had some funding for TILA implementation) and five teachers were associate with no funding. Most interviews were conducted through BBB and lasted from 1 to 2 hours.

STF1: Spanish teacher of French (associate)

FTS1: French teacher of Spanish (associate)

FTE1: French teacher of English (associate)

FTG1: French teacher of German (consortium)

FTE2: French teacher of English (associate)

STE1: Spanish teacher of English (consortium)

STE2: Spanish teacher of English (associate)

GTF1: German teacher of French (consortium)

GTS1: German teacher of Spanish (consortium)

Concerning the tasks produced by these teachers, two teachers did one task and two teachers carried out six tasks. All of them started with “introductions”, followed by various topics such as “family and friends”, “holidays”, “hobbies”, “environmental issues”, “European issues”, “festivities”, “fashion”, “food habits”, “schools”, “organising a party” etc. As for telecollaboration and language constellations, there were three ELF (two telecollaboration partnerships with Spanish and Dutch speakers, and one with Spanish and French speakers), one Spanish as a lingua franca or SLF (with Catalan and German speakers), one German as a lingua franca or GLF with French and Dutch learners, and two tandem constellations, French/German and Spanish/French. Six teachers were interviewed in French and three in Spanish. For both languages, we will provide the original version of their interview.

To sum up, the case study presents a variety of languages and countries, language combinations, consortium and associate teachers who designed a variety of tasks. The plurilingual, pluricultural setting of TILA is clearly taken into account as all languages can potentially have a status of lingua franca, which is not exclusively the privilege of English.

9.4 ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS

Teachers are all extremely motivated and enthusiastic about TILA and have given much of their energy and determination to implement telecollaboration partnerships within their secondary schools. They believe that intercultural competences are part an parcel of the language curriculum and that they should be developed regarding the more globalised world their pupils will be living in (Questionnaires, Interviews).

The analysis and results will be organised into three parts, what teachers mean by the intercultural dimension, how they relate it to the Tandem or Lingua Franca situations and how they address the development of an intercultural, plurilingual environment through telecollaboration.

It is worth noting that teachers, when expressing examples related to this general topic, usually code-switch when they give examples of cultural specificities of the target language/culture. Teachers present the target culture through anecdotes for snapshots, but present it in a more academic way when using a textbook or applying the curriculum.

9.4.1 WHAT THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION MEANS FOR TEACHERS

These interviews showed a wide range of perceptions of interculturality which was one of the major attractions for TILA for teachers (Derivry-Plard, Sratilaki, Potolia, & Boughnim, submitted).

For Teacher-FTE1, culture has to be presented through documents and particularly for younger learners through visual documents like maps and statistics as they trigger interest and speech from the learners who want to understand the differences they can observe and the interpretation of such differences. Even though the focus of such an approach enables interaction and speaking activities, documents and media organised by textbooks provide a somehow "academic" angle to the cultural dimension (a more learned version of culture "*culture savante*"), which may also overestimate cultural differences relative to cultural similarities. However, culture seems to be understood as cultural knowledge, getting to know about cultural facts of the target culture such as knowing more about geography, history, the arts and so on.

The same kind of attitude towards culture is reported by Teacher-GTF1, as the textbooks and the texts provided are documents to be discussed in class about salient characteristic of the target culture: "*dans le manuel, il y a donc des sujets comme la banlieue, les problèmes sociaux là bas, la francophonie et aussi l'Afrique ou le Maghreb, ce sont des sujets qui reviennent toujours dans les bouquins*" but when one has a learner from this target in class, what is presented in textbooks can sometimes become

clichés²⁵ and this has to be worked on even more with telecollaboration exchanges following a Tandem constellation.

A French teacher in Spain, Teacher-STF1 seems to perceive culture more as social habits, traditions and everyday life rituals, a more “anthropological” view of culture. In that sense, her perception of culture makes her a good match with Teacher-FTS1, a Spanish teacher in France for whom the intercultural dimension is presented whenever learners are comparing their life styles and specific rhythms or pace of their lives.

Teacher-FTE2 uses a lot of videos presenting different English-speaking countries (US, UK, Ireland, South Africa, India ...) to present cultural and linguistic variety within the Anglophone world and he emphasises the power of controversial issues (the death penalty, arm permits, GMOs) as they represent different cultural, social and judicial systems. Therefore they are appropriate topics to develop intercultural communicative skills.

Just like Teacher-FTE2, for Teacher-STE1, the plurality of the Anglophone world has to be presented, and a few textbooks present the differences between American English and British English. The priority is not to use the language in itself to produce these differences, but rather to offer the learners the opportunity to recognise different accents: “*Si si, hay alguno método, algún libro de texto [...] que hablan de diferencias algunas diferencias que hay básicamente entre el inglés americano y el inglés británico, eso se utiliza y después cuando hay listenings, [...] canciones, yo procuro hacer un pocito de, enfocar también las diferencias que hay de pronunciación y cosas con el vocabulario pero no es una prioridad. La prioridad si es ofrecer a los alumnos unos diferentes acento*” . Teacher-GTS1 also agrees with the presentation of different accents as part of the Spanish curriculum, and acknowledges the importance of knowing the different meanings of expressions, for example “*coger un autobus*” meaning something different in Argentina and in Spain.

For Teacher-FTG1, the intercultural dimension is pervading language teaching in all aspects: “*on fait quand même du culturel un peu tout le temps ... de l'interculturel même sans s'en rendre compte*” as this is by definition how to get into a new language. Therefore, the classroom with all its objects and posters is a gateway towards alterity, to lead learners towards new attitudes, to reflect on different lifestyles, representations and clichés. This is also mentioned by Teacher-STE1 outlining the intercultural physical dimension of the classroom. With Teacher-FTG1, the intercultural dimension sounds more complete as it is about sharing attitudes, engaging with texts, images (films for Teacher-GTS1)²⁶ and objects but above all exchanging opinions in order to build one's own critical thinking. In that sense, this French teacher of German agrees with the French teacher of English (Teacher-FTE1) in valuing the exchange of opinions as a salient characteristic of the intercultural dimension in language teaching and learning. Her tasks were particularly successful in engaging German and French learners on interesting topics about

²⁵ Teacher-GTF1 « J'ai une classe, il y a Laura, une française, qui est là dedans et parfois je la regarde et elle roule avec ses yeux pour me montrer oh la la quel cliché! Elle n'aime pas trop ça et je comprends bien »

²⁶ Teacher-GTS1 : “*Pues yo utilizo muchas películas en mis clases de español. Las películas pues es un material perfecto para hablar de diferentes maneras de comunicar, pues de gestos y también vez el ambiente donde viven los personajes. Esto permite mucho, mucho más que los libros de textos*”.

the environment, what they think and do about it. They really learn about different perspectives with the topic. For instance, the notion of a “veggie day” was totally new for French pupils and as it was also controversial in Germany, it produced lively intercultural exchanges.

Even if textbooks are relied on to present cultural knowledge or cultural awareness, teachers like Teacher-GTS1, Teacher-FTG1 or Teacher-STE1 like to bring their intercultural experiences to the class as well. As Teacher-GTS1 said: *“Siempre intento eh:: contarles como es en tal y tal país si conozco este país. He viajado bastante y entonces les cuento un poco mis experiencias”* and *“tu como profequieres también transmitir tu propia experiencia no solamente como se habla español”*.

However, although textbooks are a large part of the resources for secondary-school language teachers, they can also design their own tasks, such as Teacher-FTG1 and Teacher-GTF1 discussing the environment or presenting clothes styles. As Teacher-GTF1 said: *“Et ça je crois que c'était vraiment une tâche réussie. Il y avait des panneaux dans OpenSim où les élèves se montraient avec leurs vêtements préférés et ils ont discuté et là c'était à mon avis une tâche très réussie aussi pour l'interculturalité. Mais ce que j'ai observé c'est que les élèves ils étaient* très vite à remplir les tâches et puis ils ont discuté un peu sur n'importe quoi. Ça c'était encore plus important que la tâche et dans ce discours libre, c'était peut être plutôt interculturel que l'autre.”*

So here, we have the notion that the intercultural dimension is again linked to lifestyles and the way young teenagers dress, and that commenting on the differences and similarities results in an engaging kind of intercultural communication.

His perspective complies with the notion of European citizenship that Teacher-STE1 explained: *“hay una identidad europea o hay una diversidad, somos idénticos, en qué somos idénticos, en qué somos distintos”*. Therefore, the objective of European language teachers is to deal with the intercultural dimension: *“eso básicamente el trabajo fundamental de lo que es la interculturalidad y el enfoque tiene que ser”*.

Teacher-GTS1 also said from his experience of Spanish as a lingua franca with Britain: *“Eso no es un problema intercultural sino un problema más bien social y económico, son diferencias diferentes pero también es una cultura, la cultura de la gente rica en escuelas privadas y la cultura de la gente en escuelas públicas pero no es como yo lo había imaginado antes pero bueno si hablan de sus cosas tienen mucho en común, gustos de música y películas, mascotas, [...], sus amigos, sus hobbies, cosas de la vida cotidiana, sobre eso hablan muy bien y les interesa lo que es los otros. Y se nota que la juventud en Europa tiene un mundo de experiencias común, es lo que yo veo”*.

In this excerpt, there are two interesting ideas:

- The first one means that interculturality expands to all aspects of social life and that the intercultural dimension cannot be restricted to “national differences” but pervades all kinds of social dimensions such as being rich or poor, going to a private or state school etc.
- The other one deals with a media culture that young people have in common and that telecollaboration can foster even more through a common educational experience.

To sum up, teachers have different interpretations of the intercultural dimension:

- Some have a knowledge-based cultural perspective that textbooks provide. Telecollaboration is about getting to know about similarities and differences with partner learners about the target language and culture. They are in phase with the “culture savante”.
- Others think the intercultural dimension is best expressed through telecollaboration discussing similarities and differences in lifestyles, and behaviours and that clichés and stereotypes are to be addressed through these exchanges of different behaviours and attitudes.
- Finally, some teachers think the intercultural dimension is best expressed through telecollaboration exchanging ideas and opinions about controversial issues as they engage interest in different cultural, social, historical and judicial systems.

9.4.2 Tandem / Lingua Franca through the lens of interculturality

However, if textbooks or anecdotal snapshots usually refer to the target culture of the target language, language and culture can be dissociated. For one teacher (Teacher-FTE2) English can be used to know, for instance, more about Chinese students and how English is taught and learnt in China. Learning English no longer means exclusively learning about English-speaking countries cultures (Hu, 2005; Hufeisen, 2006). In Teacher-FTE2’s case, if we get to know more about teaching and learning practices in China; this is nonetheless linked to the fact these Chinese students in the video presented are learning English.

This is an interesting point to consider as TILA offers the organising mode of any TILA language to be used as a lingua franca. Therefore, language and culture are disconnected or dissociated when a French learner speaks English with a Spanish learner, they speak English but interact from their own cultural settings to discuss their own culture or other topics understood through their own cultural filters. This is a salient feature of the intercultural dimension in TILA offering online tandems but enlarging the principle of a strict exchange of matched students in a reciprocity of learning the language and culture of the partner. The Lingua Franca constellation offers exchanges of students learning the same foreign language and therefore getting the possibility to learn about the culture of the partner though the medium of a common foreign language with no necessary link with the cultural dimension of the foreign language itself.

The tandem and the Lingua Franca constellations provide an unprecedented learning and teaching environment as the Lingua Franca mode, which can be more related to real life situations outside class, particularly for English, with TILA on a par with the more classical tandem version working as a model within classes. In fact, the lingua franca mode brings more pluriculturalities into the classroom and suggests a shift of paradigm within language education as the model of the native speaker (NS) on which the tandem mode and its reciprocity of language-culture is based. It is therefore enlarged with the model of the non-native speaker (NNS) on which the lingua franca mode is designed.

However, Teacher-STF1 prefers a tandem situation to communicate with “real” French people and also because she thinks that language is the priority over culture: *“je vise surtout qu'ils puissent*

communiquer par écrit ou à l'oral [...] avec des Français et donc la culture, je n'insiste pas trop“. Conversely, FTS1 would rather appreciate a lingua franca situation as Paris is a very cosmopolitan city and “*there are so many traces of Spain in France*”²⁷. This observation made by Teacher-FTS1 also suggests his understanding of Spanish lingua franca does not dissociate the target language from the target culture. For him, even though French and Dutch learners could interact in Spanish, they will be talking about Spanish culture. There is nothing wrong with speaking or interacting about Spanish culture between French and Dutch learners, but one cannot help thinking that the real encounter of French and Dutch learners might be a bit lost as they will get to know one another only indirectly, possibly being channelled through the objective of the target culture - being closely linked and associated with the Spanish language as if there was no escape from the language - as if one could not be fully accepted as a Spanish learner using Spanish to know more about Dutch culture, or the culture of Dutch learners. From this comment, we wonder about the strong filter imposed by a language curriculum on language teachers to the extent that they do not feel it legitimate to get to know about other people's cultures if the latter are not closely linked to the language they teach. Moreover, the traditional stance of target language only, which has been credo for years is still very strongly at play in this representation as it means a language teacher feels fully legitimate when his/her learners only speak the target language, and talk and learn about the target culture. This representation is in accordance with the French directive on language teaching and learning which does not encourage interdisciplinary language activities: “*Alors, sincèrement je pense que l'idéal pour mes élèves ça serait de s'exprimer en espagnol [...] que ce soit des espagnols ou des polonais ou des britanniques ou peu importe*“.

It is worth mentioning the even more complicated lingua-cultural configuration that Teacher-FTE1 opted for with her Dutch teacher of French. In fact, it was an English-French tandem situation, but English was nonetheless the ELF as her partner was a French teacher from the Netherlands. Here, we have an interesting type of partnership as it was probably not imagined by TILA. The learning environment open to exchanges between European teachers offers this possibility of experimenting with an even more complex intercultural dimension of a telecollaboration partnership. In this instance, the model of the NS is combined with the NNS model: French learners are used as NS of French in communicating in French with the Dutch learners learning French, and Dutch and French learners are both NS of English when communicating through English.

The respective advantages and disadvantages of Tandem vs Lingua franca are also put forward with other teachers.

Teacher-STE2 clearly expressed the views of many teachers (FTE2/STE1/FTG1 ...) about the benefits of a lingua franca constellation: “*Pero cuando trabajas en lingua franca y no hay nativos, los dos estudiantes del par están en igualdad de condiciones y esa situación también es muy motivadora para los alumnos. Ellos ven que los holandeses también dudan a la hora de elegir una palabra, etc... . Juegan en igualdad de condiciones*”.

²⁷ Teacher-FTS1 : « (Paris étant une capitale cosmopolite) il y a également des traces de l'Espagne en France, le musée Picasso ».

Teacher-GTS1 felt that the Native/Non-native relationship that a Tandem constellation entails is a real challenge for shy learners.

However, Teacher-STE2 thinks his leaners have been able to appreciate the change of roles, from a learner to an expert: "*En la primera telecolaboración con Nijmegen trabajamos tandem y la experiencia fue positiva. Mis alumnos hacían un poco de "maestros" de español e intentaban hablar despacio*". Here, we have definitely something to foster, which is exactly what the CEF recommends with the capacity of native-speakers to adapt to intercultural communication (CEF, 2001)

However, doing the same task in two languages should be avoided. It can help understanding and pronunciation as Teacher-STE2 said: "*Las ventajas de trabajar con nativos son obvias: los alumnos escuchan una pronunciación nativa y eso les hace mejorar la suya*"

But, this can be quite demotivating as there is no longer new information to be gained from the exchange: "*Ellos obviamente disfrutaron más cuando empezamos a hacer tareas en inglés. Lo que considero importante es hacer tareas distintas para que los alumnos no tengan la sensación de que están haciendo lo mismo pero cambiando la lengua*" (Teacher-STE2).

However, Teacher-GTF1 also thinks that a Tandem constellation can be unbalanced if there is some kind of tacit agreement with a weak learner of French and a strong learner of German. The learners might eventually chose one language, in this case German which is good for the French learner but not too appropriate for the German pupils learning French: "*Premièrement, pour lingua franca, ça pose peut être un problème parce que les élèves ils sont plutôt tentés de parler la langue qui va mieux pour les deux. Alors si l'élève est faible en français et le Français il est fort en allemand, on va peut être plutôt parler en allemand, et on va négliger un peu la tâche de parler telle ou telle langue*".

So, when both constellations have been explored, it seems to teachers that they should be used as much as possible as Teacher-STE2 said: "*Yo creo que si se tiene ocasión hay que utilizar los dos sistemas*".

On the whole teachers agree that their learners are enthusiastic about the TILA environment as it deals with technologies that belong to the common culture of the learners (chats, BBB and OpenSim) (Lamy & Zourou, 2013) as Teacher-GTS1 said: "*Aceptan inmediatamente que el avatar es la representación de su persona. Esta fase requiere una introducción, una hora algo así pero después [...] ya la barrera no existe, tu aceptas totalmente el tono virtual como el tono para la comunicación y la actuación!*"

Moreover, these technologies allow the intercultural dimension when monitored by the teachers. As Teacher-STE2 said: "*Yo creo que las nuevas tecnologías son el futuro y si además introducen el elemento intercultural pues mucho mejor. En mi opinión el futuro de la enseñanza de idiomas está en proyectos de este tipo*".

The supervision of teachers to help intercultural communication is even more important in OpenSim for Teacher-GTF1: "*par exemple de se dire bonjour et au revoir, et dans le monde virtuel il n'y a apparemment pas de règles, ou normalement, les élèves connaissent plutôt des, des trucs comme des jeux vidéo ou l'autre est un ennemi qu'il faut tuer, je sais pas, et puis ils rencontrent des avatars qui sont des amis, des correspondants et là il faut apprendre aussi de se dire bonjour, merci, au revoir*". With this

excerpt, we can see how teachers have an essential role in sustaining and developing polite communicative behaviours and show the relativity and necessity of such polite attitudes, in particular in intercultural encounters.

There are other intercultural communicative incidents that have been reported by teachers, which highlight the essential role of teachers in developing intercultural skills for communicative encounters.

For example, Teacher-FTE1 had to deal with the cultural shock that her learners experienced in seeing a Dutch pupil with a muslin veil or scarf as this is forbidden in all French schools due to the secularity of the state and law in France. Reactions and the necessary language have to be dealt with in class to elicit what is shocking. Putting words to the situation can help us see whether French pupils share the sense of shock and decide if might be interesting to discuss dress codes in European schools. In such a situation, it is important to let people express in polite ways why they may feel insulted or, on the contrary, liberated by discussing a religious or simply cultural piece of clothing. Preparing young learners to communicate with others is definitely one of the major objectives of education in a more and more diverse world. So teachers have to set the rules of communication as well as accompany their learners to their better understanding of others, in all their diversity.

To build that relationship with others, Teacher-GTS1 rightly remarks that telecollaboration cannot be limited to one task, and that it requires time to build a relationship, to build trust in it as to better grasp otherness: *"Si se sienten más seguros y cómodos"* and *"Pero con más confianza, con el grupo, si trabajas siempre con el mismo grupo, en Inglaterra [...] eso crece la confianza. Es como en el mundo real! Si te encuentres la primera vez ya es así, no hay una diferencia tan grande"*.

To sum up, either tandem or lingua franca constellations lead to the development of intercultural skills but in very different communicative and intercultural modes. Both are necessary to expand the intercultural repertoires of learners and teachers. Moreover, they should be sustained to really develop intercultural competence, as communication with and trust in others need time in order to build a relationship. Multiplying intercultural situations throughout a significant period of time would help both teachers and learners to develop their intercultural skills.

9.4.3 Developing an intercultural, plurilingual environment through telecollaboration

This analysis makes us deal with the limitations of the term “intercultural”, which has also been criticised as implying interaction with two cultures whereas the majority of situations are plurilingual and pluricultural (Zarate et al, 2008; 2011). However, the notion of “inter” is also a very useful term to underline the social and somehow democratic reciprocity of “inter”: its meaning is to relate two entities, to influence and be influenced (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986; 1999; Dervin, 2010, 2011, 2012). Dervin (2011) suggests a fluid dimension of interculturality so as to emphasise the hybridity of self/other and human relations.

As a consequence, researchers are trying to find more precise concepts expressing “inter” and “pluri” at the same time. Intercultural telecollaboration cannot be understood without the depth of the debate around “intercultural” (Dervin, 2012). Intercultural telecollaboration entails taking into account this

general debate about what interculturality is, and there is no denying this is a key dimension of language teaching and learning. However, the notion is certainly not understood in the same ways by researchers and therefore cannot be understood in the same practical ways by language institutions and teachers.

As regards the pedagogical exchanges that teachers working together could benefit from, it is worth noting that teachers mentioned the pleasure of collaborating with their partners but that coaching was also very much appreciated if it was really to support the exchange. For Teacher-FTE2, the telecollaboration coach was really helpful: “on faisait pas de démarche chacun dans son coin [...] voilà, toujours les messages en copie pour être certain d'abord de pas faire deux fois le boulot ou de pas tirer dans deux directions différentes”. Teacher-STF1 did not have such a smooth coaching experience, as she could not get direct access to her English partner, having to pass through the supervision of the head of department.

However, the tandem situation was particularly beneficial for language teachers as they can reciprocally help their partner with language and culture. Teacher-GTF1: *“alors, ça donne un peu de sécurité de travailler avec un professeur de langue native. Quand on crée des tâches ou des exercices, on a toujours quelqu'un qui va les corriger si on a faux et par contre moi je peux aussi vérifier ou corriger des tâches que l'autre propose”*. So an intercultural teaching environment like TILA allows some kind of linguistic and cultural training like a linguistic sojourn that helps to brush up the language and culture with the partner colleague. Teacher-GTF1 shows by a slip of the tongue “giant/géant” instead of “annoying/gênant” that his is really enthusiastic about working with a native-speaker colleague: *“ça peut être un peu géant, euh gênant pardon, que l'autre ne parle pas ou qu'il pense qu'il ne parle pas assez la langue mais pour moi ça ne pose pas de problème. Moi j'apprécie beaucoup s'il y a quelqu'un qui sait corriger s'il faut”*.

To sum up, TILA as an intercultural telecollaborative environment allows teachers to develop their language, cultural and intercultural repertoires as it works as a direct in-service training for language teachers. Through these language and cultural exchanges, longer-term partnerships also have the potential of developing common pedagogical repertoires.

9.5 CONCLUSIONS

Teachers either consortium or associate and whatever the language taught have been very enthusiastic about the intercultural dimension that TILA offers.

Even though they mean different things about the intercultural dimension for their learners, they see the importance of developing intercultural telecollaboration for addressing a more and more diverse world and for fostering European citizenship as their learners will be part of a European and global world.

They see that either tandem or lingua franca constellations should be explored hand in hand as they offer different intercultural situations. With a tandem constellation, the pupils are both learners and experts of the language-culture. With a lingua franca constellation, the pupils are all learners of the target language and culture but are also informants of their own language and culture to others.

Intercultural telecollaboration also requires time for their learners to build a relationship and develop their intercultural skills. This can also be said for the teachers, who benefited from a safe and egalitarian kind of online in-service training to enhance their lingua-cultural repertoires as well as their pedagogical ones. Coaching teachers is also an essential dimension of the process of working together and should not be discarded if such a sustainable European platform is put in place. Coaching and training could be supported by the writing of experience journals and diaries to foster reflection and reflexivity on teachers' lingua-cultural and pedagogical repertoires (Byram, COE, nd; Causa & Chiss, 2013; Lin-Zucker, 2011; Molinié, 2006; Moloney et al, 2012; Peterson, 2010; Zarate, 2008/2011). In his way, a complex meshing of teachers' inter-relationships for developing a European educational space for language learning and teaching could emerge and be put forward.

NB: We are incredibly grateful to all the teachers who spent so much time and energy to the project and we thank them very much.

10 ANALYSIS OF TEACHER ROLES IN TILA TELECOLLABORATION

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10.1 SUMMARY

Research objectives

- To carry out a study on teacher roles in telecollaboration with a view to providing teachers with a guide on best practices in this type of foreign language teaching based on real teacher/student practice.

Approach

- A taxonomy of hypothetical teacher roles will be arrived at using state-of-the-art literature on teacher roles in telecollaboration.
- Once the pilot experience is over, teachers will be given questionnaires in order to determine the actual roles that they adopted and the approximate time spent on each during the different phases of the task.
- Teachers will also be asked to give their views on their roles in the piloting process.
- The results will be compared with our initial hypotheses drawn from Hootstein (2002), O'Dowd (2013) and Dooly (2010).
- Finally, the results will be used as input to suggest improvements, modifications of teacher roles and where further training for teachers might be needed.

Findings

Our results mainly reveal that the teachers in the project dedicate most of their time organizing tasks, solving technical problems and monitoring students' behaviour. Nevertheless, teachers also mediate to facilitate and improve students' interaction by resolving linguistic, interpersonal and intercultural problems (Hootstein, 2002; O'Dowd, 2013; Dooly, 2010).

10.2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The main objective of this study is to carry out an analysis of teacher roles in telecollaboration with the final aim of providing teachers with insights into what the best practices in this particular environment might be. We reflect on the different roles teacher may adopt in telecollaborative exchanges and try to find out which of those roles are considered most important according to the teachers participating in the project.

The methodological approach implemented here is based on a taxonomy of teacher roles adapted from the literature on the topic and the administration of questionnaires followed by the analysis of the responses by several teachers in our project. The results will also serve as input to suggest improvements, provide possible modifications of teacher roles and to improve teacher training by taking into account different variables such as pupils' needs, task requirements, learning environments, etc.

10.3 TEACHER ROLES

10.3.1 Introduction

The TILA project's main aim is to use telecollaboration to enhance secondary school students' language skills and for them to acquire competence in intercultural communication. The main objective of this study is, therefore, to explore the different types of teacher roles that exist in telecollaboration and particularly in the context of the TILA project. One of the most important tasks in the TILA project is to develop a series of mainly synchronous tasks to improve students' communicative ability in linguistic terms and also their communicative intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Müller-Hartmann, 2007). The main secondary school partners in our project come from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Holland and Spain. Students' ages range from thirteen to eighteen but most of the students are from fourteen to sixteen years of age. The partnerships are both of the lingua franca type (Seidlhofer, 2001) and of the tandem type. An interesting aspect of our project is that these lingua franca type exchanges include languages other than English, such as Spanish and French. It is also interesting to note that the Dutch students –as Dutch is not one of the target languages- always act as “false” natives when they do English/Spanish tandems with Spanish students. This is also the case with German students in partnerships with Spanish students.

10.3.2 Telecollaboration

Telecollaboration in foreign language teaching involves the use of both synchronous and asynchronous tasks to facilitate cooperative work between students who are geographically distant (Dooly, 2010). In the telecollaboration context, it is obvious that the roles teachers have cannot be the same as the ones teachers have in more traditional settings (Hootstein, 2002; O'Dowd, 2013; O'Dowd, 2015). The onus is on the fact that students are now placed at the centre of the teaching-learning process.

There are other reasons to use telecollaboration. One of them is that to communicate through computers, mobile phones and other devices is becoming more and more important and also very common nowadays not only when it comes to talking to other native speakers of one's language, but also in cases when people communicate using a foreign language. This has a direct consequence in teaching because both teachers and students need to adapt to this new way of communication and need to become familiarized with these new forms of communication. Indeed it would be strange for students not to have the opportunity of using the foreign language in computer and mobile-device mediated communication. Teachers are in charge of implementing and guaranteeing the acquisition of the new competences that have arisen in this new era of electronic communication. They need to transform their roles so that they can now become facilitators and mediators and thus move away from the rather authoritative, teacher-centred role they had in the past. However, we should not over-emphasise the difference between online and in-class teaching as many teachers use communicative and task-based learning in tradition classroom settings. However, blended learning does lend itself to an approach that centres more on the student. One way of putting the focus on this type of approach is to make use of the advantages brought about by telecollaboration. Individuals can learn language using computers, tablets and such to connect to the internet and platforms such as *Second Life* but the type of telecollaboration we are interested in here are in setting such as schools. In this sense, telecollaboration:

involves the application of global computer networks to foreign (and second) language learning and teaching in institutionalized settings under the guidance of a language cultural expert (i.e., a teacher) for the purposes of foreign language learning and the development of intercultural competence (Belz 2003, 2).

According to Belz (2003), partners in a telecollaborative project are learners in different countries who, using the Internet, have common access to a great variety of communication tools (video chats, audio chats, blogs, wikis, forums, etc.) that will allow them to enhance “social interaction, dialogue, debate and intercultural exchange” (Belz 2003, 2). This is particularly appropriate for those students who do not have the opportunity to engage in face-to-face interaction with native speakers of the target language.

10.3.3 The online context

The Moodle platform is the environment where most of our work takes place. We have created different courses for all the exchanges taking place between the different schools. People visiting the page can also find a series of resources on online learning, teacher training, materials, tasks, etc. This environment is also used for the sharing of official documents and other materials. Some of the resources are open and available for the educational community even if they are not TILA members.

BigBlueButton (BBB) and *OpenSim* are the tools that we use for meetings between consortium partners and also for student interactions. BBB (<http://www.bigbluebutton.org>) is an online tool, embedded in the Moodle environment. It includes video, public and private chat and a space where documents can be shared. This tool is particularly useful for the purposes of our project since students can share the task on the screen at the same time as they are involved in oral and/or written interaction. We have also used this tool for meetings among teachers and in online teacher-training sessions. Finally, this platform allows us to record the telecollaborative sessions, which is essential for researchers to gather data that they can later analyse.

Lastly, our virtual world TILA, which is a part of *OpenSim*, offers a wide range of possibilities not only for the meetings with TILA staff, but more importantly for student interaction. We have created several worlds to resemble the different regions participating in the TILA consortium. For instance, there is a recreation of an area in Valencia where avatars can sit down in a “horchateria” and try the typical “horchata” drink. They can also visit a typical Parisian café called Amelie Café. The objective of virtual worlds is to add authenticity to the online exchanges. We have found that students really enjoy visiting this world and that they like the type of tasks that they can carry out in this environment. When they take the form of avatars they can perform many different actions, like walking, running or flying around, talking to students from other countries. There are also many other activities they can perform like creating posters or other types of constructions that can enhance the tasks being carried out by making them more interesting and probably meaningful.

10.3.4 Teacher roles

In the context of telecollaboration the main role of teachers is not to overtly teach a language; rather they provide the students with the opportunity to acquire it. They facilitate acquisition by giving students the chance to interact with peers from other countries and other cultures using a task-based learning approach. The production and implementation of tasks is an essential part of our project so their design is of the upmost importance for us. Our tasks are made up of three different phases:

1. the preparatory phase, where students are introduced to the topic and they work with the vocabulary and the structures they are going to have to carry out in the main phase of the task. This phase serves mainly to activate background knowledge, to prepare students to make predictions, to help to promote schema, to anticipate possible problems and, in sum, to prepare students for the telecollaborative exchange.
2. the main phase, where the actual online exchange takes place. This is when students take the main role, whereas the teacher is just the facilitator. Autonomous learning takes place in this phase and collaborative work is emphasized.
3. the post phase, where students and teachers analyse the results of the exchange. It is at this point when teachers can receive feedback from the students and when they provide students with their own feedback. Many often, teacher take the opportunity here to provide their students with some expansion work that can be carried out with the rest of the class, for instance, asking the students who participated in the exchange to report to the rest of the class what they did and what they learned. It is also in this phase when most of the teachers take the opportunity to raise awareness of intercultural aspects.

Following Hootstein (2002), the main role of a telecollaborative teacher is, generally speaking, that of a facilitator, a person who has an administrative, a technical, an academic and a social role at the same time. Nevertheless, it is clear that these roles are not and cannot always be delimitated since sometimes a particular problem might need the intervention of the teacher making use of two different roles. For example, when a student is faced with a problem related with technical constraints of a particular piece of software, this might affect both the technological and the pedagogical parts of the interaction and therefore the teacher will have to look for solutions that might require performing both roles at the same time (the academic and the technical one).

We have adopted Hootstein's (2002) distinction of teacher roles and also draw on those of O'Dowd (2013) and Dooly (2010), to create the following categorization:

- **The programme director or administrative²⁸ emoderator:** she directs the agenda, timetable, deadlines, etc. and has to decide on the types of tools to be used. Furthermore, she is in charge of liaising with other teachers, partners and students to promote and advance students' performance and of trying to avoid or solve problems. She must also keep students up-to-date and on course regarding deadlines. It is also her duty to modify task objectives and/or deadlines if problems arise. Finally the programme director is also in charge of determining levels and of organizing and maintaining peer exchange structures.
- **The technical director or technical emoderator:** he must help students to become comfortable with systems and software and also prepare learners to overcome technical difficulties. He has to instruct students in the use of platforms, systems and software and/or inform them where to find information from technical personnel or online. He must also guarantee students' safety and privacy by selecting the correct software and advising on its use. In order to do this, teachers must understand the affordances and constraints of specific applications (Compton 2009) and must become autonomous with regard to ICTs.
- **The instructor or academic emoderator:** she guides learning in a problem- and project-based learning environment (Dooly 2010, 294). Her main task is to facilitate communicative

²⁸ In each section we will use a different gender pronoun to refer to the roles.

competence (Compton 2009, 81-84) in order to ensure high quality online interaction (Lai, Zhao and Li 2008, 90) and to provide authentic communicative input. She must make sure that pedagogy takes precedence over technology. At the same time, another one of her duties is to design tasks, activities and organize exchanges at the same time as she instructs learners on peer correction procedures. The academic role also includes helping students to reflect on cultural aspects of their interactions and facilitating intercultural understanding. One way to guarantee this is to identify the relevance of the task from both a cultural and a linguistic point of view and by providing students with the necessary communication strategies. Included in this role we also find the explanation of learning outcomes, rubrics and evaluation processes and objectives. This way, she can situate the tasks and the activities within the students' overall curriculum. Another facet of this role is to provide scaffolding for students, linguistic and cultural feedback and make sure she allows students' creativity and choice in use of language (Chapelle and Hegelheimer, 2004). Finally, she should monitor students' academic progress in order to pre-empt possible problems and assess their performance taking into account shared meaning construction and new communicative skills (Dooly, 2010, 295).

- **The social director or social emoderator:** he must create and foster a collaborative environment. His role is to promote "community building skills" (Compton 2009, 77) and enhance empathy between peers. At the same time, he has to make sure that the student is in the centre of the telecollaborative process and that intercultural issues are a central part of said process. This could be done by using strategies such as taking on board students' suggestions, opinions and criticism and acting as troubleshooter with regard to possible cultural misunderstandings.

10.3.5 Teacher roles in TILA

In section 1.3.4. we looked at the roles teachers may have to adopt in telecollaboration. Through our dialogue with our teachers in the Spanish cluster in meetings, teacher-training session and information gathered from reports and surveys we have found that the main roles teachers report having in the TILA project are as follows. We must take into account that the percentages refer to the time taken up by each role –which probably points to the relative importance of each.

Programme director or administrative emoderator:	40%
Technical director or technical emoderator:	15%
Instructor or academic emoderator:	30%
Social director or social emoderator:	15%

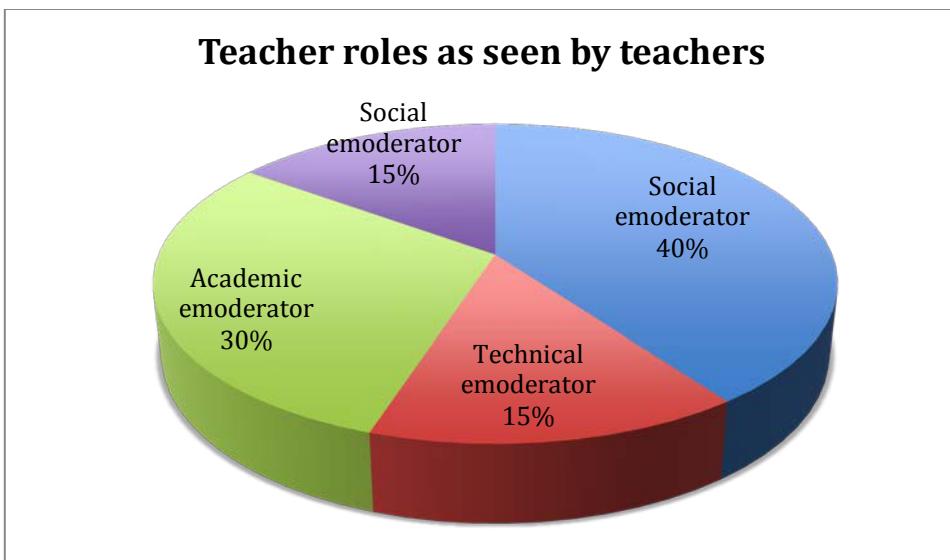


Figure 1: Teacher roles as seen by teachers

According to the teachers interviewed, administrative tasks take up most of the teachers' time. In particular, they mentioned the task of setting up of exchanges between students. The technical side of telecollaboration takes up less of the teachers' time as we had foreseen since on many occasions teachers are helped by their school technicians. The teachers recounted that the academic work they do consists mainly of creating tasks or modifying previously existing ones with an onus on highlighting intercultural aspects of communication and also on exploiting the results of the actual exchanges with the students in the post-task phase. As social emoderators according to the teachers, their main task is to maintain a communicative ambiance.

These results are backed up by our observation of recordings of student interactions. They show that most teachers try to keep a very low profile during the actual interaction between the students and that, especially at the beginning of the sessions, teachers are involved in technical troubleshooting. Basically, most of the academic work carried out by teachers takes place before and after the exchanges in the preparation of tasks, preparatory phase and post-phase work with the students.

10.4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of our study demonstrate that teachers' roles in telecollaboration are quite different depending on the task phase. The preparation of telecollaborative tasks would be very similar to the work teachers traditionally do to prepare their lessons, especially if the learning in these classes is task based. Preparatory phases and post-phases are also similar to the kind of work the teacher does in more traditional classes. In these two phases teachers and students are involved in something akin to traditional face-to-face interaction in the classroom. In the pre-phase handouts need to be prepared and the students need to become acquainted with the language they might need or might encounter. In the post phase teachers might give feedback to students or receive it. Sometimes students might be

required to produce work that has to do with their encounters with their foreign peers such as blogs or reports. Of course, these phases may be carried out online occasionally. In those cases the setting and the interaction is obviously different from more traditional settings. However, the main difference between telecollaboration and traditional language teaching is found in the main phase, that is, when online exchanges actually take place. In those cases teachers are never at the centre of the process: rather, their main role is to facilitate and monitor to guarantee high quality online interaction.

The results we gathered using our short questionnaire were acquired during the piloting phase of the TILA project. It may be that, as the project has evolved from a mainly synchronous approach to a more balanced synchronous/asynchronous focus, things will have changed regarding this role. Indeed, the burden of technology is much greater in synchronous communication compared to the asynchronous type. So, the time taken up by technical issues might be less than we have found. Also, the administrative role can fluctuate quite a lot depending on how easy or difficult or easy it is to find partners and set up a partnership. Here personal issues may help or hinder the setting up of the partnership. We hypothesise that teachers involved in a partnership with another school without the extra work inherent to belonging to a project will have considerably less administrative work. In the follow-up phase of our project secondary school teachers have been given a greater role in the creation of tasks and so this would also affect the amount of time used in academic tasks. More research needs to be done on the social facilitator/moderator role as not enough credit is given to teachers as cultural experts who can defuse cultural misunderstandings, among other facets, rather than just language teachers. However, we can see that at the moment this role is on a par with what might be considered a secondary role for teachers, that is, technical facilitator/moderator. We are already carrying out further research into teacher roles to see if there are differences between the pilot and follow-up phases.

Telecollaboration is a perfect opportunity for highlighting intercultural awareness and above all intercultural communicative competence. Students can be made aware of intercultural issues (the intercultural dimension) without actually meeting people from other cultures (Belz et al. 2002, 10). Intercultural issues can be discussed in class and differences between cultures can be reflected upon. This type of learning, however, is unlikely to involve the students and would be just seen as another academic subject without much linkage to real life and real people. Thus, it is our view that the only way to acquire intercultural competence is by meeting and communicating with speakers from other countries. Only by actually experiencing the challenges that interacting with people from other cultures involves can students learn to be more tolerant of other people's "beliefs, values and behaviours" (Belz et al. 2002, 9) and, what is more, to reflect on their own culture. Acquisition of intercultural competence may be guaranteed by meeting members of the target culture in their own country but this is extremely expensive and only possible for a small number of students. The only other possibility is through telecollaboration which, although it might require a certain amount of expenditure on computers, is much cheaper than sending students abroad. We could say, thus, that telecollaboration is the only real and viable way forward if we want the majority of our students to have the opportunity to acquire intercultural communicative competence and at the same time improve their language skills. Therefore, the research we are carrying out may prove useful if we are to discover the most appropriate way of implementing telecollaboration in secondary schools and that means finding out what knowledge and skills teachers need to make telecollaboration a success.

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APPENDIX WITH QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

The appendix includes the following questionnaires and interview guidelines

- Learner background questionnaire
- User experience questionnaire for learners
- Anxiety questionnaire
- Teacher questionnaire
- Questionnaire on teacher roles
- Guiding questions for interviews with learners and teachers

Student Background TILA ENG

*1. Course

*2. Institution

*3. Date (DD/MM/YY)

*4. Language

 English German Catalan French Spanish

*5. Level (CEFR)

*6. Your name (First name and Surname)

*7. Age

 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 Over 20

*8. I am

 Female Male

You and language

*9. Did you learn any foreign language prior to secondary school

 Yes No

*10. Do you like learning languages?

 Yes No

Student Background TILA ENG

*11. Which languages do you learn at school?

	Yes	No
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
French	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other: do please specify here any other languages you learn (at school)

*12. What activities do you like best in class?

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
listening	<input type="radio"/>				
reading	<input type="radio"/>				
speaking	<input type="radio"/>				
writing	<input type="radio"/>				
grammar	<input type="radio"/>				
vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>				
pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>				
learning about other people	<input type="radio"/>				

*13. Do you learn languages outside class?

	Yes	No
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
French	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*14. If yes, what activities do you mostly undertake in the foreign language?

	1 (never)	2	3	4	5 (always)
listening	<input type="radio"/>				
reading	<input type="radio"/>				
speaking	<input type="radio"/>				
writing	<input type="radio"/>				

Student Background TILA ENG

15. Do you get good results?

	1 (very bad)	2	3	4	5 (very good)
English	<input type="radio"/>				
French	<input type="radio"/>				
German	<input type="radio"/>				
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

*16. Have you ever been in a country where the languages you learn are spoken?

	Yes	No
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
French	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*17. Do you like meeting and speaking to people from other cultures?

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (very much)

*18. How were your experiences with people from other cultures?

- 1 (very bad)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (very good)

*19. Did you feel that language was a barrier to get to know people from other cultures?

- 1 (completely disagree)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (completely agree)

Student Background TILA ENG

20. If it was, what did you do to overcome communicative problems?

[Large empty text area for answer]

Technology at your school

*21. Do you make use of the following digital tools for the different courses you follow at school?

	1 (never)	2	3	4	5 (always)
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>				
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>				
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>				
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>				
Skype	<input type="radio"/>				
Whatsapp	<input type="radio"/>				
Touch	<input type="radio"/>				
Ping	<input type="radio"/>				
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>				
Wikis	<input type="radio"/>				
Google +	<input type="radio"/>				
Google hangout	<input type="radio"/>				
Google drive	<input type="radio"/>				
Edmodo	<input type="radio"/>				
Mahara	<input type="radio"/>				
Moodle	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

[Large empty text area for answer]

*22. Do you use educational apps at school?

- 1 (never)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (always)

23. If you use educational apps do please specify which ones you use for which course

[Large empty text area for answer]

Student Background TILA ENG

*24. Do you use mobile devices in your courses at school?

	1 (never)	2	3	4	5 (always)
smartphone	<input type="radio"/>				
tablet / Ipad /	<input type="radio"/>				
Ipod	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

*25. Do you think that digital applications should be used more at your school?

- 1 (completely disagree)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (completely agree)

*26. Do you think that the use of digital tools may contribute to learn languages better and more?

- 1 (completely disagree)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (completely agree)

You and technology

*27. Have you got internet connection at home?

- Yes
- No

*28. Have you got a computer at home?

- Yes
- No

*29. Have you got a smartphone?

- Yes
- No

*30. Have you got a tablet/Ipad/Ipod?

- Yes
- No

Student Background TILA ENG

*31. Do you use the following tools to communicate with your friends or family?

	1 (never)	2	3	4	5 (always)
Email	<input type="radio"/>				
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>				
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>				
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>				
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>				
Skype	<input type="radio"/>				
Whatsapp	<input type="radio"/>				
Touch	<input type="radio"/>				
Ping	<input type="radio"/>				
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>				
Google +	<input type="radio"/>				
Google hangout	<input type="radio"/>				
Google drive	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

User experience TILA English

*1. Name (First name and Surname)

*2. Nationality

*3. Age

- 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 Over 20

*4. I am

- Male
 Female

*5. School

*6. Teacher

*7. Class

*8. Interaction type

- Tandem
 Lingua Franca

*9. Target language

- English German Catalan
 French Spanish

*10. Session date (DD/MM/YY)

User experience TILA English

Please specify to what extent you disagree or agree with each of the statements below: Tick ONE of the boxes to the right.

Please decide spontaneously; don't think too long about your decision. It is your personal opinion that counts. There is no wrong or right answer!

*11. (A) Technological quality

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It was easy to START the tool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easy to USE the tool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SOUND was good (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
VIDEO was good (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

*12. (B) Preferences and likes

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like to communicate and interact in this tool environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to meet students from other countries in this tool environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to learn in this tool environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

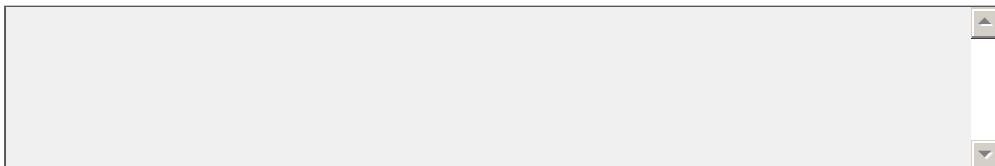
Comments

User experience TILA English

*13. Which telecollaboration tool(s) did you use?

- BigBlueButton
- Skype
- OpenSim
- Other (please specify)

- Forum
- Wiki



User experience TILA English

*14. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like to be visible in a video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like to see the others in a video	<input type="radio"/>				
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Comments

User experience TILA English

*15. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like to be an avatar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to speak with an avatar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

User experience TILA English

*16. (C) How did you feel in the interaction?

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I felt comfortable in the interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt I was in the same place with the others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt satisfied with the way I communicated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the tool environment affected in my communication positively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt part of a group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed communicating with students from another country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could have done better with more time to think	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could have done better in my native language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found it motivating to communicate with students from another country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt nervous when speaking in the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

User experience TILA English

*17. (D) What was IMPORTANT for you in this interaction?

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for me to be understood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to understand the other student(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to speak/write correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to express what I wanted to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to speak fluently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to learn about the other students' life and culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to get to know students from another country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

User experience TILA English

* 18. (E) How do you characterize your performance?

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was able to make myself understood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to understand what the other student(s) said	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to speak correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to express what I wanted to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to speak fluently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to learn something about the other students' life and culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

* 19. (F) Overall assessment

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoyed the online task	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found the online task interesting for interaction with peers of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found the online task useful for my language learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The online task helped me discover new things about the other culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would suggest to a friend to take part in this kind of online collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to use online tasks with students from other countries more often	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

Anxiety Questionnaire

1. Name**2. Age**

- 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Above 20

***3. I am**

- Male
 Female

4. Name of your school**5. Please indicate the number of the session that you have just completed.**

- Before the session
 Session 1
 Session 2
 Session 3
 Session 4
 Session 5
 Session 6
 Session 7
 Session 8
 After the project is finished

***6. Language(s) that I practised during the session**

- English
 French
 German
 Spanish
 Catalan

Please specify to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Choose one of the options.

Try to decide spontaneously; do not overthink your answers. Your personal opinion is what matters, there is no right or wrong answer!

*7. What telecollaboration environment have you used in the session?

BigBlueButton (voice)

OpenSim (voice)

Written chat

Skype (voice)

Forum

With webcam

Wiki

Other (please specify)

***8. I learn a lot by communicating in the foreign language with native speakers.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***9. I like to communicate in the foreign language with native speakers.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***10. When I communicate in my foreign language with students from other countries, I learn more than when I communicate with native speakers.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***11. I think that my foreign language competence is good enough to communicate with native speakers.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***12. I can express myself correctly in the foreign language.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***13. I understand (almost) everything that my partner says in the language that I'm learning.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***14. I get nervous when I communicate in the foreign language.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***15. I worry a lot if I make mistakes when I communicate in the foreign language.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***16. I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language with someone who is also learning it, than with a native speaker.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***17. I get nervous when I don't understand every word that my exchange partner says.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

***18. I am afraid that my exchange partner will laugh at me when I communicate in the foreign language.**

- 1 I strongly disagree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 I strongly agree

Please answer the following two questions, if you have used the webcam during the sessions.

19. I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language when my exchange partner cannot see me through the webcam.

- 1. I strongly disagree
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. I strongly agree

20. I feel more at ease communicating in the foreign language when I don't see myself on the webcam.

- 1. I strongly disagree
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. I strongly agree

***21. What is your mother tongue?**

TILA LANGUAGE TEACHERS

This questionnaire is aimed at getting to know you better and your teaching environment. The questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete and is part of TILA' research proposal. In order to make fewer mistakes in collecting data, we ask you to give your name and we assure you of full confidentiality of the results. Thank you.

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOURSELF

First Name :

Family name :

1. Where you work: Country _____ Town/City _____

2. Are you ? male , female

3. Years of experience as a language teacher (Choose ONE)

0-4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5-9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10-14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15-19 <input type="checkbox"/>	20-24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. Highest relevant qualification to Language Teaching (Choose ONE)

Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/>	Master's <input type="checkbox"/>	Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Language (s) you teach (Tick one or more)

Catalan <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>	French <input type="checkbox"/>	German <input type="checkbox"/>	Spanish <input type="checkbox"/>
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6. Type of institution you teach in most often (Choose ONE)

Private <input type="checkbox"/>	State <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
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7. The age of the learners you teach most often (Choose ONE)

11 or younger <input type="checkbox"/>	12-15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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8. Have you ever worked in a foreign country ? Yes No
If, yes, for how long ?

Less than a year	A year	One to 2 years	3 to 5 years	More than 5 years
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Section 2: About technology (Section in April Questionnaire/ could be used again?)

9. Please indicate on the scale below how often you use computer/Internet technologies in your classes? 1=never; 5=everyday

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

10. If you do not use computers/Internet technologies in your classes, please state why. Please tick as many statements as apply to you.

Statements	Yes	No	Not relevant
Classrooms are not equipped with PCs for the teacher.			
There are not enough computers for the students.			
There are not enough computer suites			
Computer suites need to be booked in advance.			
The school's Internet connection is not very good			
I don't like using technology in my lessons.			
I don't like the students going on the Internet in class time.			
I don't feel confident enough to use technology in my lessons.			
Other (please specify)			

11. What computer/Internet technologies do you use in class?

Tools	Every day	1 to 5 times a week	1 to 5 times a month	1 to 5 times a year	Never
Blogs					
Wikis					
YouTube					
Facebook or other social networking sites					
Chat applications					
Twitter					
Mobile phones					
Skype					
Virtual Worlds					
Do you use online bilingual dictionaries ?					
Do you use online monolingual dictionaries ?					
Do you use online translators or translating aids ?					
When writing, do you use the spell checker ?					
Other (please specify)					

12. Is there a technician who can assist you?

Section 3: About your school (Section in April Questionnaire , maybe we could close these questions)

13. Are there any specific regulations regarding the use of the Internet in the classroom that your school must abide by?

14. Do you have any technical concerns around the use of the Internet or computers in the classroom? Please elaborate.

15. How intercultural is your school? Circle ONE number for each statement below to give your opinion (Paris)

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Agree Strongly
Intercultural and cultural dimensions are a priority in the language curriculum	1	2	3	3	4
Your school encourages partnerships with EU or non EU schools	1	2	3	3	4
A lot of colleagues try to develop partnerships, e-twinning and exchanges in my school					
A lot of language teachers in my school are willing to get a language assistant					
It is easy to get a language assistant in my school					
We get support to innovate for intercultural exchanges from school administration					
We get support to innovate for intercultural exchanges from colleagues					
Intercultural competence is an important student outcome					

Section 4 : About teaching (Paris)

16. General Teaching : Could you rank in order of importance the different curricular areas of your language courses ? 1 = least important to 5 = most important

Areas	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar					
Vocabulary					
Spelling					
Phonetics					
Listening					
Speaking					
Reading					
Writing					
Culture					
ICC (Intercultural Competence)					

Other:

16. Teaching culture or ICC

How often do you use the following teaching activities on culture ? (Sercu, 2005 ...)

	never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Evey teaching day
I tell my pupils what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture	1	2	3	4	5
I tell my pupils why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s)					
I talk to my pupils about my own experiences in the foreign countries					
I talk with my pupils about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries					
I ask my pupils about their experiences in the foreign countries					
I ask my pupils to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language					
I use videos, CDs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign cultures					
I ask my pupils to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign cultures					
I decorate my classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture					
I comment on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the foreing language materials I am using in a particular class (how the media of the foreign country promotes the image of the target culture)					
I ask my pupils to independently axplore an aspect of the foerign culture					
I ask my pupils to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture					
I touch upon an aspect of the foreign culture regarding which I feel negatively disposed					
I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom					
I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom					
I ask my learners to use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to compare meanings					
I ask my learners to use translating aids to compare translations					
I ask my learners to use spell checkers to compare their effectiveness					

Other:

This completes the questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to respond.

SURVEY ABOUT TEACHER ROLES IN TILA

Dear teacher,

We would be very grateful if you could answer this very short survey about teacher roles in TILA. We have divided the roles of teachers doing telecollaboration into four, following Hootstein (2012), (see below for more information on what these roles entails).

We would like to know:

How much time (approximately) does each of these roles occupy with regard to the total time dedicated to TILA? The total should come to 100%.

Very briefly also, we would like to make any comments you think are relevant about teacher roles.

The roles are the following: (please write the percentage next to each role below)

1. The programme director or administrative emoderator ____%
2. The technical director or technical emoderator ____%
3. The instructor or academic emoderator ____%
4. The social director or social emoderator ____%

Comments: (optional but we would be grateful if you have time)

INFORMATION ON ROLES

According to Hootstein (2012), the main role of a teacher is, from a holistic point of view, a facilitator, a person who is (at different times or simultaneously) an administrative, technical, academic and social emoderator. In more detail the four roles are:

- THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR OR ADMINISTRATIVE EMODERATOR directs the agenda, timetable, deadlines, etc. and decides on types of tools. Among her functions she has to liaise with other teachers, partners and students to facilitate and improve students' performance and to try to avoid or solve problems. She is also in charge of keeping students up-to-date and on course with regard to deadlines. She also has to modify task objectives and/or deadlines if problems arise or persist. Determining levels is another function of this type of role and finally organizing and maintaining peer exchange structures.

- THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OR TECHNICAL EMODERATOR helps students to become comfortable with systems and software and also prepares learners to overcome technical difficulties. He must instruct students in the use of platforms, systems and software and/or inform them where to find information from technical personnel or online. He must also make sure they protect students' safety and privacy by selecting the correct software and advising on its use. In order to do this, teachers must understand the affordances and constraints of specific applications (Compton, 2009) and must become autonomous with regard to ICTs.
- THE INSTRUCTOR OR ACADEMIC EMODERATOR guides learning in a problem- and project-based learning environment (Dooly, 2010: 294). Her main role is to facilitate communicative competence (Compton, 2009: 81-84) to ensure high quality online interaction (Lai, Zhao and Li, 2008: 90) and to provide authentic communicative input. She must guarantee that pedagogy takes precedence over technology. At the same time, she has to design tasks, activities and exchanges while instructing learners on peer correction procedures. The academic function also involves helping students to reflect on cultural aspects and facilitate intercultural understanding. This can be done by identifying the relevance of the task from both a cultural and a linguistic point of view and by providing students with the necessary communication strategies. Included in this function we also find the explanation of learning outcomes, rubrics and evaluation processes and objectives thus placing the tasks and the activities in the curriculum. An academic emoderator must also provide scaffolding for students, linguistic and cultural feedback and make sure she allows students' creativity and choice in use of language (Chapelle and Hegelheimer, 2004). Finally, she must monitor students' academic progress in order to pre-empt possible problems and assess their performance taking into account shared meaning construction and new communicative skills (Dooly, 2010: 295).
- THE SOCIAL DIRECTOR OR SOCIAL emoderator is in charge of creating and fostering a collaborative environment. His job is to promote community building skills (Compton, 2009: 77) and enhance empathy between peers. At the same time, he must make sure that the student is in the centre of the TC process and that intercultural issues are a central part of that process. Some of the ways in which this can be done include taking on board students' suggestions, opinions and criticism and acting as troubleshooter with regard to possible cultural misunderstandings.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK INTERVIEWS WITH PUPILS AND TEACHERS

The interview refers to one or several telecollaboration exchanges the respective pupil or teacher was involved in. Focus is on the experiences and observations regarding

- type and quality of the telecollaboration environment
- type and quality of communicative interaction
- value/impact of the communicative interaction for intercultural insights
- value/impact of the communicative interaction for language learning

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK INTERVIEWS WITH PUPILS

Your overall impression

- How did you like the telecollaboration exchange? (scale 1 – 5)
- What did you like best?
- What did you NOT like?
- Do you have other preferences?

Telecollaboration environment

- Was the technological quality sufficient for the task?
- Was the technology appropriate for the communicative interaction?
- Did you enjoy working with this kind of technology? (scale 1 – 5)
- Would you have preferred a different kind of technology? (Which one and why?)

Communicative interaction

- Were you satisfied with the communicative interaction? Why (not)? (scale 1-5)
- Did you like the topic(s)? Why (not)?
- Did you encounter any communication problems? (Please specify)
- Were you satisfied with your contribution in the communicative interaction? Why (not)?
- If tandem: (a) Did you like to communicate with a native speaker? (b) How was your communicative interaction affected by the tandem constellation? (e.g. mismatch between native speaker and non-native speaker proficiency, accommodation to non-native speaker partners' proficiency level, production and learning support by native speakers)

- If lingua franca: (a) Did you like to communicate with another non-native speaker? (b) How was your communicative interaction affected by the lingua franca constellation? (e.g. more relaxed and less worried about making mistakes, stimulating effects)

Intercultural communication

- Do you feel you learned something about the other country/culture and/or the other pupils?
 - concerning things that are different
 - concerning things that are the same
- Do you feel you and the other pupils communicated in (slightly) different ways? (e.g. direct/indirect; polite/impolite, formal/informal, friendly/unfriendly)

Foreign language learning

- Do you feel the telecollaboration task had positive effects on your language and communication proficiency? Why and in what respects?
- Do you feel the telecollaboration task will have positive effects on your language and communication proficiency if it is continued? Why and in what respects?

Preparation and support

- Is it important (for you) to prepare for the telecollaboration?
- How did you prepare for the telecollaboration event?
- Was the preparation particularly difficult / time-consuming?
- What kind of preparation or support would be particularly helpful?

Outlook and suggestions

- Which aspects of the telecollaboration exchange should be changed and improved?
- Which topics and tasks would be particularly interesting?
- Would you like to participate in such a telecollaboration again?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

Your overall impression

- How did you like the telecollaboration exchange? (scale 1 – 5)
- What did you like best?
- What did you NOT like?
- Do you feel the pupils might have had other preferences?

Telecollaboration environment

- Was the technological quality sufficient for the task?
- Was the technology appropriate for the communicative interaction?
- Did you enjoy working with this kind of technology? (scale 1 – 5)
- Would you have preferred a different kind of technology? (Which one and why?)
- Did the pupils enjoy working with this kind of technology? (scale 1 – 5)
- Would they have preferred a different kind of technology? (Which one and why?)

Communicative interaction

- Were you satisfied with how the pupils communicated? Why (not)? (scale 1-5)
- Do you feel the pupils were satisfied with how they communicated? Why (not)? (scale 1-5)
- Did the topic(s) work for the communicative interaction? Why (not)?
- Were there instances when the communication did NOT work? (Please specify)
- What was your own role in the communication?
- Were you satisfied with your role? Why (not)?
- If tandem: (a) Did your pupils like to communicate with native speakers? (b) How was the communicative interaction affected by the tandem constellation? (e.g. mismatch between native speaker and non-native speaker proficiency, accommodation to non-native speaker partners' proficiency level, production and learning support by native speakers)
- If lingua franca: (a) Did your pupils like to communicate with other non-native speakers? (b) How was the communicative interaction affected by the lingua franca constellation? (e.g. more relaxed and less worried about making mistakes, stimulating effects)

Intercultural communication

- Do you feel your pupils learned something about the other country/culture and/or the other pupils?
 - concerning things that are different

- concerning things that are the same
- Do you feel your own pupils and the other pupils communicated in (slightly) different ways? (e.g. direct/indirect; polite/impolite, formal/informal, friendly/unfriendly)

Foreign language learning

- Do you feel the telecollaboration task had positive effects on your pupils' language and communication proficiency? Why and in what respects?
- Do you feel the telecollaboration task will have positive effects on your pupils' language and communication proficiency if it is continued? Why and in what respects?

Preparation and support

- Was it difficult (time-consuming) to prepare the telecollaboration event?
- What kind of preparation was particularly difficult / time-consuming?
- What kind of preparation / support was essential?

Outlook and suggestions

- Would you use this telecollaboration format again?
- Which aspects of the telecollaboration format should be changed and improved?
- Which topics and tasks would be particularly suitable?