

DISSERTATION

**Learner Support in Telecollaboration:
Peer Group Mediation in Teletandem**

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List of Abbreviations

UNESP	Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho
JGU	Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz
CLDP	Centro de Línguas e Desenvolvimento de Professores / Language and Teacher Development Centre
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
L2	Second language, foreign language
L1	First language, native language
AS	Mediation session
ALL	Advising in language learning
PGM	Peer group mediation
FL	Foreign language
TL	Target language
LB	Learner Biography
I	Interview
LLS	language learning strategies
S ² R-Model	Strategic-Self-Regulation Model
SI	sociocultural-interactive
TT	Teletandem

Note on Transliteration

Signal	Example	Description
[]	[laughs] [parts incomprehensible]	Comments of the transcriber (to indicate non-verbal behavior, incomprehensible parts, and to give further explication)
...	...	Small breaks during speech
Capital letters	eu não entendo o que é um OBJETIVO de aprendizagem	Speaker raising his/her voice to emphasise (in a whole word or syllable)
:	Eu quero saber fala:r nesse tipo de conte:xto em alemã:o	Speaker extends vowels to give emphasis.
(?)	e quero conseguir uma boa nota (?)	Transcriber was not sure if it really was this word she heard.

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Preamble

Every experience in life is the result of a combination of many small things acting together – people, objects and places, memories, feelings and plans (see Van Manen, 1990). In a research study situations are created to experience something from which you want to learn, something you want to understand better, or gain greater insight into something that puzzles you. Just like John Dewey's *principle of contiguity of experience* (Dewey, 2007), previous experiences have an impact on your present experiences and the latter will have an impact on the experiences you will have in the future. Experiences are part of a person's history, not only concerning their personal lives but also the participation of people in research studies. Working with people as part of a research study means working with different histories and different views on life, and remembering to bear this in mind while evaluating the study (Connelly, 1988, p. 8). In his book *Teachers as curriculum planners. Narratives of experience* Connelly discusses the importance of personal knowledge resulting from the personal experiences of an individual's history. One way to express personal knowledge and experience lies in the form of narrative. "Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future." (p.8)

During my undergraduate studies at the University of Mainz, Germany, the academic approaches in research and academic writing styles I became acquainted with were of positivistic nature. However, having commenced the readings for my Master's thesis and then, later, my PhD dissertation project (Bell, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Charmaz, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2009; Mruck & Breuer, 2003), I began to realise that I had to use approaches for qualitative research in order to start, carry out and describe my own research project in which the participants' reflections and actions as well as the researchers' constitute the core of the whole study.

The purpose of this work is (a) to describe my research study, (b) to re-create and to reflect on my experiences gained throughout this study and (c) to provide readers with substantial thoughts and challenges regarding the future evolution of learning foreign languages in tandem, i.e. possibly contributing to academic discourse in this area of education. I will do so by beginning with my own story as a student practitioner of teletandem and later as a university instructor and teacher of the German language. In these introductory pages, in sum, I will narrate the story of how I came to focus on this as a research subject and its subsequent research questions, how I conducted the study and obtained the results as an attempt to contribute to the

existing knowledge in the area of tandem learning. With this goal in mind, I have also remained conscious of the fact that ‘[e]ach publication is merely a [small] contribution to a continuous professional conversation’. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 25)

My story

How did I come to conduct research in the area of foreign language learning through tandem: an autonomous, reciprocal and collaborative learning process between two learners with different native languages (Brammerts, 2001) or at least proficiency in different languages (Telles, 2009), so that they are able to learn with and from each other?

My interest in second language acquisition was sparked by a six month stay in a south Brazilian city as part of a high school exchange programme at 16 years of age. After having studied English, French and some Spanish in school (German is my native language) since the age of 11, I also had to learn Portuguese. Fortunately, I had always enjoyed foreign languages and possessed a natural ability of learning them with ease. After a few months of immersing myself in the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture, I spoke quite well, i.e. I was able to communicate fluently with Brazilian native speakers about common subjects such as home, school, hobbies, movies and other things that make up a 16 year old girl’s universe. Occasionally, I was even mistaken for a south Brazilian immigrant which I took as a compliment as they did not see the typical tourist in me who would stammer and struggle with the language. After a stint in performing arts, I decided to study foreign languages with the goal of obtaining a university degree as a translator.

While attending a Portuguese and English translation course of my undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Translation, Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the *Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz* in Gernersheim, Germany, I came into contact with language learning in tandem. For one semester, I participated in a face-to-face tandem with a Spanish exchange student and during my 7th semester I was offered to be part of a teletandem project (an online tandem project via Skype) with a Brazilian student located at our partner university in Brazil, the *Universidade Estadual Paulista* (UNESP) in Assis. At the time, I believe I was among the first students in Germany who took part in a so called ‘teletandem’ with a Brazilian native. It was a fascinating experience. My teletandem partner was a very nice and intelligent girl with a good sense of humour who was very interested in studying German and learning about the German culture. Vice versa, I wanted to broaden my Portuguese language skills and keep in contact with the culture I had gotten to know some years before during my school

exchange. Over the course of two semesters, we held 40 teletandem sessions, which totalled over 100 hours of German or Portuguese interaction online and today, six years later, we are good friends and continue to stay in touch.

Since teletandem was an official pilot project at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and knowing that I was the ‘guinea pig’ everybody would observe in order to establish the project’s success, I invested a tremendous amount of time in my teletandem partnership. Later I worked with my Portuguese teacher and project coordinator to create a website and to help other teletandem partnerships with my experience and ‘personal practical knowledge’¹ (Connelly & Clandinin 1988, p. 25). This work inspired the idea of writing my diploma thesis on the teletandem experience, and I completed it in December 2007. The thesis provides an overview of the history of tandem learning, reaching from the 1960s in Europe to the computer- and internet-assisted form of teletandem today, including a discourse on learner autonomy and learning strategies. It concludes with a practical report on my teletandem partnership, as one of the first teletandem interactions at the time.

After receiving my diploma degree² I returned to Brazil to teach German – which by that time had developed into a passion as a result of the teletandem project during my final semesters. I also gained initial professional experience as an assistant teacher at my faculty and through an internship at a translation agency in Shanghai, China. The latter helped me decide once and for all that I did not want to pursue a career as a full-time translator. The translator’s work then and now seemed too solitary to me due to the fact that it predominantly revolves around oneself, the computer and the text. While I still enjoy the occasional translation assignment, it was definitely not a full-time option for me owing to me being an outgoing, communicative and open-minded person who thrives through interaction with other people. Teaching my native language and culture turned out to be surprisingly enriching on a personal level. In addition, it matched my interest in other cultures and foreign language learning very well.

In Brazil, I spent a year teaching students from various fields of study areas who wanted to learn German at the *Universidade Estadual de Campinas*. During this time, my colleagues

¹ Connelly and Clandinin (1988) identify personal practical knowledge as a profound influence on teachers’ perception of a lived curriculum, both personal and professional. They state that what teachers know and believe about teaching cannot be separated from who they are as individuals and what they do. “Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher’s past experience, in the teacher’s present mind and body, and in future plans and actions” (p. 25). Thus, this type of knowledge is found in the practice of people, which in my opinion do not necessarily need to be teachers, but can be any kind of professional or even a student, as it is in this case.

² Before the restructuring process of academia in Europe (referred to as the ‘Bologna Process’), an undergraduate degree in Germany was known as “Diplom”, “Magister” or “Staatsexamen”. The degree I received was a Diplom-Übersetzer degree, a degree for a certified translator, which is similar to the Master of Arts degree today and allows direct entrance into a PhD programme.

learned about my experience with teletandem learning and wanted to try it with the partner university *Universität Wien* in Vienna. Due to a number of different reasons which are not relevant to this study and therefore will not be discussed, we were unable to move beyond the initial contact. Nevertheless, I benefited from this new teaching experience in Brazil by contemplating second language acquisition in general. Naturally, this was a common topic of conversation with my colleagues. The majority of them continuously conducted research in foreign language education and therefore provided me with the relevant body of knowledge relating to graduate studies. Through my teletandem partner's university, UNESP in Assis, I became acquainted with several other teletandem researchers who were not only Brazilians researching at the teletandem centre but also French and North American researchers. These face-to-face interactions also provided input as we discussed and reflected on the teletandem project by sharing ideas and experiences relating to its different facets and outcomes.

As a result of the personal contact with a research team, learning about the processes at the teletandem laboratory in Assis, Brazil, and reflecting more deeply on my own teletandem experience as well as teaching and learning, I concluded I wanted to be part of this scientific community again – however, this time it was to be more consciously and with greater reflection. At the time of writing my diploma thesis, I was not fully aware that a research community existed around the project. I was looking for direct contact with the teletandem team in Assis, and, as a teacher of Portuguese and German, I found myself in a position of being able to combine all these preferences by researching German-Portuguese teletandem. The research questions and the focus of my study still had to be identified though. This turned out to be more challenging than originally anticipated. There were so many intriguing things to look into relating to the topic of teletandem, but, at the same time, there was also a great deal of study done by other researchers.

Initially, I wanted to carry out a teletandem study in business contexts, i.e. attempting to implement the learning of languages via teletandem in international companies as I had had experience in teaching Brazilian employees German who worked for large German companies in Brazil and wanted to spend some time in the German parent company. Working with these students made me recognise that for many workers in big companies there existed a need for language learning and reflection on cultural values. Eventually, I came to realise that this was a project for more than one person given its financial and organisational aspects. At that point, I returned ‘to the roots’ by reflecting on my own teletandem experience and started to identify aspects which would be compelling for further research. I recalled the first few months of my teletandem period, when I had practically experienced my learning process on my own. During

that time, I had to test a large number of different things, e.g. revise my pedagogical approaches, identify learning objectives, test learning strategies as well as how to use the internet for didactic purposes effectively. Later, by guiding students through other teletandem partnerships and through their collaborative learning experiences, I learned about the importance of a person (a teacher, an advisor, a tutor) who can help students during a teletandem process as challenges arise. I now know that this is not an entirely new concept. The concept of *counselling* or *advising* has a research background spanning a number of years (see Helmut Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001; Schmelter, 2004). However, learner support was something which was still ‘missing’ – at least from my point of view. I felt the need to offer help (and my own experience as a teletandem practitioner) in order to optimise the learning of others and to resolve issues arising during partners’ teletandem communication. These problems sometimes led participants to quit their whole teletandem process. This then marked the impetus for the first outline of my research project.

This is my story, written to provide you with an overview of what led me to this point – conducting a research thesis, writing about its outcomes and, thus, pursuing a contribution to the academic knowledge on advising for language learning and foreign language learning in teletandem. In the following chapters you will read about the work which I have completed over the past six years. The last four years have been greatly influenced by my work as a full-time lecturer of German language and researcher at UNESP Assis. This has been instrumental in helping me to better understand the educational context in which my study has been carried out and has provided me with many more experiences in relation to teletandem and language mediation.

Assis, 29.03.2016

Introduction

Rationale and significance of the study

The internet has undoubtedly changed the lives of those people who have access to it. Younger generations can no longer imagine a life without being connected with family and friends via social networks and instant messenger programmes. Certainly, life without the ability to immediately search for any information via billions of websites on the World Wide Web would be quite different. This transformation is not only restricted to our personal lives (personal relations and information seeking), but also has a political, social and pedagogical impact on the realm of education, including kindergarten, primary and secondary school, university and many other educational institutions. The internet has turned out to be a crucial tool of communication – it is so easy nowadays to talk to people from all over the world and different cultures at any given time.

Foreign language competencies and intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997) have become increasingly necessary. In a world in which more and more people communicate and cooperate with each other, there seem to be just as many who hurt each other because of cultural and religious reasons. Young's observation made back in 1996 seems to be more relevant than ever considering the armed conflicts in different countries across Africa and Eastern Europe which lead to huge flows of refugees into other countries: "The dilemma of the global age is that, while we have finally discovered that we are one people who must share one precarious world, we are profoundly divided by race, culture and belief and we have yet to find a tongue in which we can speak our humanity to each other" (Young, 1996, p.2). According to Young, each culture should try to modify itself to the extent necessary for it to "recognise differences, to acknowledge the *prima facie* validity of other cultures, to incorporate some degree of tolerance of cultural diversity, and to discover some common ground in the new intercultural space" (Young, 1996, p. 3). Intercultural communicative competence, thus, is of utmost importance in achieving cooperation and understanding on a global scale.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (Candelier, M., et al., 2012), for instance, emphasise the importance of "plurilingualism and pluricultural competence" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). Learners should develop their ability to apply their linguistic and communicative skills across various languages and situations. And this should not only apply to contexts of training and preparation of the work force in international administration, industry and business management, but should primarily pursue communicative and ethic goals, in all educational contexts, such as elevated sensitivity towards the other, more tact and empathy

in personal encounters, more tolerance, and, considering certain self-reflexivity, the capacity for relativisation of one's own position (Volkman, 2002, p.14).

Therefore, many foreign language educators have attempted to utilise the potential of network technologies to enhance and enrich traditional classroom activities (blended-learning contexts) or even substitute them (distance-learning contexts). "The opportunities offered by engaging learners in online collaborative project work with members of other cultures have been identified as being an authentic and effective way of preparing learners for the complex yet enriching experience of foreign language and culture learning" (O'Dowd, 2007, p. 3).

There are many different terms for online collaborative projects such as *online intercultural exchange* (O'Dowd, 2007), *cross-cultural keypal project* (Kabata & Edasawa, 2011), *e-tandem* (Brammerts & Little, 1996), *desktop videoconferencing* (Wang, 2007), *internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education* (Belz & Thorne, 2006), *telecollaboration*, and probably many more. Essentially, all of them refer to activities which engage language learners in interaction in authentic communication situations and collaborative works with partners from other cultures by using online communication tools (O'Dowd, 2007). One form used in telecollaboration is synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC) which has the potential to create new social environments in which to develop not only language skills but also interactional competence and intercultural competence.

One of these SCMC telecollaboration projects is the so-called *Teletandem Brasil – Línguas Estrangeiras para todos*³ project (Telles, 2006, 2009). Considering the different forms of language learning in tandem, teletandem is a form of distance tandem or e-tandem⁴ which uses free VOIP technology⁵ and an instant messaging service such as Skype or Google Hangout in order to pair native or proficient speakers of different languages to help each other to learn the respective language of the partner collaboratively. In sum, teletandem is a term which was developed in the context of the *Teletandem Brasil* project to denominate synchronous distance tandem using voice, text and webcam images, combined with linguistic and cultural objectives as well as a semi-structured framework but consisting of mainly free activities, focussing on conversation, with the possibility of learner support⁶. This mode of telecollaboration is usually promoted by an educational institution (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014).

³ Teletandem Brazil: Foreign languages for all

⁴ Generally, the term e-tandem refers to electronic tandem (Bower & Kawaguchi, 2011; Brammerts, 2001a; Cziko, 2004), i.e. tandem via electronic media such as e-mail, chat, telephone, sms, videoconferencing etc. In some cases, the term only refers to e-mail tandem (Vassallo & Telles, 2009).

⁵ Voice-over IP, i.e. audio calls or video calls using an internet connection.

⁶ A similar project called *Tele-Tandem®* was developed by the Franco-German Youth Association (DFJW/OFAJ), however, the tandem exchange activities rather focus on e-mail and face-to-face tandem in primary and secondary schools in Germany and France.

The benefits of a teletandem project are easy to establish: a) authentic and real communication opportunities with native or proficient speakers from other cultures; b) promotion of learner autonomy; and c) fostering of intercultural competence through the contact with learners of other cultures. However, learners are often not used to working in an autonomy-promoting learning context and experience difficulties developing their autonomy. After intense research studies in the area of learner autonomy, Little (1999) stated that “even university students were unlikely to come to tandem learning by e-mail with a fully developed capacity for autonomous learning” (p.4). This is why several authors highlight the fact that a greater benefit from tandem learning can be obtained when it is embedded in a larger structure of formal learning (Little, 1999) or accompanied by specific learner support settings (Brammerts, 2006; Schmelter, 2004). Teachers involved in the *Teletandem Brasil* project have also discovered that not all of the participants derived benefits from their learning with the partner in the interactions and that some partnerships failed after the first teletandem sessions (Fernandes & Consolo, 2010; Garcia, 2010; Santos, 2008).

After my engagement in the Portuguese-German teletandem project on the German side during my undergraduate studies at *Johannes Gutenberg Universität (JGU) Mainz*, I mainly focussed on the aspect of learner support⁷ in teletandem. During the project’s first year, no specific learner support was offered on the German side⁸, and on the Brazilian side, only informal learner support was implemented at *Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) Campus Assis*⁹. I was wondering if a more structured learner support could be put in place on both sides, and whether this would have a positive impact on the stability of tandem partnerships and the outcomes of the participants’ learning processes. Studies on learner support in face-to-face tandem learning (both individual and peer group settings) have already shown some results confirming this hypothesis (see Brammerts, Calvert & Kleppin, 2001; Helmling, 2001). But could these findings be transferred to the virtual tandem context (teletandem being one of them), in which the partners are usually distant to each other and in which communication/interaction seems more non-committal than in ‘real life’?

⁷ I am using ‘learner support’ as an umbrella term for different settings of learner support in language learning which are also denominated as advising, counselling, coaching or mediation. In section 2.1 I will further explore differences in the terms used for learner support. Until then I will use the umbrella term ‘learner support’. If a cited author uses another term, I will use this accordingly.

⁸ A few years later, Augustin (2012) developed a learner support for teletandem called *virtual supervision* which is described in her dissertation about the Teletandem Project carried out at JGU Mainz.

⁹ Whereas at UNESP Campus São José do Rio Preto so called *mediation sessions* (term borrowed from the Vygotskian concept of mediation) for teletandem participants were carried out regularly and researched (Salomão, 2008). Today, the term *mediation sessions* for learner support within the Teletandem Brasil project has already vernacularised.

Similar to Pomino (2011) who conducted research in advising tandem partners in e-tandem contexts, I was profoundly interested in the peer group learner support as it had received very little academic attention (Elstermann, 2014c; Helmling, 2001); to me it seemed to be a productive setting in relation to reflection on and the exchange of learning experiences in its specific tandem context. Meeting with several peers with the same language learning experience (in the setting of conventional classes at university or in teletandem sessions) would generate more input for discussion and reflection than individual advising sessions solely with an advisor and advisee. Those meetings tend to be more informal to some extent. In addition, the focus on the hierarchical relation between advisor and advisee is reduced and divided more equally between the peers. Experienced advisors know about this risk of possible power imbalances in individual advising sessions, which is why non-directive behaviour of the advisor or coach in most settings is preferred (Augustin, 2012; Mehlhorn et al, 2005; Mehlhorn & Kleppin, 2006; Spänkuch, 2014). Nevertheless, as will also be shown in the data from this study, the advisor is usually seen as solution-giver or a type of teacher from whom directions for the learning process are expected. Another advantage of peer group learner support is time. Due to many other academic commitments, advisors often do not have much time per week to offer individual advising sessions which last approximately 60 minutes each. In a peer group session, important items (such as corrective feedback, preparation of tandem sessions, setting of learning goals, etc.) can be discussed at least at an introductory level. Consequently, only a small amount of time remains to cover individual concerns of the participants in peer group settings.

During my first teletandem experience in 2007/2008, I was able to benefit from conversations with a classmate who was also taking part in a Portuguese-German teletandem. Usually, I discussed my thoughts on the experience with her as well as any technical and didactic-methodological problems regarding our teletandem partnerships. When we reached out to our project coordinator about these issues, we felt insecure and often found ourselves frustrated with the responses. Adding to this was the assumption that our project coordinator, who was just as new to the undertaking as ourselves since we had started it all together, had not participated in any teletandem sessions at the time and, therefore, could not understand some of our common issues, especially when technical troubleshooting. It was out of this personally unsatisfying situation that my research interest in learner support in the language learning in teletandem context arose. As I had enjoyed and benefited from the informal conversations with my classmate, I was particularly interested in peer group settings.

Scope of the study

*Peer advising or mediation*¹⁰ is one form of learner support in language learning which, until recently, has not been the subject of many academic studies. Helmling (2001, 2006) developed a peer group advising setting with a group of French-German tandem learners (face-to-face tandem) at the Goethe-Institut Paris. Kao (2012) examined the effects of peer advising between university students in the roles of tutors (more experienced learners) and tutees (less experienced learners) who were studying the same university course. In the case of Helmling's experience, which served as the basis of my own research, the peers had roughly the same level of experiences (however, of different types that is) in tandem learning.

As only a small amount of research had been carried out on peer group settings, I was primarily interested in establishing a similar setting for peer mediation in the teletandem context, which meant, for instance, that only half of the teletandem partners, i.e. from one institution, would be present at the meetings. I wanted to know more about the interactional and personal development of the learners and the mediator in the peer group mediation sessions, especially in regard to language learning in teletandem and autonomy development. I believed that peer group mediation settings could be improved and better adapted to the teletandem context if I gained greater insights into (a) the events in the peer group mediation sessions and (b) the learners' and the mediator's individual mindsets. In fact, a form of peer group mediation currently takes place after each institutional teletandem group interaction at UNESP Assis, which was the research object of Funo (2015).

Considering the above presented factors, this dissertation presents a research study in which peer group mediation sessions have been put in place as support for learners of German who were practising their foreign language in a German-Portuguese teletandem project. For my research project, I conducted peer group mediation (student attendance was voluntary) in addition to individual Portuguese-German teletandem sessions. At regular meetings the participants and I, as the mediator, discussed factors relating to teletandem, foreign language learning, and learner autonomy which either the participants or myself deemed important or necessary for reflection.

¹⁰ In German, Helmling (2001) used the term *angeleitete Peergruppen-Arbeit* (guided peer group work) for which, to my knowledge, no specific term in English has been established so far. Therefore, I have used the terms advising, which is a common term for this type of learner support, and mediation (which is used in the Brazilian context with learner support in peer groups) as synonyms at this point. A discussion about the terms and concepts is given in section 2.1.

My research questions were as follows:

- ✓ Which impressions, beliefs, and questions regarding their language learning and learning in teletandem are expressed by learners in the peer group mediation sessions?
- ✓ What is the role of the mediator? How do they conduct and inform the peer group mediation sessions for teletandem?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of a peer group mediation setting?

These questions are quite basic and broad. However, I have chosen these due to the fact that little research has been carried out regarding learner support in peer group settings. In addition, my initial interest was to obtain an overview of this form of learner support by focusing its participants: the learners and the mediator. Although there is a range of studies on the mindsets and actions of advisors, coaches or mediators available, the majority of these were carried out within individual advising settings (Bartle, 2001; Jamieson, 2001; Kelly, 1996; McCarthy, 2012; Pemberton, Ho, Toogood, & Ham, 2001; Peuschel, 2006; Stickler, 2001b; Wilczynski, 2001). In contrast to this, this study intends to map an initial approach of what can be considered peer group mediation and, therefore, aims to establish a basis for further research on this form of learner support.

As mentioned above, I in the role of the mediator accompanied the learners of German during one semester of individual teletandem interactions with German learners of Portuguese. The mediation sessions took place bi-weekly and usually had a main subject that guided the peer reflection. The interaction between the peers and the mediator was audio-recorded (and transcribed) and served as the main source of data for this study. Additional data was collected through a learner biography which all participants completed at the beginning of the project; the learners were also asked to keep learner journals about their learning of German in teletandem, and a final questionnaire was filled out by the participants as well. The latter forms of data served as secondary data to add specific information relating to participants, for example, and to confirm or refute the findings of the main data.

Contributions of the study

This study contributes to different areas of knowledge: advising/mediation in language learning, foreign language learning in telecollaboration projects, especially teletandem, synchronous computer mediated communication and teacher education.

In the area of learner support in language learning, this study opens the discussion on one form of learner support which, up to now, has received little attention but is becoming

increasingly commonplace: *peer group mediation*. Therefore, this study offers a conceptualisation of peer group mediation settings that can be further tested and improved upon. Besides, this study sheds light on the role of the mediator in this specific type of setting and provides some answers in relation to questions such as: Does the mediator require the same pedagogical and contextual conditions as in individual advising settings? What are the mediator's responsibilities? Learners' perspectives of their language learning processes and of the language learning context in the peer group mediation session may help to improve this type of mediation session. Each group and each learner is different. It may be possible to identify frequently occurring characteristics through different studies on learners within the same context (higher education, Brazilian university, etc.). Then, mediators and coordinators can be better prepared for handling this kind of learner or type of learning. Especially with regards to the relatively new area of advising/mediation in the Brazilian academic context¹¹, this study is intended to make a major contribution to further discussion and research in this area.

As far as telecollaboration between language learners is concerned, this work contributes a presentation of one model of learner support (peer group mediation) which can serve as an example or starting point for further projects aimed at using or developing learner support settings. There are many studies on telecollaboration projects, but a large proportion of them do not focus on specific types of learner support. This study reflects on ideas for future telecollaboration projects in order to implement learner support in their learning activities.

In the realm of language learning in teletandem and more specifically in the *Teletandem Brasil* research project, this study contributes to the first deeper understanding of the peer group mediation sessions. Academic attention to this subject was first given a few years ago, in 2010, but, to this day, there have only been two studies which have decisively focused on the work of the mediators (Funó, 2015 and this dissertation). This study discusses important terms and concepts in the field of advising, coaching or mediation in language learning. This discussion is contributing to a deeper understanding of different concepts held in the different participating countries and cultures. In Europe, a large number of contributions to advising and coaching in language learning can be found which are based on Roger's humanistic counselling approach. The Brazilian concept of mediation in language learning – as the term suggests – is grounded on the Vygotskian principles of mediation and zone of proximal development (ZPD). Having

¹¹ To my knowledge, the first articles about advising in language learning such as the forms described in this dissertation have been published in Brazil since 2009: about mediation/mediação (Telles, 2009; Salomão 2010; Funó, 2015), about language advising/ aconselhamento linguageiro (Magno e Silva et al 2013, 2015) and advising in language learning/ consultoria de aprendizagem de línguas (Marques-Schäfer et al., 2015).

established the differences between these approaches, dialogue between project coordinators and mediators around the world may be facilitated.

This study also describes how different learner support settings can be implemented in telecollaborative projects such as teletandem, in regular classrooms and in various autonomous learning contexts. The participants in this study were all Brazilian pre-service teachers. As will be shown, the results suggest that pre-service teachers should be trained in these alternative support settings so that they are able to use and implement learners' support for autonomous learning in their careers at schools and other educational institutions. To a certain extent, this study might also contribute to the general discussion on autonomous learning and learner support which has been growing rapidly in Brazil during the past few years (Cunha & Magno e Silva, 2014; Garcia, 2012; Luz & Cavalari, 2009; Luz, 2010; Nicolaides & Fernandes, 2000).

A note on the transculturality of this work

It has been known for some time that we are conscious of the fact that the idea of homogenic and separate cultures no longer applies. The German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch introduced a new concept of seeing culture today, that of *transculturality*, because “[c]ultures today are extremely entangled with and penetrate one another” (Welsch, 1994, p. 23). The term transculturality (according to the double meaning of the Latin *trans*) demonstrates that today's idea of cultures goes *beyond* the old idea, and that this happens because cultural determinants *cross* cultures, so that they are characterised not by clear delimitations but by entanglements and similarities (Welsch, 2010, p. 42). “Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, and are found in the same way in other cultures” (Welsch, 1994, p. 23).

This phenomenon is also visible in academia. As a consequence of the mobility of academics from all over the world, universities and research centres become more and more international. Bi- or multicultural scholars with specific migratory experiences bring sensitivity to cultural differences to their work places (Dietrich, Smilovski & Nünning, 2011, p.2). This reality leads to the imagination of a special dimension of scientific work that is bound neither to territorial borders nor to concrete institutions and, thus, to a place which could be called a ‘global space of discourse’ (Dietrich, Smilovski, & Nünning, 2011, p. 2). In this space, intellectuals, thinkers, and scholars can act as global actors and cultural differences can be solved or at least put aside. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of this idea is not that easy: it is through mobility and meetings, where academics with different scientific traditions come together, that it becomes clear how difficult it is to simply transfer knowledge to other

contexts. The arduous work of cultural translation is always required (Dietrich, Smilovski & Nünning, 2011, p.3). Concepts of one culture inevitably come in contact with “pre-existing concepts, categories, institutions, and practices [of another culture] through which they get translated and configured differently” (Chakrabarty, 2008, p. xii).

In the above-mentioned sense of transculturality and clash of different academic traditions and cultures, I see myself as a PhD candidate, researcher and world citizen and, therefore, my research project was highly influenced by different cultures and traditions.

I am German, I was born in Germany and have also completed my entire academic education (school, undergraduate and graduate studies) in Germany; thus, my main academic thinking or ‘intellectual style’ (Galtung, 1981) is influenced by a Teutonic tradition¹². For the past five years, I have been living, working, researching and publishing at a public university in Brazil, i.e. one with Brazilian academic requirements.¹³ My PhD project was mainly based on German academic literature but was carried out as part of a Brazilian research team and within a Brazilian learning context. In addition to this, in order to reach both the German and the Brazilian academic communities (and my two supervisors, each from one of the two mentioned countries), I am writing this dissertation in English.

The transcultural situation surrounding my project (and to a certain extent myself) confronted me with several challenges: Having experienced both (or to some degree even three) cultural and academic contexts that work with language learning in tandem and advising/mediation, I was uncertain when it came to deciding how to work with the desiderata of the different contexts. The German ones or the Brazilian ones? I actually chose to try to cover both. This choice had a substantial effect on the chapter about tandem learning, for instance, which became considerably more extensive than it would have been, had I only taken the German research landscape on tandem into consideration. Many authors (Bechtel, 2003; Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; Brammerts & Little, 1996; Schmelter, 2004, amongst others) have written about language learning in tandem. With this in mind, it would have been possible to summarise their findings and merely suggest further readings by other authors. As the German literature on the topic is little known in Brazil due to linguistic barriers, I wanted to allow access to more information in regards to language learning in tandem for Brazilians who read English.

¹² Johan Galtung (1981), in his essay on structure, culture and intellectual style in academia, develops a typology of four intellectual academic styles: saxonic, teutonic, gallic and nipponic. These terms were chosen to refer to styles that are dominant in countries such as Germany and Great Britain but are not reduced to those countries.

¹³ There are many differences that can be found starting with low impact factors such as formation of academic texts to more complex aspects such as different styles of academic writing (expressions, syntax, style).

In contrast to this, the section about teletandem (the newer version of tandem) contains a in-depth synopsis of a number of different research projects which were carried out in Brazil and published in Portuguese. Once again, these works are not easily accessible due to the language barrier; they have not been widely read by researchers outside of Brazil who may be interested in the new developments in this version of tandem learning.

The same applies in parts to the chapter about learner support. Especially the individual advising context was researched and described by authors of advising projects in German universities and schools (and, of course, also in other countries such as France, the UK and, recently, Japan), but whose papers are rarely accessible by non-speakers of German. On the other side, a new approach to advising has been developed and is currently being researched (also alongside this dissertation) within the *Teletandem Brasil* project based on Vygotskian concepts¹⁴ such as mediation, zone of proximal development and scaffolding, the results of which may not make it to Europe in order to complement the academic discussion about learner support for language learners, once again due to language barriers.

In summary, I would like to emphasise that these transcultural aspects, which informed the different phases of this work, justify several decisions I made throughout the research and writing process, making this work a transcultural product which is directed to the public of different cultures. As Dietrich, Smilovski and Nünning (2011, p. 10) state, the work of a scholar of humanities does not only consist of a neutral acquisition and exchange of information, but requires socialisation within a community and the transmission of a certain community moral which, in turn, is represented performatively in the scientific work. Thus, each scientific argumentation reflects a certain relationship with a real or imaginary public – which is also the case in this dissertation.

And finally, I would like to cite Dietrich, Smilovski and Nünning again on another aspect which I consider very important: “When getting involved in a cultural encounter, simultaneously one gets involved in a dynamic, from which a complete return to ‘one’s own’ is no longer possible” (Dietrich, Smilovski & Nünning, 2011, p. 5, my translation¹⁵). In this sense, I think this and future academic work of mine will always be influenced by several academic traditions and ‘intellectual styles’. It will be an ongoing task to closely analyse each academic context in which I publish a paper or deliver a presentation in order to adapt my findings to the specific context, without, however, being too restrictive.

¹⁴ Vygotsky’s sociocultural theories are also cited in relation to advising in language learning by Mynard 2012.

¹⁵ Original: “Wenn man sich auf eine kulturelle Begegnung einlässt, lässt man sich zugleich auf eine Dynamik ein, aus der keine vollständige Rückkehr zum ‚Eigenen‘ mehr möglich ist.“

Organisation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 and 2 provide a discussion of relevant theories in relation to the study. Chapter 1 describes the teletandem learning context. It examines the definitions of tandem learning and gives a brief description of the history of tandem learning and the different existing forms of tandem. The chapter particularly focuses on the most recent form of tandem, the teletandem, which is tandem learning via online communication tools such as Skype, for instance. It will provide insights about one project in particular, the *Teletandem Brasil* project (Telles, 2006, 2009), describing in detail the project development and research conducted within the framework of this project, as this was the resource for this study's collection of data.

In chapter 2, I present a detailed overview of learner support in language learning. The chapter provides a discussion on definitions and terms in greater detail, as the use of terms in relation to learner support is still not unified. As this study has a strong cross-cultural character, concepts of specific learner support settings from different countries and cultures are compared and discussed. In addition to this, characteristics of different learner support setting such as individual advising sessions or peer group mediation sessions are presented, as well as strategies and techniques of the advisor. At the end of the chapter, focus is placed on learner support in relation to tandem projects in order to align the two main subjects which build the basis of this study.

In chapter 3, I describe and discuss the methodological structure of the study. This chapter begins with a discussion about qualitative research methods followed by a description of research context, participants and instruments as well as data analysis approach and procedures.

In chapter 4, I present, analyse and discuss the qualitative data. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section focuses on the perspective of the learner and the second on the perspective of the mediator. Research question one and two are answered just behind the respective parts one and two. The third section of this chapter answers the third research question.

Finally, chapter 5 summarises the findings of the study and its limitations. It then discusses pedagogic implications for teacher education, telecollaboration projects and learner support. Also, it proposes potential focal points for future research.

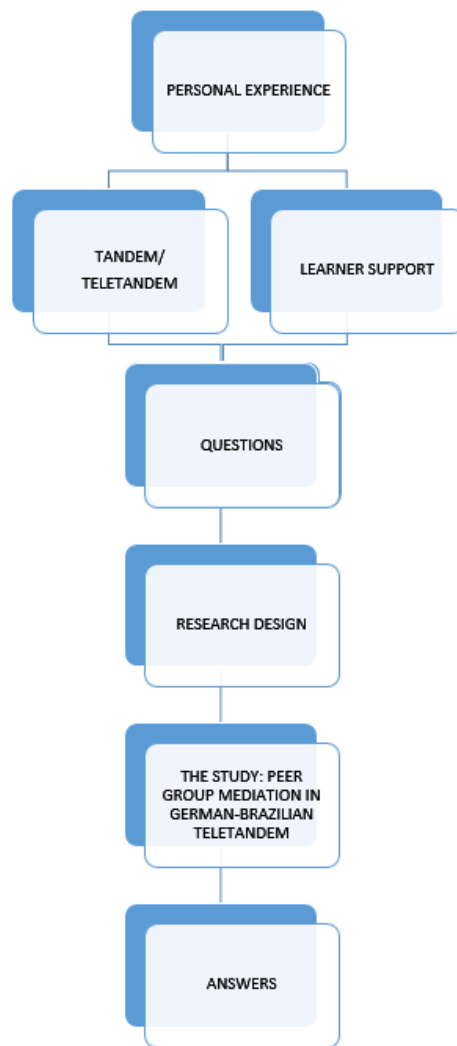


Figure 1. Structure of dissertation

1 Language learning in tandem

As the study presented in this thesis was conducted in the framework of tandem learning via the internet (teletandem), this chapter provides information with regard to foreign language learning in tandem. Firstly, a definition of tandem learning will be given. Next, the development of tandem learning throughout the last five decades will be described. This is followed by a deeper look into the specific modality of teletandem, i.e. tandem via synchronous communication software (e.g. *Skype*, *Google Hangout*, and, most recently, *Zoom*) and furthermore into some teletandem projects that exist today; in particular the *Teletandem Brasil* project which provided the framework for this study. In addition, an overview of the research related to the *Teletandem Brasil* project will be given as, up to the present day, most research results have been published in Portuguese and have not yet been widely read by researchers, practitioners and teachers of other languages.

1.1 Definition and principles of tandem learning

As defined by Little (1991), “tandem language learning is a form of open learning in which two people with different mother tongues work together in order to learn one another’s language” (p. 1). This pair of learners usually agrees on meeting at regular intervals with at least the common goal of learning each other’s language, exchanging personal, cultural and linguistic information and sometimes even information about academic or professional activities.

In tandem language learning, the main common objective of two learners in general is the improvement of communication skills in the respective foreign languages. Learners enhance their linguistic skills by making both languages (a) their medium of communication, i.e. learning through the partner’s model, practising what they have already learned and (b) their object of communication, i.e. learning through mutual corrections and explanations (Brammerts, 2001, p.11). This is why it is important, as Vassallo and Telles (2009a) argue, that the tandem context should not be seen as a mere chat between friends. They point out several characteristics of tandem encounters that differ from ordinary chats between friends: the setting up of systematic meetings during a determined period of time, the prior definition and negotiation of conversation topics and the definition of correction modes, amongst others (Vassallo & Telles, 2009a, p.35).

Having worked with and undertaken research on teletandem for more than five years, my colleagues and I agreed that one of the more substantial challenges within the teletandem project is making it clear to learners and educators who are inexperienced with tandem learning that the tandem context is more than just a ‘Skype conversation’¹⁶. Of course, this depends on the definition of a ‘Skype conversation’, but one repeatedly senses a certain reluctance amongst learners in tandem sessions to adhere to the different stages of the tandem session such as the feedback or correction phase. As described in more detail below (1.3.1), according to Telles and Vassallo (2006), a teletandem session consists of three stages: communication, language corrections and general feedback. When I took part in my first teletandem partnership in 2006/07, my Brazilian partner and I dropped the different stages after a relatively short period of time and combined the two final stages into one general feedback and correction phase instead (Elstermann, 2007). As our teletandem partnership progressed and friendship deepened, it seemed that we placed less importance on correction and feedback and more importance on our conversational topics (personal and educational matters). The correction still took place as we were concerned about our improvement of the foreign language, yet it was kept to a minimum and we only invested a few minutes at the end of the session. The feedback phase, however, had become irrelevant to both of us, as we had discovered the most convenient and enjoyable way to conduct our teletandem sessions. Considering the situation of two experienced teletandem learners in relation to the different phases of a teletandem session, it is important to not only emphasise the focus on form and correction for tandem beginners but also remind tandem ‘experts’ not to forget about these special characteristics of tandem learning. It is precisely the special characteristics of teletandem (such as the different phases) that mark the crucial distinction to occasional virtual chats.

Of course, conversation topics are not restricted to linguistic topics, as previously mentioned, but may vary and also include professional and cultural areas, for instance. What is being learnt in tandem sessions highly depends on the learners’ conversational needs or any other requirements such as academic exams or professional situations (Brammerts, 2001, p.11). From my point of view, this aspect is one of the great advantages of tandem learning, as this learning context can be very useful to the learner’s individual needs. However, in order to use the context for personal needs, some form of learner autonomy is required. Learner autonomy is one of the broadly discussed topics in tandem learning (Augustin, 2012; Brammerts, 2001a;

¹⁶ Personal communication with Telles and Zakir in November 2014. By using the term ‘Skype conversation’, the intention was to contrast an occasional, more informal conversation between two individuals (not necessarily two speakers of different languages) with a tandem session.

Cavalari, 2009; Little, 2001; Luz, 2009; Schmelter, 2004) and implemented as one of the main principles.

Tandem exchange in general provides the participants with live situations and authentic communication purposes. These two elements engage learners in the actual use of their respective foreign languages (Appel, 1999; Brammerts & Little, 1996). The authentic communication situation makes specific communication elements come to light which do not become visible in simulated conversation situations (e.g. in the classroom. See Brammerts, 2001, p.11). Even attempting to promote natural conversations in the classroom by using authentic texts (thus, stimulating discussion between the learners) is not the same situation as a personal discussion between two learners who decide themselves what they want to talk about, while having their partner's expertise in regard to their target language available.

To summarise, the tandem learning context consists of several main characteristics including: (a) the collaboration of two learners (with individual learning goals but one goal in common: to help each other in the learning process), (b) the use of two different languages, (c) reciprocity, and (d) autonomy. The latter two terms were even designated as main principles of tandem learning by Brammerts and Little (1996) and have been referred to repeatedly ever since. Vassallo and Telles (2006) added a third principle; the principle of the separated use of languages. As other authors (Augustin, 2012; Salomão, Carvalho Da Silva, & Daniel, 2009; Veloso & Almeida, 2009) also state, the principles and characteristics of tandem learning are interwoven. One principle is based on the other or partially needs one of the others in order to be fulfilled, as can be seen in the following brief discussion about these three principles.

1.1.1 The principle of reciprocity

The **principle of reciprocity** means that both learners must be committed to their own learning process and (at least partially) to that of their partner. Brammerts (2001) describes that

language learning in Tandem occurs in a learning partnership in which each partner contributes knowledge and skills that the other person wishes to acquire and in which both partners simultaneously support each other's learning. The reciprocal dependence of each partner on the other requires that they work for each other and that both profit as much as possible from their common efforts. (p. 10, translated by Cziko, 2004)

It is quite difficult to quantify the commitment to the partner and their own benefit, as this is actually something which is highly subjective. One partner may feel that they contribute to a great extent to the tandem partnership, whilst the other partner may think the opposite. In order to help learners with this situation of reciprocity, the 'rule' of dividing the time into two equal

parts (one half for one partner's foreign language, the other half for the other partner's foreign language learning) was established (Brammerts, 2001). However, the focus on the time-bound level of reciprocity actually pushes the quality of personal dedication to the tandem partnership into the background.

The principle of reciprocity also highlights the advantages of a tandem partnership by creating a natural communication situation between learner and native speaker in which it is usually only beneficial to the learner. In tandem learning both partners are learners, thus, they are less inhibited expressing themselves in the foreign language in front of their native speaker colleague. They know that their partner is in the same situation and may feel just as insecure and uneasy. Therefore, this helps to relax and facilitates the communication attempt; even with a lower level of foreign language competency, as one knows that the other may make mistakes as well and may also feel uncomfortable once they switch languages during the tandem session.

Augustin (2012, p. 296) relates the principle of reciprocity to a study by Tomasello (2008) whose starting point is the assumption that the origin of human communication and language lies in jointly realised actions based on reciprocity, because these actions lead to a general improvement in living conditions of the individuals and the whole community. This collaboration between individuals based on reciprocity arises from the capacity for recursive reflection, i.e. human beings do not only see the world from their own perspective, but try to see things from the perspectives of others, too (Tomasello, 2008 in Augustin, 2012). This development of reciprocity in humans due to communication needs, as described in Tomasello (2008), may then be transferred to tandem learning. A successful language learning partnership must be based on reciprocity, and mutual comprehension requires empathy from both parts (Augustin, 2012, p. 295). Augustin also stresses the point that tandem learning should not be confounded with private language lessons in the sense that "I pay for my partner's efforts and he pays his debt by teaching me his language and culture" (Augustin, 2012, p. 308, my translation). The openness of tandem partners and the ability to define and communicate learning goals are basic requirements for learning on a reciprocal basis in tandem.

1.1.2 The principle of autonomy

A second important principle of tandem learning is the **principle of learner autonomy**. Both learners are responsible for their own learning. Each one determines what he/she wants to learn when and how, and he/she can only expect his partner to support him/her in the way in

which they originally negotiated the amount and form of support (Brammerts 2001, p. 14). Little (1999) points out that

[t]he principle of autonomy requires that tandem partners explicitly accept responsibility for their own learning but also (via the principle of reciprocity) for supporting their partner's learning. Being responsible for one's learning means planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process overall as well as the succession of activities that make up the learning process. In order to do this efficiently one requires a combination of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness and skills. Being responsible for one's partner's learning means planning, monitoring and evaluating the various kinds of support one provides for his or her learning. (p. 2)

It is important to stress that each learner is responsible for his own learning process because learning goals and methods are rarely the same. Learners usually have different learning experiences and learning needs. However, as each one has more expertise in relation to his own language and culture than the most advanced learner of his native language, learners with high language level differences can still benefit from this kind of learning partnership.

Through language learning in tandem the partners are able to acquire and/or improve their autonomous language learning abilities. Appel (1999), in her study on e-mail tandem, points to a paradox in the process of developing learner autonomy in tandem. She states that “for the exchange to be successful the learner needs a minimum of autonomy which will then further develop as a result of the exchange. This is ‘the paradox on which the development of learner autonomy is founded: in order to achieve autonomy, learners must first be autonomous’ (Little)” (p. 14). Moreover, Little (1999) affirms that work on learner autonomy in other fields of language learning have shown that not even university students are equipped with a “fully developed capacity for autonomous learning” (p. 4) to participate in tandem projects, for instance. This is in line with gradualist approaches of learner autonomy in contrast to radical approaches (Allford & Pachler, 2007).

Gradualist approaches “view autonomous FL [foreign language] learning and autonomous TL [target language] use as eventual goals” (Allford & Pachler, 2007, p. 141) of a language learning process. Radical approaches defend the view that every learner should have the right to learn autonomously, i.e. the assumption of responsibility for the learning process and support nativist foreign language acquisition theories (Augustin, 2012). Allford and Pachler (2007) state that gradualist versions of learner autonomy fit better with the understanding of language and cite Little when saying that autonomy is not a goal itself but “an essential support to the development of autonomy in language use” (Little, 2000, p. 16).

As Augustin (2012, p. 283) states, the term ‘autonomy’ can be interpreted in various ways and measured on a number of different scales. Augustin argues for a mix of radical and gradualist autonomy approaches. Autonomy of an educational institution is not necessarily

required, but teaching and learning must be understood in its entirety. Their success is based on the constructive teamwork of teacher and learner. Augustin (2012) essentially bases her development of a ‘teletandem learning-teaching method’ on the notions proposed by Rogers (2007); authenticity, positive regard, empathy and the perception of them. In her opinion, these notions create the basis for a successful teletandem partnership, as they guarantee sincere, tolerant and respectful interaction between partners of different language and culture contexts. The learners’ reflection on humanistic and psychological theories in relation to language learning in tandem contributes to assuming greater responsibility for the learning process (Augustin, 2012, p. 291). Connecting this theory-focused reflection with reflections on their own learning in tandem (through evaluation tools, the feedback phase in the tandem session or even advising sessions), learners are encouraged to gain greater knowledge and experience which, in turn, promotes autonomous teaching and learning attitudes (Augustin, 2012).

Another important aspect emphasised by Brammerts (2001, p.15) is that autonomous learning (in tandem) is not equivalent to learning without professional support. On the contrary, studies have shown that learners are particularly successful in tandem when they have acquired and used strategies and techniques for their language learning, or if they have been supported directly or indirectly by a learning advisor/mediator (Helmling, 2001; Reinecke, 2013; Salomão, 2010; Schmelter, 2004). This is further improved when an action competence evolves which can be transferred to other learning domains and can thereby contribute to lifelong learning (Brammerts, 2001, p.15)¹⁷.

1.1.3 The principle of separation of languages

Vassallo and Telles (2006) mention a third principle, which, from their point of view, has not been given enough attention in the academic literature: **the principle of separation of languages**. Cited by other authors (Brammerts, 2001; Rost-Roth, 1995) as a general rule (but not specifically as a principle), Vassallo and Telles consider it an important aspect because it motivates and challenges learners to use the target language, even if it is sometimes easier and faster to explain something in the mother tongue. “[T]his basic principle assures that both partners will also have their respective chances to communicate in the language in which they are proficient, particularly when trying to attain communicative goals that would be too difficult or too challenging in the target language” (Vassallo & Telles, 2006, p.3).

¹⁷ See chapter 2 for more on learner support.

Salomão, Silva and Daniel (2009) discuss the principle of not separating the languages by looking at various terms they found in tandem literature. The first term found is *bilingualism* (de Souza, 2006) which is not supported by the authors because it may lead to the assumption that the “bilingual context of the relationship involves the indiscriminate use of both languages and not the separation of them¹⁸” (Salomão, Silva & Daniel, 2009, p. 84, my translation). Panichi (2002, in Salomão, Silva & Daniel, 2009) uses the term *equality* when referring to the necessity that both languages have the same status in the tandem partnership and that there must be an equal level of opportunity to use both languages. It can perhaps be said that *equality* here is used more in the sense of reciprocity, i.e. the division of the language use should be equal in order to give the learners the same amount of time to practise their respective FL. The third term the authors cite is the one used by Vassallo and Telles (2006) – *the separation of languages*—which has been described above. Augustin (2012) uses the term *Einsprachigkeit* (monolinguisism) which refers to the use of only one language in one half of the session, i.e. not mixing both languages.

What all these authors intend to convey using this terminology is that the languages should be used in equal measures (in relation to the principle of reciprocity) and that both languages should be kept separate, whenever possible. It is advisable to make an attempt to communicate in one language during the first half of the session and then in the second language during the second half, so that listening and speaking can be practised by both partners in their respective target language. Switching the initial language during each session also makes a difference, as the first half of the teletandem session is always more productive than the second. This is perhaps due to the fact that when switching languages, learners usually need a few minutes to adapt.

In her work on developing a ‘teletandem learning-teaching method’, Augustin (2012) confirms the relevance of the principle of language separation by pointing out that adhering to this principle allows a clear distinction of the learners’ roles in the different parts of the tandem session. During the first part of a teletandem session, one partner is the specialist of his/her native/proficient language. During the second part of the same session, after the language has been switched, it is the other partner who becomes the specialist of his/her native/proficient language. Augustin adds that practising the separation of languages also leads to a balanced power relation between both learners (see also Vassallo, 2010). However, Augustin points out that an important aspect which must be considered is that, in this case, both learners should

¹⁸ Original: „[...] o contexto bilíngüe da relação envolve o uso indiscriminado das duas línguas, não supondo uma separação entre elas.“

have a similar level of competence in their respective FL. If this is not the case, Augustin argues, it should be the responsibility of the learners to decide how they want to handle the language question. In an earlier study (Elstermann, 2007), I previously explored the difficulty of radically separating the languages in a teletandem session. When I started the Portuguese-German teletandem, my competence in Portuguese, according to the CEFR, was approximately at a B1 level, while my partner had just started her German lessons at university. Therefore, it was relatively easy for us to hold a conversation in Portuguese for an hour or longer.

However, that was not the case when speaking German during the other half of the teletandem session. At the beginning we even became stuck with the basics when trying to negotiate the contents and procedures of the German part. We soon realised that this could certainly be demotivation and cause frustration for my Brazilian partner. Therefore, we changed strategies and used the end of the Portuguese half of the session to negotiate everything we needed to know for the German half. During the German half of the session we used the chat function to write down translations of unknown German vocabulary. It was simply too time intensive to explain every single word my partner was unfamiliar with. This caused impatience and frustration with both parties, and so the strategy of using chat helped us substantially (see Elstermann, 2007).

Augustin (2012) supports this view. She notes that learners should not be criticised when not strictly observing the principle of separation of languages. In her experience, learners usually strive to communicate exclusively in their respective TL and only make use of the other or third language when it is unavoidable.

As discussed above, these main principles and characteristics are the basis for tandem learning and make the distinction between a casual chat of speakers with different native languages. These principles are also common ground for different modalities of tandem learning which have evolved over the recent decades. Between the various forms of tandem learning, there is individual face-to-face tandem which is characterised by the physical presence of two learners with two different native languages who meet at the same place and at the same time. This modality also exists for groups of learners, in so-called *tandem courses* (Blanco Hölscher, Kleppin, & Santiso Saco, 2001; Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; DFJW, 2007; Zakir, 2015). Tandem courses are usually fully or partly integrated in the curriculum of school or university courses. They aim to promote the tandem exchange between entire classes of learners. The tandem activities are usually task-based and they demand a greater support role on the part of the teacher.

The evolution of technology has made it possible to communicate via telephone, e-mail, chat, and other instant messenger programmes. These tandem modalities are called *eTandem* (Bower & Kawaguchi, 2011; Brammerts, 2001a; Cziko, 2004), or – more specifically – *e-mail tandem* (Strobl & Carecho, 2001), or even *distance tandem* or *tandem via the internet* (Brammerts & Little, 1996) when language exchange through e-mails, MOOs or chat is utilised. When specifically referring to videoconferencing via instant messenger programmes such as Skype or Google Hangout, for instance, researchers and practitioners use the terms *teletandem* (Abreu-Ellis et al., 2013; Cappellini & Zhang, 2013; Silva, Figueiredo, & Fonseca-Yang, 2014; Telles & Vassallo, 2006) or *Skype-based tandem* (Biolcati & Murelli, 2010; Mullen, Appel, & Shanklin, 2009).

The following graphic by Wakisaka (2014) provides a synthesis of the different forms of tandem learning we can identify today:

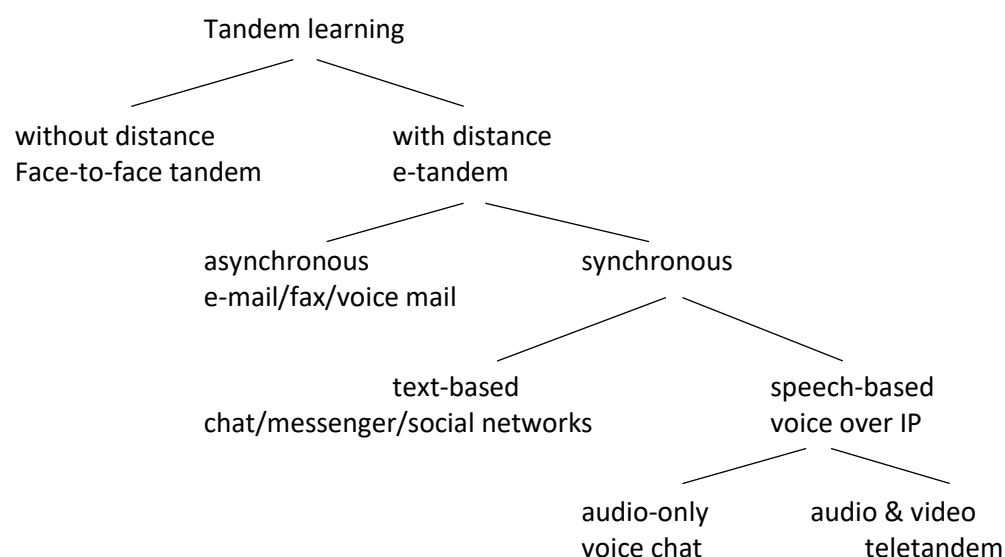


Figure 2. Different forms of tandem learning. Source: Wakisaka (2014)

As mentioned above, tandem learning is largely based on the collaboration of two learners with different native or proficient languages who help each other to learn the respective foreign language. Thus, all forms of e-tandem are types of telecollaboration. But what exactly are the distinctive characteristics of e-tandem in relation to other forms of telecollaboration? Especially when we consider that there are many telecollaboration projects using e-mail, chat or videoconferencing exchange for the promotion of authentic foreign language use, but which do

not specifically use the tandem modality (Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2002; González-Lloret, 2008; O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006; Wang, 2007).

Nonetheless, e-tandem has been one of the first appearances in online exchange or telecollaboration since the beginning of the internet (O'Dowd, 2007). "First reports of online collaboration projects between language learners in different locations began to appear in the early 1990s when teachers and learners gained access to the internet" (O'Dowd, 2007, p. 4).

Telecollaboration, as defined by O'Dowd and Ritter (2006), refers to "the use of online communication tools to bring together language learners in different countries for the development of collaborative project work and intercultural exchange" (p. 623). This kind of language exchange makes use of a variety of online communication tools such as emails, wikis, blackboards, chats and videoconferencing, depending on the project's main focus (as designated by the educators). O'Dowd and Ritter further point out that "apart from the linguistic advantages of engaging learners in authentic language practice with native speakers, telecollaboration is also seen to offer great potential for the development of the skills and attitudes of intercultural competence" (Byram, 1997, p. 624).

So far, this definition could also be used for a general explanation of tandem learning, as e-tandem forms integrate themselves into this general definition of telecollaboration. Telecollaboration projects, as can be found in the academic literature cited above, are institutionally-bound, closely integrated to specific courses or to the curriculum, and they usually involve two classes that follow tasks set by the teachers. Tandem projects can be institutional and integrated into the curriculum as well (see projects like Blanco Hölscher et al., 2001; Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; Gassdorf, 2001; Lewis, 2001), but there are still many options for taking part in 'free tandems', for example at tandem agencies at universities or the International Tandem Network. Both help students find a tandem partner in order to autonomously learn the FL they have chosen.

Even though elements of the three principles of tandem learning can be found in other telecollaboration projects as well, it is in the e-tandem context (particularly with the free tandems) in which an attempt is made to place a distinct focus on these three characteristics. In addition to this, if an e-tandem project such as the institutionally integrated teletandem is mainly task-based and integrated in a regular university course (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014), the coordinators still try to focus on their learner's autonomy, even with certain restrictions such as the choice of topics or the evaluation mode that may be suggested or predefined by the instructors¹⁹.

¹⁹ In section 1.3.1.1, different modes of teletandem integration in the curriculum/ course are presented.

The following sections will provide a more detailed overview of the history of tandem learning and the development of different modalities. As this work focuses on the most recent modality of tandem, *teletandem*, a closer look is taken into research projects which use this tandem modality. Particular attention will be paid to one specific project as the research project presented here was carried out within in the framework of the *Teletandem Brasil* project.

1.2 The history and evolution of language learning in tandem

In this section, I would like to give an overview of the history of language learning in tandem. In recent years, many authors have already offered a more or less extensive overview of the history of tandem learning (Augustin, 2012; Bechtel, 2003; Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; DFJW, 2007; Elstermann, 2007; Kerndter, n.d.; Schmelter, 2004; Wolff, 2009). As its history does not directly interfere with my research project, a brief account for mere contextualisation should be sufficient. However, I decided to give a more detailed account of the history and development of language learning in tandem, because most sources are written in German and therefore are not accessible to the large number of readers who might be interested in more information on the evolution of this specific kind of learning context.

Generally speaking, the history of language learning in tandem can be divided into four main periods: the time before the ‘tandem’ context was officially mentioned, the 1960s and 1970s during which the tandem context started to increase in popularity in some educational institutions, the 1980s and 90s when tandem became more popular and was explored in different educational contexts and from the 21st century onwards especially at which point we begin to observe a huge shift in tandem being used online through emails, MOOs, Skype and other communication tools.

Brammerts (1996) cites a variety of language learning contexts in which language learning in tandem has been introduced over the course of the last 50 years. At the end of the 1960s tandem learning existed in tandem courses in German-French youth encounters (Calvert, 1992; Herfurth, 1993), and starting in the 1980s tandem was used to connect tourists and local language learners in Spain (Wolff, 1982) and between university students with different native languages (Müller, Schneider, & Wertenschlag, 1988). In the 1990s, tandem was used in professional trainings and among specific professional groups. However, it is likely still within the educational context, universities in particular, where tandem language exchange flourished, was implemented and researched on the largest scale.

In the next sections, a closer look will be taken at the historical developments of tandem learning by returning to the roots and starting with a discussion about presumable precursors of tandem learning. This will be followed by an analysis of a timeline up to the present day in order to give an overview of different forms of tandem learning and how they developed within the transformation of technological advances of our time.

1.2.1 Precursors of tandem

Dating back to the 19th century, different forms of organised peer learning can be found in the literature on pedagogy which could be regarded as precursors of individual face-to-face tandem because of the notion of peers helping peers. Wolff (2009) and the Franco-German Youth Office²⁰ (DFJW, 2007) refer to the Bell-Lancaster-method from the early 19th century as a possible precursor of tandem learning and also some other forms of progressive education that demonstrate principles which can be found in tandem learning.

The Scottish educator and chaplain Andrew Bell (1753-1832) propagated the *Madras System of Education*, also known as *mutual instruction*, which is based on the concept whereby “pupil monitors teach pupils younger than themselves in addition to receiving their own education from older pupils or teachers” (Gilroy, 1997, n.p.). Bell developed his approach from an experience he had had as superintendent of a boarding school for orphans in Madras, India, where he had seen children teaching other children in an open-air native school by drawing letters in the sand. Despite the opposition of the long-time teachers at the boarding school, he tested and implemented the mutual instruction system and wrote a book about his experiences²¹ (Gilroy, 1997). Back in his home country, it was as early as the closing of the 18th century that the first schools adopted his educational approach and over the next 20 years, many other schools followed suit – by 1816, around 750 schools had adopted the Madras System of Education (Gilroy, 1997). Bell’s concern was the basic education of the non-privileged social classes who were seeking education. Due to the lack of teachers, the monitorial system proved to be a solution for the situation²².

²⁰ Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk (DFJW) www.dfjw.org or Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse (OFAJ) www.ofaj.org

²¹ Bell, Andrew (1807): *An analysis of the experiment in education, made at Egmore, near Madras*, London: T. Bensley, 3rd edition. The first version of this report was first published in 1797 under the title of “An Experiment in Education made at the Male Asylum in Madras, suggesting a system by which a school or family may teach itself under the Superintendence of the Master or Parent”.

²² Further below we will see that the project Teletandem Brasil – Foreign Languages for All, developed by Telles and Vassallo in 2006, expresses the same social concern (Telles, 2006).

Bell and his concept of a mutual education system was years ahead of his time. His theories that pupils should find their own levels in their learning process, that learning should happen in small steps and through teaching, and that no learner should be left behind (*let there be no residuum*) are aspects which are treated in contemporary educational discussions. The drawing up of pupils' profiles for learner evaluation and the total rejection of corporal punishment in a time in which corporal correction was a daily affair, exemplify the innovative ideas of Andrew Bell (Gilroy, 1997, n.p.). Language learning in tandem goes hand in hand with the idea of leaving nobody behind, as the tandem learners can build on their actual level of knowledge and competences and develop both further at their own pace. In the tandem context, the learner does not need to keep up or slow down because of their classmates; each learner can follow his individual path.

A very similar approach to Bell's *mutual instruction* was developed by the English Quaker and educator Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) in the same period – the so called *monitorial system* (Schmelter, 2004, p. 134). After opening his own elementary school in Southwark, England, Lancaster found himself confronted with a large number of pupils, but had no funds to hire teachers or assistants for the instruction of the children. As a result, he had the idea of using the boys who had some pre-existing knowledge to teach the boys with less knowledge (Lancaster, 1803). Lancaster's idea very much resembles Vygotsky's idea of *scaffolding* in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD determines the difference between what a learner can achieve unaided and what a learner can achieve with support from another person, i.e. from a teacher, a learning advisor or, as in Lancaster's case, from a more experienced peer.

Promoting his idea in the publications of *Improvements*²³ and getting the support of many influential persons of the upper class in England, he was able to open more schools utilising the same system (Salmon, 1932). Contrary to Bell's system in which teachers or assistants always helped the monitors, Lancaster could not always provide the supervision of a teacher. He also introduced a more complex system of reward and punishment (Salmon, 1932) in order to impose discipline in his classes which he knew lacked in other types of schools at that time (Lancaster, 1803).

Both models were very popular in the 19th century as they proved to be a low-cost way of making primary education more inclusive, thanks to the fact that the average size of a class could be increased (Schmelter, 2004, p. 135) and children from lower social classes could be included.

²³ Available at <http://www.constitution.org/lanc/improv-1803.htm> [last access 30/11/2014]

The German education researcher Peter Petersen (1884-1952) developed a similar model in the 1920s called *Jena-Plan*. In this model, basic forms of natural learning build the centre of the lessons. According to Petersen (1974), learning through conversing, playing, and also by celebrating is a much more natural learning form for children in contrast to traditional instruction forms. Aside from the school phases in which children stay amongst themselves and learn in groups, there is a very small number of teacher-centred and instructional class phases. In particular, processes of mutual help and ‘learning as a sideline’ are important elements of this class form, and take place interannually.²⁴ The idea of working with three different years at the same time and place, once again, reminds us more of a socio-constructivist and Vygotskian (1978) tutorial system in which more mature pupils help their less mature colleagues. Another important aspect of the *Jena-Plan* pedagogy is the learner’s reflection on and the evaluation of individual learning processes. This is also a crucial factor for successful language learning in tandem.

In the parts of her work on tandem history, Augustin (2012) discusses peer tutoring models of the 1970s, of which the majority are from the United States of America while some are from Europe. They seem to be based on the same ideas as the Bell-Lancaster-method (Feldmann, 2002). All these projects in which pupils help their classmates and take the roles of tutors, monitors or teachers (also present in the *Jena-Plan* pedagogy) have a number of main objectives in common: lifelong learning, learning to learn and greater support for academically-challenged pupils.

Nonetheless, the peer tutoring model has not gained much acceptance in today’s traditional educational systems. Augustin (2012, p. 246) argues that the basis of effective tutoring programs is based on a change in the role system of educational institutions, i.e. the traditional roles of learner and teacher. Learners who are only responsible for their own learning process would, with a change of the roles, have to take responsibility for the learning processes of their classmates when monitoring them. This would positively impact the relations of teachers, learners and their autonomy. However, this change of roles has not happened to this day, except in very specific local contexts (Augustin, 2012, p. 242).

Returning to the question as to whether the Bell-Lancaster-method and other forms of progressive education can be called precursors of tandem learning, two different stances can be found in the literature. Schmelter (2004) postulates that there is no relation between tandem learning and the monitorial systems: “there is no real relation to tandem learning because the

²⁴ For more details about the model of Jenaplan-schools see <http://www.jenaplanschule-nuernberg.de> and <http://www.jenaplan.de>. [Last access on 12.06.2014]

typical constellation of two learners with different native language is not given. And it is this constellation of two languages which contrasts tandem from monolingual peer work²⁵” (Schmelter 2004: 135, my translation). He continues that: “[...] concepts of partner and group work (Dörnyei, 1997; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1998; Schwerdtfeger, 2000) should be seen as no more of a precursor of the didactic use of tandems than models of ‘learning by teaching’ (Martin, 1986, 1996)²⁶” (Schmelter, 2004: 135, my translation).

Augustin in turn counters that there is a relation between the Bell-Lancaster-methods as well as other forms of progressive education, because those mutual systems are based on the principle of reciprocity which is also one of the core principles of tandem learning. The common goal of these approaches is to promote motivation, autonomous learning and the adoption of responsibility for the learning process, and this is fully in line with the main ideas of tandem learning (Augustin, 2012, p. 246).

Although I disagree with Augustin’s affirmation that tandem learning is a ‘method’ that can be applied to learners and a specific learning context, I do, however, agree that the two learning contexts cross over (of the Bell-Lancaster method and tandem contexts) due to their shared aspects of reciprocity and mutual help. (One of the basic explanations of tandem learning is “I help you learn my language and you help me learn yours”.) However, the reciprocity in tandem learning seems to be stronger, because there is the direct exchange and the direct balance of a pair of two learners who interact exclusively with each other. In monitorial approaches, the reciprocity is given in a wider context because help is not directly provided to the monitors, but somehow indirectly because they are learning by teaching, and this aspect still supports the teacher-learner-role that, in my opinion, is much weaker in tandem learning contexts.

1.2.2 The beginnings of tandem learning with German-French youth encounters

Tandem learning as a term for cooperative learning of two people was first coined in the 1960s in relation to German-French youth encounters and binational language courses

²⁵ Original: „Ein Bezug zum Tandem lässt sich auch deshalb nicht herstellen, weil die für das Tandem typische Konstellation zweier verschiedensprachiger Lerner nicht gegeben ist. Sie hebt das Tandem ja gerade von der einsprachig geprägten Partnerarbeit ab.“

²⁶ Original: „[...] Konzepte der Partner- und Gruppenarbeit (Dörnyei 1997; Ghaith/Yaghi 1998; Schwerdtfeger 2000d) sollten ebenso wenig als Vorläufer der didaktischen Nutzung des Tandems betrachtet werden wie Modelle des ‚Lernen durch Lehren‘ (Martin 1986, 1996).“

organised by the Franco-German Youth Office²⁷. A few years later, the tandem principle was transferred to German-Turkish and German-Spanish learning contexts. In Munich and Frankfurt tandem courses for Turkish immigrants were introduced, whilst in Madrid parallel German and Spanish language courses were joined so that the learners would benefit from joint practising.

After the Élisée Treaty between Germany and France in 1963, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) started to facilitate extracurricular contacts between the German and French youth (Schmelter, 2004). They soon discovered, however, that major linguistic difficulties existed between the partners, and FGYO linguistic departments were established to reduce the language barriers between the groups. The target groups of the language promotion were pupils, young professionals and university students who might have had German or French at school, but did not show sufficient language proficiency to communicate adequately with their neighbours (DFJW, 2007, p. 8).

It was for this reason that the FGYO developed a didactic concept called '*ateliers linguistique*' that differed greatly from traditional school language courses, and it was in those *ateliers* where the tandem principle was tested for the first time (Bechtel, 2003, p. 20). The most important aspect of the concept was the learner and his needs. The classes were supported by methods and materials which could be implemented flexibly and easily adapted to the changing meetings of the young people. In addition to German-French sport and leisure activities, language classes were also developed with both languages in mind. Thus, the potential that lies in the presence of Germans and French in the same place can be used for language acquisition. A situation- and communication-oriented contact with the German and French languages during the classes should be a priority (Schmelter, 2004, p. 137). The FGYO then requested and promoted the creation of different concepts and materials for these language programmes. The language teachers Michel Wambach and Pierre Bazin, who had vast experience in Franco-German exchanges, basically prepared the *ateliers linguistiques* for the binational learner groups (see Grandmaître, 1980). At the start, the teacher team, which was also binational, played video and audio sequences of day-to-day scenarios to their learners, alternating between the two languages. Following the audio-visual-method, prevalent at that time, the next steps were phases of repetition, consolidation and correction guided by the teachers. Only then did the binational work in tandem start when deepening and evaluating the model dialogues they had learned before. In some courses the correction phase was already held with the tandem

²⁷ Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk (DFJW) www.dfjw.org, or Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse (OFAJ) www.ofaj.org

partners in which the native speaker had to correct his partner in correspondence with the original text from the audio. (DFJW, 2007, p. 8)

A similar concept oriented by the audio-visual approach as well and, introduced by the Workgroup Applied Linguistics French²⁸, was also based on model dialogues (Schmelter, 2004, p. 138). In contrast to the *ateliers linguistiques*, however, the tandem should work with structural exercises, guided conversational exercises and discussions with distribution of roles. The use of technical media – typical for the *ateliers linguistiques* – was not planned for these phases (DFJW, 2007). The native speakers were the role model both at reading the pattern dialogues and at creating the different phases of the exercises. During the classes, two language teachers (one German and one French) were always present. Moreover, the participants received the texts of the dialogues and other written models for the structural exercises at an early stage – very much in contrast to the principles of the *ateliers* where exercises were only carried out orally. The contents of the exercises of the Workgroup Applied Linguistics French were based on nine general subjects: gastronomy, everyday life, regional issues, press, German-French get-togethers, leisure time, culture, economy and history. The model dialogues were created in varying stages of difficulty so that different levels of prior knowledge of the participants could be accommodated (DFJW, 2007, p. 8f).

A characteristic for all approaches of tandem language work of the binational language courses of the 1960s and 70s were the predominantly exclusive use of ‘prefabricated’ materials, especially dialogues (Schmelter, 2004, p. 138). But the potential of common experiences like sport activities, cinema, classes, parties and joint learning and cultural interaction was certainly not fully exploited. Due to the strong dependence on preconceived materials, the originally intended ‘linguistic animation’²⁹ in the youth meetings was only partially viable (Schmelter, 2004, p. 139). This, however, may be one of the reasons why the FGYO started to invest in solid training of teachers/facilitators in the area of foreign language classes, which had not existed in this way before. Another reason for implementing teacher training was certainly the increasing participation of associations, educational institutions and schools of both countries in the youth encounters. In 1980, the German *Gesellschaft für übernationale Zusammenarbeit* and the French *Bureau International de Liaison et Documentation* initiated special training in three phases for so-called ‘language monitors’. These language mediators are teachers who do not assume the traditional role in teacher-centred teaching, instead they act more like learning

²⁸ Arbeitsgruppe Angewandte Linguistik Französisch (AALF), created by Albert Raasch in 1970 in Kiel, Germany.

²⁹ Original in French: *animation linguistique*

advisors or language facilitators accompanying the tandem work in binational courses (Schmelter, 2004, p. 139).

1.2.3 The spreading of tandem learning to other learning contexts in the 1990s

In the 1970s, shortly after the FGYO started with its *ateliers linguistiques*, Klaus Lieberharkort and Nükhet Cimilli transferred the tandem model to work with Turkish immigrants in Munich. The same had been applied to Turkish immigrants and German workers in tandem courses in Frankfurt since 1983 (Wolff, 2005, p.1). In these cases, learning objectives and working materials were jointly elaborated by teachers of the Turkish and German language. The learners in turn were to try to work independently with the materials. In order to achieve the learning objectives, the learners were indirectly expected to have linguistic knowledge about their native language as well as with handling non-didactised materials (Schmelter, 2004, p. 141). Ultimately, the project failed due to the small number of interested German participants and because of huge divergences in ideas surrounding the project held by the respective partners. The essential condition for tandem learning – the mutual interest – did not exist sufficiently on the German side, whereby the learning of the German language was very important for the Turkish immigrants. The main difficulties were the different social backgrounds of both parties and respective different learning biographies and cultural differences. The diverging language system of the German and Turkish language might have also been one of the barriers (DFJW, 2007).

In 1979, the *Goethe-Institut Madrid* started to match German and Spanish learners in individual tandems in the so-called *TANDEM project* which was initiated by Jürgen Wolff. The next step was a tandem course programme created in 1982 in which parallel running German and Spanish language classes were joined to work together. Besides the phases for specific exercises, which were to be completed by the German and Spanish pairs, there was also time for individual conversations between them. (Wolff, 2005, p. 2)

The success of the tandem courses in Spain (in comparison to the disappointing results of the German-Turkish attempts) probably depended on the closer communicative interests and learning motives on both sides of the German and Spanish students (Schmelter, 2004, p. 142).

As a result of the positive experiences with tandem in Madrid, more tandem initiatives emerged first in Barcelona, San Sebastián and some German cities, later also in France and Italy. These tandem initiatives see themselves as alternative language schools and joined forces in a tandem network which organises different activities. Due to the extensive publication work

of Jürgen Wolff from the former *Centro Intercultural Hispano-Alemán Tandem* in San Sebastián³⁰ the idea of tandem learning spread widely in Europe and is nowadays accepted from primary to higher education (DFJW, 2007, p. 10).

This continuous dissemination of tandem activities led to the first international conference on tandem learning, in 1989. At this conference, which takes place every one to two years, different approaches, new ideas and scientific research are discussed regularly. Most of the conferences led to publications³¹ on theory, practices and research on the subject and contributed to a wider diffusion (DFJW, 2007, p. 12). The conferences on tandem learning continue until today³².

Since the 1980s, universities have continued to take a greater interest in tandem learning. Because of the growing number of foreign students at German universities³³, it became increasingly easier to match tandem pairs with different mother tongues. That is one of the reasons why tandem learning became the object of scientific research, as before this stage only practice reports existed on the subject (Schmelter, 2004, p. 143).

The most important centres of scientific research for tandem learning in that period were the *Université de Fribourg*, Switzerland, and *Ruhr-Universität Bochum*, Germany. As early as 1982/83, individual face-to-face tandem had been introduced at the *Université de Fribourg* and was later expanded by advising sessions and tandem conversation classes. The Institute for German Language has been the contact for the ‘Tandem Network Switzerland’ since 1989 (DFJW, 2007, p. 11). Since 1990, the law school of *Université de Fribourg* has used the tandem learning context for their bilingual (French and German) law courses³⁴, where law students are able to obtain a bilingual diploma („*licence bilingue*“) that requires them to attend law classes in the foreign language and on the other law system, respectively. This kind of German-French cooperation, with tandem parts, is also employed at the *Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz* and *Université de Bourgogne, Dijon*, both for the context of law school and in teacher training (Dijon-Büro Mainz³⁵).

³⁰ Now the Escuela Internacional TANDEM, see www.tandem-madrid.com (last access 23/06/2014)

³¹ (Estevez Coto & Ruano, 2000; Hahn & Reinecke, 2013; Künzle & Müller, 1990; Pelz, 1995; Rosanelli, 1992; Tandem eV, 1991; Wolff & Zimmermann, 1994)

³² Regular tandem conferences take place in Germany every year, while an international conference on tandem learning has been held bi-annually since 2014. The next German conference (Tandem Tagung) will be held at Leuphana University in Lüneburg in March 2017 (<http://www.leuphana.de/zemos/konferenzen-tagungen/5-tandem-tagung.html>, last access 30/03/2016) and the next international conference (II IMFLIT) will be held at Georgetown University in Washington D.C (see <http://imflitgeorgetown.weebly.com/>, last access 30/03/2016).

³³ In the winter semester 1970/71 there were 25.000 foreign students enrolled at German universities, in 2000/2001 it had risen to 187.027 (Isserstedt & Schnitzer, 2002) and in 2012/13 to 282.201 (Statista, 2014)

³⁴ See (Wertenschlag, 1991) and his project LEX-Tandem

³⁵ Personal communication from the Dijon Office at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz.

Since 1986, the *Ruhr-Universität Bochum* has been collaborating closely with the *Universidad de Oviedo* in Spain organising joint tandem courses each year (Brammerts, Kleppin, Schleyer, & Zarco de la Hoz, 1990). Building upon their traditional German and Spanish language courses, the university partners developed different learning opportunities for their students. The first step was the introduction of special language courses at the universities for the respective target language (Schmelter, 2004, p. 144). In order to use and consolidate the recently learned content of the language courses, the language coordinators of both universities organised projects and meetings with the host students of the respective university. However, the organising team got an impression that those activities were not particularly welcomed by the students, and that they preferred to test their newly learnt knowledge during their free time outside of class activities.³⁶ The organisers then changed their concept in order to react to their individual needs: the learners paid more attention to what they were unable to express in the foreign language and tended to learn more than in the regular classroom environment (Schmelter, 2004, p. 144). Thus, the sequence of the language course programme developed from year to year from the practice, without having been based on a specially formulated concept. The theoretical concept was considered later and based on observations made and experiences encountered during the courses (Schmelter, 2004, p. 144).

During the 1980s, tandem courses were not only introduced in higher education but also in all other educational contexts; in primary and secondary schools as well as in adult education. This encompassed daily meetings of primary school children in border regions (Germany-France, Germany-Netherlands, Germany-Poland) for example, who were participating in programmes such as ‘learn the language of the neighbour’.³⁷ They also entail projects with email contact between pupils of vocational schools, and in the case of adult education tandem courses at language schools or other types of exchange activities are provided within the framework of town twinning. A very detailed description of the different options for professional education training (especially for the German-French context) can be found in the tandem handbook³⁸ of the FGYO.

³⁶ We can observe this phenomenon in different tandem learning contexts, especially when tandem activities are integrated in institutional programmes such as language classes: the institution and language instructors usually tend to suggest a variety of topics and tasks that should be discussed and carried out by the learners during their tandem. On the one hand, this practice is understandable considering the fact that given themes and tasks help learners who are less experienced with autonomous learning to have subjects to discuss in their tandem. On the other hand, the development of autonomy does not seem to be promoted with prescribed tasks and autonomy promotion is one of the key principles of tandem learning (see 2.1.2).

³⁷ This program was accompanied scientifically by Universität Freiburg/Breisgau (see Pelz, 1995).

³⁸ „Die Tandem Methode – Theorie und Praxis in deutsch-französischen Sprachkursen“, available as pdf document at http://www.teletandem.de/public/Tandem_Handbuch.pdf

Another milestone in the history of tandem learning was the creation of the language project LINGUA, funded by the EU, which led to the introduction of tandem at several European universities. The LINGUA project contributed to the foundation of the International Tandem Network in which 12 European universities currently participate (Brammerts, 2001b; Vassallo & Telles, 2006) and will be explored in more detail in the next section. The following section features a discussion of the changes in tandem language learning due to the advent of the ever-increasing use of the internet and fast developing technological advances.³⁹

1.2.4 The internet and new possibilities for tandem learning

With the advent of the internet, many parts of everyday life have changed significantly for a large part of the world population – be that in relation to buying and selling products via the internet or the constant availability of and access to vast amounts of information via the World Wide Web. These significant changes, which have taken place thanks to the internet and web 2.0 applications, undoubtedly affect our daily communication behaviour. The world seems to become closer because we are able to communicate with people around the world via smartphones, computers, tablets wherever and whenever we want to. In particular, generations born in 1990 and after have grown up with these new technologies and use them every day. Messenger programmes and social networks allow us to be connected to a large number of ‘friends’ 24 hours a day, and through the possibilities of posting photos, videos and other information instantly, people are able to share many more moments of their lives than ever before. To what extent we can still speak of ‘friends’, ‘friendship’ and ‘intimacy’ in these new social contexts we live in is another discussion – very worthwhile, in my opinion – but, unfortunately, cannot be covered within the scope of this work.

Nevertheless, it is precisely this changing of communication contexts through technological developments, which creates a number of new possibilities for distance tandem learning. As previously mentioned, this has created a new language learning context which is based on authentic communication with native or fluent speakers of a language.

Greater stability of telephone connections and the ensuing introduction of the internet opened the doors for the first email tandem (or e-tandem) projects in the 1990s, which were then followed by tandem interactions in MOOs⁴⁰, chats and second life environments. With the quick development of faster internet connections and the emergence of VOIP (Voice Over

³⁹ <http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/etandem/etindex-de.html> (last access on 23.06.2014)

⁴⁰ MOO stands for Multiple User Domains Object-Oriented

Internet Protocol) technologies, communication programmes for audio and video calls – so-called synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) tools⁴¹ – videoconferencing has been made possible not only for professional purposes in companies but even for private users through the voice, text and webcam image resources of software such as Skype, Google Hangout and, most recently, Zoom.

Types of online tandems generally provide authentic communication situations outside the classroom either as a supplement to the normal syllabus or integrated as part of the syllabus – different scenarios are possible. The important fact is that we can use the authentic communication with a native or fluent speaker of a language as a positive factor that is often not available in normal classroom interaction.

The following sections will provide an overview of the different forms of tandem modalities over the internet. These are listed in an approximate chronological order starting with email tandem, which was the first type of internet-assisted tandem, followed by tandem interactions in MOOs and chats and concluding with VOIP videoconferencing tools for tandem learning.

1.2.4.1 E-mail Tandem

According to O'Rourke (2007), tandem learning was attempted over the internet for the first time in 1992. It was from these first attempts that funded projects emerged which “sought to promulgate the idea of tandem learning, to set out its fundamental principles and explore its potential, and to provide practical support and resources for individual and institutionally based Tandem partnerships” (p.43). During that year, the *Ruhr-Universität Bochum* and the University of Rhode Island started an email forum and arranged individual student email partnerships (O'Rourke, 2007) which can be considered as the foundation for many other email tandem projects that will be cited in the next pages.

Often, there are not enough tandem partners in the same place to realise presential face-to-face tandems, and the organisation of tandem courses where one group of learners travels to meet the partner group is often not viable due to organisational and financial reasons (Brammerts & Little, 1996). Therefore, establishing e-mail tandem projects (or even other forms of e-tandem) to overcome long distances seems a good alternative to match native or

⁴¹ Considering the increasing use of tablets, smartphones and similar devices, soon we will probably have to speak of synchronous electronic devices mediated communication. According to Gartner 2014, mobile phones and ultramobiles (such as tablets, hybrids and clamshells) will take over as the main driver of growth in the devices market from 2014 onwards whilst the use of PCs (desktops and notebooks) will steadily shrink. (<http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2645115>, access on 13/11/2014)

fluent speakers of different languages to cooperate in their language learning. Other aspects to consider are the low costs of sending e-mails, and the fact that today nearly everybody owns a personal e-mail address for communication.

Brammerts & Little (1996) state that older conventional personal communication tools like telephone, fax or letters have never really been recommended for the use of tandem learning⁴². They were expensive, inconvenient, or too slow. As a result, the use of e-mail was practically a small revolution at the time, thanks to the quick sending and receiving of electronic mail, and also due to being able to attach nearly any kind of data file.

In e-mail tandem the asynchronous communication between two language learners (similar to the writing exchange of pen-pals through ordinary letters) prevails (Appel, 1999). This type of communication is called asynchronous because the composition and reception of the messages happen in different moments. Both partners do not need to sit at their computers at the same time to receive and send messages immediately which would be the case of the use of chat or videoconference, for instance. On the other hand “the partner cannot help either with formulating or with comprehension, and his reactions like requesting, incomprehension etc. are delayed”⁴³ (Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001, p.29, my translation).

A peculiarity of e-mail tandem is the kind of language that is used. In face-to-face tandem the oral form of the languages in use⁴⁴ is naturally more prevalent. In e-tandem, however, the use of the language follows the written conventions of the respective language more closely. But as Appel (1999) states “[...] e-mail tandem exchange is not concerned exclusively with writing and reading skills. E-mail uses the written medium” (p.2). There is potential for constant dialogue between the tandem partners and the language used is usually more informal and even closer to informal spoken language. This was also proven by Moran, O’Rourke and Schwienhorst in an analysis of the linguistic data of several e-mails from an e-tandem project between Irish and German students (Moran, O’Rourke, & Schwienhorst, 1999). The use of informal oral language, and even an abbreviated form of informal language, can also be found on a significant scale in SMS, chats and conversation groups in social media programmes (Bernicot, Volckaert-Legrier, Goumi, & Bert-Erboul, 2012).

⁴² Cziko (2004) gives a detailed explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of various electronic tools that could be used for e-tandem, such as telephone, amateur radios etc. Nevertheless, there are almost no references to e-tandem via telephone or radio, for instance. It was with the advent of personal computers and especially the internet that e-tandem began to grow.

⁴³ Original: „Der Partner kann weder bei der Formulierung noch beim Verständnis unmittelbar helfen, seine Reaktionen wie Nachfragen, Unverständnis usw. erfolgen zeitversetzt“.

⁴⁴ Presential face-to-face tandem activities, of course, do not exclude written tasks performed by one or both tandem partners. On the contrary, tandem partners often use the tandem context for training their writing abilities as well.

One of the advantages of this form of tandem is the availability of the messages; they can be reread any time, and even used for post-learning.⁴⁵ When composing or reading the e-mails each learner can take the time they need and are not required to react to something they might not have understood upon receiving the message. A disadvantage, however, is that the written corrections are quite time-consuming and that possibly too many corrections are marked in the partner's text because they have plenty of time to revise and edit (see Marquart, 2011) – this is in contrast to spoken language which we forget very fast. Misunderstandings are likely to occur more frequently in written communication than in oral communication if the use of the foreign language was not right or if the partner interpreted statements differently because of his cultural background. During face-to-face communication voice intonation and hand gestures can help to express the 'correct' meaning behind a statement or help to overcome the misunderstanding directly through the oral communication.

Different e-tandem projects⁴⁶ have been promoted by the European Union between 1994 and 2001 in order to implement and research the possibilities for language learning in e-tandem, and have entailed the collaboration of more than 30 universities, schools and other institutions in these projects. The result which had the most significant impact on the academic community was the creation of the International E-mail Tandem Network, coordinated by Helmut Brammerts, which "was established as a means of promoting tandem language learning on a much larger scale, overcoming the need to travel by putting learners in touch with one another by e-mail" (Little, 1999, p.3). The network exists to this day, as International Tandem Network, and its tandem agency and supportive materials can still be used and downloaded at <http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>.

Another telecollaboration project with tandem character is *Tele-Tandem®*, which has been developed and coordinated by the FGYO since 2002. According to Macaire (2004) the project

⁴⁵ However, the question is if the learners really take advantage of this opportunity to review their emails and respective corrections. Moran, O'Rourke and Schwiendhorst (1999) affirmed that students did NOT reread their mails even though they had had the possibility to do so. Face-to-face tandem meetings can also be recorded and used for posterior analysis (see Leone, 2014), but this method is much more time-consuming and probably requires a pedagogical support or guidance for a learner to benefit from this kind of reflection on individual learning processes and performances.

⁴⁶ The first project was the LINGUA-project (1994-1996) in which numerous European universities connected and created a network to promote foreign language learning in tandem via the internet (e-mails, MOOS) and developed material for tandem learners. The network was called the *International E-mail Tandem Network*. This project was continued within the ODL (Open and distance learning) project "Telematics for Autonomous and Intercultural Tandem Learning" (1996-1999) in which the Tandem Server was created. From 1998 to 2000 the LINGUA-D project focused on teacher training and tandem learning at schools; a handbook for teachers and practical guidelines for pupils were developed. The following TRIS project (2000-2001) tested cooperative learning of foreign languages in tandem via videoconferencing implemented in university course curricula. The last project (2001-2002) was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and studied the possibilities for e-tandem learning focusing on preparation for German as FL proficiency tests (TestDaF) and advising.

is grounded on “partnership based and integrated learning following the tandem method using new technologies” (n. p.). The former binational language work of the FGYO which has taken place between France and Germany since the 1960s outside the school context (see section 2.2.2) led the organisation to develop a new project with similar principles but focused on primary and early secondary school pupils. The German and French schools participating in the Tele-Tandem® project develop thematic projects with their respective courses, which involve jointly working on the same project. Interactions between pupils occur via e-mail, videoconferencing, chats and one week of face-to-face tandem work at one of the schools.⁴⁷

Nowadays it is possible to imagine even more e-tandem interactions via new communication tools such as messaging through *Facebook* or other social networks, *WhatsApp*, *Line* or similar programmes and not only on personal computers such as desktops or notebooks, but also on smartphones and tablets. When considering messenger applications, one must bear in mind that the language used within these apps resembles that of oral communication much more closely, even if the messages are still typed out. What can be observed is that the frequency of using audio functions of chat apps is increasing. As time plays a crucial role in our fast-moving lives, typing seems to be too tedious and renders the recording of audio messages more attractive.

1.2.4.2 Tandem in Chats, MOOs, Second Life

Another written modality which can be used for tandem learning is the written communication through different chat programmes via the internet (Brammerts & Calvert, 2001). This quasi-synchronous communication evolves in chat or messenger programmes which give tandem partners the opportunity for direct dialogue, but is still restricted to writing and reading. The term “quasi-synchronous” (Brammerts & Calvert, 2001, p. 30) is used because two people can type messages at the same time and send them instantly, where they will then appear in the shared chat window within milliseconds. Nevertheless, this is not the same as communicating whilst speaking on the telephone or during presential face-to-face tandem. This is due to the fact that it is difficult to interrupt the partner during a chat, and one needs to wait for at least a short period of time before receiving the partner’s response. Sometimes two conversational subjects evolve at the same time, which are covered alternately in the dialogue.

⁴⁷ For more information on the Tele-Tandem project see <http://www.tele-tandem.org/doclies/zezeninnovprojekt.html> (last access on 06.12.2014)

Bower and Kawaguchi (2011) analysed a data corpus originating from chats between Japanese and Australian learners. They compared corrective feedback in chats with corrective feedback provided post-chat in e-mails. The results show that during the chat interaction little implicit or explicit correction is carried out between the learners; instead much greater negotiation of meaning takes place. In the post-chat interaction, explicit correction occurs on a much larger scale. The authors therefore argue that this could be used as a strategy for effective e-tandem when the main focus is the form of language (Bower & Kawaguchi, 2011).

Tandem interactions with a greater prevalence of written communication can also take place in so-called MOOs or Second Life environments. Multiple User Domains Object Oriented (MOOs) are replicas of virtual worlds and the predecessors of environments in Second Life⁴⁸. Registered users can set up permanent profiles of their online persona (avatar) and then create and manipulate objects and environments in the MOO (Kötter, 2003) or in other virtual worlds. In MOOs, users generally access the interface by using two windows: a smaller one in which they type and edit messages they want to send to other users or in order to manipulate the environment and a bigger window which shows the current activity in the online world (there they can read the contributions of others, see the arrival of new users, etc.) (Kötter, 2003).

Kötter (2002), Kötter and Donaldson (1999), Schwienhorst and Borgia (2006) have analysed tandem learning inside the MOO. In the MOO, communication between the tandem partners occurs primarily either via messages that users type using keyboards and which appear on the partner's screen after their author has hit the enter key (as in chat), or through a private messaging service like e-mail (Kötter, 2002). Thus, communication in a MOO combines the potential of synchronous and asynchronous CMC for the promotion of learner interaction and for facilitation of L1 as well as L2 acquisition (Kötter, 2002). Native and non-native speakers collaborate in real time whilst experiencing authentic communication situations. As MOOs also have internal text editors students are able to draft and collaborate via shared documents.

Donaldson and Kötter (1999a, 1999b) studied the potential of an MOO to facilitate language learning between tandem partners from a group of night school students in Germany and 4th semester US-American college students who met once a week for 2 hours. Schwienhorst (2000) conducted a study with 50 participants focusing on German-English tandem in an MOO exchange which was an integral part of a degree course. Some results of Kötter's (2002) analysis of tandem interaction in MOOs show a noticeable increase in learners' awareness of the target language and communication and learning processes, but a conspicuous absence of corrective feedback during the tandem sessions.

⁴⁸ <http://secondlife.com>

The more contemporary version of a MOO is the virtual 3D world in *Second Life*⁴⁹. In *Second Life*, language villages were created with the objective to offer language learners immersion in their target language and culture. Universities and language institutes such as the British Council, Confucius Institute and the *Goethe-Institut* have islands in *Second Life* specifically for language learning⁵⁰. Tandem learning groups or ‘buddy learning’ as it is called in some blogs can also be found in *Second Life*⁵¹.

1.2.4.3 Tandem and desktop videoconferencing

With regard to the use of videoconferencing for language learning (and in particular for tandem learning), the literature on the subject offers different varieties. The first use of videoconferencing for language learning was used in teacher-to-class interaction in order to bridge distances between teacher and learner (Buckett & Stringer, 1997; Goodfellow, Jeffreys, Miles, & Shirra, 1996). Today, some language schools offer this option for distance education and provide language courses in virtual classrooms with video, chat and other virtual interaction tools⁵².

In the late 1990s, the first videoconferencing projects with class-to-class or student-to-student interaction were also conducted. Kinginger (1998) reports on an English-French classroom interaction of university students via videoconference. The objective was to provide access to members of a speech community whose language was the object of study for a specific group of learners. Both sides were equipped with video cameras, microphones and televisions, and on specific dates during the semester, both groups met via videoconferencing to interact and discuss the project tasks they were assigned to carry out in collaboration with the other group. A similar project was carried out by O’Dowd (2000) with Spanish-English interaction between university students.

⁴⁹ *Second Life* is a virtual online world created by Linden Lab. This world can be accessed freely by users from the age of 16 (some locations in the *Second Life* may be entered by younger users if, for example, they have been created by a school). Users create their virtual representation, so called avatars, and can interact with other avatars in the created places and objects within the virtual world of *Second Life*. (*Second Life*, Wikipedia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Life)

⁵⁰ Virtual World Language Learning (Wikipedia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_world_language_learning)

⁵¹ Language Log (<http://languagelog.wordpress.com/tag/tandem/>), Goethe-Institut <http://www.goethe.de/ges/spa/dos/daf/spr/en4590436.htm> (last access 10/12/2014)

⁵² Amita Talwar from the Goethe-Institut in New Delhi presented online and blended learning courses for German as Foreign Language at the International Conference of German Teachers 2013 (IDT) in Bolzano, Italy. The teachers use virtual classrooms on *vitero.de* and also Google Hangout in order to interact with their learners (Talwar, 2013).

Student-to-student interaction, which comes closest to tandem learning, is not usually referred to as a type of tandem learning in early publications about student-to-student videoconferencing projects. These projects were initially carried out in secondary schools throughout Europe as part of the “Students Across Europe Language Network” SAELN project (1996-1999) which was funded by the European Union together with sponsorship from commercial companies.⁵³

With growing technological advances in relation to internet capacities (i.e. higher speeds and larger, faster data transfers), hardware and software, more options for videoconferencing between learners of different languages and cultures become available. Nowadays, videoconferencing is possible via instant messenger programmes such as *Skype*, *Oovoo*, *Adobe Connect* or *Zoom* but is also available via social networks like Facebook or even through email accounts like *Google Mail* via *Google Hangout*.

Language learning projects still vary their modalities by occasionally featuring a more unilateral interaction, i.e. using videoconference interaction with FL learners and experts in their respective target language (Lee, 2007), one-to-one tutorial sessions with learners and teachers (Wang, 2007) or a more bilateral focus on the language exchange (tandem) in which the learners help each other with their respective FL (Mullen et al., 2009; Murelli & Pedretti, 2010; Telles, 2009; Vassallo & Telles, 2006, amongst others). In most cases, the videoconferencing projects do not solely rely on the audio-video resources of the communication programmes, but also make use of the different features usually integrated in these programmes. These can be applied pedagogically, for example through on-screen white boards, file transferring and document sharing. The face-to-face tandem that became popular in the 1980s (which at the time still had to be carried out presentially in the same physical space) has now assumed a new dimension where learners in distant locations have the opportunity to meet via the internet using instant messenger programmes in order to improve their linguistic and cultural competences in their foreign language. Commercial websites such as Wimba Horizon, conversationexchange.com, livemocha.com and others harness the capabilities the internet, web 2.0 and hardware currently offer in order to connect teachers, tutors and learners. Such platforms usually allow access to the site’s basic structure so that potentially interested learners and tutors can meet and connect (at least for the free versions). Organisers of these

⁵³ <http://sitesdatabase.cite.hku.hk/M2/case2/UK009/content/background.htm> (last access 8/12/2014); Butler and Fawkes (1999) wrote a small report on their experience with videoconferencing in the scope of the SAELN project between French and English school interaction.

platforms offer details about how the platform and the language exchange could be realised. Ultimately, it is up to the participants what they will negotiate and do.

Of course, different educational institutions (especially those relating to higher education) have developed telecollaboration projects for language exchange to promote language learning in authentic conversation situations for their learners, but they are also engaged in researching the many possibilities nowadays available for language learning via the internet. Publications such as “Engaging Language Learners through Technology Integration: Theory, Applications, and Outcomes” (Li & Swanson, 2014), “Researching Online Foreign Language Interaction and Exchange: Theories, Methods and Challenges” (Dooley & O’Dowd, 2012), “Virtual Worlds for Language Learning: From Theory to Practice” (Sadler, 2012) and “Online Intercultural Exchange – An Introduction for Foreign Language Teachers” (O’Dowd, 2007), amongst others, are just a few examples of the range of literature about research and practice in the field of telecollaboration in language learning.

Projects which focus on learning in tandem and its online varieties include *Teletandem Brasil – Línguas estrangeiras para todos* (Telles, 2006; Telles & Vassallo, 2006), L3TASK⁵⁴ (Learning a third language via Online-Tandem; Vetter, 2014), and smaller projects (Mullen, Appel, Shanklin, 2009; Murelli & Pedretti, 2010) which use videoconferencing tools to promote e-tandem language learning. Some of these projects, (namely the *Teletandem Brasil* project) are described in more detail in the following sections as they provided the scope for my dissertation project.

1.3 Teletandem: telecollaboration via videoconferencing tools through the internet

In the expositions above, it became evident that the idea of using videoconferencing in foreign language education is not new. The first tryouts with videoconferencing (via television screens) were conducted in the 1990s and then later via the internet (MOOs) with the ODL projects and programmes. Back then, however, internet connections were relatively slow and fast, reliable data transfer was still to come. With the development of VOIP technology for videoconferencing in recent years and the increasing availability of high speed internet across the globe, it has become much easier to talk people from all over the world through the internet; today, this is available to anyone.

⁵⁴ <http://www.l3task.eu/de>

This section focuses entirely on language learning in tandem via videoconferencing, denominated as *teletandem* (Telles, 2006), *Skype-based tandem* (Mullen et al., 2009), *online tandems with video chat* (Vetter, 2014) or *audio-visual e-tandems* (El-Hariri & Jung, 2015). Hereafter, I will use the term *teletandem* as developed by Telles and Vassallo (2006) for this particular form of tandem learning. In my opinion, it is interesting to use the term *teletandem* as it clearly distinguishes this form of tandem via videoconferencing from other forms of e-tandem (e-mail tandem, tandem in chats, in MOOs etc.).

As suggested by the structure of this chapter, the learning of foreign languages in teletandem is largely based on the face-to-face tandem developed in the 1980s. Nevertheless, this new form is executed through the virtual assistance of computers, the internet and different software programmes based on VOIP technology, i.e. it represents a context of synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC). Thus, teletandem exhibits more characteristics than those of the traditional face-to-face tandem, which were extensively researched by Telles and Vassallo (2006, 2009) and Augustin (2012).

In the following sections, the specific characteristics for teletandem as SCMC context will first be presented, followed by some practical implications of teletandem at educational institutions (free teletandem, institutionally integrated teletandem, stages of a teletandem sessions, etc.). Then, the project *Teletandem Brasil* will be presented in more detail as the data collection of this study took place within scope of this project. As two research focuses evolved as part of the *Teletandem Brasil* project which results (master theses, doctoral theses, research papers) have mainly been published in Portuguese, a summary of the most important works will be given. Finally, a number of teletandem projects which were developed in other universities will be mentioned (e.g. Wakisaka, 2014; Murelli & Pedretti, 2010; Appel et al. 2009; L3Task, FAME).

1.3.1 Definition and characteristics of teletandem

Teletandem is primarily based on the common principles of face-to-face tandem, which were presented in section 2.1. The main differences between the two modalities lies in their concrete execution. The early face-to-face tandem was restricted to learners who were in the same physical space. In general, e-tandem overcomes this limitation, but in a narrower sense, it is often limited to asynchronous written/oral activities. Teletandem can be used for improving all four abilities (writing, reading, speaking, listening) in addition to the reading of the webcam images (its paralinguistic aspect), thus, also for synchronous communication at a distance.

Telles (2009) states that we talk of teletandem “when [...] it is realised in a virtual, computer-assisted context, at distance, via synchronous communication, with the use of tools for writing, reading and videoconferencing of instant messenger programmes (Skype, Windows Live Messenger, Oovoo, for example)⁵⁵” (p. 17, my translation). For its realisation, two learners are needed with different native tongues or fluent foreign language competencies who want to learn the language of the respective partner, computers with appropriate communication software, internet access and a webcam (Telles, 2009).

Telles and Vassallo (2006) formulate six principles for foreign language learning in teletandem which in many aspects readopt the basic principles of tandem learning (see section 1.1).

1. Teletandem is a new distance and computer assisted mode of learning foreign languages in-tandem that makes extemporaneous use of oral and written production, reading and listening comprehension and webcam images of the participants.
2. Teletandem procedures are carried out on bases of commonly agreed and shared principles of reciprocity and autonomy between two participants.
3. Teletandem participants are two people interested in studying each other’s language at a distance in a relatively autonomous way. We say “relatively autonomous” because they can resort to a teacher’s professional mediation, if they wish or if they need so.
4. Teletandem participants are (reasonably) competent speakers of the respective languages. They may or may not be native speakers of the target languages. They are not professional teachers.
5. Teletandem teaching/learning processes are accomplished through the development of regular and didactically aimed sessions of free audio/video distant conversations.
6. These free conversations are followed by shared reflection during which reading and writing abilities are practiced. These reflections may focus on content, culture, form, lexicon and the process of Teletandem interaction itself. The reading and writing practices can also take the form of regular e-Tandem practices, such as exchange of written homework assignments by e-mail, when language feedback and meaningful vocabulary and grammar inputs are given by the teletandem partner. (Telles & Vassallo, 2006, p. 193-194)

Especially principle number six is important to distinguish from the (tele)tandem context of a normal conversation with some corrections by the respective interlocutor. First of all, a normal, more informal conversation between friends does not incorporate a feedback stage in which the partners evaluate their session including corrections and explanations in relation to language and culture. Secondly, to be able to provide certain feedback in the final stage of a teletandem session, the partners usually take notes on the partner’s speech production or

⁵⁵ Original: “quando [...] é realizado em um contexto virtual, assistido pelo computador, à distância, via comunicação síncrona, por meio da utilização dos recursos de escrita, leitura, e videoconferência de aplicativos de mensagens instantâneas (Skype, Windows Live Messenger, OoVoo e Talk & Write, por exemplo).” (Telles, 2009, p.17)

unfamiliar concepts of the target language and culture. A third reason for a teletandem session being different from a normal conversation is that the partners can decide whether they want to develop a writing assignment from one session to the other. This planned and revised writing activity is quite different from an informal chat or email exchange, which might result of a sporadic talk between friends (Telles & Vassallo, 2006, p. 194).

1.3.1.1 Hardware and software

First of all, learners who want to engage in a teletandem partnership or institutions which want to promote a teletandem project need to provide one or more computers, a headset or loudspeakers, a computer-integrated microphone and must have internet access (preferably a high speed connection as it offers more reliable video and audio transmission) (Telles & Vassallo, 2009). There are many different software programmes available which can be used for teletandem interactions. During the first few years of the *Teletandem Brasil* project, Windows Live Messenger was used. Then, the programme Skype turned out to offer more stable connections and to this day it is the programme of choice for teletandem interactions, also in other projects (Bilbatua, Saito, & Bissoonauth-Bedford, 2012; Mullen et al., 2009; Murelli & Pedretti, 2010). A very similar programme to Skype and Windows Live Messenger is Oovoo, but videoconferencing applications which are integrated in other internet programmes like email accounts or social networks also may be used for teletandem such as Google Hangout or the video feature of Facebook. Recently, a new tool called Zoom⁵⁶ has been introduced which is a market newcomer of the webinar programme Adobe Connect⁵⁷. It shows excellent performance and offers additional tools such as screen sharing, discussion and several chat functions.

Most of these programmes feature extras such as file sharing, shared desktop, interactive whiteboards, individual or group chat or even group videoconferencing. The whiteboard is particularly interesting because it is a shared space in which documents can be jointly edited and it can be used as a blackboard to draw things or write words and phrases at the same time (Telles & Vassallo, 2009).

All data generated in chats or whiteboards can be stored on a disk or pen drive and therefore can later be used for rereading or revising the content.

⁵⁶ See www.zoom.us

⁵⁷ For a review of Adobe Connect and Zoom, see <http://www.ourglobalhomebusiness.com/blog/adobe-connect-vs-zoom-webinar> (last access 29/03/2016)

1.3.1.2 Stages of a teletandem session

Telles and Vassallo (2006) suggest a division of the teletandem sessions in two general parts in which one part should be reserved for one language and the other part for the other language (respecting the principle of reciprocity). If one part has a duration of one hour, for example, the hour could be divided in three different stages: The first stage would be for the conversation about one or more topics between the partners (approximately 30 minutes). The second stage would be for the linguistic correction in which the partners help each other with the form of the respective foreign languages (approximately 20 min). The last stage would be for the feedback about the teletandem session as such and which aspects could be improved in the subsequent meetings.

The frequency and structure of the teletandem sessions highly depend on the availability of both partners and what layout they agree on. The frequency of the teletandem sessions is not only determined by the schedule of each teletandem partner but also external factors such as time differences between countries and possible preferences of meeting at specific times of the day or week. Dividing the teletandem session in two or more parts also depends on the two learners. My experience (Elstermann, 2007) was that soon after my partner and I first started the meetings we reduced the three stages to only two to allow more time for the conversation; we merged the correction and feedback phase into one stage.

Considering an institutionally-integrated teletandem project (see Cavalari & Aranha, 2014, and next section), i.e. teletandem sessions integrated in a normal language class, learners usually are not able to spend a whole hour on one language. Often, 60 minutes are allotted for both languages which usually results in a considerably reduced (or completely eliminated) correction and feedback phase so that there is enough time left for conversation. Depending on the project type, coordinators and learners must find their own ways to reconcile these requirements. Nevertheless, it is important to reiterate that (tele)tandem is not just a conversation between friends but that correction and feedback are crucial to the learners' success of this learning context and that these final stages should not be entirely abandoned.

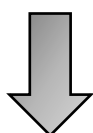
1.3.1.3 Different forms of teletandem

In face-to-face tandem and e-tandem contexts (see section 1.2), different modalities are available for conducting tandem activities. The same applies to teletandem. Teletandem can be developed independently between learners of two different languages, i.e. one looks for and finds a partner via the internet and arranges individual teletandem sessions. Teletandem can also be developed institutionally, i.e. a learner is assigned a teletandem partner through the

coordination of collaborating teachers, as is the case with the *Teletandem Brasil* and *L3Task* projects, for instance.

In the case of institutionally-organised projects, there again are different possibilities for their implementation and realisation. Teletandem activities can be offered outside the curriculum – this usually implies the voluntary participation of students – or within a language course. On the basis of explanations about different forms of tandem by Brammerts (2002), Salomão (2006) created an overview of the different modalities.

<i>Context-related tandem modalities</i>		
<i>INSTITUTIONAL TANDEM</i>	<i>SEMI-INSTITUTIONAL TANDEM</i>	<i>NON-INSTITUTIONAL TANDEM</i>
Realised in institutions like primary or secondary schools, language schools, higher education which acknowledge and promote the activities	Institutionally only for one of the participants	Realised by both participants outside an institutional context



<i>INTEGRATED</i>	<i>NON-INTEGRATED</i>
The tandem activities are acknowledged by the institution, it is integral part of a course and compulsory. (Brammerts et al, 2002: 86)	The institution supports the project and/or supplies some resources (physical space, means to find a partner, technical resources, materials, advising) but there is no official acknowledgement. It can be realised without any specific course. (Brammerts et al, 2002: 84)

Figure 3. Context-related tandem modalities, according to Brammerts (2001) and Salomão (2006).

Institutional non-integrated tandem can be found in many universities. Language centres or language departments usually have at least a noticeboard with information about tandem learning and a list where potential learners can add their names and look for other interested learners. In some cases, there are tandem agencies or tandem offices which offer pedagogical support and a structure for the project (workshops, tandem parties etc.), in other cases the interested learners have to enrol via a tandem webpage of the respective university in order to be assigned a tandem partner. However, in all these cases of institutional non-integrated tandem, after the pair matching, the learners themselves are responsible for all aspects regarding their learning in tandem: dates and hours, contents, exercises, materials and evaluation.

The same situation applies to teletandem contexts. Interested students enrol for teletandem activities on a website and are matched with a teletandem partner by e-mail; they will receive

written information about the project along with tips and tricks on how to conduct and maintain a successful teletandem partnership. After this initial help, learners continue on their own in their tandems. This had been the procedure for the first years of the *Teletandem Brasil* project (see section 1.3.2) and the SEAGULL project (see 1.3.4).

Institutionally integrated (tele)tandem means that the tandem activities are linked to a designated course or class, either as a part of the course or the tandem activity is comprised of the course itself. The activity is compulsory for learners and generally there is an evaluation of the completed tandem activities (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014, p. 72). Students usually hold their teletandem sessions during the scheduled class time in computer labs of the respective institution, with staff assisting in case troubleshooting is required. Teachers usually set up a session calendar and choose topics related to the course syllabus, which then should be discussed by the learners. Normally, it is no problem if other topics are discussed as well and, in some cases, tandem partners even develop written assignments together (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; Augustin, 2012).

With regards to face-to-face tandem, the institutionally-integrated modality was carried out between the universities Bochum and Oviedo in Spanish-German tandem courses (Blanco Hölscher et al., 2001). Within teletandem, a similar project is being developed by UNESP São José do Rio Preto and the University of Georgia, partners in the *Teletandem Brasil* project (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014) and also Tsuda College, Tokio and San Diego State University (Mullen et al., 2009) or even within the L3TASK project realised between various universities in Austria, Germany, Spain and China⁵⁸.

The institutionally-integrated tandem projects require a high level of communication and commitment between the coordinating educators, otherwise it is difficult to start and conduct a project in which a certain number of learners have to meet, communicate and be invested as well. Furthermore, one can claim that the autonomy factor is reduced in institutionally-integrated tandem projects because contents and meeting time are determined by the collaborating teachers. On the other hand, one can expect high levels of commitment of the learners due to the fact that the tandem activities are integral part of the curriculum or syllabus and will be evaluated at the end of the course (see Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; Augustin, 2012).

1.3.2 The *Teletandem Brasil* project

Tandem had not been practised in Brazil very much until the advent of the new technologies and broadband internet. In 2006, when developing the teletandem project, Telles and Vassallo

⁵⁸ See www.l3task.eu and Vetter, 2014.

only found 66 references to tandem in the Brazilian context on Google. In regards to postgraduate research, only 3 works (Braga, 2004; de Oliveira, 2003; Souza, 2003a) and only 4 scientific papers on the subject (Marques & Zahumensky, 2005; Souza, 2003b; Souza, 2005a, 2005b) could be found in the established databases in the area of Applied Linguistics. When we search for “language learning tandem” today in Portuguese in the Brazilian Google search engine and select in the advanced search that only websites from Brazil and in Portuguese should be displayed, Google returns approximately 3,900 hits. Many of the links do not refer to specific projects or scientific articles but there is still a large number of links which refer to different university tandem projects, various presentations and research papers or even at websites that refer to the *Teletandem Brasil* project, for instance.

Why was tandem learning hardly known in Brazil as early as 10 years ago? For many years, the face-to-face tandem was the only possibility to realise an oral conversation-focused tandem, but this required the existence of regions or places with proficient speakers of various languages (touristic cities, country borders, universities with large foreign student populations), something which is common in Europe due to the high number of small countries which often share borders with multiple countries. There is also a high student exchange rate due to special student mobility programmes promoted by the European Union (Erasmus and Sokrates, for instance). In Brazil, the situation is different “due to its location and geographic dimensions and, consequently, high travel costs to leave the country” (Vassallo & Telles 2009, p. 41, my translation). There are few places with a high number of foreigners and often it is financially difficult for Brazilians to go on a (longer) trip to another country.

In Brazil, face-to-face tandem would only be possible in highly urbanized and touristic centres. Vassallo and Telles argue that the tandem context probably did not spread in Brazil until the advent of the internet because of the aforementioned geographical and economic limitations. In the 1990s, however, with the increasing access to internet in the country, first email tandem projects were organised (Souza 2003b, Braga 2004), but this modality was still limited to improving reading and writing skills in the foreign language (ibd.).

The internet and the development of new communication technologies blazed the trail for new possibilities: desktop videoconferencing with a webcam and through programmes such as Skype, MSN Messenger and others, that could be used for a new virtual face-to-face tandem, called *teletandem* by Vassallo and Telles (2006).

Aiming to offer Brazilian L2 students the possibility to work collaboratively with native speakers around the world Telles and Vassallo created the *Teletandem Brasil* project which is described in the following sections.

Origin and development of the project

The university campuses in which the project *Teletandem Brasil – Foreign Languages for All* was originally created and promoted – UNESP Assis and São José do Rio Preto – are located far away from touristic centres and international commerce. Students have few opportunities to connect with universities in other countries or international students. Thus, with this context in mind, it is challenging for them to achieve a solid communicative and intercultural competence.

This is especially true for students in teacher education courses training to become foreign language teachers. Many foreign language teachers at public and private schools in Brazil have never *been* to a country of their target language and culture. Certainly, this is absolutely not an obstacle for teaching language well but one or more stays in a country of one's target culture do provide the respective person with significantly more country-specific information, experiences and knowledge about the respective culture in a way that is undoubtedly beneficial to the teaching process as a result from these experiences (Telles & Vassallo, 2009).⁵⁹ However, with the technological advances in regards to internet availability around the country and development of software for online communication, contact with native speakers of other countries was made possible.

The first step leading to the development of the *Teletandem Brasil* project was a face-to-face tandem experience between the later coordinators of the project, the Italian lecturer Maria Luisa Vassallo and the professor of Education Sciences, João Antonio Telles, both working at UNESP Campus Assis. They knew the basic principles of tandem, had read literature on the subject and used the learning context for their necessities and objectives (Telles & Vassallo, 2009).

After their first positive evaluations of their tandem experience (see Telles & Vassallo, 2005), they were thinking about how they could create the same context for their undergraduate language students in order for them to benefit of this kind of learning context as well. They were interested in the student-centred approach which could balance the focus on form and focus on content (Doughty & Williams, 2004; Long, 1988, 1991) based on the socio-constructivist paradigm (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1962) and on the concept of language as

⁵⁹ To encounter the problem of low student mobility in higher education in Brazil, the Brazilian government has created a programme called *Sciences without frontiers (Ciências sem fronteiras)* which promotes the exchange of Brazilian students to partner countries such as the United States, France or Germany, for instance. All students receive financial support to cover travel costs, insurance and a monthly fee for living abroad for 6 to 12 months. Unfortunately, this programme mainly considered students from natural sciences university courses. For unknown reasons, students in foreign language teacher education (who mostly needed an experience abroad to improve language and culture competences) were not able to apply for the programme. In 2015, a new programme was developed by the Brazilian government, *Languages without frontiers*, wherein particularly students in teacher training will be promoted for a stay abroad. (<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/>)

social action (Bakhtin, 2000) (Telles & Vassallo, 2009). However, with no resources of respective native speakers, it seemed infeasible to develop a tandem project for a larger number of students.

Due to personal events in the Italian lecturer's life – she had to return to Italy –, both educators and tandem practitioners looked for possibilities to continue their tandem contact and learning. They had already heard about e-tandem projects, but those were principally based on writing and reading skills (McPartland, 2003) and they wanted to continue focusing on their oral abilities (Telles & Vassallo, 2009).

At the beginning of the 21st century, instant messaging services for auditory and visual communication were used more frequently and Telles and Vassallo started to test the free software MSN Messenger which, back then, already offered different tools like chat, videoconferencing and a shared whiteboard. After some months of testing the applications, trying teletandem sessions with other friends and colleagues, Telles and Vassallo outlined some definitions (see 1.3.1) of what teletandem would be characterised and started developing the *Teletandem Brasil – Línguas Estrangeiras para todos*⁶⁰ project which would be implemented at UNESP Assis, which was where Telles and Vassallo (she eventually came back as lecturer to work at UNESP Assis) were professionally involved and also at the Campus São José do Rio Preto where the teletandem project became a research object in the postgraduate programme of Linguistic Studies.

In the first semester of 2006, a pilot project was started at UNESP Campus Assis and São José do Rio Preto with a handful of students who were interested and agreed to participate on a voluntary basis. These students started to develop research projects for Master theses and smaller research projects on an undergraduate level (Benedetti, Consolo, & Vieira-Abrahão, 2010, p.18). Telles and Vassallo, the coordinators of the project, contacted different Portuguese departments at universities in America and Europe in order to find partners with the respective languages which were needed for the Brazilian students enrolled in the foreign language teacher education at UNESP⁶¹. The first universities to collaborate within the *Teletandem Brasil* project were *Université Charles-de-Gaulle, Lille III* in France, *Università del Salento* and *Università degli Studi di Salerno* in Italy, *Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz* in Germany, *Northwestern University, Utah Valley University* and *Truman State University* in the USA,

⁶⁰ Teletandem Brazil – Foreign Languages for All

⁶¹ English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese can be studied at UNESP Assis in teacher education. It is difficult to organise Portuguese-Japanese teletandem interactions due to the large time difference between Brazil and Japan, which is 11 or 12 hours. In 2015, the Japanese department started Portuguese-Japanese teletandem between Japanese exchange students at another Brazilian state university and the Brazilian students of Japanese at UNESP Assis.

Universidad Nacional de La Matanza in Argentina and *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* in Mexico.

The Brazilian students who participated in the pilot project held their first teletandem sessions from their homes, if internet and computer were available, or in internet cafés in their home cities. Based on the first findings of the pilot project, a research project about the teletandem activities was developed by the coordinators and a couple of interested professors at UNESP; soon it became clear that the project could not rely on students going to cyber cafés, but that computer labs were necessary at both participating campuses Assis and São José do Rio Preto.

The *Teletandem Brasil* research project proposal was accepted by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) in 2006 and the approved financial support for the project resulted in the setup of two fully-equipped computer labs which were opened in 2007. At the same time, a homepage for the project was launched (www.teletandembrasil.org) which provided the scientific research theses and papers, general information about the project and a platform for teletandem pair matching. This platform was particularly important in the first years of the project when the teletandem activities were carried out institutionally non-integrated, i.e. they were not part of regular language courses, yet. In this modality, students were paired by the coordinators at UNESP after they had registered on the platform. They received an email including the most important information about teletandem and links to find more information online (handbook and guidelines). The platform was discontinued in 2012 as the institutional (semi)-integrated modality is mainly used by partners in the project. ‘Free teletandems’ are only paired personally by collaborating teachers and coordinators in the various institutions when they know students who are interested in free teletandem activities, as is the case for German-Portuguese. Due to the difficulty of finding German partners to match whole classes with Brazilian students of German at UNESP, the German teachers at UNESP try to match at least individual teletandem partners through contacts they have in Germany, Austria or Switzerland.

Since 2014, three campuses of UNESP have been conducting regular teletandem activities throughout the semester. UNESP Assis has the most teletandem partnerships, participating in institutionally semi-integrated teletandem activities, i.e. for most foreign partners the teletandem activities are compulsory and integral part of the language class whereas at UNESP Assis students participate in the teletandem sessions on a voluntary basis. The following tables show the institutionally (semi)-integrated teletandem partnerships in 2014.

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08H					
09H		Georgetown University 9:50 – 11:00		Georgetown University 9:50 – 11:00	
10H					
11H	University of Miami 11:10 – 12:30		University of Miami 11:10 – 12:30		
12H					
13H					
14H					
15H	Fairfield University 15:00 – 16:20		University of Hawaii 16:30 - 17:30	Fairfield University 15:00 – 16:20	
16H					
17H	University of Hawaii 16:30 – 17:30				Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México 15:00 – 16:20
18H		Virginia Commonwealth University 18:30 – 19:50		Virginia Commonwealth University 18:30 – 19:50	
19H					
20H					

Table 1. Table of teletandem interactions in the 1st semester of 2014 at UNESP Assis.

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
11h00					
11h30			Truman State University 11:30 – 12:30		
12h00				Princeton University 12:00 – 13:30	
12h30					
13h00					
13h30			Georgetown University 13:30 – 14:30		
14h00					
14h30					
15h00				University of Seattle – Washington 14:30 – 17:30	
15h30	University of Miami 15:30 – 16:30	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México 15:30 – 17:00	University of Miami 15:30 – 16:30		
16h00					
16h30	University of Hawaii 16:30-17:20				University of Hawaii 16:30-17:20
17h00					
17h30					
18h00					

Table 2. Table of teletandem interactions in the 2nd semester of 2014 at UNESP Assis.

As can be seen in the tables, there are about ten interactions each week with several groups from the different partner institutions. The University of Miami sometimes has two different learner groups, and University of Harvard, with which interactions started in 2015, send three different classes. Sometimes, interactions overlap and other computer labs at UNESP Assis have to be used. Besides these regular interactions, a number of individual teletandems take

place with the language pairs German-Portuguese, Swedish-Portuguese and Japanese-Portuguese.

Teletandem activities at the campus of São José do Rio Preto were initially conducted in the same way as in Assis: pairs were matched after having registered on the teletandem platform and the learners were then responsible for the next steps such as agreeing on dates for the teletandem sessions, identifying topics and evaluation. Recently, Cavalari & Aranha (2014) have implemented an institutionally-integrated teletandem within English classes and their respective partners (students of Portuguese) at the University of Georgia. The teletandem activities take place every semester over a period of eight weeks in which eight teletandem sessions of 1 hour each are conducted. The first session is an introductory session in which the students get to know each other. The last interaction is reserved for an evaluation of the partnership and the activities done throughout the previous sessions (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014, p. 80). During the second and seventh sessions, the students are asked to work on written tasks, i.e. text production on specific topics chosen by the teachers of the courses in relation to the course syllabus. Each week one partner writes a text in his respective foreign language and sends his first version to his teletandem partner who revises and returns it. In the following week, both learners will discuss the revision and – if time allows – can talk about the topic of the text or other topics if they want to. Then it is the other partner's turn to write a text in his foreign language. In this way, both partners write three texts in their foreign language and have to revise it in their native language. The completed texts are then sent to the respective teachers for evaluation (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014, p. 81). In addition to the text production, the learners are also asked to maintain a reflexive diary and report on their experiences in e-portfolios online (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014, p. 82).

At the campus of UNESP Araraquara, teletandem activities have been carried out since 2013. The first interactions were realised with an Italian partner university, now there are also interactions with several US-American, German, French and Colombian universities. Depending on the language pair, the teletandem activities are integrated in regular language classes at UNESP or at the partner university or they are semi-integrated and the students hold their teletandem session voluntarily in the computer lab or from their homes also ⁶².

A detailed explanation about the implementation of different teletandem modalities at the German *Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz* can be found in Augustin (2012) who describes the transition of initial individual teletandem to teletandem activities which were

⁶² Personal communication with Maria Cristina Evangelista Reckziegel Guedes, one of the professors working with teletandem at UNESP Araraquara.

integrated in the curriculum in different ways such as an extra activity for translation classes or even as a whole module within the Portuguese curriculum in which classes on theories around language learning in teletandem and teletandem practices were integral part of the module.

1.3.3 Overview of research within the scope of *Teletandem Brasil*

In this section, a summary of the *Teletandem Brasil* research projects and the various academic works that have been written under the umbrella of both of them is provided. Most works are unpublished Master theses and PhD dissertations in Portuguese, which, unfortunately, have received little attention outside Brazil. This is likely due to their language as Portuguese is not as widely spoken and understood as English, for instance, and because they were only accessible via the websites of university libraries and of the *Teletandem Brasil* project.

These works are mainly written in Portuguese except for one US American and one German PhD dissertation (Brinckwirth, 2012; Augustin, 2012) and five Master and Bachelor theses in German, French and English (Abraha, 2009; da Rocha, 2009; Elstermann, 2007; Gröninger, 2009; Moiteiro, 2009) which were created at their respective universities but their research was done within the same project. Results of some of the Portuguese dissertations were later published in journal articles (reference to them will be made later). In order to present to a larger public the wide range of research which has been carried out within the Teletandem project so far, this research summary will be extended a bit by giving synopses of the doctoral dissertations at the end of the section.

As already outlined in section 1.3.2, the first project was named *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas Estrangeiras para Todos*⁶³ (Telles, 2006) and officially launched in 2006. Its main objectives were outlined as follows: (a) to study instant messenger programmes as tools for communication and foreign language learning, (b) to study the processes of interaction between the participants and of learning foreign languages mediated by communication tools, and (c) to investigate teacher training in relation to virtual learning context and the roles of the teacher/mediator/advisor in the teaching system mediated by teletandem (Telles, 2006).

The following figure presents the three focuses of the project (based on the above-mentioned objectives) and their respective research subjects.

⁶³ The project received financial support by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) between 2007 and 2010 (proc. 2006/03204-2).

FOCUS	THEMES
1) <i>Teletandem</i> : processes, context, participants and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the <i>Windows Live Messenger</i> as a <i>Teletandem</i> pedagogical tool. • The use of the <i>Windows Live Messenger</i> by the teacher-mediator and by the interacting partners. • The use of the <i>Windows Live Messenger</i> video images by the interacting partners and by the teacher mediator. • The use of the White Board by the interacting partners and by the teacher-mediator. • The role of the <i>Windows Live Messenger</i> in the construction of student autonomy, reciprocity, reflection and self-management of learning in the <i>Teletandem</i> process. • Analysis of the registers induced by the specificity of CMC (written register on the White Board of the Messenger and register of the oral interactions via webcam in the <i>Teletandem</i>). • The role of the virtual space in power dynamics between <i>Teletandem</i> partners.
2) Foreign language teaching and learning in <i>teletandem</i> : investigating the linguistic, cultural and pedagogical characteristics of partners' interaction in different languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive and learning processes between pairs of learners in the <i>Teletandem</i>. • Linguistic, cultural and pedagogical characteristics of the interaction between pairs of learners in <i>Teletandem</i>. • Language transfer within the intercultural learning context of <i>Teletandem</i>. • Oral evaluation in <i>Teletandem</i>. • Use of learning strategies in <i>Teletandem</i>. • Autonomy within the intercultural context of <i>Teletandem</i>. • Turn-taking system in the interactions between native x non-native speakers, forms of politeness as signs of beginning and end of turn-taking.
3) The teacher-mediator: actions, beliefs and their roles in teachers' practices of <i>Teletandem</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher development within the virtual context of <i>Teletandem</i>. • The role of the teacher-mediator between <i>Teletandem</i> partners. • Mediation in the teaching/learning process of <i>Teletandem</i>. • Beliefs of teacher-mediators and <i>Teletandem</i> partners. • Management processes and pedagogical strategies. • Roles of teacher-mediators' beliefs and actions within the practices of <i>Teletandem</i> partners.

Table 3. The three research focuses and their respective themes of the first teletandem project: Teletandem Brasil – Línguas Estrangeiras para todos (Figure extracted from Telles/Vassallo 2006)

When this first research project was officially concluded in April 2010 – Teletandem activities with the respective partner universities, of course, continued and even intensified – the scientific outcomes and practical experiences, in fact, opened up many more questions, especially in relation to (inter)cultural issues. Thus, a second research project was conceived with its research focus on the cultural dimension of learning languages in teletandem: *Teletandem: Transculturality in online interactions via webcam*⁶⁴ (Telles, 2011). From the perspective of transculturality, the project explores the importance, the characteristics and the impact of the cultural dimension of online intercontinental interactions over:

- *the learning process*, with its multiple cultures, ways, habits, conceptions of curriculum and procedures for learning and teaching foreign languages;
- *students' representations* of their (and their partners') language, country, culture and national identities;
- *the education of the students* who participate in the project, in regards to their competence in relating to other peoples in a foreign language; and
- *our own actions*, as educators, researchers and administrators of a project aimed at working with "the different Other" or "the Otherness". This last objective has an evaluative nature. (Telles, n.d.⁶⁵)

⁶⁴ Original title: TELETANDEM: Transculturalidade nas interações on-line em línguas estrangeiras por webcam. For more information see <http://teletandemetransculturalidade.weebly.com/> (last access on 31/03/2016)

⁶⁵ <http://teletandemetransculturalidade.weebly.com/objectives.html>

The following table outlines the new thematic focuses and their respective general research questions which the studies conducted by professors and students of the research team seek to answer.

FOCUS	GENERAL QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT
1. Ways of understanding the study, learning and practice of foreign languages	(a) Which representations do teletandem partners have in relation to curriculum, learning processes, the importance of studying and practicing foreign languages online? Which impact do these representations have on the relations established between the partners in the teletandem process and which references are created of each of the partners?
2. Ways of understanding the culture of the partner and its impact on learning and the relation with the partner	(b) Which representations does the teletandem practitioner have in regards to his own country, his own habits and traditions, and in regards to his partners'? How do these references affect the development of online relationships and which references are produced from the transcultural meetings?
3. The contribution of teletandem to the education of the learner and how they relate themselves to other peoples	(c) Which relations are developed by the participants through intercontinental, cultural, linguistic and academic contacts via teletandem? Based on the online contacts via teletandem, which references are produced that could contribute to the development of abilities of young learners to relate themselves to other peoples in this world?
4. Different perspectives on institutional implementation of teletandem	(d) In the face of contextual, cultural, educational and curricular differences, how do researchers and coordinators of the project contact each other? Which new references are produced from this transcultural contact?

Table 4. Thematic Focuses and research questions of the project Teletandem and Transculturality (Telles, 2011, p. 12, my translation).

In regards to both teletandem research projects, the teletandem activities such as interactions, mediation sessions, project coordination, amongst others, have been the object of several studies throughout the years. The researchers studied different aspects in relation to the learning of foreign languages in teletandem aiming to respond to the above cited general research questions of both projects. The following were the main topics addressed in the studies which were related to the teletandem activities: (i) relationships of power (Vassallo, 2010), (ii) learner autonomy (Cavalari, 2009; Elstermann, 2007; Luz, 2009), (iii) beliefs (Patrícia Fabiana Bedran, 2008; Kfoury-Kaneoya, 2009), (iv) teacher education (Funio, 2011; Salomão, 2008; M. G. de Souza, 2012), (v) oral evaluation/assessment (Furtoso, 2011; Mesquita, 2008), (vi) communities (Aranha, 2009; Silva 2012), (vii) relations with Activity Theory (Araújo, 2012; Luvizari-Murad, 2011; Luz, 2012), (viii) characteristics of the interaction (Brocco, 2010; A. M. Fernandes & Telles, 2015; Santos, 2008; Silva, 2008), (ix) intercultural issues (Mendes, 2009; Moiteiro, 2009; Salomão, 2012), (x) gender, identity and performativity (da Costa, 2015; Funo, 2015; Telles, 2015b; Zakir, 2015), (xi) implementation in higher education (Augustin, 2012; Brinckwirth, 2012; Gröninger, 2009; Telles & Ferreira, 2011; João Antonio Telles, 2015a); role of webcam images in the interaction (Telles, 2009).

The following tables give an overview of most of the Master theses and Doctoral dissertations concluded in the scope of both teletandem research projects in order to provide an insight into the different areas of research which were covered. The author, year of conclusion

and original title of the work is given; the English translation of the title is provided in brackets, whenever necessary. Most of the papers can be downloaded from www.teletandembrasil.org under the link “Publications”.

MASTER THESES	
Author & Year	Title
Elstermann, Anna-Katharina Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2007	<i>Vom Präsenztandem der 1960er Jahre zum internetgestützten Teletandem des FASK Mainz in Gernersheim und der UNESP-Assis, Brasilien</i> (From presence tandem of the 1960s to internet assisted teletandem of FASK University of Mainz and UNESP Assis, Brazil)
Salomão, Ana Cristina Biondo UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2008	<i>Gerenciamento e estratégias pedagógicas na mediação dos pares no teletandem e seus reflexos para as práticas pedagógicas dos interagentes</i> (Management and pedagogical strategies in the mediation of teletandem pairs and its reflection on pedagogical practices of the learners)
Bedran, Patrícia Fabiana UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2008	<i>A (re) construção das crenças do par interagente e dos professores-mediadores no teletandem</i> (The (re)construction of beliefs of learners and the teacher-mediators in teletandem)
Mesquita, Alexandre Alves França de UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2008	<i>Crenças e práticas de avaliação no processo interativo e na mediação de um par no tandem a distância: um estudo de caso</i> (Beliefs and evaluation practices in the interaction and mediation of a learner pair in distance tandem: a case study)
Santos, Gerson Rossi dos UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2008	<i>Características da interação no contexto de aprendizagem in-tandem</i> (Characteristics of the interaction in the tandem learning context)
Silva, Andressa Carvalho da UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2008	<i>O desenvolvimento intra-interlinguístico intandem a distância (português e espanhol)</i> (The intra-interlinguistic development in Spanish-Portuguese distance tandem)
Mendes, Ciro Medeiros UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2009	<i>Crenças sobre a língua inglesa: o antiamericanismo e sua relação com o processo de ensino-aprendizagem de professores em formação</i> (Beliefs about the English language: antiamericanism and its relation to the learning-teaching process of teachers in training)
Brocco, Aline de Souza UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2009	<i>A gramática em contexto teletandem e em livros didáticos de português como língua estrangeira</i> (The use of grammar in the teletandem context and in the textbook for Portuguese as foreign language)
Luz, Emeli Borges Pereira UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2009	<i>A autonomia no processo de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas em ambiente virtual (teletandem)</i> (Autonomy in the learning and teaching process in virtual learning environments (teletandem))
Moiteiro, Nicole Martins Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2009	<i>Action Research on Teletandem: An Analysis of Virtual Intercultural Communication between Students from Brazil and Germany</i>
Abraha, Yorisalem Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2009	<i>Internetgestützter Spracherwerb im Teletandem: Eine Untersuchung der Umsetzbarkeit des Natural Approach und der Rolle der L2 auf den Erwerb einer weiteren Fremdsprache</i> (Internet assisted language acquisition in teletandem: A study about the implementation of the Natural Approach and the role of L2 in relation to L3 acquisition)
Gröninger, Nora Paula Marie Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2009	<i>Potenzielle Probleme für Teletandem zwischen dem FASK Gernersheim und der UNESP Assis aus individueller und institutioneller Sicht unter Berücksichtigung der Spracherwerbstheorie von Stephen Krashen</i> (Potential problems for teletandem between FASK Gernersheim and UNESP Assis from individual and institutional perspectives in consideration of the language acquisition theory of Stephen Krashen)

Da Rocha, Suzana Université Charles-de-Gaulle, Lille III, 2009	<i>Améliorer l'accompagnement dans les partenariats de teletandem francobresiliens</i> (Improving the support of French-Brazilian teletandem partnerships)
Cândido, Juliana UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2010	<i>Teletandem: Sessões de orientação e suas perspectivas para o curso de letras</i> (Teletandem: the introductory workshop and its perspectives for teacher training)
Funo, Ludmila Belotti Andreu UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2011	<i>Teletandem e formação contínua de professores vinculados à rede pública de ensino do interior paulista: Um estudo de caso</i> (Teletandem and professional development of teachers of public schools in the state of São Paulo: a case study)
Kami, Camila Maria da Costa UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2011	<i>A motivação na aprendizagem de língua estrangeira via teletandem</i> (Motivation in foreign language learning via teletandem)
Matos, Filipa Andreia Martins Universidade Aberta de Lisboa, 2011	<i>O Skype como ferramenta de interação e colaboração no ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras em teletandem</i> (Skype as interactive and collaborative tool for foreign language learning in teletandem)
Silva, Jaqueline Moraes da UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2012	<i>O Projeto Teletandem Brasil: As relações entre as comunidades virtuais, as comunidades discursivas e as comunidades de prática</i> (The Teletandem Brasil project: relations between virtual, discursive and practical communities)
Souza, Micheli Gomes de UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2012	<i>Os primeiros contatos de professores de línguas estrangeiras com a prática de teletandem</i> (The first contact of foreign language teachers with teletandem practice)
Araújo, Natasha Rodrigues Pimentel UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2012	<i>Formação de parcerias de teletandem: Da organização ao sistema de atividades</i> (Matching teletandem pairs: from organization to system of activities)
Freitas, Paola Buvolini UNESP – São José do Rio Preto 2015	<i>Pertencer e deslocar virtualmente: Teletandem como espaço antropofágico</i> (Teletandem as antropophagic space)
Franco, Gabriela Rossatto UNESP – São José do Rio Preto In preparation	<i>Aspectos linguísticos e discursivos emergentes em formas de interagir em sessões de Teletandem</i> (Linguistic and discursive aspects emerging from interactions in teletandem sessions)
Marinoto, Deise UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, In preparation	<i>Polêmica e Controvérsia nas Interações de Teletandem</i> (Polemics and controversy in teletandem interactions)

Table 5. Master theses concluded within the scope of both Teletandem Brasil projects

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS	
Author, Year	Title
Kfouri Kaneoya, Marta Lúcia Cabrera UNESP – São José do Rio Preto , 2009	<i>A formação inicial de professoras de línguas para/em contexto mediado pelo computador (teletandem): um diálogo entre crenças e reflexão profissional</i> (Initial language teacher training in computer mediated contexts (teletandem): a dialogue between beliefs and professional reflection)
Cavalari, Suzi Marques Spatti UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2009	<i>A auto-avaliação em um contexto de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras em tandem via chat</i> (Self-evaluation in foreign language learning contexts in tandem via chat)
Vassallo, Maria Luisa UNESP – São José do Rio Preto Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 2010	<i>Relações de poder em parcerias de teletandem</i> (Relationships of power in teletandem partnerships)
Garcia, Daniela Nogueira de Moraes UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2010	<i>Teletandem: Acordos e negociações entre os pares</i> (Teletandem: agreements and negotiation between the partners)
Furtoso, Viviane Aparecida Bagio UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2011	<i>Desempenho oral em português para falantes de outras línguas: Da avaliação à aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras em contexto online</i> (Oral proficiency in Portuguese to Speakers of Other Languages: from assessment to foreign language learning in online contexts)
Luvizari-Murad, Lidiane Hernandez UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2011	<i>Aprendizagem de alemão e português via teletandem: um estudo com base na Teoria da Atividade</i> (German and Portuguese learning via teletandem: a study based on Activity Theory)
Augustin, Wiebke Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2012	<i>Kooperativer Fremdspracherwerb im Teletandem. Handbuch der Lern-Lehrmethode</i> (Cooperative foreign language acquisition in teletandem. A handbook of the learning-teaching method)
Luz, Emeli Borges Pereira UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2012	<i>Variáveis influenciadoras da continuidade ou descontinuidade de parcerias de teletandem à luz da teoria da atividade</i> (Influencing variables of continuity or discontinuity of teletandem partnerships in the light of Activity Theory)
Brinckwirth, Anton T. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 2012	<i>Implementation and Outcomes of an Online English-Portuguese Tandem Language Exchange Program Delivered Jointly Across a U.S.-Brazilian University Partnership: A Case Study</i>
Salomão, Ana Cristina Biondo UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2012	<i>A cultura e o ensino de língua estrangeira: Perspectivas para a formação continuada no projeto teletandem</i> (Culture and foreign language teaching: perspectives for continuing education within the teletandem project)
Zakir, Maisa de Alcântara UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2015	<i>Cultura e(m) telecolaboração: uma análise de parcerias de teletandem institucional</i> (Culture in/and telecollaboration: an analysis of an institutional teletandem partnerships)
Funio, Ludmila Belotti Andreu UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2015	<i>Teletandem: um estudo sobre identidades culturais e sessões de mediação da aprendizagem</i> (Teletandem: a study about cultural identities and mediation sessions)
Da Costa, Leila UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2015	<i>Performatividade e gênero nas interações em teletandem</i> (Performativity and gender in teletandem interactions)
Souza, Micheli Gomes de UNESP – São José do Rio Preto, 2016	<i>Mal – entendidos em parcerias colaborativas de aprendizagem de línguas no contexto teletandem</i> (Mis-understandings in collaborative language learning in teletandem)

Table 6. Doctoral dissertations concluded within the scope of the project *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas Estrangeiras para todos*

In order to shed a little bit more light on the differentiated research that has been done within the project and to give it more visibility for the academic public I want to provide an overview of the PhD studies conducted so far. The following summaries are shortened and slightly modified versions of the abstracts of the respective authors' dissertations.

Kfouri-Kaneoya's (2009) investigation focuses on partner's pre-service education in a context of Portuguese and Spanish teaching/learning in teletandem, and was carried out within the institutional project *Teletandem Brasil: línguas estrangeiras para todos*. This study has as participants a Brazilian Language student from a public university; a Mexican Ph.D. candidate in Applied Linguistics, who lives in Spain; and a mediator, who is also the author of this thesis. The study aims at analysing beliefs, discourse and reflective processes that are revealed and (re)constructed in relation to communication and language learning processes, mediated by the computer. The research has an ethnographic basis and the data were collected by instruments such as the recording of interactions and mediations developed in teletandem and in chat, autobiographies, interviews, questionnaires and research diaries, which were analysed through an interpretative perspective. In this context, teletandem is a real possibility for communication and culture learning, which may not be explored by textbooks. The mediations are learning contexts with the potential to promote meaningful opportunities for critical reflection, searching for coherence in pre-service teacher education and shared learning responsibility. The project can contribute to theory focused on new realities and necessities, that is, a coherent theoretical and practical education, according to contemporary times and contexts.

Cavalari (2009) conducted a case study which deals with the self-assessment process in the teletandem context. It focuses on self-assessment related to the distinctive qualities of chat communication, which promotes specific language features considering how spoken and written languages are described. The study includes the description of the chat language in teletandem, the learning goals and the assessment standards and criteria under the perspective of a Brazilian participant who is a learner of English as a second language and an undergraduate student in an undergraduate Language Studies and Teacher Education Programme. This is a qualitative research, data were collected by means of questionnaire; interview; recordings of teletandem sessions, mediation meetings and e-mail exchange; and reflexive diary writing. Data analysis showed that the chat language presents some specific features in the teletandem context. Such features have implications on the self -assessment process. Eventually, analysis proved that the participant sets high standards as well as affective, linguistic-communicative and based-on-feedback criteria to assess her own performance in teletandem.

The exploratory study of Vassallo (2010) investigates the relationships of power within the specific learning context teletandem. This happens in different sessions for each language through written chat, audio and video. The study is grounded on the qualitative analysis of fifteen semi-structured interviews of seven teletandem partnerships and of one face -to-face partnership. Their focus is placed on three aspects of power relations within this learning context: (a) points of transit of power; (b) foundations of power; and (c) the dynamics of power. Rather than being considered as a permanent characteristic of people, power is viewed as a dynamic characteristic of relationships. Data interpretation is grounded on theories about the sources of power (Social Psychology), social exchange (Political Sociology) and the accommodation of communication (Linguistics). Finally, the results reveal: (a) a convergence of activities within both parts of the session; (b) that the roles that are taken within power relations are independent of the languages and of the roles that are momentarily exercised (either by the learner or by the more competent speaker); (c) a prevalence of the relational over the didactic aspect of the session; (d) a prevalence of the reciprocity over the autonomy principle; (e) that the partners tend to consider teletandem as a social exchange.

The study of Garcia (2010) focuses on the themes and characteristics of the agreements and negotiation processes in teletandem. Data were collected from (1) emails exchanged between the partners and between partners and the mediator-professor; (2) DVD interaction sessions recordings; (3) written teletandem sessions recordings; (4) recordings of interviews between the partners and the researcher at ooVoo and (5) field notes taken at Teletandem Laboratory at UNESP- Assis. The data analysis revealed that teletandem partners have little ability when establishing contact and initial negotiations with the partners which can be justified by the new context (teletandem) and also that it presupposes autonomy. The results of this study led to the conclusion that it is possible to observe (i) initial difficulties in collaborative teletandem practices that contribute to the development of autonomous attitudes of the learners on the negotiation processes during interactions, (ii) new roles for the teacher which involve mediation and orientation of the learners towards meaningful and intercultural learning.

Based on the principle that assessment integrates learning and teaching, in the thesis of Furtoso (2011), the potentiality of assessment was investigated in a twofold learning process, that is, learning a foreign language (FL) and learning to be a teacher of Portuguese to Speakers of Other Languages (PSOL). As a qualitative research project, this study aimed at investigating features of both spoken language and oral proficiency assessment in an online FL learning context, which is constituted by teletandem interactions. The information was collected in the scope of the *Teletandem Brasil* project (TTB) by means of interviews, audio and video

recordings of teletandem conversation, questionnaires, teletandem tracking sheets and field notes. The data were categorised according to the contents revealed in each type of research instrument and analysed with the support of a theoretical framework. The results show that the teletandem conversation is a linguistic and cultural interchange between Brazilian and foreigner partners motivated by the feedback provided. Based on the results of the data analysis and the literature review, this study presents two proposals in order to take better advantage of the FL learning and assessment process in online contexts. The first proposal is a new version of the teletandem tracking sheet that presents the criteria descriptors. The second proposal concerns the potentiality of online synchronous communication.

Luvizari-Murad's (2011) dissertation is also linked to the *Teletandem Brasil* research project and it aims to investigate the foreign languages collaborative learning activity of German and Portuguese. The study investigates the partnership between a German teletandem practitioner learning Portuguese, and his Brazilian teletandem partner learning German. More specifically, this research investigates the configuration of the activity components and its organisational dynamics as well as the potential for the participants' transformations in this innovative pedagogical context. It is qualitative ethnographic research and the data were generated by the records of teletandem sessions, personal notes of the Brazilian participant and an interview with the German participant. Data analysis showed a complex activity system in terms of its components and the relationships that were established among them. To overcome the activity contradictions two rules were established a) The learner decides what and how he/she wants to learn; b) the helper is supposed to do as requested. In relation to the artifacts, it was observed that they make use of linguistic, practical and technological tools, according to the characteristics and needs of each participant. This context can be considered, thus, as a space of transformations of its participants as they had to make changes in their own tools and in the activity system itself to achieve their goal: learn German and Portuguese.

In her dissertation, Augustin (2012) focuses on psychological and neurophysiological principles in regards to learning, especially in relation to teletandem. The first objective of the study is to discuss selected behaviouristic, cognitivist and constructivist learning theories which have influenced our thinking about the functioning of our brain and psyche and, hence, the resulting implications for human learning taking L1 and L2 acquisition into account. This discussion is then transferred to the 'teaching and learning method teletandem' and Augustin investigates in which way the teletandem method supports and facilitates the learning process of students and teachers in institutional contexts. The second objective of the study is to give an account of the implementation of teletandem in the curriculum of Portuguese studies at

Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz and the analysis and report of the first project evaluation.

The study of Luz (2012) aims to verify how the components of fourteen activity systems within the scope of Teletandem Brazil: foreign languages for all are characterised and how they interact and influence the continuity or discontinuity of teletandem partnerships. The theoretical framework is based on the fundamentals of the teletandem learning, its guiding principles, norms and suggestions for conducting teletandem and the historical-cultural approach of the activity theory. The research in question investigates seven teletandem partnerships which last from one to eight months and consist of one Brazilian, paired with three speakers of Spanish, and another Brazilian who interacted with four speakers of English. Data were generated through a questionnaire applied to the Brazilian participants, recordings of interactions, journals, e-mails exchanged among the participants, research reports of the Brazilian, narratives and a final interview. Based on the precepts of the activity theory, it is understood that the variables that influence the continuity and discontinuity of the partnerships are related to: (i) a well-structured Teletandem Community with professors, mediators or monitors available to assist and prepare the participants; (ii) subjects are aware and motivated to achieve their specific and potentially shared objects; (iii) access to instruments as a technological and didactic kit as well as to be digitally literate; (iv) good ability to constantly negotiate between the partners and (v) ability to work with the contradictions of the systems as a source of development, an opportunity for change and innovation of the activity. The lack of the elements mentioned above can influence the system of the teletandem partnership and determine its discontinuity.

Brinckwirth's (2012) study was conducted to investigate a class-to-class online English-Portuguese teletandem project that was conceived, negotiated and implemented cross-collaboratively between the foreign language faculty and language resource centre (LRC) staff at two large state universities – one in the United States and the other in Brazil. Ten English language students in Brazil were paired with ten Portuguese language students in the U.S. for a 10-week Skype-based tandem language exchange project that was jointly delivered online across an international university partnership. A qualitative case study design was used to examine the attitudes, perceptions, views and behaviours of the teachers, students and LRC staff who participated in the project. The objective of the study was to shed light on the factors that facilitated and hindered teletandem design, implementation and sustainability. The findings suggest that Teletandem is an innovative, low-cost, high-impact language learning activity with vast pedagogical implications. In addition, the results showed that – for many students –

teletandem heightened intercultural awareness, boosted confidence in the L2, and strengthened fluency skills while rendering a transformational learning experience.

The research of Salomão (2012) seeks to understand the conception of culture of in-service teachers and their beliefs about the language-culture they teach as well as the contributions of a continuing education course covering such aspects both theoretically and practically. It is ethnographic qualitative research that focuses on an extension course for continuing education of teachers in a virtual context of collaborative learning, provided by the project *Teletandem Brazil: foreign languages for all*, from UNESP, for teachers of Spanish as a foreign language from a public school in a city within the state of São Paulo, between May and September 2009. The theoretical reference is anchored on sociocultural theories, language teaching education, technologies and teaching, language learning, culture and culture teaching principles. The results have implications for the field of language teaching and learning mediated by new technologies and for the education of teachers presently, indicating a need for the reconceptualization of the terms ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural’ and of constructs such as communicative and intercultural competence. There is also a need to review the knowledge base for language teacher education in regards to the teaching and learning of culture, which should spur discussions grounded in real world interaction and supported by technological tools.

Zakir’s (2015) dissertation presents an exploratory ethnographic study, which investigates telecollaborative partnerships among students of a public university in Brazil and a private university in the United States. Her research mainly aims at investigating the role of culture in the context of an institutional teletandem partnership. Thus, the specific objectives are: *identifying the participants' conceptions of culture* in activities proposed in a virtual learning platform and *understanding how culture emerges* in the dynamics of teletandem interactions. Considering the principle of dialogism from the relationality of the self and the other, and the production of meaning as part of the social activities of students, data are interpreted under the perspective of the methodological principles of what is called *Dialogic Discourse Analysis* in Brazil. Thus, all kinds of texts produced by the participants will be deemed to give more elements to interpret data and, therefore, to investigate linguistic, social and ideological issues embedded in the multiple discourses which is included in the documentary material. The results contribute to a reflection on the education of teachers and other professionals in a context that has been decreasingly marked by geographical barriers, aiming to develop a possible transcultural citizenship through contact with different languages and cultures.

The study of Funo (2015) which was developed in the scope of the *Teletandem Brasil* project seeks to broaden the horizon of the cultural dimension of the project by focusing on the mediation sessions. These mediation sessions are peer personal meetings with teachers and teletandem learners which occurred directly after the institutionally semi-integrated teletandem sessions with the objective to support the learners in their learning process. The specific objective of the study is to investigate how the mediation sessions in teletandem can contribute to “the education to get involved with other peoples” (Telles, 2011). Therefore, the study interprets a) the evidence of cultural learning which emerges in the mediation sessions, and b) the evidence of cultural identity of the learners and mediators which materialise during the reports and reflections and which are evoked in these meetings. On the basis of the reflection on the dimensions of pedagogical challenges which occur in the mediation sessions, it is possible to reflect on the new challenges in foreign language and culture teacher education.

The study of da Costa (2015) aims to analyse gender and gender discourses in teletandem interactions given that this area of study is absent from the scientific production in the Project. The study has two main objectives: a) to analyse the interaction dynamics between same and different biological sex/gender partnerships and b) describe how these partnerships perform gender, discourses and ideologies in these transcultural interactions on-line in teletandem. The theoretical framework of her research is centred on Performativity Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis from a socio-historical perspective. The research methodology is qualitative, exploratory and interpretive. The instruments for data collection were video recordings of 10 teletandem sessions carried out by 34 university students of which 17 were from an American university and 17 from a Brazilian university. The analysis of transcribed data was guided by Performativity Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. In order to analyse Performativity in the interactions, the concepts of speech acts, turns, and sedimented ideas about gender and gender discourses, culture and identities were used. The results of the analysis indicate the preference of the students for same sex/gender partners and the emerging of two groups with divergent discourses about typical topics that different sex/gender engage in: (a) the sedimented ideas group (b) the group whose ideas are not based on different topics for different sex/gender.

In her study, Souza (2016) sets out to investigate misunderstandings between teletandem partners during their teletandem sessions. Even if the teletandem contexts aims to promote negotiation, collaboration and mutual comprehension, the interactive process between the learners is not immune to misunderstandings. On the contrary, misunderstandings are considered an inherent phenomenon in communicative processes (Garand, 2009). Generally,

misunderstandings are associated with discomfort, disagreements, conflicts and other unpleasant sensations and consequences for the communicative dynamic. The aim of this study is to analyse episodes of misunderstandings in teletandem interactions between Brazilian learners of English and students of US American universities learning Portuguese. The results of the analysis should contribute to pedagogical interventions in mediation sessions in teletandem and also to the linguistic, inter- and transcultural learning of the students.

From the 14 PhD dissertations completed so far within the scope of the *Teletandem Brasil* project, we can see that many different topics have been addressed: there are several studies about aspects of the learning of foreign languages in the specific context of teletandem (Augustin, 2012; Luvizari-Murad, 2011; Luz, 2012); two studies relate to the process of implementation of institutional projects that use the teletandem context for language learning (Augustin, 2012; Brinckwirth, 2012); several researchers worked with the direct interaction or relationship between teletandem partners such as in negotiations, misunderstandings, power balance and gender discourse (da Costa, 2015; Garcia, 2010; Souza, 2016; Vassallo, 2010); forms of assessment in teletandem were studied by Cavalari, 2009 and Furtoso, 2011; and most recently the idea of culture was studied in interactions and mediations of teletandem sessions (Funó, 2015; Salomão, 2012; Zakir, 2015). With the exception of Funó's dissertation and parts of Augustin's study, all others are examining elements of the teletandem sessions, i.e. the interactions between the language learner pairs. However, mediation sessions, which are often integral part of a teletandem interaction, are receiving more and more attention and become increasingly important in the teletandem project. In her study, Funó emphasises the significance of mediation sessions as integral part in teletandem projects in order to give the necessary support in areas such as learning process, (inter)cultural understandings and linguistic aspects of the languages the participants study in teletandem. Studies that investigate how mediation sessions in relation to teletandem are working, what is happening in those mediation sessions and how learners and even mediators can benefit from these meetings are still a desideratum. In this respect, this dissertation intends to start a new research direction which could focus more on different aspects of mediation sessions as they are developed within teletandem projects. Mediation sessions, also referred to as advising or counselling sessions, have already received attention in studies and reports especially about autonomous language learning and even in some face-to-face tandem projects, as will be shown in chapter 2. Nevertheless, within the telecollaboration project *Teletandem Brasil*, in which a lot of different countries with different learning cultures and learning contexts participate, mediation, advising or coaching concepts

are visible and practised differently. This is why the main objective of this dissertation is to bring together those different ideas and concepts and to attempt to outline a first model of the group mediation activities which are carried out on the Brazilian side of the teletandem projects.

1.3.4 Other Skype-based tandem projects

Besides the *Teletandem Brasil* project, many similar tandem exchange projects via videoconferencing tools have been developed and tested in other universities and schools in different countries around the world. This section provides a brief overview of some of these comparable projects, some of which are smaller and some of which are of broader range, but, of course, the summary is by no means exhaustive.

There exist a number of broad telecollaboration networks such as *INTENT* or *TiLA* which encompass different modalities of telecollaboration, amongst them one can usually find a Skype-tandem-project. The *INTENT – Integrating Telecollaborative Networks into Foreign Language Higher Education* – project promotes various activities to integrate telecollaboration with foreign languages in higher education contexts. Particularly European universities are involved but also others can be found among the participating partners⁶⁶.

TiLA stands for *Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition*. The project's objective is to improve the quality of L2 teaching and learning processes through telecollaboration between pairs. It promotes professional development by addressing digital, intercultural, pedagogical and organisational concerns for the successful integration of telecollaboration practices in language education. Target languages of the project are English, French, German and Spanish. The project is financed by the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme for a duration of two years from 2013 to 2015.⁶⁷

The project *Lingalog* at Université Lumière Lyon II is a platform for L2 teachers and educational institutions, which contains different educational projects promoting the development of multilingual competence. It offers material and activities in 16 languages for telecollaboration, one of its forms being e-tandem.⁶⁸

Beside of the telecollaboration networks larger in scope such as the *INTENT* project, which connects a number of smaller telecollaborative partnerships between different educational institutions, there are websites offering users, who are interested in language learning, a platform to find information and a learning partner for private language learning. The interested

⁶⁶ www.uni-collaboration.eu

⁶⁷ www.tilaproject.eu

⁶⁸ www.lingalog.net/dokuwiki

learners have to register on the platform and create profiles with information about their languages. The site then offers (usually free of charge) pair matching and information on how to work with a native speaker. However, users must make the contact and negotiate all details with their learning partners. No personal help is given.⁶⁹ Recently an app for smartphones called *Hello Talk* was launched which seems to promote the idea of tandem learning with native speakers through a chat programme that has special functions such as instantaneous visibility of the translation of a message, built-in grammar correction and other features⁷⁰. As people increasingly choose to use smartphones or tablets over laptops and PCs, an app for realising an electronic tandem on the smartphone or tablet, with more functions than Skype-app, for instance, offers, might be an interesting development for language learners.

In regards to tandem projects via Skype, or similar videoconferencing programmes, in higher education, different projects can be found when researching the internet.

First of all, there are universities which were inspired by their teletandem experiences within the *Teletandem Brasil* project and expanded their teletandem activities to other partner universities which are then carried out outside the scope of the *Teletandem Brasil* project. This is the case with Georgetown University, USA, *Université Lille 3*, France or *Università del Salento*, Lecce, Itália. Lille has partners in Leeds, UK and also with the University of Foreign Languages Dalian in China (Cappellini & Zhang, 2013). Georgetown University has partners in Turkey, Russia, Jordania, France, Japan, and Mexico⁷¹, for instance, and *Università del Salento* has further teletandem activities with *Universität Bonn* (Flurschütz, 2014).

Naturally, other universities have developed electronic tandem projects as well, which is especially true for Europe where the idea of tandem learning is widely known and practiced. The *Università degli Studi di Padova* and the Boston University in their “eTandem Learning project” match interested students in English and Italian from both universities for collaboration with videoconferencing. Students receive a certificate when specific requirements have been fulfilled, i.e. participation in a discussion forum and weekly learning diaries. This is a type of non-integrated institutional tandem because the tandem activities are not part of a specific course (see 1.3.1)⁷².

Universität Bielefeld in Germany has a tandem centre called *Teutoburger World Tandem* with different tandem programmes such as face-to-face tandem but also international Skype

⁶⁹ The Mixxer www.language-exchange.org; Tandem Exchange www.tandemexchange.com; Conversation Exchange www.conversationexchange.com; Live Mocha www.livemocha.com

⁷⁰ www.hellotalk.com

⁷¹ <https://itel.georgetown.edu/teletandem-project/>

⁷² See <http://www.cla.unipd.it/cetest-firstpage/autoapprendimento/tandem-learning/en-etandem>

tandems⁷³. In addition to regular face-to-face tandem, *Universität Münster* also offers a Spanish-German Tandem Course in which students have to hold weekly Skype tandem sessions with their partners. In order to receive 5 ECTS-credit points⁷⁴ for their academic record, students are required to write a weekly portfolio and to participate in two advising sessions and five workshops⁷⁵. The University of Manchester, UK, for instance, offers a similar course for post-intermediate French in which students interact in Skype tandems with their French or English partners, respectively⁷⁶. At *Leibniz Universität Hannover*, different forms of tandem are available, amongst them institutionally-integrated Skype tandem courses with a Mexican partner university and not-integrated e-tandems through Skype sessions with Japanese students from Osaka⁷⁷.

Universität Freiburg i. Br. started an e-tandem project based on Skype videoconferencing and e-mails with the Italian *Università di Pavia* in 2009/10. The so-called *e-tandem project based on Skype* was developed to be course-integrated, thus, participants were asked to write a weekly portfolio to record improvements and difficulties they noticed in their tandem activities (Murelli & Pedretti, 2010). As institutionally-integrated tandem modality, students met at specific days and hours during the week throughout the semester, the language level of the students was similar, the tandem had a didactic structure, i.e. conversation subjects were predefined and the assessment methods were clarified for the participating students. Besides the portfolios, regular feedback between students and between teacher and students were planned. Upon completion of all tasks, students receive a language certificate and 4 ECTS points (Biolcati & Murelli, 2010).

Another e-tandem project which uses Skype videoconferencing sessions is a Chinese-English interaction between Peking University, Beijing, and Griffith University, Nathan, Australia. Paired randomly, there were 15 students on each side who had to conduct a tandem session via Skype one hour per week outside the classroom. Oral reports of students of Mandarin (two minutes after each session) were one form of assessment. The students of English had to write brief reports after each session (Tian & Wang, 2010).

⁷³ See <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/fachsprachenzentrum/e-learning/international-skype.html>

⁷⁴ By completing a course, seminar, module etc. a student at a European university participating in the Bologna process is credited with ECTS points. Hereby, each ECTS credit point equals a certain amount of work load. ECTS-credit points, therefore, are not grades. The workload includes class room hours but also class preparation, homework, preparation for exams, etc. In Germany, one ECTS-credit point is the equivalent of a workload of 30 hours.

⁷⁵ See <http://spz.uni-muenster.de/de/courses/19349>

⁷⁶ See <http://www.ulc.manchester.ac.uk/languages/leap/french/levels/post-intermediatefrench/>

⁷⁷ For a pilot study in 2011/12 with German-Japanese e-tandem with Skype sessions see Wakisaka 2014. For additional information, see <http://www.fsz.uni-hannover.de/tandemkurse.html>

Mullen, Appel and Shanklin (2009) report on a Skype-based tandem learning project between students of Tsuda College, Tokyo, and San Diego State University. The project started in 2006 with a pilot study on Japanese-English task-based tandem activities. For the US American students the tandem activities were compulsory and part of their course, whereas for the Japanese students the project was entirely voluntary. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for whether the project will be continued or not.

There are two more teletandem projects connecting Brazilian universities to several US American and German universities. The first one is an English-Portuguese teletandem between Brigham Young University, Ashland and Georgetown College on one side and *Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina* and *Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro* on the other. Their teletandem activities are course-integrated and task-based (see Abreu-Ellis et al., 2013). The second project is also an English-Portuguese exchange; however, the English speaking partners are proficient speakers of English from the German *Universität Trier* and *Universität Worms*. With regards to the videoconferencing tool, the students use *Openmeetings*, the modality of the tandem activities is not course-integrated, but the students develop some projects together. Another distinctive characteristic is that the project coordinators also promote face-to-face meetings between the students so that one side travels to visit the other (da Silva et al., 2014).

With regards to Europe, a noteworthy, relatively new project in relation to e-tandem via Skype® is the L3-TASK project which is also promoted by the European Commission in the Lifelong Learning Programme (2013-2016), “Mother tongue + 2” is the objective as per the European Commission’s language policy. English is already being consolidated as the first foreign language in many European countries, but, nonetheless, Europeans are still far away of achieving this in regards to a third language. Therefore, this project, has the objective to promote a third language, but in a non-traditional way, i.e. via online tandems using Skype® to communicate with the partners⁷⁸. Currently, universities in Spain, China, Germany and Austria are participating in the project. The project coordination lies with *Universität Wien* in Austria.

The same coordination team recently started another e-tandem project, but for this its focus was laid on public schools. FAME – *Förderung von Autonomie und Motivation durch den Einsatz von E-Tandems im schulischen Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Promotion of autonomy and motivation through the use of e-tandems in L2 classes in schools) aims to find out how the non-formal learning context e-tandem must be designed in order to promote high motivation and autonomy as well guarantee the necessary guidance and advising by the teachers. The

⁷⁸ www.l3task.eu

project started at the end of 2014 and included schools in Vienna and Vannes, France (El-Hariri & Jung, 2015).

Another tandem project in Germany using videoconferencing as a possible modality is called SEAGULL – *Smart Educational Autonomy through Guided Language Learning* – and is coordinated by *Universität Greifswald*. Promoted by the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme as well, the organisers sought to create a dynamic concept of language learning which aims to support tandem learning in various ways. First of all, one of the project's objectives is to bridge the gap between autonomous language learning and systematic learner support. This is why the approximately 20 participating universities created materials for tandem learning in 11 languages for levels A1 to B2. The project also seeks to promote intercultural competence of its participants which is why the materials elaborate extensively on the cultural component. The third aspect is the integration of tandem learning into the curricular structures of educational institutions so that the activities are recognised by ECTS-credit points and certificates. However, even learners who are not associated in any way with any of the participating universities may look for a partner on the SEAGULL platform by registering and creating a profile. The ideas and materials are available to any tandem learner as well.⁷⁹

1.3.5 Chapter synthesis

In this chapter I offered an overview of tandem learning as a specific learning context, as my research was conducted within the scope of a teletandem project between Brazilian and German university students. One can say that teletandem is a newer virtual version of face-to-face tandem where two learners with different native or proficient languages meet at the same virtual space to help each other learn the other's language (Telles, 2015). With modern communication technology and internet, learners do not need to be at the same physical space anymore, but can meet via the internet to have a face-to-face tandem, a teletandem.

Today, many teletandem projects between educational institutions exist, even if they are not always labelled with the term 'teletandem', as it can be noticed in section 1.3.4. Besides some publications of the *Teletandem Brasil* partner universities in Europe (Augustin, 2012; Cappellini & Zhang, 2013; Elstermann, 2014b, 2014c; Leone, 2012, 2014; Mompean, Cappellini & Elstermann, in preparation; and others) the relatively broad scientific production developed in the scope of the *Project Teletandem Brazil: Foreign languages for all* is still

⁷⁹ <http://seagull-tandem.eu/project/>

unknown as most researchers involved in the project have published in Portuguese. Thus, one of the aims of this chapter was also to give an overview of the research carried out in Brazil so far, a country with an only very recent tradition of tandem learning.

Nevertheless, it was also a concern for me to present and describe (even if only very briefly) other online tandem projects I have come across throughout the last years, because I think that it is important that more contact should exist between researchers and practitioners of similar projects. Often, it seems that each research team is working on its own, but by building closer relationships and more networks between international research teams, new ideas, best practices and research results could be shared and bundled and reveal even more ideas and results. The first international conference on tandem learning at the University of Miami in February 2014 (I INFLIT⁸⁰) was a productive meeting that brought together coordinators, practitioners and researchers of different tandem projects around the world. It was an opportunity for tandem researchers to gain interesting insights into context-specific problems and their respective solutions as well as to connect with others for networking and collaboration. The II IMFLIT at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. in 2017 should be another opportunity to deepen the established contacts and networks.

As my investigation on learner-mediator interaction in peer group mediation sessions was embedded in the *Teletandem Brasil* context with teletandem interactions between Brazilian and German students, the topic ‘teletandem’ certainly plays a crucial role in understanding the learners’ and the mediators’ interaction and reflection from the data of my study. Within the peer group mediation sessions, the main topic was always the autonomous language learning in tandem, or topics closely related to this learning context. Thus, it is important to provide to the readers of this dissertation an introduction to the principles, theories and the project background, so that it is easier to comprehend the content of the dialogues in the peer group mediation sessions and other collected data.

In the next chapter, I will enter the field of advising/ mediation in language learning which builds the second main theoretical pillar of my doctoral research project. This includes a review of existing (standard) literature on theory and practice for advising in language learning in tandem as well as a description of advising and mediation settings in relation to teletandem learning contexts which has been scarcely explored in the current academic literature. As I have worked with three different language and culture contexts (Brazilian Portuguese, English and German), I aim to connect and discuss similarities and differences in regards to terms, concepts and practices. For the partners in this international and transcultural telecollaboration project it

⁸⁰ First International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in Tandem: Past, Present, Future

is very important that they can communicate with fewer misunderstandings and less conflict between them. If each party within the teletandem project starts out from a different concept of advising – this is only a small part of a larger international project chosen for this research – communication and/or negotiation gaps might arise between the partners when the concepts are not clearly discussed and understood.

2 Learner support for language learning contexts: different formats for different needs

There are many different fields in which counselling, advising, coaching, training and similar forms of support are used – professionally or otherwise – in areas such as finance, economics, politics and academia. All fields are developing their own practices and discourses depending on institutional context, theoretical approach and political dimensions (Silverman, 1997 in Mynard & Carson, 2012). In regards to the field of language learning, this is not an exception. In it, different forms of learner support have been established in the last two decades. Language centres, self-access centres and other language projects such as language learning in tandem, offer types of support for their learners, mainly in order to promote self-directed or autonomous learning⁸¹.

This chapter focuses on different forms of learner support for language learning contexts⁸² and aims to give an overview of many different aspects which are related and connected to the subject and which are dispersed in specialised literature about learner support. Being immersed as a professor and researcher in the Brazilian academic landscape, where discussions on learner support for language learning have recently started to emerge (Bedran & Salomão, 2013; Cunha & Magno e Silva, 2014; Ferrari, 2013; Funo, 2015; Magno e Silva, Dantas, Sá e Matos, & Martins, 2013; Marques-Schäfer, Marchezi, & Junger, 2015; Salomão, 2010), the idea of this chapter is to organise relevant information on the subject mainly developed in other countries such as Germany, France and the UK, and which might serve as a basis for the development of a local approach of learner support for language learning which includes the peculiarities of the learning context in Brazil.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the different terms and definitions that can be found under the umbrella term ‘learner support’, whereby emphasis is given to English, German and Brazilian language learning contexts and terms. Then, I will present some of the main theories on which concepts of learner support such as advising and mediation are based as well as the aims and functions of learner support and the different forms of support used in different learning contexts. This entails reporting on different forms of learner support that vary from

⁸¹ When using the terms self-directed or autonomous learning (both adjectives as synonyms) I am referring to a learning in which learners are highly reflective and conscious about their own learning process. To be autonomous does not mean that someone is free from exterior influences. It is important to consider that it is difficult to delimit when we are self-directed and when other-directed (Schmenk, 2014). Because when we ourselves are capable of determining our objectives, of defining learning ways, and of evaluating our outcomes, based on Holec’s idea of autonomy, it’s not that we have this ability from our birth on, but we have learned this from other people, in specific learning contexts, throughout the course of our lives.

⁸² Mainly in higher education contexts, but they can also be applied to other language learning contexts.

face-to-face encounters between a language advisor and a learner to distance and peer-mediation modalities. An additional focus is the role and context of the language learning advisor/mediator by examining his or her goals, practices, skills and the tools implemented in learner support contexts. I then give a summary of the research carried out so far in this field. Naturally, it is impossible to reproduce all research, primarily due to linguistic limitations of access. Whilst reviewing the literature on learner support, it became apparent that much of the academic exchange remains inside the respective linguistic communities even if research results and reports published in other languages are available and can be accessed.

Finally, a more in-depth exploration of learner support settings in relation to tandem language learning will be done. There are many forms of tandem learning, therefore, there is a need for a varied offer of learner support to meet the learners' needs. The chapter closes with a tentative conceptualisation of the various forms of learner support in the different existing teletandem modalities.

Mynard and Carson state that “ALL [Advising in Language Learning], as an emerging field, is in the process of defining itself” (2012, p. 6). Even if the discussion about learner support in language learning started at once with the discussion about learner autonomy, the field of learner support is still struggling to be recognised by learners, teachers, and occasionally the wider academic community. This, however, appears to be changing in the case of some countries such as the UK, France, Germany and Japan, where it is possible to find a highly productive practice and research tradition with advising contexts for (language) learning, especially in Higher Education, where the subject is broadly discussed both in publications and in specific conferences.

It is in the scientific literature of the aforementioned countries where the latest discussions on the variety of terms that exist for denominating learner support in different language learning contexts can be found. Besides the variety of terms, the concepts behind the terms are still unclear, and differences are vague (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014, p. 34). This is a result of the development of learner support in different contexts and settings, where practitioners use varying terminology which sometimes may imply different practices. In general, however, practitioners in advising, coaching and mediation contexts do agree on the main goals of support in language learning (Mynard & Carson 2012, p. 6).

Kleppin and Spänkuch (2014) indicate two reasons for why the terminology situation is this complex. Firstly, the need for learner support is usually related to the concept of learner autonomy, i.e., in short, “the ability to take charge of one's own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

The role of the teacher, thus, should be to support the learner to become conscious of the individual learning process. This entails detecting individual prerequisites, motives, and needs, identifying concrete and viable goals, before then organising useful resources such as learning strategies. Based on this idea, the role of teachers has changed; they are now seen as facilitators, mediators or advisors (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014, p. 34).

A second reason may be an insufficient differentiation between the functions and objectives of learner support settings. These settings can comprise, amongst others, a) concrete help for a learning project, b) recommendations (for exams), c) information (for facilitating the choice of a certain learning programme), d) guidelines (for adequate work with a software), and e) individual exercises (for training pronunciation or writing skills), but they are all likely to be labelled as advising or *Beratung*, in the case of German contexts (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014, p. 34).

Silverman (1997), however, notes that when a field is still growing, it will be unlikely to develop a unique definition because theories and practice are used in different ways due to different contextual factors. Mynard and Carson (2012) believe that “despite the inevitable variety of approaches to ALL [advising in language learning], there are benefits to be gained through discussing and agreeing on what may be the central foundations, principles, practices and issues in the field, in order to inform new educators and researchers, and also to guide future innovation and research” (p.6).

Support for language learning is still a relatively new area of Applied Linguistics. With the discussions on learner autonomy for language learning, which was initiated in the 1970s and 1980s, and the opening of the first self-access centres (SAC) to promote self-directed learning⁸³, it quickly became evident that the simple free access to a range of materials did not automatically result in an increase in the autonomy of learners. A learner needs to be aware of several aspects of his own learning style to consciously use the programmes he is offered in a SAC, for example. A solution for enhancing autonomy, without replicating the traditional classroom setting, is a context in which a learning expert would help the learner to reflect on his learning process and, whenever necessary, offer advice and information about aspects concerning contents, learning strategies and techniques, evaluation, etc.

Since the 1970s and 80s, the variety and number of publications on different forms of support for language learning have been constantly increasing and cover reports on concrete advising contexts as well as their underlying theoretical reflections. Nevertheless, there is still

⁸³ One of the most important researchers of learner autonomy and author of that time is Henry Holec and his team of the C.R.A.P.E.L. – Centre de Recherches et d’Applications Pédagogiques en Langues, Nancy, France.

a *desideratum* for more empirical research to be carried out in this area. This would complement the practical reports we usually read about advising settings and lend greater theoretical and practical consistency for further research, as noted by Schmelter in 2006 and by Mynard and Carson six years later in their book *Advising in Language Learning*⁸⁴. Although more could have been written about learner support for language learning, it can be noted that learner support is evolving to established itself as a professional field in academic institutions around the world.

Types of institutionalised learner support in Higher Education can vary. They can include general advising programmes for university students to help them plan their studies and further career, special programmes for training writing skills (both for native and foreign students), and even advising settings in SACs to help students organise their autonomous learning of a foreign language, amongst many other possibilities. This wide variety of advising scenarios, however, does not exist in all of the world's academic communities. In the Brazilian academic context, for example, the situation is different. Learner support does, of course, take place (see Elstermann, 2014; Funo, 2015; Magno e Silva et al., 2013; Marques-Schäfer et al., 2015; Salomão, 2010), but in most universities not in formalised or institutionalised forms – such as training for academic writing, which takes place in a specialised setting designed solely for this purpose. Support for academic writing, for instance, most likely takes place in encounters between supervisors and students when discussing the development of a paper, thesis or dissertation⁸⁵ or in classroom projects (see Ferrari, 2013). In the case of support for exchange students, for example, the support does not usually exceed the personal involvement of a teacher or native student who works or studies in the same department in which the exchange student is enrolled. As there are still relatively few foreign students enrolled in academic studies at Brazilian universities, at least in comparison to European or US American universities with exchange programs such as ERASMUS⁸⁶, institutionalised support such as international offices for incoming students, for instance, have just been implemented in recent years. One of the reasons why learner support in general is still scarcely implemented – and also why it has only very recently been researched – is probably due to the fact that actual discussions on the

⁸⁴ Mynard/Carson (Eds.), *Advising in Language Learning. Dialogue, tools and context*, Harlow: Pearson Education, 2012.

⁸⁵ Personal communication with colleagues from different Brazilian universities (Dr. Kristina Peuschel, Dr. Katja Reinecke).

⁸⁶ Only the exchange programme ERASMUS enabled 252,827 students in 2011/2012 to gain experience at universities in other European countries. There exist more exchange programmes as well as the possibility of studying as “free mover” (without an exchange programme) which increases the number of foreign students. (http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/erasmus1112_en.pdf (10.02.2014))

promotion of learner autonomy in the Brazilian school and university systems are still in its infancy⁸⁷ (Davis, Nunes, & Nunes, 2005; Nicolaides, 2003).

After this short introduction to learner support for language learning, I intend to move on to a deeper discussion of different definitions and terminology that describe learner support in general, learner support for language learning and learner support for language learning in tandem, in particular. This commences with a description of the German, English and Portuguese definitions of the terms, which all served as a basis for my research and then involves a look at the theories behind the perception of advising definitions.

2.1 Terms and definitions of learner support

In the academic literature in the field of learner support in language learning, different terms can be found which are often used as synonyms. Some terms emerged from other contexts but nevertheless share the same definition as the concepts pursue the same or very similar goals. For this study, I have been immersed in three different academic contexts and have therefore worked with three different sources – German, Brazilian and English-language texts. Nowadays, people no longer live and work in closed and separated settings – globalisation has transformed the global population into crossers of borders and cultures. It is no longer exceptional to be German, living and working in Brazil and cooperating with colleagues in Japan, the United States and Italy, for instance. For this reason, I had to work with more advising terms than I initially anticipated. The variety of terms in German and English is equally large with certain English terms also being used in German contexts such as ‘tutoring’ or ‘mentoring’. As the field of advising has only recently become an area of research in Brazil, I have only found a small number of terms in Brazilian literature to date: *mediação*, *orientação*, *aconselhamento linguageiro* and *consultoria de aprendizagem de línguas*.

I will start with terms and definitions for language learning support discussed in English texts, followed by German and the Brazilian term discussion. Afterwards, I will attempt to bridge the various concepts.

When reading the academic literature about language learning support in English, there are two main terms that appear consistently: *advising* and *counselling*. As far as I am aware, these terms are used synonymously. When we read the definitions of counselling and advising in relation to language learning, they are very similar or even the same. It seems to be a matter of

⁸⁷ Learner autonomy has actually been mentioned in the Brazilian curriculum plan for public schools (PCN) since 1997, but the reality at many schools is that education rarely focuses on the learner and there is hardly time and space for the teachers to be able to promote autonomy.

the author's preference which term he or she uses, and to which extent his/her approach is directive or non-directive.

The term *advising* is defined as ensuring the development of the learner's learning competence and focusing on the learning process (Gremmo, 2009, p.2) or as the process of assisting students in directing their own paths in order to become better, more autonomous language learners (Carson & Mynard, 2012). Advising has alternately been described as a frame that advisors provide, "a set of conditions within which learners can have or hold the responsibility of some or all the decisions concerning aspects of their learning, from stating their aims to determining their objectives to defining contents, selecting methods and techniques and finally evaluating the process and the knowledge" (Mozzon-McPherson, 2003, p. 180).

In regards to the term *counselling*, Kelly (1996) defines it as follows: "counselling is essentially the form of therapeutic dialogue that enables an individual to manage a problem. It is particularly effective when personal choices have to be made, and when acquired beliefs about oneself and the world need to be changed" (p. 94). Both definitions focus on the learner as individual who has to make decisions about his/her learning process. However, the definitions also point to the changes that may happen in the process of assuming responsibility for one's own learning process.

Alternatively, Carson and Mynard (2012) discuss several English terms in relation to learner support in their book on *Advising in Language Learning*. The authors opt for the term "advising in language learning" (ALL) as an overarching term which also allows us to use the companion terms *advisor* and *advisee*. This is even the case if the word *advising* is often related to an imparting of knowledge or transference of information from an expert to a decision-maker as in the use of the term *financial advisor*, for example. Mozzon-McPherson (2001, p. 7) and Reinders (2008, p. 13) use the similar term *language advising*. Carson and Mynard, however, find this term too narrow, as it implies only giving advice in relation to the language, and, therefore, could suggest the exclusion of elements that "encompass in their work all the elements involved in assisting language learners with enhancing their learning processes" (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 4).

According to Carson and Mynard, the terms *counselling* and *counsellor* are problematic for three reasons. Firstly, they argue that the term *counselling* evokes an image of overcoming conflict, pain and personal struggles, and is related to work with a certified and trained counsellor. Language learning should not be seen as such a painful process of inner conflicts, even if it is a complex and life-long process. Secondly, the authors state that the person who

acts as counsellor for language learning is usually not a trained therapist, and, therefore, could not be expected to offer this kind of specialised help. A third point is that mainstream counselling theories are based on a clear non-directive approach, but in Carson and Mynard's opinion, the language counsellor/advisor sometimes explicitly has to give information or intervene in a way which may be slightly directive – even if it is possible to adopt a non-directive approach (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 8).

As a non-native speaker of English, the first step towards a deeper understanding of the two terms is to look up the definitions of both *counselling* and *advising/advise* in a dictionary. The Merriam Webster dictionary provides several synonyms for the word *advise*; to give an opinion/suggestion, to give advice, to recommend, and to give information.⁸⁸ At first sight, these verbs make sense when thinking genuinely about a learner support session. A language learning expert is giving information (on materials and strategies that could be used by the learner), and making suggestions (on how to proceed in the learning process). The only problem encountered here is with regards to the keyword *directiveness*, as several types of learner support tend to be purposely non-directive, i.e. the expert should NOT give advice or make suggestions as a way to prevent influencing the learner's decisions.

When looking at the term *counselling*, the following definition can be found: “professional guidance of the individual by utilizing psychological methods [...]”⁸⁹. With this definition in mind, I agree with Carson and Mynard that by using the term *counselling* there may be too much focus on therapeutical aspects which is certainly not desirable within the context of learner support in language learning. The language expert⁹⁰ may have had training in counselling techniques, but is not a professional therapist in the psychological sense. As can be seen later on in the chapter, whilst discussing the aspect of directiveness in learner support, I think the term *advising* and its companion terms seem to be a satisfactory choice for a form of learner support as an expert helps language learners to promote their learning.

Carson and Mynard also introduce the terms *guidance* (Bond, 2000), *advice-giving* (Silverman, 1997) and *life coaching*. However, these terms are used in other fields such as HIV counselling and psychological therapy and were not directly found in relation to language learning.

It is important to note that the terms regarding learner support are used differently in different learning cultures and, of course, different languages, as demonstrated below.

⁸⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advise> (11.04.2014)

⁸⁹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counseling> (11.04.2014)

⁹⁰ I am using ‘language expert’ in the sense of a person who has gained much experience in language learning by learning at least one foreign language and through an education as language teacher, advisor/mediator, tutor.

Nevertheless, we can see some consistency in the definitions underlying the terms, and the central goal is always to foster learner autonomy.

The extent to which the practices of (language) learning advisors will draw on skills from counselling, guidance, coaching or professional advising will depend on the context (Kato & Yamashita, 2009). It will also depend on a learner's particular circumstance, for example, language proficiency level, purpose of the session, or a student's emotional state (McCarthy, 2010). In other words, just as is the case with the field of counselling, ALL [advising in language learning] has core aims and practices, but the practice may have within it, a variety of approaches. (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 12)

In German, it is the term *Sprachlernberatung* (advising in language learning) which is mostly used in academic literature, but recently, there has been an observable shift to the word *Sprachlerncoaching* (coaching in language learning), when researchers talk about an advising concept that encompasses the learning process and is strictly non-directive. In general, the definition for *Sprachlernberatung* is very similar to the definitions for counselling and advising: supporting learners' learning process in different learning contexts in order to take responsibility for their own learning process and find efficient ways of learning (Mehlhorn & Kleppin, 2006, p. 2). Mehlhorn (2005) explicitly expresses that the concept of *Sprachlernberatung*, advising, (not coaching) is non-directive, where goals and ways of learning are discussed, new ways found, tested and evaluated with the aim to support students so that they take responsibility for their own learning. Yet Schmelter (2004) recognises a directive approach, at least partly, when he defines *Sprachlernberatung* as

help with the development of individual potentials for action in foreign language learning in tandem. [...] looking for and finding the most efficient ways possible of achieving learning goals together with them [the learners]. [...] **eventually, imparting knowledge about language learning in tandem**, but also stimulating reflective processes.⁹¹ (Schmelter 2004, p. 345, my emphasis, my translation)

We also find the terms *Sprachlerntraining* (training in language learning) and *Tutoring* in German academic literature in the field. In the first case, it is quite clear that language support known as *Sprachlerntraining* offers concrete support on an operational level, i.e. direct strategies for concrete actions such as strategies for listening in foreign language learning. This type of support can be realised individually or in small groups (see Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014). In the case of *Tutoring*, we actually find this term in different languages, in German as well as in English and even in Portuguese. In all three languages *tutoring* or the person named *tutor*

⁹¹ Original: [In der hier vorgelegten Studie hatte die Beratung in meinen Augen die Aufgabe,] eine Hilfe bei der Entwicklung persönlicher Handlungspotenziale beim Fremdsprachenlernen im Tandem zu sein [...]. [Die an der Studie teilnehmenden Studenten habe ich darauf hingewiesen, dass es mein Wunsch sei,] gemeinsam mit ihnen nach möglichst effizienten Wegen für das Erreichen der von ihnen verfolgten Lernziele zu suchen und diese zu finden. [...] Zum einen musste ich gegebenenfalls den Lernern gezielt Wissen über das Fremdsprachenlernen im Tandem vermitteln, zum anderen hielt ich es für wichtig, sie in reflexiven Prozessen auf die Diskrepanzen zwischen den besonderen Potenziale [sic] des Präsenz-Tandems einerseits und ihrem konkreten Vorgehen andererseits hinzuweisen. (Schmelter 2004:345)

usually refers to a trained student or a context in which trained students support their peers, frequently found in e-learning contexts – and sometimes referred to in German as *e-Tutoring* (Kleppin, 2006; Wegele, 2006). The kind of support trained peers provide is usually on a more technical basis: sharing best practices regarding work/study techniques, making corrections and evaluating tasks. They may also be asked to answer emails, open and guide discussion boards, and offer help by commenting and clarifying questions on contents (Garcia & Lima, 2013; Kao 2012). In this case, advising on the learning process is normally not involved (Kleppin, 2006).

Kleppin and Spänkuch (2014) in their paper on the use of terms in learner support in language learning highlight the diffuse use of these terms in the German literature and propose an organisation of the terms in accordance with their underlying objectives. Depending on the learner's needs in a special situation, the type of support will be directed to those needs. For example, if a learner wants to optimise his learning process in general, coaching would be the optimal choice. Similarly, another learner who wants to improve his listening skills for a specific learning situation may therefore need a concrete strategy training to master the listening tasks (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014, p. 35). The authors compiled a list of all of the terms used for advising contexts in German academic literature, looked at the underlying characteristics, and describe the concepts for the majority of the terms. In the following section, I would like to give a brief overview of Kleppin's and Spänkuch's proposal.

Under the term *Sprachlerncoaching*, the authors understand strictly non-directive (and usually individual) advising sessions. This type of learner support is process-oriented, and the objective is to help the learner to acquire the ability to identify realistic learning goals and available resources in relation to a concrete learning project or topic (Spänkuch, 2014)⁹².

Sprachlernberatung tends to be more directive, as there is an imparting of knowledge on how learners can build language learning competencies, and the advisor may make specific recommendations.

Sprachlerntraining describes concrete help on an operational level (techniques, strategies), and *Sprachlern-Tutoring* is encompassed within a non-professional context in which trained students help their peers.

Another learner support setting is called *Angeleitete Peer-Arbeit mit Beratungscharakter* (guided peer work with elements of advising⁹³), which describes the interaction of learners in relation to a specific learning subject guided by a teacher-facilitator. The facilitator (who may be the teacher) starts the interaction process by specific intervention and guides the conversation

⁹² See Spänkuch (2014) for a detailed report on systemic-constructivistic coaching in language learning.

⁹³ I refer to this type of learner support as 'peer group mediation' in this work.

by asking trigger questions and steering to different phases of peer work (Helmling, 2006). Other terms for similar advising approaches in groups are *Kollegiale Beratung* (cooperative advising) (Tietze, 2010; Wadl, 2011) or even several terms in one paper for the same concept of group advising by Gudjons and Kömm (2005): *peer coaching*, *kollegiale Fallberatung* (cooperative case advising), *Intervision*, *Beratungsgespräche unter Kollegen* (counselling session between colleagues) – all to denominate a kind of group advising with peers. These group advising approaches, except for Wadl (2011) who introduced the cooperative advising approach for writing development at universities, are of therapeutical nature or relate to team coaching in companies and are based on Rogers’ non-directive counselling approach (Bachmair et al., 1994; Rechten, 2004).

As Kleppin and Spänkuch state, the main criterion for forms of learner support in language learning is the objective of learner support. The form of support is no end in itself, but depends on the objective which in turn is derived from the concerns and desires of the learners.

In Brazilian literature on the field of learner support, the term *mediação* (mediation) is found most frequently; the following terms are used sometimes: *orientação* (orientation), *aconselhamento* (counselling), *aconselhamento linguageiro* and even *consultaria de aprendizagem de línguas*, whereby the latter two terms are direct translations from *language advising* or *Sprachlernberatung*. In most cases, these terms were found in relation to the teletandem project as referred to in section 1.3. The terms *orientação* or *sessão de orientação*, used in the context of language learning in teletandem, refer to introductory sessions to the learning of languages in teletandem within the framework of the teletandem project, i.e. informational meetings with students novice to teletandem in order to explain to them the context, procedures and basic rules for the learning in teletandem (Candido, 2010; Garcia, 2010, Souza, 2012).

In the case of the teletandem lab at Assis, initial introductory sessions about theoretical and practical issues were held for the students who would use the lab for their teletandem activities. Those sessions aimed to the contextualise teletandem for the students and how to use applications such as Skype, ooVoo and Windows Live Messenger [...].⁹⁴ (Souza, 2012, p. 40, my translation)

Rocha and Lima (2009) used the term *orientação* as a translation for Stickler’s (2003) use of the term “advice” in contrast to the term ‘counselling’ which in turn was translated with *aconselhamento* by Rocha and Lima. Magno e Silva also uses the term *aconselhamento* in her

⁹⁴ Original: No caso do laboratório de Assis, foram organizadas sessões de orientação iniciais teóricas e práticas para os alunos que utilizariam o laboratório para a prática de teletandem. Tais sessões tinham o objetivo de contextualizar o aluno sobre o que era a modalidade teletandem e sobre como utilizar os aplicativos Skype, ooVoo e WLM, [...].

research about individual advising sessions with learners of English, but adds the adjective *linguageiro* to refer to the advising specifically in language learning (see Cunha & Magno e Silva, 2014; Magno e Silva et al., 2013; Magno e Silva, Vianna Sá e Matos, & de Andrade Rabelo, 2015). When describing their concept of *aconselhamento lingueiro*, Magno e Silva et al. (2013) refer to European researchers such as Mozzon-McPherson (2001; 2007) and Riley (1997) who speak of individual language advising in language learning in Higher Education contexts using the common definition for advising for language learning we saw at the beginning of the section.

The term *mediação*, as it is used as learner support approach in teletandem, is directly borrowed from the Vygotskian concept of mediation in which people change aspects of the world around them using tools such as cultural artefacts, language, signs or symbols (Vygotsky, 1978). The explicit mediation particularly fits into the learner support context, because it is a teacher or mediator and his/her intentional interventions which may influence learners' behaviour or learning processes in different ways⁹⁵. According to Funo (2015, p. 39), the concept of mediation is a theoretical construct based on the possibility of expanding the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in order to elucidate the development of learning and of learners of different ages in relation to teletandem. As Salomão (2008) illustrates: "In our work, the figure of the mediator is called such because it is about a more experienced person who mediates [...] the learning of the student by offering him/her mediation with tools including technological resources and mediation through the use of language in their interactions⁹⁶" (p. 44, my translation). Some Brazilian studies point out that the idea of mediation (as discussed in the teletandem project) in opposition to the concept of counselling or advising considers the help of the mediator not only by giving advice on how to improve learning, but as a person who inserts himself in the collaborative learning-teaching relation of a tandem partnership to help the learners to reflect on their own practice (see Bedran & Salomão, 2013). However, as can be seen in the aforementioned discussion on (non-directive) advising and *Sprachlerncoaching*, for instance, and as later detailed in this chapter, the concepts of learner support in learning projects have the same general ideal: to stimulate the learner's reflection on their own and their partners' learning processes and, as a result, promote learner autonomy. In earlier definitions of *mediação* in relation to the *Teletandem Brasil* project there

⁹⁵ See section 2.3.2

⁹⁶ Original: Em nosso trabalho, a figura do mediador é assim chamada por se tratar de um par mais competente que irá mediar, nos termos Vygotskianos acima apresentados, a aprendizagem do interagente, oferecendo-lhe a mediação por instrumentos, incluindo-se aí os recursos tecnológicos ou não utilizados por ele, e a mediação por meio do uso da linguagem, dentro da interação que ocorrerá entre eles.

can be found an even more directive stance in its mediation concept with an explicit mention of advice-giving.

The actions of the mediator in the mediation context are: a) to help the tandem learners to identify their individual needs and the goals they want to achieve within the course; b) after this initial phase, to show what learning in tandem actually means; c) **to give directions or show the first steps** towards developing their capacities to learn independently and increase confidence; d) to help learners become aware of the variety of learning and teaching strategies that can be used during interactions.⁹⁷ (Simões & Lima 2009, p. 227, my emphasis, my translation)

In a more recent definition, Bedran and Salomão (2013) focus on the role of the mediator who enters the collaborative learning-teaching-process and helps to reflect on the students' own practices as learners. Fernandes and Telles (2015) describe the mediation sessions as

a space for self-evaluation and reflection on the learning and teaching process from the individuals who are involved in the teletandem interaction. The mediation activity allows reflection on learning and teaching experiences, especially in relation to experiences of new digital tools and with distance learning.⁹⁸ (Fernandes & Telles, 2015, p. 263, my translation)

In these latter definitions, aspects relating to directiveness can no longer be detected, but it becomes apparent that one of the core discussions among practitioners in learner support settings revolves around the degree of directiveness used in advising sessions. I agree with Carson and Mynard (2012, p. 9) that, on the one hand, learner support should promote learner autonomy and increase learners' responsibility for taking charge of one's learning. On the other hand, there are language experts with substantial knowledge and experience related to all kinds of language issues which are of great benefit to the learners. Learner support based on humanistic counselling approaches (Carl Rogers) is usually described as being non-directive because the advisor will not take part by making personal statements, suggestions or offer advice in the affairs of their learners. As demonstrated above, the different German definitions attempt to resolve this dilemma by suggesting two different terms for two different approaches; *Sprachlernberatung* for a rather directive stance, and *Sprachlerncoaching* for a strict non-directive stance. Depending on the circumstances of the educational background in an institution, it may be advisable to blend different approaches and, in the case of learners with

⁹⁷ Original: [...] as ações que constituem o papel do mediador no contexto de mediação são: a) ajudar os aprendizes *em tandem* a fazerem um diagnóstico de suas necessidades individuais e objetivos a serem atingidos no curso; b) após essa etapa inicial, deve-se mostrar o que se espera de uma aprendizagem *em tandem*; c) dar um direcionamento ou mostrar os primeiros passos a partir dos quais os aprendizes deverão ser encorajados a desenvolverem a capacidade de aprenderem sozinhos e ampliarem o sentimento de confiança; d) deve também ajudar os aprendizes a se conscientizarem da variedade de estratégias de ensino e de aprendizagem que podem ser utilizadas durante as interações.

⁹⁸ Original: As sessões de mediação visam à auto-avaliação e à reflexão acerca do processo de ensino e aprendizagem por parte dos sujeitos envolvidos na interação. A atividade de mediação permite aos envolvidos refletir sobre as experiências de ensino e aprendizagem, especialmente em relação às experiências via novos meios digitais e à distância.

less experience with autonomous learning, to start with a (partially) directive learner support in order to enhance learner autonomy at a slower pace.

In summary, it can be stated that there is a range of terms used for both the same and different forms of support. In the German field, Kleppin and Spänkuch (2014) initiated the first discussion about ‘cleaning up’ the terms and defining different concepts in relation to their objectives⁹⁹. In the German-speaking academic community, it makes sense to divide the terms into *Beratung* (advising/counselling) and *Coaching* when speaking of near non-directive and strictly non-directive language learning support respectively. In the Brazilian discussion, the terms had not been used until very recently¹⁰⁰ and as there is still only little research in the field of learner support for language learning, the establishment of new terms and the conceptualisation of existing terms can be undertaken. However, in the area of teletandem, the term *mediação* (mediation) seems to have manifested itself. From my understanding, this term describes the concept of a near non-directive learner support. In the English-speaking academic community, the terms *advising* and *counselling* clearly dominate, with perhaps a more recent shift to ‘advising’, and with no clear distinction between partially directive or non-directive approaches.

As for the use of terms in this work – which is a challenging undertaking, because the whole chapter is based on literature of the three different academic contexts and languages, and different concepts are mentioned regularly – I will use the term *learner support* or *advising/mediation* with a slash when speaking of concepts or settings of learner support in general. When discussing learner support settings for teletandem or other specific language learning projects, I will use the terms that are already linked with these projects such as *mediation* in the case of teletandem.

In the next section, the theories which provide a fundamental basis for learner support concepts in language learning will be presented and compared. These are mainly the person-centred counselling approach of Carl R. Rogers and parts of sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky.

⁹⁹ See their table with the characteristics for several forms of support (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014, pp. 41-46)

¹⁰⁰ (Cunha & Magno e Silva, 2014; Magno e Silva et al., 2013; Marques-Schäfer et al., 2015).

2.2 Theories related to learner support in language learning

When exploring academic literature of the field of learner support in language learning two authors can be found whose theories are frequently cited and used to explain and justify different aspects of the advising/mediation process. These authors are Carl R. Rogers and his person-centred counselling approach and Lev Vygotsky and the sociocultural theory. Both theories are not based on each other but emerge from different theoretical concepts. In addition to these two theories, Mynard (2012) and Augustin (2011) also refer to Constructivism as a theory for their models on advising in language learning because it examines “how humans learn through investigating cognitive processes that are activated when individuals make sense of new information” (Mynard 2012, p. 27). Mynard also mentions Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as another relevant field that may have some influence on the field of advising. Certainly, both latter theories also contribute to the field of advising, but for now I will focus on the aforementioned scholars, Rogers and Vygotsky, because of they are a more common occurrence in the literature on advising and mediation.

2.2.1 Carl R. Rogers and the person-centred approach

Many studies on advising frequently draw upon Carl Rogers’ approach of person-centred counselling and the conversational techniques proposed by him (Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; Claußen, 2009; Mehlhorn et al, 2005; Vogler & Hoffmann, 2011, Carson & Mynard, 2012; Stickler, 2001). Person-centred counselling is an example of humanistic counselling, and is the theory that is referred to most frequently in the literature on learner support. This type of counselling is largely non-directive, i.e. it is concerned with the development of self-knowledge where the counsellor takes an unobtrusive role (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 7).

Carl R. Rogers (1902-1987) worked as counsellor and director in different institutes for child guidance, and was also a counsellor for university students and families. His non-directive counselling approach was developed from his work in the field of child guidance, but also influenced by student and marriage counselling (Rogers, 2007, p. 28). Rogers’ approach aims directly at a greater independence and integration of the individual. The individual is the focus of the counselling, not his problem (Rogers, 2007, p. 36). According to Rogers, the main goal of the counsellor should be for the individual to develop a new attitude in relation to himself and his surroundings. It is a series of direct and personal contact between the counsellor and the individual which helps the individual to change his attitudes and behaviours (Rogers, 2007, p. 17). The client needs to work on an improved understanding of himself and his situation, and

with this new orientation, he/she will be capable of making positive steps towards changing his/her attitude (Rogers 2007, p. 28).

The counselling session must be clearly defined before or during the first meeting of counsellor and client. The client must be conscious of the fact that the counsellor does not have ready-made solutions for his/her problems, but that the counselling sessions are a chance for him/her to find his/her own solutions for the problems, in cooperation with the counsellor. Thus, the responsibility lies with the individual – not with the counsellor (Rogers, 2007, p. 40).

This is an important aspect also for advising in language learning: in the first meeting of advisor and learner, it is crucial to talk about the expectations of both sides and clarify the roles. In a strictly non-directive advising setting for language learning, the advisor does not bear the responsibility of solving the problems of the learner either, although many learners expect the advisor to guide them through the learning process so that they can achieve better results.

Another interesting aspect highlighted by Rogers is the client's history. Possessing knowledge of the client's background gives some indication about the individual (Rogers, 2007, p. 79). The same applies to the advising setting. Many advisors ask for learner biographies or questionnaires about their participants in order to better understand the background of their learners and, therefore, be able to help in a more holistic way.

Rogers also refers to certain interview techniques counsellors employ during their counselling sessions which should encourage the client to express his feelings as freely as possible. According to these techniques, the counsellor should avoid activities and reactions that might influence the course of the interview. Open questions and active listening are amongst some of the mentioned techniques (Rogers, 2007, p. 123). Some of these conversational techniques have been adapted for advising contexts by different practitioners in the field of foreign language learning and are reproduced and detailed in chapter 2.5.2 below.

2.2.2 Vygotsky's sociocultural approach and mediation

Brazilian publications on mediation as learner support in teletandem draw upon Vygotsky's work and his main concepts of mediation, Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding. Mynard (2012) also cites sociocultural theory that derived, in part, from the work of Vygotsky and his colleagues in order to link this with advising in language learning. Very recent studies on advising in Germany start to use references to Vygotsky¹⁰¹ as well.

¹⁰¹ Personal communication with Prof. Dr. Karin Kleppin (March 2016).

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a teacher and psychologist, and dedicated seven of his eight works to the discussion of education, especially in relation to children. In the area of psychology, he received acknowledgement for arguing that awareness and human, social and cultural mediated behaviour are inseparable. The basis of Vygotsky's theory is that culture has a profound influence on how humans think. The relation between human beings and their world around them is not direct but mediated by culture and society (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 11).

Vygotsky's theory of education is not only a theory of cultural transmissions but also a theory of development (Moll, 1992, p. 1). Education is the development of an individual's potential, i.e. of higher and uniquely human psychological processes. This happens through enculturation into practices of society and through acquisition of society's technology, its signs and tools. The approach focuses on social, cultural and historical contexts of learners. It also underlines the role of others in the learning process of individuals which makes the theory this compelling for the learning context tele-tandem and the concept of mediation as learner support.

One of his most important concepts is the 'Zone of Proximal Development' – ZPD. Vygotsky developed this concept, in part, as critique and as an alternative to static, individual testing, especially IQ testing. He claims that those static measure types only assess already matured, fossilised mental functioning, but omit maturing or developing mental functions which should be assessed by collaborative activities (Moll, 1992, p. 3). Vygotsky and his colleagues then developed an alternative methodology for assessment which included the use of hints and prompts during testing, i.e. several artefacts which would mediate with the learner's performance (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991, p. 337). The ZPD determines the difference between what a learner can achieve unaided and what a learner can achieve with support from another person, i.e. from a peer, a teacher or even a learning mediator or advisor. Optimal learning takes place in this zone, because what children are able to perform collaboratively today is what they will be able to perform individually and competently tomorrow.

Another key concept of Vygotsky's work is 'mediation'. "The central fact about our psychology is the fact of mediation" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 116). Vygotsky understands mediation as the way in which people change aspects of the world around them using psychological tools, such as cultural artefacts, language, signs or symbols which facilitate interaction with the world and enable cognitive change (Mynard, 2012, p. 29).

In his work, Vygotsky emphasises the nature of social interactions particularly between adults and children. The existing forms of cooperation are central to instruction. Knowledge is transferred to a child in a definite system, which is a social organisation of instruction within a

specific cultural background (Moll 1992, p. 9). Vygotsky (1962) claims that the intellectual skills children acquire are directly related to how they interact with others in specific problem-solving environments. They internalise and transform the help they receive from others, and eventually use these same means of guidance to direct their subsequent problem-solving behaviour. This idea can also be transferred to learners of a higher age; when young adult learners, such as university students, interact with the world and others around them, this situation provides them with opportunities for reflection which, in turn, result in higher cognitive functions and conscious and intentional activities (Mynard, 2012, p. 29).

In that moment, the mediator comes into play; it is the mediator's task to raise the learner's awareness and to promote the use of these higher cognitive functions so that the learner can become more autonomous. The mediator is the more experienced person who mediates the learning of the student by offering reflection and tools through the use of language in their mediation sessions.

Social interactions themselves are mediated through auxiliary means and most prominently by language, which is also the case in interactions between mediators and learners in mediation sessions. On the one hand, these cultural signs and tools are used to communicate with others and to mediate contact with our social worlds and surroundings. On the other hand, these artefacts mediate our interactions with the self (Moll, 1992, p. 11). The use of symbols, such as numbers, charts, music, paintings and language above all (written and oral), to influence ourselves and the activity of our minds is called regulation. Making use of the symbols by talking to ourselves, to somewhat mediate our thinking process, is called self-regulation (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 12).

Vygotsky distinguishes between *explicit* and *implicit* mediation. *Explicit mediation* is a teacher's intentional intervention which influences the learner's behaviour or thinking process. *Implicit mediation*, on the other hand, is a shift in the individual's thinking or understanding of a certain concept or idea. This form happens unconsciously over time and emerges through conversations about learning (Wertsch, 2007). Explicit mediation immediately evokes the image of the mediator influencing the learner's behaviour and learning process during mediation or advising sessions. Implicit mediation is what the mediator or advisor wishes to happen – for the learner to succeed in changing not only his attitudes and practices but also the concepts or ideas he had about learning and teaching.

In this work, the learner support entitled 'mediation' draws on the Vygotskian idea of mediation as explained above. The term 'mediation' appears in coaching approaches and in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, but it is not based on the

Vygotsky's concept of mediation. In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 'mediation' is a language activity for activating learners' communication competences and it is usually divided into activities of translating and interpreting from the foreign language to the mother language and vice versa (see chapter 2.1.3 of the CEFR). Mediation in the area of professional counselling and coaching practices is always related to conflicts between two or more parties in which a mediator tries to mediate the conflict¹⁰².

2.3 Aims and functions of learner support

The concept that is behind the idea of most forms of learner support in language learning is that even if learners attend a learner support session because they encountered a problem while learning a foreign language, the learner support does not consider itself as problem-solving entity. Advising or mediation sessions should help the learners to become acquainted with new learning techniques, encourage them to test new methods and evaluate them afterwards, offer a range of ideas, and show learning progress (Claußen, 2009).

The aims and functions of learner support found in the academic literature point to some theoretical assumptions – touched upon in section 2.2 – and are mostly based on valid experiences resulting from advising and mediation projects (Schmelter, 2004, p. 325). Thus, advising or mediation proceed from the assumptions that:

- The learner is capable of independently deciding on learning objectives, ways of learning, learning content, learning progression and results evaluation. Advising or mediation therefore is promoting learner autonomy (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2010, p. 203).
- Individual learning factors influence the learning process. Every single learner has different conditions and qualifications, and is a different learner type. Advising or mediation stimulates the self-reflection on the individual learning process (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2010, p. 203).
- Learners increase knowledge and improve learning in their zone of proximal development and through explicit and implicit mediation with the help of others.
- The advisor or mediator helps the learners to discover their potential and use it profitably. Therefore, the advisor or mediator uses techniques and skills from a partly non-directive and person-centred advising approach and from

¹⁰² See Schwertfeger (2006), and for 'mediation coaching' the website: <http://www.mediate.com/articles/noble4.cfm> (26/04/2016)

communication psychology. Open questions, active listening, mirroring by describing and resuming promote reflection and conversation impulses (Kleppin & Spänkuch 2010, p. 203).

Advising and mediation is mainly used for adult learners because their learning process is influenced to a high degree by individual and complex interwoven learning factors. Nevertheless, there are some studies on creating a differentiated learner support in the school context to promote learner autonomy in an earlier age, too¹⁰³.

The overall aim of learner support is the personal realisation (awareness) of subjective theories about (language) learning and the completion and expansion of language learning processes with the help of an advisor or mediator in order to become a more efficient learner. Generally, advising and mediation aim to support learners in foreign language acquisition in different learning contexts (tandem, self-access centre, distance language courses, etc.) so that they can find more efficient ways of learning and assume responsibility for their learning process (see Vogler & Hoffmann, 2011).

More concrete aims are to:

- Support raising awareness of individual conditions for learning, the conditions for decision processes and their interaction (in order to discover personal needs);
- Support the process of finding reachable goals and of formulating precise/concrete ideas;
- Help realise learning difficulties and possible solutions;
- Help find adequate ways of learning and strategies;
- Help find adequate learning materials and situations;
- Enhance motivation;
- Support the concrete implementation of own decisions;
- Help detect learning progress and evaluate the student's own learning process;
- Help establish time tables;
- Help realise the relationship between the learner's attitude, motivation and learning success/failure.

(Brammerts, Calvert & Kleppin, 2001, p. 54; Vogler & Hoffmann, 2011, p. 21)

Amongst these numerous aims highlighted by several authors over the previous years, I miss an aspect which is already included in the area of learning foreign languages: intercultural competence. It is crucial to name this aspect due to the ever-increasing speed at which globalisation is occurring and intercultural contact (Kramsch & Uryu, 2014) is happening not

¹⁰³ (Berndt & Kruczek, 2009) (Kleppin & Mehlhorn, 2008)

only face-to-face but also virtually, for example in telecollaboration projects. Despite not being a specific learning goal for learners in many cases, the development of intercultural competence is important – not only in the learning context of (tele)tandem.

In different “contact zones” (Pratt, 1992), people from different cultures come together, interact with each other. Contact zones as defined by Pratt (1992) are “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (p.12). Many participants in the language learning context of the *Teletandem Brasil* project have experienced tensions of inter- and transculturality through their contact with other cultures via the internet. As a result of these observations made by teletandem participants and mediators, recently, greater attention has been paid to this aspect in the mediation sessions¹⁰⁴ (Funio, 2015; Souza, 2016; Telles, 2011; Zakir, 2015).

In learner support for language learning, the advisor or mediator should help the learners to become more sensitive to the target culture and help them to develop an intercultural consciousness. This is not only important for the personal development of the learners in relation to the target language they are learning and their mother language and own culture, but also for the development of a global and tolerant society. As Kramsch and Uryu (2014) state, “in our current era of globalization, IC [intercultural contact] has become more complex than just speakers of different languages encountering one another” (p. 211); it actually brings about linguistic, cultural and social change. In view of the conflicts which can be encountered in intercultural contact, the role of the mediator becomes another important perspective in telecollaboration projects.

Brammerts, Calvert and Kleppin (2001, p. 55) argue that learners need advising/mediation because even if learners have access to all their personal decision conditions (objectives, experiences, traditions, possibilities, preferences etc.), it is unlikely that they will be able to acknowledge all of them at the same time. They will probably not be able to oversee all relevant relations between each of these conditions, and so it is not an easy task to put some of one’s own decisions into practice. The latter aspect can often be observed in language classes and also in the teletandem context (Elstermann, 2014a) – most of the learners do not know how to reflect on their own needs and from this point experience difficulty in establishing learning objectives and making decisions in relation to their personal needs. The same applies to intercultural competence: the first reaction to something that is different to one’s own culture

¹⁰⁴ The research project ‘Teletandem and Transculturality’ which started in 2011 emerged as a result of the mediators’ experiences with inter- and transcultural issues during teletandem and advising sessions. For more information on the project, visit <http://teletandemtransculturalidade.weebly.com/> (Last access: 08.08.2014)

often goes along the lines of “They [the other culture] are so weird.”, “Why do they do those strange things?”. This applies in particular when the learners do not have direct contact with the target culture and therefore, cultural “mediation” through a language mediator, teacher or advisor is of utmost importance in this scenario.

After having presented the main aims and functions of learner support in language learning which are the basis for most of the advising and mediation approaches, the next section sheds some light on the different formats and settings of learner support.

2.4 Forms of learner support for language learning

There are different forms or settings of learner support in foreign language learning contexts that are used in various contexts and situations. In this section, some of the most frequent characteristics will be presented to show which settings are used today and how the setting chosen for this study (peer group mediation) differs from other possible formats.

Learner support in language learning can be implemented in relation to a language course or independently of it. When learner support is relative to a course, it is common to make use of content and questions from the course. Often the advising/mediation part is carried out by the respective teachers themselves. ‘Relative to a course’ can also mean relative to a group tandem project, or some elements of learner support directly used in the classroom. Learner support ‘independent’ of a language course means that there is no relation to a special institutional language course. Independent learner support is mainly executed for individual tandems or in self-access centres, for instance. It was actually the demand of learner support in self-access centres implemented in the 1970s that promoted the first advising settings, because it was perceived that the simple and free access to learning materials was not necessarily enhancing learner autonomy (Claußen, 2009).

Learner support can be voluntary – usually in self-access or language centres – **or obligatory**. The obligation to participate in advising or mediation sessions is often related to group tandem projects or some self-access centres which prescribe great importance to learner support and actively want to promote learner autonomy. The question that arises automatically when talking about obligatory learner support and learner autonomy is whether obligation is against the autonomy principle. Some researchers point out this problem (amongst others Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; Claußen, 2009; Elstermann, 2014b) but many experiences show that when learner support is offered for voluntarily use, just a small number of learners use the offered programme. The learners who actually attend the advising or mediation sessions are

those who have already gained some experience in reflecting on their own learning process, and have already understood how advising/mediation can help their learning progress. It will always depend on the learning context and the educational background to justify which style to adopt.

Another characteristic of learner support is the factor of physical presence. Learner support usually takes place in a face-to-face setting with advisor/mediator and learner in the same physical space. However, due to technical and technological advances, especially the internet, web 2.0 and communication tools, distance learner support becomes much more viable and is increasingly used (see Augustin, 2012; Pomino, 2011; Saunders, 2010). Distance learner support can be carried out over the telephone and the internet via tools like e-mail, chat, video conferencing, and telephone using VOIP¹⁰⁵ technology (Kleppin, 2006; Pomino, 2011).

Basically, **it is possible to distinguish three forms of learner support in relation to the number of advisees.** The most typical form of learner support is held with one advisor or mediator and one learner in order to concentrate on the specific needs and problems of the individual learner. In tandem settings, it may be profitable and interesting to arrange a learner support meeting with both tandem partners. Instead of solely focusing on the individual learning processes, the centre of attention is the experiences of interaction of both learners. As Brammerts, Calvert and Kleppin (2001) affirm, the tandem learner is usually not aware of the entire potential he/she can extract from a tandem partnership, and therefore the tandem partners may benefit from the pair learner support. The third form is learner support in peer groups, when a larger number of learners interact with each other in order to share their experiences and ideas of a learning context for a joint reflection. The mediator's role in this context is more that of a moderator and reflection stimulator. This peer group reflection can be found in tandem projects with many tandem pairs (Elstermann, 2014c; Helmling, 2006), or within workshops of learner support which are offered at some language centres to give learners a 'starter kit' for their autonomous learning period (see Cavallini & Wagner, 2011).

In summary, we can state that learner support can be used in numerous settings in the field of foreign language learning such as:

- Learner support (individually or in pairs) in tandem learning contexts
- Learner support for learners at self-access centres
- Learner support for university students throughout their studies
- Learner support in classrooms

¹⁰⁵ Voice over IP

- Tutorial support for learning with online language programmes
- Learner support for special target groups, e.g. exchange students at universities, PhD candidates
- Learner support for special language learning skills or areas (e.g. academic writing, pronunciation, listening skills)

The focus of the present study is voluntarily-attended, face-to-face mediation in peer groups, independently of a language course and in the teletandem learning context with German and Portuguese as foreign languages (see chapter 3).

2.5 The role of the advisor/mediator

“[...] a learning advisor is a professional language educator who works with language learners in order to promote learner autonomy” (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 13). Even if many explanations can nowadays be found in the literature on the differences between a language teacher and language advisor, there may still be some people who will question the need for a ‘second job title’. Advisors or mediators in learner support settings often have different backgrounds. Some supporters may have trained for advising or mediation in language learning and work exclusively with learner support – in self-access centres, for example. Other advisors/mediators, which are probably the majority, are teachers of foreign languages who became advisors/mediators by shifting learning contexts or who wanted to experience new forms of learner support. Carson and Mynard (2012) also acknowledge that “there may be some degree of overlap, depending on the context, learning goals, needs of the student and personality and teaching/advising style of the teachers and learning advisors” (p. 13).

The objectives most language teachers set are usually to help their students to develop mastery in language-related areas with the intention of completing a pre-determined course syllabus. Of course, educators may be working with learner support for autonomy in their classes, but this is strongly influenced by exterior factors such as the curriculum, class size, institutional limitations and emphasis on tests. The goals of advisors/mediators are generally focused on the development of autonomy, trying to help the learner to grow their ability to identify individual language needs and to personalise their learning experiences (Carson & Mynard 2012, p. 14).

It is crucial to emphasise that learning advisors/mediators must have a clear understanding of the learning context they are working in and recognise the degree to which learners are prepared to actually take up autonomy in language learning inside this context. The first

immense variable is the wider learning context, i.e. the learning culture of a region or a country; the second variable is a more individual learning context which depends on teaching/learning styles of schools, universities and, of course, of learners and their individual learning styles. The advisor/mediator will see that the rate and readiness to embrace autonomy will vary substantially between different learning and cultural contexts.

The role of the advisors/mediators, thus, can also be filled in by a peer of the learner if there is a situation where learners of the same learning group or more experienced learners help each other in the learning process (Helmling, 2001; Kao, 2012).

In general, it is possible to say that advisors/mediators help and accompany designers of the learning process who support the learner in discovering and using his learning potential. They are equipped with expert knowledge in the area of second and foreign language acquisition and have experiences with learner autonomy and new technologies. Whilst acting as a mediator in the context of tandem learning, it would be an advantage to have experiences in tandem, eTandem or teletandem activities as well.

When thinking about the differences of learner support contexts (face-to-face, distance, group, pair, individual learner support, e.g.) and terms (coach, advisor, tutor, mentor, mediator, etc.), we can assume that in practice one person may have many functions in different contexts, i.e. a coach, a trainer or an advisor. One condition for this playing of multiple roles is, thus, that the person knows how to recognise different contexts and their requirements, and knows how to activate the necessary competences at appropriate times (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014).

In the next two sections, I will discuss some core competences and behaviours of learning advisors and mediators and present skills and techniques which are useful for guiding a mediation or advising session.

2.5.1 Competences and behaviours of the advisor/mediator

Many learner support concepts are based on the non-directive, person-centred counselling approach developed by Carl Rogers (1942). In this counselling concept, the counsellor should show three basic attitudes and competences: respect, empathy and genuineness. In my opinion, these attitudes in advisors are also valid if another concept for learner support is used, such as the socio-constructivist theory, as is the case of the *Teletandem Brasil* project, because they are basic attitudes that are desirable in all personal relations. These three main competences are:

- **Respect/positive regard:** The advisor/mediator accepts the learner as a person who is inherently capable of making decisions about his own learning. The

advisor/mediator accepts and supports the learner regardless of whether he/she would make the same decisions.

- **Empathy:** The advisor/mediator should try to see things from the learner's perspective and try to understand which learning goals the learner wants to achieve. He/She also tries to see the limits and possibilities learners face. The dialogue with the advisor/mediator should help the learner to become conscious of these factors.
- **Genuineness/authenticity:** The advisor/mediator does not hide himself/herself behind a mask, and he/she tries not to be hierarchical. This means that, on the one hand, the advisor/mediator is the expert for learning, but, on the other hand, the responsibility of the learner carries greater value than the advisor's/mediator's own opinion. (Brammerts, Calvert, Kleppin 2001, p. 56; Mehlhorn, et al. 2005)

Other competences of advisors and mediators are the ability to motivate and encourage the learner, helping to overcome obstacles without manipulating, patience, being able to give impulses for self-reflection (to revise prejudication) and the ability to listen to the learner (see Mehlhorn et al., 2005, p. 186).

2.5.2 Skills and techniques

Having highlighted some of the competences and general behaviours advisors and mediators should possess and show in the advising or mediation sessions, we now come to a more specific part: the skills and conversational techniques which are employed by many advisors and mediators, and which promote an advisor/mediator-learner relationship based on confidence and a warm and friendly atmosphere. Voller (2004) says that “advising requires an overlapping, but fundamentally different, set of skills from those employed in classroom teaching“ (n.p.). This requirement goes hand in hand with the aforementioned different goals of teachers and advisors/mediators, and these partially different learning/teaching objectives influence the skills utilised by teachers and advisors/mediators in learning contexts.

The first published list of skills employed by advisors and mediators was set up in 1996 by Rena Kelly when she proposed a division of the skills in two main areas: macro and micro skills. Macro skills are defined by Kelly (1996) as strategies which can facilitate a learner's self-management in relation to his/her learning. They are thought to be used in a cyclical form but can also appear randomly during the advising sessions. These strategies include *initiating* (giving new options and directions), *goal-setting* (helping to formulate specific goals), *guiding* (offering advice, information, ideas, helping to develop alternative strategies), *modelling*

(demonstrating target behaviour), *supporting* (encouraging, reinforcing), *giving feedback* (reacting constructively to the learner's efforts), *evaluating* (appraising the learner's process and achievements), *linking* (connecting the learner's goals and tasks to the wider context), and *concluding* (establishing boundaries and defining achievement)¹⁰⁶.

Micro skills, on the other hand, are defined as component behaviours that come into play in a variety of ways during any interaction between advisor/mediator and learner. These micro skills include *attending* (giving undivided attention), *restating* (repeating the learner's affirmations in the advisor's own words), *paraphrasing* (simplifying the learner's statements), *summarising* (bringing together the main elements of a message), *questioning* (using open questions to encourage self-exploration), *interpreting* (offering explanations for the learner's experiences), *reflecting feelings* (surfacing the emotional content of the learner's statements), *empathising* (identifying with the learner's experiences and perceptions), and *confronting* (surfacing discrepancies and contradictions in the learner's communication).

The skills Kelly divides in micro and macro strategies used by the advisor or mediator are very similar to those found in another classification in Mehlhorn's et al. (2005, pp. 186) explanation of conversational techniques for advisors. The authors group the skills in various main topics such as 'active listening', and 'open questions', amongst others. Inside the category 'active listening' skills, such as giving undivided attention, paraphrasing, summarising, and reflecting feelings can be found.

Yamashita and Kato (2012) have recently developed another short list of specific *coaching* skills which in some cases overlap with the ones above, or simply amplify the range of different skills and, in general, support the overarching idea of the trustworthy and friendly helper who supports autonomy development. The authors list *metaview* (encouraging learners to view the big), *metaphor* (helping learners visually imagine their learning), *intuiting* (using intuition to stimulate learner reflection), *powerful questions* (evoking clarity and discovering possible courses), *challenging* (going beyond the learner's limits and giving new perspectives), *requesting* (ensuring the learner commits to an action, with conditions and date of completion), and *accountability* (helping the learner to become accountable for his vision)¹⁰⁷.

Alongside these personal characteristics and specific conversational skills, it is important to remember the professional knowledge an advisor/mediator should possess; Kleppin (2003) touched upon this in an article on learner support in language learning in which she explored

¹⁰⁶ For a comprehensive overview of macro and micro skills, see Kelly 1996, pp. 94-96, or Carson & Mynard 2012, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰⁷ For the detailed list, see (Yamashita & Kato, 2012, p. 166)

the need of training for advisors. Kleppin states that professional know-how in the field of (foreign) language learning is an indispensable condition for learning advisors. They should have knowledge about language acquisition processes, and personal experiences with learning processes, different learning contexts, individual variables in language learning, learner autonomy, learning strategies, and learning difficulties, amongst others.

Basically, all the skills presented above by several authors are skills used to promote language learning and process reflection. It would be interesting to extend the view a little bit and see if those skills are sufficient to support cultural aspects in learning as well, or if the (inter)cultural aspect of learning would require additional skills and techniques in order to promote reflection on culture.

In this section I wanted to present the different competences, characteristics, behaviours and skills an advisor/mediator should ideally possess and master. However, simply writing and listing the skills is not sufficient. Firstly, this does not reflect what an advisor/mediator actually does, and, secondly, in practice, nobody really expects an advisor or mediator to be perfect on the first day. As in any job, the practices, competences and skills must be learnt during real activities which must be critically reflected on afterwards, and then hopefully improved in subsequent sessions. An awareness of these skills (through lists and explanations) is very useful, especially for novices in learner support. Nevertheless, time is needed in order to become well acquainted with them, as there is a need for their practical employment in advising/mediation sessions. After all, advising/mediation is considerably more complicated than merely mastering these skills, as it deals with the complex nature of human interactions and individual learning (Carson & Mynard, 2012, p. 16).

The presentation of the competences, behaviours and skills were important for this study because the mediator tried to incorporate some of the skills and techniques in her peer group mediation sessions. Additionally, one of the main questions of the study is about specific characteristics of a mediator in peer group mediation settings which will be discussed in the last chapter of this dissertation.

2.6 The different stages in advising and mediation processes

The proposal of different stages in learner support usually refers to individual face-to-face advising sessions which can be seen as the basis for other processes in learner support settings, too, as they include important reflection stages that should always be considered. The next sections follow a proposal for different stages in individual advising and peer group mediation

settings which have a slightly different focus. Both advising processes promote reflection on learning processes and learner autonomy, but whereas advising in individual encounters with the learner focuses more on the learner's needs, individual learning goals and evaluation of his/her learning, mediation in peer groups emphasises the exchange of experiences and mutual help in order to promote learning and autonomy.

2.6.1 ...in individual advising settings

An individual advising process usually extends over a certain period of time (a semester, for example) with several advising sessions which are roughly divided into a number of macro stages. Each individual advising session (with a duration of approximately 45 to 60 minutes) in turn consists of three different micro stages. The following remarks refer to the works of Claußen (2009, pp. 70-71), Mehlhorn et al. (2005, pp. 168-169) and Brammerts, Calvert and Kleppin (2001, pp. 57-58) who try to give a more detailed view of what occurs during the advising process.

2.6.1.1 The macro stages in the advising process

The first stage is the time for the advisor and the advisee to get to know each other. The advisee writes a learner biography of his former learning experiences and both advisor and advisee discuss concrete learning conditions such as learning goals, possibilities, available time for learning projects etc. An important aspect is to clarify the initial positions and roles of both the learner and advisor (the advisor is not a private tutor, for example), in order to explain what ALL can do, and to motivate the advisee for the future proceedings.

The second stage of the ALL process consists of the actual advising encounters. Here, advisor and advisee talk about the concrete needs and learning goals of the learner which are connected to the information contained within the learner's biography. Often, a specific learning problem and possibilities for improvement are discussed.

The third and final macro stage leaves room for a final evaluation of the learning and advising process. The advisor should point out the learner's achievements and give a positive prospect for the following actions.

2.6.1.2 The micro stages of an advising session

After the very first meeting and the production of the learner's biography, the micro stages of an individual advising session may emerge several times throughout the same session and also in a variable order.

First of all, the advisee must reach the stage where he/she is aware of his/her learning goals and of the problems for which he/she seeks a solution. In the centre of the discussion stand the desires, estimations and possibilities of the learner, and the advisor should help him/her to become conscientious of his/her own goals, concretise vague ideas, correct non-realistic or contradictory estimations (by asking open questions) and analyse the situation or intervene in any other way (see 3.6).

During the second stage, advisor and advisee reflect on the possible ways of achieving those learning goals. The learning habits and ideas of the learner play an important role in this part. It is the learner who has to decide which way he/she wants to go first. The advisor should help the learner with his/her technical skills and the knowledge from the learner's biography in order to make an informed decision.

In the last stage, advisor and advisee should negotiate and then register which steps of the learning process should be carried out before the next advising session. This should be written down in both the learner's diary and the advisor's notes. Crucially, the advisor should be sure that the learner has fully understood what he/she should do next and which direction he/she needs to take. The learner should also be aware of mechanisms of self-evaluation in order to monitor his/her learning progress.

In the subsequent advising session, the first step will be to evaluate the previous learning method. The learner talks about his/her experiences and how he/she handles certain strategies, and tries to estimate his/her achievements. The advisor stimulates the reflection and provides feedback. Based on this evaluation, the learner will plan new actions and steps with the advisor's assistance.

This kind of advising session should occur on previously agreed fixed dates and in a room where undisturbed work is possible. It is advisable to have a time limit so that the learner does not misunderstand the advising session as being an informal chat about their learning. From prior experience 45 minutes seems to be the ideal time frame; it is only the first meeting which usually lasts slightly longer due to writing the learner's biography, and clarifying the objectives of advising as well as the expectations of the learner.

2.6.2 ... in peer group mediation settings

In contrast to the individual advising settings, peer group mediation in both Helmling's (2001, 2006) and my own understanding of this concept, does not specifically attend to the individual learning needs of the participants. Instead, it is intended to enhance the interaction

between peers in order to help each other, whilst changing ideas and experiences of the same learning context (e.g. face-to-face tandem, teletandem). For this particular learner support setting, the meetings usually take place over a period of 3-4 weeks, but this pattern depends greatly on the project coordinators and the context. A mediation session can also be divided in several stages as Helming (2001, 2006) proposes.

The first stage is the self-reflection phase where the learners shall reflect on a certain topic with the help of some questions from or prompts by the advisor. The next stage is the contrasting phase in which the individual reflection is discussed in small groups. The next step takes place in the wider group meeting, where chosen aspects are zoomed in on and alternatives developed. Here, the mediator plays a crucial role as facilitator by promoting the discussion with trigger questions, focusing on certain aspects, and giving prompts. After this stage, the learners must plan and agree upon a certain task before the next encounter. Each learner has to test a new strategy or task during the next weeks in his/her learning project which will be evaluated and discussed in the very first stage of the next mediation session (see Helmling, 2001).

From personal experience and the descriptions of Helmling (2006), it seems appropriate to adhere to the order of the different stages. This scheduling helps the participants to better prepare for the next meetings. The mediators should watch out for a number of different moderation forms (visualising and associating techniques etc.) in order to keep attention levels high and reduce monotony due to repeated tasks.

2.7 Tools for learner support

In this section, I would like to present a variety of tools which are used in different advising contexts. When discussing tools, I do not only refer to physical tools such as questionnaires. Jo Mynard (2012) defines the term *tool* in relation to the advising process as cognitive, theoretical or practical. Cognitive tools include learning plans, journals, self-evaluation sheets and the associated practices used to stimulate cognitive and metacognitive processes. These tools can be used alone or in combination with dialogue (between peers or with the advisor or mediator). Theoretical tools are defined by Mynard as the theories and knowledge that an advisor draws on in order to work effectively with a learner, e.g. attribution theory (McLoughlin, 2012), and knowledge of strategies for successful language learning (Hurd & Murphy, 2012). Practical tools include practices that facilitate the organisation of learner support such as record keeping or the reservations systems employed in institutions (Mynard, 2012). In the following section, I will focus on the cognitive and practical tools that can be used by the advisor/mediator and

learners in order to stimulate reflection and to organise the learning and advising/mediation process.

The learning agreement: This ‘learning contract’ between advisor and advisee arose as a result of an unsatisfying situation in the advising process. The often non-binding nature of advising offers has repeatedly led to little-targeted learning, scarcely-used learning environments and absences from appointments with advisors. This kind of contract should seek to establish transparency and obligation. The roles and responsibilities of both parties are clearly negotiated and registered in the learning agreement. Other recorded aspects usually include the learning objectives, instruments, materials, obligations of the advisee, session schedule, evaluation process, feedback criteria etc.

The learning agreement is one of the tools to which researchers and practitioners seem to have an ambivalent opinion. As learner support is based on the principle of autonomy, a ‘contract’ may seem contradictory to voluntary learner support. If the learner himself feels the need to ask for learning support, we may assume that he/she will not need any contract because it is his own desire to ask for this support and probably his intention to let himself be helped. In practice, however, this is not commonly experienced by advisors. On many occasions, learners request support initially but then do not show up again or are strongly encouraged by teachers and tutors but do not take advantage of the offered opportunities (Reinders, 2005). Several studies report a low participation in learning support, which is probably due to the voluntary character of most of these offers (Mak & Turnbull, 1999; Voller, Martyn, & Pickard, 1999). Mak and Turnbull did not investigate the motives behind student withdrawal from advising sessions, but speculate that several “simply seemed too immature in their attitudes towards themselves as learners to benefit from a programme of this nature” (Mak & Turnbull, 1999, p. 50). As Reinders (2005) states:

Unfortunately, little formal research has been done to investigate why some students decide not to continue their participation in such programmes. Various studies (investigating not only advisory programmes but also self-access in general) speculate that students’ limited time for language study may play a role (Pemberton, Ho, Lam, & Toogood, 1999), as well as students’ resistance to self-study as opposed to teacher-led instruction (Tsang, 1999), and students’ lack of previous experience with such support (Hiemstra & Brockett, 1994). (p. 211)

Learners who are still not very familiar with autonomous learning may benefit from a learning agreement because it can help them to be guided through an initial autonomous learning phase. This provides them with preliminary established learning steps that they can tick off after having completed one step after the other, giving them a sense of achievement and motivation early on in the process. Some learners even may be happy to make a kind of contract

because they know they will be more motivated to learn or do something if they are asked or obliged to do so in the first place¹⁰⁸.

Learner's biography: In the first meeting of a learner support session, a questionnaire about former experiences in language learning and some personal information about the learner is collected and later used by the advisor/mediator to become better acquainted with the learner. For the learner to estimate his/her general skills in a foreign language, the global scale of the European Language Portfolio¹⁰⁹ (ELP) can be used. For more precise results, the Self-Assessment Grid is a good choice. In addition to language skills, there are also questions about learning objectives and motivation, general interests, etc.

The learner's biography can include a checklist for self-evaluation, as mentioned above, to estimate language skills or learning strategies and techniques. These checklists can be filled out at several stages of the advising period, or at least at the beginning and at the end of the learner support process in order to demonstrate the learning achievements (see Langner, 2006).

Learner diary/portfolio: This metacognitive tool is designed to accompany and document the learner's own learning process. The learner records what was when learned, practised, reflected on and evaluated. The use of strategies can be registered, too, as well as problems and difficulties. The learner diary supports reflection and can be used as a starting point for discussion in advising or mediation sessions. A benefit of diaries or portfolios is the promotion of responsibility of the learners with regards to their learning process (Gardner & Miller, 1999) in so far as they include reflective components (Murphy, 2008). Experiences have shown that the use of learner diaries usually has a positive impact on the learning process. The learner effectively sees what learners achieved or which aspects they have to improve (Elstermann, 2014a; Walker, 2001).

A learner diary can be maintained in an electronic form, a continuous text or in a table format, with prompting questions or keywords as guidance. In some cases, a learner's biography and/or learning guidelines and strategy support can be integrated in the portfolio (Valdivia et al., 2012; Walker, 2001) to combine different tools in one package that will accompany the learner throughout the learning phase (and possibly the learning support period). Studies with learning diaries show that some learners have difficulties in verbalising their learning process.

¹⁰⁸ Some of my German students frequently ask me to assign text production and other type of homework because otherwise they would not do it. They know that it is better for them to do homework but they need the 'pressure' from outside in order to complete the tasks.

¹⁰⁹ See appendix B.

In this case it is advisable to give some support for formulating the thoughts in the form of questions such as “What did I learn today? Did I achieve my goals and if so, why?”. A limitation of the use of diary/portfolio in some cases is that the advisors/mediators usually have little time to familiarise themselves with the material before the reflective conversation in the advising or mediation session as the diary/portfolio is in paper format kept by the students (see Valdivia et al, 2012). Reinders (2012) presents a possible solution for this problem by describing the Student Monitoring System which electronically records students’ information (including needs analysis, learning activities, participation in advisory programs, etc.) in one centrally accessible program.

Advisor’s/Mediator’s notes/protocol: An advisor/mediator cannot remember everything about a learner so the notes are a crucial instrument to develop advising and mediation sessions of (a) learner(s). Information in relation to the learner’s biography, identified learning difficulties, learner progress, agreements, appointments and personal reflection on the advising sessions themselves are usually the content of the advisor’s/mediator’s notes in the form of minutes, or a record of the meeting (Mehlhorn & Kleppin, 2006).

Kaleidoscope¹¹⁰: This online reflection tool was developed at the University of Helsinki for the Autonomous Language Modules (ALMS) to help students create their language-learning profile and to facilitate their learning reflections. This programme does not only suggest strategies and materials that could be tested or used like the VELA, Virtual English Language Counsellor in Hong Kong, for instance. The main goal of Kaleidoscope is to “aid students to situate themselves in their own language-learning context, with the ultimate goal of producing the above-mentioned language-learning profile” (Kidd & von Boehm, 2012, p. 130). It consists of 5 sections relating to language learning: needs, current skills, motivation, personality and learning history¹¹¹.

The Wheel of Language Learning: This tool was developed in order to enhance the reflection process of language learners. It was adapted from the field of life coaching and is used to increase learner awareness, illustrate links between different elements, monitor progress and to empower learners towards positive action in their learning. The Wheel of Life exercise

¹¹⁰ See the Kaleidoscope website at <http://h27.it.helsinki.fi/vkk/kaleidoskooppi/intro.php> (22.12.2013)

¹¹¹ For a detailed description, see Kidd & von Boehm (2012).

was originally designed to help clients clarify their existing situation and their level of satisfaction with different areas of life. Yamashita and Kato (2012) then adapted this wheel to evaluate aspects of language learning. The centre of the wheel is zero – indicating complete dissatisfaction. The boundary of the wheel is ten, indicating complete satisfaction. Learners are asked to grade their present level of satisfaction for each area shown in the wheel (e.g. goal setting, enjoyment of learning, learning materials, motivation, etc.), and are then encouraged to talk about the reasons for this self-evaluation with the learning advisor (Yamashita and Kato 2012).

Naturally, there are many more tools for stimulating reflection on learning needs, learning process and evaluation of the outcomes. Many advisors and mediators create their own documents and strategies to use with their learners. Strategy sheets, language diagnostic documents and tips for more productive learning and studying exist in a wide range of forms (see Yamaguchi et al., 2012 for the tools being used at Kanda University of International Studies, for instance).

2.8 Learner support for language learning in research and education

Developing the area of learner support in language learning in the field of Applied Linguistics means continuous research and publication on theoretical and practical issues concerning the area. Another important factor is the formation of qualified advisors who are one of the core components of learner support by enhancing learner autonomy and learning awareness, as we could see in the aforementioned sections. In this section, I would like to present an overview of some research on learner support that have been published in the German, English and Portuguese academic literature and which also discusses existing training programmes for advisors. This review will show the current stage of discussion in the area of studies and will also show that there are very few studies on peer group mediation which shows the importance of this new research direction, as there are more and more group activities taking place in telecollaboration projects. By citing some conferences and university courses in which the most recent research on learner support is being presented to a public of scholars and practitioners, I would like to emphasise the fact that these are indicators for a growing institutionalisation and consolidation of the research area.

2.8.1 Studies and practical reports in learner support for language learning

The several forms of support for language learning were studied and reported whilst focussing on different aspects, as I will show in this section. A considerable amount of publications are concerned with the learning advisor or mediator: his/her conversational skills, question techniques, and competences (Jamieson, 2001; Kelly, 1996; Mehlhorn et al, 2005; Mozzon-McPherson, 2003, 2012; Riley, 1997; Stickler, 2001b), the advisor's notes (Peuschel, 2006; Wilczynski, 2001), the role of the advisor/mediator in the advising/mediation process and in interaction with the learners (Bartle, 2001; Mozzon-McPherson, 2007; Pemberton et al., 2001; C. F. Rocha & Lima, 2009; Salomão, 2010), or with the inner dialogue of the advisor (McCarthy, 2012). Consequently, it is possible to find some more articles on training and development for advisors and mediators which range from basic reports on first experiences in advisor/tutor training (Domiciano, 2001; Taillefer, 2000) to discussions about the importance of training staff (Kato, 2012; Mozzon-McPherson, 2012), and also the positive outcomes of advisor interaction in communities of practice (Kodate & Foale, 2012).

A second important perspective studied within the field of learner support is, of course, the learners: their goals, problems, beliefs (Crabbe, Hoffmann, & Cotterall, 2001; Peuschel, 2003) and perspectives in relation to their learning processes (Claußen & Peuschel, 2006), their expectations (Cotterall, 2012; Pemberton & Toogood, 2001), individual differences (Hurd & Murphy, 2012), reflection on their learning (Karlsson, 2012; Schmelter, 2004), their identification of reasons for their learning success or failures (McLoughlin, 2012), the demographic changes in learner generations (Blake, 2007), and reasons for (not) participating in advising sessions (Reinders, 2005). Some studies were specifically conducted on the interaction of the advisor and the advisee (Clemente, 2003; Cotterall, 2012), and on peer-advising.

In the case of peer advising/mediation, it is necessary to distinguish between two perspectives; in the first scenario, peers are on an equal level and stimulate peer reflection on learning processes with personal experiences and ideas (Elstermann, 2014c; Helmling, 2001, 2006; Wadl, 2011), and in the second scenario, peers are on differing competence levels (in a foreign language, for instance) and the more experienced peer helps the less experienced peer, turning the situation in a tutor-learning-context (Ishikawa, 2012; Kao, 2012).

In addition to the personal components of learner support, there is a substantial amount of experience reports on different learner support projects carried out in different settings, such as online platforms (Hurd, 2001; Poppi, 2001; Wegele, 2006), self-access centres (Pugliese, 2011; Sartirana, 2011; Voller et al., 1999), workshops (Cavallini & Wagner, 2011), culturally

sensitive settings (Schoepp & Lydiatt, 2012; Zeilinger, 2006); and autonomous learning programmes (Karlsson, Kjisik, & Nordlund, 2007). Naturally, it is also possible to find works on the aims of learner support (Brammerts, Calvert, & Kleppin, 2001; Carson & Mynard, 2012; Mehlhorn & Kleppin, 2005) and different formats of learner support (Kleppin, 2006), as well as on concepts, theories, and models for learner support (Hoffmann, 2011; Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2014; Kleppin, 2004; Mynard, 2012; Schmelter, 2004, 2006), including discussions on the question of directiveness and obligation in learner support (Mynard & Thornton, 2012; Vogler, 2011).

The description of tools for reflection and communication in learner support is another topic found relatively often in the literature about learner support; the use of learning diaries (Langner, 2006; Walker, 2001), learning portfolios (Valdivia et al., 2012), storytelling (Karlsson, 2012), virtual platforms (Kidd & von Boehm, 2012; Reinders, 2006, 2007), the Wheel of Language Learning (Yamashita & Kato, 2012), podcasts (Stork & Adamczak-Krysztofowicz, 2011), and communication technologies for distance advising (Altshul, 2001; Pomino, 2011; Saunders, 2010).

There are also works on the use of elements of learner support in foreign language courses (Carson, 2012; Hoffmann, 2006; Kleppin, 2001; Skowronek, 2006), learner support for special purposes, for example for pronunciation (Mehlhorn et al, 2005; Mehlhorn, 2006), for learners with dyslexia (Jowers, 2001), and (academic) writing (Ballweg, 2011; Ferrari, 2013; Grieshammer, Peters, & Theuerkauf, 2009; Reinders, 2008; Wadl, 2011; Zegenhagen, 2008) and learner support in the context of learning foreign languages autonomously in tandem. In this case, we can distinguish works with more general descriptions of the relation of learner support and tandem (Brammerts, 2006; Helmling, 2001, 2006; Morley & Truscott, 2001; Stickler, 2001a), distance advising sessions and e-tandem (Altshul, 2001; Pomino, 2011), and mediation in the teletandem context (Bedran & Salomão, 2013; Elstermann, 2014c; Faria, 2007; Funo, 2015; Salomão, 2010).

Other topics include the use of the language (L1 or L2) in advising sessions (Thornton, 2012), learning strategies in learner support (Claußen, 2009), the aspect of evaluation in learner support (Kleppin & Spänkuch, 2010; Tassinari, 2012), institutional factors that influence advising programmes (Reinders, 2012; Victori, 2007) and, as learner support is usually researched in the context of higher education, some authors study the possibility of implementing learner support on the school level (Berndt & Kruczek, 2009; Berndt, 2011; Kleppin & Mehlhorn, 2008).

2.8.2 Conferences and university courses on learner support for language learning

With regards to research in the field of learner support, it is important to remember academic meetings and conferences held on the subject as they are a sign of consolidation of the research area. For the English-speaking community, the first conference entirely dedicated to the field of advising, according to Thornton (2012, p. 2), was the conference *Advising for Language Learner Autonomy*, held on November 12, 2011, at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. However, there have been four conferences for the German-speaking community since 2005 in Germany. The organisers of the conference at the Technical University of Dresden, ‘Facets of advising in language learning: positions and perspectives’, in June 2012, published the outcomes in a book on advising in 2014 (Berndt & Deutschmann¹¹²). The electronic journal *SiSal – Studies in Self-Access Learning* also originates from Kanda University. Published quarterly since 2010, the journal contains many articles on advising in its different facets. An Italian working group on advising for German learning met at a conference for German Linguistics in 2010 and has already published their meeting outcomes in the book *Sprachlernberatung für DaF – Advising in Language Learning for German as Foreign Language* (Vogler & Hoffmann, Eds., 2010).

Since March 2007, in cooperation with the language centres of universities in the German state Bremen and the Association of Language Centres of German Universities¹¹³, symposia have been held frequently on autonomous language learning in higher and adult education¹¹⁴ at the University of Bremen. Many works presented during these symposia reflect studies in the context of learner support. In the USA, many advising programmes joined forces by founding the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). This association of professional advisors, counsellors, faculty, administrators and students work together in order to enhance the educational development of students as well as to provide a forum for discussion, debate, and exchange of ideas pertaining to academic advising. One publication medium is the biannual NACADA Journal.¹¹⁵

We usually find training programmes for advisors in relation to self-access centres or university courses that treat language acquisition, didactics, learner autonomy, learning strategies, etc. in their course programmes. In Germany, this usually applies to courses such as ‘German as Foreign/Second Language’, ‘Applied Linguistics’ or teacher training courses. At

¹¹² Berndt, Annette; Deutschmann, Ruth-Ulrike (Eds.) (2014): *Sprachlernberatung – Sprachlerncoaching*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

¹¹³ Arbeitskreis der Sprachenzentren der Hochschulen Deutschlands

¹¹⁴ Symposium zum autonomen FSL in Hochschule und Erwachsenenbildung

¹¹⁵ <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/About-Us.aspx#sthash.BuIyf59D.dpuf>

the Institute for Applied Linguistics at the University of Bochum¹¹⁶, the Master's degree programme includes a module named 'Coaching for language learners' (*Coaching für Sprachenlerner*) which covers two courses (over two semesters) in which students discuss topics such as learner autonomy, self-directed learning, language acquisition hypotheses and learning theories, individual factors of language acquisition, error cause, learning strategies and learning styles. With this theoretical basis, students then work with the aims and stages of coaching sessions for language learning, as well as the tasks and competences of the coach.¹¹⁷ Since the Bachelor and Master degree programmes in Applied Linguistics will be discontinued in 2016 at University of Bochum, the Language Centre (Fremdsprachenzentrum) offers a training for coaches in language learning within a blended learning setting.

Other German universities offer similar courses and modules as well such as the Herder Institute at the Philological Faculty at *Universität Leipzig*, the Department of German as Foreign Language at *Technische Universität Berlin*, the Department of Intercultural German Studies at *Universität Göttingen* and German as Foreign Language at the Institute of German Studies of *Technische Universität Dresden*, *Universität Regensburg* and *Viadrina Universität* in Frankfurt/Oder¹¹⁸. In the UK, Marina Mozzon-McPherson developed an online postgraduate qualification for language learning advisors at the University of Hull after her experiences in the project SMILE (Strategies for Managing and Independent Learning Environment) relating to advising in language learning (Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001, p. 1).

2.8.3 Advisor/mediator/tutor training in learner support for language learning

A notable number of publications on learner autonomy, independent learning, self-access learning and advising in language learning have originated from Asia over the past few years, demonstrating the high levels of research activity in the field. When focussing on advising for language learning, it is necessary to highlight the work of Jo Mynard and her team at Kanda University International Studies (KUIS) in Makuhari, Chiba Prefecture in Japan. Mynard has been the editor of the *SiSAL Journal on Studies in Self-Access Learning* since 2010, which

¹¹⁶ Seminar für Sprachlehrforschung, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

¹¹⁷ For more details, see the commented subject programme on the website of the Institute of Applied Linguistics <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/slf/studium/lehrangebot.html> (22.11.2013). Unfortunately, the Master degree programme will run out in 2016 due to the closing of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at Ruhr University Bochum.

¹¹⁸ Fachgebiet Deutsch als Fremdsprache, TU Berlin, <http://www.daf.tu-berlin.de/>; Abteilung Interkulturelle Germanistik, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/17580.html>; Deutsch als Fremdsprache, TU Dresden, <http://www.tu-dresden.de>, Universität Regensburg <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/sprache-literatur-kultur/germanistik-daz/studium/>, Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) <http://www.sz.europa-uni.de/de/index.html>

featured a special issue on advising in 2012 (Vol 3, Issue 1). She organised a conference on advising in language learning in 2011 at the same university¹¹⁹, and published the outcomes of the conference in a book on advising: *Advising in Language Learning. Dialogue, tools and context* (Mynard & Carson Eds, 2012). KUIS also offers a wide range of programmes for advisor training. One option is a three day intensive practical workshop on advising for language educators held in Japanese. A second option is an integrated part of the MA TESOL programme which consists of some elective modules (in English) on self-access, advising and learner autonomy. A third option can be found in the Self Access Centre: a comprehensive training programme for learning advisors who are employed with the university. This programme includes initial intensive training, reading and discussions, followed by an ongoing weekly mentoring and reflective observation for new advisors in their first year.¹²⁰

In Brazil, I was able to find two records of training for advisors or mediators in language learning. The first dates back to the year 2000, and briefly describes a type of workshop designed to train students to become tutors for a self-access centre (SAC) which had recently been opened at *Universidade Estadual de Londrina*, Paraná. The learning process of autonomous learners as such, however, did not seem to be focus on the training (Domiciano, 2001; Taillefer, 2000). The second record of mediator training originates from a personal experience at State University of São Paulo, Campus Assis. My colleagues Ludmila Belotti Andreu Funo, Maisa de Alcântara Zakir, Micheli Gomes de Souza and I have been working with mediation in language learning in the context of teletandem (see section 2.3) for a number of years, and in 2012, due to the increasing number of teletandem interactions, we decided to start a pilot project of a mediator workshop to enable students to become language learning mediators themselves. The workshop included 4 meetings to discuss topics including concepts of learner autonomy, language learning in (tele)tandem, learning strategies, and a practical part in which the participating students had to shadow a teacher-mediator at mediation sessions after teletandem interactions (Funo & Elstermann, 2012). The pilot project was successful; four of the participating students began working as mediators in teletandem interactions after the workshop. Nevertheless, due to time constraints and a cutback on staff, the workshop, then with a slightly changed programme, could not be offered again until the first semester of 2014.

In the eight sections of chapter 2 we traced the way of learner support by starting with a term and definition discussion followed by the theoretical foundations which corroborate the different approaches of learner support. Becoming more specific, the next steps were the

¹¹⁹ More information about the conference see <http://advising2011.wordpress.com/> (22.11.2013)

¹²⁰ Mynard, Jo, November 2013, personal communication via e-mail.

observation of general aims and functions of learner support, the characteristics of different learner support settings, the advising process, tools for promoting learner support and the role of the mediator/advisor. After having reinforced the importance of learner support in applied linguistics by giving a summary of research from the last 20 years, the next section we will draw closer to the core of the study and learner support settings specifically for tandem contexts will be discussed.

2.9 Learner support in the tandem language learning context

Most of the institutions and tandem offices that offer tandem language exchange consider learner support important and necessary. Learners are usually motivated when they start their language learning in tandem but do not know how to use the potential of the tandem context and, in some learning contexts, do not know how to deal with the freedom of autonomy and self-directed learning styles that are needed to succeed in tandem learning. Brammerts (2006, p. 6) affirms that many learners (and, I believe, teachers as well) are not able to assess the learning possibilities the tandem context offers and fail to understand how they can follow their own objectives. Some learners do not even realise that they can (and should) decide on their own learning goals and ways of learning. As they commence the process with the view of their tandem partner as a personal communication partner, they usually maintain the idea that merely conversing with a native speaker will guarantee learning outcomes.

Induction meetings organised by tandem coordinators and written guidelines and best practices for successful tandem partnerships generally do not lead to the desired results in raising awareness for autonomous language learning, even if it is in the form of personal meetings and workshops (Kleppin, et al. 2001, personal experience at the teletandem lab at UNESP Assis). Learners have very different starting positions, conditions, needs and goals and it is very complex for them to auto-evaluate themselves and to interrelate their needs with the needs of the tandem partner. In learning contexts in which learners are even less used to working autonomously, insecurity regarding working procedures in tandem learning will still increase.

In a similar vein to other learning contexts, the main objective of learner support for tandem learners is to help the learners to develop their capacity for self-directed (language) learning and to support them in making decisions for ways of learning and respective learning goals. Particularly in the case of tandem learning, Brammerts (2006, p. 8) adds the following as a concrete objective: “It [the learner support] should encourage the learner to assume responsibility for his/her learning in the tandem situation and to guide his/her own learning; it

should support him/her in developing the capacity for autonomous learning and in finding greater certainty for his learning in tandem¹²¹” (my translation).

In the following sections, I will briefly describe some pre-existing advising settings which were used in different tandem learning contexts and which formed the basis for the development of the peer group mediation setting presented in this study. Afterwards, I will introduce four different styles of learner support which I identified as having being developed and implemented for some years now in the teletandem context. Based on a criteria grid for learner support proposed by Kleppin and Spänkuch (2014), I will try to define the learner support settings for teletandem.

2.9.1 Learner support in tandem intensive courses

When tandem is an integral part of language intensive courses such as the ones developed by a number of European universities, learner support always plays an important role. The Universities of Bochum (Germany), Mitthögskolan Sundsvall (Sweden), Oviedo (Spain) and Sheffield (United Kingdom) introduced tandem intensive courses for the language pairs German-Spanish, English-Spanish and German-Swedish. Those programmes included 2 to 4 weeks of face-to-face tandem courses at one of the aforementioned universities and the main component of the language course was team work with a tandem partner (see Brammerts, Jonsson, Kleppin, & Santiso Saco, 2001).

For this kind of tandem programme three different types of learner support exist in order to meet the different objectives. First of all, there is peer group mediation, called “guided exchange of experiences” (*gelenkter Erfahrungsaustausch*) by the authors. The learners observe each other during tandem work and later, in a smaller group, discuss their learning experiences and discuss strategies. The second type of learner support occurs with both tandem partners and serves to optimise collaboration between the pair. The advisor reacts to requests and questions from the pairs, or initiates a discussion on the basis of some previous observation he/she has made. The third learner support is individual advising: the objective is to optimise the individual learning process. The learner talks about individual prerequisites and desires for concrete goal setting in relation to the tandem course. In later sessions, the discussion is about successful ways of learning, learning improvements, etc. The conversations are held in the native language of the learner and are scheduled to take place ranging from once a week to once a day for about

¹²¹ Original: „Sie soll den Lerner ermutigen, die Verantwortung für sein Lernen in der Tandemsituation zu übernehmen und es selbst zu steuern; sie soll ihn dabei unterstützen, die Fähigkeit dazu auszubauen und zu mehr Handlungssicherheit beim Lernen im Tandem zu finden.“ (Brammerts, 2006, p. 8)

15 minutes. Systematic inquiries revealed that a daily individual advising sessions received more positive evaluations than a weekly one. It seems that daily encounters with the advisor reinforce the benefits for the individual learning process and help to create a confident relation between learner and advisor (see Brammerts, Jonsson, et al., 2001).

2.9.2 Learner support in tandem activities independent of a language course (free tandems)

Many different institutions offer a tandem service that functions independently of a language course and promotes a more informal and intercultural learning of foreign languages. Universities with a high number of foreign students usually offer a tandem service, but tandem services are also available in private language schools or adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen* in Germany). The main task of these tandem services is to match respective pairs and provide some kind of pedagogical support – by offering brochures and leaflets with best practices, workshops or individual or pair advising sessions. These tandem programmes are usually attended voluntarily by learners and, according to reports of coordinators of these tandem programmes¹²², many of them do not see the need to participate in an additional learner support programme. In some cases, attempts were made to make learner support obligatory, but in a voluntary learning context it is difficult to make learners do something they do not want to or think they do not need.

At the *Goethe-Institut* in Paris, France, Helmling (2001, 2006) tested another learner support format for German-French tandem partners. In addition to learner support in the form of specific tandem tasks and individual advising during consultation hours, Helmling used peer group activities for a guided exchange of experiences in particular between the learners – a project which served as the basis for the research study described later in this work. The peer group meetings were held every three to four weeks and about 20 tandem pairs participated. There were two facilitators who guided the meeting, prepared questions for the small group and pair work units, and coordinated the final discussion with the whole group. The tandem partners were asked to split and to work in smaller groups, so that they were able to express their opinions freely and, in the case of learning difficulties, for instance, could ask the other members (peers) of the small group for advice (Helmling, 2001: 83).

¹²² Personal communication during the conference for tandem learning in Freiburg i.Br., Germany (Freiburger Tandem Tagung), 7th December 2012.

2.9.3 Learner support in eTandem projects

Another report by Pomino (2011) describes a distance advising setting for two eTandem projects that were organised by the German *Ruhr-Universität Bochum* and the Italian universities *Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II* and *Università degli Studi di Salerno*. The eTandem project had a duration of one semester and the German and Italian participants used e-mail, Skype and the learning platform Blackboard for learner support and general information exchange. The German participants in the project attended a traditional Italian language course at university where they were able to become acquainted with the principles of tandem learning before starting their individual work with the Italian tandem partners. The pairs had to work on specific writing and oral tasks which were presented afterwards in the language course. The author of the report, Jenny Pomino, also an advisor in this tandem setting, used Skype and the web-conferencing tool Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro for the distance advising sessions that were held three times individually or in tandem pairs throughout the project. The individual advising session took place via video conference in Skype, and, for the pair advising, Pomino used Adobe Connect Pro which contains several tools to support the advising process.¹²³

2.9.4 Learner support in teletandem projects

The universities participating in the *Teletandem Brasil* project have developed different styles of learner support during the last years. At the beginning of the project in 2006, during the pilot phase, learner support mostly occurred on an informal basis between learners and their respective language teachers who were involved in the teletandem activities as well. This kind of learner support depends on the learner and his will to ask questions and get help from a more experienced person (peer, teacher, tutor), and on the teacher or project coordinator who wants to know how the learning in teletandem is proceeding and if his/her learners are doing well. At the faculties involved in the project, different formats of learner support have emerged such as the mediation sessions (*sessões de mediação*) at the participating campuses of UNESP or virtual supervision sessions at JGU, Germany, or even class-integrated mediation within the modality of institutionally-integrated group Teletandem¹²⁴.

In the following sections, I will describe the development of learner support for the teletandem learning context followed by an overview of the different conceptualisations that

¹²³ For a detailed description, see Pomino (2011, p. 77).

¹²⁴ See section 2.3.1

arise from the analysis of the practical descriptions (Augustin, 2012; Candido, 2010; Cavalari & Aranha, 2014; Funo, 2015; Salomão, 2008, 2010) and experiences (of colleagues and mine) regarding the learner support.

2.9.4.1 The development of different learner support settings in Teletandem

In this work, through the teletandem project, we are dealing with a very international academic network which presents us with the opportunity to look at the same project from varying perspectives. Different scientific communities, different cultures and different languages merge into one project but each part has its own singularities. This, in turn, confronts us with different learning cultures and contexts, and different preconditions regarding research in specific areas such as foreign language learning in tandem (see chapter 1), and learner support for language learning.

This analysis begins by taking a look at the development of learner support in Brazil, the country in which the *Teletandem Brasil* project commenced in 2006. As already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, research on learner support for language learning – as we know from German or English literature (Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001; Mynard & Carson, 2012; Vogler & Hoffmann, 2011 amongst others) – is still in its infancy in Brazil. To my knowledge, besides learner support in the *Teletandem Brasil* project, there are only learner support activities at three more universities in Brazil: language advising (*aconselhamento linguageiro*) for English learners at *Universidade Federal do Pará* (Magno e Silva et al., 2013), the advising project CALIC at *Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro* (Marques-Schäfer et al., 2015) and some research on advising at *Universidade de São Paulo* (Ferrari, 2013; Ferreira, in preparation).¹²⁵ This is why the above-mentioned recent articles and some more about mediation sessions (*sessões de mediação*) in teletandem (Funo, 2015; Salomão, 2010) have opened up a new field of research in Applied Linguistics in Brazil which is still unexplored, and provides many opportunities for further studies.

The first works on mediation sessions in teletandem usually refer to the articles regarding support for tandem learners in the handbook on tandem learning “Autonomous language learning in tandem” published by Tim Lewis and Lesley Walker in 2003. Beyond that, no additional specific literature on learner support has been discussed. This is despite the existence of certain works on autonomous language learning in teletandem (Luz, 2009; Cavalari & Luz, 2009; Simões & Lima, 2009) – which do not focus on learner support. In relation to teacher

¹²⁵ Should I be wrong, I am happy to receive information about research on learner support which I may not have been aware of previously.

education, however, some research has been carried out in the field on reflection and reflective practices which are then linked to the learner support practices in teletandem (Garcia, 2012; Salomão, 2008, 2010). In general, researchers commenting on mediation sessions in relation to teletandem base their discussion on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and his concept of mediation¹²⁶ (from which the term of learner support derived) and the zone of proximal development.

In summary, it can be argued that most of the Portuguese and English language best practice reports and studies regarding mediation in teletandem (Salomão, 2008; Cândido, 2010; Funo, 2015; Souza, 2016) are one of the first specific literary works on learner support in the Brazilian field of Applied Linguistics.

The development of the learner support setting 'virtual supervision' (Augustin, 2012) at the partner institution JGU in Germany, however, was most likely based on German literature on former studies and reports on different settings of learner support, principally promoted by the *Arbeitsgruppe Sprachlernberatung*. Furthermore, Augustin (2012) also referred to other learning theories which corroborated her concept of supervision theoretically, such as constructivistic approaches or the stories and discourse theory (Schmidt, 2005 in Augustin, 2011, p. 189).

Due to different and more structural curricular preconditions, the institutions with institutionally-integrated teletandem (TTii) modality developed another setting of learner support which could be termed as classroom-integrated mediation. This setting has not yet been specifically defined in the literature, but can be extracted partly through personal conversations with teacher-mediators involved in TTii and classroom-integrated mediation and through references made to the subject in academic articles on TTii (Aranha & Cavalari, 2015; Cavalari & Aranha, 2014). This concept can be linked to former studies on and discussion of classroom-based learner support as can be seen in the works of Carson (2012), Berndt & Kruzcek (2009), Hoffmann (2006) and Kleppin (2001).

In the next sections, I will describe in detail the development of learner support settings in the different teletandem contexts and additionally attempt to conceptualise these different settings in a criteria grid.

¹²⁶ See section 2.2.2.

2.9.4.2 UNESP Assis: Teletandem, introductory workshops and group mediation

From the introduction of the *Teletandem Brasil* project in 2006 onwards, the so-called *sessões de orientação* were held, a type of introductory workshop for interested learners who wanted to start a teletandem with a foreign student. In Brazil, the learning context ‘tandem’ is virtually unknown amongst learners and, therefore, learners need a thorough introduction to the main concept, principles, and guidance on how to prepare a teletandem session. This type of initial learner support was shared with the participating universities, also in an attempt to introduce the project and the network of universities involved.

At the teletandem lab at UNESP Assis, the first more formal mediation setting started with my research study in 2010, and resulted in peer group mediation sessions for learners of German who participated in individual teletandem sessions with learners of Portuguese residing in Germany (see chapter 3 for a detailed explanation). These peer group mediation sessions took place fortnightly and were organised by the mediator, with the format of a main subject and some triggering questions to stimulate a discussion that would guide the mediation session. These remained open to the discussion of other topics, problems and aspects that were of the interest of the participants.

Approximately one year later, in 2011, a number of North American universities started to implement teletandem sessions in their language courses (TTii), and effectively used class time for interaction with the Brazilian partners. Therefore, the teletandem project included group teletandem sessions, where a fixed number of students met at the same time in the teletandem lab to interact individually with their partners during the given time schedule, i.e. once or twice a week over the course of six or eight weeks during the semester.

Soon, the coordinating teachers realised that due to the steadily growing number of participating students¹²⁷, the informal conversations about the learning processes would not be sufficient anymore, because more and more students from faculties outside of the language department were participating in the project. For this reason, teletandem coordinators decided to introduce mediation sessions (*sessões de mediação*) which were held directly after the group teletandem interaction in the lab. After an hour of English-Portuguese interaction, for example, the students stayed in the lab and discussed their learning experiences with the mediator, usually a language teacher in charge of the respective teletandem interaction, or an experienced senior student.

¹²⁷ In 2014, there were nine different groups with approximately 100 participants interacting in teletandem with our partner universities in the US and Mexico.

There is still no consistent mediation concept which the teletandem mediators in charge use, as discovered by a small study based on a questionnaire with open questions (Elstermann, Funo, & Zakir, 2015). Each mediator has a slightly different view of the mediation session and, therefore, guides them in different forms. Some try to prioritise conversation in the respective foreign language (to stimulate and focus on the FL learning), whilst others focus on reflecting on the learning process and prefer to use the native language. This is due to the limited proficiency of many students when trying to make this kind of reflection in the foreign language. Some mediators use an electronic learning platform such as Moodle or TelEduc, and others utilise closed groups on Facebook to stimulate additional reflection outside of the mediation session (Elstermann et al., 2015). When using Moodle or TelEduc for additional learner support, the mediators use the platform for group discussion in forums (initiated by the mediator with questions about correction modes, preparation techniques etc.), or to upload small reflective texts about the last teletandem interaction, so that the mediators of both sides can get an impression of the thoughts their learners have, and to be able to provide personal feedback. The groups on Facebook are a tentative and serve as an alternative to the electronic platforms in use since 2013.

The mediators observed that the activity levels of learners in the forums (and the platforms in general) were very low. The explanation most commonly given was that the learners had too little time to log in to the platform, or that they simply forgot to access the groups. Knowing that young learners usually spend a considerable amount of time each day on Facebook, some mediators created closed teletandem groups on Facebook¹²⁸. The participants of both sides, of which 95% had a Facebook account, were then invited to join the group and asked to post information about themselves, and later about their experiences with the teletandem partner and sessions in the respective foreign language. The group was also used to post information about the start and end of the teletandem interactions, and to provide additional information about language and culture-specific aspects in order to stimulate intercultural reflection, or to give topical input and suggestions for the next teletandem sessions.

2.9.4.3 UNESP São José do Rio Preto: individual mediation and classroom integrated mediation

The mediation concept in the *Teletandem Brasil* project at the sister campus of UNESP São José do Rio Preto was different in character from its introduction in 2006. The local

¹²⁸ In the first semester of 2014, five groups existed on Facebook for interactions between Miami-Assis, Virginia Commonwealth-Assis, Hawaii-Assis, and Fairfield-Assis. The following link is an example: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ttassismiami2sem2013/> (18/05/2014)

coordinators of the project implemented a mediation format that consisted of individual mediation sessions between M.A. or PhD students (as mediators), who were carrying out research as part of the *Teletandem Brasil* project, and undergraduate students who were enrolled in teletandem partnerships.

Mediators and students met during regular individual mediation sessions that were held either face-to-face physically in the same location, or virtually via Skype, MSN Messenger or even by chat/email throughout the duration of the teletandem partnership, usually over a period of a few months. In most cases, the mediation sessions only took place with Brazilian students, but occasionally the foreign teletandem partners were involved (Salomão, 2008, p. 92; Luz, 2009, p. 41).

The mediators also held regular meetings with colleagues and their coordinator to exchange information and experiences. The theoretical basis for their mediation actions were Korthagen (1982): “Helping student teachers to become reflective: the supervision process” and Sól (2005): “Modelos de supervisão e o papel do formador de professores¹²⁹”. One of the outcomes of their group meetings was a list with 15 guidelines for mediators that were published in the *Teletandem News* Ano 1, No. 1¹³⁰.

Since 2011, the teletandem project at UNESP São José do Rio Preto has evolved into the institutionally-integrated teletandem modality where a group of students carry out their teletandem interactions at the same time in the teletandem lab at university, as outlined in section 1.3.2. For this reason, the type of mediation has also changed. Before starting their learning activities in teletandem partnerships, the group has a one-hour tutorial in which the instructor explains theoretical and practical aspects of the learning of foreign languages in teletandem. The instructor also discusses learning objectives (by using a questionnaire for the students to establish their personal learning goals), and describes the reflective diaries which are to be completed after each teletandem session. The class approximately lasts two hours, one hour of which is used for the teletandem interaction, and the second hour is used for the preparation of texts and individual reflection by writing a reflective diary entry which must be uploaded using the e-learning platform (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014). Queries and problems are only discussed with the teachers, tutors and the wider group if the learners raise these issues openly¹³¹.

¹²⁹ Translation: Models of Supervision and the role of the teacher trainer

¹³⁰ For a copy of the guidelines see Appendix H (in Portuguese).

¹³¹ Personal communication with Aranha, 2014

As these elements of learner support are directly included in the scheduled hours of the class, I would like to denominate this setting as ‘classroom-integrated mediation’.

2.9.4.4 JGU Mainz: Teletandem and Virtual Supervision

The learner support concept at the German partner university Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz (JGU) is called ‘supervision’ or ‘virtual supervision’ and “can be seen as indispensable for adequate learning for the participants, especially in relation to the cooperation in teletandem”¹³² (Augustin, 2012, p. 340). This concept also draws upon Carl Rogers’ approach of non-directive counselling.

After the pilot phase (two semesters in 2007), the German project coordinator of the teletandem project, Wiebke Augustin – who also assumed the role of the advisor – introduced physical face-to-face supervision to the German students on site and virtual supervision with the Brazilian participants if they wished to speak with the German advisor¹³³.

From this initial learner support setting, Augustin developed a more complex supervision model that turned into a cross-border virtual supervision with additional tutor supervision in 2009 and 2010. In this setting, learner support occurs as follows: A German-Portuguese teletandem pair agrees on three virtual supervision meetings with experienced tutors (who are also students of either the Brazilian or German university). After the first virtual supervision with a German tutor, for example, turns will be taken in the next virtual supervision, and the Brazilian tutor then talks with the same teletandem pair. After each virtual supervision, the two tutors meet and talk about their impressions regarding the teletandem pair and their learning processes, and agree on a date to meet with the Brazilian or German project-coordinator/teacher to schedule a ‘tutor supervision’. In the tutor supervision, the tutors discuss their impressions once more, and, with the help of the coordinator, give their reflections a theoretical basis. The coordinators, in turn, also meet and discuss their tutors, their teletandem participants and the ongoing activities. (Augustin, 2012, p. 365)

This model of learner support, the ‘tutor supervision’, was developed to complement the teletandem module in the curriculum of Portuguese translation studies at Johannes Gutenberg Universität (JGU) (see section 2.3.2 and Augustin, 2012), where the students (= tutors) should use their recently acquired knowledge about learning theories of the classroom discussions and apply it to the virtual supervision meetings with the teletandem pairs (Augustin, 2012, p. 358).

¹³² Original: “[...] können, gerade hinsichtlich der Zusammenarbeit im Teletandem, als unverzichtbar für das angemessene Lernen der Teilnehmer angesehen werden.“

¹³³ At that time, there was still no mediation offered as part of the Teletandem Brasil project at UNESP Assis.

In summary, we can record that at JGU there were non-virtual supervisions with German teletandem partners participating directly in the classes, virtual supervisions with both German and Brazilian teletandem participants, and that a third form of supervision existed which was linked to Portuguese Intensive Courses that only involved teletandem: Students without any knowledge of Portuguese could enrol in Portuguese Intensive Courses via teletandem (Augustin, 2012, p. 369). In this case, supervision is indispensable because there is no additional class with a personal teacher or contact with an advisor. In this form of supervision, the advisor asks for permission to join the teletandem sessions where he/she listens and observes silently for about 20 minutes. Afterwards, the advisor and the two learners have a conversation about the ongoing teletandem session. The learners may ask the advisor questions about linguistic, cultural, structural or theoretical aspects (Augustin, 2012, p. 370) and the advisor may address subjects which he/she considers important for the teletandem partnership.

As the teletandem project unfortunately came to an end at JGU in 2011, neither the teletandem activities nor the virtual supervision were continued or further developed from that point onwards.

2.9.4.5 Teletandem and classroom-integrated learner support

As mentioned previously, universities involved in the teletandem project which adopted the TTii modality usually implement elements of mediation in the classroom activities alongside the teletandem interaction.

At the University of Miami, as the teletandem interactions are an integral part of the Portuguese language course, the teachers themselves assume the role of the mediator. In the case of Miami, the Portuguese course consists of three meetings of 50 minutes per week, two of them reserved for teletandem activities with their Brazilian partner at UNESP Assis. Due to the students' busy schedules, the teachers only have time for learner support during their third class in the week, where they also have to teach the normal syllabus – so very little time remains for the teachers to begin developing advising sessions. Nevertheless, the teachers usually reserve the first 15 minutes of the class to talk about any problems or difficulties encountered, and discuss ways of solving them. Due to the fact that little time is left for oral group reflection, the instructors use electronic platforms, such as TelEduc or Facebook, in order to stimulate reflection on intercultural aspects and learning processes of their North American students¹³⁴. The students are asked to write a short commentary on their teletandem interaction after each session describing the contents of the session, their impressions about the session and any other

¹³⁴ See Zakir, 2015

additional comments. As the teletandem sessions are an integral part of the syllabus, it is with these reflective texts and comments that the teachers evaluate the students.¹³⁵

At *Università del Salento* in Lecce, Italy, where teletandem is also institutionally integrated to complement the foreign language course curriculum, learner support takes place in the classes that accompany the teletandem interactions. One of these classes is a type of workshop where learners watch their recorded teletandem sessions, and analyse and reflect on their actions and experiences in the teletandem partnership (Leone, 2014).

2.9.5 Conceptualisation of the forms of learner support in teletandem

We can see from the descriptions about learner support in teletandem above that within the same project (Teletandem Brasil: Línguas estrangeiras para todos) different approaches of learner support have developed during the last years. Basically, we can say that the different forms of mediation, as the learner support type is called in teletandem, emerged due to different needs in the various learning contexts.

The introductory workshops (*sessão de orientação*) were needed since the beginning of the project in order to explain the principles of tandem learning to the foreign language learners who would participate in the project. Especially learners in Brazil and the USA (where we have the largest number of partnerships) are rarely acquainted with the notions of foreign language learning in tandem. To date, these introductory workshops continue in different formats (virtually, in face-to-face meetings).

Individual mediation started at UNESP São José do Rio Preto as part of the research project where Master and PhD candidates worked as mediators to promote the learning of their undergraduate learners who participated individually and voluntarily in the teletandem project. Due to more structured teletandem interactions in groups and as TTii, this type of mediation is practically non-existent today, which does not mean that it may not return when the need for it arises.

Because of the increasing number of teletandem group interactions first at UNESP Assis and now also at UNESP Araraquara, group mediation has become detrimental so that the teletandem learners get introduced to reflect on their own linguistic and cultural learning.

At JGU in Germany, as teletandem was implemented as a course in the curriculum of Portuguese studies, supervision and tutor-supervision were used for the participants who acted as tutors to use their recently-acquired knowledge about learning theories within the teletandem supervisions.

¹³⁵ Information obtained in oral communication with Maisa Zakir and Leila DaCosta on 20/05/2014.

Classroom-integrated mediation forms became necessary at UNESP São José do Rio Preto and University of Miami, for instance, because there was no time outside the classroom activities to discuss and promote reflection on the learning in teletandem.

All these types of mediation were or still are in a certain way obligatory. Of course, the learners are not obligated to participate in peer group mediation or classroom integrated reflective conversations and there are no credits or certificates being issued in relation to the mediation sessions. However, as mediation is integrated in classroom activities or directly following a group teletandem interaction, the mediators expect the learners to participate and make it clear in advance that it is important to participate in the mediation sessions.

Certainly, each form of mediation session can be improved in different aspects, for example in which way mediators should promote the reflection, which subjects should be touched upon in the mediation sessions, the training of mediators. This is why we are doing research in this area: to improve our mediation activities and outcomes. Nevertheless, Augustins' supervision model is one of the most complex models of learner support in teletandem, as it is actually a double learner support. University teachers help their tutors to develop themselves as tutors and concerning learning theories, and in a second step the learners in teletandem receive support to improve their FL learning. Aiming at the training of advisors/supervisors and regarding the course on learning theories, this model is very interesting and promising and parts of it should be considered for further exploration and implementation. Considering the advising reality, however, it is quite an intense, time-consuming model: supervision – tutor-exchange – tutor supervision – teacher-exchange. With demanding work and study schedules, this model will be difficult to put into practice within a normal academic routine.

One important aspect which was discovered by Elstermann, Funo & Zakir (2015) and Funo (2015) is that the mediators working in the *Teletandem Brasil* project follow their individual approaches on how to coordinate or guide the mediation sessions. There are some basic guidelines all mediators use but because of little research and conceptualisation of mediators' work we still cannot speak of a solid concept of mediation in teletandem. This is why I tried to summarise the different mediation approaches in one table in order to organise the different aspects regarding each approach. This first overview and conceptualisation might be a starting point for more research on mediation in teletandem and other telecollaborative projects which attribute some importance to learner support.

In the columns of the table we can see the different forms of learner support in teletandem, i.e. peer group mediation, individual learner mediation, virtual supervision and classroom-based mediation. Horizontally, then, are described the different criteria for each learner support

form such as 1) objectives, 2) procedure principles, 3) procedure (stages), 4a) interventions/techniques of the mediator, 4b) materials, 5a) necessary competencies of the mediator, 5b) possible tasks of the mediator, and 6) settings.

CRITERIA GRID FOR FORMS OF LEARNER SUPPORT IN TELETANDEM

(based on the criteria grid for forms of learner support by Kleppin/Spänkuch, 2014)

	Peer group mediation	Individual learner mediation	Virtual Supervision	Classroom-based mediation
Teletandem Modality	-institutional, semi-integrated -in groups	-institutional, non-integrated -individual	-institutional, integrated - individual	-institutional, integrated - in groups
1. Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting reflective ability, especially regarding intercultural and linguistic competences - exchange of experiences of learning FL in TT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting reflective ability, especially regarding one's learning process - transmission of knowledge about how to improve XYZ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -promoting (together with others) reflective ability, especially regarding one's learning process - supporting the development of the learning process - promoting motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -discussing questions and problems when proposed by the learner -promoting reflective ability
2. Procedure principles	<p><i>Directive and non-directive (learner develops solutions, mediators give support)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured guidance for the teletandem context and pedagogical support through questions that launch group discussions 	<p><i>Directive and non-directive (learner develops solutions, mediators give support)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structured help to stimulate reflection about learning in TT, set up hypotheses and reflective support on the basis of learner data - Structured guidance for the teletandem context through information and advice 	<p><i>Non-directive (learner develops solutions)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structured help to stimulate reflection about learning in TT, set up hypotheses and reflective support (exclusively) on the basis of learner data 	<p><i>(still unknown, more research needed)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured guidance for the teletandem context through information and advice - Support and help offered when asked for by the learners
3.Procedure (stages)	<p><u>Semi-flexible procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I.Presence/support of mediator during group TT interactions II. Group discussion (with questions of mediator; discussion procedure is flexible) 	<p><u>Structured procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. TT-session II. Preparation of reflective learner diary III. Mediation session IV. Preparation of reflective diary V. TT- Session 	<p><u>Structured procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. 2 virtual supervisions with tutors II. Discussion between tutors III. Tutor supervision with teacher IV. Discussion between teachers 	<p><u>Flexible procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -group discussion about specific themes if proposed by learners
4a.Interventions / techniques of the mediator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conversational techniques - communicative conversation skills - skills of solving technology problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicative conversation skills - advising techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicative conversation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conversational techniques - communicative conversation skills

4b. Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e-portfolios, reflective texts - discussions in forums - mediator's notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflective diaries of learners and mediator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary lists - evaluation forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflective diaries (eportfolio in teleduc) -questionnaires -records of TT sessions
5a. Necessary (and desired) competencies of the mediator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - methodological and professional competence as moderator - skills/competence in the field of language learning-teaching - technological competence – <i>linguistic competence for the respective languages used in TT</i> - <i>experiences in learning in TT</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - methodological and professional competence in the field of advising/mediation -social-communicative competence - skills/competence in the field of language learning-teaching - <i>linguistic competence for the respective languages used in TT</i> - <i>experiences in learning in TT</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social-communicative competence - skills/competence in the field of language learning-teaching - <i>linguistic competence for the respective languages used in TT</i> - <i>experiences in learning in TT</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skills/competence in the field of language learning-teaching - <i>linguistic competence for the respective languages used in TT</i> - <i>experiences in learning in TT</i>
5b. Tasks (possible) of the mediator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -make contact and stay in touch with partner institution -match pairs - coordinate and realise TT interactions and group mediation - coordinate ongoing reflection through e-platform - substitute absent learners in TT interaction - eventually check hardware and software of PCs - emission of certificates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinate and realise individual mediation sessions - read and write reflective diaries - analysis of recorded TT sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -make contact and stay in touch with partner institution -match pairs - coordinate and realise virtual supervisions - realise tutor supervision - discussion with teacher of partner institution - analysis of questionnaires and voc lists - learner evaluation by classroom activities which accompany the TT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -make contact and stay in touch with partner institution - coordinate TT interactions (8 sessions per semester) with following classroom activity - analysis of reflective diaries - learner evaluation through text production (made during TT)
6. Settings	<p>1-2 mediators/tutors –group of learners</p> <p>→ physical presence with one half/side of the TT learners</p> <p>→ reflective diary in electronic format</p>	<p>1 mediator – 1 learner</p> <p>→physical or virtual presence (via videoconference)</p> <p>→ reflective diary in electronic format</p>	<p>a)1 mediator – 2 learners (TT partners)</p> <p>b)1 teacher – group of learners</p> <p>a)→ virtual presence (via Videoconference)</p> <p>b) → physical presence (in the classroom)</p> <p>→ evaluation forms and voc lists in electronic format</p>	<p>1 teacher (and tutors) – group of learners</p> <p>→ physical presence with half of the TT learners (in the classroom)</p> <p>→ reflective diary in electronic format</p>
Bibliography	ELSTERMANN; 2014; ELSTERMANN, FUNO; ZAKIR, 2015; FUNO, 2015	SALOMÃO 2010; SALOMÃO, 2012	AUGUSTIN, 2012	CAVALARI & ARANHA, 2014; ELSTERMANN, FUNO & ZAKIR,2015

Table 7. Criteria grid for forms of mediation in teletandem projects

Analysing the criteria grid it becomes apparent that several criteria points are the same in all four mediations forms. This (with some exceptions) mainly applies to objectives, procedure principles, mediators' interventions and techniques and the mediators' desired and necessary competencies. Other criteria such as the mediators' tasks show bigger differences between the four forms. One of the most important objectives in all four forms is the promotion of reflection on linguistic and cultural issues in learning. In regards to the competences of a mediator, all forms rely on a mediator with competences in the field of language learning and teaching, linguistic competence in the respective languages which are used in the teletandem project and also experience in tandem learning. On the other hand, we have the tasks of the mediator which vary depending on the mediation format: in peer group mediation, the mediator is frequently present in the group teletandem interaction supervising the entire teletandem process and often needs technological and IT competences to perform hardware and software troubleshooting. In individual mediation and supervision, the mediator might accompany the learners virtually, i.e. via videoconferencing and/or by e-mail. In some formats, the mediator is the coordinator of the teletandem interaction and also completes administrative tasks.

Even with this table and the tentative of classifying the criteria of the different forms of learner support, it is important to mention that this grid should not be understood as static and finished. Using different descriptions, observations, practical reports and research studies, I tried to extract details that define each form of mediation. However, each mediation session strongly depends on the persons involved and is always prone to small changes in procedures, task realisation and evaluation. Also, as long as different forms of teletandem interactions emerge (depending on different educational circumstances), new or at least different forms of learner support might be necessary.

2.10 Chapter synthesis

In chapters 1 and 2, I attempted to give an overview of concepts and theories which build the basis of my research study: the learning of foreign languages in tandem and the pedagogical learner support for language learning. As my research study deals with a specific form of learner support, peer group mediation, in a specific language learning project: audio-visual distance tandem via the internet, teletandem; definitions, concepts and theories regarding these two subjects were important to be examined in the two chapters.

As I explained in the introduction of this work, I have dealt with different academic contexts, i.e. I am officially enrolled as a PhD student in Germany, but I carried out the study

in Brazil and also work as teacher for German as FL at a Brazilian university. As many of the European concepts of learner support, which started to emerge in the 1970s, are still not very much known and discussed in Brazil, I wanted to detail them a little bit more in this theoretical framework, being fully aware that some parts would become quite extensive. By presenting European concepts of learner support I do not mean to blindly incorporate those theories and concepts within the Brazilian educational context, but I do think they can potentially serve as a source of ideas and inspiration for educators and researchers like myself in Brazil to develop our own style of learner support in accordance with our educational reality and challenges.

In the chapter on learning foreign languages in tandem, I started by giving the definition of tandem learning and the three main principles: reciprocity, autonomy and the separation of languages. Then I continued with the historical account of the evolution of tandem learning which might cause some astonishment, because the historical development may explain the conceptualisation of tandem learning. Nevertheless, I opted for the other order because I wanted to show the smooth transition from face-to-face tandem settings, which started in the 1960s, to the newest versions of tandem learning using the internet and its resources such as videoconferencing tools for communication – teletandem. In the last parts of the chapter on tandem I also set out to describe a number of similar telecollaborative projects which use tandem learning and videoconferencing tools but do not denominate their telecollaboration as teletandem. We also saw that there is very little exchange and communication surrounding those projects. This is a pity because partnerships between universities and projects could be strengthened if forces would be joined.

In the chapter on learner support, I started with a discussion on several existing terms and approaches. This was done for three different languages: English, German and Portuguese. As telecollaborative projects inherently are highly international, the participants' routine is to deal with several languages and cultures. However, even being able to communicate with ease, we often overlook that different cultures produce different knowledge within their academic communities, i.e. we have different ideas of an apparent same concept. Learner support approaches in Germany, for example, are mainly based on the non-directive counselling approach of the psychologist Carl R. Rogers, whereas in Brazil the learner support within the teletandem project is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of mediation – both of which are very different theoretical conceptions.

As my study wants to shed light on the specific learner support format “peer group mediation”, I described several approaches and formats of learner support such as individual advising, pair advising, group mediation, distance and face-to-face advising settings along with

many other related aspects. This is important in order to situate my own learner support setting. At the end of the chapter, the focus is on learner support in teletandem. After analysing the different formats which exist within the *Teletandem Brasil* project, I attempted to outline a first conceptualisation of the four different learner support approaches I extracted from the literature on teletandem and learner support. As there is only little research on learner support in teletandem, this table may contribute to a more systematised future research on the different modalities of learner support in teletandem in order to better understand them and to concretise the conceptualisations behind the approaches.

In the next chapter, the methodology of my research study will be presented. After an introduction to the principles and evaluation criteria in qualitative research, the research context, participants and the research design will be described. Subsequently, I will elaborate on the data collection, its instruments and procedure as well as the procedure of data analysis.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, I will present the methodology and research design that guided this study. Firstly, I will briefly return to the main framework of the study and the research questions in order to situate the reader in the research context. Then, a number of principles and evaluation criteria for qualitative research are described. Afterwards, the research context and participants are explained, the different roles of the researcher discussed, the sequence of the project detailed and the data collection proceedings and instruments specified. Finally, the analysis process will be described.

The study presented here deals with peer group mediation sessions¹³⁶ which were in place as support for learners of German who were practising their foreign language in a German-Portuguese teletandem project. For this research project, I implemented peer group mediation (attended voluntarily by students) in addition to individual Portuguese-German teletandem sessions. In regular meetings the participants and I, as mediator, talked about aspects relating to teletandem, foreign language learning and learner autonomy which either the participants or I deemed important or necessary for reflection.

The research questions were as follows:

- ✓ Which impressions, beliefs, and questions regarding their language learning and learning in teletandem are expressed by learners in the peer group mediation sessions?
- ✓ What is the role of the mediator? How do they conduct and inform the peer group mediation sessions for teletandem?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of a peer group mediation setting?

As mentioned, I in the role of the mediator accompanied the learners of German during one semester of individual teletandem interactions with German learners of Portuguese. The mediation sessions took place biweekly and usually had a main subject that guided the peer reflection. The interaction between the peers and the mediator was audio-recorded (and transcribed) and served as the main source of data for this study. Additional data was collected from a learner biography which all participants completed at the beginning of the project; the learners were also asked to keep learner diaries about their learning of German in teletandem and a final questionnaire was filled out by the participants. The latter forms of data served as secondary data to add specific information relating to participants, for example, and to confirm or refute the findings of the main data.

¹³⁶ For a description of peer group mediation and other types of learner support in teletandem, see section 2.9.4

In the following sections, a more detailed explanation is given about the different aspects of the research design starting with principles and evaluation criteria for qualitative research projects.

3.1 Principles and evaluation criteria in qualitative research

This research was conducted as a qualitative study with an ethnographic approach. The object of the study has been observed in a holistic way and inductive (bottom-up) methods were used to explore data, i.e. to gain hypothesis through the empiric data. Analysis was conducted in exploratory and interpretative manners.

Qualitative studies with ethnographic character focus on the research process from the researcher's stance. What is happening in any given moment is important, not only the final results. The researcher in the field looks for varied data such as situations, people, surroundings, affirmations and dialogues that are collected, organised, transcribed and described by the researcher. In this study, the focus of observation has been placed on, firstly, the learners of a foreign language (in this case German) in order to find out more about their comprehension of linguistic interaction and social context they are involved in while doing teletandem and, secondly, on the mediator in order to learn more about her different roles and actions in the mediation process. The study's inductive/abductive character is expressed by the description and construction of a figure that gains form while the researcher is collecting and analysing additional data. Therefore, this study will not prove or disprove hypotheses which were postulated in advance, but it seeks to reconstruct the situations under observation and discover new concepts, relations and/or new forms of comprehension of reality by intertwining the differently gathered data.

This study draws on quality criteria formulated by Steinke (2009). In general, the three frequently cited terms of *objectivity*, *reliability* and *validity* are used especially for quantitative and/or analytical studies. The variables of a study must be reliable and thus, when a study is repeated, must show the same results under same circumstances if the experiment is to be considered 'objective'. In the case of exploratory studies, this is much more difficult because for research on the development of language competence in the classroom, for instance, we would not wish to see the same result with the same group. Moreover, people and their behaviour differ so much from one another that even reactions of the same experimentee may vary in two different data collection moments (Edmondson & House, 2006).

According to Steinke (2009), the aforementioned terms should not be used as criteria for qualitative research because they are defined in different ways and there are myriads of forms of objectivity, reliability and validity for standardised research that it is hard to transfer them to qualitative research (Steinke, 2009, p. 323). Steinke proposes basic criteria for qualitative research which should serve as a list of criteria where a researcher chooses criteria and evaluation methods depending on his specific study while the possibility to modify and/or complement the chosen set of criteria continues to be available. One of the basic criteria is “*intersubjective replicability*” (Steinke, 2009, p. 324). As already mentioned, in qualitative research we cannot claim intersubjective verifiability as we could in quantitative research. Due to the limited standardisation of qualitative studies, identical repetitions are nearly infeasible. However, watching out for replicability at least others will be able to evaluate the results. That is why I will be transparent about the entire research process and describe the preparation, realisation and post-processing of data collection in detail. During the research process, researcher journals were maintained and reports were created on a regular basis; both document what happened before, during and after fieldwork. I will also present the methods used for both data collection and analysis and provide information about the participants and context of the study.

A second criterion noted by Steinke (2009, p. 326) is the *indication of the research process*, which refers to the description of the criteria used for research, the method selection or transcription rules, for instance. This part of the dissertation, the methodology, is particularly dedicated to the description of the whole research process, i.e. from planning to finishing the writing of this work.

Empirical anchoring (Steinke, 2009, p. 328) is another important criterion for qualitative research. Conceiving hypotheses and assessing hypotheses or theories should be done empirically, i.e. anchored in the data. Theories should be constructed in a way that allows new discoveries to be made. The same applies to theoretical presuppositions of researchers – it should always be possible to question and modify them, if necessary. Thus, theories should be developed on the basis of the data (for example in close relation to the subjective perspectives and actions of the research participants) and systematic data analysis (Steinke, 2009, p. 328). When choosing such an approach, it is advisable to use codifying methods such as Objective Hermeneutics (Reichert, 2009) or Grounded Theory (Böhm, 2009). These methods guarantee empirical anchoring.

Another criterion is the *relevance of the theory or study* (Steinke, 2009, p. 330). Theories should be assessed in relation to their pragmatic impact. The following questions help to frame

this criterion: Are the research questions relevant? What does the developed theory contribute to the respective field of study? Does the theory allow for new interpretations? Does the theory explicate anything in relation to the researched phenomenon? Does the theory contribute to problem-solving? Are the results generalisable?

In relation to my own study, the question of the relevance of the research questions can be answered positively. As I mentioned above, very little research has been carried out on learner support in peer groups. The broad research questions allow initial access into the field of peer group learner support in order to get an overview of this type of learner support and to discover new and more precise research directions within this field. The other questions will be answered in the final notes of this dissertation. Firstly, we will need to review the data analysis and interpretation in order to evaluate whether the created hypotheses will actually contain further explications on the researched phenomenon (which is expected, of course).

The criterion *reflected subjectivity* (Steinke, 2009, p. 330f) involves questions about the role of the researcher as subject and part of the social world he/she studies. To what extent is the researcher included in the reflection process of the study? In this sense, several aspects should be evaluated as the following questions will explain: Is the research process subject to self-reflection? Are personal qualifications taken into consideration for the research? Does the researcher present adequate methodical procedures? Is the researcher-participant relationship marked by trust as a precondition for data collection? Is there any reflection when the research field is entered? In section 3.2, a brief discussion on the role of the researcher is provided which answers most of the above-mentioned questions in relation to reflected subjectivity.

To be able to evaluate a research study adequately the application of only one or two of the proposed criteria is not sufficient. On the basis of several criteria it should be decidable whether the ‘best possible’ result was achieved. (Steinke, 2009, p. 331¹³⁷)

Other important principles for exploratory and interpretative studies are openness, flexibility, communicativity and reflexivity. Caspari, Helbig and Schmelter (2003) summarise these principles as follows: Openness means that the researcher is conscious about his prior knowledge, assumptions and attitudes, and that he/she is willing to verify and maybe revise them throughout the research process. This applies to the object of study, the chosen research design and instruments as well as to the participants. Flexibility depends on the openness because it may be necessary to change research questions or design during the study. Communicativity means that the participants of the study are given the opportunity to express

¹³⁷ Original: “Für die Bewertung einer Studie ist die Anwendung von nur einem oder zwei der vorgeschlagenen Kriterien nicht ausreichend. Auf der Grundlage mehrerer Kriterien sollte entscheidbar sein, ob das <bestmögliche> Ergebnis erzielt wurde.“

their opinions and that those are understood adequately. With this, all points of view will be integrated into the study. Reflexivity refers to the researcher and that he/she understands himself in his subjectivity as part of the research process and openly expresses it (Caspari, Helbig, & Schmelter, 2003).

With the basis being on the principles of qualitative research described above, I will now illustrate the preparation, realisation and data analysis of the study. Therefore, I will describe the context and the participants of the study, the role of myself as researcher and participant and the instruments used for data collection. Furthermore, I will describe the process of data collection, organisation and analysis.

3.2 The different roles of the researcher

As Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 44) affirm, we may occupy various positions in our study. Sometimes we are included as insiders to our own study while simultaneously we may be identified as outsiders. But in making explicit this special situation we are finding ourselves involved, we are given the opportunity of “crafting uniquely complex understandings of the research questions” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 44). In the study presented here, I experienced this conflict of roles as well. On the one hand, I assume the role of the researcher that designed this study, prepared and conducted field work and later analysed the collected data. On the other hand, I played an active part as participant in the study because it was myself guiding the mediation sessions and helping the students to develop in their language learning process in teletandem. One of my research questions is precisely about the role of the mediator in this learning context, hence, I had to analyse myself, i.e. my actions, reactions and reflections.

Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 32) introduce a table that shows the continuum and implications of positionality in action research starting with the position of the insider within a study moving on to outsiders who study insiders. However, they emphasise the fact that while it is important to define the researcher’s position in the setting, it is often a very difficult task to do so. There may be outsiders to a study who have great knowledge about the setting, while others may only have little knowledge and the same applies to insiders: “[...] insiders to a setting do not have direct access to the “truth” of the setting. There is merely one truth among many” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 32).

Considering my setting and my roles, I believe that one of my roles can be described as *insider* to the setting. “[...] Insiders, either alone or in collaboration with other insiders, are researching their own practice and/or practice setting” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 32). As one

of my research questions is about the role of the mediator in the language learning context teletandem, I am directly researching my own practice as mediator. An important action in relation to the role of the insider/mediator is to constantly reflect on one's practice and to be willing to learn and possibly change behaviour; this is in reference to Schön's (1987) notion of the *reflective practitioner*, who learns to learn about his/her practice and, therefore, becomes a better practitioner. In this case, it is advisable to ask a "critical friend" to double check the analysis outcomes in order to critically examine bias and subjectivity and also to help problematise the taken for granted aspects of the given setting. Critical friends can help the researcher reflect on his/her practice from another point of view and validate his/her research claims (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 60).

Another role which I assume to have in my study is the role of the *outsider within* (Collins, 1990). Collins suggests that "one's location in an organization or community makes for varying vantage points and differing lenses of 'reality'" (Collins, 1990, p. 11 in Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 44). In my case, I am a certain outsider within the setting because I have a different role in relation to the other participants. All participants except me are Brazilian students of the German language with the same learning context, same age and similar background. I actively participate in the setting, I have had many experiences in teletandem language learning and constantly interact with the other participants, but, nevertheless, I grew up within a different cultural background (Germany), went through a different educational system (also in Germany), I have the role of the mediator, i.e. I am on a somewhat higher hierarchical level, and I am also a native speaker of German, i.e. I am something like a linguistic reference for the other student participants.

As good relationships had developed between my participants and myself, as a mediator I was worried as I wanted them to express themselves as freely as possible about their reflection on teletandem experiences and learning processes. During our meetings, I made an effort to be on a peer level with the other participants by sharing my own experiences in teletandem, my own challenges, hopes and difficulties. At the time, I was about five to seven years older than the other participants and I was not their German teacher; I was 'just' a PhD student from a German university undertaking field work at the setting. I think that I reached my goal of building trust with my participants because they did, in fact, express very personal opinions about their learning in teletandem and also about their learning experiences in the German classes at university which they were quite critical about. I assume that they would not have voiced criticism in the dimension they did if I had been their teacher or associated with them.

Another aspect I would like to mention at this point is the use of different languages throughout the research project. My native language is German, my first ‘academic’ language is German as well, as I completed my undergraduate and graduate studies at a German university. English was my first foreign language which I learned from age 10 onwards and also studied at university. Portuguese is my fourth foreign language (after French and Spanish), which I first started to learn at age 16 during a school exchange in Brazil. Nevertheless, I consider Portuguese my strongest foreign language today as I selected it as my major in university and also have lived in Brazil for many years. I bring this ‘language question’ up for discussion because even having a certain ‘fluency’ in English and Portuguese, I experienced moments during the research period in which I struggled because of this ‘language mix’. I had mainly used German literature on the advising topic for preparing my research stay. Data collection and conduction of the study was mainly done in Portuguese and this dissertation has been composed in English. Therefore, translation was a crucial activity in this research project: not only the mere translation of some excerpts from Portuguese to English but also translations of thoughts, concepts and cultures. It remains to be seen in how far I succeeded with the task of separating and joining the cultures, but I am mindful of the situation and gave my best.

In summary, it can be stated that I am aware of my multiple positionality in this study and that I made a conscious effort to exclude subjectivity and bias as much as I could by constant auto-monitoring through reflections on my actions, my field journals and my researcher’s diary and also by asking critical friends to double-check the analysis outcomes. I am also conscious about my previous experiences in tandem learning and my personal studies in the area of autonomous language learning and advising in language learning (in discussion groups at university, colloquium and through academic literature for the research) that may interfere with my perception on the outcomes of this study.

3.3 Research context and participants

I observed a German-Portuguese teletandem programme for one semester (approximately 12 weeks), which included learner support in the form of peer group mediation sessions delivered at two large state universities—one in Brazil and the other one in Germany. Fifteen students learning German in a teacher education programme in Brazil were paired with fifteen students who were learning Portuguese as part of a four- week intensive language course at a university in Germany. The participants were at a beginner’s level of German and Portuguese, respectively, and undertook between one and ten teletandem sessions throughout the semester.

However, the main focus of the study was on the six mediation sessions in peer groups in which the researcher took on the role of the mediator.

Although the teletandem project participants were from two state universities in Germany and Brazil, respectively, the field work for this study was primarily conducted at the Brazilian university, with the main focus on the Brazilian participants. The next sections describe the university in which the study took place and the Brazilian and German students who participated in the study.

3.3.1 Research context

The Brazilian university is the *Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP)*, Faculty of Science and Languages, Campus of Assis. UNESP is one of three state universities in the state of São Paulo and one of its peculiarities is that its campuses are distributed over 24 cities throughout the state of São Paulo. The city of Assis is located approximately 450 km west of the capital São Paulo and the Assis campus houses the Faculty of Sciences and Languages which encompasses departments for five courses: Biological Sciences, Biotechnological Engineering, Psychology, History and Language Teacher Education.

The study was conducted in the Language and Teacher Development Centre¹³⁸ (CLDP) with an integrated Teletandem Computer Laboratory at the aforementioned campus. The CLDP is a facility created by the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of Education in order to offer language courses to the academic and external community and to promote teacher training for students of the language courses as the same students are conducting the language courses at CLDP under the supervision of a university teacher. The *Teletandem Brasil* project as described above in section 1.3.2 is carried out in the facilities of CLDP.

The CLDP staff are undergraduate students working as assistants in the centre and carrying out administrative and supervisory tasks. Divided into three shifts per day, the staff ensure that the teletandem computer lab is running smoothly, provide information, offer advice about the language courses and teletandem activities and handle the language course enrolments. For this study, they helped set up the lab for the video conferences and teletandem sessions, whilst also supporting the mediation sessions by recording the peer group discussions, for example.

¹³⁸ Centro de Línguas e Desenvolvimento de Professores

3.3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were: (a) the researcher and learning mediator and (b) the Brazilian and German students. The researcher assumed different roles throughout the study: on the one hand, she was the insider of the action research as she had the role of the mediator and was participating actively in the project. On the other hand, she was an outsider of the action research because of the different role in relation to the students (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Firstly, I will provide more information about myself as mediator and researcher of this study. Then I will present the Brazilian and German students who were participating in my research.

a) The learning mediator, the researcher and I

In 2010, I started the field work at UNESP Assis. Two years before, I had graduated from the course Translation, Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies from the *Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz*, Germany, where I had studied Portuguese, English and Spanish as foreign languages. At the time I started the field work, I had a three years of experience as a translator of Portuguese and German. I also had experience as a teacher of Portuguese and German as a foreign language, mainly in the context of higher education. Though I had had no experience as language learning advisor/mediator, I did have two years of experience learning a foreign language in teletandem with Brazilian partners (and more than 15 years in foreign language learning, in general). In addition, I had exchanged lots of information and experience with one of my German classmates who was also enrolled in the teletandem project. The literature on tandem learning and advising/mediation for tandem¹³⁹ (but also for other contexts, particularly in self-access centres) served as the basis for outlining the practical part of the project and my theoretical foundation.

Owing to teletandem experience of two years, not only as learner, but particularly as project assistant of the teletandem coordinator at the German university, I knew that many teletandem partnerships did not develop very well. One reason for this might have been the little support learners received by teachers, advisors or organisers on both sides. The German teletandem coordinator shared a similar opinion and expressed it in the first report of the *Teletandem Brasil* project from April 2008 as follows:

The lack of regular and language specific supervision: for the Brazilian TT-project manager it is difficult to supervise all students from 7 different language departments at UNESP Assis. For the TT-project, a tight supervision of the students is necessary, as a lot of questions arise during the TT, not only regarding the learning process, but also linguistic (and intercultural) aspects of the foreign language and culture (Augustin, in Telles, 2008: 161).

¹³⁹ (Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; Mehlhorn & Kleppin, 2006; Schmelter, 2004; Telles, 2009; et al.)

On the one hand, I believed that a stronger support for learners would help to resolve communicational or intercultural issues between the partners before it would lead to a premature end of the tandem partnership. On the other hand, stronger support of learners could promote learner autonomy. This, in turn, could also help to increase the stability of the partnerships because the learners would know how to make better use of the learning context for their personal learning purposes. This is how the idea of the study emerged. When I was working as a visiting German teacher at another Brazilian university, I already started to plan my research with the focus on Brazilian German learners within the *Teletandem Brasil* project at UNESP Assis.

b) The Brazilian and German students

The 15 Brazilian students were all undergraduates at UNESP Assis, between the ages of 20 to 25, training for careers as German and Portuguese teachers. However, as they were in different semesters of their course, their German language level was differing. Their linguistic competences ranged from A1 to B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Thus, the Brazilian participants had already worked with both languages – Portuguese and German – and in different fields of study: linguistics, didactics, culture and literature. Only one Brazilian student had already visited the target culture – Germany – once. An important fact is that the Brazilian students participated voluntarily in the study and did not receive any credits or grades for their commitment. In some cases, the teachers of the German course accepted the participation in the German-Portuguese teletandem activities as part of the obligatory subject “German Language in the Language Laboratory¹⁴⁰”.

The 15 German participants consisted of 14 undergraduate students between the ages of 25 to 30 from *Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz* and one 18-year old girl who had just finished her A-Levels. The undergraduate students were enrolled in translation studies, each with a different language as their primary subject¹⁴¹ of which only one of them was enrolled in Portuguese as a main subject of study. All of them participated in a four- week Portuguese intensive beginners course (based on the Natural Approach) which took place during university summer break, with 14 students having only limited knowledge of Portuguese as L2 and the student of Portuguese possessing intermediate knowledge. Nevertheless, the other participants

¹⁴⁰ The German language course in the teacher training program consists of a traditional language course with a teacher and didactic materials, a lab supplement where the students have to work on the four different abilities on their own and classes on German literature.

¹⁴¹ Enrolling in the translation course at the Faculty for Translation, Linguistics and Cultural Studies of Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz-Germersheim, the students have to choose at least two foreign languages they want to study.

all had competencies in at least two other foreign languages and, therefore, can be considered as being familiar with language acquisition/learning. Only one German participant had already visited Brazil. The German students, too, participated voluntarily in the teletandem project and were asked to carry out their teletandem sessions after their daily five-hour workload of the intensive course. However, they were only involved in the teletandem sessions and did not participate in mediation sessions.

The teletandem pairs were conducting their sessions freely, i.e. the teletandem project was not institutionally-integrated (see section 1.3.1) and amount, duration and contents of the teletandem sessions were negotiated individually between the pairs. Throughout the project period, one to ten teletandem sessions were realised depending on the pairs' availability.

Germany <i>Faculty for Translation, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz</i>	Brazil <i>Universidade Estadual Paulista, Faculty of Sciences and Languages, Campus Assis (UNESP)</i>
15 learners of Portuguese	15 learners of German
Age: 18-30	Age: 20-25
Course: Translation (14), A-level completed (1)	Course: Teacher training in Languages: Portuguese and German (15)
Language level: no – little knowledge (\leq A1)	Language level : little knowledge – intermediate (A1 – B1)
Visited target culture: 14 no, 1 yes	Visited target culture: 14 no, 1 yes

Table 8. The profiles of the participants of the study

Both groups of participants, by their own accounts, were already used to using and working with email programs, the internet and synchronous communication applications such as Skype or MSN Messenger, which they would use when communicating with family and friends. Therefore, it was not necessary to give an introduction to the use of those applications. Nevertheless, all participants were regularly encouraged to ask for support and help any time.

Further, the participants of this research project (Brazilians and Germans) consented to contribute voluntarily to this study. For ethical reasons, their identity is protected and all participants received fictitious names. The Brazilian students were asked to sign a *Termo de consentimento*¹⁴² (Consent Form) which explained the use of the data of the teletandem project and stated that they could withdraw from the study any time.

¹⁴² See appendix A

3.4 Organisation and stages of the project

The teletandem sessions which make up the basis of the research project within the framework of my PhD studies were planned for a period of one or two semesters. One semester was the minimum period and the outcomes of the first semester's activities would determine the continuation of the project in the following second semester. The project implementation and data collection would take place at the aforementioned Brazilian UNESP in the state of São Paulo from the end of August 2010 onwards (which is the start of the second academic semester at Brazilian universities), but the preparation began months earlier in Germany. Learner support materials were collected¹⁴³ and then adapted to my research context, the structure of the advising session was planned, the teletandem project with the German coordinators was organised and contact with UNESP Assis was established.

Knowing the CLDP and its staff from earlier visits at UNESP Assis, I asked them to advertise my research project on the bulletin board of the CLDP and to distribute flyers about it along with a note to students stating that I was looking for participants for a study that would be carried out in June 2010. I also contacted the local German teachers and asked them to share my project with their students and to get in contact with me by email if they were interested. Five students had responded before I started with the fieldwork at the Assis campus. The other ten students joined the project after I had talked about my study in person in the German classrooms. In the case of the German participants, I already knew the organiser and the teachers of the Portuguese course at the German university as I had already worked with them in earlier Portuguese intensive courses. Therefore, I was able to negotiate their participation in my study several months in advance of the fieldwork.

First stage	May – August 2010	Project preparation by the researcher and the Portuguese teachers
Second stage	September 2010	Portuguese intensive course, first virtual contact between the participants, three group video conferences, and first mediation session in Brazil
Third stage	September – December 2010	Individual teletandem sessions and in Brazil: mediation sessions, one group video conference

Table 9. The different stages of the study.

¹⁴³ After some German projects on learner support were carried out, their materials and research outcomes were published online (Learner biography by Steffen Skowronek, Universität Potsdam; learner protocol by Karin Kleppin, Helmut Brammerts and Dawn D'Atri, 2002, documents for advising by Langner, 2006). The materials already used and tested by other researchers and advisors built a foundation for creating similar but context-adapted materials for my own project.

After arriving in Assis/Brazil at the end of August, I immediately contacted the CLDP, the teletandem lab and the participants of my study who had already enrolled in the teletandem sessions. In order to get more acquainted with the procedures of the teletandem lab, I was in charge of a shift as assistant staff in the CLDP. Certainly, this brought me insider's knowledge about teletandem projects (English-Portuguese) or administrative matters of the centre.

A first informational meeting for interested German students took place on August 25; 15 had been invited but only 5 students showed up. During that week I was still able to visit different German classrooms for promoting my project. Finally, by September 1st I had gathered 15 interested students for a second orientation meeting. In this meeting, a CLDP staff member prepared an introduction on learning a foreign language in teletandem¹⁴⁴ and I added more details on the German-Portuguese teletandem project and my research interests about it. As all 15 students were willing to participate voluntarily, we also started to prepare the future interactions with the German group.

In order to build rapport and motivation within the group, I had suggested to my German colleagues to organise a few group videoconferencing sessions throughout the period of the Portuguese intensive course (the month of September). A group videoconference would be a virtual meeting with both groups in front of one camera on each side respectively at the same time. From former classmates who had been conducting smaller research projects within the teletandem framework at UNESP Assis, I knew that the biggest challenge would not be to find a group of interested participants but to keep them interested, invested and participating throughout the whole fieldwork period. Therefore, I organised additional activities that promised to be motivating. However, these data would not necessarily be used in my Ph.D research¹⁴⁵.

Then, after explaining the main aspects of the project and asking the participants to write their learner biographies, my German colleagues and I also organised the first group videoconference, which was scheduled for a week later. We took a group photo to present both groups to each other and the participating students wrote short texts to introduce themselves – everything e-mailed to the partner group.

In September, three group videoconferences were conducted during which the participants told each other what they were currently learning in the respective foreign language (German or Portuguese) by presenting songs to each other or tongue twisters, for example. By the middle

¹⁴⁴ The so-called *sessão de orientação* (see section 2.9.4).

¹⁴⁵ The data collected with the group videoconferencing were analysed and described in an article on group videoconferencing as a motivating factor for Portuguese as foreign language classes (Elstermann, 2012).

of the month, I was able to match all participants and had 14 teletandem pairs set up. Most of the pairs started their individual teletandem sessions and I held the first peer group mediation session on September 22.

During the month of October, the teletandem sessions continued and two peer group mediation sessions were carried out in a two-week rhythm.

In November, there were three more peer group mediation sessions as well as individual teletandem sessions and on November 29, another group videoconference took place with a Christmas special to wrap up the first fieldwork period before parting for the summer holidays in Brazil.

In December, I interviewed two students and started to transcribe and organise the collected data. As my study records stop at Christmas time, I have no data about pairs who continued with the teletandem project beyond that period, but from personal communication I know that some pairs carried on with a type of e-tandem over the holidays and were willing to continue teletandem sessions in the following year.

Months	Group videoconference	Teletandem sessions ¹⁴⁶	Advising sessions	Final interviews
September	3	X	1	
October		X	2	
November	1	X	3	
December				2

Table 10. Number of project activities during the project period.

For the following semester, which in Brazil starts in March after Carnival, the idea was to continue the group mediation sessions but this time, the activity was offered to all teletandem participants, i.e. from all language projects. Two of my most engaged participants, Lena and Leandra, would assume the roles of the mediators together with me and we would plan the implementation of those mediation sessions together based on their experiences with teletandem and the peer group mediation from the previous semester. Unfortunately, due to job changes, I had to go back to Germany at the beginning of the second semester, in April, and therefore could not continue with the plans for the continuity of the project and the two students did not want to carry it out on their own.

¹⁴⁶ X means that teletandem sessions were held but the total number of teletandem sessions per month is unknown.

3.5 Data collection: Instruments and procedure

The data for this study were collected predominantly through qualitative case study methods which included observation, audio-recorded peer group mediation sessions, interviews, evaluation questionnaires, field notes, learner diaries and learner biographies, which will be analysed later using strategies and techniques from the Grounded Theory.

The data were collected between August and December 2010 at the Teletandem lab of CLDP at UNESP Assis and can be divided into several parts. Several months before the field work started at UNESP Assis, the preparation phase began in which contacts with colleagues at UNESP Assis were strengthened, materials for the mediation sessions prepared and the teletandem exchange with the Portuguese teachers at the German university was organised. This preparation phase concluded late August/early September when I was already at UNESP Assis looking for project participants, working with the staff at the Teletandem lab and preparing the first information meetings for the participants.

The main phase ran for four months – from September to December, inclusive. During this phase, the following took place: individual teletandem sessions, group videoconferencing, six mediation sessions every two weeks, the application of final questionnaires and interviews. The procedure of the peer group mediation sessions was as follows:

In the first mediation session, the mediator prepared three open questions regarding the initial experiences of the participants when contacting their teletandem partners. She also prepared questions about the first teletandem session which some of them had already completed. After presenting the three questions to the participants by projecting them on the whiteboard of the conference room, the mediator divided the group into two smaller groups so that they could exchange their experiences more effectively. A smaller number of students in each group would promote more individual interaction between the participants. During the second stage of the session, the two small groups assembled in one large group and quickly updated each other with what had been discussed, so that all participants would have the same level of knowledge.

The second advising session with the topic *Planning a Teletandem Session*, was only by a small number of participants (three). Because of this, small group work was not possible, and instead, the mediator had to improvise and started discussion on the topic with only one group of three participants. By the end of the mediation sessions, the participants were given

homework and were asked to observe their preparation for teletandem. Later, the participants were to evaluate how the preparation had helped completion of the teletandem session.

The third mediation session started with the mediator talking about her research interest. This was something she had not done before and as a result, mixed up two aspects of the project: the mediation as pedagogical support to the learners of German in teletandem, and her personal research interests in the group mediation sessions. She also talked about the learner diaries and asked the students to participate more frequently in both activities. The following topic, *Correction in Teletandem Sessions*, commenced with four reflective questions. The participants were asked to think about the four questions on their own for about 10 minutes. They could notes on this, and in the second stage of the session, their personal reflection was discussed with the whole group, still guided by the topics from the four main questions.

The fourth mediation session was marked by an important topic which had already appeared in all other mediation sessions and was therefore explicitly brought up again by the mediator: *Defining Learning Objectives*. Similar in structure to that of the third mediation session, the mediator had prepared several questions to promote, firstly, an individual reflection, before asking the whole group to discuss their experiences and impressions. As can be seen in the transcripts, the planned individual reflection did not take place as such because one of the students had already initiated a general discussion within the first few minutes. This happened because they wanted to know what a learning goal actually was, and therefore, started the group discussion directly.

The fifth mediation session was about *Giving Feedback in Teletandem*. The mediator had chosen a short video recording of one of her own teletandem sessions with her Brazilian teletandem partner from a few years back. The part of the video shown was the feedback phase of the teletandem session and, without any comments provided about the video beforehand, the students were asked to watch the video and share their impressions. Questions such as Which part of a teletandem session is this? What are the two learners doing? How do we feel about this? Where can we see connections to our own teletandems?, etc. guided this session.

The last mediation session took place with just two participants and was very informal. The main interest of the mediator was a to obtain final evaluation of the teletandem project and the mediation sessions. General questions were asked with regard to both aspects but the participants were also asked to talk freely about a topic of their choice.

The third phase of data collection can be referred to as the evaluation phase in which I organised the collected data, transcribed all audio recordings and analysed the data.

The following figure gives an overview of the different instruments used for data collection and shows that the data gained through the recorded and transcribed peer group mediation sessions served as primary data, whereas the learner biographies, learner diaries, final interviews, evaluation questionnaires and the researcher's field notes were used to complement and triangulate the primary data.

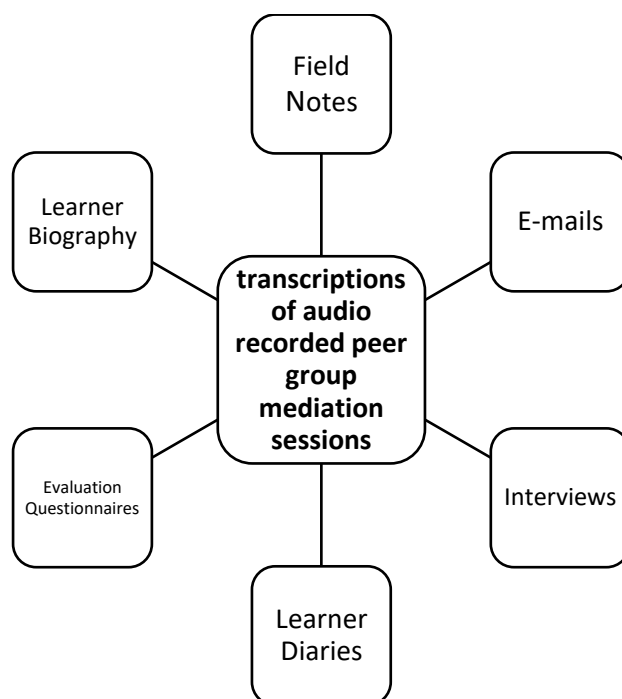


Figure 4. Overview of the data collection instruments

In the following sections, I will describe the data collection instruments in greater detail along with their purpose and how they were used to collect the data.

3.5.1 Learner biography

The learner biography¹⁴⁷ was used to collect data about the Brazilian participants' language learning experiences, their present language learning visions and their future language learning objectives. This information was necessary for setting up a detailed data base about the participants and, later on, to be able to identify relations between the learners' language experiences and the collected data from the mediation sessions. The questions in the learner

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix B

biography were based on existing documents from the Language Centre¹⁴⁸ at *Universität Potsdam*, elaborated by Steffen Skowronek.

The learner biography was handed out as a hard copy to students interested in participating in the study at the beginning of September and collected by the researcher a few days later. Students who joined the study at a later date completed the form digitally and emailed it to the researcher. The researcher received 12 completed forms as not all participating learners returned their biographies.

The learner biography was divided into three main parts. The first part asked for general data about the participant such as name, email address, native language and foreign languages studied so far as well as the main reasons for intensifying the studies of German language in teletandem. In the second part of the biography, the participants were asked to provide a brief account of their foreign language learning experiences they had gained so far. The third part dealt with the learning objectives, offering a table with abilities in language learning and asking the participants to indicate how much (on a scale from 0 to 4) they intended to work on improving any of the abilities through teletandem. Lastly, the participants were also asked to do an auto-evaluation of their competences in German by using the table offered by the CEFR (see Appendix B). Learning more about the individual learning objectives of the participants was important for further study of the statements during the mediation sessions.

As all students initially interested were asked to complete the learner biography but some did not participate in the study in the end for various reasons and other students entered the study at a later stage, I have biographies of students that did not participate and actual participants that never handed in their biography.

3.5.2 Recorded mediation sessions

The recorded and later transcribed interactions in the mediation sessions build the main corpus of this study's data. As the research focus lies on the reflections expressed by the participant learners of German and their interaction with each other, the recording of the mediation sessions in peer groups was an important tool.

Six mediation sessions were conducted over the course of September, October and November – approximately every two weeks, usually on Wednesday afternoons. Each lasted at least 45 minutes and they were prepared by myself, the researcher and mediator, with a main subject to guide the reflexive discussion (see table 11 below). I prepared two or three questions

¹⁴⁸ Zentrum für Sprachen und Schlüsselkompetenzen, Universität Potsdam, <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/zessko/index.html> (02.10.2013)

in relation to the main subject that were presented to the participants and served as a stimulus for discussion.

The number of participants varied greatly, which was likely due to the voluntary participation in the project. The number of participants ranged from two to seven in the mediation sessions. This is a small number considering that 15 participants had initially registered for the project and the teletandem sessions, but this fact can probably also be attributed to the voluntary nature of the project: participation was not mandatory and some of the participants might have had other commitments scheduled in the afternoons (jobs, other courses, etc.) or did not see a necessity in participating in the mediation sessions.¹⁴⁹ The recording was no problem for the participants, after the first few minutes they had already forgotten that the recorder was running and talked uninhibitedly about their experiences in tandem learning.

Date	Main subject of mediation session	No. of participants
22/09	<i>No specific subject (initial phase of a teletandem partnership)</i>	5
06/10	<i>Planning a teletandem session</i>	3
20/10	<i>Correction in teletandem</i>	7
03/11	<i>Learning objectives</i>	4
10/11	<i>Feedback in teletandem</i>	4
17/11	<i>No specific subject (final evaluation)</i>	2

Table 11. Main subjects and number of participants in the peer group mediation sessions

All mediation sessions were recorded and transcribed by myself afterwards. For the transcriptions, I used the programme f4 which generates Microsoft Word files with the typical line numbering. I did not modify the statements of the mediator and the participants in order to improve the reading, but I reproduced the statements exactly the way they were uttered. Overlapping statements were not marked as they were not relevant for the purpose of the study. Parts of the conversation during mediation sessions which highly deviated from the original plan of the mediation session (such as personal affairs which had nothing to do with the project or language learning) I have marked as such during transcription and excluded them from the analysis. (Example: [They talk about the different schedules of academic semesters in Brazil

¹⁴⁹ A smaller number of participants in the peer group mediation sessions had an impact in such a way that there were fewer different opinions and perspectives than there could have been. On the other hand, the participating students had more time to express their opinions and reflections as the duration of the mediation sessions was not changed. With 15 participants in each mediation session, I would still have the same amount of recorded meeting time. This problem could actually be turned into another research project in which two groups with a different number of participants hold mediation sessions and it is evaluated in which way the general content in relation to individual participation and turn-taking differs from one group to another.

and Germany.]) During the transcription, I sometimes had to ask Portuguese native speakers for help because it turned out to be difficult to understand every conversation, especially when more than one person spoke at any given time. The total amount of transcribed hours is about six.

3.5.3 Learner diaries

In order to possibly acquire more individualised data about the learners' reflection about their learning processes, I proposed the use of learner diaries in the pre-phase information meetings. The learner diaries should encourage the participants to reflect on their learning of German in teletandem sessions. I was interested in the participants' learning objectives, how they planned to achieve them through tandem and how they would evaluate them. Furthermore, the diaries would show me how many times the participants would meet their partners, which is an interesting aspect for the comparison with other participants. My objectives were to possibly get some personal, individualised information about the participants learning experiences which they would not express in the peer group meetings. Another objective was that, from the mediator's perspective, I assumed that a learner diary would support the personal reflection on learning processes of the participants. In traditional learning contexts such as classroom learning with groups, reflection is usually not promoted a lot by teachers. This is why I presumed that my participants would not be acquainted very much with reflection on individual learning processes.

I suggested updating the learner diary after each teletandem session. I had prepared some reflection-stimulating questions in a Microsoft Word document and provided the document to all participants by email. I told them they could print the diaries and either complete them manually or digitally and submit them to me later. The learner diary could be written in their native tongue – Portuguese. One of the university German teachers even offered the students to accept their learning diaries as a record of the German Language Practice in Laboratory class.

However, this instrument was hardly used. Only three participants submitted three or more diaries. Most participants submitted at least one diary but kept their answers so brief that the data were not rich enough to work with. As Bell (2005) also states, learner diaries are usually seen as time-consuming and, therefore, are not happily carried out by learners. "If subjects are not fully in sympathy with the task, or have been press-ganged into filling in diary forms, they will probably not complete them thoroughly, if at all" (Bell, 2005, p. 102).

Assuming that many participants were only somewhat used to autonomous learning and reflection on the learning process or at least may have had difficulties in verbalising their learning process, I had chosen to give very detailed questions to stimulate the reflection and to

help overcome possible perceptions of obligation to write something in the diaries. Walker (2001, p. 75) addressed this problem in a similar manner and also gave more detailed questions (in addition to more general questions) in her learner diaries for those learners who were less experienced in expressing their reflection about their own learning.

I used the following questions in the learner diary¹⁵⁰:

Please describe your interaction with your teletandem partner and write about your learning in the teletandem session. Use the following questions as support:

1. What did I learn today? Was it funny, interesting and/or useful?
2. What did I really like about today's session?
3. What worked out fine and what didn't work out very well? Why?
4. What do I want to improve in the next session?
5. Am I satisfied with what I have done in the session today?
6. Am I satisfied with what my partner has done in the session today?
7. Did I understand everything? Did I ask to my partner any questions?
8. Did my partner correct me? What did he/she correct? Did I understand the corrections so that I will not make the same mistakes again?

After receiving the first diaries of some participants and analysing them quickly to get a first impression, I realised that the questions were too narrow because they did not stimulate the participants to write about their reflection but limited them in such way that it was easy and less work intense to answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Of course, such answers did not give me the kind of information I was seeking. Therefore, I had to adjust the questions and make them more open so that the answers could provide richer information.

Please describe your interaction with your teletandem partner and write about your learning in the teletandem session. The following questions may help you:

1. Tell me something about your teletandem session. What have your partner and you done today?
2. Write something about the things you really enjoyed in your teletandem session.
3. And what about any difficulties, problems or aspects you did not enjoy very much? Tell me something about it.
4. Think about the correction style you and your partner have adopted. How do these work for you?

¹⁵⁰ For the Portuguese originals see Appendix C.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Describe some of the goals you have for the next session/s.6. Is there anything else you would like to add? |
|---|

3.5.4 Final interview

I conducted final interviews with some of the participants because I wanted to know their verdict on the mediation sessions and the impact of the mediation sessions on their learning in teletandem. It had been the first peer group mediation session in this context and I was eager to learn about the participants' thoughts and comments on the project after having finished the study in that semester. As the semester was coming to a close, I was only able to talk to two of the participants. During the last weeks of a semester the students' schedules are usually filled with tests and exams and students are also looking forward to go back home to see their families, so by the end of the semester and this study, the majority of participants were already too busy with university activities or had already left for Christmas break. The two interviewees were two of the chosen single case study participants. The interviews were also audio-recorded and transcribed by myself afterwards; each lasted approximately 40 minutes. The transcription was made in the same way as I had done for the mediation sessions.

The interview was conducted in an open manner and was based on previously- established guidelines to structure the interview.

In spite of the fact that I could only conduct two interviews, the data contain interesting information about the general evaluation of the project and the personal development of the two participants. As such the interviews served for triangulating data of the mediation sessions.

3.5.5 Evaluation questionnaire

The final questionnaire was handed out to all participating students at the end of the semester (end of November) and, therefore, at end of the field work phase in order to get an evaluation about the study/project in general and, in particular, to find out more about the individual and subjective perception of participation in teletandem, attained learning goals and impressions about the mediation sessions in peer groups. The questionnaire was distributed to the students in paper format and they filled them out by hand. I received 14 completed evaluation questionnaires.

The final questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part asked questions to receive information about the participants' general teletandem activity such as how many times they

met with their partners and if they were satisfied with their teletandem partnership. The second part of the final questionnaire collected information about learning goals and the priority of focussing on these goals. The third part of the questionnaire asked about personal reflection experiences, use of the learner diary and participation in the mediation sessions.

Questions of the first part

- a) Were you able to contact your partner?
- b) How many teletandem sessions did you conduct during this semester?
- c) Do you plan to continue during the holidays and/or the next semester?
- d) Are you satisfied with your teletandem partnership?
- e) Describe your teletandem partnership a little bit.

Questions of the second part

- a) What were your learning goals for your learning in teletandem? How did you work to achieve those goals?
- b) Tell me what you know about learning strategies and in which way you use them in your learning in general and for teletandem in particular.

Questions of the third part

- a) Tell me about your experience with the “learner diary”.
- b) What was the influence of the advisor in relation to your work with the diary?
- c) Tell me about your experiences with the advising sessions that took place with the advisor every two weeks. Also, reflect on the relation between the advising sessions and your teletandem sessions with your partner.
- d) Talk about the role of the advisor in relation to your experiences in learning in teletandem.
- e) What are (or would be) the reasons for you to participate in advising sessions?

At the end of the semester, it was more difficult to gather all participants to complete the final questionnaire due to the large number of academic requirements at the time such as written and oral exams or essays. Due to organisational motives, I was not able to check the filled out questionnaires very quickly. It was not until several months later, that I could take a deeper look and after the first analysis I realised that, once again, my questions had not been formulated in a way that would generate informational answers. After double-checking this finding with my supervisors, I updated the questions (see box below), of course, and I could have asked the participants to fill it out again, but at the time, at least half of the participants were no longer students at UNESP Assis and too much time had elapsed. So, would they still remember their teletandem partnership and their learning processes? Assuming that I would only get less than half of the information I wanted because of the small number of participants and because of the length of time that had passed, I decided not to repeat the application of the final questionnaire. As I had collected data through various instruments, I was able to resort to data from the other

resources. However, I still used some interesting information of the final questionnaires but I am absolutely conscious about the fact that I cannot rely on this data source very much.¹⁵¹

3.5.6 Personal field notes

Since the preparation phase, I had had started taking field notes in a researcher's diary about nearly everything that happened throughout the field work phase at UNESP Assis. As one of my research focus is the role of the mediator in peer group mediation settings, my personal reflections on the mediation process were an important tool for analysis. Considering the special role as researcher and active participant in the study, it is important to examine my own reflection on the events in order to try to prevent bias. Field notes used in this dissertation were double-checked by colleagues that did not participate in any form in my study. The field notes and memos filled two 90 page A5 notebooks with an array of information: reflections of me as mediator and researcher regarding the field work; notes on theoretical thoughts after reading articles and books; records of dates and events; first analysis of data, records of conversations with colleagues and supervisors, etc. Some reflective entries were written shortly after listening to the recorded mediation sessions in order to reflect the mediator's actions and behaviours. The pages in the two notebooks are marked with different colours in order to divide the different information into research topics.

Instruments	Purpose	Data type
Learner biography	Collect general data about the participants language learning experiences and learning objectives	Written data (manually)
Audio records of the advising sessions in peer groups	Collect data about the reflection expressed by the participant learners and through their interaction with each other	Oral data
Learner diaries	Collect individual data about reflection on learning processes of the participants	Digital, written data (via PC)
Interviews with participants	Collect data about the opinion of participants in relation to the advising sessions and learning in teletandem	Oral data
Evaluation questionnaire	Collect information about the participants regarding their reflection on learning goals and advising sessions	Written data (manually)

¹⁵¹ For the Portuguese originals and the English translations of the evaluation questionnaire, see Annex D1 and D2.

Field notes	Collect data about the reflection of the researcher/advisor in relation to the project in general and in relation to advising sessions	Written data (manually)
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Table 12. Summary of the instruments of data collection.

3.6 Procedure of data analysis

Firstly, to get an overview of the basic information of my participants, I organised the data of the learner biographies and final questionnaires. For both document types, I created a new document in which I gathered the answers in form of tables (indicating the number of teletandem sessions, learning goals, etc.) and graphics which show some of the main figures of the study in a clear manner. The more detailed answers in text format to more open questions were also collected and grouped in relation to similarities and differences. The right side of the document has a wider margin to accommodate comments and memos.¹⁵²

In a second step, I turned to the main data resource: the transcripts of the audio records of the peer group mediation sessions. For the examination of these data, I used the methods of Grounded Theory. The central aim of the Grounded Theory is to generate or discover a theory starting from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is used for studies which seek to explore social relationships and the behaviour of groups in which little exploration has been done of the contextual factors that affect individuals' lives (Crooks, 2001). The research project presented here combines with a more constructivist Grounded Theory which arises from interaction between the researcher and participants and where the researcher's perspective is being integral part of the process (Charmaz, 2006). The general characteristics of the Grounded Theory are the creation of analytic codes and categories developed directly from the data and not by pre-existing conceptualisations. The researcher becomes theoretically sensitive by immersing himself in the data and trying to understand what the participants see as being significant and important. It is crucial to start the categorisation and analysis with as few predetermined ideas as possible. This does not mean, however, that the researcher must start with a *tabula rasa*. Dey (1999) called it an open mind and not an empty head; it is important how we use our prior knowledge and that encloses the literature review done before or simultaneously to data analysis. The creation of the codes (the so-called *in vivo codes* because the code names are directly derived from the language of the participants) happens by analysing line by line. After the coding, the researcher identifies basic social processes in the data and constructs abstract

¹⁵² For the presumed results of the learner's biographies and final questionnaires, see Annex E and Annex F, respectively.

categories. Writing analytical memos about the codes and categories is the stage between coding and writing. They should not be treated as complete, because they are just initial analytical thoughts which may be changed while thinking continues. In a final step, the researcher integrates the categories into a theoretical framework and composes the final analysis report. Some general questions such as *What is actually happening here? Under what conditions does this happen? What is this data a study of?*, etc. help guiding oneself through the process and compare data constantly.

Part I – The learner’s perspective

During the first reading of the 127 pages of the transcript, primarily focussing on the learners’ perspectives, I divided the text into larger sections and named them in relation to their main topic, for example: *German classes at university, teaching Portuguese, organisation of teletandem session*, amongst many others. During the second reading, I looked more closely and attempted to extract topics (in vivo codes) in each statement of the participants. During these two sifting rounds, I also wrote down ideas and interpretations on the data on the right margin which had been reserved for comments.

The next step was to identify categories for the different topics. Bringing together the topics which may be related to each other in some ways, I determined a first list of categories, but was still unsure about some category labelling. Some category labels such as “didactic proceedings” strongly overlapped with categories like “learning strategies” and “learning process”. So once again, I brought together all topics and discussed the rearrangement of the topics in categories together with a colleague and friend. Discussing the reorganisation of topics with another person, who was also a researcher in the area and language teacher, helped considerably as I had to elaborate on some of the topics which then became clearer to myself as well. Also, our different perspectives on language learning promoted a deeper discussion of the understanding of some of the categories which, in turn, helped us to better organise the topics. The final distribution, however, does not eliminate some double-markers. Also, a number of topics remain that may be attributed to more than one category.

The categories of the learners’ perspectives, a description of the categories along with an example as well as the abbreviation of the category (code) is detailed below:

Category	Description of Category	Example	Code
Evaluation	Evaluation of the Teletandem project and the offered peer group mediation sessions	<i>“My listening ability seems to have improved.”</i>	EVA

Technical/Administrational issues	Technical and administrational issues in relation to the Teletandem project and mediation sessions	<i>"The time difference changed this week, it's now 5 hours."</i>	TEC
Learner support	Learner support offered by the mediator through mediation sessions and learner diaries	<i>"I never read the guidelines for teletandem sessions."</i>	SUP
Partner Issues	Issues around the teletandem partner (interaction, relationship, problems)	<i>"It seems that my partner and I have known each other for a long time."</i>	PAR
Comparison to traditional classroom	Teletandem sessions in comparison to traditional learning contexts such as the classroom or home study	<i>"I use my teletandem for conversation because in the German class we only see grammar."</i>	CLASS
Linguistic Issues	Linguistic issues (grammar, phonetic, etc.) about the native and foreign language	<i>"My teletandem partner has a strong German accent while speaking Portuguese"</i>	LING
Strategies	Learning and communication strategies used for the teletandem sessions	<i>"How can I train pronunciation in the teletandem sessions?"</i>	STR
Learning Process	Conscious and unconscious learning processes and procedures	<i>"How can I learn more efficiently during the teletandem session?"</i>	LPR
Learning Objectives	Learning objectives in relation to the foreign language learning in teletandem	<i>"For which purpose should I set a learning goal?"</i>	OBJ
Feedback	Feedback phase in the teletandem session	<i>"We could give the feedback after the session by e-mail."</i>	FBA
Mistakes & Correction	Handling of mistakes and correction in teletandem sessions	<i>"I don't correct wrong prepositions as long as I understand what my partner means."</i>	MIC
Cultural Issues	Cultural issues that arise in the teletandem sessions or in the mediation sessions	<i>"Today we talked about a typical day of a Brazilian/German student."</i>	CUL
Resources & Materials	Resources and materials used for and in the teletandem sessions	<i>"I use Google images for explaining vocabulary."</i>	RES
Preparation of Teletandem	Issues around the preparation of teletandem sessions	<i>"I don't plan any topics for our teletandem sessions, they come up spontaneously."</i>	PREP
Affective Factors	Affective factors in relation to the learning in general, in teletandem, and to the teletandem partner	<i>"I am afraid of pausing too often while speaking German."</i>	AFF
Others/General	General issues on learning and teaching, and other issues that are difficult to categorise	<i>"The language learning process never ends."</i>	OTH

Table 13. Description of the categories.

After determining the categories, I wanted to know how many recurrences each category actually contained, i.e. how often the participants talked about topics related to a certain

category. Therefore, I created a table that included all identified topics and their respective chapter and line in the transcript; in some cases, I added an interpretive comment on the recurrence. After completion, I counted the recurrences related to the categories after which I was able to create charts which visualised the topics addressed in individual mediation sessions and in all mediation sessions (see example of mediation session 1 below).

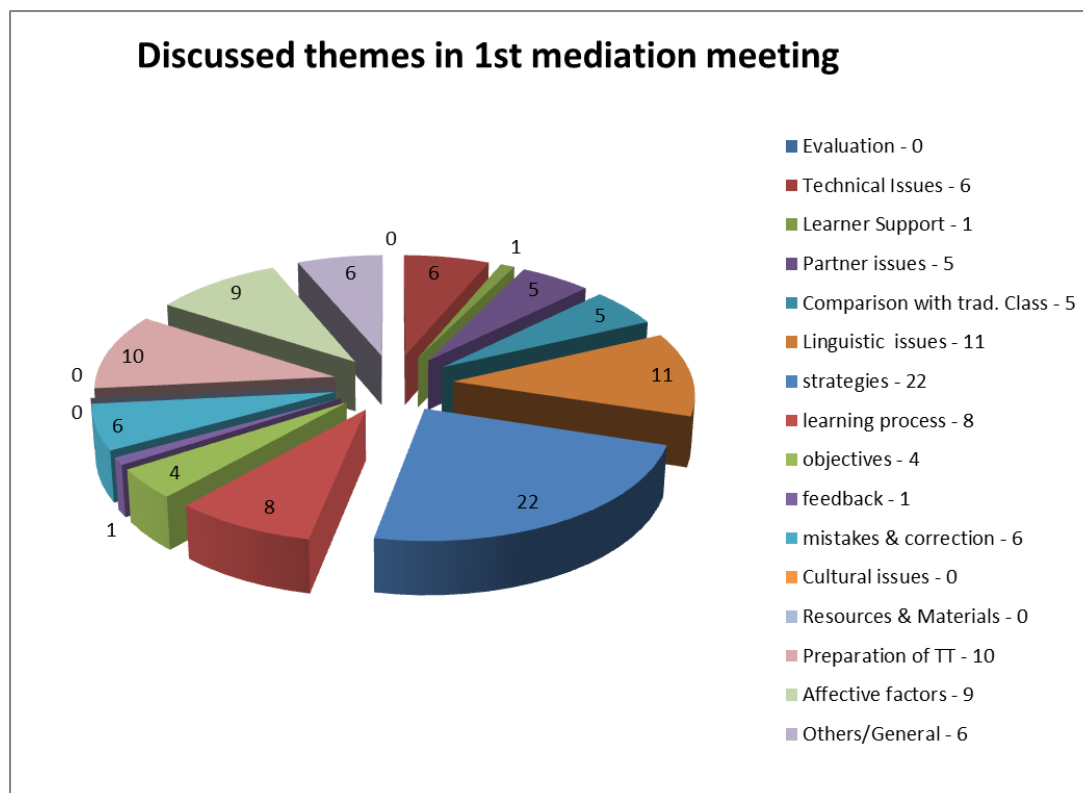


Figure 5. Chart showing addressed topics by participants during the first mediation session.

After this division of topics, categories and mediation sessions, I was wondering which topics were mentioned by the participants spontaneously and which were addressed as a response to a question the advisor had asked previously. So I began a third reading of the entire transcript during which I marked the topics with three different symbols: a red triangle (▲) to mark spontaneous statements, an encircled red bullet (●) to signify influenced statements and an encircled green x (x) to mark the mediator's suggestive statements. Having read the first few pages, I noticed that it was extremely difficult to assess which statement had actually been made spontaneously – for every statement can evoke and influence another statement. Even if a statement of learner A does not directly refer to the previous statement of learner B, something of B's statement might have influenced the thinking of A and how they expressed it afterwards. Likewise, even something that was said several minutes before could have influenced a

statement made by another participant. Therefore, I, decided to mark a topic as spontaneously uttered when I could not find any direct reference in the previous statements. After this procedure, I created six charts – one related to each mediation session – to show which topics were mentioned spontaneously and which were influenced by the mediator and the peers. The following diagrams show how I proceeded to separate the spontaneous and influenced statements. In a first step I organised the topics in a table but then, for better visualisation, elaborated a chart. The orange circles without connection to the main subject represent statements uttered spontaneously and the blue circles connected to the main subject in the centre of the graphic represent the influenced topics¹⁵³

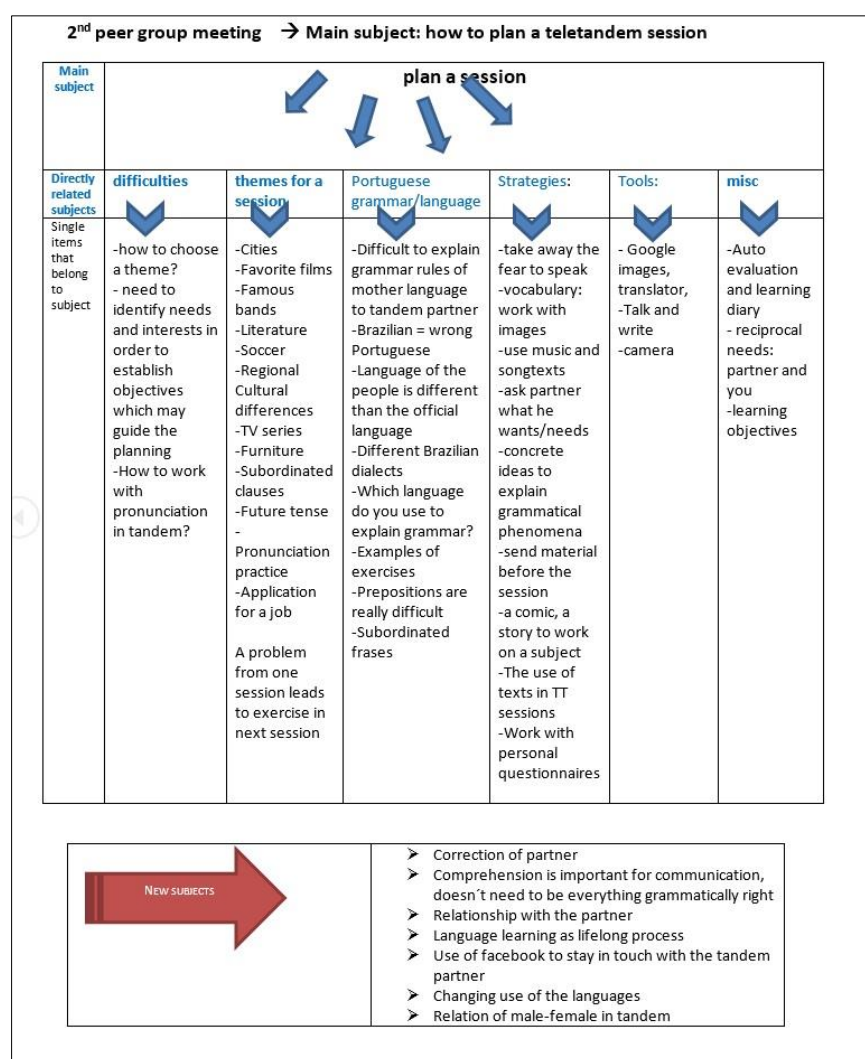


Table 14. Organisation of spontaneous and influenced statements during mediation session in table format

¹⁵³ For all other tables and charts, see Annex G.

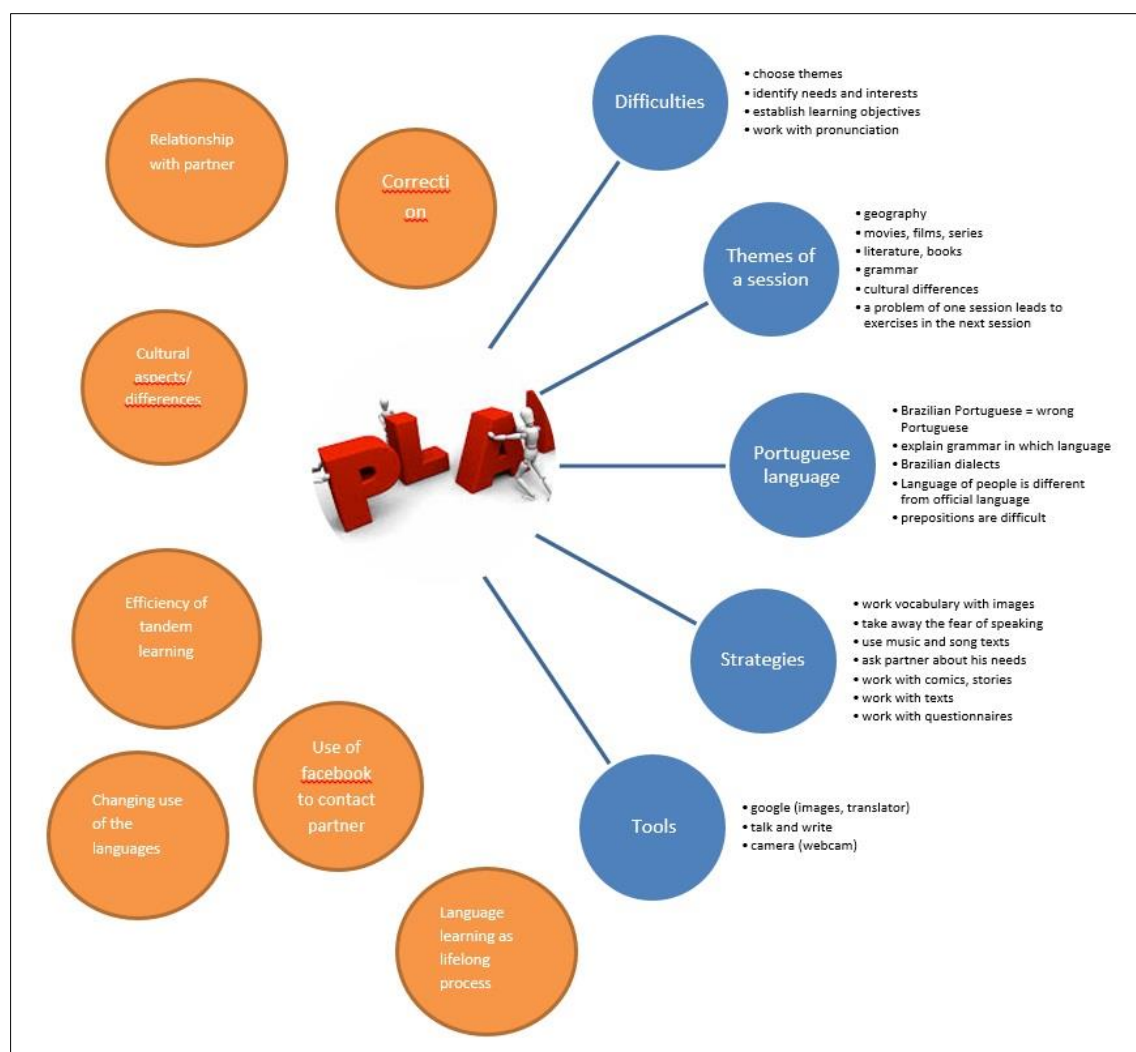


Figure 6. Organisation of spontaneously and influenced statements during mediation session in graphic format

After conversations with colleagues and more reflection on the problem of the spontaneous and influenced comments of the participants, I started wondering if a strict separation was really necessary. My understanding of education and learner development (and, in extension, for mediation in language learning, too) is grounded on socio-constructivism and critical pedagogy (Magalhães & Liberali, 2004; Vygotsky, 1962, amongst others) in which learner and teacher co-construct knowledge and meaning and new learning is produced by sharing the knowledge of both the learner and the teacher. If the teacher, as a specialist in learning foreign languages and learning in tandem, helps the learner to get the needed input to construct more knowledge, the learners' experiences and beliefs will influence back on to the teachers' experiences and beliefs. Education, and also advising/mediation, becomes a process of collective/collaborative and continuous education.

Based on this reflection, I slightly changed my direction and instead of focusing on the duality of spontaneous and influenced comments, I looked at the interaction of mediator and learners in relation to the topics they mention during the peer group meetings. What is important for the learners? What is important for the mediator? Why do they comment on certain topics and not on others? Those were the initial questions I wanted to pursue through the analysis of the data.

Coming back to the questions that guided my research about what is happening in the peer group mediation sessions and what are the perceptions and beliefs of the learners in regard to their learning in teletandem, I chose some of the most significant categories (largest categories and related ones), extracted parts of the transcripts that can be assigned to the respective category and then looked at the statements very closely by describing and interpreting the topics and statements of the learners (see chapter 4). Doing this I concluded that the categories could not be regarded as strictly divided or isolated. In the case of *Strategies* for example, I noted that some recurrences labelled with the category *Learning Objectives* could also be seen as a certain strategy. So, even with a dedicated category *Strategies* we see that strategies somehow permeate other categories as well. The category *Preparation of Teletandem Session* could actually be considered as a strategy for learning as the preparation of a language-exchange-encounter could be seen as preparation strategy for language learning. Thus, the same recurrences were differently analysed – in this case, for example, in the light of a preparation style for a session and secondly, as a type of planning strategy.

The learner biographies, learner diaries, interviews, field notes and evaluation questionnaires were analysed afterwards and used for triangulation of the data and to conclude whether or not the hypothesis created from the data held true.

Part II – The mediator's perspective

The mediator data were examined the same way as had been done for the learner data. The mediator's speech segments in the transcribed peer group mediation sessions were selected and coded. The coding produced four categories: *The Mediator as Peer*, *The Mediator as Questioner*, *The Mediator's Reflections in Regard to Teletandem* and *The Mediator and Directiveness*. These categories were analysed by the interpretation of respectively selected excerpts.

A point worth noting about the mediator is the fact that it is difficult to precisely separate the two roles I had in the research, as I was the researcher who planned the entire project and also the mediator of the peer group mediation sessions (see section 3.3). This is problematic as

it is not easy to distinguish which parts of the preparation for the peer group meetings can be assigned to the researcher or to the mediator. If the mediator had not been involved in research, her decisions and choices might have been different, but it is also difficult to assess in retrospect what could have been different. In a study on three different peer group mediations in the teletandem context, Funo (2015) points out that the direction of the mediation sessions is at risk of being influenced by the mediator's research interests. When a researcher-mediator is interested in researching (inter)cultural aspects, for instance, it is quite probable that his/her questions during the mediation sessions will lean towards his/her research interest. This action per se is not problematic as long as these questions contribute to the promotion of reflection on language and cultural learning. Nevertheless, mediators' questions and comments can sometimes even reinforce cultural stereotypes or try to impose a certain learning perspective the mediator is convinced of (Funo, 2015). My point is that a mediator with a concrete research object in his/her own mediation session is less likely to be free from bias in relation to specific topics as a mediator who only has the role of guiding through a peer group mediation session by principally encouraging the peers to communicate their reflections.

Another important factor for this chapter is that I will refer to myself in the first person when I am referring to the author's or researcher's perspective. When writing about my role as mediator, I will write in the third person. Despite this adaptation of a somewhat positivist perspective, it appears to lend a more objective view of myself as mediator. On the other hand, I feel much more comfortable speaking in the third person about myself in this case. From a temporal aspect, 'I' underlines the current perspective and 'she' refers to myself in 2010 when I carried out the data collection.

Another interesting aspect concerning the mediator is her being a fluent but non-native speaker of Portuguese. This is because (due to linguistic or pragmatic limitations between the participants and the mediator) misunderstandings may have occurred which could have influenced reflection and mutual comprehension. In the course of the peer group mediation sessions, it can be observed in the transcripts that it was sometimes difficult for the mediator to express herself clearly or to convey an idea in Portuguese. In some cases, she even addresses the fact that she is a foreigner, for example when she does not understand an expression that one of the participants uses ("Mediadora: Tá, patinando no gelo. Eu não sei que isso quer dizer. [risos] explica pra mim, por favor, pra estrangeira (AS 5, lines 489-490)."¹⁵⁴). Whilst exploring the data and analysing my own discourse, I thought that sometimes a mediator with Portuguese

¹⁵⁴ Translation: Mediator: Ok, walking on ice. I don't know what this means. [laughs] Please explain me, for the foreigner. (AS 5, lines 489-490)

as native language would have explained concepts better; I seemed to be insecure sometimes and this could have been ascribed to lacking language or even cultural competence, despite the fact I had approximately 10 years of experience speaking Portuguese and two years of living in the target culture Brazil.

On the other hand, this situation of the mediator occasionally being insecure about speaking Portuguese and making mistakes can also be seen as an advantage because the participants – learners of a German as foreign language – see that speakers of their language as foreign language also make mistakes when they speak, but, nevertheless, are able to communicate. In this case there was quite a difference between the linguistic competences of the mediator in Portuguese (B2-C1) and the students in German (A1-A2), but as the participants of this study had had little to no contact with foreigners aside from the mediator, the experience of seeing how others struggle with their own language might have been a relief to them and possibly encouraged them to speak more in their foreign language as well.

I showed parts of the data including discourse from the mediator to Brazilian colleagues from the research group and asked them, as ‘critical friends’ (Herr & Anderson, 2005), for their opinion regarding this question of my Portuguese competence and whether it was sufficient for providing guidance during the peer group mediation sessions. They said that they were unable to make out any barriers for the peer group sessions in relation to my linguistic competence in Portuguese. On the contrary, they mentioned the fact that the mediator admitting her role as foreigner and not speaking Portuguese at a very advanced level actually provoked even greater reflection on the side of the participants, because they had to express themselves more precisely or had to explain ideas differently so that the mediator was able to understand them better.

In this chapter I outlined the methodology of my research study. I started by reviewing the research questions and a summary of the research study in order to redirect the attention of the reader to the empirical part of this work. In a next step, general principles and evaluation criteria for qualitative research were discussed and compared with different steps of my own research procedure. Then, a detailed description of the research context and the participants of the study followed. After this, the course of the research steps, data collection with its instruments and procedure and the procedure of data analysis was presented. In the next chapter, we will proceed to the data analysis where a lot of different excerpts of the data are shown and interpreted.

4 Data Analysis

In this section, I will discuss and interpret selected parts of the data. While working through the transcripts of the peer group mediation sessions and mediator's field notes, which served as the main corpus for analysis, six main categories emerged in relation to the learners' perspective and four for the mediator's perspective. The objective of analysing the categories is to identify the role of the different perspectives and beliefs of the mediator and the learners in this specific type of learner support setting, i.e. peer group mediation sessions.

This chapter is composed of three main parts. The first presents the analysis of six selected categories in order to discover the perspective of the learners in relation to their learning, to the teletandem learning context and to the learner support when they were interacting with each other and with the mediator during the peer group mediation (PGM) sessions. In the second part, I will shed light on the role of the mediator by analysing her discourse with the learners during the PGM sessions and her reflections on her work as recorded in her field notes. The third part will summarise the data analysis and, at the same time, seek to answer the research questions.

4.1 Part 1: The learners' perspectives on self-directed learning in teletandem

As outlined in chapter 3, I have organised the topics of the transcribed peer group mediation sessions into categories. The most relevant ones will be analysed and interpreted in the next sections; this is to gain an insight into the learners' perceptions and beliefs in relation to their self-directed learning in teletandem and with regard to the mediation sessions themselves.

However, before starting the interpretation of the selected categories, it is interesting to take a look at an overview of the data that were collected. The following chart will help to observe the different categories and the respective number of topics that pertain to those categories. As can be seen, the number of occurrences of topics related to each category vary considerably. Throughout the entire period of six mediation sessions, the most commonly recurring category was *Strategies* (93 recurrences). This is followed by the categories *Learning Process*, *Learning Objectives* and *Mistakes & Correction* with 48, 45 and 40 recurrences, respectively. The subsequent level encompasses many categories that vary from nearly 20 to 30 recurrences per category; *Cultural Issues* with 13 recurrences is the second lowest and the least frequently occurring category is *Resources & Materials* with only 4 recurrences.

The following chart shows the frequency of mentions of the different topics in the peer group mediation sessions.

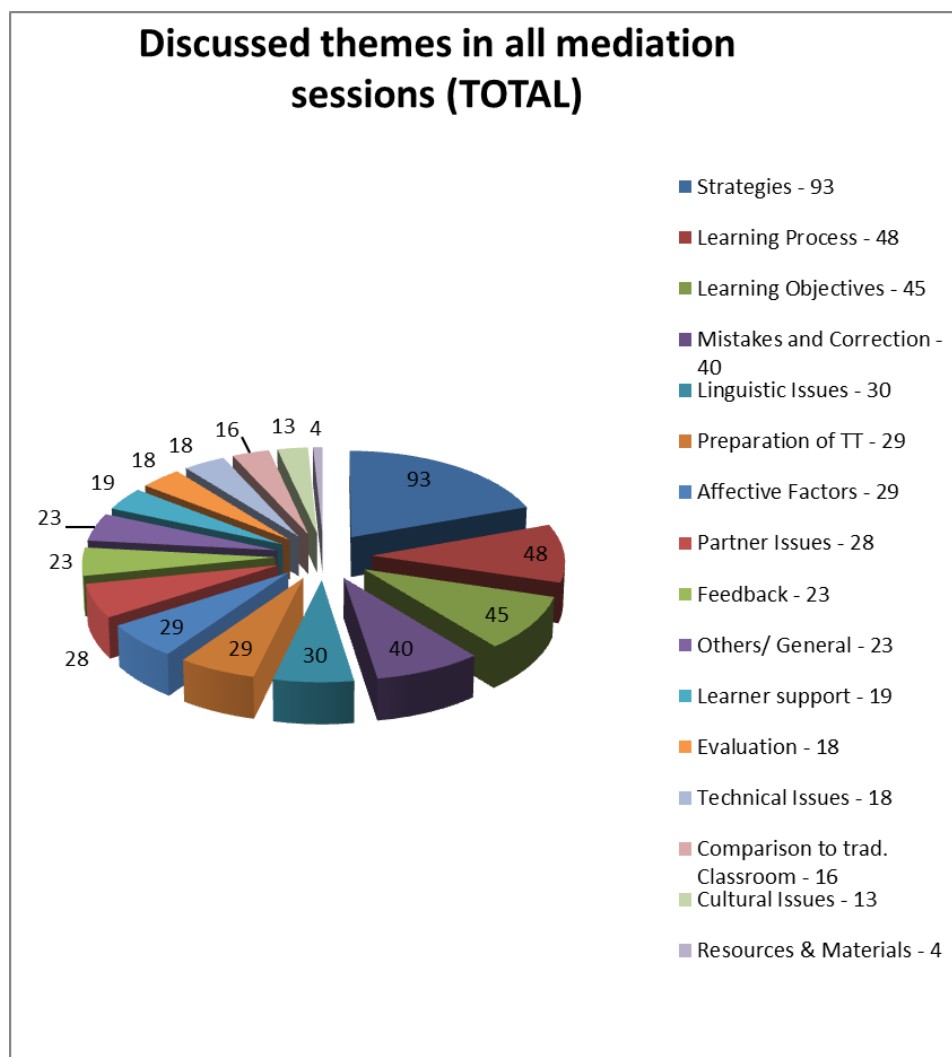


Figure 7. Number of topic occurrences for each category (throughout all mediation sessions)

It is important to note that only the initial and final peer group mediation sessions were completely open in terms of topics meaning that the participants were able to choose the subjects which they wished to discuss. The mediator posed a number of general questions to promote discussion, for example: “How did the first contact with your teletandem partner go?”, “What questions, doubts or comments would you like to express?” or even “What would you like to say about the teletandem project and the peer group mediation sessions?”. In this scenario, the mediator wanted the learners to openly express their thoughts, ideas, questions, doubts and comments on all topics related to teletandem learning (such as German as a foreign language and the mediation sessions, for example). From the second to the fifth peer group mediation session, the mediator chose a general topic that was designed to guide group

reflection and discussion, albeit without restricting the scope for topics. As can be seen later, a general theme often led to many focused discussions on a specific subject. The general themes chosen by the mediator for the mediation sessions were the following:

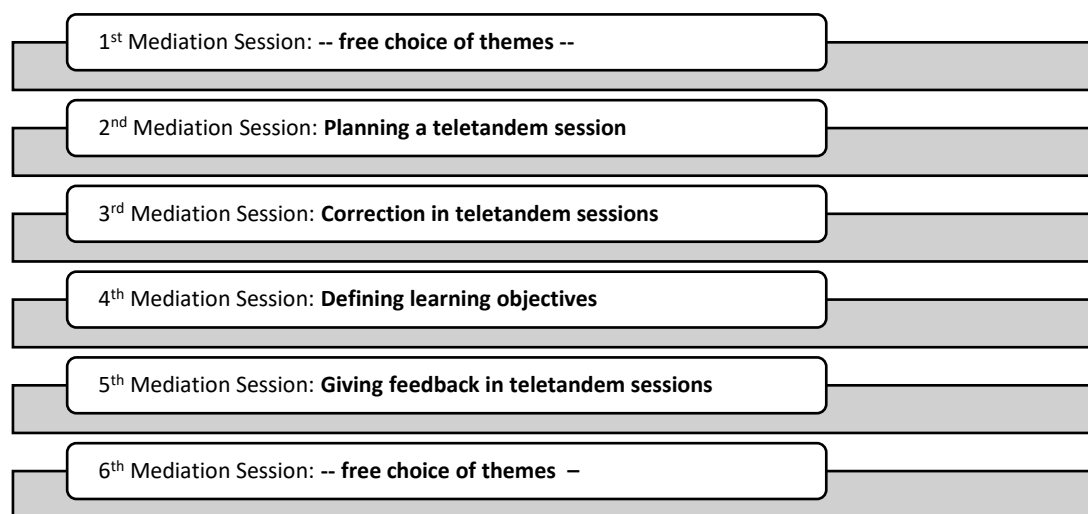


Figure 8. General topics of the peer group mediation sessions

Whilst still discussing categories more generally, it can be observed that ‘Strategies’, ‘Learning Process’ and ‘Learning Objectives’ were the most frequently mentioned categories in the learner interaction during the mediation sessions. These topics were not primarily introduced by the mediator, but were instead raised by the learners themselves.

This leads us to the assumption that the learners felt the need to talk about these preliminary basics of language learning. Questions such as “What do I want from the teletandem sessions? What do I actually need in my learning process? What does my partner want from me?” became very important from the first mediation session onwards.

The extremely high number of recurrences in the category ‘Strategies’ demonstrates that, in all mediation sessions, the learners frequently discussed strategies and aspects related to strategies. In some cases, this mentioning of strategies occurred unconsciously whilst participants were discussing their preparation or study techniques, and in other cases they were helping each other with concrete ideas on how to prepare a certain topic for the teletandem partner or how to study a special phenomenon in the foreign language.

It is interesting that ‘Cultural Issues’, which include stereotypes, cultural traditions, prejudice, etc., were seldom discussed as part of the mediation sessions. One possible reason for this is that the mediator did not focus on cultural issues and, therefore, did not ask triggering

questions of this kind during the mediation sessions¹⁵⁵. Nevertheless, as a researcher and also as an experienced German teacher of Brazilian students, I expected a larger number of comments regarding cultural issues from the participants. It seems that procedures relating to organisational aspects such as the preparation of a teletandem session or the reflection on the students' own learning processes were much more relevant during the mediation sessions. This observation, which is corroborated by the data, implicates that the role of the mediator must be taken on with caution. The mediator has an influence on the direction of the mediation sessions and should be aware of this fact when planning them. Considering the possibility that the learners did not only speak less often about culture because of a reduced number of questions on culture by the mediator, we could interpret this fact in this way that aspects of the learning process and concerns about how to help the teletandem partner are more important in first place than (inter)cultural issues. In any case, it could be advisable for mediators to consider these different aspects around foreign language learning (cultural issues, intercultural dialogue, linguistic aspects, learning process, amongst others) and promote reflection on each of these aspects during the mediation sessions.

As I analysed the data, the aforementioned 16 categories emerged by induction. Describing and interpreting the data from all 16 categories would go beyond the scope of this work, and so the decision was made to choose six categories to analyse in greater depth. These are *Strategies*, *Learning Process*, *Learning Objectives*, *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions*, *Affective Factors* and *Learner Support*. Primarily, I was interested in the categories which showed a considerably higher number of recurrences as this demonstrated that these topics were important for learners and the mediator during their peer group encounters. The two main areas which formed the basis of this study are language learning in teletandem and learner support for language learners. These, then, served as criteria for the selection of the category *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions* and *Learner Support* as I aimed to obtain more findings specifically in relation to both areas. The selection of the category *Affective Factors* can be explained by the growing interest in the influence of feelings and emotions related to (language) learning. After Krashen's (1982) hypothesis of the affective filter, studies on the influence of affective factors on learning ceased,

¹⁵⁵ Funo's study (2015) compares three different peer group mediation sessions with three different mediators in order to find out which notions of culture and cultural identity are shared and created during the group encounters. It was observed that the mediator has a certain influence on the choice of the topics which are discussed. The mediators (and at the same time researchers) in Funo's study which were interested in cultural research topics led the group reflection and discussion to more cultural issues whereas the more learning-focused research of one mediator had led to more learning-focused peer group discussions.

but have seen a resurgence in recent years (see Börner & Vogel, 2004; Ogasa, 2011; Tassinari, 2014).

In the following subsection, analysis of the categories is undertaken in order to find out what the beliefs and perceptions of the learners are in relation to their self-directed learning of German in teletandem partnerships with native German learners of Portuguese¹⁵⁶. Some excerpts of the data are used twice albeit in different categories due to the subject matter contained within them. It was not always easy to separate the topics precisely or to assign them to only one category, but this does not lead to further problems.

4.1.1 Strategies

Before starting with the description and interpretation of this category, I must point out an obstacle which I encountered when I commenced the analysis of this category. When I started to code the data of the transcripts, I deemed it necessary that the different types of strategies be categorised. Thus, I highlighted parts of the data as a strategy with Oxford's typology of 1990 in mind. I had not studied her typology again but worked with the fragments of earlier studies and classroom practice still present in my mind. After having separated all excerpts which were coded with STR for strategy, I wanted to categorise the different strategies in order to organise them better for analysis and, therefore, returned to Oxford's 1990 typology without questioning it or looking for an updated model. After this stage, I had access to a more recent publication of Oxford from 2011, in which she brings together all the research that has been carried out in the area of self-regulated L2-learning and language learning strategies (LLS). The new findings led to a transformation of the structure of the category *Strategies* in order to keep up with the latest developments in the area.

In a second step, when it came to the outline of this chapter, I thought that I would need to at least touch upon Oxford's new strategy typology in the text. However, this kind of theoretical description of a strategy typology should be placed in the theoretical part of such a work. I was just not able to identify a proper place for this part in the theoretical chapters as it did not occur to me that I would have to write about strategies before finishing data analysis and mapping the first categories. This is why I decided to unorthodoxly insert a brief theoretical description of

¹⁵⁶ The quotations in the following sections are taken from the corpus of transcribed data of the peer group mediation sessions which were collected in Portuguese. For readability purposes, the English translation is always given in the right column of the table with the Portuguese original in the left column. All translations are the author's.

Oxford's typology at this stage of the dissertation in order to give an overview of the basis I used for categorising the different strategies.

4.1.1.1 A short detour to Oxford's (2011) typology of learning strategies

One of the most renowned researchers in the area of *learning strategies* is Rebecca Oxford alongside with O'Malley and Chamot, Anita Wenden, and others. In 1990, she published a strategy-typology firstly dividing strategies into two groups, the *direct* and *indirect* strategies, then dividing *direct* strategies once again into *memory*, *cognitive* and *compensation* strategies, and the *indirect* strategies into *metacognitive*, *affective* and *social* strategies.

In 2011, Oxford updated her first typology by bringing together all the research that had been carried out in the area of self-regulated L2-learning and language learning strategies (LLS). Firstly, Oxford (2011, p. 7) introduces the Strategic-Self-Regulation Model (S²R-Model) which is based on self-regulation in learning and is also known by a number of different names including "learner-self-management" (Rubin, 2001), "learner self-direction" (Dickinson, 1987), "self-regulated or autonomous L2 learning" (Oxford, 1999) and "mediated learning" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, based on Vygotsky, 1978)¹⁵⁷. As a definition for self-regulation applied to learning, Oxford quotes Schunk and Ertmer:

Self-regulation comprises such processes as setting goals for learning, attending to and concentration on instruction, using effective strategies to organize, code and rehearse information to be remembered, establishing a productive work environment, using resources effectively, monitoring performance, managing time effectively, seeking assistance when needed, holding positive beliefs about one's capabilities, the value of learning, the factors influencing learning, and the anticipated outcomes of actions, and experiencing pride and satisfaction with one's efforts. (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000, p. 631¹⁵⁸)

In Oxford's view, strategies play a crucial role in self-regulated learning. Strategies help the learner regulate and control their learning and, therefore, make it easier and more effective

¹⁵⁷ Rubin, J. (2001) Language learner self-management. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communications*, 11: 25-37. Dickinson, L. (1987) *Self-Instruction in Language Learning*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. Oxford, R. (1999) Relationships between second language learning strategies and language proficiency in the context of learner autonomy and self-regulation. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 38: 108-126. Scarcella, R.C. and Oxford, R.L. (1992) *The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom*. Boston: Heinle/Thomson Learning. Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

¹⁵⁸ Schunk, D.H. & Ertmer, P.A. (2000): Self-regulation and academic learning: self-efficacy enhancing interventions. In Boekaerts, M, Pintrich, P.R., and Zeidner, M. (eds) *Handbook of Self-Regulation*. San Diego: Academic Press: 631-650.

(Oxford, 2011, p. 11). Oxford's definition of the self-regulated L2 learning strategies is as follows:

- In the S²R Model, *self-regulated L2 learning strategies* are defined as deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2 (based on Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris, 2008¹⁵⁹). These strategies are broad, teachable actions that learners choose from among alternatives and employ for L2 learning purposes (e.g., constructing, internalising, storing, retrieving, and using information; completing short-term tasks; and/or developing L2 proficiency and self-efficacy in the long term). *Examples*: Planning, Evaluating, Obtaining and Using Resources, Reasoning, Going Beyond the Immediate Data, Generating and Maintaining Motivation, and Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating.
- *Learning strategies* are sometimes confused with *skills*. Skills are automatic and out of awareness, whereas strategies are intentional and deliberate.
- It is impossible to tell whether an action is a strategy or a skill without finding out whether it is under the learner's automatic or deliberate control. (Oxford, 2011, p. 12, emphasis by Oxford)

Oxford's S²R-Model general distinguishes *strategies* from *meta-strategies*. Meta-strategies help the learner know how to deploy a given strategy and whether it is working or has worked as intended. Both types of strategies may be divided into three dimensions: cognitive, affective and sociocultural-interactive. *Cognitive strategies* are used by the learner to "construct, transform, and apply L2 knowledge" (Oxford, 2011, p.14). *Affective strategies* aid the learner in creating positive feelings and attitudes in regard to his learning and motivation; *sociocultural-interactive (SI) strategies* help the learner with communication, sociocultural contexts, and identity. The meta-strategies belonging to these three dimensions help the learner control and manage the use of strategies in each dimension.

Tactics are another important concept of the S²R-Model as they are "the specific manifestations of a strategy or metastrategy by a particular learner in a given setting for a certain purpose" (Oxford, 2001, p.31). Strategies are broad and general, such as *Using the Senses to Understand and Remember*,¹⁶⁰ and their corresponding tactics might be examples like "I understand better when I look at the visible structure of the article or story in Spanish¹⁶¹" or "I make charts, tables and pictures to help me make mental associations in Norwegian¹⁶²".

Oxford (2011) states that self-regulated L2 learning strategies are "employed consciously" (p. 14). I agree with her to a certain extent, but also believe that corresponding tactics might be implemented unconsciously. As can be seen in the data I collected below, the participants hardly

¹⁵⁹ Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris 2008

¹⁶⁰ Oxford writes strategies with an initial capital letter while tactics are written normally. As I am referring to her typology I adopt the same style.

¹⁶¹ Oxford, 2011, p. 108

¹⁶² Oxford, 2011, p. 108

spoke about strategies or tactics which they were fully aware of. On the contrary, on many occasions the participants were helping each other by suggesting different tactics or relating to tactics they used to address a certain problem, but only the mediator used the word “strategy” consciously in some cases. This finding corroborates Claußen’s study when analysing individual advising sessions with foreign students at a German university: “When talking about the use of strategies of the participants it is to be noted that in many cases they are implemented without reflection¹⁶³” (Claußen, 2009, p. 186, my translation).

Thus, tactics are actions which can be realised both unconsciously and consciously while strategies, as a kind of higher instance of tactics or representing a kind of umbrella term for a range of tactics, are used consciously because the learner must be aware of the definition of strategy, metastrategy and tactic in order to be able to differentiate between them.

The following diagram presents a summary of the three dimensions with examples of strategies and metastrategies as developed by Oxford (2011). Each (meta)strategy involves a number of tactics which depend on the learner, the need, and the circumstances.

¹⁶³ Original: Claußen, Tina (2009, p. 186): “Zur Strategienverwendung der einzelnen Probanden ist anzumerken, dass sie in vielen Fällen recht unreflektiert vollzogen wird.“



Figure 9. The three dimensions of L2 learning strategies according to Oxford, 2011.

In this study, the type of strategy that shows most tactics mentioned by the participants are the *sociocultural-interactive* (29 occurrences), *cognitive* and *metacognitive* strategies (30 and 28 occurrences). As the learning context teletandem is an interactive learning context per se, it is not surprising that different learning tactics about the interaction with the tandem partner have been mentioned. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies consist of tactics that are often directly connected to materials, exercise types or to actions in general which a lay person would immediately relate to language learning (i.e. make a plan, organize learning materials, use music or video for learning, create a vocabulary list, etc). Tactics related to affective or meta-affective strategies were very seldom, only two and five occurrences, respectively. Meta sociocultural-interactive Strategies recorded 16 occurrences.

An important fact is that the mediator never pushed the subject ‘strategies’ as a main topic for the mediation sessions, but it emerged naturally in the group discussions. The participants talked about their own tactics and skills used in the sessions, they compared their tactics and often talked about them unreflectively. As it seems that the learners automatically talk about their learning tactics, the mediator does not need to push this topic with her students. She will probably have many chances to engage in discussions about strategies and to deepen the theme by reflecting on it with the participants.

In the following sections, the different strategies and tactics are presented and shown within the data. Then, selected excerpts are interpreted.

4.1.1.2 Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies manage cognitive aspects of foreign language learning. They are crucial for independent learners (Oxford, 2011, p. 45). Within the metacognitive strategies, tactics in the learners’ data could be identified which belong to the following strategies:

- ✓ Paying Attention to Cognition
- ✓ Planning for Cognition
- ✓ Implementing Plans for Cognition
- ✓ Organising for Cognition
- ✓ Obtaining Resources for Cognition
- ✓ Evaluating Cognition

In regards to the strategy *Paying Attention to Cognition*, there were only two recurrences. In the first case, participant Leandra discovers that the tandem context with the double focus on content and form makes a learner become more sensitive in relation to one’s own and the partner’s speech.

Excerpt (1)

<p><u>Leandra</u>: ehm... mas ANTES dela desaparecer [risos] ehm, a gente trabalhou algumas vezes com leitura de texto, [parte não compreensível] ela sempre me mandava um textinho, aí ela lia, ... aí eu lia... aí ela corrigia os erros de pronúncia, e pedia pra eu ler de novo. é legal também, porque às vezes a gente se preocupa MUITO também com como falar tal tal, e não presta muita atenção a ... eu acho que às vezes não presto muita atenção... (AS 2, linhas 1063-1069)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: ahm... but BEFORE her disappearing [laughs] ahm, we worked several times with reading texts, [part incomprehensible] she had always sent me a small text, then she read it, ... then I read it... then she corrected my pronunciation mistakes, and asked me to read it again. This is cool, too, because sometimes we are also worried A LOT about how to speak this this, and we don't give attention to... I think that sometimes I don't give too much attention... (AS 2, lines 1063-1069)</p>
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Leandra thought that she had not paid so much attention to her own speech production, yet. Usually, she focused more on the content but not so much on other aspects such as pronunciation. Through the corrections and comments of her teletandem partner, she realised that she could try to pay more attention to other aspects of speech production as well. The tandem partner, though, stimulates the reflection about one's own learning and thus, the adoption of new learning tactics that result of this reflection.

In the second case, Célia affirms as well that the relationship with her teletandem partner made her reflect more about her own native language and that she pays much more attention to facts of Portuguese grammar and lexicon because of the fact that her teletandem partner studied translation at the German university and frequently discussed translational matters with her.

Excerpt (2):

<p><u>Célia</u>: Eu acho que na minha sessão, assim, na minha parceria em geral, sempre, o, o, a coisa que que isso não foi nem o que eu queria aprender, mas é que tinha uma preocupação muito maior do que a outra pessoa, precisava saber. Por exemplo, a Maike, eu acho que minha parceria com ela me fez refletir muito mais sobre... o funcionamento da língua alemã, e da língua portuguesa, porque ela é tradutora e assim, ela nunca me exigiu que eu me esforçasse tentar corrigir [parte incompreensível] para falar tudo certinho, ela não me cobrou. Eu, EU – sei lá, entendeu, como o tradutor costuma fazer e tudo mais. ... Mas ela tem que me dizer, por exemplo, que a gente encontrasse uma coisa que correspondesse ... que não correspondesse com a tradução, porque a palavra às vezes não tem tradução, e correspondência, e qual é a ideia geral, o verbo que a gente usa em tal coisa e eles usam em outro... sabe, eu acho que, acho que refleti muito mais sobre os</p>	<p><u>Célia</u>: I think that in my session, with my partner in general, always, the, the, it's the thing I didn't want to learn, but I was much more worried than the other person needed to know. For example, Maike [her teletandem partner], I think that my partnership with her made me reflect a lot more about... the functioning of the German language, and of the Portuguese language, because she is a translator and so she never required me to make an effort to try and correct [part incomprehensible] to say everything correctly, she never asked me to do this. I, I – I don't know, you know, like a translator usually does and so on. ... But she has to tell me, for example, that we need to find something that corresponds to... which does not correspond with the translation, because a word sometimes does not have a translation, and correspondence, and which is the general idea, the verb we use in such a context and they use it in another... you know, I think that, I think</p>
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pensamentos, a influencia do pensamento geral na língua, assim. ... Acho que foi uma exigência dela, por ela ser tradutora e ter me exigido isso. (AS 4, linhas 334-350)	that I reflected much more about my thoughts, the influence of the thoughts in relation to language... I guess it was what she demanded of me for being a translator. (AS 4, line 334-350)
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Through the discussion in her teletandem sessions, Célia realised that she started to pay much more attention to contrastive aspects between German and Portuguese, the two languages used in her teletandem.

In relation to the strategy *Planning for Cognition*, several recurrences could be found in the data. Setting goals and planning ahead for cognition are some of the core elements of this strategy. One reason for the higher number of recurrences certainly is that the learning mediator had chosen the subject “learning objectives” for discussion in one of the PGM sessions. The topic *learning objectives* will also be discussed in section 4.1.2, which is why I will discuss the tactics related to setting cognitive goals only briefly at this point.

It can be seen that the learners have goals for their learning, but that they are still quite general and broad (e.g. “work a little bit with grammar” excerpt 3, AS4, line 75) and, therefore, it is difficult for them to evaluate their achievement. The following excerpts show a selection of the tactics participants mention in relation to goal setting during the PGM sessions.

Excerpt (3):

<u>Hugo:</u> Ah, o meu objetivo, pelo menos de Teletandem, pra mim ehm... é tentar o máximo possível aplicar o que aprendo. Sabe. Nas, nas aulas de alemão, por exemplo. Ah, determinadas estruturas, então tento recordar na cabeça, assim, ficar olhando, e tentar utilizar elas, assim. E também sacar esse tipo de estruturas ou pontos gramaticais que ela fala. Ehm, as nossas sessões não tem tipo um tema assim, geralmente [parte incompreensível] para outras coisas assim, é bem mais, ehm, aberto. Mas, ehm, o objetivo, o objetivo hoje assim principal é conseguir .. aplicar e, e entender esses pontos que já aprendi. E também.. o lugar mais certo é esse. (AS 4, linhas 80-89)	<u>Hugo:</u> Ah, my objective, at least for teletandem, for me, ahm... is trying to apply the maximum of what I have learnt. You know. In, in the German classes, for example. Ah, specific structures, so I try to remember them in my mind, looking at them and trying to use them. And also to understand this type of structures or grammatical aspects that she [his partner] uses. Ahm, our sessions don't have a specific theme, usually [part incomprehensible] for other things, it's much more, ahm, open. But, ahm, the objective, the objective today, the main objective is being able... to apply and, and understand those aspects I have already learnt. And also... this is the most appropriate place to do this. (AS 4, lines 80-89)
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Excerpt (4):

<u>Célia:</u> [curto silêncio] sim. [risos] A partir de um momento que você alcance uma coisa que	<u>Célia:</u> [short moment of silence] yes. [laughs] From the moment on that you reach a certain
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<p> você não, não planejava outras tão distantes quanto mais longe que você pensa, mais próximo você chega, acho que mais você evolui. Então, o meu objetivo agora com a Maike, já que perdi a vergonha de falar e tudo mais, seria trabalhar um pouco mais a gramática. E isso a gente não faz tanto nas nossas interações. (AS 4, linhas 70-76) </p>	<p> thing which you didn't planned others still far away, even farer away that you think, the closer you come, I guess more you develop. So, my objective now with Maike, as I already lost my embarrassment to speak and everything, is too work a little bit more the grammar. And that is what we don't do in our interactions. (AS 4, line 70-76) </p>
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Excerpt (5):

<p> <u>Letícia:</u> Eh, eh que falo, que ouvi vocês comentando, eu falava muito com a Clara disso, né. que aqui a gente vê mesmo, né. eu peguei o <i>Stufen</i>, só, e depois eu trabalhei um pouco com <i>Passwort</i>. e o <i>Stufen</i> é bem pior mesmo. [risos] porque há muito mais vocabulário, que você viu os dois né?, mas eu achei que era bem pior. Mas alguma coisa legal no TT é que a gente pode pegar isso, essa prática que não existe na sala de aula para jogar nas nossas sessões, pelo menos é isso que eu tentava fazer. Tipo, sobre essa falta que eu tinha nas aulas de alemão, eu vi a gramática e muitas vezes, a gente, eu conversava com a Clara sobre coisas que tinha visto na aula, eu falava, ah, hoje vamos treinar vocabulário, né, que acabei de aprender sobre as coisas da ca:sa, eh, apontava as coisas, ah, preciso do, ah, preciso usar, eh, preciso usar. (AS 1-1, linhas9 253-264) </p>	<p> <u>Letícia:</u> Ah, ah I say, I heard you were commenting, I talked a lot about this with Clara, you know. That here we really see, you know. I just had <i>Stufen</i> [German course book], only, and later I worked a little bit with <i>Passwort</i> [German course book]. And <i>Stufen</i> was really worse. [laughs] because there is a lot more vocabulary, you saw the two, right? But I thought it was really worse. But one cool thing in teletandem is that we can use this, this practice that does not exist in the classroom and put it in our sessions, at least that's what I tried to do. Such as, about this thing that I missed in the German class, I learned grammar and many times, we, I talked with Clara about things that I had seen in the class, I said, ah, today we will train some vocabulary, right, that I had just learnt about the things of the hou:se, eh, I pointed at things, ah, I need the, ah, I need to use, ah, I need to use. (AS 1-1, lines 253-264) </p>
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Hugo and Letícia mention that their objective is to use the already learned with their partners in the teletandem session. They see the advantage in the teletandem partnership to use their foreign language competence in an authentic communication situation. It is in these moments that they will know (and be able to evaluate) to which point they will get with their actual language level, what kind of communication they are already able to have and what is still missing. Célia, on the other hand, specifies a little bit more and wants to focus on grammar after having achieved her goal of losing anxiety to speak in the foreign language with a native speaker. In this case, she also evaluated one of her learning goals and identified that she lost her fear to speak in the FL and now wants to readjust the learning and focus more on form.

After having set the goals, usually, the next step is the planning for the learning process and how to achieve the goals. As it can be seen in section 4.1.2 (learning objectives), the establishing of learning goals and making plans to achieve and evaluate them, in most cases of the

participants, is not happening. They still do not grasp the whole dimension of goal setting → making a detailed plan to achieve the goal → evaluate the outcomes → adjust goals and ways, etc. Nevertheless, they use many tactics related to each step but still do not connect them consciously to get more out of their learning. In regards to the strategy *Plans for Learning*, participants mentioned the following tactics:

Excerpt (6):

<p><u>Hugo</u>: Sei lá. Você pega um texto ehm, que tem... o <i>Sprechen</i>, no no... sei lá... e você estuda esse texto, sem nunca ter ouvido direito. e depois fazer uma redação sobre o tema, aí você pega, lê, e ve se conseguiu algo, algo, de atingir alguma meta. sabe. (AS 4, linhas 615-618)</p>	<p><u>Hugo</u>: I don't know. You take a text, ahm, that has... the <i>Sprechen</i> [Speaking], in in ... I don't know... and you study this text without having heard it before. And then you write an essay about the subject, then you take it, read it and see if you achieved something, something, if you reached a goal. You know. (AS 4, line 615-618)</p>
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Excerpt (7):

<p><u>Lena</u>: é, com leitura estou pensando em fazer alguma coisa na próxima. Ehm, eu vou sugerir pra ela, tipo, eu vou mandar um texto para ela em português e ela me mandar um texto em alemão, pra gente poder treinar um pouco de pronúncia também. Que acho eu isso vai ajudar ela deixar um pouco de lado o espanhol e trabalhar só o português. Mas ainda não tive a experiência de trabalhar com textos. (AS 3, linhas 449-454)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: yeah, I think I will do something with reading next time. Ahm, I will suggest her that I will send her a text in Portuguese and she will send me a text in German, so that we can practice a little bit pronunciation as well. I think this will help her to forget a little bit the Spanish and work only with Portuguese. But until now I don't have any experiences with working with texts. (AS3, line 449-454)</p>
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Excerpt (8):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Deu certo! Usei ... usei <i>powerpoint</i>, fiz uma apresentação, alguns slides para mostrar para a minha parceira as coisas do, ehm, sobre os móveis da casa. Então, eu achei figuras... fiz uma apresentaçõzinha, tipo coloquei a cama e escrevi "cama". Aí mandei para ela com antecedência, antes da sessão, para ela ver. Achei uma música que tinha um pouco de vocabulário sobre isso, mandei antes também e conversamos sobre isso durante a sessão. (AS 3, linhas 131-137)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: It worked! I used... used powerpoint, I prepared a presentation, some slides to show my partner the things, ahm, about furniture in the house. So I found pictures... I prepared a small presentation, like, I put a bed and I wrote "bed". Then I sent it to her some time before our meeting so that she could see it. I also found a music which contained some of this vocabulary, I sent it earlier, too and then we talked about it during the session. (AS3, line 131-137)</p>
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In excerpt 6, Hugo is giving advice to one of the other participants and suggests some planning tactics for her ("you take a text and then you study the text..."). Lena in excerpt 7 is

talking about her own plans she is making for the holiday break where she and her partner want to continue their tandem work, even if it will be primarily via e-mail. Leandra talks about her plans retrospectively. She tells the group what she had planned and how she transformed the plan in action. As this study was originally not prepared for asking the participants about their tactics and strategies, the way the learners mention their tactics is oftentimes quite different from the way Oxford (2011) presents the tactics of the learners of her study (see Oxford 2011, p. 102-136 for a long list with tactics related to the respective strategies).

In relation to the strategy *Obtaining Resources for Cognition*, there are only very few recurrences. Amongst them, for example, is one tactic that also serves as a suggestion for another participant, as can be seen in the next excerpt:

Excerpt (9):

<u>Célia:</u> Estratégias de aprendizagem? Tem vários textos desse tipo. (AS 4, linhas 657-658)	<u>Célia:</u> Learning strategies? There are different texts of this type. (AS4, line 657-658)
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In this excerpt, Célia wants to help her colleague Taís who struggles with her learning process (see also section 4.1.3) and suggests some theoretical texts about learning strategies which is one kind of resource that can be used for cognitive processes in learning. The lecture of a theoretical text (such as Oxford, 2011, for instance) can help a learner to try out new tactics and strategies, especially when they are looking for new stimulations, as it is the case with Taís. In this excerpt, we also see how peers help each other and promote reflection on new tactics and strategies by giving direct suggestions.

For the strategy *Organising for Cognition*, it could be found that the learners of this study mentioned tactics in relation to the organisation of their study materials. Most of them mentioned the use of a notebook and the chat window to record linguistic and cultural aspects of the target language they learn. The following excerpts illustrate this:

Excerpt (10):

<u>Lena:</u> Eu tenho tudo anotado, tem caderninho ... num papel, eu anoto tudo , ela fala se eu não sei como é a grafia, peço para ela escrever pra mim, aí ela escreve e eu anoto no caderno, por mais que vai ficar ali salvo mas [parte incompreensível] eu tenho tudo escrito também. (AS 3, linhas 611-614)	<u>Lena:</u> I have my annotations, in a notebook... I write down everything on paper , she speaks and when I don't know how to write it, I ask her to write it for me. Then she writes it and I write it down in my notebook. Even if it is save there [part incomprehensible] I have also everything written. (AS3, line 611-614)
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Excerpt (11):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Então, eu sou muito sistemática. Assim, pra pra aprender. Se não for assim eu não consigo aprender. Então eu tenho um caderno, aí eu releio a sessão, vejo todas as palavras que... já tenho um caderno que é dividido em três partes, verbos, tipo, substantivos e expressões. Aí vou lá, escrever o verbo que aprendi, já procuro o verbo no passado, [risos] conjugo o verbo, sabe, não vou mais esquecer esse verbo! Aí ... faço umas duas frases com esse verbo, porque aí eu vou saber como e quando uso esse verbo. Só funciona desse jeito, tudo escrito, dividido, separado por cor, tudo! Palavra em alemão vermelho, palavra em português preto, ehm, substantivo na mesma cor conforme o gênero, já com plural. Muito sistemático, tenho que fazer isso. Tenho que reler toda a conversa, procurar as coisas... (AS 3, linhas 616-627)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Well, I am really very systematical. For, for learning. If it wasn't this way, I would not be able to learn. So I have my notebook, there I reread the session, I revise all the words that... I already have a notebook which is divided in three parts: verbs, such as, substantives and expressions. Then I go there, write down the verb I learned, then I already look for the verb in the past tense, [laughs] I conjugate the verb, you know, I won't forget this verb! Then... I compose two sentences with this verb, because then I will know how and when to use this verb. It just works this way, everything written, divided, separated by colours, everything! German word in red, Portuguese word in black, ahm, nouns in the same colour of the gender, already with the plural form. Very systematically, I have to do it this way. I have to reread the whole conversation, look for the things... (AS3, 616-627)</p>
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Excerpt (12):

<p><u>Taís</u>: e eu me sinto muito mal toda vez [risos] Sempre quando vejo todo o meu texto colorido, né, [parte incompreensível] Quem diria. [risos] Mas assim, oral, mas na hora assim a gente coloca uma expressão ao lado, escreve e eu salvo. [parte incompreensível] Já tentei caderninho... eu gosto mais escrever no chat. (AS 3, linhas 682-686)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: and I feel really bad every time [laughs] Always when I see all of my text coloured, right, [part incomprehensible] Who would have said. [laughs] But, oral, but in the moment we write the expression at the side, write it down and save it. [part incomprehensible] I've already tried a notebook... I prefer to write in the chat. (AS3, line 682-686)</p>
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Lena and Leandra prefer to use a paper notebook for organising their learning of German. Especially Leandra has a very systematic way to write down and organise the learning content, as she explains in excerpt 10. Taís, on the other hand says that she prefers organising the learning in the chat than in a paper notebook. When using the chat in teletandem sessions realised at UNESP, learners usually save the sessions in an extra folder or they e-mail the chat log to themselves; some of the learners really make use of this data for post-processing the already learned, as we can see in this excerpt:

Excerpt (13):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Para as coisas novas eu faço isso, até com as aulas de conversação que faço com</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: I do this for the new things, also for the conversation classes I have with Thomas,</p>
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Thomas também, sabe, chego em casa, vejo tudo que aprendi, organizar o conhecimento assim , então é a única coisa que funciona pra mim, desse jeito. (AS 3, linhas 631-634)	you know, I arrive at home, I revise everything I learned, I organise the knowledge like this , so this is the only thing that works for me, this way. (AS3, line 631-634)
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However, as Little et al. (1999) found out, it is not a usual attitude of learners to revise learning in chat logs or e-mails. Only very organised, or systematically working learners do this kind of post-processing on their own account. Between the learners of this study, who are all learners in teacher education for languages, only Leandra and Taís told us about this organisational learning tactic.

Only one tactic in relation to the strategy *Evaluating Cognition* was identified. In the following excerpt we see that Taís is not satisfied with her learning progress and wants to increase her efficiency. She is already on an intermediate level (B1) in German and has the feeling that her progress in gaining more competence is too slow. In the following, she evaluates her learning outcomes as follows:

Excerpt (14):

<u>Taís</u> : não é tema. é eficácia. a questão não é mais tema, não é apenas, assim, vocabulário novo, mas às vezes assim, como eu posso melhorar , sem que isso for egoísta, sem que isso::: interfira com o [parte incompreensível] Meu diário de aprendizagem tem todo isso [risos] Porque é assim, eu posso tentar resolver o... a prova do C1, ouuu... C2 [parte incompreensível] tipo, mais do que isso não tem, é só pra nativos, aquilo lá. [risos] Mas a questão é, até que ponto isso é eficaz? porque o processo de aprendizagem, ele mexe com esse é eficaz, não é eficaz, o que preciso mudar, o que não preciso, como posso ver isso? Como mudar isso? A questão não é como tratar a linguística. Mas a aprendizagem, como posso ficar renovando? ... Entendeu? (AS 4, linhas 376-386)	<u>Taís</u> : it's not the theme. It's efficiency. The question is not the topic anymore, it's not only new vocabulary, but sometimes it's how can I improve. Without being egoistic, without thi:::s interfering with the [part incomprehensible] My learning diary has all this [laughs] Because it's like this, I can try to solve the... the C1 test, oor... C2 [part incomprehensible] such as, more than that is not possible, then it's only for native speakers, this thing. [laughs] but the question is, to which point is this efficient? Because the learning process is related to this it's efficient, it's not efficient, what do I have to change, what do I not, how can I get this? How to change this? The question is not on how to handle linguistics. But the learning, how can I constantly renew it? ... Do you understand? (AS 4, line 376-386)
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By evaluating her learning outcomes, Taís identifies different aspects which she does not consider as an obstacle for learning (“it is not the subject anymore, not only, new vocabulary”) and tries to explain that her sense of stagnation has to do with efficiency and the learning

process. Here, we can see that she is able to evaluate her progress and her performance quite clearly but still cannot detect the real problem.

In this section, excerpts which showed metacognitive strategies (such as Paying Attention, Planning, Organising and others) were described and interpreted. In the next section, the same will be done with cognitive strategies and their respective tactics.

4.1.1.3 *Cognitive Strategies*

Cognitive Strategies function like “construction workers” – they help the learner in putting together, consolidating, elaborating and transforming knowledge of language and culture (Oxford, 2011, p. 46). Going through the data four strategies could be identified within the mentioned tactics by the learners:

- ✓ Using the Senses to Understand and Remember
- ✓ Activating Knowledge
- ✓ Reasoning
- ✓ Conceptualising with Details

The participants of the study frequently mentioned tactics which can be related to the strategy *Using the Senses to Understand and Remember*. These include tactics regarding the visual, the auditory and the haptic sense and also the combined use of these. Especially the visual and auditory senses seem to be used to understand and remember grammatical structures and vocabulary of the foreign language. The learners talked about the tools they use to support the learning via their senses, as the following excerpts show.

Excerpt (15):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: então, uma coisa que fiz que achei legal na última sessão, antes da sessão, tipo, é porque eles tinham mandado este questionário: que você faz, como... então a gente ia falar sobre isso, sobre essas perguntas. aí antes... aí achei legal para mim porque pesquisei, por exemplo, eu, alguns alimentos, ou algumas coisas que eu não sabia como é, como era em alemão. e aí a gente conversou em alemão um pouco sobre como era, era a rotina na universidade, e então, e eu procurei já antes o vocabulário, a saber, a saber algumas coisas e aí eu peguei algumas fotos, daqui da unesp, e porque falamos da universidade. [...] Aí mostrei a foto para ela tipo do RU, aí a gente falou um pouco sobre a, sobre a comi:da, mostrei uma foto da bibliote:ca, uma foto do bo:sque. por exemplo, eu não</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: so, one thing I did and that I found great last session, before the session, was, well, they had sent us a questionnaire: what do you do, how... So we decided to talk about this, about these questions. So beforehand... so I found it great for me because I researched, for example, I, some food, or some things that I didn't know how they were in German. So then we talked in German a little bit about how was, was the routine at university, and then, I looked for the vocabulary beforehand, to know, to know some things and then I got some photos, of UNESP here and, because we talked about university. [...] Then I showed her a photo of the canteen, then we talked a little bit about the, about the food, I showed a photo of the library, a photo of the woods. For example, I didn't know how to say many</p>
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<p>sabia dizer muitas árvores ou aqui tem um bosque ou não sei o que. então, eu fui mostrando as fotos e aí ela via e me ajudava, porque ela sabia o que eu queria, o que eu queria perguntar. Porque se eu perguntasse pra ela também em português, ela sabe pouco em português, talvez ela não soubesse se eu perguntasse pra ela muitas árvores estão? o que é que é árvore também? né, por exemplo. então fui mostrando as fotos, foi bem legal trabalhar com imagens. (AS 2, linhas 277-298)</p>	<p>trees or here we have a wood or whatever. So I showed her the photos and she looked at them and helped me because she knew what I wanted, what I would ask her. Because if I asked her in Portuguese as well, she knows very little Portuguese, then probably she wouldn't understand if I asked her many trees are? What is tree then? Right? For example. So I showed the photos and this was great, to work with pictures. (AS2, line 277-298)</p>
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Excerpt (16):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: é nem como te falei naquele dia das frutas, né? a gente tava falando sobre os nomes das frutas, eh, você já aprendeu "uva"? O que é que é uva? uva... uva... aí coloquei no google imagens [risos] mandei a foto de novo pra ela, aí ela, ahhh, isso é uva. falei: é, isso é uva. (AS 2, linhas 304-308)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: it's like I told you that day with the fruits, right? We were talking about the names of fruits, eh, have you already learned "uva" [grape]? What is "uva"? <i>uva... uva...</i> then I put the word in google images [laughs] and sent her the photo, and then she, ahhh, this is a grape. I said: Yes, this is a grape. (AS 2, line 304-308)</p>
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Excerpt (17):

<p><u>Letícia</u>: [...] Tipo, sobre essa falta que eu tinha nas aulas de alemão, eu vi a gramática e muitas vezes, a gente, eu conversava com a Clara sobre coisas que tinha visto na aula, eu falava, ah, hoje vamos treinar vocabulário, né, que acabei de aprender sobre as coisas da casa, eh, apontava as coisas, ah, preciso do, ah, preciso usar, eh, preciso usar declinação de adjetivo, então vou, vou descrever uma foto, falar alguma coisa assim. entendeu. então eu vi assim, que isso me ajudou bastante, assim. nessa, nessa falta. porque existe, é uma realidade, né, a gente não consegue mudar assim, mas pelo menos (nos processos?) de aprendizagem a gente consegue fazer diferente com o teletandem. então, é uma idéia também, de aproveitar assim, alguma coisa, a gente viu na sala de aula também pras nossas sessões, talvez. ... numa maneira diferente, né. Tipo, não gramática, eh,... (AS 1-1, linhas 253-272)</p>	<p><u>Letícia</u>: [...] So, about what I was missing in the German classes, I saw grammar and many times we, I talked with Clara about things I had seen during class, I said, ah, today we will revise some vocabulary, right, which I had learned some time before about the things of a house, eh, I pointed out at things, eh, I need to use declination of adjectives, so I will, will describe a photo, I will say anything. You know. So I saw that this really helped me a lot. That what was missing. Because it exists, it's a reality, right, we cannot change like this, but at least within the learning (processes?) we are able to do something different with teletandem. So this is an idea as well, to take advantage of, something, which we saw in the classroom and use it in our sessions, maybe... in a different way, right? Like, not grammar, eh... (AS 1-1, line 253-272)</p>
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Leandra and Letícia tell their peers about the tactics regarding the visual sense they use to support the learning of their teletandem partners. When Leandra was talking about her daily routine at university she used photos of the campus to first show the campus and its facilities,

i.e. the reality of her daily life – where she eats her lunch, where she studies etc., but also to help her partner understand the new vocabulary. The Portuguese word for library “*a biblioteca*” is not difficult to comprehend because the German word for university libraries is also derived from Greek (German: *die Bibliothek*, Greek: βιβλιοθήκη (*biblio-thékē*)), but the abbreviation some students use for *canteen* in Portuguese – R.U. (*restaurante universitário*) – is not easy to infer the first time one hears the word. Therefore, it is practical to show images of the canteen and explain at the same time what students do there. In this way the teletandem partner will be able to understand the context and new vocabulary even if her/his linguistic competence in Portuguese is not very high. Other tactics include the use of Google Images to explain vocabulary that is unknown (excerpt 16) or the use of facial expressions and gestures.

The visual sense is used most often to help understand and remember new vocabulary. But a photo or image can also be used to train grammatical structures as can be seen in excerpt 17: Letícia mentions a tactic she used which was describing a photo to practise the declination of adjectives in German.

The same applies to the tactics that are directed to the auditory sense like the use of music to help remembering and understanding aspects of the foreign language. Several times the participants mentioned the use of music audio files or video clips to promote language learning as can be seen in the selected excerpts below:

Excerpt (18):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Música é muito bom pra, pelo menos, eu acho que sobra muito (?) é mesmo muito bom.</p> <p><u>Maria</u>: você guarda, né?</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Porque você (..) difícilmente você esquece o vocabulário que você aprende na, na música. (AS1-1, linhas 242-248)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Music is really good for, at least, I think there is much left (?), it's really very good.</p> <p><u>Maria</u>: you remember things, right?</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: because you... it's difficult to forget the vocabulary you learn with music. (AS 1-1, line 242-248)</p>
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Excerpt (19):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] Achei uma música que tinha um pouco de vocabulário sobre isso, mandei antes também e conversamos sobre isso durante a sessão. (AS 3, linhas 135-137)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] I found a music which contained a little bit of vocabulary about this, I sent it in advance, too, and we talked about it during the session. (AS3, line 135-137)</p>
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Excerpt (20):

<p><u>Maria:</u> Em nosso primeiro ano, o Luiz Carlos falou bastante, que era importante ouvir muita música em alemão. Num curso que a gente fez sobre curtas alemães. [...] (AS 6, linhas 300-302)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> I our first year, Luiz Carlos [German teacher at university] talked a lot about the importance of listening a lot to German music. In a course we had about German short films. [...] (AS 6, 300-302)</p>
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The excerpts demonstrate that the participants like to use music because it helps them remember new vocabulary and that “they hardly forget” it anymore. They also remember that their teachers had suggested to make use of music in the foreign language they learn since the beginning of their university course. This tactic is easily adopted by most learners because nowadays, nearly all students listen to music on a daily basis – be it on their mp3-players or mobile phones. Also, on the internet they have easy access to all types of music, so they can select their music genre and download their favourite songs onto their devices. In the teletandem context, learners usually get paired with partners of a similar age and with similar interests, if possible, and, thus, the teletandem partners can exchange the newest information about hits, music styles, bands, etc. they both like.

In some cases, the participants did not describe the tactics they used in detail but they mention some general tactics they would like to use or have already used with their teletandem partners. Generally, they mentioned the use of films and music (videos) to generate conversation topics or to show a certain grammatical structure of the foreign language or even to practise vocabulary. Learning in tandem opens up ways to several strategies and modes of learning due to its liberty of choosing on the part of the involved learners.

Excerpt (21):

<p><u>Aline:</u> Não, ele é de Karlsruhe. Aí:: e:le, a gente fez assim, se surgiu uma dúvida, a gente falava assim: olha! e eu falava: ah, mas não sei falar isso, né. Ah falava: ah, então, na próxima aula a gente vai falar disso. Então, pra (...?, (dentro?) de uma semana já preparava mesmo (...?) às vezes procurava uma música ou procurava um videozinho, ou alguma coisa assim. Então sempre gostei quando fazia Teletandem de fazer isso, deu uma dúvida assim, bem ... evidente, aí já voltava lá no meu caderno e na próxima aula já preparava alguma coisa. (AS 1-1, linhas 417-424)</p>	<p><u>Aline:</u> No, he is from Karlsruhe. The::n he:, we did it this way, if there was a doubt, we would say: look! And I said: ah, but I don't know how to say this, right. Then he said: Ah, so, next class we will talk about this. So, for (...? in?) one week we really prepared (...?) sometimes we looked for a music our a short video, or something like this. I always liked to do this while I was making teletandem, there was a doubt, ok... obviously I turned to my notebook and in the next class I would have prepared something. (AS 1-1, line 417-424)</p>
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Excerpt (22):

<p><u>Lena</u>: Não sei, ela falando aqui, né, que eles falam bastante de filme, talvez, uma possibilidade, tipo, a gente pode, por exemplo, assistir um filme, né, é, pegar um filme brasileiro aí. né. eu assisto aqui, ela assiste lá, e depois a gente pode discutir, eu acho que talvez isso seria uma boa para, pra ver a comunicação. né. A gente podia pegar uma letra de uma música, ouvir, tentar interpretar a música, a letra da música. acho que, isso... (AS 2, linhas 493-499)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: I don't know, listening to her here, right, that they are talking a lot about films, maybe, a possibility, like, we could, for example, watch a film. Right, we could get a Brazilian film, I watch it here, she watches it there and then we can discuss it, I think this could be a good thing for, to get some communication. Right? We could get some lyrics from a music, listen to it, try to interpret the music, the lyrics. I think that's it... (AS 2, line 493-499)</p>
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In excerpt 22, we can see how Lena takes over an idea of her peers (“I don’t know, what she has said here, that they talk a lot about films...”) and develops this idea further into a tactic she wants to test with her teletandem partner (“take a Brazilian film. I watch it here, she watches it over there and then we could discuss it”). So the stimulus she received from the comments and discussions of her peers makes her reflect on her own tactics she uses for foreign language learning in her teletandem partnership and makes her create new ways of learning.

For the strategy *Activating Knowledge* I found one concrete tactic participant Maria mentioned in the last PGM sessions when the mediator and the peers were talking about the general impressions and experiences from the teletandem project. The mediator talks about a personal learning experience during her undergraduate studies when she was listening to Brazilian music before an exam in order to activate knowledge, stimulating thoughts and memory in a Portuguese/Brazilian direction. Maria then answered:

Excerpt (23):

<p><u>Maria</u>: Mas eu faço isso. Antes das aulas de alemão, eu ponho música alemã pra escutar. (AS 6, linhas 292-293)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: But I do this. Before the German classes I put some German music to listen to it. (AS 6, line 292-293)</p>
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She has already used this tactic and listened to music in German before her German classes. This tactic is important as it helps the learner to focus on the foreign language before even starting to use it for communication. Even for a teletandem session it is interesting to use this tactic as a way to mentally prepare for the communication with the teletandem partner.

In relation to the strategy *Reasoning*, a comment of participant Taís can be shown to underline which tactics she used for deductive reasoning.

Excerpt (24):

<p><u>Taís</u>: [parte incompreensível] aí ele falou assim o, não, você pode responder na escrita. Mas [parte incompreensível] o Hörverstehen TestDaf é, ... [parte incompreensível] você vai trabalhar, ah... mais uma vez, estamos juntos. eu já tive que fazer. Então, vamos discutir sobre isso. Discutimos. Ah,então, já sei que o vocabulário que isso, ... o vocabulário, ah, então, que bom. Fazemos a parte do vocabulário. Depois partimos para as questões, então vamos ler de novo. Lemos de novo. Aí, [parte incompreensível] você tem que fazer um novo lá, mas é alguma coisa que você tem que trabalhar mais. O que [parte incompreensível] é que está tudo ótimo. A questão é, como posso tirar mais proveito disso?.... (AS 4, linhas 485-495)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: [part incomprehensible] Then he said like this, ey, no, you can answer by writing. But [part incomprehensible] the Hörverstehen [listening] TestDaf [a German proficiency test] is... [part incomprehensible] you will work, ah... once again, we're together. I already had to do this. So let's discuss it. We discussed it. Ah, ok, I already know that it's the vocabulary... the vocabulary, ah, ok, good. So we did the vocabulary part. Then we went on to the questions, so let's read them again. We read them again. Then, [part incomprehensible] you have to do a new one, but it is something you have to work more for. What [part incomprehensible] is that everything is perfect. The question is, how can I take more advantage out of this? ... (AS 4, line 485-495)</p>
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Taís was preparing for a proficiency test in German FL and at that time strongly concentrating on listening tasks. In the excerpt, she explains how she works with her teletandem partner on the listening tasks and how one can try to deduct information and vocabulary only by reading the explanation and questions of the listening task. Many teletandem pairs usually have more communicative objectives for their teletandem and focus on the discussion of different cultural issues such as politics or national holidays, amongst many others (Zakir, 2015; da Costa, 2015).

But in this case we can see how very specific learning tasks like listening exercises of a proficiency test can be worked on with the teletandem partner as well. And in this case, tactics like deductive reasoning play a larger role – because there is a specific goal of achieving the right answers in the listening test – than in a seemingly more informal conversation.

In relation to the last strategy of the group of Cognitive Strategies, *Conceptualising with Details*, tactics in the area of analysing and decoding or comparing and contrasting across languages were found among the comments of the participants. Excerpt 25 clearly illustrates the tactic of comparing across languages:

Excerpt (25):

<p><u>Nina</u>: só se vocês explicarem em alemão pra ela isso, que é bem mais fácil, né? <i>wo e wohin</i>. (AS 1-1, line 282-283)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: only if you explain this to her in German, which is far easier, right? <i>Wo and wohin</i>. (AS 1-1, line 282-283)</p>
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In a discussion about how to explain the Portuguese grammatical phenomenon *onde* (where) and *aonde* (where to) to one of the German teletandem partners, Nina suggests to simply use the German correspondent words *wo* and *wohin* as this would be much easier than to explain the difference with Portuguese sentences or situations. Contrasting or comparing across languages can be particularly effective when, in this case, the Portuguese language competence is still low and an explanation in Portuguese would be hardly understood by the learner.

Excerpts 26 and 27 are examples of analysing the language in order to decode different sounds of some Brazilian Portuguese words. Leandra wants to help her German teletandem partner to understand and improve the pronunciation of the different sounds of the letter “r” in Brazilian Portuguese.

Excerpt (26):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] várias vezes, assim, durante a conversa ela me pede pra escrever o que eu, eu estou falando. várias vezes mesmo. e aí, ah, aí eu tento, por exemplo, ela queria, tava com dificuldade do som, ela tem muita dificuldade do som do r, né, porque o r é um muito (...?) urático, ure uri uru, r do meio das palavras ela não, não pronuncia, (...?) a palavra era, que a palavra era "direção", ela: "dirreção", não "direção", "dirreção", aí eu, eu falei pra ela, con.. assim, tem outras palavras que aconteceu a mesma coisa que é como, pronuncia "Arara", ehm, sei lá, ... "ratoeira", para você perceber que no começo tem um som e no meio tem outro som, aí fiz uma listinha de palavras pra ela, falei pra ela, tenta pronunciar estas palavras ... acho que até agora, não sei, eu acho que até agora foi mais proveitoso pra ela do que pra mim porque. (AS 1-2, linhas 193-202)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] several times, during the conversation, she asks me to write what I, I am saying. Really several times. So then, ah, then I try, for example, she wanted, she had difficulties with the sound, she really has huge difficulties with the sound of the r, right, because the r is very (...?) <i>urático, ure, uri, uru</i>, r in the middle of words she doesn't pronounce, (...?) the word was, that the word was "<i>direção</i>" [direction], she: "<i>dirreção</i>" [guttural r-sound], no, "<i>direção</i>" [r as voiced alveolar tap], "<i>dirreção</i>", then I, I told her to... well, there are other words where the same thing happened just like, pronounce "Arara" [Brazilian bird], ahm, don't know... "ratoeira" [mouse trap], for you to perceive that at the beginning there is one sound and in the middle there is another sound, so then I prepared a small list of words for her, I told her, try to pronounce these words... I think that until now, I don't know, I think for now she had more advantages [of the teletandem sessions] than I had because. (As 1-2, line 193-202)</p>
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Excerpt (27):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Por exemplo, a ênfase... [parte incompreensível] já falei várias vezes, eh, ra - ha - ra - ha [para mostrar a diferença entre o r na garganta e o r dental] [risos] nossa, como "caro", não sei o que, tipo coloquei várias palavras: caro, touro, não sei o que, não sei o que. (AS 2, linhas 1133-1136).</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: For example, the emphasis... [part incomprehensible] I already said many times, ahm, ra – ha – ra – ha [to show the differences between guttural r and voiced alveolar tap r] [laughs] wow, like in "<i>caro</i>" [expensive], whatever, I gave several words: <i>caro, touro</i> [bull], etc. etc. (AS 2, line 1133-1136)</p>
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Leandra tries to find words that present the different phonetic realisations of the “r”-phoneme and she also thinks about short exercises and examples for her teletandem partner to practise the different sounds. This exemplifies what can be observed often: many teletandem partners actively look for tactics which can help their partners to practise different parts of the respective foreign language they study.

In this section, we saw how the participants of this study described tactics belong to several cognitive strategies such as Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Activating Knowledge, Reasoning and Conceptualising with Details. In the following section, we will see how the learners dealt with meta-affective and affective strategies.

4.1.1.4 Meta-affective and Affective Strategies

As there were only a few tactic recurrences found for Meta-Affective and Affective Strategies, they will be discussed in one section. Meta-Affective strategies can be explained with the metaphor of the “electricity manager” (Oxford, 2011, p.62) which is managing the electricity of foreign language learning, i.e. the affective spark of emotions, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and motivations that keep language learning moving. Meta-affective strategies are needed because FL learners are not just cognitive information- processing machines. Without meta-affective strategies learners might be less likely to reflect on their affective needs and, hence, might not take the affective control that is often necessary for L2 learning, particularly in the early stages¹⁶⁴ (Oxford, 2011, p. 62). The following meta-affective strategies were found:

- ✓ Planning Ahead for Affect
- ✓ Monitoring Affect
- ✓ Evaluating Affect

The affective strategies are, to stay within the realm of the same metaphor, comparable to the “electricity workers”. They work best with guidance of their manager. Some of their main functions are creating optimistic emotions, beliefs and attitudes and spurring and maintaining motivation. It is difficult for everyone to learn without these positive feelings and motivation. Affective strategies are especially important for distance L2 learners who do not have on-site support from a teacher or class. Especially in free telecollaboration projects (i.e. not

¹⁶⁴ In the learner diaries, we can find traces of motivation and positive feelings in regards to the foreign language learning in teletandem. Participant Lena wrote four learner diaries and in all four diaries there can be found 17 references to positive feelings (i.e. Foi bem interessante... [It was really interesting]; Fiquei muito feliz... [I was very happy] (Lena_Diary_1)).

institutionalised or only semi-institutionalised (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014), a mediator is important because she can provide this support to the students. The following affective strategy could be found in the data of this study:

✓ Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs and Attitudes

In relation to the meta-affective strategies, one tactic could be identified which can be related to the strategy *Planning Ahead for Affect*.

Excerpt (28):

<p>Taís: Então, [parte incompreensível] aberto, então, por exemplo, para um, eu tenho que mandar, para Janis, eu tenho que mandar uma lista de vocabulário, eu tenho que mandar antes, porque, ele pede! Se eu não faço eu me sinto mal. uma lista com algumas coisas pra ele É importante. Agora para o outro, por exemplo, se eu mandar, vamos dizer que a gente se encontra na terça, assim, mandar segunda-feira alguma coisa sobre "cem anos de solidão" que é o nosso próximo tema, ele vai ficar super feliz e dali [parte incompreensível] o vocabulário. (AS 3, linhas 571-577)</p>	<p>Taís: Ok, [part incomprehensible] open, for example, for a, I have to send to Janis, I have to send him a vocabulary list, I have to send it beforehand because he asks for it! If I do not do it, I will feel bad. A list with some things IS important for him. Yet for the other one, for example, if I send him something, let's say we meet on Tuesday, then, sending something on Monday about "Cem anos de solidão" [One hundred years of solitude, novel by Gabriel García Marquez] which is the next topic, he will be very happy and then [part incomprehensible] the vocabulary. (AS 3, line 571-577)</p>
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In this excerpt, Taís tells her peers about her different experiences with the teletandem partners in relation to preparing or planning the next teletandem session. About her second partner she knows that he will be happy if she sends him material for the next topic in advance. With this *planning* of the session's content in advance she makes her partner feel good, therefore, his good feelings and motivation will influence his learning. At this stage, Taís already demonstrates awareness of the different (learner) personalities of her tandem partners and knows how to react to each of them. With this behaviour, she promotes the L2 learning of her partners.

Taís is a participant who also seems to be able to monitor her affective state during a task which belongs to the strategy *Monitoring Affect*. By monitoring her performance and the results of tasks she completes with her teletandem partners ("What can I do? What am I not able to do, yet?") she motivates or demotivates herself which in turn is also monitored by her.

Excerpt (29):

<p>Taís: Ah, é que, comigo funciona com a motivação. Então eu vejo, uma coisa que tá</p>	<p>Taís: Ah, it's just, with me it works with motivation. I see something that is there... so,</p>
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ali...então, assim, é algo mais com o emocional , nem é algo tão [parte incompreensível] Ah, ok... é meio emocional. O que eu já conseguia, o que já consigo? O que eu ainda NÃO consigo fazer? [risos] Também pode desmotivar , então é mais ou menos por essa linha. (AS 4, linhas 238-242)	well, it is something more emotional , it is not anything [part incomprehensible] Ah, ok, ... it is half emotional. What was I able to, what am I able to? What is it which I am still not able to do? [laughs] This can demotivate as well , so it's more or less in this direction. (AS 4, lines 238-242)
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Through emotions and motivation, she tries to monitor and organise her learning process. In general, we can assume that learners are conscious of the fact that with high motivation one learns better than with low or no motivation at all (Oxford 2011, p. 61f). However, reflection on what Taís shows in excerpt 29 demonstrates that she consciously reflects on her emotional state in relation to her L2 learning process which can lead her to be a more successful learner (Oxford, 2011, p. 64).

Regarding the *Evaluation of Affect*, we found two tactics which can be related to this strategy. Taís is evaluating some of her learning outcomes more negatively while Lena is evaluating her learning process during her teletandem in a very positive way (excerpts 30 and 31).

Excerpt (30):

<u>Taís</u> : Não, mas eu [parte incompreensível] diários de aprendizagem, gente do céu, vou escrever algo decepcionando , né... então... (AS 4, line 708-710)	<u>Taís</u> : No, but I [part incomprehensible] learner diaries, oh my, I will write something very disappointing , right... so... (AS 4, lines 708-710)
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Excerpt (31):

<u>Lena</u> : Não, estou satisfeita, gostei muito de fazer, perdi todo meu medo , sabe, medo que eu tinha, e o pessoal que fala pra mim, ah, eu tenho muito medo pra falar, não, não tenha medo, sabe. Eu falo do nosso grupo aqui, aí eu já passo as dicas pra eles também, sabe. (AS 6, 455-458)	<u>Lena</u> : No, I am satisfied, I really liked to do it, I lost all my fears , you know, fear that I had, and the people who tell me, ah, I am too frightened to talk, no, no, don't be frightened, you know. I am talking about our group here, so I will give them the tips as well, you know. (AS 6, 455-458)
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In the data before the extraction of excerpt 30, Taís tries to explain to her peers and the mediator what she does in order to turn her learning process around and make it more efficient. As she has the feeling of not succeeding in changing her learning attitudes and, therefore, not being more efficient in her learning process, she expresses her dismay about it in the PGM

session but also mentions that she will write about this fact in her learner diary (“I will write something very disappointing” AS 4, line 710). Taís submitted seven learner diaries but only in the last two diaries, dated 28 and 29 of October, she writes concretely about her frustration of not succeeding in specific exercises (especially listening exercises which are essential part of proficiency tests for German): “A parte do Hörverstehen do DaF é muito difícil... eu me senti muito mal [...] eu não entendi muita coisa...” [The listening part of the DaF-test was very difficult... I felt very bad [...] I didn’t understand very much...] (Taís_Diary06), or also “[...] fiquei um pouco frustrada...” [I became a bit frustrated] (Taís_Diary07). And it is also in the last learner diary where she reflects on her learning strategies and questions herself if she is adopting the right way: “Sim... eu poderia debater melhor, formular melhor os argumentos... a minha dúvida é a seguinte: será que eu fico treinando muito gramática e esqueço do resto?” [Yes... I could improve debating, improve formulating the arguments... my question is the following: Am I training too much grammar and forgetting the rest?] (Taís_Diary07). Taís is “frustrated” with her learning outcomes and, therefore, insecure about her learning style and evaluates her learning process in a more negative way.

Lena on the other hand makes a very positive final evaluation about her learning and her affective state and progress during the teletandem learning period. She affirms to have lost all her fear, especially in relation to her speech production – something that her classmates, for example, still struggle with. In other excerpts, which will follow in the next sections, we can see that Lena was still a very timid and insecure teletandem participant because she had only attended a few months of German classes at university when she started the teletandem. By reading her self-evaluation at the end of the teletandem project and realising the self-confidence she had gained through her teletandem partnership, we can see at least one example of how a teletandem can be beneficial to the learner’s learning process.

Regarding the group of affective strategies, I was able to identify two tactics for the strategy *Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs and Attitudes*. In both cases, they are concerned with creating or activating positive emotions; in the first excerpt, this is done through positive thoughts and statements and in the second excerpt through maintaining a good relationship with the teletandem partner

Excerpt (32):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] Acho que isso também porque como to fazendo aula de conversação fora da faculdade, então julgo perder aquele, aquele me:do, aquele bloqueio de se expressar. então pra mim foi, foi tranquilo. aí no final</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] I think this as well because as I am attending conversation classes outside the university, I think I already lost this, this, fear, this blockade to express oneself. So for me it was, was easy. At the end of the session</p>
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da sessão, a gente fez um feedback, eu perguntei pra ela o que ela achou da sessão. e ela disse que tinha gostado muito, ... aí nos combinamos que falaríamos na próxima sessão. [...] (AS 1-2, linhas 106-112)	we gave us some feedback, I asked her what she thought of the session. And she said that she had really enjoyed it, ... so then we agreed on the topic for the next session. [...] (AS 1-2, line 106-112)
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Leandra is expressing her positive thoughts about her losing fear of experiencing a blackout or a blockade when speaking to a native speaker of German. As she attends additional German classes outside the university, she has a little bit more accustomed to communicating in German and already feels less anxious regarding her teletandem sessions. By stating this, she is creating a positive emotion which automatically sustains her own motivation and can even be transferred to her peers in the PGM session. Seeing that one of the learners has little or no anxiety when it comes to talk to the teletandem partner may put the others at ease and encourage them to feel less intimidated, too.

Excerpt (33):

<u>Célia</u> : [...] Então... e ela não me corrige tanto, ela não se importa tanto... e, isso me impede um pouco de, de refletir, porque ela está me entendendo, mas às vezes, transmitir a mensagem não é o mais importante. é que eu e ela, estamos tão interessadas em discutir as coisas, ela quer tão saber o que estou contando pra ela, ou vice versa... que: a gente acaba não atendendo a essas coisas, entendeu? A Maíke me compreende, indiferente de... com quem eu fale ou não. Talvez isso prejudique... não sei. [risos] (AS 4, linhas 261-268)	<u>Célia</u> : [...] So... and she does not correct me much, it is not that important for her... and this hinders me a little bit to, to reflect, because she understands me, but sometimes, to transmit the message is not the most important. It's just like that I and she, we are interested in discussing things, she really wants to know what I am telling her and the other way around... so: we don't pay so much attention to the things, you know? Maíke understands me independently from... with whom I talk or not. Perhaps this is bad.... I don't know. [laughs] (AS 4, line 261-268)
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In this excerpt, Célia expresses that the teletandem partnership gives her a sense of security and creates positive emotions for her. Her partner Maíke and she are very close; they share the same interests and both seem to enjoy the meetings and conversation with the partner – at least from Célia's perspective. Célia feels that Maíke understands her in all situations and this makes her feel relaxed and comfortable to speak to her in the L2 even if it is still difficult for her to manage a conversation in German.

In this section, tactics in regard to meta-affective and affective strategies were identified in the selected excerpts. The found tactics are related to strategies such as *Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs and Attitudes* for a specific affective strategy and *Planning Ahead*,

Monitoring and Evaluating Affect for specific meta-affective strategies. In the next section, the use of meta-sociocultural-interactive strategies will be explored.

4.1.1.5 *Meta-Sociocultural-interactive Strategies*

Meta-SI strategies are comparable to a “community manager” (Oxford, 2011, p. 87), they act like the overall manager of contexts, communication and culture in foreign language learning. These meta-SI strategies could be identified in the data:

- ✓ Planning for Context, Communication and Culture
- ✓ Obtaining and Using Resources for Context, Communication and Culture

Regarding the first strategy *Planning for Context, Communication and Culture*, one tactic could be found which expresses a plan for a communication situation in a specific culture and context, as can be seen below. Célia was talking about her learning behaviour and how she would change in different cultural circumstances:

Excerpt (34):

<p><u>Célia</u>: Nesse ponto eu sou bem sincera, assim. Quando eu estiver na Alemanha, vou com certeza mudar isso, porque aí vai ser tapa na cara mesmo [risos] [parte incompreensível] uma coisa mais... não sei, ehm. (AS 4, linhas 743-745)</p>	<p><u>Célia</u>: With this aspect I am very honest. If I am in Germany one day, I will certainly change this, because it will be like a slap in the face [laughs] [part incomprehensible] one thing more... I don't know, ahm. (AS 4, line 743-745)</p>
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Célia says that she usually is not very dedicated, does not always do her homework, or does not write down a lot during her teletandem sessions. In the excerpt above, she realises that this might be to her disadvantage if she were to go to Germany and that she certainly would change some of her behaviour. Therefore, the plan is to change certain tactics for a more beneficial stay in Germany, one context for learning more about the target language and culture.

In relation to the strategy *Obtaining and Using Resources for Context, Communication and Culture*, the learners mentioned numerous tactics, especially in regards to technological resources. As teletandem is a computer and internet-assisted learning context, naturally, significantly more technological resources will be used in comparison to other learning contexts (e.g. the classroom or face-to-face tandem). The following excerpts contain different tactics in relation to the use of technological resources for communication with the teletandem partner.

Excerpt (35):

<u>Lena</u> : é, porque é assim. primeiro... minha parceira... EU mando email pra ela em alemão, e ela me manda em português. todos os emails. (AS 1-2, linhas 419-421)	<u>Lena</u> : It's, because it's like this. First... my partner... I send her an e-mail in German, and she sends me one in Portuguese. All e-mails. (AS 1-2, line 419-421)
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Excerpt (36):

<u>Leandra</u> : é legal, tipo, você usar, por exemplo, o, os outros meios, né, para fora do tandem, tipo o facebook . [parte incompreensível] é um laço diferente com uma pessoa! (AS 2, linhas 733-735)	<u>Leandra</u> : it's great for you to use, for example, different tools, right, outside the tandem, like facebook . [part incomprehensible] it's a kind of different relation with a person! (AS 2, line 733-735)
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Excerpt (37):

<u>Leandra</u> : Deu certo! Usei ... usei powerpoint , fiz uma apresentação, alguns slides para mostrar para a minha parceira as coisas do, ehm, sobre os móveis da casa. Então, eu achei figuras... fiz uma apresentaçãozinha, tipo coloquei a cama e escrevi "cama". Aí mandei para ela com antecedência, antes da sessão, para ela ver. (AS 3, linhas 131-135)	<u>Leandra</u> : It worked! I used... used powerpoint , I prepared a presentation, some slides to show my partner the things, ahm, about furniture in the house. So I found pictures... I prepared a small presentation, like, I put a bed and I wrote "bed". Then I sent it to her some time before our meeting so that she could see it. (AS3, line 131-135)
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The selected excerpts above reveal that e-mails were widely used, especially for negotiating and organising the teletandem partnership. E-mails did not only serve for the purpose of negotiation but also as an exercise with which reading and writing skills can be trained. Another frequently used technological resource was the social network Facebook. Many of the learners have a Facebook account and like to connect with their teletandem partners via this social network. Leandra mentions that it seems to be a different connection she and her partner have. The teletandem project, especially when it is institutionally integrated (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014), is a more formal learning context, associated with a university and language teachers/mediators involved. Thus, the connection between learners via Facebook lends a differentiated, more informal context to the communication. First of all, the learners are able to view more personal information about their partners if they make such information available. The chat and videoconference applications give them the opportunity to meet spontaneously when they see each other as 'online' in the contact list. As a result, these technological resources enable further communication situations for the teletandem partners.

Another technological resource, as cited by Leandra in excerpt 36, is the programme Power Point which she used to support the learning of her teletandem partner by showing images and words she prepared in advance for a certain topic. Beyond that, the participants also resorted to the internet by working with online dictionaries, playing videos on YouTube or using the chat function of their communication programme, too.

Other times, the participants mentioned the use of print or in-person resources for context, communication or culture such as working with a questionnaire, dictionary or texts to promote communication between the partners.

Excerpt (38):

<p><u>Maria:</u> montar um questionário para eles, para eles responderem a gente. Porque tinha coisas tanto pessoais ali, que era principalmente do dia, né? Como é o seu dia, né? que horas você acordava, que horas tomava seu café. (AS 2, linhas 1021-1024)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> Create a questionnaire for them, so that they have to answer us. Because there were personal things there, which were basically about the day, right? How is your day, right? the time you get up, the time you have breakfast. (AS 2, line 1021-1024)</p>
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Excerpt (39):

<p><u>Gislaine:</u> E ele gostava muito de, às vezes, colocar um texto, tanto para eu ler, quanto para ele ler, a gente discutia, então deu alguma coisa, entendeu. (AS 3, linhas 463-465)</p>	<p><u>Gislaine:</u> and he enjoyed it a lot, sometimes, to use a text, for me to read, or for him to read it, then we would discuss it, so he used some things, you know. (AS 3, line 463-465)</p>
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Excerpt (40):

<p><u>Maria:</u> na verdade, eu entendi relacionando que <i>Kaiser</i> era,... que Júlio César era <i>Kaiser</i>, né. [risos] Então ele era imperador! Mas assim, ele escreveu algumas outras coisas, havia tipo palavras ... pegava dicionário pra procurar, que palavra é essa? Que eu achava que era importante no texto, porque às vezes as palavras mais ... assim, você pesquisando um monte de palavras, você desencana. (AS 6, linhas 200-205)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> actually, I thought that <i>Kaiser</i> was... that Julius Caesar was <i>Kaiser</i>, right. [laughs] He was an emperor! But he wrote some other things, there were words... I got the dictionary to look for the word, which word is this one? I thought it was important in the text, because sometimes the words which are more... well, if you have to look for many words, you kind of desist. (AS 6, line 200-05)</p>
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One type of resource used by the German students and often commented by the Brazilian learners were questionnaires to obtain more information about the target culture. Working with texts or using the dictionary were found to be other resources to facilitate communication.

The fact of merely having a teletandem partner can be considered a tactic for sociocultural-interactive strategies, because the partner is a person (= a resource) with whom learning by communication, context and culture can be enhanced. The participants also mentioned this specific fact, as can be noticed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt (41):

<p><u>Leandra:</u> Ele fala assim que, ele tem a impressão – ele tem a impressão que ele chegou nu, num momento que ele não sabe mais assim, o que ele tem que aprender. Ele sabe que ele tem que aprender mais, mas ele não consegue identificar, assim, o que que ele tem que aprender. Ele falou assim pra mim, nossa, eu preciso arrumar um contato da Alemanha, não sei, alguém para conversar, alguma coisa. Não sei... (AS 5, linhas 680-685)</p>	<p><u>Leandra:</u> He told me that, he has the impression – he has the impression that he arrived at, at a point in which he doesn't know, well, what to learn. He knows that he has to learn more but he can't identify what it is he needs to learn. He said to me like this, wow, I need to get a contact in Germany, I don't know, somebody to talk to, some thing. I don't know... (AS 5, line 680-685)</p>
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Leandra talks about a friend who has also studied German for a while and graduated from university already. Nevertheless, he wants to continue studying German but does not know exactly where to start. A tandem partner seems to be possible solution for him as he envisions a person from the target culture as a resource to promote his language learning. What becomes evident here, is that even tactics from other learners, external to the specific learner community, may influence learners' reflection.

After exploring some of the tactics used by learners in relation to meta-sociocultural-interactive strategies (*Planning and Obtaining and Using Resources for Communication and Culture*), we will now look at more specific socio-cultural interactive strategies.

4.1.1.6 Sociocultural-interactive Strategies

SI strategies directly facilitate communication and understanding of sociocultural contexts and the roles of the person in these contexts (Oxford, 2011, p. 88). They help learners to interact and collaborate with others, seek help and deal with sociocultural issues of identity and power¹⁶⁵. The following strategies of this group could be identified through the mentioning of tactics in the data:

✓ Interacting to Learn and Communicate

¹⁶⁵ In relation to this, also see the dissertations of Zakir, 2015; Vassallo, 2010; Funo, 2015, Da Costa, 2015.

✓ Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communication

With regards to the strategy *Interacting to Learn and Communicate*, again, there is to say that the whole learning context (tele)tandem can be seen as a tactic for this strategy due to the constant interactive character of the teletandem session and also beyond that in email exchanges or social network activities. This is certainly one of the reasons why several tactics in relation to the sociocultural-interactive dimension of Oxford's strategy typology could be identified. A frequently mentioned group of tactics involve asking for explanation, clarification, verification or repetition. The following excerpts show some of these tactics

Excerpt 42:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: porque, eh, eu achei que tá uma coisa que (...?) com Thomas na aula de conversação, e eu acho legal o que ele faz. Se eu pergunto, eh, o que significa uma palavra dele, ele não me dá a tradução da palavra. Ele vai me ex-, ele tenta me explicar em alemão o que significa a palavra. Então acho isso é legal (...?) pergunta é uma coisa em português, e em vez de simplesmente traduzir para o alemão, ah tal coisa é tal coisa. você tem que (...?) uma forma com que, ... com que você explica o português, tentar mostrar para a pessoa em vez de só, só traduzir. eh, você tentar mostrar (...?).(AS 1-1, linhas 323-331)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: because, ahm, I thought that (...?) with Thomas in the conversation class, and I really like what he does. When I ask him, ahm, the significance of a word, he doesn't give me the translation of the word. He will ex-, he tries to explain the signification in German. I think this is great (...?) you ask something in Portuguese and instead of simply translation it to German, ah, this is this, you have (...?) a form with which... with which you explain Portuguese, trying to show the person, instead of only translation. Ahm, you try to show it (...?) (AS 1-1, line 323-331)</p>
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Excerpt 43:

<p><u>Maria</u>: Não tem como, às vezes, fazer uma comparação de frases, por exemplo, "eu fui para o centro" e "andei pelo centro". tipo como se você já estivesse lá. e aí você também vai ter que explicar a diferença entre o pelo e o pêlo com acento. (AS 2, linhas 49-52)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: Isn't it possible, sometimes, to make a comparison of sentences, for example, "eu fui para o centro" [I went to the city] and "andei pelo centro" [I walked in the city] as if you were already there. Then you will also have to explain the difference between pelo and pêlo with accent. (AS 2, line 49-52)</p>
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Excerpt 44:

<p><u>Maria</u>: do que ele esta tentando falar. Se eu não entendo, eu peço, se ele não me entende, ele pede. Apesar de que eu falo bem devagar o português com ele, então. (AS 6, linhas 224-226)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: what he is trying to say. If I do not understand, I will ask him, if he doesn't understand me, he will ask me. Besides that I am speaking a very slow Portuguese with him. (AS 6. Line 224-226)</p>
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In these excerpts, the tactics are not always stated explicitly, e.g. “If I don’t understand, I ask my partner xy”, yet, these comments show that the participants use these tactics in order to help the partner to understand better or get clarification or repetition themselves. Sometimes it is just an inquiry about the meaning of a new vocabulary or grammar structures (see excerpt 42) or even cultural traditions. There are also several possible forms of how questions are explained or clarified. The partners can either provide the direct translation in another language in which both partners are more proficient or they use images and objects to explain a word or even describe whole words or concepts in the respective foreign language in order to give more L2 input to the partner.

For the same strategy, we can still relate tactics such as giving feedback as a specific form of interacting with the partner.

Excerpt (45):

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] aí no final da sessão, a gente fez um feedback, eu perguntei pra ela o que ela achou da sessão. E ela disse que tinha gostado muito, ... aí nos combinamos que falaríamos na próxima sessão. [...] (AS 1-2, linhas 109-112)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] then at the end of the session, we gave some feedback, I asked her what she thought of the session. And she said that she had really enjoyed it... then we agreed on the topic for next session. [...] (AS 1-2, line 109-112)</p>
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Excerpt (46):

<p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, eu tenho um feedback oral e escrito. O escrito eu tenho aqui, posso mostrar pra vocês, se quiserem. [risos] (AS 5, linhas 386-387)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, I have oral and written feedback. The written one I have here with me, I can show it to you if you want [laughs] (AS 5, line 386-387)</p>
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Apart from constituting a significant part of the teletandem session, giving feedback promotes the communication of the partners because it enables the partners to negotiate positive experiences they would like to continue and negative experience they would like to change. As can be observed in the excerpts above, forms of feedback vary. There is the feedback at the end of a teletandem session in which the partners reflect on their session in a kind of meta-tandem. The partners are also in a position to give more specific feedback orally and directly upon completion of a task or exercise during the sessions or in writing, by e-mail, for example.

Changing the languages used in a teletandem partnership is another tactic regarding a reciprocally balanced interaction between the partners. This tactic is actually suggested by

several guidelines and handbooks on tandem learning (Brammerts & Kleppin, 2001; Telles, 2009); in fact, it is important for a respectful and satisfactory interaction for both partners.

Excerpt (47):

<p><u>Maria:</u> (...?) Tipo, primeiro, ele manda pra mim em alemão e depois em português para me forçar ler em alemão, e eu faço o contrário, mando primeiro em português e depois em alemão para forçar ele ler em português. (AS 1-2, linhas 423-426)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> (...?) Well, first, he sends me in German and then in Portuguese so that I am forced to read in German, and I am doing the other way around, first I send it in Portuguese and then in German to force him to read Portuguese.</p>
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A balanced use of the two languages both in written communication (emails outside the teletandem interaction) and in oral exchange during the teletandem sessions in most cases may trigger a sense of satisfaction with the learners. They will not feel disadvantaged in relation to the partner, because giving and taking is balanced. This, in turn may boost motivation and improve learning outcomes as positive affective factors in regards to learning have a positive influence on the entire learning process (Oxford, 2011; Garcia, 2010).

Moreover, mutual corrections are directly related to the interaction. The participants usually have to negotiate their individual correction styles depending on the partners' preferences. Some learners chose to be corrected immediately after having made the mistake while others favour to speak uninterruptedly for longer periods of time and not receive the corrective feedback until the end of the teletandem session. Thus, different tactics related to correction modes exist, as other researchers in teletandem have asserted (Santos, 2009; Vassallo & Telles, 2009b).

Excerpt 48:

<p><u>Taís:</u> Mas com o meu parceiro, ele pede assim. Eu gosto ser corrigida na hora e eu gosto ter exemplos. Então a gente falou assim. Quando eu falo algo errada, pára Taís! ele escreve também o que foi errado e dá um exemplo de como seria o certo. só que aí, né, eu falo assim, na hora que tou falando, você escreve na forma certa, e no final da sessão eu quero que você me de os exemplos, então trocar a ordem! porque senão ele pede um fio de [parte incompreensível] (AS 3, linhas 359-365)</p>	<p><u>Taís:</u> But with my partner, he asks me the following. I like to be corrected immediately and I like to get examples. So we agreed on the following. When I say something wrong, stop Taís! He also writes down what was wrong and then gives an example about how would be the correct version. But then I told him, in the moment I am speaking, just write the correct form and at the end of the sessions I would like you to give me the examples, so we changed the order! Because if not he asks for [part incomprehensible] (AS 3, line 359-365)</p>
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Excerpt 49:

<p><u>Maria:</u> (...?) alguma coisa de abril que ele não escreveu abril, o aniversário dele. e aí eu coloquei: A tamtamtam, que a gente, desde da primeira sessão a gente começou a fazer a correção dessa forma, de pegar o que o outro escreveu errado e repetir certo e acrescentar alguma coisa. Tipo... ou fazer uma pergunta. então a gente faz a pergunta, tem alguma coisa errada, responde – para as crianças, sabe, ah... entendeu, então responde tudo copiando a pergunta (...?) (AS 1-2, linhas 469-475)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> (...?) something with April when he didn't write April, his birthday. So then I said: THE tamtamtam, that we, since the first session we started to make the correction this way, to get what the other wrote wrong and repeat it correctly and add something. Like... or to ask a question. So we ask a question, there is something wrong, answer – for kids, you know, ah.... You got it so answer everything repeating the question (...?) (AS 1-2, line 469-475)</p>
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In relation to the strategy *Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communication*, we can also locate varying indications for tactics used by the teletandem participants. One of them is using other words to continue to communicate despite the gap in knowledge.

Excerpt (50):

<p><u>Maria:</u> humhum... A gente escreve e fala. é. é que abordamos, por exemplo, ehm, tentar, se não vem a palavra na cabeça dele em português, para ele me falar em alemão, em inglês! Para ele não tentar falar alemão quando ele tiver tentando falar português, e eu não tentar falar português na hora que tiver. [...] (AS 6, linhas 92-96)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> hmhm... We write and talk. It's, it's that we approach, for example, ahm, trying, if the word doesn't come to his mind in Portuguese, he will say the word in German, in English! So that he doesn't try to speak German while he is trying to speak Portuguese and I don't try to speak Portuguese in the moment when [...] (AS 6, line 92-96)</p>
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Excerpt 50 contains an example of how Maria and her partner deal with knowledge gaps. In their case, they sometimes fall back onto a third language to continue understanding and communication. Apart from the case above, other language-related tactics might be used such as translating into the native language of the teletandem partner who is having difficulties to understand a word or concept in the foreign language.

Another tactic is to change the subject when the first topic in the foreign language seems too difficult to continue with or when the topic has been exhausted as becomes evident in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 51:

<p><u>Maria:</u> [...] Então a gente consegue, parece que vai surgindo, a, às vezes... às vezes também fica meio mudo, mas [parte incompreensível] Acabou aquele assunto... e aí ele fala pra mim:</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> [...] So we are able to, it seems that it emerges, sometimes... sometimes we also stay a little bit silent, but [part incomprehensible] one topic is finished... and then he asks me:</p>
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e aí, o que você fez ontem? [risos] começa um assunto bobo que é, o QUE você fez ontem?	ok, so what did you do yesterday? [laughs] We start a minor topic which is, WHAT did you do yesterday?
<u>Lena</u> : Traz um outro assunto!	<u>Lena</u> : getting a new topic!
<u>Mediadora</u> : Isso, é. (AS 6, linhas 134-142)	<u>Mediator</u> : Exactly. (AS 6, line 134-142)

In Lena's case, she anticipates difficulties in maintaining communication with her teletandem partner, even if it is about simple topics (aspects of everyday life). She is only in her third semester of the German course at university and her language competency is still low¹⁶⁶. That is why she used the tactic of preparing a topic and, in fact, her whole speech in advance.

Excerpt 52:

<u>Lena</u> : [...] E como a gente, ou pelo menos eu, preparo o que eu vou falar, porque se eu deixar pra falar na hora eu sei que não vou conseguir , então, não há muito que corrigir assim, mas eu vejo que isso não tá me ajudando muito. Porque eu acabo esquecendo o que eu falei, entendeu, porque, tipo, eu mais tava lendo do que falando, e eu vi que acho que ela também tava fazendo isso, assim, eh, ela prepara também o que ela vai falar e acho que isso não vai ajudar tanto, isso não é o objetivo do tandem, né. [...] (AS 1-2, linhas 65-72)	<u>Lena</u> : [...] And as we, or at least, I, I prepare what I will say because if I wait until the moment I have to speak, I know I won't be able to , so, there is little to correct, but I perceive that this is not really helping me much. Because I forget what I just said, you know, because, I was more reading than talking, and I saw that she, too, is doing this, ahm, she prepares what she is going to say as well, and I think that this won't help us very much, this is not the objective of tandem, right [...] (AS 1-2, line 65-72)
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In the same excerpt, she also reflects on the disadvantages of this tactic. She felt more secure using the tactic of preparing the topics in detail for her teletandem session, i.e. writing down exactly what she plans to say, but after her first experience she also recognises its downsides: no spontaneous communication, few corrections, no 'natural flow' in communication. Nevertheless, the mere fact of her conceiving tactics, applying them and then reflecting on them with her peers shows her positive attitude towards improving her learning together with her teletandem partner.

In this last section of strategies, we saw how learners describe their tactics in relation to the sociocultural-interactive strategies *Interacting to Learn and Communicate* and *Overcoming*

¹⁶⁶ In the self-evaluation (CEFR self assessment grid) as the last part of the learner biography, Lena evaluated her competencies with A2 for all abilities (LB07).

Knowledge Gaps in Communication, which recurred considerably in the learners' reflection on their teletandem experiences. The following section gives a synthesis of the category Strategies.

4.1.1.7 Synthesis of the category 'Strategies'

In general, we could observe that the participants talked far more about cognitive and sociocultural-interactive strategies (including the respective meta-strategies) than they would about affective strategies. Certainly, my categorisation of the tactics found in the data is not the only possibility. In some cases, I found myself confronted with multiple options for categorising one tactic. However, after discussing this version with colleagues and rearranging some recurrences, it is a viable version for the purpose of this study which is not exclusively on strategies but rather on the different topics mentioned by the students during the peer group mediation sessions with strategies and tactics being part of them.

As mentioned in the introduction of this section which deals with learning strategies and tactics¹⁶⁷, the data showed that the participants hardly used the words strategies or tactics; this indicates that they were not fully aware of speaking about applied strategies or tactics. It was only the mediator who sometimes used the terms consciously in order to refer to specific strategies or tactics or to stimulate reflection on it. As learning strategies are crucial for language learning and we can observe the participants making them a subject of conversation (albeit not fully cognisant of it), they should be discussed in PGM so that the learners' awareness about strategies is raised in general and how to use them in particular to improve their language learning processes as individuals. What's more, considering that the learners already ascribe significance to tactics and frequently talk about them, it is even easier for the mediator to "jump onto the bandwagon" and navigate the reflection and discussion to a more theoretical level.

Summarising the analysis that has just been presented, in relation to **(meta)cognitive strategies**, we can say that the respective teletandem partner has a certain influence on the learning tactics. In the case of *Paying Attention for Cognition*, for example, we could see that the learners reflect on themselves in the partners and compare their attitudes to their partner's. The direct collaboration with a learning partner in the tandem situation – the partner's actions, comments, corrections – seems to sensitise the learner for tactics in general, but in particular for paying more attention to several aspects of learning, language and culture (both in the target and the native language) (see excerpts 1 and 2).

¹⁶⁷ According to Oxford (2011) and as mentioned in section 4.1.1.1, the difference between strategy and tactic is that tactics are a specific manifestation of a strategy used by a specific learner in a specific situation. Thus, tactics are highly individual and contextual, whereas strategies are broader and of a more general nature.

Planning strategies such as goal setting or task planning recurred throughout the data and mainly refer to tactics such as expressing general learning goals (“work a little bit with grammar” [excerpt 3]) and organising the study material in teletandem sessions (note books, chat).

Very few tactics related to *Evaluation* were found. This might be an indication for the mediator to help the learners to reflect more on their learning and especially to evaluate their learning process and the outcomes. Evaluation traditionally is done by language ‘experts’ such as teachers, mediators or advisors, but it is important to lead the learners themselves to more self-sufficiency regarding auto-evaluation.

In regards to the strategy *Using Senses to Understand and Remember*, the most recurrent of cognitive strategies, the data shows that the learners have a wide spectrum of tactics which make use of the visual, auditory and haptic senses. This becomes evident in the learners’ comments on the use of music, videos, and pictures, amongst others, when they work with their tandem partners. Other cognitive strategies used by the participants, but with fewer recurrences, were *Reasoning* (deducing language aspects of the context), *Conceptualising* (contrastive language work, for instance) and *Activating Knowledge* (listening to music before a language class).

In relation to **(meta)affective strategies**, it was already mentioned that only few tactics could be identified in the data: two occurrences for affective and five for meta-affective strategies, respectively. However, the comments on affective tactics were closely related to activities carried out in the teletandem sessions: on the one hand, positive feelings at the end of the project when one learner (Lena) evaluated her learning activities and outcomes positively (*Evaluating Affect*) or a motivating teletandem partnership due to a good personal relationship between the partners (Célia’s case, in excerpt 32). On the other hand, also negative feelings such as demotivation and anxiety in relation to not having achieved learning goals in teletandem (Taís) (see excerpts 30 and 31).

Concerning **(meta)sociocultural-interactive strategies**, it is important to consider that the learning context teletandem is an interactive learning context per se. Thus, it does not surprise that different learning tactics about the interaction with the tandem partner have been mentioned with such frequency. Within the meta-SI-strategies, the mentioning of tactics regarding the strategy *Obtaining and Using Resources for Communication, Context and Culture* was apparent. The learners particularly talked about technological resources (which does not surprise either, as the teletandem context is based on the use of computers, tablets or smartphones, specific software and an internet connection), but also about print and in-person resources, as can be seen in excerpts 35 to 40. SI-strategies such as *Interacting* and *Overcoming*

Knowledge Gaps were cited several times as well. As the learners continuously interact when working in teletandem, the following tactics were noticed in the statements of the participants: asking for explications, clarifications, verifications or repetitions (excerpts 42-44), giving feedback (excerpt 45, 46), changing languages and mutual corrections (with individual correction styles). Regarding the strategy *Overcoming Knowledge Gaps*, some participants mentioned that they would look for word alternatives or change the subject altogether (excerpts 50 and 51).

Based on the data presented above, it can be deduced that the learners of this study looked for new tactics as they showed interest in the tactics of the peers and compared their own tactics with the ones of their peers. They reflected on possibilities to improve their learning processes and their efficiency with their language learning, especially through the communication with the teletandem partner (by paying attention to their partner's actions, by evaluating how they overcome knowledge gaps or by contemplating which resources they can use to improve understanding, explications, etc.). They are also mindful about the learning and improving of their partners' language competencies, and they reflect on tactics that might help them (especially in the case of Taís, for instance).

The table below shows a synthesis of the results obtained so far in relation to the category *Strategies* based on the analysis of the data that were considered for this study:

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY <i>STRATEGIES</i>
➤ Cognitive and social-interactive strategies were discussed more than affective Strategies. (→ Probably related to the specific learning context and the emphasis given by the mediator.)
➤ Learners were usually not fully aware of their use of tactics and strategies even though they used and discussed them frequently.
➤ The teletandem learners influence the learning tactics of their partners, as teletandem partners compare actions, attitudes and languages in use.
➤ The learners of this study looked for new tactics and ways of learning. They also took an interest in the learning of their partners and looked for tactics for them to use.
➤ Learners plan for cognition such as setting goals and planning tasks. However, learning goals are still broad and general which makes evaluation more difficult. They plan learning through specific steps and tasks and help each other (peers) with suggestions.

➤ Learners organise their learning and the teletandem sessions with different study materials.
➤ Few tactics related to evaluation of learning processes were used or mentioned. This might indicate that the learners were not used to auto-evaluation.
➤ Learners frequently used tactics corresponding to all senses such as videos and pictures for the visual sense, and music and other audio medias for the auditory sense (used by nearly everybody in each teletandem interaction).
➤ Learners frequently compared linguistic aspects of both languages in use in order to conceptualise grammar phenomena, for instance.
➤ Even with only a few recurrences, positive and negative affective strategies were detected, such as positive evaluation of affect looking retrospectively on the project, and negative aspects such as anxiety and demotivation in relation to not achieving learning goals.
➤ Learners use many different tactics regarding technological resources for learning.
➤ Learners use a number of different tactics while interacting with their partners in order to enhance language comprehension and oral output (i.e. asking for explications, explaining, mutual corrections, amongst others).

Table 15. Synthesis of the category Strategies

4.1.2 Learning Objectives

The category *Learning Objectives* is the third largest category with regards to the number of recurrences. Even though the mediator initiated the subject *Learning Objectives* as a general theme in the fourth PGM session, it also arose as a subject in the other PGMs in which the learners started to talk about their learning objectives without initiation on the part of the mediator. The mediator had chosen the general themes for the PGM sessions after having listened to the discussions of the participants in the very first PGM session, and having observed repeated references to learning objectives, the mediator chose this subject to be discussed in one of the subsequent PGM sessions.

A learning objective, or learning goal, in this study, is defined as a concrete and specific purpose in the field of foreign language learning which can be evaluated (Did I achieve my goal?) and which is based on the learner's wishes, needs and possibilities.

Within the category *Learning Objectives*, the recurrences could be divided into several sub-topics as can be seen on the following pages.

4.1.2.1 *Main Objectives // Specific Objectives*

The overall objective for all learners participating in the teletandem project was the free and spontaneous communication with native speakers of German in order to improve their communicative competence in German as foreign language¹⁶⁸. As the German classes at the university, where this study took place, still tend to be quite grammar-focused and do not particularly focus on communication, students seem to be most attracted by precisely this characteristic of the teletandem project: language competences acquired thus far but put into practice in authentic and real communication situations with native speakers. That was, in fact, one of the goals of the project *Teletandem Brasil – Línguas Estrangeiras para Todos*. However, the idea of free communication turned out to become an obstacle, when the foreign language competence of one learner was still at an elementary (A1/A2) level, as in the following case of both teletandem partners.

Excerpt 53:

<p><u>Lena:</u> [...] além dessa, dessa primeira, aí na primeira ela falou um pouquinho de, de música pra mim e alguns, alguns autores, e citou algumas obras e eu também falei de algumas músicas pra ela, e a nossa última sessão, ela falou sobre a cidade de Hamburg e aí, eu falei um pouquinho da literatura brasileira pra ela, mas, eh, tipo, na questão de aprendizagem assim, tipo, foi uma aprendizagem muito mais cultural do que, do que gramatical, nesse sentido, sabe. E como a gente, ou pelo menos eu, preparo o que eu vou falar, porque se eu deixar pra falar na hora eu sei que não vou conseguir, então, não há muito que corrigir assim, mas eu vejo que isso não tá me ajudando muito. Porque eu acabo esquecendo o que eu falei, entendeu, porque, tipo, eu mais tava lendo do que falando, e eu vi que acho que ela também tava fazendo isso, assim, eh, ela prepara também o que ela vai falar e acho que isso não vai ajudar tanto, isso não é o objetivo do tandem, né. Não é natural, não soa uma coisa natural, não soa uma conversa natural, é a mesma coisa, tipo, tá</p>	<p><u>Lena:</u> [...] besides this, this first, there in the beginning she talked a bit about, about music and some, some authors, and cited some works and I also talked to her about some songs, and in our last session, she told me about the city Hamburg and then, I told her a bit about Brazilian literature, but, ahm, like, regarding the learning, ahm, it was more a cultural way of learning than, than a grammatical one, in this sense, you know. And as we, or at least I am preparing what I'm going to say in the session, because if I wait to speak spontaneously, I know I won't be able to, so, there's not so much to correct, but I see that this isn't helping me very much. Because I somehow forget what I was talking about, you know, because, I was reading more than I was talking and I saw that I think she was doing the same, ahm, she prepares what she's going to say, too, and I think this won't help much, this is not the objective of tandem, right? It's not natural, it doesn't sound natural, it doesn't sound like a natural conversation, it's the same as</p>
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¹⁶⁸ On a list with nine major learning objectives (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar, Strategies, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Others) 11 out of 12 participants indicated Speaking as learning objective with priority 4 (very high) followed by Vocabulary (11/12) also with priority 4. (see Evaluation of Learner Biographies – Appendix E)

lendo um livro pra mim, sabe. e aí, só preciso pensar em uma forma de trabalhar isso. Só que como a gente não tem, ehm, uma bagagem de::, para poder fazer isso, é a forma que eu tenho para a gente poder conseguir se comunicar porque se eu chegar sem preparar na:da, sem eu escrever um pouco do que vou falar, eu não vou conseguir. Então... <u>00:04:11-9</u> (AS 1-2, linhas 58-78)	reading a book to me, you know. And now, I have to somehow think about a way of improving this. But as both of us don't have, ahm, the knowledge to do this, for now this is the only way I see we have to be able to communicate with each other, because if I come and have not prepared anything, without having written at least a little bit about what I am going to say, I won't able to do it. So... <u>00:04:11-9</u> (AS 1-2, lines 58-78, my emphasis)
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Lena's reflection on her and her partner's experiences of their first German-Portuguese teletandem session is already quite advanced¹⁶⁹ in the very first PGM session as she is able to relate to their proceedings and evaluate them in relation to what she thinks is the main objective of teletandem. She realises that her preparation method (writing a text to read to her partner in order to compensate for her feeling of not being able to speak freely with her partner) does not support her in achieving the overall objective of practising free and spontaneous communication with a native speaker from her target culture (*'It's not natural. It doesn't sound natural.'*). As she still wants to stick to the objective, she understands that she has to find other ways of promoting free conversation with her teletandem partner (we will return to this example later).

In the next excerpt, we can see that participant Franciele has the same overall objective for her teletandem, but still needs to determine more specific learning goals.

Excerpt 54:

<u>Franciele:</u> é que mais um objetivo geral. não é específico. Nessa sessão quero aprender sobre esporte na Alemanha, .. então eu tenho objetivos para a sessão, que só ... né, que 99 por cento das vezes eu cumpro. Ehm, na parte assim, que a minha parceira me oferece e espero que também eu faça, ehm, a, a resposta... então, eu acho que, eu acho que me falta colocar objetivos gerais, sabe assim. Eu quero melhor .. ehm, que nem você já comentou, que é aquela palavra que sempre erro. Eu quero saber fala:r nesse tipo de conte:xto em alemã:o, e isso falta, eu acho, eu colocar, é uma coisa que eu ainda espero	<u>Franciele:</u> It's more of a general objective. It's not specific. In this session I want to learn about sport in Germany, ... so I have objectives for the session which... ahm, in 99 percent of the time I achieve. Ahm, in the part in which my partner offers me input and I hope I do the same, ahm, the, the answer... well, I think that, I think that I simply don't set general objectives, you know. I would like to improve... ahm, like you've said, this word I always go wrong with. I want to know how to spea:k in this specific context in Ge:rman, and that's what's missing, I think, to set goals. That's something I still hope I might put into
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¹⁶⁹ Reflection in relation to foreign language learning occurs on different levels (Bräuer & Ballweg, 2011; Bräuer, 2009, in Böcker, 2014;): 1) Documenting and describing; 2) analysing and interpreting; 3) comparing and evaluating; and 4) planning. The levels are based on each other starting with level 1 whereas level 1 cannot be called an actual reflection as it does not present the characteristics of problem solution, learning activity transformation or goal achievement. However, because of missing definitions of the term 'reflection' (Böcker 2014) and at the same time its overuse in the field of L2 learning, this term is widely found in literature for this basic activity of documenting and describing of learning situations. Here, the reflection of Lena is described as 'advanced' because she reflects correctly by not only describing her activities but also interpreting and evaluating them.

colocar em prática. Faz tempo que eu faço teletandem mas ainda vejo muito o TT mesmo como uma oportunidade de falar com alguém da Alemanha, e praticar o meu alemão, mas sem ter um objetivo grande assim... 00:07:32-6 (AS 4, linhas 155-167)	practice. I've been doing teletandem for a while, but I still see teletandem as an opportunity to talk to someone in Germany, and to practice my German, but without having a main objective... (AS 4, lines 155-167, my emphasis)
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Franciele is a learner who has participated in more than one teletandem partnership as an undergraduate university student, but admits that she has never set a more specific learning goal other than taking the opportunity to train her oral competences in German with a native speaker. She also thinks that she does not have general learning objectives such as stop making a certain frequent mistake in German – which is actually a specific learning goal. She also speaks of ‘specific goals’ she sets for her teletandem session. These goals are slightly blurred by what could be denominated a content-related topic to discuss with her partner. What is evident here is that she is not sure about how a main or specific learning goal is actually defined and how it differs from a conversational topic.

Omitting these learning objectives, the full potential of what the context of (tele)tandem can offer remains unattainable. Tandem learning contexts are both communication and learning situations. The partners are not only able to learn what arises automatically during the conversation (as is the case in a conversation with any other native speaker), they are also able to pursue specific learning objectives such as improving pronunciation or the capability to grasp spoken foreign language output (see Brammerts, 2006). Telles (2009, p. 32) remarks that teletandem should not be seen as merely chatting. Tandem learning was developed as a context for conversation with a partner to potentialise the learning of a foreign language and the many facets that this type of communication is comprised of. In a situation as experienced by Franciele, a type of learner support might be advisable. It is important to raise learner awareness about the principles of the chosen learning context (teletandem). In this specific case, as shown in the data, the mediator could offer Franciele an individual advising session in order to discuss and to reflect on her learning and learning processes so that she could make more efficient use of teletandem.

In addition to the wish to improve free and fluent conversation with the learning partner, many participants have also affirmed that their goal is to become more knowledgeable about the German culture rather than the German language, i.e. grammar, as can be seen in the excerpts below.

Excerpt 55:

<u>Franciele</u> : mas aí depende dos objetivos também, né, porque eu já vejo, para mim, pelo menos, uma experiência MUITO rica para falar com uma pessoa da Alemanha, trocando idéias! Com ela. Não para aprender gramática com ela, isso não acho muito bom. (AS 3, linhas 525-528)	<u>Franciele</u> : but this depends also on the objectives, doesn't it? Because I can see, at least for me, that it is a REALLY great experience talking with a person from Germany and exchanging ideas! With her. Not learning grammar with her , this I don't like very much. (AS 3, lines 525-528, my emphasis)
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Excerpt 56:

<u>Franciele</u> : Então, o problema é que a gente realmente – eu pelo menos – a gente nunca pensou muito na gramática. a gente entrou mesmo muito mais na parte cultural, mas pode ser, pode ser, na época das eleições é eleições, como funciona aqui, como funciona lá. (AS 4, linhas 173-176)	<u>Franciele</u> : Well, the question is that we really – or at least I – that we never cared much about grammar. We actually dealt much more the cultural part , but, but, in the time of elections, it's how it works here, how it works there. (AS 4, lines 173-176, my emphasis)
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On two occasions, Franciele expresses her view that the cultural aspect is considerably more important than grammar. Subjects from everyday life, for example elections, hold much greater interest for her, probably due to the fact that these topics are seldom discussed during German classes at university. In addition, the possibility of talking to a native speaker enables her to be provided with first-hand information about the target culture. This shows that the learners use the teletandem context to obtain information otherwise unavailable as part of their university curricula.

Aside from one case, no participant could be identified who explicitly expressed objectives during the discussions in the PGMs. Even the learner biographies didn't yield any specific learning objectives. Taís, an intermediate learner of German (B1, threshold level), is the only one able to concretise her learning goals – partly due to a one year stay in Germany as an *au pair*, which helped her to become quite autonomous as a learner¹⁷⁰. Being aware of her challenges and requirements, she seeks help or suggestions on how she could tailor the teletandem learning context even more to her needs, as can be seen in the next excerpt.

¹⁷⁰ For this study and its specific learning context (university students of foreign languages who learn a FL as part of a university course with traditional L2 classes and additional teletandem sessions with native speakers), the definition of an autonomous learner is to be capable of planning and directing his/her learning using strategies consciously and monitoring his/her learning process.

Excerpt 57:

<p><u>Taís</u>: é, porque é assim, eu tenho objetivos, agora, assim, vou ter o teste de proficiência, e quero conseguir uma boa nota (?) E eu não sei como utilizar o TT para isso. Então não sei se às vezes o que eu faço, se rende ou não. (AS 5, linhas 646-648)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: Because it's like this, I have objectives, now, because I will have a proficiency test, and I want a good mark (?). And I don't know how to use the teletandem for this purpose. So I don't know if what I am doing is helping or not. (AS 5, lines 646-648, my emphasis)</p>
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Some learners from the group of participants had already been aware of the lack of definitive objectives. Others became more conscious of this fact during the peer group mediation sessions. A third fact is that establishing goals did not matter a lot to some learners. They thought that this would not make a difference to their learning. Some participants had already begun to reflect on their learning goals and ways of learning during the first two PGMs, without it being an explicit topic introduced by the mediator.

Excerpt 58:

<p><u>Nina</u>: é então.. eu tava dizendo assim que: .. o que eu senti:: a mega (?) (...?) é um pouco de falta de objetivos, assim, na sessão, sobre o que vamos falar hoje, por quê? ... é, porque a gente não fala ahh bom ... como eu posso dizer por exemplo, eu nunca tive uma orientação para fazer TT no sentido ahh como você vai ensinar a língua portuguesa pro seu parceiro de TT [...] (AS 1-1, linhas 11-16)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: well... I was saying that... what I was feeling was a mega (?) (...?) is a bit of a lack of objectives, ahm, in the session, on what we are going to talk about today, why? ... it's because we don't say ahhh ok... how can I say... for example, I have never had an introduction as to how to carry out the teletandem in the sense of, ahh, how you will teach the Portuguese language to your teletandem partner [...](AS 1-1, lines 11-16, my emphasis)</p>
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This is one of the first comments recorded in the first PGM. The participant, Nina, appears to be very eager to tell the others about her frustration of feeling lost in her teletandem. She thinks that it is related to a lack of objectives and that she does not know which goal to pursue. But the subsequent sentences reveal that she actually feels insecure and not prepared to 'teach Portuguese' to her tandem partner. However, at this point I would like to emphasise that she carries out this reflection without any visible external stimulation showing that she is reflecting on her actions in teletandem and is not satisfied with them. The eagerness to share her experiences and concerns at the very beginning could be interpreted as her finally recognising her chance to ask her questions, to discuss problems with other learners who have had similar experiences and also to speak with the learning mediator in the role of language and teletandem expert. By giving learners time and space to reflect on and discuss their experiences, we, as

teachers and mediators, enable them to develop their ability to reflect on learning, and, therefore, promote the first steps towards autonomous learning and self-direction.

Another case is about participant Hugo, who does not only understand the meaning of a learning objective but is also not convinced that it is necessary to establish objectives as he thinks that learning happens naturally by simply talking to a native speaker.

Excerpt 59:

<u>Hugo</u> : eu não entendo o que é um OBJETIVO de aprendizagem (AS 4, linha 22)	<u>Hugo</u> : I don't understand what a learning OBJECTIVE actually is. (AS 4, line 22, my emphasis)
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Excerpt 60:

<u>Hugo</u> : Estabelecer um objetivo no TT serve para que? Por que você aprende... por que você escolheu alemão? Você escreve em alemão, você fala em alemão, pronto! (AS 4, linhas 776-778)	<u>Hugo</u> : What's the point of establishing an objective in teletandem? Why do you learn... why did you choose German? You write in German, you talk in German, that's it! (AS 4, lines 776-778, my emphasis)
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Hugo had probably received an insufficient introduction to the teletandem project or has forgotten that the project does not only serve to 'chat to a native speaker'. Instead, the project (as described in section 1.3) was established to go further, to use the conversation context with a native speaker to improve the learner's own foreign language competencies even more. If this was not his intention then he could as well subscribe to one of the numerous online platforms for language exchange, for example Livemocha¹⁷¹, and casually chat with like-minded users. The idea of university telecollaboration projects usually is to go beyond the natural acquisition process and aim to enhance learning by providing some thematic or structural direction and learner support.

In the next excerpt, participant Franciele talks about her 'incapacity' to set goals and achieve them.

¹⁷¹ Livemocha.com as well as other online platforms such as conversationexchange.com, rworld.com, italki.com or meetup.com are based on the idea of talking to native speakers of the language one is currently studying with the desire to improve language capabilities. After having registered, one can look for the respective native speakers, contact them and start chatting. These platforms usually give advice on how to use this learning feature but there is no individual learner support or any kind of control (who is subscribing, what is being talked about, etc.). In most cases, language classes by professional teachers or tutors are also offered via the platform.

Excerpt 61:

<p><u>Franciele</u>: é, eu acho que, que me falta ... ehm... me falta a capacidade de colocar objetivos, e cumpri-los. Tanto faz no TT ou nas coisas do meu dia-a-dia [ri] então eu acho que, não falo de objetivos da sessão. Não sei. Vale também, né, como objetivo de sessão... (AS 4, linhas 147-150)</p>	<p><u>Franciele</u>: Well, I think that, what I lack... ahm... what I lack is the capacity of establishing objectives and to achieve them. Or in teletandem or is other things of my everyday life [laughs] so I think that I don't talk about session objectives. I don't know. It's also about session objectives, right?... (AS 4, lines 147-150, my emphasis)</p>
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Her comment shows that she probably never reflected on anything that resembled a learning objective. As she has never reflected on this before, it is an entirely new subject to her; this in turn may lead her to think that she is not able to set and achieve an objective. In the same excerpt, it also becomes apparent that main learning goals or more specific goals for a teletandem session are, once again, intangible to Franciele. These are moments in which learner support is important to help the learner gain clarity and organise himself more effectively.

4.1.2.2 *Learning Objective // Topic*

During the discussions in the PGMs, it became visible that the participants used the terms 'learning objective' and 'topic' or 'theme' for a session as synonyms or at least did not know how to separate the terms conceptually and, therefore, used them interchangeably. A specific topic ('football', for instance) can certainly be a part of a learning goal (as in 'be able to talk about aspects of everyday life'). Therefore, the mediator should be aware of this possible misconception and discuss the terms and their concepts with the group (or in individual advising settings). In the following excerpt, as mentioned previously, the confusion about concepts becomes clear in Nina's comment: "...lack of objectives, in the session, about what to talk today..."

Excerpt 62:

<p><u>Nina</u>: é então.. eu tava dizendo assim que: .. o que eu senti:: a mega (?) (...?) é um pouco de falta de objetivos, assim, na sessão, sobre o que vamos falar hoje, por quê? ... é, porque a gente não fala ahh bom ... como eu posso dizer por exemplo, eu nunca tive uma orientação para fazer TT no sentido ahh como você vai ensinar a língua portuguesa pro seu parceiro de TT [...] (AS 1-1, linhas 11-16)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: well... I was saying that... what I was feeling was a mega (?) (...?) is a bit of a lack of objectives, ahm, in the session, on what we are going to talk about today, why? ... it's because we don't say ahhh ok... how can I say... for example, I have never had an introduction as to how to carry out the teletandem in the sense of, ahh, how you will teach the Portuguese language to your teletandem partner [...](AS 1-1, lines 11-16, my emphasis)</p>
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What would Nina's definition of 'learning objective' be? And what does she mean by 'topic of the session'? She confounds both concepts and terms, but she probably means both aspects. On the one hand, she describes the lack of an objective relating to what she should actually do in the teletandem sessions (she feels insecure about it) and on the other hand, as can be seen in the following sentences, Nina does not know which content (topics) to cover in the 'Portuguese lessons' – the term she uses to designate the part of the conversation when it is her partner's turn to learn Portuguese¹⁷².

The next excerpt quotes participant Hugo, who also has difficulties deciding on topics (and/or objectives) for teletandem sessions and even questions his own behaviour after it seems to him that his colleagues act differently in their teletandem sessions.

Excerpt 63:

<p><u>Hugo</u>: Hum, será que eu sou normal? [ri] Tipo, eu não consigo estabelecer temas assim, igual ... mesmo se a gente estabelecesse, e a gente ia falar como é São Paulo e como é uma cidade grande na Alemanha. Começamos, [parte incompreensível] sabe aí eu vou falar, eu vou ter que fumar, ahhh, você fuma, eu também, aí a gente começa falar sobre cigarros brasileiros e cigarros alemães, aí já começa com outras coisas, sabe... (AS 4, linhas 313-319)</p>	<p><u>Hugo</u>: Hum, am I normal? [laughs] Because I can't define topics this way... and even if we did define some, and we wanted to talk about São Paulo and what a big city in Germany is like. We started [part incomprehensible] you know, then I would say, I have to go smoke, ahhh, you smoke, me too, and then we already start to talk about Brazilian cigarettes and German cigarettes, and then we've already started with something else, you know... (AS 4, lines 313-319, my emphasis)</p>
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Hugo says that he cannot agree on topics for his teletandem sessions. As the discussion, from which the excerpt was taken, was about learning goals, Hugo may confuse the terms and concepts of goals and topics. It is difficult to infer what he refers to exactly. Nevertheless, both Hugo and his partner usually digress from a chosen subject and talk about many other things. Hugo seems to justify the variety of topics as he does not entirely agree with the idea of establishing learning goals and adhering to certain ways of learning. It was not the mediator's intention to convey the idea of a 'pre-determined' teletandem session, on the contrary, a variety of conversation topics helps to generate information about themes relating to both the source

¹⁷² Speaking of learning the partner's language and teaching the partner one's own language can often be noticed in research within the realm of the Teletandem Brasil project (Cavalari, 2009; Garcia, 2012; Telles, 2011) even if the original idea of tandem is not that of 'teaching a language' but more of helping the partner to learn one's own language (Brammerts, 2001, p.10) as we cannot assume that a tandem partner is a trained language teacher (indeed, this is not the case in many tandem project).

and target cultures. However, it is beneficial for a learner to be aware of the benefits of defining objectives in order to exhaust all possibilities that derive from a tandem situation.

A central question which arises is why do learners have such difficulty setting learning goals (and even conversation topics)? One answer may be that learners are not used to reflecting a lot on their learning. In previous learning contexts (school, university), they were not asked or introduced to thinking about learning needs, goals, ways of learning and results. All of these are important steps towards becoming an autonomous language learner – one of the core concepts in tandem learning contexts. The fact that learners often even have problems defining conversation topics could be the result of being unfamiliar with self-directed learning contexts. When course programmes, syllabus and didactic materials always provide the learning direction (both content-related and progression-related), it is indeed a difficult task for a learner to ‘suddenly’ take charge and decide themselves what is interesting for him/her.

After discussing excerpts which exhibited a lack of objectives on the side of the teletandem participants, we will now move on to the relation between learning objectives and certain language approaches.

4.1.2.3 *Learning Objective // Learning Approaches*

The individual selection of a learning goal may depend on the learner’s understanding of learning – how he/she thinks learning works and what learning is. For the majority of learners in this study, ‘language learning’ means to study grammar, structure and vocabulary. Cultural topics are only a kind of by-product. An example for this desire of language learning can be found in the following excerpt, in which Leandra states that she ‘REALLY wants to learn’ the language:

Excerpt 64:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Então, acho que como você corrige, por que você corrige, depende do seu objetivo. Realmente. O que você espera do TT? Isso vai fazer, tipo um, que você queira ser corrigido mais ou menos, e como você quer ser corrigido, sabe. Se você faz o TT porque você quer ... conhecer a Alemanha para ficar lá por um tempo, é uma coisa. Se você faz TT porque você estuda alemão, e pq você quer usar o alemão para trabalhar, é outra coisa. Então para cada... depende ... a correção vai depender do seu objetivo. eu gosto de ser corrigida minuciosamente (?) em tudo, assim, minuciosamente. porque eu quero aprender MESMO, de fato. agora se fosse só para a</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Well, I think the way you correct, why you correct, depends on your objective. Really. What do you expect from teletandem? That will influence, like, the way you want to be corrected, you know. If you participate in teletandem because you want to... get to know Germany to stay there for a while, that’s one thing. If you participate in teletandem because you study German and because you want to use German for work, then it’s another thing. So for each... it depends... the correction will depend on your objective. I like to be corrected on everything in minute detail, really minutely. Because I REALLY want to learn, really. If it was just for a communication situation,</p>
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situação de comunicação, já é diferente. (AS 3, linhas 419-428, minha ênfase)	then it would be different. (AS 3, lines 419-428, my emphasis)
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This concept of learning a language is still partially prevalent at the university where this research took place. Some language teachers continue to be convinced that to ‘really know a language’ means to possess knowledge of all grammatical and structural rules of the respective foreign language. This conception even involves the idea that bilinguals who did not do a thorough study of the grammar consequently do not really ‘know’ the language. These learning concepts probably result from one’s own learning experiences and the way teachers influenced us. We then often pass these preconceptions on to new generations the same way we were originally taught them. Therefore, as a learning mediator I must be prepared to understand the learning reality of the country, region or community which I will work in. What are the learning concepts underlying learning and teaching practices? Which methods are mainly used at schools and universities? What concepts build the basis of my own convictions and beliefs regarding learning and mediation? What possibilities are there make different approaches less obvious without shaking other people’s views and beliefs to their core?

The following excerpt corroborates the above--mentioned image of grammar as the ‘heart’ of the language as opposed to ‘culture and those things’:

Excerpt 65:

Lena: E foi bem interessante assim. São coisas que eu ainda não conhecia, filmes, eu não tenho muito contato com filmes, não tenho muito contato com a cultura mesmo, então foi interessante para mim, nessas três sessões. Mas acho que não é o que eu pretendo no Tandem, né. ficar falando sobre cultura e essas coisas. (AS 2, linhas 403-407)	Lena: And it was very interesting. Things which I didn’t yet know, films, I don’t have much contact with films, I don’t have much contact with the culture either, so it was interesting for me, in the three sessions. But I think it’s not what I intend to do in tandem, is it? Talking about culture and those things. (AS 2, lines 403-407, my emphasis)
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Lena is truly astonished about working with films in her teletandem as she has hardly had any contact with German culture previously (at the time it was her the second year of German studies). She ‘thinks’ that this is not what she intends to cover in her teletandem sessions. However, this sentence implies that she genuinely thinks she is not supposed to talk about ‘culture and those things’ because it is not directly discussing the ‘target language’. Needless to say, I am unable prove that this feeling is indeed a fact. As a mediator, I got to know Lena as a person outside the recorded mediation sessions which influenced my interpretation of this sentence. At the beginning, she was a timid participant with only two semesters of German

classes at university under her belt. She was very insecure when she started the teletandem and asked a lot of questions. The last two sentences in her comment (especially the ‘is it?/ne?’) make me think that she is asking her peers and the mediator if cultural topics are ‘approved’ or not.

It seems that a possible link may exist between the setting of learning goals and personal learning conceptions, and that the mediator should be aware of this aspect and cover the topic in the peer group mediation sessions. This way, participants are made aware that any general objective and topic is fine as long as both partners agree to work together on them in their teletandem.

4.1.2.4 *Defining Objectives // Teletandem Partner*

Some of the learners realised very early in the course of the teletandem interactions that their main learning objectives differ from their partners’ ones. Leandra, for instance, talks about the differences she sees between her learning goals and the one from her partner. This awareness is very useful for the partners to be conscious about the reciprocity principle – especially if the learning goals diverge considerably, and also to be supportive of the partner to achieve his/her individual goals as he/she will want in return that his/her learning goals are supported by the actions of the partner.

Excerpt 66:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Acho que a gente tem objetivos, assim, diferentes. Ela quer aprender a gramática, ela quer que eu explique gramática pra ela e eu quero mais ... falar. Então é muito diferente o tempo que a gente faz no alemão e o tempo que a gente faz falando o português. é muito diferente. porque quando a gente conversa em alemão, a gente mais só conversa mesmo, com pouco correção, e em português a gente faz assim, mil perguntas sobre, sobre gramática. então são objetivos diferentes. (AS1-2, linhas 552-559)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: I think we have different learning goals. She wants to learn grammar, she wants that I explain grammar to her and I prefer... to talk. So the time we make German and the time we are doing speaking Portuguese is very different. Very different. Because when we talk in German, we actually just talk, with little corrections and in Portuguese we make like a thousand questions about grammar. So we have different objectives. (AS1-2, lines 552-559)</p>
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With regards to the learning objectives, it became apparent that the learners made an effort to support each other in achieving the goals that they had established individually or at least pay heed to the wishes the partners had in relation to conversation topics or grammatical explanations.

Excerpt 67:

<p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, eu as vezes me sinto um pouco desconfortável, e não preparar uma sessão porque acho que não tá andando (?) as vezes, mesmo se já tem uma certa intimidade ... [parte incompreensível] por fazer alguma coisa por ele, exatamente por ter essa intimidade assim, para a consciência... vocês entendem assim? [risos] não é que não flui, por exemplo, porque flui sim, por exemplo, iuiuiuiuiui, [risos] Mas por exemplo, se eu não ... [risos] se eu não preparo a sessão, eu acho que sei sobre o que falar, mas parece que não correspondeu aos objetivos dele. Então é alguma coisa assim que eu tenho um pouco de receio, né, então. eu gosto de preparar, mesmo que flua para outras assim (?) eu gosto de preparar, o textinho, os exercícios e o vocabulário. Assim, isso, [parte incompreensível] para o outro eu gosto fazer mais os meios visuais (?) assim, mas ele me pede! [risos]. (AS 3, linhas 530-542)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, sometimes I feel a little bit uncomfortable, and not preparing a session, becomes I think that this sometimes doesn't work, even if you feel already closer to each other... [part incomprehensible] for doing something for him, especially for having this intimacy, it's for my conscience... do you understand what I mean? [laughs] it's not that it doesn't flow, for example, because it DOES flow, for example, iuiuiuiuiui [laughs] But for example, if I don't ... [laughs] if I don't prepare for the sessions, I guess I know what to talk about, but it seems as though it doesn't fit into his objectives. So it's something I'm a bit afraid of, right? I like to prepare, even if some topics flow, I like to prepare, a short text, exercises and vocabulary. Well, it's [partly incomprehensible] for one I like to use more visual resources (?), you know, but he asks for it! [laughs] (AS 3, lines 530-542, my emphasis)</p>
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In this excerpt, participant Taís discusses the preparation of her teletandem sessions. She is very detail-oriented in her preparation of a teletandem sessions because she wants to help her partner achieve his objectives. This shows that she expects reciprocity (the tandem learning principle of reciprocity) and that she cares about giving as much as she is receiving from her teletandem partner. In Taís' case – a very reflective and independent learner – we know that she negotiated objectives, preparation and correction styles with all of her teletandem partners. But this is behaviour is rather an exception than the rule; on many occasions, no conversation and negotiation can be detected between the partners (Garcia, 2010), which eventually may lead to larger problems in a teletandem partnership. The next excerpt shows that learners often resort to 'guessing' what their partners look for.

Excerpt 68:

<p><u>Maria</u>: Então assim, eu acho, eu imagino que ele esteja querendo [parte incompreensível] que é mesmo conversar, e não a gramática. (AS 6, linhas 144-145)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: Well, I think, I imagine that what he wants [part incomprehensible] is actually talking, and not the grammar. (AS 6, lines 144-145)</p>
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However, after discussing, in the PGM, the benefits of negotiating specific aspects of teletandem with the partners, Maria tells the group that she had certainly talked with her partner about defining topics and correction styles, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 69:

<p><u>Maria</u>: Eu não lembro MESMO, assim. Lembro vagamente assim do (??) e o que nos combinamos, que eu perguntei pra ele o que ele gostaria de conversar, nada muito preparado. a gente tirou a consenso que a gente às vezes tentava preparar alguma coisa mas tomava outro rumo. então a gente, podemos falar sobre isso, então o que ele queria saber mais era sobre a literatura brasileira, e as diferenças de culturas regionais que nos temos. Que, aliás, por exemplo, as dúvidas de gramática tanto as minhas quanto a dele, iam, surgem conforme a gente vai conversando. Então, tipo, então eu não falo assim, eu falo de tal jeito, e é, porque não sei o que tanana depende disso, e a mesma coisa ele, ahh, então, não fala assim não, você fala de tal jeito, [parte incompreensível] e nem fiquei corrigindo muito porque é, muito chato. tudo, ainda mais porque ele mistura algumas coisas com o italiano. então... (AS 2, linhas 449-462)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: I REALLY don't remember. I remember vaguely that (??) and that we agreed on that I asked him what he wanted to talk about, nothing very prepared. We agreed on sometimes trying to prepare something but we could get off the track. So we could talk about it, and what he wanted to know was about Brazilian literature, and the differences between the regional cultures we have. The questions about grammar, by the way, mine as well as his, emerged according to the course of our conversation. So, so I don't talk like, I talk this way and I don't know why this depends on Tanana and the same thing with him, ahhh, ok, you don't speak like this, you speak like that [part incomprehensible] and I didn't correct so much because it is very nasty. Even more because he mixes some things with Italian. So... (AS 2, lines 449-462, my emphasis)</p>
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In general, it could be observed that learning objectives cannot always be separated from conversational topics, and that objectives, if set, are usually very vague or broadly defined making it difficult to assess whether they were achieved or not. There are very few specific goals which can be identified in the participants' statements and similarly, how these goals are to be achieved is not defined either.

When learner support/mediation in the teletandem context aims to promote development of the learning process, then it is equally important to appreciate the definition of learning objectives and to discuss this with the learners. As defining learning goals is a very individual affair, the discussion about learning goals could be initiated in a PGM learner support to lead the learners to reflection on this aspect, but the individual support should be continued in individual advising sessions between mediator and each learner.

4.1.2.5 *Synthesis of the category 'Learning objectives'*

As expected, all learners were aware of a number of main learning objectives – such as if they wanted a greater focus on grammar or culture during their teletandem partnership. More specific learning goals were communicated by only one of the eleven participating learners whilst the others admitted to having difficulties in determining learning goals. They could not even imagine what a learning goal actually meant. It could also be noted that some participants had difficulties in differentiating a learning goal from a learning topic. Specific content or a

certain topic can be part of a learning goal or may also be a learning goal per se, but the same cannot be said vice versa. With regards to the learning goals of the German teletandem partners, it could be observed that some of the Brazilian participants thought that their German partners had a clearer view of what they wanted to do during the teletandem sessions and that the German partners also had more specific goals. However, this could only be verified by the comments of the Brazilian learners in the PGMs and the learner diaries. It could not be verified through data of the German side due to the restriction of data collection on the Brazilian side only.

In general, both parties attempted to support their respective partners in achieving their respective learning goals throughout the process, as statements of the participants suggest. This has an effect on the principle of reciprocity and, in this study, may lead to the assumption that the principle of reciprocity was mostly adhered to.

Another interesting aspect is the relation between the definition of learning objectives and the learner's conception of learning. For example, a learner who understood that "real learning" meant the thorough understanding of the grammar of a foreign language preferred grammatical topics for his teletandem sessions.

The (main) learning objective mentioned most frequently was 'free and spontaneous communication with the tandem partner' or the desire to 'speak fluently' in the foreign language. This learning objective never specified what fluency actually meant or how the respective participants wanted to evaluate their free and fluent communication. Nevertheless, it was the goal of nearly every participant. Grammar as a goal for tandem learning was also mentioned in addition to text work (interpretation and reading for pronunciation). Some learners explicitly stated that they wanted to discuss cultural issues during the teletandem as opposed to the grammar-focused German classes at university. Other learning goals included practising for proficiency tests, practising specific verbs, practising formal language, learning a foreign language for specific purposes, putting to use what had been learnt in German class, reading out loud for pronunciation purposes and eliminating the fear of speaking in the foreign language.

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

- In certain ways, learning objectives relate to the understanding of language learning of the respective learner. (→ Mediators must be aware of this fact and be prepared to attempt to present other points of view and beliefs to the learners, if necessary, but first of all also detect the views on language learning of the learners.)

➤ The overall learning objective for almost all participants was ‘free and spontaneous communication’ with a native speaker.
➤ In general, learners seem to have an idea of an overall goal such as a “grammatical focus” or “cultural focus”, but the definition of specific goals and the respective ways of learning to achieve those goals are often unclear and even difficult to define after/upon reflection.
➤ Learners are sensitive in relation to the objectives of their TT partners. In a few cases in this study, learners even discuss their objectives with their partners. This, however, is of great importance – especially in relation to effects this analysis of learning goals has on the principle of reciprocity.
➤ Learners may have no clear idea of what a learning objective is. Differences between main goals, specific goals and topics are often diffuse (and learners are not aware of goals in any case) and, therefore, should be discussed in PGM or individual advising sessions

Table 16. Synthesis of the category Learning Objectives

4.1.3 Learning Process

This category deals with the learning process and its directly-linked variables. What seemed to be a recurrence for the category *Learning Process* after the initial examination of the data changed slightly after a more thorough review of the recurrences per category. In the second, more in-depth analysis of this category, it was not clear anymore if all recurrences could indeed be classified as being a topic related to the *Learning Process*.

I understand the term ‘learning process’ as a process with which knowledge is being acquired or better constructed and then processed in the human brain. Learning programmes, learning content, cultures of learning and relationships, individual learning conditions and learning styles all play a crucial role in the learning process and, therefore, are not excluded from this category.

Three main subjects frequently reappeared in the PGM sessions: statements about different learner types and learning styles, the observation of stagnation of the learning process and questions about efficiency and improvement of the learning process.

4.1.3.1 Learner Type, Learning Style and Learning Process

Concerning the field of learner types, many of the participants independently or with the help of the peer group discussions agreed that, in general, different learner types exist and that

each of these types have different learning styles. That which works well for one learner, needs not necessarily work for the other learners of the group (Edmondson & House, 2006).

Excerpt 70:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Eu já descobri que assim eu aprendo. Você tem que ver o que funciona melhor para cada um. porque no primeiro ano do alemão, eu sempre fazia isso, com todas as [parte incompreensível] que aprendia na aula, aí esse ano que já comecei a fazer menos, ai, sabe, os verbos que aprendi primeiro, eu não esqueço, eles estão lá. Sabe, ne. (AS 3, linhas 690-694)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: I've already discovered that this is the way I learn. You have to see what works best for each one of you. Because in the first year of German, I always did this, with all the [part incomprehensible] what I learned in class, and this year I've already started to do less, you know, the verbs I learned in the first year, I don't forget, they are here. You know, right? (AS 3, lines 690-694, my emphasis)</p>
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In this excerpt, Leandra independently notes that each person has his own methods to learn and that everyone is a different learner type. This knowledge is important because every learner has his own strategies and procedures to construct his knowledge. The learner who is aware of this fact will be able to guide his learning consciously and make the process more efficient. The same applies to learning in tandem as self-directed learning prevails in this learning context. This means that an analysis of needs and the setting of learning goals are good pre-conditions for successful learning in tandem. For mediation settings, this means that the learning mediator eventually has to carry out less groundwork for participating learners regarding the introduction to reflection on learning processes or that in a PGM, the more reflective learners will influence the other learners by sharing their reflections with them. The following excerpt illustrates this kind of interaction between a very reflexive learner¹⁷³ and one who has not yet been concerned with the topic of his own learning style.

Excerpt 71:

<p><u>Táís</u>: porque você pode ver seu processo, então você vai ver você (?) antes, e esse... aqui tá o começo, e é uma evolução, aí você tem um panorama de você mesmo. Acho isso bacana. Você reflete sobre o que ... ahh, tá legal, não tá legal, melhorei tanto, não melhorei</p> <p><u>Hugo</u>: Mas isso não é alguma coisa natural que vai acontecendo. Porque essa coisa pragmática que ... ah, não sabia isso, agora eu sei isso. Sabe... eu não aprendo desse jeito. Eu acho que [parte incompreensível] tá acontecendo naturalmente assim, eu... você vai vendo, eu vejo ehm essa evolução, mas não é nada assim,</p>	<p><u>Táís</u>: because you will be able to see your own process, so you'll see yourself (?) before and this... here is the beginning, and there is an evolution, so then you'll have a panorama of yourself. I think that's great. You reflect on what... ahh, this is good, this isn't good, I improved this much, I didn't improve.</p> <p><u>Hugo</u>: But what is happening here isn't natural. Because this pragmatic thing... ah, I didn't know this, now I know that. You know... I don't learn this way. I think that [part incomprehensible] it's happening</p>
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¹⁷³ A learner who is capable of reflecting on his learning process on different levels such as analysing and interpreting personal learning actions and behavior (Bräuer & Ballweg, 2011, p.9, in Böcker 2014, p. 182) or comparing learning goals with external demands and evaluating used actions and behaviours in order to achieve one's learning goals (Bräuer 2009, p. 160, in Böcker, 2014, p. 183).

<p>ah, tenho esse objetivo e agora eu cumpri. [parte incompreensível]. Não sei, mas eu acho que é uma coisa, aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira é alguma coisa mais natural, assim.</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: ahhh, cada um é cada um [risos]</p> <p>(AS 4, linhas 202-216)</p>	<p>naturally, I... you'll see, I see, ahm, this evolution, but it's nothing like, ah, I have this goal and now I will accomplish it. [part incomprehensible] I don't know, but I think that's something, learning a foreign language is something more natural.</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Ahhh, everybody is different [laughs]</p> <p>(AS 4, lines 202-216, my emphasis)</p>
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In this excerpt, two entirely opposite learner types are present. Taís is a structured learner who is very reflective about her learning process, sets goals and evaluates her learning outcomes. For Hugo, this behaviour is difficult to comprehend. He thinks that this is not the ‘natural way of learning’. He considers himself a very different type of learner and prefers to learn ‘freely’, i.e. without reflection on goals, actions and evaluation.

Why are both of them such different learners? How did they develop to become the learners they are? These questions are difficult to answer without knowing the two learners well. Only with more profound knowledge about the learners (about their learning history and their preferred learning styles) will we, as mediators or teachers, be able to analyse and evaluate their learning process and learning outcomes in a more holistic way.

In the case of a foreign language course, teachers usually get to know their learners throughout the weeks and months they work together in the classroom. In the case of advising/mediation settings, this situation is slightly different. The mediator is normally not the teacher of the learners, and depending on the mediation format, there is less contact with the participants¹⁷⁴. In these scenarios, a learner biography may be of considerable help as it offers basic information about the foreign language learning background and sheds light on the learning history of the participants. As a result, this allows the mediator to react more appropriately to individual learning issues that may occur during the mediation sessions.

Taking a look at Taís’ learner biography (unfortunately, Hugo did not return his learner biography and cannot be considered on the basis of the biography), we can see that Taís is a very determined learner of the German language. Her learning history reveals that she is in teacher education to become a Portuguese and German teacher and that she lived in Germany for one year early during her university course in order to improve her linguistic and cultural competences. Back at university, she had several teletandem partners and even a face-to-face tandem partner to continue her studies in addition to the regular classes offered through the

¹⁷⁴ Individual advising sessions are generally scheduled three to four times per semester; in the case of the PGA sessions described in this paper, meetings occurred every two weeks which approximately lasted one hour each. Therefore, in both formats, there is just a reduced number of contact hours between mediator and advisees which makes building closer relationships between both parties more difficult.

university course. In her last academic year, she estimated studying 20 hours per week including classes, teletandem sessions, self-study and personal contact via Skype and emails to friends in Germany. In the section of the learner biography where she has to write about learning objectives, it can be observed that she is able to define clear goals such as: ‘training subordinated clauses and conjunctions’ or ‘specific vocabulary such as economic, political terms’ (LB 04). Thus, her data in the learner biography corroborate the impression she is passing on to her environment, namely that she is a determined and well-organised learner who is able to plan her learning thoroughly, monitor and evaluate it afterwards.

The next excerpt shows the view of participant Célia in relation to other learners she has contact with.

Excerpt 72:

<p><u>Célia</u>: Não. Ehm, no caso [parte incompreensível] isso, eu penso em como, eu aprendi as coisas, eu penso que cada um aprende de um jeito, por isso eu não gosto de explicar uma coisa de uma maneira só, tento de explicar de varias... tento em todas as formas possíveis que eu consigo explicar aquilo, tento aplicar tudo isso mas sem dar de mão beijada, é isso que eu faço quando eu preparo um aula de alemão. lógico que [parte incompreensível] Como eu conheço a Maike já faz mais do que um ano, ah, as vezes a gente vem com ideias em mente, vamos discutir pronomes em português, porque ela me pede e eu preparo um exercício, preparo alguma coisa, vamos estudar alguma coisa mais [parte incompreensível] a gente acaba desviando do assunto para outras coisas porque a gente já tem uma relação de amizade muito forte. (AS 4, linhas 40-52)</p>	<p><u>Célia</u>: No. Ahm, in the case of [part incomprehensible], I think about how I learned things, I think that everybody learns in a certain way, that's why I don't like to explain things in a certain manner, I try to explain in different ways... I try to explain the topic in all possible variations I can, I try to do this but without helping too much, that's what I do when I give a German class. Of course [part incomprehensible] As I've known Maike more than a year now already, ah, sometimes we come with some ideas in mind, we discuss Portuguese pronouns because she asked me and I prepare some kind of exercise, I prepare something, we will study something more [part incomprehensible], then we start talking about other topics because we already have a strong friendship. (AS 4, lines 40-52, my emphasis)</p>
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Participant Célia has also understood that each individual has his own learning style, and therefore tries to explain things in different ways when she is delivering a language class or is working with her tandem partner – especially, when she does not know, yet, which kind of learner type there is in front of her. It seems as though she has carried out this kind of reflection previously. As she is a senior student and speaks directly about ‘teaching’, she perhaps has discussed these subjects with her teacher and classmates in the pedagogical-didactic classes at university.

Considering that Célia is aware of the different learning styles shows that she reflects on learning, in particular on the learning of German and Portuguese in her teletandem partnership.

This will also help her to adapt to different tandem partners and will enable her to conduct her teletandem in a more self-directed and reciprocity-balanced way as reflection is the first step towards a more self-directed learner.

4.1.3.2 *Stagnation in the Learning Process*

Some of the participants point out in the PGM sessions that they feel that their learning process is stagnating and that they do not believe they will learn anything anymore. In one of the cases (Leandra), this was expressed in relation to her teletandem partner who was (linguistically) developing at greater speed than herself. On the one hand, this sentiment probably emerged due to the lack of evaluation in teletandem. No learning success or failure was identified by an external figure (such as a teacher) and this could be the reason why the learner could not assess if she ‘had learned something’ and how much. The learners did not carry out any form of self-evaluation, which was partly due to the mediator’s inaction to encourage this process. On the other hand, the feeling of stagnation might have emerged because the learner had already reached a certain level of foreign language competence, and that the competences of learners on upper language levels are those of pragmatic, semantic and technical areas and are much more difficult to detect than basic grammar subjects such as verb tenses. The following shows Leandra’s preoccupation with this aspect:

Excerpt 73:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Também, hoje de manhã um amigo meu que se formou aqui no ano passado tava me falando, nossa Leandra, eh, você não pode me dar o contato, ou perguntar para sua parceira de Teletandem, se a gente não pode conversar? Eu falei como assim? Porque eu me formei em alemão, e agora estou dando aula de alemão e, assim, estou me sentindo estagnado! Eu preciso de mais, assim, eu consigo me comunicar bem, mas ele falou assim: não dá pra parar, sabe. Eu preciso de mais, eu sinto assim, que to parado. No mesmo lugar. Então eu acho que, aprender uma língua estrangeira é um processo contínuo assim, sempre... Ele falou assim, sa:be, eu não sei o que mais eu preciso, mas eu sinto que eu, eu preciso de MAIS. acho que você nunca está pronto. O conhecimento nunca está pronto, sempre tem mais do que já sabe. [...] (AS 2, linhas 587-598)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: This morning a friend of mine, who graduated here last year, also said to me, woah, Leandra, ah, could you find me a contact, or ask your teletandem partner if we can talk as well? And I said what do you mean? Because I graduated in German and now I am giving German classes and, well, I feel stuck! I need more, like, I’m able to communicate well, but he said: you can’t stop, you know. I need more, I feel that I am stuck. At the same point. So, I think learning a foreign language is a continuous process, always... He told me this, you know, I don’t know what else I need, but I feel that I, I need MORE. I guess you’re never finished. Your knowledge never reaches the end point, there is always more for you to know. [...] (AS 2, lines 587-598, my emphasis)</p>
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Through the discussion with her friend, Leandra reflects on language learning in general and concludes that learning never stops and that we always continue to learn. Her friend does not know where the problem lies, but he perceives a certain sense of stagnation. In this specific case, an individual advising session would be necessary in order to help him understand what he actually wants and needs (→ needs analysis). But it is not only Leandra's friend of who feels this way. Leandra herself, in a later PGM session, talks about her feeling that her learning is stalling.

Excerpt 74:

<p>Leandra: Eu acho que meu TT tá muito, assim, patinando no gelo... Nossa, parece que!!</p> <p>Mediadora: Tá, patinando no gelo. Eu não sei que isso quer dizer. [risos] explica pra mim, por favor, pra estrangeira!</p> <p>Leandra: Ah, quer dizer, não tá saindo do lugar, entendeu. [e os outros falam todos juntos para explicar também]</p> <p>Mediadora: Entendi, entendi! [risos & falando ao mesmo tempo sobre a expressão]</p> <p>Leandra: às vezes eu acho que não tá evoluindo. Pra mim. Não sei.</p> <p>Mediadora: Tivemos essa discussão na semana passada, interessante!</p> <p>Leandra: pra mim não tá. Pra, não sei, pra Christine parece que sim, mas pra mim parece que não tá saindo do lugar. Também eu noto que eu sempre tenho uma preocupação maior em preparar alguma coisa, pra ela. Sempre eu mando email pra combinar os horários, sempre eu tenho que ficar... sabe... (AS 5, linhas 486-507)</p>	<p>Leandra: I think that my Teletandem is like 'walking on ice'... Oh my, it really seems to be!!</p> <p>Mediator: Ok, 'walking on ice'. I don't know what this means. [laughs] Please explain to me, to the foreigner!</p> <p>Leandra: Ah, this means that I am not moving forwards, you know? [the other participants all talk at the same time to explain as well]</p> <p>Mediator: I understand, I understand! [laughing and everybody is talking at the same time about the expression Leandra used]</p> <p>Leandra: Sometimes I think I'm not developing. I don't know.</p> <p>Mediator: we had this discussion last week, interesting!</p> <p>Leandra: For me it's not advancing. For her, I don't know, for Christine it seems to moving forwards, but for my case it seems to be stuck. Another thing I notice is that I'm the one that's always more concerned with preparing something for her. I always send emails to organise timings to meet, it's always me... you know. (AS 5, lines 486-507, my emphasis)</p>
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In a later PGM session, Leandra feels that her teletandem does not advance or that it seems that she does not improve anymore. Here, the question is whether it is really about her learning process that does lead to the desired results (as in the case of Taís, below) or if it is something else. In her opinion, she does not learn as much as her teletandem partner. Her partner, however, is on a much lower level of language competency than her – she started learning Portuguese in the Portuguese intensive course at the German university a couple of weeks earlier – and progress is much more visible on a lower level than on a higher one. As everything seems new

in the first foreign language lessons one has the feeling of learning many different language aspects on a lexical, grammar and cultural level in each lesson, for instance. On an intermediate language level, one has already acquired a certain amount of language competency to maintain a basic conversation, i.e. one draws from a basic pool of lexic and grammatical structures and it is more difficult to discern new and old lexic and grammatical structures which is why there is a tendency to think that one does not improve so quickly anymore. In my opinion, Leandra and her partner did not negotiate their teletandem partnership thoroughly enough (“For her, I don’t know, for Christine it seems to be moving forwards, but for my case it seems to be stuck.”). Leandra did not clearly communicate her needs and wants and so, reciprocity is imbalanced. This becomes more evident in the next excerpt.

Excerpt 75:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Então! Então, acho que ela quer! até, eu acho. Mas eu acho que a parte da sessão em português ... vai melhor. Porque eu, acho que eu to tentando ter uma preocupação mais didática em relação ao TT do que ela. A impressão que dá é que, eu acho que ela pensa que eu consigo me comunicar bem, o que de fato não é verdade, mas pelo fato de ela falar muito pouco português, talvez ela pense que eu já sei um pouco mais de alemão assim, e ... eu acho que não tenho evoluído assim, ... acho que o meu alemão tá do mesmo jeito do que ele tava. Não, não do mesmo jeito exatamente, claro, né. (AS 5, linhas 519-527)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Ok! Ok, I think she wants to! At least, I think. But I think that the part of the session in Portuguese... is better. Because I, I think I am trying to care more about didactics in relation to the teletandem than her. The impression I have is that, I think that she thinks that I am already able to communicate well, which in fact is not true, but considering she speaks very little Portuguese, maybe makes her think that I already know a bit more in German and... I think that I have not developed as much... I guess my German is still the same way it was before. No, no exactly the same way, of course. (AS 5, lines 519-527, my emphasis)</p>
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Leandra tells the group that didactics and methods now matter more to her than to her partner and that she probably invests more time in preparation and cares about ‘teaching’ something to her partner. Leandra is a student in teacher training and brings her experiences from her university classes to her teletandem. Her teletandem partner has just finished her A-levels and has much less learning and teaching experience than Leandra. This imbalance between the learner experience levels of both Leandra and her partner Christine does not necessarily need to result in an imbalance of reciprocity, which is a leading principle of tandem learning (see section 2.1.1). Leandra probably does expect her partner to be more of a teacher than she actually is and feels frustrated about not receiving the input she expects¹⁷⁵. This once

¹⁷⁵ The learner background and the educational system as Leandra knows it must be considered as well. The teacher still has a very dominant role in classroom scenarios in the Brazilian educational system, so a learner normally might expect a large amount of prescriptions and proposals for learning.

again proves that communication and negotiation between partners is crucial for a successful tandem partnership in which both parties feel that their needs are respected, and their learning is challenged.

The participant in the following excerpt also wants to know what to do when you ‘get to a point’ at which things do not ‘flow’ anymore.

Excerpt 76:

<p><u>Taís</u>: E Clara, você? E quando você chega num ponto? Como renovar esse, esse processo de aprendizagem? Como..</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Tipo, você estabelecer metas e você ... conseguiu chegar lá?</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Como fazer mais isso porque tem uma... [risos] (AS 4, linhas 360-366)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: And you, Clara? And when you get to this point? How can we renew this, this learning process? How...</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: Like, you’re setting goals and you... achieved them already?</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: How to do more of this because there is... [laughs] (AS 4, lines 360-366, my emphasis)</p>
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Taís directs the question specifically to the mediator, Clara, whom she probably views as a language and teletandem expert. She wants to know how she can revitalise her learning process as she wants to use the teletandem context in the most effective way possible. Taís is a very ambitious learner who always wants to be prepared to the best of her ability and thinks about her learning in great depth. The PGMs are an opportunity for her to discuss learning processes with a language learning expert (who is not her teacher) and her colleagues. She hopes to obtain ideas about new strategies and solutions for her problems. In the continuation of the discussion, the mediator does not respond directly to Taís’ questions as she lets other peers try to answer. Nevertheless, the mediator perceives that the peers do not grasp Taís’ problem very well and that Taís will not receive satisfying support from her peers. A few minutes later, she even remarks that it is better to have a one-on-one with Taís in order to give her more attention and support without making the peers feel bored.

However, the idea of stalling within the learning process is corroborated by the university teachers, as the next excerpts show.

Excerpt 77:

<p><u>Taís</u>: [...] é que assim eu não sei, uma vez conversei com Luiz Carlos, e o Luiz Carlos falou assim: que na aprendizagem de língua estrangeira, você vai até tal ponto depois parece... que... (AS 5, linhas 657-660)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: [...] it’s like this, I don’t know, one time I talked to Luiz Carlos [a German teacher at university], and Luiz Carlos said to me that when learning a foreign language you reach a certain point and then it seems... that... (AS 5, lines 657-660, my emphasis)</p>
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A few moments later, Taís explains further:

Excerpt 78:

<p><u>Taís:</u> Parece que [parte incompreensível] são outras. Você já está acostumado com o vocabulário [parte incompreensível] A2, tudo é muito novo assim, [parte incompreensível] ohh, Ich heiße Taís. ohhhh [bate palmas] [risos]</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Verdade.</p> <p><u>Taís:</u> Depois ... quando você passa, sabe, essa fase inicial em que você vê que, que a língua é mais complexa... é outra coisa. Porque não muda muita coisa na gramática, não sei, foi o que o Luiz Carlos falou, não muda muito, por exemplo, você tá no final do intermediário para o avançado, são questões mais estilísticas, né, não tanto gramática que você vai fazer. Mais semântica... (AS 5, linhas 695-708)</p>	<p><u>Taís:</u> It seems that [part incomprehensible] are different. You're already used to the vocabulary [part incomprehensible] A2, everything is totally new, [part incomprehensible] ohh, Ich heiße Taís [my name is Taís]. Ohhh [claps her hands] [laughing]</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> That's true.</p> <p><u>Taís:</u> Then... when you pass this stage, you know, this initial stage, when you see that the language is more complex... then it's different. Because grammar doesn't change very much, I don't know, that's what Luiz Carlos said, it doesn't change too much, for example, you're at the end of the intermediate going to the advanced level, then the questions are more stylistic, right, there isn't as much grammar to do anymore. More semantics... (AS 5, lines 695-708, my emphasis)</p>
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Taís feels more secure once she has been reassured by her German teacher that her feelings about her 'stagnation' are not wrong. Nevertheless, her teacher does not provide her with any guidance on how to overcome this feeling or on how to evaluate her own efforts in order to perceive the progress she will definitely make. The teacher is certainly not to blame, because, on the one hand, he possibly did not recognise that Taís was seeking help in this situation. On the other hand, he likely had never received training in language mediation techniques, and, as a result, struggled to provide her with the necessary input she needed for the self-evaluation of her learning. This is one reason why she turns to the learning mediator she met at the teletandem project. Stimulated by the discussions of learning German and Portuguese as foreign languages and the reflections on different aspects of learning in teletandem, she hopes to receive support from Clara. The next subsection, on efficiency in the learning process, will once more focus on Taís as she tries to explain to her peers and the mediator Clara how she wants to become a more efficient learner.

4.1.3.3 *Efficiency in the Learning Process*

The aforementioned theme of *Stagnation in the Learning Process* is closely linked to *Efficiency in the Learning Process*. After Taís has detected that she feels her learning process has stagnated, and that she does not seem to be making advances with her German language competencies, she passes on to the next step and poses question on how to improve the learning process and become more efficient. The following excerpt, which is slightly longer than the others, precisely demonstrates the difficulty of Taís in explaining her ‘problem’ to her peers and the mediator.

Excerpt 79:

<p>Taís: não é tema. é eficácia. a questão não é mais tema, não é apenas, assim, vocabulário novo, mas as vezes assim, como eu posso melhorar, sem que isso for egoísta, sem que isso::: interfira com o [parte incompreensível] Meu diário de aprendizagem tem todo isso [risos] Porque é assim, eu posso tentar resolver o... a prova do C1, ouuu... C2 [parte incompreensível] tipo, mais do que isso não tem, é só pra nativos, aquilo lá. [risos] Mas a questão é, até que ponto isso é eficaz? porque o processo de aprendizagem, ele mexe com esse é eficaz, não é eficaz, o que preciso mudar, o que não preciso, como posso ver isso? Como mudar isso? A questão não é como tratar a linguística? Mas a aprendizagem, como posso ficar renovando? ... Entendeu?</p> <p>Célia: Tipo que você chega numa zona de conforto, vamos dizer assim?</p> <p>Taís: Não, não é uma zona de conforto. A questão não é linguisticamente, mas eficaz... como eu posso ficar eficaz no meu processo de aprendizagem no teletandem. Porque não é só pegar um livro de gramática autônomo e ler, sabe. Eu posso fazer exercícios mais difíceis, eu posso decorar em casa, como fazer isso mutuamente? Entende? eu tenho uma organização de emails, aí tem uma pasta para o meu parceiro, entende, ou escrevo diários de aprendizagem? ... Como eu posso [parte incompreensível] Como eu posso aprender melhor, aproveitar mais, mas pode ser alguma coisa simples, não precisa ser difícil. é que eu acho que o meu teletandem, chegou num ponto que estagnou assim, no processo de aprendizagem. (AS 4, 376-401)</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>Taís: It's not the topic. It's efficiency. The question is not the topic anymore, it's not only about new vocabulary, but sometimes about how I can improve, without being selfish, without thi:::s interfering with the [part incomprehensible] My learner diary is full of this [laughs]. Because it's like this, I can try to do the... the C1 test o:r... C2 [part incomprehensible] but more than this doesn't exist, it's only for native speakers, those things. [laughs] But the question is, until which point is this still effective? Because the learning process has to do with this is it efficient? Is it not efficient? What do I need to change? What do I not need? How can I check this? How can I change this? The question is not how to manage linguistics. But the learning itself, how can I renew this process? ... Understand?</p> <p>Célia: Like you're getting in a comfort zone, so to say?</p> <p>Taís: No, it's not a comfort zone. It's not a problem linguistically, but efficiency... how can I become more efficient in my learning process in teletandem. Because it's not about getting a grammar book autonomously and start reading, you know. I can do exercises which are more difficult, I can learn something off by heart at home, but how can I do those things mutually? You understand? I organise my emails and I have a folder for my partner, you know, or I write learner diaries... How can I [part incomprehensible] How can I improve learning, make more of it, it can be something simple, it doesn't need to be difficult. It's just that I think that my teletandem reached a point of stagnation, in the learning process. (AS 4, 376-401, my emphasis)</p>
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<p><u>Célia</u>: Eu acho que eu passei por isso com a Lorena. Quando vieram os italianos para cá, foi... o meu primeiro contato com o Teletandem foi tandem presencial. E assim, eu já tinha estudado faz um tempão, á tinha uma noção boa de, de italiano. E... eu queria aprender muitas coisas, queria aprender MUITAS coisas e consegui explicar e a gente acabou chegando numa zona de conforto em que tudo que ela me pediu eu fazia e o que a Taís falou. acho que eu estagnei ...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Mas assim, não é zona de conforto linguisticamente, é de aprendizagem, por exemplo, a gente se comunica, é difícil ...</p> <p><u>Célia</u>: Acho que vai muito mais do seu parceiro de propor ...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: hummm, não! Porque também, ehm,esse... o objetivo de aprendizagem também depende de mim. Né, então, é meio que eu também tenho que ver, sei lá ... [parte incompreensível]</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: [parte incompreensível] Se ele não fizer o que você precisa, o que você realmente quer, é difícil para [parte incompreensível] ...</p> <p><u>Hugo</u>: Eu não estou entendendo, mesmo! (AS 4, linhas 416-436)</p>	<p>[...]</p> <p><u>Célia</u>: I think I had the same situation with Lorena. When the Italians came here, it was... my first contact with teletandem was the face-to-face tandem. And I had already studied Italian for some time, I knew quite a lot in Italian. And... I wanted to learn more, wanted to learn MANY more things and I was able to explain this and we somehow reached a comfort zone where everything she asked me I did and the same that Taís said. I think I stagnated/got stuck...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: But it's not a comfort zone, linguistically spoken, it's about learning, for example, we talk, and it's difficult...</p> <p><u>Célia</u>: I think you partner has to propose more to you...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Hmmm, no! Because, ehm, this... the learning objective depends on me. So, I have to see how I get along... whatever... [part incomprehensible]</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: [part incomprehensible] If he doesn't do what you need, what you really want, it is difficult to [part incomprehensible]</p> <p><u>Hugo</u>: I really do not understand, really! (AS 4, lines 416-436, my emphasis)</p>
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This excerpt is considerably longer than the part extracted above. The peers try to understand Taís' problem and she tries to explain it in several ways, but it is still very hard for the others to follow her (Hugo: "I really do not understand, really!"). In this case, Taís needed individual language learning advising or coaching, because language content, learning strategies and the definition of learning objectives are activities which she is familiar with. The fact that Taís takes several minutes and uses multiple ways to explain herself shows that she really needs and wants help from the mediator and her peers to improve her learning. In fact, this problem goes beyond the scope of learning in tandem – Taís wants to generally understand more about how to improve learning. This is why an individual mediation session would have been the better setting for her to find solutions. However, discussing these aspects in the PGM session was very useful for all peers. Through her peers' persistent enquiries or even the misinterpretation of her problem, Taís was pushed to deal with the definition of her problem and to repeatedly describe it in greater detail. It is not easy to fully comprehend what she exactly means, but it does not relate to a lack of creativity for topics or exercises for her teletandem,

but to the feeling that all those tasks and actions apparently do not translate into progress anymore.

Another aspect revealed in this excerpt is the advanced skill of reflection¹⁷⁶ on her learning (in relation to her peers) which Taís demonstrates through her comments. However, the active participation of the peers in finding a solution for Taís’ problem shows how they are all immersed in the discussion and that they want to follow Taís’ way of thinking. Maybe the mediator could have stopped the discussion slightly earlier in order to switch the focus to the other participants, too, as opposed to maintaining the focus on Taís’ problems. These very specific questions would be discussed more effectively in an individual advising session between Taís and the mediator. Unfortunately, an individual advising session did not take place.

In an earlier PGM session, participant Leandra also drew attention to ‘efficiency’ in language learning. As a result of a comment made by Leandra, the peers started an interesting discussion about efficiency in learning processes, albeit without reaching an actual conclusion as to what enhancing efficiency precisely means. A short excerpt shows Leandra’s concerns and the response of Clara, the mediator.

Excerpt 80:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Quanto tempo será, mais ou menos, estatisticamente, [risos] assim, quanto tempo, sabe, será que a gente vai levar pra... pra levar o teletandem eficiente assim, de de fato.</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Difícil! Isso na verdade ...</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Será que é um processo muito demorado?</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Eu acho que não! Porque, na verdade, depende de você. eu acho que você pode, na verdade, a partir da primeira aula ter um TT eficiente para você! Assim tipo, isso é seu conhecimento x e você vai querer acrescentar, né? (AS 2, linhas 958-969)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: How much time, approximately, statistically [laughs], how much time, you know, will we need to... to have an efficient teletandem, effectively?</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: Difficult. Actually, this is...</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Is it a very slow process?</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: I don’t think so! Because, in reality, it depends on you. I think that you can effectively have an efficient teletandem from the first sessions onwards! Like, this is your knowledge x and you want to add something, right? (AS 2, lines 958-969, my emphasis)</p>
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Considering her tenure as a second-year university student, Leandra’s questions are compelling after her first few teletandem sessions and in her second PGM session. It seems that Leandra has high expectations of the tandem learning context as she does not deem her regular classes at university as very productive for her and that she learns better at home¹⁷⁷. However,

¹⁷⁶ Taís is able to reflect on all levels as proposed by Bräuer, 2009, and Bräuer & Ballweg, 2011.

¹⁷⁷ In Mediation Session No. 5 Leandra says: “For example, I am like this, I hate going to class, I really hate it [laughs] [...] I like university because it shows me the way... I have to go, but I don’t have the patience to stay in

in her opinion, she does not use her time in teletandem particularly efficiently, which may have led her to her question. She is certainly aware of the fact that a teletandem partnership does not usually continue indefinitely but one or two semesters, so she is interested in finding out when she will see the results of her learning in teletandem. The mediator, in turn, tries to lead the discussion on to the definition of learning goals. When setting learning goals, which are measurable and can be rated, it is easier to evaluate the outcomes (positive or negative) afterwards which, again, will help to determine the ‘efficiency’ of the learning, in the words of Leandra.

4.1.3.4 Synthesis of the category ‘Learning Process’

In this category, three main aspects in relation to the learning process have been discussed: *learner type and learning styles*; *stagnation of the learning process*; and *efficiency of the learning process*. Regarding the first aspect, it can be noted that the learners who participate in PGM sessions are, obviously, very different learner types themselves. However, occasionally, they only become aware of this fact as a result of the in-depth discussions of learning styles and strategies within the PGM sessions. The mediator should equally be aware of this fact and stimulate reflection and discussion relating to this subject as it is an important aspect for promoting self-awareness among the participants regarding their own learning processes and procedures.

In relation to stagnation of learning processes, some learners on their own account detect a sense of stalling in the learning process and not advancing towards upper levels of language competencies. In some cases, this might be an illusion as these learners possibly do not know how to evaluate their learning and therefore believe that they are unable to make progress. Supporting them by coaching on how to set achievable learning goals and how to evaluate the outcomes might be sufficient for them to regain momentum.

The third aspect which touched upon the efficiency of language learning is linked to the second aspect. Some learners did not only feel stagnated in their learning process, but also wanted to know how to improve learning in order to make it more efficient. These learners held many expectations of the teletandem learning context and may have aimed too high. They seemed to have thought that they would see quick and meaningful improvements in their

class and those things, you know. But, goodness, if I study at home I can study 7 hours without stopping.” / “Por exemplo, eu sou assim, eu odeio ir às aulas, eu odeio mesmo. [risos] [...] Acho a faculdade legal porque ela me mostra o caminho... que eu tenho que seguir, mas eu não tenho a paciência de ficar na aula e essas coisas, assim, sabe. Mas nossa, se eu estudo na minha casa, eu consigo estudar 7 horas seguidas... [...]” (AS 5, lines 756-762)

German competencies merely through the teletandem contacts, but realised after a few weeks of teletandem sessions that this was not to be the case. By having contact with a learning mediator, they hoped to get help and explanations about how to be more efficient in learning in teletandem. In this case, it is indispensable that the mediator explains from the get-go that no universal formulas exist that just needs to be applied. Every learner has to find his own way of learning, his preferences for strategies and his learning style. The mediator is there to support him during this search, occasionally provide input by proposing new strategies or making joint reflections, for example.

The following table gives a summary of the findings of this category.

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY <i>LEARNING PROCESS</i>	
➤	There are many different learner types in a learner group, each one with an individual learning process to guide. The mediator must be aware of this fact and stimulate reflection on it.
➤	The awareness of the existence of different learner types is not provided during the initial stages. This awareness grows within each learner through discussions and group reflection.
➤	Learners may experience a sense of stagnation in their learning process (only in relation to the learning in teletandem or in relation to learning in general) and ask for help. Both mediator and peers can provide support.
➤	Learners may want to receive formulas on how to get more efficient in learning. It is important to remember that each individual is different and, therefore, needs appropriate support.
➤	Learners might have expectations of a quick learning progress in regards to teletandem sessions which is not necessarily viable.

Table 17. Synthesis of the category Learning Process

4.1.4 Category Preparation of Teletandem Sessions

The category *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions* is predominantly concerned with recurrences on topics which appeared in the teletandem sessions of the participants that attended the PGM meetings and in which way they prepared (or failed to prepare) these topics. Learners often talked about the topics they had chosen for the collaborative work with their partners in the teletandem sessions. Those topics are mainly related to cultures and comprise: German and

Brazilian literature, football, beer, personal plans for the week, Hen nights and weddings, German and Brazilian films, the seasons of the year, star signs, cities in Germany and Brazil, German and Brazilian music, authors and their works, information about family and friends and other personal matters, in addition to university courses, foreign language courses at university, and pronouns. We can see that there is only one linguistic topic among many others which are related to (inter)cultural or personal aspects – and those were probably chosen to discuss the similarities and differences between the two countries and cultures.¹⁷⁸

In some cases, the learners try to agree on topics which they want to discuss in the next teletandem session. Others relate their difficulties in coming up with specific topics as they do not know or cannot decide which subject to choose. Others, in turn, prefer to look for conversational topics spontaneously and do not prepare for their sessions at all.

4.1.4.1 *Preparation of teletandem sessions and low communicative competence of partners*

In the *Teletandem Brasil* project, the idea is to leave the choice of topics completely to the participating learners. This aspect differs from many other telecollaboration projects (even with tandem character) which often determine the topics or at least a range of topics from which the learners are to choose.

The preparation of any chosen topic is of great importance to guarantee relatively free-flowing conversation, especially when both teletandem partners are beginners in their foreign language. The exchange of ideas and strategies between learners (peers), mediator and learner on how to handle this problem increases the motivation of those learners to face the challenge and tackle the problem in different ways.

Excerpt 81:

<p><u>Lena</u>: [...] aí, depois nós tivemos duas sessões, né, além dessa, dessa primeira, aí na primeira ela falou um pouquinho de, de música pra mim e alguns, alguns autores, e citou algumas obras e eu também falei de algumas músicas pra ela, e a nossa última sessão, ela falou sobre a cidade de Hamburg e aí, eu falei um pouquinho da literatura brasileira pra ela, mas, eh, tipo, na questão de aprendizagem assim, tipo, foi uma aprendizagem muito mais cultural do que, do que gramatical, nesse</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: [...] then, afterwards, we had two sessions, besides this first one, and in the first one she talked a little bit about, about music and some, some authors and cited some works and I too, I talked about some music, and in the last session, she told me about the city of Hamburg and I told her about Brazilian literature, but, ahm, in regards to learning, it was far more cultural learning than, than grammatical learning, in that sense, you know. And as we, or at least I, prepare what I will</p>
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¹⁷⁸ It is worth noting that most participating learners said that “real language learning” is studying grammatical structures and not cultural aspects (see section 4.1.2), however, they choose rather cultural topics for their teletandem sessions. Nonetheless, they also said that they had the grammar part in the German lessons at university, so they would probably want a counterpart in the teletandem sessions.

<p>sentido, sabe. E como a gente, ou pelo menos eu, preparo o que eu vou falar, porque se eu deixar pra falar na hora eu sei que não vou conseguir, então, não há muito que corrigir assim, mas eu vejo que isso não tá me ajudando muito. Porque eu acabo esquecendo o que eu falei, entendeu, porque, tipo, eu mais tava lendo do que falando, e eu vi que acho que ela também tava fazendo isso, assim, eh, ela prepara também o que ela vai falar e acho que isso não vai ajudar tanto, isso não é o objetivo do tandem, né. Não é natural, não soa uma coisa natural, não soa uma conversa natural, é a mesma coisa, tipo, tá lendo um livro pra mim, sabe. e aí, só preciso pensar em uma forma de trabalhar isso. Só que como a gente não tem, ehm, uma bagagem de::, para poder fazer isso, é a forma que eu tenho para a gente poder conseguir se comunicar porque se eu chegar sem preparar na:da, sem eu escrever um pouco do que vou falar, eu não vou conseguir. Então... <u>00:04:11-9</u> (AS 1-2, linhas, 58-78, minha ênfase)</p>	<p>talk about, because if I wait till the moment to speak, I know I won't be able to, so, there is not so much to correct, but I perceived that this doesn't help me so much. Because I start to forget the things I said, you know, because, I was reading more than I was talking, and I saw that, I think she was doing the same, ehm, she also prepares what she wants to say and I think this doesn't help us, it's not the objective of tandem, right? It's not natural, it doesn't sound natural, it doesn't sound like a natural conversation, it's just like reading a book to me, you know. So I have to think about a way to work on this. The only problem is that we don't, ahm, have a basis yet to::, to be able to do this, it's the only way I see we may use to be able to communicate with each other, because if I come without preparation, without writing a little bit of what I am going to say, I won't get it. So... (AS 1-2, lines 58-78, my emphasis)</p>
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Lena is in her second year in university, enrolled in a teacher education course and had just one year of German classes. About herself she says that she still does not reach high language competencies in German (*The only problem is that we don't, ahm, have a basis yet to::, to be able to do this [speak freely]*), but she is very motivated to learn more and to improve. In my study, I did not want to exclude students with a lower level of German¹⁷⁹, because even senior students often have not reached an intermediated level, yet. However, her teletandem partner is also a beginner as she started her Portuguese studies as part of the Portuguese intensive course at the German university a few weeks prior.

Both students use a strategy to overcome their limitations and to succeed in their teletandem communication: they write short texts with the content they want to communicate to their partner and read them out (see section 4.1.1). Generally, this is a good idea, which demonstrates that they reflecting on their own limitations and the creation of strategies to overcome these limitations: 'I am unable to speak freely so I will write down what I want to say'. However, it was immediately after the first session that Lena did not think that the strategy worked very well (*It's not natural, it doesn't sound natural, it doesn't sound like a natural conversation.*).

¹⁷⁹ There are institutions which offer Tandem opportunities only for speakers with at least a B1 level in their respective foreign language because on an intermediate level, a basic conversation between the tandem partners is probably guaranteed. (For example the face-to-face tandem project at *Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz*; the information about the tandem project is written on posters pinned in several places on the campus. – seen in September 2015).

As a result, she then wanted to change the strategy to try to achieve her goal of true communication, i.e. having a free and spontaneously guided conversation with her partner.

Naturally, this situation raises the question as to whether a minimum level of foreign language competency should be required before taking part in a tandem project, so that participants do not get frustrated upon the realisation that they have great difficulties in communicating with the partner (Brammerts & Calvert, 2001). Some tandem projects have, in fact, established a minimum level of language competency as a prerequisite for enrolment (Morley & Truscott, 2001). In my opinion, this must be decided on a case-by-case basis whilst considering the context. At UNESP Assis, senior students often do not possess an intermediate or advanced level of the respective foreign language they chose for their studies¹⁸⁰. Therefore, it would very likely be immensely demotivating to only accept the few advanced German speakers among the students to participate in the project. The teletandem project in the context of foreign language learning and teacher education at UNESP Assis also serves as a motivational trigger to become more engaged with language learning. This is another reason for coordinators and/or language mediators to be especially aware of the fact that lesser experienced learners will participate in the project and special attention and support will be needed in order to help the learners overcome the initial frustration and obstacles. The majority of students still do not obtain a highly developed strategy inventory to face the many forms of ‘speechlessness’ that may emerge during the conversations. Quick demotivation and quitting the teletandem partnerships can be averted by the mediator as comments from the participants of this study also demonstrate (*“But the guidance we received from you, I think if I had started teletandem like everybody else starts, without this support you gave us, with the meetings here and everything, talking about main subjects of, of a teletandem, I would not have made it.”* Lena in AS 6).

The next excerpt shows another comment made by Lena in which she once again expresses her uneasiness in relation to the preparation method she chose for her teletandem sessions with her partner Melanie.

Excerpt 82:

<u>Lena</u> : ah, não quero escrever [risos] é porque é assim. é, a Melanie me pediu para falar alguma coisa sobre literatura brasileira, só que como eu ainda não tenho uma bagagem de	<u>Lena</u> : Ah, I don't want to write [laughs]. It's like this. Melanie asked me to talk about something about Brazilian literature, but as I still don't have a solid basis in vocabulary, so,
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¹⁸⁰ It is very difficult to identify the exact reasons for this situation. Most likely, it is most a combination of circumstances such as inadequate language classes (where too little is asked of the learners, insufficient input, slow progression) and low motivation on the part of the students, but also the lack of learning contexts and contact zones with the target cultures outside the pure language and literature classes of the curriculum.

vocabulário, grande, assim, então, eu sabia que se eu chegasse assim sem um texto, eu não conseguiria me expressar para ela. só que chegar na hora, tipo, aí fica aquela coisa, tipo, você acaba lendo, não, e acaba sendo não natural e não sei, eu queria fazer, largar mão disso e [parte incompreensível] se há outro jeito? De abordar os temas que ela me pede. senão, ehm, a gente vai se encontrar na sexta-feira, e eu vou falar algumas coisas sobre São Paulo e um pouco sobre comida brasileira. só que, se eu não fizer isso, não vou conseguir me comunicar. (AS 1-2, linhas 237-247)	I knew that if I would arrive without anything written, I would not be able to communicate with her. But also, in that moment, this thing like, you start reading, no, then it turns out to be nothing natural and I don't know, I would like to abandon this and [part incomprehensible] is there another way? To talk about the themes she asks me about. If not, ahm, we will meet on Friday and I will tell her some things about São Paulo and a little bit about Brazilian food. But if I don't do this [write a text], I won't be able to communicate. (AS 1-2, lines 237-247, my emphasis)
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Lena reiterates what she said, similarly, in a previous comment. This shows her dissatisfaction with the situation and how much she would like to change it (*I would like to abandon this*). She is discontent about the fact that she is not able to communicate freely, even if the main objective of a teletandem partnership is to speak relatively freely and spontaneously with a native speaker in the target language. Reading texts to each other with only slim chances of correcting each other (because the written text has been well prepared) is not an adequate strategy for either of them.

In the specific case of Lena, discussion with the peers and the mediator helped her to obtain more ideas for strategies which can be implemented or tested to promote freer conversation, which, nevertheless, has been prepared. After Lena's aforementioned comment, the peer group continued to talk for more than two minutes about possible strategies on how to prepare her next teletandem session without resorting to text composition. Some of the proposals made are to work with captioned images and short notes which should serve as 'cheat sheet' but not as template.

Excerpt 83:

<u>Mediadora</u> : você vai conseguir! sabe o que você faz? você pode usar imagens, fotos, assim. Bota um texto em baixo, sabe... (AS 1-2, linhas 249-250)	<u>Mediator</u> : You'll be able to do this! You know what you could do? You could use images, photos, etc. Write a small amount of text under them, you know... (AS 1-2, lines 249-250)
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The mediator reassures her that she does not need to utter perfect sentences. Partial sentences or very simple sentences are sufficient for her partner to understand her, and she will help her if Lena gets stuck. Using this approach increases the likelihood that the conversation will flow freely even if Lena thinks that she is speaking 'like a baby'.

Excerpt 84:

<p><u>Mediadora</u>: e aí você fala assim: <i>und es gibt ein Museum in Park</i>. Ou, sabe, coisas que você sabe fazer, [parte incompreensível] ou mesmo se for assim: <i>es gibt – Museum – in Park</i>. tipo assim, você vai conseguir, porque realmente ... (AS 1-2, linhas 270-272)</p>	<p><u>Mediator</u>: and then you just say it like this: <i>und es gibt ein Museum in Park</i>. [<i>and there is a museum in the park</i>] Or, you know, things you know how to do, [part incomprehensible] or even if it is like this: <i>es gibt – Museum – in Park</i>. [<i>there is – museum – in park</i>] Like this, you will be able to do this, because it's really... (AS 1-2, lines 270-272)</p>
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In this case, it is mainly the mediator who shared new ideas and provided guidance. This can be considered a directive behaviour on the part of the mediator¹⁸¹, but may be justified considering that she aimed to motivate Lena to continue with her teletandem partnership, even if the mediator did not wait for Lena to make this reflection and eventually come up with her own solutions. The stimulation of a more profound reflection of Lena's problem and possible solutions would have been more appropriate in an individual mediation session to avoid boring the other participant

4.1.4.2 *Preparation Techniques for Teletandem Sessions*

In the second PGM session, which was attended by three students only (Lena, Maria and Leandra), the main subject was *Planning a Teletandem Session*, though the discussion often took various turns.

Lena, for example, had a question about how to explain aspects of Portuguese grammar to her teletandem partner. On the one hand, she encountered difficulties because of the low foreign language proficiency of both (A1, breakthrough level) which leads to the question of which language to use to explain such topics (Brammerts & Calvert, 2001). On the other hand, Lena thought that she did not know the grammar rules well enough and felt insecure in responding to grammar questions promptly. She does, however, try to find solutions herself and proposes in one of the teletandem sessions that she will look up the rules at home and explain it to her partner correctly in the next teletandem session. Then, Leandra and Maria (together with the mediator) help Lena to reflect on possible and simple ways to explain the grammar aspects she made reference to. During their discussion, all three students note that despite taking part in a teacher education programme for Portuguese, they do not know a lot of Portuguese language

¹⁸¹ For a discussion on directiveness in the behaviour of mediators and learning advisors, also see sections 2.5 and 4.2.4.

rules. However, they are able to understand that they can often reach the solution by contemplation and making deductions.

At some stage, Leandra frankly asks which type of ‘teaching’ would be better for the teletandem context:

Excerpt 85:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: e então, aproveitando a dúvida da Lena, tipo, o que é mais legal pra você ensinar a gramática? é você preparar por exemplo uma aula sobre gramática e já trazer algumas frases prontas e mostrar ou você (...) você coloca isso no contexto da conversa, sabe? o que é mais legal, você preparar, chegar tipo assim, hoje vamos falar sobre a preposições tais tais e tais. então, isso, isso, isso, isso, isso, isso. o que é mais ... viável?</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: para você que já fez tandem. [risos]</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Fazer uma aula mesmo? sabe, como se fosse uma aula mesmo? (AS 2, linhas, 160-171)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Ok and considering the doubts that Lena has, which is the better way to teach grammar? Is it, for example, preparing a class about grammar and offering some sentences and showing them or do you... do you put this in a context of a conversation, you know? Which one is better, you preparing something, arriving and then today we will talk about the prepositions x, y and z. so, it's like this and this and that, and this and this and that. What is more... viable?</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: for you who have already done tandem [laughs]</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Hold a real class? As if it were actually in the classroom? (AS 2, lines 160-171)</p>
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The question is directed at the mediator – not because of her position as ‘teacher’ but rather as ‘expert in tandem learning’. It seems that the learners respect her for the experiences she has in teletandem and want to benefit from them. This is exactly what the mediator had envisioned as the purpose of the PGM setting: the learners would not see her in the role of a teacher (which she, in fact, was not), but rather as a peer and, in extension, would be more open and share their experiences and feelings in relation to the teletandem partnership. When the teacher has the role of the mediator, the whole mediation setting can be impacted negatively because of a perceived hierarchy or possible bias (like evaluation and marks), and there is a greater likelihood of the participants not voicing everything they would if the teacher were not present. The project participants presumably regarded the mediator firstly, of course, as a German native speaker with a certain expertise in cultural issues, and secondly, as a tandem learner expert. With the roles being divided this way, it can be assumed that an even greater number of directive comments from myself were mitigated as a result of the peer role I took on.

In the second PGM session, the learners also discussed different preparation techniques and thus, influenced each other with new ideas for applying these techniques. One example is shown in the next excerpt, in which Leandra relates how she is using pictures and images of objects she will talk about in the teletandem session.

<p><u>Leandra</u>: então, uma coisa que fiz que achei legal na última sessão, antes da sessão, tipo, é porque eles tinham mandado este questionário: que você faz, como... então a gente ia falar sobre isso, sobre essas perguntas. ai antes... ai achei legal para mim porque pesquisei, por exemplo, eu, alguns alimentos, ou algumas coisas que eu não sabia como é, como era em alemão. e aí a gente conversou em alemão um pouco sobre como era, era a rotina na universidade, e então, e eu procurei já antes o vocabulário, a saber, a saber algumas coisas e aí eu peguei algumas fotos, daqui da unesp, e porque falamos da universidade. então a gente, peguei uma foto da entrada, e eu não sabia, por exemplo, como eu diria: essa é a entrada da faculdade. aí eu falei pra ela: eu queria saber o que é isso? Ah, é a entrada, <i>Eingang</i>, não sei o que. Ai mostrei a foto para ela tipo do RU, aí a gente falou um pouco sobre a, sobre a comida, mostrei uma foto da biblioteca, uma foto do bosque. por exemplo, eu não sabia dizer muitas árvores ou aqui tem um bosque ou não sei o que. então, eu fui mostrando as fotos e aí ela via e me ajudava, porque ela sabia o que eu queria, o que eu queria perguntar. Porque se eu perguntasse pra ela também em português, ela sabe pouco em português, talvez ela não soubesse se eu perguntasse pra ela muitas árvores estão? o que é que é árvore também? né, por exemplo. então fui mostrando as fotos, foi bem legal trabalhar com imagens. (AS 2, linhas 277-298)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Well, one thing I did and which I liked in the last session was, before the session, hum, it's because they have sent this questionnaire: what do you do, how.... so we intend to talk about this, about the questions. So beforehand... I thought it would be a good idea for me because I looked for, for example, I, some food, or some things I didn't know how to say in German. And then we talked in German a little bit about the, the routine at university and then, and I had looked up the vocabulary in advance, to know, to know some things and then I got some photos, from UNESP and, because we were talking about the university. So we, I showed her a photo of the entrance and then I didn't know, for example, how to say: this is the entrance of the university. So then I told her, I would like to know what this is? Ah, this is the entrance, <i>Eingang</i>, whatever. Then I showed her the photo of the canteen, then we talked a bit about, about the food, I showed a picture of the library, a picture of the woods. For example, I could not say many trees or here is a forest or whatever. Then I showed the pictures and when she saw them she helped me because she knew what I wanted, what I wanted to ask. Because even if I had asked in Portuguese, she only knows very little in Portuguese, maybe she would not have known it if I had asked her what many trees are? What does tree mean? For example. So I showed her the photos and it was really great working with pictures. (AS 2, lines 277-298)</p>
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Leandra explains in details how she prepared her last teletandem session. As she and her partner had agreed on a specific topic beforehand, she prepared the topic by looking for specific vocabulary (in relation to food and her university campus) and also by searching for images or photos of the campus so that she could use them during the session to facilitate conversation and understanding. In the last sentence, Leandra evaluates her preparation techniques as successful (“it was really great working with pictures”) which shows that her preparation strategies (also see section 4.1.1) worked well. The discussion about the preparation of teletandem sessions with the peers probably made her reflect more deeply on the techniques she had chosen and in which way she implemented them in her preparation and session activities; also this let her evaluate them. Her ideas may also influence her peers in using similar techniques and Leandra herself will probably draw on her own successful techniques in the future.

In the next excerpt, the girls talk further about techniques and agree that they need to use techniques which can be easily remembered. They do not want to utilise the well-known techniques from their classroom experiences which seem boring and recall methods of the translation approach and audiolingual methods for language learning. They prefer new approaches such as working with music, stories or jokes.

Excerpt 87:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Talvez eu acho, sei lá, tipo uma historinha engraçada, ou alguma coisa...</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: e tem que ser alguma coisa que vai ficar na lembrança da, da pessoa, né. Desenhos, vídeos, essas coisas engraçadas assim são as coisas que marcam mesmo. [parte incompreensível]</p> <p><u>Maria</u>: Nem a gente, acho que, queria isso [risos]</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: é, nem a gente queria isso. (AS 2, linhas 659-668)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: Maybe I think, I don't know, a little funny story or something like that...</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: it must be something that sticks in the mind of, of the person, mustn't it? Drawings, videos, those funny things that really stay in your memory [part incomprehensible]</p> <p><u>Maria</u>: Not even we would like these [boring methods and techniques], I guess [laughs]</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: right, not even we would like this. (AS 2, lines 659-668)</p>
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In the following PGM session, the mediator wants to know if the new found techniques had been helpful during the teletandem sessions. The response of the three girls is positive:

Excerpt 88:

<p><u>Mediadora</u>: Só uma pequena pergunta antes, falando com Lena, Leandra e a Maria não está. Na última sessão a gente falou sobre como preparar uma sessão para o nosso parceiro e vocês ficaram, tipo, com uma tarefa. Vamos tentar pôr isso em prática, só queria saber, vocês conseguiram? ... Tem que falar mais alto! [risos]</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Foi ótimo! Foi muito bom!</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Pode ser rapidinho, não preciso ser muito. Deu certo?</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Deu certo! Usei ... usei <i>powerpoint</i>, fiz uma apresentação, alguns slides para mostrar para a minha parceira as coisas do, ehm, sobre os móveis da casa. Então, eu achei figuras... fiz uma apresentaçõzinha, tipo coloquei a cama e escrevi "cama". Aí mandei para ela com antecedência, antes da sessão, para ela ver. Achei uma música que tinha um pouco de vocabulário sobre isso, mandei antes</p>	<p><u>Mediator</u>: Just a little question before we start, to Lena, Leandra and Maria is not here. In the last meeting we talked about how to prepare a [teletandem] session for our partners and you had a type of task. So let's put this in practice, I just wanted to know, could you use them? ... You have to speak up! [laughs]</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: It was very good! It was very good!</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: Just a quick report, it need not to be long. Everything worked out fine?</p> <p><u>Leandra</u>: Yes, everything's fine. I used, I used... PowerPoint, I prepared a presentation, some slides to show to my partner the things about, ahm, about the furniture of the house. So I prepared some figures... I did a small presentation, like I copied a bed and wrote 'bed' at the side of it. And then I sent it to her before the session, so that she could take a look at it in advance. I found music that contained some of the vocabulary, I also sent</p>
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<p>também e conversamos sobre isso durante a sessão.</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Então, e deu... e deu mais diálogo assim? Ela já teve mais vocabulário? Assim, a suas estratégia deu mais ou menos certo</p> <p><u>Leandra:</u> Deu sim, porque ... a estratégia era mandar antes para ela já usar ... na hora.</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Isso. né. ótimo, que bom. E Lena?</p> <p><u>Leandra:</u> As dicas da reunião foram boas!</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Que bom, pelo menos! [risos]</p> <p><u>Lena:</u> Também! Eu tinha comentado na sessão, na reunião anterior, né, que eu não sabia como explicar para ela o uso do pelo e pela na nossa língua, foi o que ela me perguntou. Essa diferença. E assim, aí a Clara me disse, não, você mostra para ela como é que é, deu alguns exemplos e falar para ela não se preocupar em usar tanto. ehm, que se ela falar errado, não tem problema, e eu disse isso a ela, né. Mostrei alguns exemplos, um esqueminha, olha essa é a junção do por mais a que dá pela, e a junção do por mais o que dá o pelo, né? e aí ela entendeu, perguntei se ela tinha entendido, se ela queria que eu desse mais alguns exemplos. Ela falou que não, que agora já tinha ficado mais cla:ro.[...] E deu muito certo. Até escrevi no meu diário de aprendizagem que foi a sessão que eu mais gostei de todas que fiz até agora. Foi a que mais deu certo até agora. E que a comunicação fluiu! Nas outras a gente ficava meio assim ahh.aah... o que falar agora?... né? Mas deu tudo muito certo. (AS 3, linhas 120-171)</p>	<p>it beforehand and then, during the session, we talked about it.</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> Ok, and did it... did you have more dialogue? Did she have more vocabulary? Ahm, did your techniques work?</p> <p><u>Leandra:</u> yes, sure, because... the strategy was to send everything in advance for her to be prepared to use it during our session.</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> Right. Perfect. Great. And Lena?</p> <p><u>Leandra:</u> The tips from our meeting have been really good!</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> Great, at least! [laughs]</p> <p><u>Lena:</u> for me, too! I had commented in the last session, meeting, that I didn't know how to explain to her the use of 'pelo' and 'pela' in our language [Portuguese], it was that what she had asked me. This difference. And then, Clara told me, no, you show her how it is, give some examples and tell her she doesn't need to worry to using it often. Ehm, if she said it wrong, this would be no problem. And I told her this, right? I showed her some examples, made a table, look, this is the merging of 'por' and 'a' which leads to 'pela', and the merging of 'por' and 'o' gives 'pelo', right? And she understood, I asked if she had understood, if she wanted more examples. She said no, that now it was much clearer [...] It really worked well! I also wrote about it in my learner diary, that this was the best session I have made so far. It was the one that worked best. And communication flowed! In the other sessions we were more like ahhh, ahhh... what can I say now? ... you know? But it really worked! (AS 3, lines 120-171, my emphasis)</p>
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In this longer excerpt we can see how Lena and Leandra – successfully – tested the techniques which they discussed in the former PGM session. Both experience a sense of achievement and seem very motivated to continue their teletandem. Lena in particular faced significant difficulties at the beginning of her teletandem, especially relating to free and flowing conversation with her partner. But then, after 4 weeks had elapsed, she relates the improvements she achieved (*The communication flowed!*). Even if the mediator had been slightly too directive in the PGM sessions, the offered solutions and techniques primarily led to a sense of

accomplishment and increased motivation for both learners¹⁸². These are important sentiments for the successful continuation of the partnership and, of course, also for the future study of the foreign language and target culture. As can be seen later, Lena shows how she turns out to become a much more reflective learner who is able to find and test strategies on her own.

4.1.4.3 *Method of preparation depends on the teletandem partner*

Several learners have stated that the way in which a session is prepared is informed by, amongst other factors, the respective teletandem partner. In part, this depends on the partner's attitudes, and also on the negotiations regarding the jointly delivered teletandem sessions and their learning.

Excerpt 89:

<p>Taís: Ah, eu as vezes me sinto um pouco desconfortável, e não preparar uma sessão porque acho que não tá andando (?) as vezes, mesmo se já tem uma certa intimidade ... [parte incompreensível] por fazer alguma coisa por ele, exatamente por ter essa intimidade assim, para a consciência... vocês entendem assim? [risos] não é que não flui, por exemplo, porque flui sim, por exemplo, iuiuiuiuiui, [risos] Mas por exemplo, se eu não ... [risos] se eu não preparo a sessão, eu acho que sei sobre o que falar, mas parece que não correspondeu aos objetivos dele. Então é alguma coisa assim que eu tenho um pouco de receio, né, então. eu gosto de preparar, mesmo que flua para outras assim (?) eu gosto de preparar, o textinho, os exercícios e o vocabulário. Assim, isso, [parte incompreensível] para o outro eu gosto fazer mais os meios visuais (?) assim, mas ele me pede! [risos] (AS 3, linhas 530-542)</p>	<p>Taís: Ah, sometimes I feel a little bit uncomfortable, and don't prepare a session, becomes I think that this sometimes doesn't work, even if you feel already closer/intimate... [part incomprehensible] for doing something for him, especially for having this intimacy, it's for my conscience... do you understand what I mean? [laughs] it's not that it's not flowing, for example, because it IS flowing, for example, hahahaha [laughs] But for example, if I don't ... [laughs] if I don't prepare the sessions, I guess I know about what to talk about, but it seems that it doesn't fit his objectives. So it's something which I don't feel good about, right? I like to prepare, even if some topics flow, I like to prepare, a small text, exercises and vocabulary. Well, it's [part incomprehensible] for one I like to use more visual resources (?), you know, but he asks for it! [laughs] (AS 3, lines 530-542, my emphasis)</p>
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Taís feels bad when she does not prepare for the teletandem session with her partner even though they have built a friendly relationship with each other at this point. Therefore, she views teletandem as a learning context in which both learners benefit when they make the effort and support each other to achieve the established learning goals. As can be seen, Taís strongly assumes the role of the teacher when the session relates to the Portuguese part of teletandem (*I like to prepare, a little text, exercises and vocabulary*). Taís and her partner agreed on a clear

¹⁸² Directiveness in mediators' actions can have quite a positive effect when it leads to creative solutions and resulting satisfaction on the side of the learners (see the discussion on directiveness in Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014, and section 4.2.4).

structure of their sessions in which they work on texts, exercises and vocabulary, and they like to prepare the content for each other. One explanation for her attitude is that she is a student in a teacher training course for foreign languages and that she likes drawing parallels from her studies at university to teletandem practice. Moreover, using the teletandem context to train methodical and didactical proceedings, is, in turn, ‘teaching’ her partner. Her teletandem partner is an engineering student at a German university and has had no teacher training so far, but, nevertheless, acts in a similar fashion, i.e. preparing and explaining the content thoroughly. It is safe to assume that both have agreed on the procedures they adopt in their teletandem sessions and both are eager to adhere to their arrangements to prevent disappointing the partner.

The next excerpt shows how the preparation method can vary in relation to different teletandem partners. Not all learners are equally committed to their partners which seems to depend on the jointly created teletandem atmosphere.

Excerpt 90:

<p><u>Gislaine</u>: Essa questão do planejar que você falou, ehm, no meu caso foi assim. Com... eu tinha que, o planejar era combinar antes, ah, semana que vem vamos falar sobre tal coisa. Então tá bom, vou falar sobre filme, então os dois planejavam. Com o parceiro com o qual eu falava nas férias eternamente, já era diferente. EU planejava alguma coisa, mas eu não falava pra ele o que eu ia planejar. Eu, claro, buscava textos, mas aí chegava na hora, ahh, esse aqui, e pegava alguma coisa. eu tinha planejado, para mim, ...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, mas acho que é a relação que você tem. (AS 3, linhas 566-575)</p>	<p><u>Gislaine</u>: This question of planning that you mentioned, ahm, in my case it was like this. With... I had to, the planning was actually to agree in advance on, ah, next week we will talk about this. Ok, right, I will talk about films, so we both planned for this. With the partner with whom I spoke eternally during the holidays, however, it was different. I planned something but I didn’t tell him about what I planned. Of course I looked for some texts, but starting the session, ahh, this one here, and then I chose one thing. I had planned it, for me...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, but I think this depends on the relation you have. (AS 3, lines 566-575, my emphasis)</p>
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Gislaine has already had learning and preparation experiences with two different teletandem partners. With one partner she agreed on topics for the next session and prepared them in advance; with the other one nothing was planned, but, nevertheless, she had prepared the sessions. It is apparent that these situations depend on the respective relationship the two learners have established. Both Gislaine and Taís have experienced teletandem work with different teletandem partners.

Different topics also need different degrees of preparation. A topic on grammar probably needs more preparation with the consultation of a grammar book and completion of an exercise. A mundane topic requires less preparation because the partners can draw on experiences and

memories from their personal lives. One fact which has arisen from the comments of the participants of this study and my own teletandem experience is this: the better you know your partner, the easier it becomes to veer off from pre-agreed topics. It can be argued that in both situations it is possible to learn. But a straightforward conversation about topics from everyday life is far more volatile than a topic which has been prepared in advance and is then evaluated afterwards. Otherwise the learning effect is not fully achieved, as Célia mentions in the next excerpt:

Excerpt 91:

<p><u>Célia</u>: Acho que o objetivo de aprendizagem também não é fixo, acho que ele vai mudando, ele vai mudando conforme as coisas [parte incompreensível] né. Pelo menos comigo é assim. ... [risos] Nunca [parte incompreensível] minha sessão de TT é uma surpresa. eu costumo de ... sempre tem alguma coisa que eu aprendo, as vezes, eu acho que por falha minha, eu não, não, não olho assim as palavras , não anoto as expressões, mas acabo de ficar meio perdido, não fixo tão bem, né, que é isso é uma falha mesmo, eu deveria fazer um... (AS 4, linhas 103-110)</p>	<p><u>Célia</u>: I think that the learning objective is not fixed, I think that it changes, it changes according to the things [part incomprehensible], right. At least with me it's like this... [laughs] Never [part incomprehensible] my teletandem is a surprise. I'm used to... there's always something I learn. Sometimes, I think that's my fault, I don't, don't, don't look at the words, I don't make a note of the expression, but I somehow get lost, I don't memorise things very well, right, and this is kind of my fault, I should make a... (AS 4, lines 103-110, my emphasis)</p>
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In this excerpt, it is also possible to see how teletandem sessions can provide the context for real interaction and conversation between two learners. A learner can even carefully prepare the chosen topic for the next teletandem sessions with his partner. However, we cannot anticipate what will happen in the live moment of intercultural contact between the partners. It is the dynamics of the conversation that will determine the way the conversation evolves. Nevertheless, it is advisable to prepare and later evaluate the content of the teletandem sessions, even if they are spontaneously chosen topics. It is positive when spontaneous topics arise, as sometimes they are far more interesting than other ones, but these would be useful and more efficient in terms of learning if the content is somehow finalised so that it does not get lost, as we can see in Célias comment. This is certainly something which should be brought up in the PGM sessions (possibly by the mediator) or in any other learner support setting and subsequently discussed with all participants in order to make them more aware of this subject.

4.1.4.4 *Synthesis of the category 'Preparation of Teletandem Sessions'*

Summarising the outcomes of the category *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions*, it can be stated that, in general, the learners enjoyed exchanging ideas and information among the peers about topics they addressed in their teletandem sessions. The selected topics were usually related to culture.

In some cases, learners negotiate the choice of topics with their partners as a way of preparing the following teletandem sessions. Others affirm that they have difficulties in deciding on topics for future teletandem sessions, which is probably due to lack of awareness of one's own needs in relation to the learning process.

It can be observed that insufficient preparation of teletandem sessions led to real communicative difficulties when both teletandem partners were at a beginner's level of German and Portuguese, respectively. Thus, preparation becomes extremely important when one or both learners have low L2-competencies.

The main points related to the preparation of teletandem sessions, which became apparent throughout the data analysis, are shown in the following table:

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY <i>PREPARATION OF TELETANDEM SESSIONS</i>	
➤	If one or both partners possess a low level of proficiency in the foreign language the preparation of topics for teletandem session turns out to be crucial to ensure a minimum level of freely flowing communication.
➤	Strategies and techniques on how to deal with the content of teletandem sessions must be known by participants – and there may be a need to discuss these in mediation sessions.
➤	Dedicated participants are able to perceive their difficulties regarding preparation techniques and seek solutions among the peers in the mediation sessions.
➤	Some learners negotiate topics for teletandem sessions with their partner. Others have difficulties in selecting topics for their communication.
➤	Preparation of the teletandem session is useful in regards of learning efficiency but, nevertheless, teletandem is an actual conversation context in which unexpected things happen and it is the dynamics of the conversation which will determine the direction of the teletandem sessions.

- Chosen communication topics for teletandem sessions were usually related to culture.

Table 18. Synthesis of the category Preparation of Teletandem Sessions

4.1.5 Category Affective Factors

In language learning, besides cognitive and metacognitive aspects (How do I learn effectively?), affective factors like emotions and feelings also play an important role in the learning process, as was illustrated by the excerpts in this category (also observed by Tassinari, 2014). If one feels positive about the foreign language one is studying, the target culture and the tandem partner, for instance, motivation, volition and the willingness to communicate will increase (Oxford, 2011, p. 75). As Krashen advocated back in 1982, if the affective filter is low, language learning/acquisition will be more productive (Krashen, 1982). If I feel aversion, fear, anxiety or any other type of negative feeling in relation to the language, the affective filter will rise, and language learning will be hindered.

The significance of affective aspects in the learning process is accepted in the fields of cognitive psychology and learning psychology. In the field of L2 research, however, the affective aspects like personal and individual factors such as identity, learner biography and motivation did not receive attention until the last few years¹⁸³ (Tassinari, 2014, p. 152). So far, L2 research has mainly been conducted on affective factors such as anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991; Horwitz, 2007) and motivation (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010). There are different definitions of terms related to affective factors, for example feeling and emotion. Ogasa (2011) analysed and systematised the different existing terms from the perspective of different fields of research such as evolutionary biology, psychology of learning, cognitive psychology or neurophysiology.

Feelings (*Gefühle*) and emotions (*Emotionen*), for instance, are concepts that can be reasonably differentiated as they, on a level of consciousness, refer to two different mental functions. Feelings can be described as the conscious part of emotions. They are private, mental experiences which we perceive consciously and are able to show or hide (Ogasa 2011, p. 94). Emotions, on the other hand, describe a whole mechanism which is the basis for the creation of emotional processes and which can result in conscious feelings. According to Ogasa (2011), emotions can be visible quite frequently and they can be seen by others whereas feelings can

¹⁸³ Börner & Vogel, 2004; Ogasa, 2011; Tassinari, 2014, Wakisaka, 2014

only be observed by the person who feels them. Thus, feelings are subjective (Ogasa 2011, p. 95).

However, in this section, I will mainly use the term ‘affective factors’ or the terms ‘emotion’ and ‘feeling’ as synonyms as I do not intend to differentiate or categorise certain feelings that appear in the PGM. I detected feelings and emotions related to foreign language learning in the comments of the participants of this study. As we saw for the other categories as well, the findings in the category Affective Factors may serve as a basis for future and more profound research.

This category contains a relatively small number of recurrences (29) when compared with the most significant category of ‘Strategies’ (93). Of course, this number has its origin in the way I, as researcher, related the topics to the participants’ comments during the mediation sessions. Whilst examining the data, I marked comments as “affective” when statements exhibited a word that expressed a feeling or when a feeling was clearly inferred from the words in the statement, as can be seen in the following example:

Excerpt 92:

<u>Leandra</u> : [...] Nossa, tem muitas dúvidas. (AS 1-1, linha 290)	<u>Leandra</u> : [...] Goodness, there are many doubts. (AS 1-1, line 290)
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Saying that someone has many questions or doubts does not necessarily express an inner feeling. However, there might be individuals who would like to have clarification or help when they have many questions in relation to a specific topic and when they might feel worried or concerned about it. Furthermore, the simple expression of an interjection like the one in excerpt 92 (*Nossa/Goodness*) is a proof of emotionality as we use interjections to express emotions such as pleasure, surprise, repulsion or shock¹⁸⁴.

In the participants’ excerpts from this study, we find both types of feelings: positive and negative. Particularly when looking through the excerpts related to the category Affective Factors, it stands out is that the negative feelings prevail at the beginning, during the first two peer group mediation sessions. In the last mediation session, these negative feelings are surmounted and turn into positive feelings during the reflection on the language learning in tandem, as we attempt to show below.

¹⁸⁴ Cambridge Online Dictionary, “interjection”,
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/interjection> (09.09.2015)

In terms of repetition, the feeling that was most often and explicitly expressed by nearly all of the participants was a negative feeling of being afraid to be unable to communicate in the foreign language (i.e. in German). The common fears entailed drawing a blank when communicating with the partner or making mistakes and, therefore, having to either run the risk of not being understood by the partner or to lose face. This also led to some learners' frustration. The following excerpts show this:

Excerpt 93:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] Acho que isso também porque como to fazendo aula de conversação fora da faculdade, então julgo perder aquele, aquele medo, aquele bloqueio de se expressar. então pra mim foi, foi tranquilo. aí no final da sessão, a gente fez um feedback, eu perguntei pra ela o que ela achou da sessão. e ela disse que tinha gostado muito, ... aí nos combinamos que falaríamos na próxima sessão. (AS 1-2, linhas 102-112)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] I think this as well because I am doing conversational classes outside the university, so I guess I lost this, this fear, this blockade/inhibition to express yourself. So for me it was easy. At the end of the session we gave us feedback, I asked her how she liked the session. And she said that she like it a lot... then we consented in what we could talk about next session. (AS 1-2, lines 102-112, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 94:

<p><u>Aline</u>: eu vou começar a minha sessão semana que vem. mas eu já tive TT uma vez, e só pra dar um exemplo era assim também. a gente ficava gaguejando muito, nas primeiras, só depois da terceira sessão que a gente teve, eu acho que tem muitas coisas do bloqueio mesmo. medo de errar, né? [...] (AS 1-2, linhas 129-138)</p>	<p><u>Aline</u>: I will start my session next week, but I already had teletandem once and just to give an example, it was the same. We were stammering a lot, in the first sessions, and only after the third session we had, I think there is really a lot about a blockade. Anxiety to make mistakes, isn't it? [...] (AS 1-2, lines 129-138, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 95:

<p><u>Lena</u>: Ah, pra mim, essa primeira experiência foi fantástica assim, porque eu tinha muito medo de fazer TT, pela minha pouca comunicação assim, mas::s as dicas que você deu, eu acho que se eu tivesse começado o TT igual a todo mundo começa, sem ter essa orientação que você nos deu, assim, ter feitas essas reuniões e tudo, abordando os temas principais de uma, de um TT, eu não teria conseguido. [...] (AS 6, linhas 29-34)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: Ah, for me, this first experience was fantastic, because I was very frightened to make teletandem, because of my little communication competencies, but::t the guidance we received from you, I think if I had started teletandem like everybody else starts, without this support you gave us, with the meetings here and everything, talking about main subjects of, of a teletandem, eu would not have made it. [...] (AS 6, lines 29-34, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 96:

<p><u>Lena</u>: Não, estou satisfeita, gostei muito de fazer, perdi todo meu medo, sabe, medo que eu tinha, e o pessoal que fala pra mim, ah, eu tenho muito medo pra falar, não, não tenha medo, sabe. Eu falo do nosso grupo aqui, aí eu já passo as dicas pra eles também, sabe. (AS 6, linhas 455-458)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: No, I'm satisfied, I really like to do [teletandem], I lost all my fear, you know, this anxiety I had, and the people who tell me, ah, I am frightened to speak, no, no don't be afraid, you know. I'm telling this to our group, I already give them the tips and tricks, too, you know. (AS 6, lines 455-458, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 97:

<p><u>Célia</u>: [...] Quando a gente não consegue se exprimir ou expressar determinado pensamento ou sentimento, quando você não consegue esclarecer uma coisa que você gostaria que ficasse clara para outra pessoa, por uma questão de necessidade, você não quer que ela te entenda erradamente ou .. sei lá, discutindo os aspectos culturais, as vezes, tudo. Então, você se sente meio frustrado com isso [parte incompreensível] né, .. Eu tenho um problema com isso. [...] (AS 4, linhas 247-252)</p>	<p><u>Célia</u>: [...] When we are not able to express a certain thought or feeling, when you can't explain a thing you would like to be clear for another person, because it's really important, you don't want that she understands you wrong or... I don't know, talking about cultural aspects, sometimes. So, you feel a bit frustrated with this [part incomprehensible] ... I have a problem with this. [...] (AS 4, lines 247-252, my emphasis)</p>
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These feelings of fear and frustration can hinder the learning process (Oxford, 2011, p. 65; Piaget, 1981, p. 3). However, the discussion of the effects of positive and negative feelings with regards to language learning is not a new phenomenon in Applied Linguistics. Many studies have already pointed to this aspect in various learning contexts (Börner & Vogel, 2004; Tassinari, 2014; Wakisaka, 2014). The difference in this specific tandem learning context is the learning partner. As we can see in the next excerpt (6), the learner experiences a sense of relief when she recognises that her tandem partner feels the same way. Consequently, the learner can reflect on herself and her own experiences through her partner, which seems to help her to overcome the negative feelings surrounding her own learning.

Excerpt 98:

<p><u>Nina</u>: e eu percebi também que assim, ela, eu achava ela mais travada do que eu no meu alemão [risos] ela travava MUITO para falar português, assim. diz que já faz um ano de português, é a Emma. (AS 1-2, linhas 504-508)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: I also perceived that she, I thought she was stammering more than I with my German [laughs] she paused A LOT to speak in Portuguese. She said she's studying Portuguese for one year now, it's Emma. (AS 1-2, lines 504-508, my emphasis)</p>
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The mediator can take an important role with regards to this aspect. First of all, the mediator can bring up this aspect in advance, in an individual or peer group mediation session, to prepare the learners for this scenario and these kinds of feelings. Explaining the situation and highlighting the feelings both tandem learners might experience, could lower the affective filter of the advisees, to speak in Krashen' (1982) terms, before starting their tandem interactions. When the mediator focuses on the feeling of relief, through discussions with the advisees, the learners can remain calmer throughout the project and benefit more from their interactions.

We can trace this development in the comments of participants in the last mediation session, when they were asked to talk about their overall experiences with the teletandem project.

Excerpt 99:

<p><u>Lena:</u> Ah, pra mim, essa primeira experiência foi fantástica assim, porque eu tinha muito medo de fazer TT, pela minha pouca comunicação assim, mas::s as dicas que você deu, eu acho que se eu tivesse começado o TT igual a todo mundo começa, sem ter essa orientação que você nos deu, assim, ter feitas essas reuniões e tudo, abordando os temas principais de uma, de um TT, eu não teria conseguido. E foi muito bom nessa parte, nessa questão (AS 6, linhas 29-34)</p>	<p><u>Lena:</u> Ah,for me, this first experience was fantastic, because I was very afraid of taking part in teletandem, because I hadn't communicated this way before, but::t the tips which you gave us, I think that if I'd started the teletandem the same way everyone else does, without having this guidance which you gave us, without having meet ups with everyone, broaching the main topics for teletandem, I wouldn't have coped. It was great in this aspect, regarding this question. (AS 6, lines 29-34, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 100:

<p><u>Lena:</u> Não, estou satisfeita, gostei muito de fazer, perdi todo meu medo, sabe, medo que eu tinha, e o pessoal que fala pra mim, ah, eu tenho muito medo pra falar, não, não tenha medo, sabe. Eu falo do nosso grupo aqui, aí eu já passo as dicas pra eles também, sabe. (AS 6, linhas 455-458)</p>	<p><u>Lena:</u> No, I'm satisfied, I really enjoyed taking part, I lost of all my fears, you know, the fears which I had, and the person that spoke to me, ah, I'm very afraid of talking, no, I'm not afraid, you know. I'm speaking about our group here, I'm already sharing tips with them, you know (AS 6, lines 455-458, my emphasis)</p>
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Another aspect which evolves throughout the teletandem interactions and which influences the affective factors in relation to language learning, is the relationship with the tandem partner. When the personalities of both tandem partners fit and a friendship develops, the learning process will be positively impacted¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁵ See also the article of Rivens, Cappellini and Elstermann, in preparation, on the principle of reciprocity in teletandem learning contexts.

Excerpt 101:

<p><u>Maria</u>: é! extremamente informal. ele pediu desculpas por ele não estar aqui, mas que ele ia aproveitar as férias dele, que até dia 25 ele não tava, e minha resposta foi: bebe uma cerveja no <i>oktoberfest</i> para mim! porque ele vai no <i>oktoberfest</i> em München [risos] e tipo, é, são essas coisas assim, então. [parte incompreensível] as coisas que eu gosto mais assim, que homem faz mais do que mulher, né, então eu me dou bem com ele. ... é só isso. (AS 2, linhas 485-491)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: That's it! Extremely informal. He apologised for not being here, but said that he would enjoy his holidays, which [<i>he hadn't had any for 25 days??</i>], and my response was: have a beer at the Oktoberfest for me! Because he was going to the Oktoberfest in Munch [laughs], so, it was that kind of thing, then [incomprehensible] the things which I like most, when the man does more than the woman, so I got along well with him, that was that. (AS 2, line 485-491, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 102:

<p><u>Gislaine</u>: Quanto mais você ganha intimidade, parece que mais fácil, tipo, tive parceiros que nem precisava em pensar em tema, fluía que nem ... fluía até demais. [risos] aí também já tive parceiros que eu precisei atrás, eh, nossa, se eu não planejar alguma coisa, eu não, não vai ter nada para a gente falar em duas horas. (AS 3, linhas 499-503)</p>	<p><u>Gislaine</u>: As you become closer it seems to get easier, you have partners with whom you don't need to think of a subject, it flows, flows in a really cool way. I've also had partners which were more effort, eh, god, if I didn't plan something, I didn't, there wouldn't be anything for us to talk about for two hours. (AS 3, lines 499-503, my emphasis)</p>
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The relation with the tandem partner plays a crucial role. It has also been proven that a good teacher-learner relationship has a positive influence on the learning processes (Brophy & Good, 1974; Cornelius-White, 2007; Frymier & Houser, 2000). This is why it is important to match tandem pairs carefully, and also while working with potential communication problems between the partners as soon as possible during the mediation sessions. Sometimes, a misunderstanding can lead to a premature break-up of the tandem partnership which, in turn, stops the learning process. This should certainly be prevented whenever possible.

An improved or closer relationship between the tandem partners does not only lower the affective filter and allows for more input, but can also promote the sense of responsibility and increase reciprocity, as we can see in excerpt 9 below. This is why it could be observed in several teletandem interactions at UNESP Assis with different foreign partner universities that the participants usually do not wish to change partners. They do not even make an attempt to meet a different partner during their teletandem process but prefer to stick with the one they have a good relationship with.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Personal communication in research group meetings of the Teletandem Brasil project in 2013-2014 at UNESP Assis.

Excerpt 103:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: é que no começo você tem esse assim, nossa, eu te::nho que preparar alguma coisa para fulano, né? Mas aí depo:is que você passa a gostar da pessoa, quando já fez um certo contato, você já faz isso com mais com mais vontade, sabe, o que o outro quer aprender, o que ele prefere. (AS 3, linhas 560-564)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: it's in the beginning you have this, god, I ha::d to prepare something for the guy, right? But then a:fter you begin to like the person, when you've made certain contact, you start to do it more with more ease, you know, what the other person wants to learn, what they prefer (AS 3, lines 560-564, my emphasis)</p>
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The excerpt shows Leandra's awareness of responsibility and reciprocity and also demonstrates an evolution of her own behaviour in relation to her tandem partner. Expressing this in the peer group mediation sessions makes the other learners to reflect on this point. A teacher or mediator's comment on this topic would probably have a different impact. Leandra also said:

Excerpt 104:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Acho que é legal com o passar das sessões, conforme você vai conhecendo seu parceiro, acho que você vai se tornando menos egoísta, né, porque, eu acho, não sei, quando você pensa em fazer TT você não pensa para fazer TT porque você quer ensinar alguém falar português. [risos] Quer APRENDER! Mas é bem fazer o TT porque você quer aprender a falar alemão, você está pensando em você! Em que você quer aprender e é legal, com o decorrer das sessões vai surgindo essa preocupação de... de ensinar o outro. [...] (AS 3, linhas 544-551)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: I think it's cool having the sessions, as you get to know your partner, I think you become less selfish, you know, because, I think, I don't know, when you think of doing teletandem, you don't think of doing teletandem because you want to teach somebody Portuguese [laughs] You want to LEARN! But it's good doing teletandem because you want to learn to speak German, you're thinking of yourself. It's cool that you want to learn, in the course of the sessions this concern of...teaching the other person begins to emerge [...] (AS 3, lines 544-551)</p>
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We can clearly see the development of her sense of reciprocity. This, in turn, shows that she reflects on her tandem learning process and on the relationship she has with her tandem partner. This, again, is evidence of the development of autonomy. Throughout the project, it becomes clear that Leandra is already a solid self-directed learner. As she likes working by herself at home, she has her own strategies of processing the new content she learns at the university. In her opinion, studying by herself and at home works better for her than in the traditional classroom learning context. However, despite being able to be characterised as an autonomous learner, we can assume that the peer group mediation sessions and their discussions stimulated even deeper reflection on tandem learning and led her to these thoughts.

Additional evidence for promoting positive feelings in relation to the learning process (which is not particularly unusual in the tandem context as this aspect can be found in any kind of learning process) is the achievement of learning goals as a source of motivation and stimulation to continue working with the tandem partner.

Excerpt 105:

<p><u>Mediadora</u>: não... tipo, supervisionar o meu processo de aprendizagem. Parece agora um pouco...</p> <p><u>Célia</u>: sistematiza:r</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Né? Olha::ndo, e depois ver, será que isso me ajudou? Ahh, acho que não, ah, talvez sim, só que como medir isso, né? Alguma coisa que antigamente você não... percebeu.</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, é que, comigo funciona com a motivação. Então eu vejo, uma coisa que tá ali...então, assim, é algo mais com o emocional, nem é algo tão [incompreensível] Ah, ok... é meio emocional. O que eu já conseguia, o que já consigo? O que eu ainda NÃO consigo fazer? [risos] Também pode desmotivar, então é mais ou menos por essa linha. (AS 4, linhas 229-242)</p>	<p><u>Mediator</u>: No... it's more like a supervision for my learning process. This seems a little bit...</p> <p><u>Célia</u>: systemati:se</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: Isn't it? Taking a loo::k and then see if this helped me or not? Ahh, I don't think so, ah, maybe yes, but how can I measure this, right? Something that you did not perceive before...</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Ah, for me it works with motivation. I see something that is there... like, it's something emotional, it's not that [part incomprehensible] Ah ok... it's kind of emotional. What did I achieve earlier? What do I achieve now? What am I NOT able to achieve? [laughs] This can be demotivating, too, but it's in this direction. (AS 4, lines 229-242, my emphasis)</p>
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Some of the participants, student Taís in this case, have already recognised the positive impact of achieving learning goals. By sharing this realisation with their peers, they promote reflection and set an example of “how it should be”. The mediator, in turn, should stimulate this kind of reflection and discussion in the group. Deciding on, achieving and evaluating learning goals are crucial factors in the process of becoming a more autonomous learner.

Finally, there is an additional affective factor which positively influences learning in tandem, despite not having the most substantial impact.

Excerpt 106:

<p><u>Nina</u>: Ah, mas aqui somos como uma família, no Teletandem todo mundo entende as loucuras. [risos] a gente tava tendo teleconferência, e o Murilo tava fazendo sessão de Teletandem em inglês ali, nossa, mas a gente ria, e gritava, cantou o hino. Todos entendem (?), eu acho. [risos] (AS 1-1, linhas 375-379)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: Ah but here we're like a family, in teletandem everybody understands the crazy ones. [laughs] we were having a teleconference, and Murilo was taking part in an English language teletandem session there, God, we laughed, shouted, sang the anthem (Everyone understands?) I think [laughs] (AS 1-1, lines 375-379, my emphasis)</p>
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As described in chapter 1.3, in Brazilian universities learning in tandem is not a particularly popular learning context for the acquisition of foreign languages. Very few universities throughout Brazil promote tandem learning institutionally. This is probably one of the reasons why the students enrolled in teletandem activities at UNESP Assis, for example, feel as though they are part of a distinguished group. It is a learner group that participates in the *Teletandem Brasil* project, which has a dedicated computer lab for teletandem sessions, where many research projects are carried out, where they are able to talk to ‘real’ native speakers of other languages. Due to this special context, participating learners enjoy a sense of group and community which sets them apart other learners on campus. During peer group mediation sessions, this feeling is reinforced and may have positive effects on the learning processes, because the learners feel comfortable and take pride in being part of the project.

Synthesis of the category ‘Affective Factors’

In summary, we can state that, especially in the beginning, negative feelings such as fear, uneasiness, worry and anxiety prevailed in the statements of the learners. Primarily, they were afraid of not being able to communicate in the foreign language. However, throughout the mediation sessions, it was possible to detect evidence of motivation-related factors such as camaraderie (a community of teletandem practitioners), a good relationship with the tandem partner and the achievement of learning goals. These factors result in a generally positive opinion of the tandem partnership and learning process.

Based on the learner statements in the last mediation session, it can be assumed that the discussions and reflections within the peer group contributed to this kind of learner development with positive outcomes. This assumption is confirmed by 12 of the 14 positive answers of the final questionnaire. These positive answers were given in response to the question as to whether the participants were satisfied with their teletandem partnership and were further corroborated by statements made during one-to-one interviews with two of the participants.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Leandra: Ah, eu acho que como aspecto positivo ... ehm.. o desprendimento mesmo, perder o medo de, de se expressar. Nessas primeiras sessões, eu acho assim, de mais importante das coisas que você aprende de vocabulário ou de, de gramática, é você perder o medo, é você ter coragem de, de falar o que você tá pensando. Coragem de falar. [...]pra você ter coragem de se comunicar, pra você não... não se sentir.. como posso dizer, tão inibido, ou.. pressionado. Porque existe uma compreensão muito mútua, né? Até porque as duas pessoas estão no mesmo barco, né. [risos] (I01, linhas 113-124) // Leandra: E além disso, acho que a troca de experiência também, enquanto pessoas, assim, além de.. parceria de TT, a troca de experiência enquanto pessoas, porque, as vezes a gente não tem dimensão das coisas de pessoas que estão em outro país que tem uma OUTRA cultura, OUTROS hábitos.

Thus, based on the data collected so far, it can be noted that:

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY <i>AFFECTIVE FACTORS</i>	
➤	As the teletandem partners are in the same position and the same situation, feelings of anxiety and concern might be reduced.
➤	The mediator should address this aspect – of the teletandem partners being in the same situation – before the first teletandem session starts in order to alleviate uneasiness.
➤	Successful matching of tandem partners is important for the development of the tandem partnership.
➤	A good relationship with the tandem partner can increase motivation, the feeling of responsibility for the learning process and also generate a sense of reciprocity.
➤	The sense of belonging to a group (community of teletandem practitioners) may have effect on learners' general positive feelings in relation to teletandem.

Table 19. Synthesis of the category Affective Factors

4.1.6 **Learner Support**

In this category, different forms and instruments of learner support which emerged during the PGM sessions are addressed and discussed: peer group mediation sessions, learner diaries, introductory workshops and handbooks on learning in teletandem.

Whilst analysing the data from this category, it can initially be observed that the participants started the project with different preconditions in regards to learner support. Some of the participants already had experience in language learning in teletandem with German partners. Others were completely new to this learning context. Some participants attended an introductory workshop (*sessão de orientação*¹⁸⁸) before starting their teletandem interactions, others read the handbook¹⁸⁹ with guidelines for successful language learning in teletandem, and still others did not have any initiation into the subject whatsoever. Consequently, a different ways of interaction in the PGM can be observed, in the form of a distinction between those who had some kind of introduction to learning in teletandem, and those who were complete

Então é uma troca de experiências, mas é interessante que ajuda você a aprender a gostar mais da língua [...] (I01, lines 145-150)

¹⁸⁸ See section 2.9.4

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/>

beginners. More experienced learners compared former teletandems with the current one, and they were more aware of strategies and seemed to have greater confidence about their partnership. Novice learners, for instance, asked more questions and were insecure in relation to attitudes regarding the teletandem partner or actions regarding the sessions.

4.1.6.1 *Introductory Workshops*

In the PGM discussions, the participants occasionally mentioned the introductory workshops that were offered by the teletandem lab at UNESP Assis, but they were not part of this study. It became apparent in the few comments on the introductory workshops that the participants did not know whether such workshops did actually (or still) exist, as the following excerpts show.

Excerpt 107:

<p><u>Mediadora</u>: Aí você vai continuar, né. Assim, você... – certo. Então, vamos voltar para as partes. Então, não sei se vocês já leram esse... manual de teletandem que tem, sabe, que dá para baixar com algumas, não são re:gras, mas são algumas dicas como fazer uma sessão de teletandem. Não sei se vocês já leram isso? [incompreensível – todo mundo falando ao mesmo tempo]</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: Isso.</p> <p><u>Franciele</u>: Eu nunca li mas acho que já assisti alguma ... ehm, alguma, algum momento aqui que as pessoas explicam, ahh, podem fazer assim! [parte incompreensível] tinha uma orientação antigamente, né</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: é, geralmente tem sim.</p> <p><u>Franciele</u>: é, eu fiz. (AS 5, linhas 144-163)</p>	<p><u>Mediator</u>: So you will continue, right? You... ok. So, let's get back to the different parts. Well, I don't know if you have already read this... teletandem handbook that exists, that can be downloaded, with some, there are not ru:les, but some tips about how to do a teletandem session. I don't know if you have read this already? [incomprehensible – everybody talking at the same time]</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: That's it.</p> <p><u>Franciele</u>: I have never read it but I think I already participated in a... ahm, a, a moment here when the staff explains, ahh, you can do it this way! [part incomprehensible] there was a kind of introductory workshop earlier, right?</p> <p><u>Taís</u>: Yes, usually there is.</p> <p><u>Franciele</u>: yeah, I participated in this one. (AS 5, lines 144-163, my emphasis)</p>
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Here we can see that some participants (such as Franciele) who actually visited the teletandem (TT) lab sporadically during the week did not know about events regarding learner support offered by the TT-lab, and that the TT-lab does not communicate very clearly whether any events are taking place. Taís, who is also a staff member of the TT-lab, confirms that they still exist (“yes, usually there is one”) but apparently not all TT-lab visitors know about it.

In a project in which students are supposed to work autonomously with a learning partner, learner support is of great importance and should therefore be well communicated to the learning community.

Excerpt 108:

<p><u>Nina</u>: é então.. eu tava dizendo assim que: .. o que eu senti:: a mega (?) [parte incompreensível] é um pouco de falta de objetivos, assim, na sessão, sobre o que vamos falar hoje, por quê? ... é, por que a gente não fala ahh bom ... como eu posso dizer por exemplo, eu nunca tive uma orientação para fazer TT no sentido ahh como você vai ensinar a língua portuguesa pro seu parceiro de TT, porque não adianta a gente achar que não: É uma aula. ... é uma aula de outra maneira, uma outra metodologia, uma coisa muito mais gostosa, né ... ou mais difícil para alguns, mas É uma aula, entendeu. [...] (AS 1-1, linhas 11-19)</p>	<p><u>Nina</u>: Well... I was saying that... what I felt: It was a huge (?) [partly incomprehensible] is a little bit the lack of objectives, like, for the session, about what we will talk today, why? ... it's, why do we not say ahhh great... how can I say... for example, I have never had an introduction to to teletandem in the sense that ahh how you will teach Portuguese to your teletandem partner, because it doesn't matter if we think it's not, it IS a class. ... It is a different kind of class, a different methodology, something much more pleasurable, right... or more difficult for some, mas it IS a class, you know. [...] (AS 1-1, lines 11-19, my emphasis)</p>
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Without an orientation session or introduction on “how to teach your mother language to another person”, Nina feels lost and insecure regarding the part of the teletandem session in which her partner learns Portuguese. Firstly, this comment reinforces the impression that the teletandem project does not effectively communicate the information relating to learner support for teletandem participants. Secondly, this excerpt shows that there are some learners who do not feel secure enough to teach their native language to their partners. Maybe they feel they have to teach someone because they are students in the teacher education course and this may make a difference.

In Nina's case, who was in the fourth year of her teacher education course, this comment seems slightly strange. This is due to the fact that Nina, at the time, already should have been doing pedagogical internships at public schools or language centres, and, therefore, should have had some experience in teaching. There is the possibility that she, instead, may be worried about the other, younger participants who possess less teaching experience.

At this stage, however, it is important to highlight the fact that tandem learning is actually not about the dichotomy of learning and teaching. The basic premise of the tandem concept is that two people with different native (or proficient) languages communicate with each other; thus, help one another to learn the language of the other (Brammerts, 2001a, p. 10). These two may be very different people, one being an engineer student and the other a

philosophy student, for instance, and both may be lacking foreign language teaching experience. Nevertheless, they can still enjoy an efficient and successful language exchange.

This raises the question as to why Nina has the impression that she needs to teach her partner Portuguese. One possible answer is the close connection to her course at university. She is soon to finish her studies and graduate as qualified Portuguese and German teacher and might regard the teletandem project as a context in which she can gain experience in teaching Portuguese. Another possible answer is that someone explained the teletandem context as being a situation which involves learning and teaching foreign languages – the staff at the TT lab, classmates or teachers involved in the project.

With regards to the context of the *Teletandem Brasil* project, the emphasis of the “teaching” aspect of teletandem is not entirely unreasonable as the project was primarily created to provide university teachers-in-training with the possibility of practising their foreign language in real and authentic communication situations. Furthermore, we can state that at the time of writing (2014), most of the Brazilian participants in teletandem interactions at UNESP are still attending teacher training. Only a small number of learners are from other courses such as History, Biology or Psychology in the case of UNESP Assis. On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that “teaching my mother language” may act as a deterrent to learners who are not training to become or currently work as language teachers. Learners from any study background should be encouraged to learn with a tandem partner, if they wish to do so.

In the next excerpt, participant Maria relates how she felt demotivated in her first teletandem partnership where she had not received any learner support and even comments that this may not have been the case if she had received learner support during that time. This is further evidence of how learner support encourages students to maintain their teletandem partnerships even if they experience difficulties.

Excerpt 109:

<p><u>Maria</u>: é, então. Eu concordo com ela que, é porque a primeira vez que eu tinha nenhuma, ehm, orientação, ehm, de como fazer o TT. Então acho que me desestimulou bastante, até talvez se eu tivesse tido uma orientação eu não teria me desestimulado, por menos se eu soubesse, por menos que ele soubesse. Porque com Oliver foi mais ou menos a mesma coisa, eu sinto que da primeira sessão de TT com ele até agora, o português dele melhorou BASTANTE, e... (AS 6, linhas 81-87)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: Well. I agree with her on that, it's because the first time that I didn't have any, ahm, introduction in how to make teletandem. So I guess that this fact really demotivated me, and maybe I would not have been so demotivated if I had had some kind of introduction, at least if I would have known, or he would have known. Because with Oliver it was nearly the same, I can see that from the first teletandem session up to now his Portuguese improved CONSIDERABLY, and... (AS 6, lines 81-87, my emphasis)</p>
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It could potentially be argued that aside from the small references made to learner support activities in general, there were actually too few actions regarding practices for learner support. It is possible to link the various comments of participants of this study (Excerpt 107, 108, 109) with the evaluation of the coordinator of the German partner university. She mentioned that little individual learner support may have been one possible reason for an unsuccessful German-Portuguese teletandem partnership (Augustin in Telles, 2008, p. 161).

4.1.6.2 *Peer Group Mediation Sessions*

In general, the peer group mediation sessions were received positively. Three of the participants who regularly attended the PGM sessions, Lena, Leandra and Maria, expressed very positive comments about the PGM, as can be seen below. From their perspective, their teletandem partnerships would not have succeeded without the group reflection and discussions about the teletandem sessions and learning.

Excerpt 110:

<p><u>Lena</u>: Ah, pra mim, essa primeira experiência foi fantástica assim, porque eu tinha muito medo de fazer TT, pela minha pouca comunicação assim, ma::s as dicas que você deu, eu acho que se eu tivesse começado o teletandem igual a todo mundo começa, sem ter essa orientação que você nos deu, assim, ter feito essas reuniões e tudo, abordando os temas principais de uma, de um teletandem, eu não teria conseguido. E foi muito bom nessa parte, nessa questão. Porque eu pude dar uma direção melhor com meu teletandem com as, seus conselhos e tudo mais. Foi muito bom e quero continuar! [...] (AS 6, linhas 29-36)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: Ah, for me, this first experience was fantastic, because I was very frightend to make teletandem, because of my little communication competencies, bu::t the guidance we received from you, I think if I had started teletandem like everybody else starts, without this support you gave us, with the meetings here and everything, talking about main subjects of, of a teletandem, I would not have made it. Concerning this, it was really good. Because I could give my teletandem a better direction with the, your advice etc. It was really good and I want to continue! [...] (AS 6, lines 29-36)</p>
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Excerpt 111:

<p><u>Maria</u>: [...] Então... então, acho que melhorou. Melhorou também bastante POR CAUSA das suas reuniões, de como a gente corrigir, como a gente – que nem, perguntar ao parceiro, o que você quer para a próxima aula? Né, para o parceiro de teletandem, para a próxima sessão. [...] (AS 6, linhas 124-127)</p>	<p><u>Maria</u>: [...] Well... well, I guess it improved. It improved considerably BECAUSE OF your meetings, on how we should correct, how we – like asking the partner what he would like to do in the next session? Right, for the teletandem partner for the next session. [...] (AS 6, lines 124-127)</p>
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Excerpt 112:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: Até porque quando você faz o TT como uma atividade, assim, muito sozinha, você não tem muitos parâmetros pra se, pra se pautar. com essa troca de experiência é legal porque a partir da experiência do outro você pensa sobre a sua própria experiência. é muito válido (???) essa troca de informação, eu acho realmente é muito útil. Deveria, todo mundo que faz Teletandem deveria. (Interview 1, linhas 459-464)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: And more, when you do teletandem as a, let's say, very lonesome activity, you don't have many parameters to compare, to know if it's right. And with this exchange of experiences this is great because based on the experience of the other you start thinking about your own experience. This is very pertinent (???) this exchange of information, I really think it is very useful. Everybody who makes teletandem should do this. (Interview 1, lines 459-464)</p>
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Due to the voluntary character of the PGM sessions, there were only a small number of regular participants. This may have been the reason why the only personal feedback available was given by the three participants mentioned above. I am aware that these three participants might have been more positive and expressed more praise in their comments due to the fact that I was conducting the PGM sessions and the final interviews as well as being the person who had organised and coordinated the whole project. Former studies which examined mediation or advising in relation to face-to-face tandem or teletandem, however, also stated that mediation or advising sessions were positively received by the participating learners (Funio, 2015; Hahn & Reinecke, 2013; Salomão, 2008; Schmelter, 2004; Telles, 2015).

Lena and Maria (excerpts 110 and 111) give details about aspects of the PGM sessions which influenced their teletandem interactions. They mention discussions about correction modalities, the behaviour of the teletandem partner and strategies for preparing a teletandem session. It can be assumed that these aspects were important to them, and that reflecting on correction and partner feedback changed their view on their behaviour during teletandem. The reflections and discussions resulted in increased awareness of their and their partners' learning processes, which, in turn, influenced their learning behaviour (Maria: "I guess it improved", Lena: "I could give my teletandem a better direction").

Lena is so convinced of the positive influence of teletandem interactions on her general German as FL learning process that she wants to pass on suggestions and helpful advice to her classmates and colleagues who may take part in teletandem in the next semester. One of my goals with the PGA sessions was to promote peer interaction and the mutual influence between the participants, and, in the case of Lena, I think we can see that she very much embodies this by wanting to help her colleagues.

Excerpt 113:

<p><u>Lena</u>: Não, estou satisfeita, gostei muito de fazer, perdi todo meu medo, sabe, medo que eu tinha, e o pessoal que fala pra mim, ah, eu tenho muito medo pra falar, não, não tenha medo, sabe. Eu falo do nosso grupo aqui, aí eu já passo as dicas pra eles também, sabe.</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: ótimo!</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: Pode passar as dicas pra frente, né?</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: CLARO, claro, claro. Com certeza. [...] (AS6, linhas 455-464)</p>	<p><u>Lena</u>: No, I'm satisfied, I really like to do [teletandem], I lost all my fear, you know, this anxiety I had, and the people who tell me, ah, I am frightened to speak, no, no don't be afraid, you know. I'm telling this to our group, I already give them the tips and tricks, too, you know.</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: Great!</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: I can give the tips to others, right?</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: OF COURSE, of course, of course. Certainly. [...] (AS 6, lines 455-464, my emphasis)</p>
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The final questionnaires, which were filled out anonymously by 13 participants in this study, corroborate the generally positive feedback of individual participants. In relation to the question “Did you participate in the peer group mediation session? If yes, which impact had it for your learning and in which helped you for your teletandem sessions?” some of the answers were:

“Yes, they really helped a lot, especially for preparing and developing the sessions because we discussed various learning and teaching strategies.” (F2, my translation)

“Yes, they helped me. I have improved my attitude in tandem ever since the first tandem until now. I loved the strategies we’ve learned and it was really good to discuss how to give feedback to my partner.” (F1, my translation)

“Yes! They were very wonderful because the discussions and experiences of the other people made me reflect on my own sessions. It is always good to get new ideas.” (F6, my translation)

Yes, it was interesting and good to discuss and see the tandems of the friends and compare them with mine.” (F7, my translation)

In relation to the last question “Would you participate in peer group mediation sessions again? Or if you didn’t participate this semester, would you participate next semester?”, all participants answered ‘yes’ and complemented their answer by mentioning the positive impact the meetings had on their teletandem sessions.

4.1.6.3 *Learner Diaries*

At times, the mediator and the participants talked about the use of a learner diary, which was suggested by the mediator as a tool for reflection. The participants were asked to keep a learner diary but it was not obligatory. If the participants wanted to use the teletandem interactions as a substitution for the university class “Practical Studies in the Language

Laboratory”, they were asked to hand in the teletandem learner diaries to their respective German teachers so that they were able to have a basis for evaluation.

Excerpt 114:

<p><u>Mediadora</u>: Então, só uma, assim, uma pequena tarefa assim, que não é bem uma tarefa. Então na próxima vez que vocês vão fazer... bom, para você ainda vai demorar um pouco, mas mesmo assim, mas quando vocês vão fazer outra sessão de TT, então, talvez vocês podem, realmente prestar um pouco atenção: tudo bem, eu planejei i:ssó, né, e depois, pode ser até no diário, né, escrever mais um pouquinho sobre "deu certo?", "como foi?", ehm, "eu fiz, tipo as ideias que a gente juntou aqui?", "eu tentei utilizar? ou até tive outra ideia?" né?</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: Colocar isso no diário?</p> <p><u>Mediadora</u>: é, por exemplo! Né, acho que aí vocês já tem tudo pronto, né. e a próxima vez que a gente se encontra vamos rapidinho só falar como foi a sua experiência assim. [...] (AS 2, linhas 1185- 1198)</p>	<p><u>Mediator</u>: Ok, so just a, a little homework, which is not really a homework. Well, next time you're going to make... ok, in your case this will still take a time, but nevertheless. But when you will do another teletandem session, then, maybe you could really pay attention to: ok, I planned thi:s, right, and then, this could ne in the diary, right, write a little bit more about ‘everything was ok?’, ‘How did I like it?’, ahm, ‘Did I do the things we were talking about here?’, ‘Did I try to use them? Or did I have other ideas?’ Ok?</p> <p><u>Lena</u>: Put this in the diary?</p> <p><u>Mediator</u>: yes, for example! I think that you will have everything together, won't you? And the next time we'll meet we gonna talk about your experiences. [...] (AS 2, lines 1185-1198, my emphasis)</p>
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In the excerpt above, we can see how the mediator motivates the participants to continue the learner diary. She proposes the use of this reflective tool as she is certain of its usefulness. The students do not share this view, probably due to the fact that they are not used to use these kinds of reflective tools, in addition to the fact that keeping these diaries is time-consuming. This can be evidenced by the small number of diaries that were returned to the mediator, and additionally, by the answers given in the final questionnaire regarding the question of how the participants worked with the proposed learner diaries. Some participants answered that they did not keep them at all (due to time limitations), whilst others stated that they only wrote them because the mediator had asked them to do so, and they wanted to collaborate with the research project.¹⁹⁰ This shows that the participants probably think that they do not need to reflect on their own learning process, and that a “normal way of learning” (reading texts, completing exercises, talking to others, etc.) is sufficient.

In spite of this, it may have been wrong to try to impose the learner diary as a reflective tool. Knowing that the learners would not be used to working with reflective tools and had never heard of a learner diary or learner portfolio before, the mediator could have chosen

¹⁹⁰ See Appendix F.

another way for individual reflection or, at least, should have introduced the work with a learner diary in a dedicated mini-workshop.

Younger generations grow up with web 2.0 tools, and many of today's students are unable to imagine a life without Facebook, WhatsApp and other social networking tools and instant messaging programmes. Most of them are almost constantly online and available, and so it could be possible to use their online presence and time (as it is difficult to get both otherwise) to stimulate reflection via Wikis or Facebook groups, for instance. As mentioned in section 2.9.4, some teletandem mediators within the *Teletandem Brasil* project have already used closed Facebook groups for organisational and mediational purposes¹⁹¹. Some of the mediators had given me access to their groups so that I could get an impression of the forms of discussion and reflection that usually takes place in this type of groups. It can be stated that posts containing reflections on teletandem activities (triggered of by questions of the mediators) were usually rather superficial, i.e. more an account of what had happened instead of discussing the impact of the activities on a personal or learning level.

Another aspect is the “open” character of the group. This means that all members can and are actually asked to read and comment on the posts of the participants which may lead to the omission of certain aspects of the teletandem experiences (e.g. problems with the teletandem partner or other negative feelings). In general, an environment such as Facebook is not a space for making deep reflections for which one needs a quiet ambiance and concentration. Nevertheless, Facebook is a space in which many learners already spend some time of their day and the likelihood of them to reflect on their tandem through a question posted by the mediator and write about it is higher than in any other type of e-learning platform which must be accessed separately for the purpose of working there.

Nevertheless, in the data it can be observed that some students were quite able to use the learner diary as a tool for individual reflection, even if they were not familiar with it before. Besides the fact that the teletandem context was voluntarily used by the learners, it seems that in the teletandem context, we can see similar incidents in the L2 classroom: there are learners who are open to do everything, even testing new things they are not used to, yet, while others, however, do not do what is proposed to them.

The next two excerpts show how the learner diaries were used to express feelings and emotions related to individual learning processes.

¹⁹¹ Personal experience during several semesters of working as mediator in the teletandem lab.

Excerpt 115:

<p><u>Taís</u>: Não, mas eu [parte incompreensível] diários de aprendizagem, gente do céu, vou escrever algo decepcionando, né ... então ... (AS 4, linhas 708-709)</p>	<p><u>Taís</u>: No, but I [part incomprehensible] learner diary, oh my god, I'm going to write something very disappointing, ... so... (AS 4, lines 708-709, my emphasis)</p>
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Excerpt 116:

<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] E deu muito certo. Até escrevi no meu diário de aprendizagem que foi a sessão que eu mais gostei de todas que fiz até agora. Foi a que mais deu certo até agora. E que a comunicação fluiu! Nas outras a gente ficava meio assim ahh.aah... o que falar agora?... né? Mas deu tudo muito certo. (AS 3, linhas 167-171)</p>	<p><u>Leandra</u>: [...] It worked really fine. I also wrote in my learner diary that this was the session I liked most until now. It was the one that worked best for now. And the communication flowed! In the other sessions we were more like ahhh, ahhh... what do I say now?... right? But everything went very fine. (AS 3, lines 167-171, my emphasis)</p>
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Taís and Leandra commented on the learner diaries spontaneously whereby they express that they are using them for recording both positive (in Leandra's case) and negative (Taís) learning events and their respective feelings about them. Taking a look at their learner diaries, we find that Taís has handed in seven learner diaries and Leandra only three. In regards to the content, it can be observed that Taís used the learner diary more broadly as a tool for reflection which can be seen in the quantity and quality of her responses. Leandra often only answered in brief sentences or only individual words and stayed on a much more superficial level of reflection, i.e. she mainly described the teletandem sessions but did not interpret or compare them to others. Taís, on the other hand, entered a deeper level of reflection thinking about strategies she and her partner used, asking herself questions about certain behaviours which she then tries to answer. The reflective learner she presents herself as in the PGM sessions and in the learner biography is therefore confirmed by her learner diaries. This reflective tool appears to be productive for her and thus, can be considered a triggering tool.

4.1.6.4 *Synthesis of the category 'Learner Support'*

In this category, different aspects of learner support for language learning in teletandem have been noted. In the study, I, as researcher, offered different tools for learner support such as introductory/informative meetings, peer group mediation sessions and learner diaries. In the PGM sessions, however, other tools of learner support were discussed, for example introductory

workshops in the teletandem lab and the handbook with guidelines for successful language learning in teletandem.

In general, it could be observed that information about possible learner support at the university, where this study took place, is not made public or, at least, the communication about it is not enough to inform potentially interested learners in taking part in learner support activities. In order to make the still widely unknown possibilities of learner support more visible and, in extension, more popular (both for learners and for the teaching staff) – not only in relation to the *Teletandem Brasil* project, but also for other learning contexts like self-study in self-access centres, for instance – a broad dissemination of information is of great importance.

Considering the *Teletandem Brasil* project, it was found that a thorough introduction to the specific learning context teletandem is crucial to situate the learner in this new learning context which many learners have never had contact to before. Due to its special characteristics such as authentic communication with a native speaker abroad and autonomous learning, potential participants may feel anxious and overwhelmed which may result in demotivation or discontinuation of a teletandem partnership. The accompanying PGM sessions in this study showed that joint reflection and discussion about relevant learner topics and the passing on of information by the mediator supported the autonomous learning of the participants in relation to their subjective views of learning behaviour and growing awareness of various learning issues.

Reflective tools such as the learner diary were not frequently used by the majority of the learners which may be explained with the unfamiliarity of this type of tool and also with an insufficient introduction to the use of this tool by the mediator. The mediator should have recognised earlier that many learners had not understood the purpose and use of the diary and could have explained it better or even thought about workshop-like meeting in order to promote the tool more effectively. Another aspect in relation to the learner diary is that they are time consuming to maintain, if used appropriately. For learners who are committed to their own learning processes and truly want to dedicate time to get to know or understand it better, the time-intensive aspect might be less important to them because their primary goal is to achieve deeper reflection and understanding. Learners who are less interested in their individual processes and more goal- and outcome-oriented, may be less patient and, therefore, demonstrate greater difficulties in using a time-consuming learner diary. Thus, other options for reflection impulses should be discussed.

Summarising the above-discussed details, the following can be noted:

SYNTHESIS OF THE CATEGORY <i>LEARNER SUPPORT</i>	
➤	Public information about learner support activities are limited, and should be shared and communicated more.
➤	An introduction to the learner context teletandem is important to situate the learner in this new context. Otherwise disinterest, demotivation and a discontinuation of the partnership may prevail.
➤	The PGM sessions supplied useful information for the teletandem participants, their actions and interactions, and stimulated their reflection on their and their partner's learning. This shows a change in learner behaviour and a growing awareness of learners' issues.
➤	Learner's diaries were hardly used. The possible reason for this is that most participants were not used to working with a learner diary, and that an introduction to this learning tool had not been provided.

Table 20. Synthesis of the category Learner Support

4.1.7 Answering Research Question 1

Which impressions, beliefs, and questions regarding their language learning and learning in teletandem are expressed by learners in the peer group mediation sessions?

Peer group mediation sessions (PGM), as one possible approach to learner support for language learning, were the object of very few studies so far (Helmling, 2001, 2006; Kao, 2012; Wadl, 2011). The research questions for this study, thus, emerged from the necessity and the interest to learn more about this type of learner support. PGM are used with more frequency in the *Teletandem Brasil* project, for instance, but until today we still lack a more detailed description of this learner support setting. This first research question addresses the learner's perspective in the PGM. The learners are the most important participants in this setting and I was interested in discovering with which questions, problems, difficulties, ideas, suggestions and reflections about their learning in teletandem they would come to the peer meetings. Even if these questions, difficulties or ideas are highly personal and may vary strongly from group to group and from individual to individual, this first mapping of the personal concerns the learners have will give us a first idea of the variety of themes and which themes possibly get discussed in PGM. This mapping of themes may serve mediators to prepare themselves for future

mediation sessions and researchers to develop new research questions in this area of learner support.

Then, *which are the impressions, beliefs and questions learners have regarding their language learning in teletandem that emerged during the PGM?*

To answer this question, we should firstly go back to the figure which gives an overview over all mentioned themes in all PGM. The figure shows the 16 categories that were established during the data analysis and represent the topics which were mentioned by the learners during PGM sessions.

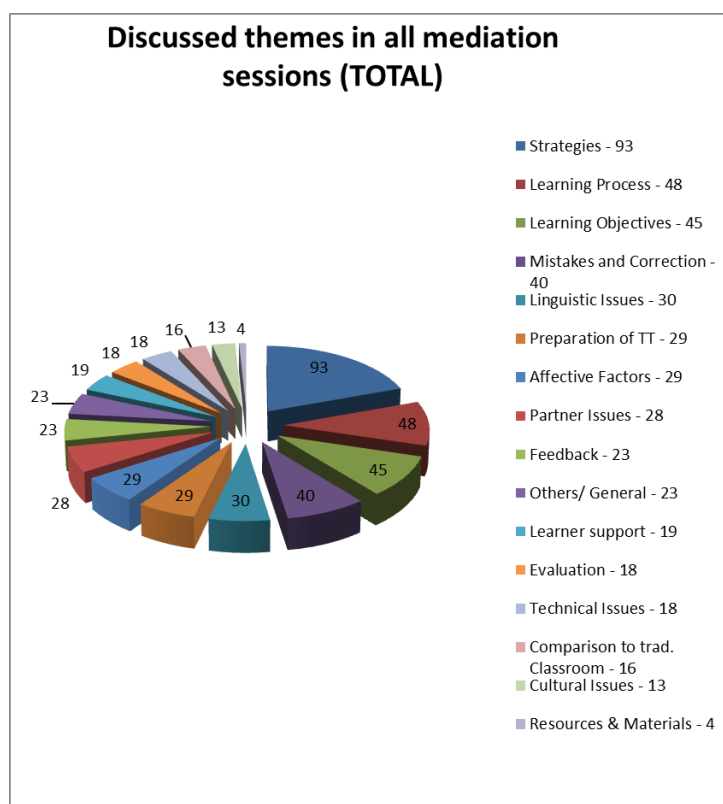


Figure 10. Number of topic occurrences for each category (during all mediation sessions)

As we can see, topics vary widely. In the six PGM sessions, learners reflected on and discussed topics which are related to strategies, the learning process, learning objectives, mistakes and their corrections, linguistic issues (such as grammar and phonetics), preparation for teletandem sessions, affective factors (such as anxiety or motivation), issues related to the teletandem partner, feedback in learning, learner support, evaluation of learning, technical issues, cultural issues, resources and materials for learning, comparisons to traditional learning settings (such as the classroom) and miscellaneous topics which were categorised in *Others*.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Four of the topics (learning process, learning objectives, preparation in teletandem, feedback) were introduced by the mediator because she had decided to discuss specific topics she thought were important for learning

This variety of topics shows the themes that were relevant for the learners, especially the ones with higher recurrences per category such as *Strategies*, *Learning Process* and *Learning Objectives*.

As already explained in section 3.6, analysing all categories would have gone beyond the scope of this dissertation. Therefore, six categories were selected for in-depth analysis and interpretation: *Strategies*, *Learning Process*, *Learning Objectives*, *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions*, *Affective Factors* and *Learner Support*.

The biggest category with regard to recurrences by far is the category *Strategies*. It was possible to observe that the learners often discussed learning tactics (Oxford, 2011) in multiple ways.¹⁹³ Although I was quite surprised that the category *Strategies* turned out to be the biggest one in terms of recurrences, as I had not planned to discuss learning strategies, it is actually not so surprising at all. Learning tactics are highly relevant for learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 2011; Wenden, 1991) and permeate the entire learning process. In this study, learners mentioned many different tactics (especially cognitive and sociocultural-interactive ones) but often, they were not aware that they used these tactics, or only became aware of them in the moment of joint reflection with their peers.

In relation to the use of meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies, data shows that the learners use cognitive tactics for planning their learning (excerpts 6-8) and setting general learning objectives such as grammar or cultural issues (excerpts 3-5). The learners of this study reflected only very few times on evaluation of their learning process and outcomes, as is the case of learner Taís in excerpt 14, in which she evaluated her learning results. Whether this is because of no or little stimulation from the mediator or because of insufficient knowledge or experience of how to auto-evaluate oneself cannot clearly be answered with the data.¹⁹⁴ Other tactics concerning cognitive strategies are the use of tactics which appeal to several senses (auditory, visual) to enhance language learning (excerpts 15-17) and the reflection of contrastive aspects of the languages used in the teletandem sessions (excerpts 25-27), for example phonetic realisations of specific letters or grammatical phenomena such as the use of prepositions.

languages in teletandem whilst other topics emerged again spontaneously during the group discussions or were initiated as a result of questions or comments made by the learners.

¹⁹³ Remembering at this point that tactics are concrete actions in relation to respective strategies, i.e. a tactic is what is happening unreflectively when executing any language-related learning action which turns into a strategy when the learner consciously reflects on it.

¹⁹⁴ From my four-year personal experience as university teacher with students of German in the same institution, my suggestion goes more in direction of the second reason, i.e. that most learners are still inexperienced in auto-evaluation due to their educational background. However, this opinion cannot be confirmed by the data.

Regarding the use of sociocultural-interactive strategies, tactics such as mutual correction, giving feedback, asking for explanations and translations to overcome knowledge gaps and to interact with the partner can be listed (experts 42-52).

Data suggests that learners used only a few affective tactics such as motivation (due to positive results) to carry on their teletandem partnership (excerpt 28) or tactics that lowered anxiety which arose because of the feeling of not achieving learning objectives, for example (see excerpt 30).

As the teletandem context is a pair-learning context, it could be detected that, in the subjective view of the learners, the partners influenced each other in relation to the use of learning tactics¹⁹⁵. The direct collaboration with the tandem partner in the teletandem session seems to make the learners more sensitive to tactics. Not only tactics for the own learning process became relevant, but also for the learning process of the partner (Taís' case with her two teletandem partners, see excerpt 28).

In addition, we could learn from the data, that most learners already have experience in using technological resources to promote their language learning in teletandem. This was shown through tactics the learners mentioned during PGM (excerpts 16, 18, 22) but also through their descriptions of the resources they know and use such as YouTube videos, lyrics websites, online dictionaries and encyclopaedias, amongst others.

Another often-addressed topic discussed by the learners was *Learning Objectives*. Considering that the development of an autonomous learner in telecollaborative projects such as Teletandem is important, concrete, clear and attainable learning objectives play a crucial role in the teletandem learning process. It can be observed that the mediator assigned a certain importance to this topic as she also chose learning objectives as one of the main subjects to be discussed in one of the PGM sessions. The data showed that learning objectives depend on the learners' understanding of language learning (= theories of language learning) as was shown in excerpts 64 and 65, when Lena said that she did not want to talk about "culture and those things" because 'real learning' is considered to be structural, grammatical learning. Mediators should be aware of this fact. They should attempt to find out which assumptions of language learning the participating learners have. This should be done before presenting other theories and perspectives in order to promote reflection on language learning theories and practices.

The findings suggest that learners generally have overall goals such as "improving grammatical structures in the L2" and are able to put them into words. However, they still

¹⁹⁵ No study was conducted to verify this subjective view. However, the learners' reflections and comments suggest that they were concerned about the partner's actions in regards to learning and even comparing their tactics.

present difficulties in defining specific and more concrete goals which are easier to evaluate. Nina, in excerpt 58 for example, mentions how she feels the lack of defining more specific objectives for her teletandem sessions. Besides, learners often do not have a clear definition of the term learning objective and cannot differentiate it from learning topics, for instance (excerpt 59, 60, 62). However, all participants of the study described a “free and spontaneous communication with a native speaker” as one of their main goals for the teletandem project, which can be seen in the summary of the learner biographies (see appendix E).

The learner support accounts for as follows: by addressing and discussing the question of the learning objectives, learners are encouraged to reflect on their own learning goals, i.e. revise them, specify them or perhaps even start to set their initial specific goals. However, learning objectives are unique to each learner, and PGM sessions possibly do not provide sufficient individual support as could be seen in the data about participant Taís. She needed specific support for very specific needs in regards to her learning process (see section 4.1.3), which the mediator was not able to provide during the PGM.

It could also be observed that some learners had never even heard of the term learning objectives (excerpt 59: “I don’t understand what a learning OBJECTIVE actually is”). Neither had they been aware of the benefits of defining and evaluating learning objectives. Such a fact may be highly dependent on the educational context, the target group of participating learners and other factors. Nevertheless, the mediator should be prepared to explain and discuss basic concepts of L2 learning and autonomous learning with the participants. Such explanation is important if one of the goals of the telecollaborative project is, in fact, the promotion of learner autonomy.

In addition to these results, it was found that the teletandem partners rarely discussed their learning goals with each other. Regarding the principle of reciprocity and thinking about the responsibility that one takes charge in regards to the partner’s learning, it is important to be aware of the partner’s goals in order to be able to be better prepared to support him in achieving these goals. The same applies vice versa, communicating my learning goal to my partner helps him to help me achieve my goals.

In relation to the category *Learning Process*, findings confirmed that in the teletandem learning context also, we have different learner types and learner styles. This in itself is by no means a new finding, but the fact that the participants on their own account perceived through the discussions and reflections in the mediation sessions that they were very different learners, makes them more sensitive towards their peers and their teletandem partners. On several occasions, this reflection was initiated by triggering comments or questions by the mediator.

The findings suggest that particularly the younger learners in this study were not aware of the fact that every person has his/her own and different learning style and has different preferences regarding strategies and ways of learning. However, via discussion with more experienced learners and the mediator as a language expert, their views were transformed and led to a greater sensitivity and an increased awareness of this fact. Reflection on one's own and the partner's or peers' learning style became more profound throughout the PGM sessions (see excerpts 70 and 71).

Furthermore, in relation to the category *Learning Processes*, it became apparent that some learners felt to be stuck in their learning process. Especially Taís and Leandra expressed their anxiety that they felt they no longer progressed. That made them seek the mediator's help (excerpts 73, 74). They came to the mediation sessions seeking solutions for specific problems and difficulties they encountered during their L2 learning (not necessarily to difficulties only related to the teletandem interactions). In many cases, the learners may have found the solutions alone as they evaluated their learning outcomes and expressed needs and plans. The mediator, thus, should encourage and support reflection in relation to needs analysis, goal setting, evaluation, etc. in order to guide the learners to greater autonomy regarding their own needs and difficulties. However, this fairly individualised attention is better given in an individual mediation or advising session than in a peer group meeting. As can be observed in excerpt 79, when Taís was trying to explain her individual problems of stagnation, the other learners could hardly follow her explanations and a large part of the PGM was dedicated exclusively to Taís' challenges. This situation could get boring for other participants, so it might be better to set up an individual meeting between mediator and learner.

The data also showed that some learners are worried about efficiency in language learning, wanting to obtain more results and measurable outcomes of their learning (Leandra's case in excerpt 80). This may indicate high expectations held for the teletandem context and for the native partner which might be difficult to meet. Each learner must find his own way of effective learning both in general and specifically for the teletandem context. The mediator can help and support the learner to find this, albeit without being able to provide universal solutions that work for everyone. This must be made clear between learners and the mediator to prevent frustration.

Regarding the *Preparation of Teletandem Sessions*, the data showed that learners enjoyed exchanging ideas on topics and tactics for 'teaching' their teletandem partners. This suggests that they look for reassurance through the exchange in the PGM sessions. They want to be assured that what they do (or plan to do) in their teletandem sessions is correct. This student's

content in collaborating also suggests that they wish to be inspired by the ideas and suggestions of others (excerpt 85 and 86, for example). The topics discussed by the learners were usually related to culture, but grammar was also a subject during teletandem sessions.

Moreover, it was found that when one or both partners have low L2 competence, preparation for the sessions becomes crucial to ensure a minimum of conversational flow (excerpt 81). Even with comprehensive preparation, there are still difficulties and frustration as reported by learners with a low L2 language level, but the motivation generated by a successful session (i.e. information exchange on one or more topics even with little L2 competence) seems to have more of an impact than the frustration of not being able to say everything one would like to (see Lena's case in excerpt 81, 87).

Findings also suggest that engaged and reflective participants are able to recognise the difficulties encountered when preparing themselves for teletandem sessions. They seek solutions both independently and with the help of their peers and the mediator via discussions. This is true even if they start the project without a great deal of experience in self-directed, reflective learning. This leads to the assumption that motivation and engagement are crucial factors for successfully overcoming learning difficulties, which resonates with the findings of other researchers' (Oxford, 2011; Wakisaka, 2014).

It could also be seen that the methods of session preparation by the learners depend on the teletandem setting which evolved between the respective teletandem pairs. Depending on the chosen topic or on the participants' interests, objectives and educational background, preparation varied from learner to learner (excerpts 90, 91). It also varied depending on what the learners agreed to focus on more generally in their teletandem: whether the teletandem had the hallmarks of an informal chat and exchange of information between friends or, alternatively, was used for specific learning goals and topics (case of Hugo and Célia, for example).

In regards to the category *Affective Factors*, data analysis suggested that the teletandem partner can help his/her partner to overcome anxiety, shame and concern. This is because both learners are in the same position and situation: both are the expert in relation to one's own native language and as the learner of the target language, with specific problems and gaps which may lead to feelings of insecurity (as can be seen in excerpts 93-97 and is the case with several participants). On one or more occasions, nearly all participating learners expressed that they had felt insecure or anxious at some point in relation to the teletandem sessions, particularly prior to the very first meeting with their teletandem partner. The mediator should address this in advance, before the start of the first teletandem session, to make the learners aware of this fact and, therefore, reduce unease.

Additionally, and corroborating Telles (2015a, 2015b), the data showed that the teletandem partners were satisfied with their matches. Such positive views of their partners may built a good basis for the success of the teletandem partnership. Several participants commented on having become friends with their partners and sharing more personal information (Célia, for example, but also Gislaine (ex. 102) and Maria (ex. 101)). More recent research on reciprocity in teletandem projects (Rivens, Cappellini & Elstermann, in preparation; Telles, 2015a/b) seems to corroborate the finding that cultivating a good relationship with the teletandem partner increases the success of the learning project for both parties. These positive feelings heighten the sense of responsibility and reciprocity in relation to the teletandem partner (see excerpt 103), and thus, it also strengthens the partnership which is the foundation of the teletandem learning project.

As data shows in excerpt 106, it seems that the feeling of belonging to the group of teletandem practitioners can have positive effects on the general feeling in relation to language learning in teletandem and the teletandem project. Teletandem learners have similar experiences and when reflecting jointly on their activities and experiences this might give the participants a feeling of ‘not being alone’ with problems they might have encountered.

Regarding *Learner Support*, it could be identified that public information on learner support in relation to a telecollaboration project or more generally for autonomous learning or self-study contexts should be widely disseminated. Learners could raise their awareness of and access to available offers at language centres, self-access centres or other institutional learning projects. The participants of this study, especially those who had never participated in a teletandem project before but had known of its existence, had little to no knowledge about the different options available for learner support such as the teletandem handbook, introductory workshops (*sessões de orientação*) or other forms of support before we started our regular meetings (excerpts 107, 108).

It was found that the introduction to the teletandem context such as *Orientation Sessions* (Candido, 2010) that are held prior to beginning teletandem sessions, is very important for situating the learner in this specific context and explaining the differences to other contexts (autonomous learning, highly communicative learning context, etc.) (excerpts 107, 108). As each learner has a different learning style, advantages and disadvantages of the different contexts should be explained so that the learner has a better understanding when deciding whether to participate in a project or not.

Data showed that the PGM sessions promoted an exchange of information relating to their actions and interactions which was useful for the teletandem participants (excerpt 109, 110). A

change could be identified in certain behaviours such as an increase in reflection and growing awareness in relation to several aspects concerning their learning, which became visible during the various PGM sessions (especially in the case of Leandra and Lena. This fact could be corroborated in the final interviews, excerpt 112, and in answers of the final questionnaire).

The learner diaries were hardly used, probably due to (a) the lack of knowledge and experience in using them for learning, (b) to the time-consuming characteristic of this reflective instrument, and (c) to the absence of an introduction, by the mediator, about how to work with the diaries. For these reasons, learner diaries may not be suitable for every telecollaboration project. If selected for specific reasons, its purpose should be fully and clearly explained to the participating learners.

The following figure tries to synthesise the findings which were described above.

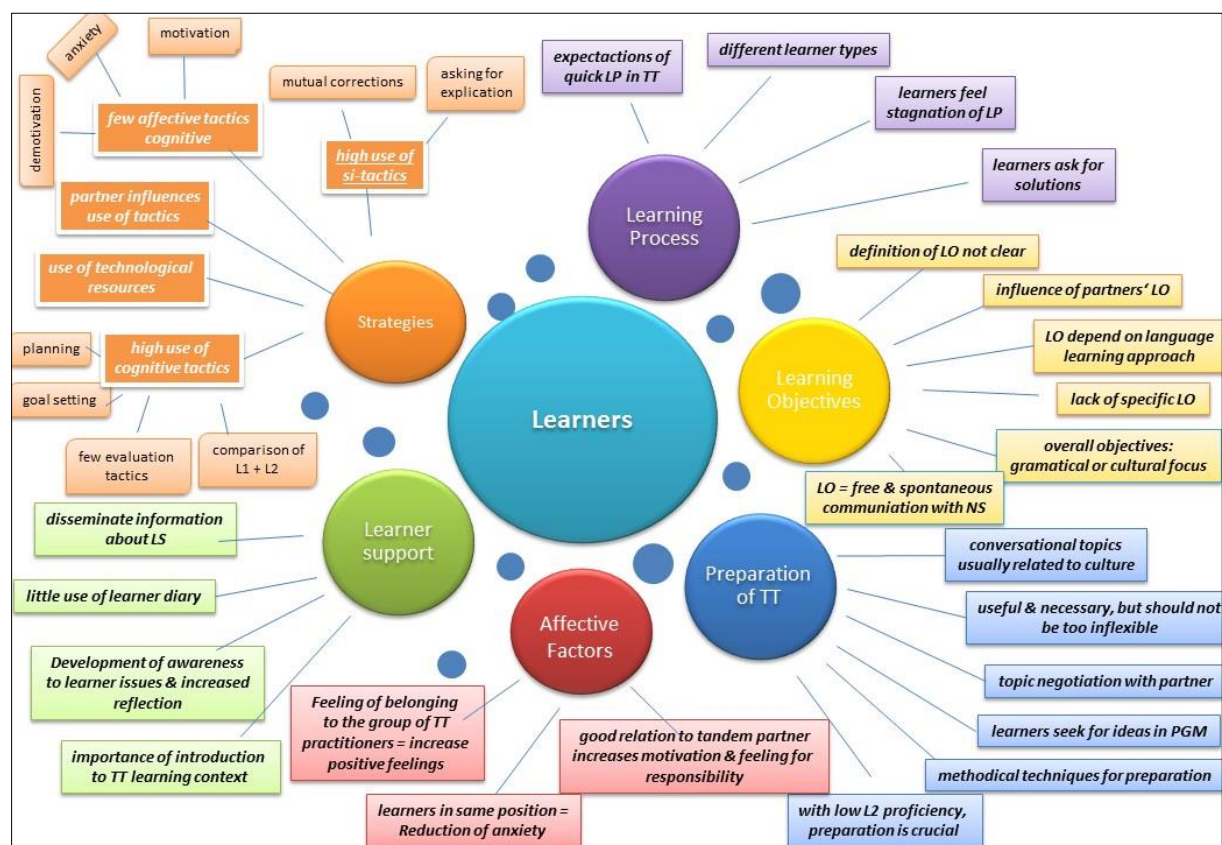


Figure 11. Synthesis of the findings of the first research question.

Although the recurrences per category in this study cannot be generalised, it can be noted that topics which described learning (such as strategies, learning process, preparation, correction modes, feedback, etc.) were discussed more frequently than (inter)cultural topics, for instance. On the one hand, this might indicate that the learners who participated in this study wished to discuss different aspects of their learning – both of their own accord and after being

prompted by triggering questions or comments from their peers. On the other hand, it must be considered that the researcher herself was much more interested in aspects regarding learning processes or autonomous learning styles, for example. Her questions and impulses were certainly aligned with her research interests.

Nevertheless, the question arises which learning contexts at the Brazilian university (where the learners of this study came from) actually provide the opportunity to talk about learning experiences in this type of open exchange situation. In this respect, mediation sessions are an important context in which learners may openly discuss their questions and doubts and have the chance to develop both personally and academically. For mediators, this signifies that they should ideally be prepared for these kinds of topics, which offer the learners new (learning) possibilities by giving them food for thought, in addition to language learning tips and advice.

4.2 Part II: The advisor's perspective in peer group mediation

In the second part of the data analysis, the mediator becomes the focus of attention. In order to attain a possible definition and characterisation of a peer group mediation setting, both perspectives – the learners' and the mediator's – should be observed and analysed as both parties are main actors in this advising setting.

In this introductory part, general information about the mediator, her concept of the mediation sessions and some of her main actions will be presented. In the following sections, the four categories related to the mediator extracted from data coding will be presented and the respective transcript excerpts of the peer group mediation sessions will be analysed.

The mediator conducted six peer group mediation sessions (i.e. meetings with the teletandem participants in which they were discussing topics about their language learning in teletandem) during the semester in which data collection took place. A few additional meetings took place, but these were largely to share information or were group videoconference meetings¹⁹⁶.

For the six mediation sessions, the mediator had selected main topics which were designed to guide the group reflection but were not obligatory. The questions were created by the mediator in advance in order to promote reflection of the peers, but other topics were also welcomed as they would reveal the actual interests and needs of the participating students. But how did the mediator choose the topics for the mediation sessions? There are some records in the researcher's diary regarding the selection of the topics, but besides this we can still consider two main aspects that might have led the mediator to the choices she made.

First of all, we must consider that she herself had been a Portuguese learner in the teletandem context for more than two years and had also actively participated as a project assistant in a teletandem project at her university. This means that she herself had experience with learning languages in teletandem as well as experience with organisational and administrative processes relating to telecollaboration projects. She was aware of possible problems learners and coordinators could encounter and had already gained experience in resolving some of these issues. In addition, the mediator had already read different works on language learning in tandem and teletandem and on advising and mediation, specifically for tandem learning contexts. So, we can presume that personal experiences and scientific texts would have influenced her choice of main topics for the mediation sessions, especially

¹⁹⁶ For detailed information about the research design and data collection procedures, see chapter 3.

experiences with difficulties she had encountered herself or observed with her peers during the time she worked as assistant in the teletandem project at her university in Germany. Apart from the first and sixth mediation sessions, for which no theme had been selected, the topics for mediation session two to five were *Planning a Teletandem Session*, *Correction in Teletandem Sessions*, *Defining Learning Objectives* and *Giving Feedback in Teletandem Sessions*.

The first topic, *Planning a Teletandem Session*, was chosen by the mediator because she realised in the first peer group mediation session¹⁹⁷ that many of the participants were worried about how to prepare for a session with their teletandem partners. Therefore, she wanted to discuss ideas, strategies and procedures in the second peer group mediation session so that the participants would feel more secure about the preparation of teletandem sessions. She also wanted to establish a solid foundation for their new teletandem partnerships.

The themes *Correction* and *Giving Feedback in Teletandem Sessions* are important parts of a teletandem session which distinguish a teletandem session from a normal conversation with a friend who speaks another language. It was important for the mediator to emphasise these aspects so that the learners would be more aware of the learning context in which they were participating. *Defining Learning Objectives* was a subject that had already appeared in the first peer group mediation session and reappeared repeatedly so that the mediator later chose to dedicate an entire meeting to the discussion of learning objectives¹⁹⁸. As the definition of learning objectives is one of the initial steps towards awareness of one's learning process (and thus, a step towards greater learner autonomy), it is an important topic for language learners to discuss and reflect on.

In the next four sections, there will be the analysis and interpretation of the four categories which emerged in the data of the mediator: 1) The mediator as peer, 2) the mediator as questioner, 3) the mediator's reflection in regards to teletandem and 4) the mediator and directiveness.

4.2.1 The mediator as peer

From the mediator's data, we can see that on many occasions, she integrated herself in the peer group discussions as a peer, i.e. as a learner of Portuguese in teletandem. Certainly, the mediator cannot be considered as an 'equal peer' because of the fact that she coordinated the project and assumed the role of the experienced mediator. Some students might

¹⁹⁷ Comments of the mediator on this can be found in the researcher's diary.

¹⁹⁸ Comments on this decision can also be found in the researcher's diary.

also have perceived her as being in a teacher role despite not working as a teacher at the university, but she had the role of a researcher and was also a native speaker of German (the foreign language of the participants). Thus, the personal narratives of her experience as a teletandem learner in nearly the same context (German-Portuguese teletandem partnership, same universities) navigated her onto a peer level sharing her experiences with the other learners in the same circumstances. Maybe she could be considered as a more experienced peer as she had more than two years of experience in teletandem learning, although the learners had different levels of experience as well, with some of the participants having taken up a teletandem partnership the year before.

What can be observed is that the mediator shared her experiences with the other peers without imposing herself on them in the sense of ‘you HAVE to do it this way’, but more in the sense of guiding and making suggestions (‘I did it this way and it worked or didn’t work. Maybe you want to try it, too.’). The mediator shared her experiences and simultaneously asked the others to share their experiences as well.

On some occasions, the participants actually requested that the mediator share her experience with them (“Lena: for you who has already done teletandem [laughs]¹⁹⁹” AS 2, 168), as they knew that she had completed many teletandem sessions already. Even as a more experienced peer, this role of hers can be considered as an equal peer because it was exactly this kind of situation the mediator wanted to create with the peer group mediation sessions: the exchange of different experiences and tips and encouragement of the fact that different ideas from the other peers will give oneself new perspectives and new ways of approaching one’s own teletandem partnership.

In Kao’s study (2012), her data also shows that the advisees directly inquire about the experiences of the older and more experienced peers/advisors (students of a higher semester). The advisees also liked the fact that they can benefit from the experiences of the so called peer-advisors as we can see in the following citation: “Our advisor is really cool. She always told us her own learning stories that I found extremely useful... [...] (G3Advisee10RJ3: 16122008)” (Kao, 2012, p. 99).

The mediator was worried about being seen as a ‘know-it-all’ due to her role as mediator or maybe teacher. This is why she preferred to draw on her own learning stories. It seemed to her that her experiences justified her role more than her technical knowledge on the subject ‘learning’ and ‘advising’ as she was not yet an experienced mediator or learning advisor at the time. She had not trained any conversation skills for advising or mediation settings and did not

¹⁹⁹ Original: “Lena: para você que já fez tandem. [risos]” (AS 2, line 168).

possess many years of language teaching experience, etc. In this respect, her self-confidence as mediator was based on her practice as learner of Portuguese in teletandem.

Nevertheless, the question remains to what extent we can consider the mediator in the role of a peer as she had the role of the project coordinator as well. Naturally, some sort of hierarchy occurs in this situation. Indeed, she was not the participants' official German teacher and there was only a small age difference between the participants and the mediator which probably reduced perceptions of hierarchical between both parties. If she had been their teacher, the situation might have been different as a teacher always has a certain power and authority over his learners.

In the following excerpts, it can be seen how the mediator shares her personal narratives with the participating learners and shows how one can reflect on oneself without implying that they should do it exactly the same way.

Excerpt 117:

<p>Mediadora: É. Por exemplo, eu estou fazendo Teletandem também, com um amigo meu. E, por exemplo, eu estou aprendendo agora como escrever... candidaturas, quando você quer se, né, candidatar para um, sei lá, um trabalho. Porque pensei, ah, talvez vou ter que fazer isso. Então, fui lá, né, e a gente já viu... eh, eu escrevi alguma coisa, ele corrigiu e aí a gente, eu preparei tudo, escrevi uma carta de motivação, assim, né. Mande para ele. E aí ele já krr krr comentário, comentário, comentário, a gente abriu os dois documentos e ele me falando, olha, aqui é assim, assim, eu não entendi isso. aí eu expliquei o que eu queri::a dizer com isso, aí eu percebi que novamente eu escrevi na verdade alemão só com palavras portuguesas, e fiquei pensando, por que eu não – né, a mesma coisa que você tava falando – por que eu já não penso logo em português? Por que faço as palavras... AINDA, depois de TANTOS anos de português, ainda faço esse erro pensando em alemão e depois escrevendo em português. [risos] Isso geralmente não dá muito certo. então por isso, assim, é, na verdade, um tema não muito interessante, né, mas ele me ajuda bastante e é realmente isso que preciso agora. Preciso, por exemplo, queria fazer um Tandem com a Taís, na verdade, presencial, só que a gente não conseguiu porque nunca temos tempo, mas aí eu falei pra ela: ah, será que a gente poderia treinar escrever textos acadêmicos? Nossa, pra ela ficou meio eh, falei: siim, eu sei que é chato, mas ... você não precisa me ensinar, mas me dar umas dicas, depois eu faço alguma coisa, te mostro, né...</p>	<p>Mediator: Ok. So, for example, I am doing a teletandem as well, with a friend of mine. And, for example, I am currently learning how to write... applications, for when you want to, ahm, apply for a, I don't know, for a job. Because I thought, ah, maybe I'll have to do this. So, we started this, right, and we saw... ahm, I wrote something, he corrected it and then we, I prepared everything, I wrote a cover letter, ok. I sent it to him. And he immediately started krr krr comment, comment, comment, we opened the two documents and then he told me, look, here it must be this way and this way, I didn't understand that. Then I explained to him what I wanted to say with this, and then I realised that again I actually wrote in German but only with Portuguese words, and I thought, why am I not – the same thing you were telling me – why do I not think immediately in Portuguese? Why do I still do the words... STILL, after so MANY years of Portuguese, I still commit the same mistake thinking in German and then writing in Portuguese. [laughs] This usually doesn't work. Well, that's why, ok, actually, the topic is not so interesting, is it, but he helps me a lot and that's what I really need right now. I wanted, for example, wanted to make a tandem with Taís, a face-to-face tandem, but we didn't manage to meet because we never had time, but then I told her, ah, maybe we could just practise writing academic texts? Goodness, for her it was just like, eh, so I said: yeees, I know it's boring, but... you don't have to teach me, but give me some tips, then I'll do something with it, I'll show it to</p>
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então, vocês podem (??) o que eu quero? o que eu quero: ... aperfeiçoar? Muitas pessoas falam, mas Clara, você já fala bem português, porque você faz Teletandem? ... Ainda tem muitas coisas para aprender! (A2, linhas 552-578)	you, ok... so, you can (??? think about???) what is it what I want? What do I want ... to improve? Many people say, but Clara, you speak already so well Portuguese, why do you do teletandem? ... There are still so many things to learn! (A2, lines 5532-578)
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In this excerpt, the mediator describes her latest teletandem partnership with a Brazilian friend in great detail: how she acts in her teletandem, what things she does and which tactics she uses, for instance. At the beginning of her experience report, she explains that her learning objective is that she wants to improve her skills in writing cover letters and CVs because she might need this in the near future. After detailing the way she and her partner work in teletandem, she touches upon the aspect of correction – another important aspect of teletandem. That was also one of the main topics the mediator had chosen to dedicate a whole peer group mediation session. Whilst talking about the correction, she comes to realise one of her problems in using foreign languages: she still formulates German phrases in her head and then translates them into Portuguese, i.e. using structures and words from her native language and transferring them more or less literally to the foreign language, despite knowing that it is not useful to do this because the structures of the two languages are not the same. By sharing this with the participants and talking about her difficulties with language learning and language production, she constitutes an example of reflection – showing how a chain of thoughts can result in a detection of a mistake she as learner repeatedly makes – and hopefully stimulates similar reflections amongst the other participants of the study. With this candor, she shows how normal it is to make mistakes using a foreign language and by doing so maybe taking away some of the anxiety and awkwardness one or another student of the peer group mediation session might feel in relation to their own language learning and especially their own language production.

When she talks about the example of people asking her why she is still doing teletandem (despite her apparent level of fluency in Portuguese) she wants to show the students that there is always something new to learn in a foreign language and culture (which is also applicable to one's native language and culture), and that it is precisely the teletandem context which facilitates this learning once one knows how to use it. It is possible to know how to use it when you are aware of your needs and wishes and how to extract this from your partner and your conversations. For this reason, teletandem can be an ideal learning context even (or especially) for advanced speakers

<p>Mediadora: Bom, pode ser, depende. Isso depende, TUDO depende MUITO dos dois parceiros. né. assim, por exemplo, a Letícia, ehm, ela fez alemão aqui e foi a minha parceira de teletandem por dois anos, a gente fez teletandem muito tempo e assim, agora to pensando [risos] nas músicas que ELA, ela me mostrou. por exemplo, uma peça (?) uma vez, foi legal, eu pedi, eh, exercícios de subjuntivo ... aí, eh, meu deus do céu. [confusão de vozes] Mas aí a Letícia escolheu uma música acho que foi, alguma coisa de família, ou amor ou alguma coisa e que tinha um monte de subjuntivo de presente, assim, seja, tenha, né, essas coisas. Aí, a gente, aí, né, o que eu queria, na verdade, foi gramática, mas como ela usou, ela me deu essa gramática assim, não olha, aqui é uma lista, uma tabela, pronto, vamos falar, né. Mas assim, ouvimos essa música, aí falamos sobre a letra, olha aqui é, aqui é o subjuntivo, PORQUE ele [o cantor] usou essa expressão, sei lá, usou talvez, e talvez sempre diz – e disso eu me lembro muito bem, marcou p r o f u n d a m e n t e [risos] o meu subjuntivo, o uso do subjuntivo. Ela falou, Clara, agora você vai pra sua noite de comunicação, porque lá na faculdade às vezes tem assim, toda terça-feira tem reunião num bar e a gente fala português. Ok, e você vai no mínimo fazer três frases com talvez e depois você usa o subjuntivo, e eu fiz, e desde então, acho que talvez eu acho que quase sempre uso o subjuntivo. então, bom. anedotas? [...] (A1-1, linhas 205-224)</p>	<p>Mediator: Well, maybe, it depends. This depends on, EVERYTHING depends VERY MUCH on both partners. Right. For example, Letícia, ahm, she learned German here and she was my teletandem partner for two years, we did teletandem a long time and now I am thinking [laughs] about the songs SHE, she showed me. For example, one piece (?) one time was great, I asked, ahm, for exercises of subjunctive forms... so then, my lord. [many voices at the same time] But then Letícia chose a song, I guess it had something to do with family or love or something like that and that had a lot of present subjunctive forms, so, <i>seja, tenha</i>, those things. So then we, what I wanted, in fact, was grammar, but the way she used it, she gave me this grammar like, don't look, here is a list, a table, that's it, let's speak about it, right. But like, let's listen to this music, let's talk about the lyrics and look, here, here is a subjunctive form BECAUSE he [the singer] used this expression, I don't know, he used <i>talvez</i> [maybe] and <i>talvez</i> always means – and this is something I remember very well, really marked me p r o f o u n d l y [laughs], my subjunctive, the use of the subjunctive. She said, Clara, now you'll go to your conversation night, because there at university sometimes there is, every Tuesday there is a meeting in a bar and we speak Portuguese. Ok, and you will use three sentences minimum with <i>talvez</i> and then you use the subjunctive form. And that's what I did and since then, I think that with <i>talvez</i> I always use the subjunctive. Well, those are anecdotes? (A1-1, lines 205-224)</p>
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The mediator talks about her experiences as a learner of Portuguese in teletandem with her first Brazilian teletandem partner Letícia. With this report, she is on a peer level with the other students as it is one of the main aims of the peer group mediation sessions to share experiences and reflect on them in order to improve one's own learning process in the teletandem context. In this case, she has the role of a more experienced peer because she has over two years of teletandem experience and has completed more than 40 teletandem sessions (Elstermann, 2007) while the other participants are still novices in the teletandem project with little or no experience.

We can see in this excerpt that the mediator tries in part to convey her convictions about certain learning aspects such as that grammar is not taught with tables anymore but that there are more deductive and experimental ways to work with grammar. Why did she choose to talk

about this? One possible explanation is that she thinks that the predominant methods in language teaching in many Brazilian educational institutions are still the audio-lingual method or even the grammar-translation-method, which she believes to be outdated and should be substituted by communicative or even post-communicative approaches. She has witnessed these methods in the German classes at this university where data collection took place and we can see the reflection of this in some of the students' convictions about what "real learning" is, i.e. learning grammar and structures (see section 4.1.3). She may, however, just want to present one possibility of preparing a grammatical topic in a more entertaining way. Perhaps the students are not yet aware of different strategies for approaching grammar, which may be dependent on experience they have had with various teachers during their educational career.

These experiences shared by the mediator may stimulate the peers to seek similar strategies regarding grammar learning in teletandem. It may encourage them to think more deeply about grammar in foreign language learning in general, which, in turn, might lead to their own preferences and allow them to think about how they actually have learned grammar in previous years and how they may have preferred to have learnt it. This reflection is crucial especially when we consider the fact that the participants were all students in teacher education. Dealing with their own learning process is a decisive step towards achieving greater comprehension and deeper reflection on language learning in general.

Within the experiences the mediator shares with the student participants of the study, she addresses different topics of language learning: phonetics, culture, learning objectives, correction styles in teletandem, rate of speech and feedback in teletandem, as we can see in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 119:

<p>Mediadora: é. e então o que é interessante é quando uma, eh, quando a minha parceira [de teletandem] escreveu em alemão um email e depois escreveu "<i>Küsse, Leticia</i>". Só que escrevendo "<i>Küsse</i>" em alemão, aí isso realmente parece um pouco estranho. se ela tivesse escrito "beijos" – bom, eu agora já estou acostumada, né – mas mesmo assim, quando uma brasileira escrevendo "ok" né, quer.. eh, escreve "<i>Liebe Clara</i>" depois blablabla aqui e escreve em português, depois "<i>Küsse fulana</i>", né, aí eu sempre fico um pouco ah, em alemão ... né? Especialmente quando a gente não é muito amiga você não escreve "<i>Küsse</i>", claro, eu SEI que é uma brasileira que queria escrever em alemão por</p>	<p>Mediator: Yes. And what is interesting is when a, ahm, when my [teletandem] partner wrote an e-mail in German and at the end wrote "<i>Küsse, Leticia</i>" [Kisses, Leticia]. But she wrote "<i>Küsse</i>" in German, so this really seemed a little bit strange. If she had written "<i>beijos</i>" – well, now I'm already used to that – but nevertheless, when a Brazilian writes "ok", right, wants, ahm, writes "<i>Liebe Clara</i>" [Dear Clara], then blablabla here and writes in Portuguese, then "<i>Küsse fulana</i>", right, so then I always think, ah, in German... right? Especially when you're not close friends you don't write "<i>Küsse</i>". Of course, I KNOW that she is a Brazilian who wanted to write in German and that is why she wrote kisses, ah</p>
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isso beijos, ah legal, isso é <i>Küsse</i> em alemão, conheço essa palavra! [risos] Mas culturalmente mmmhhh ja (A2, linhas 792-803)	great, this is <i>Küsse</i> in German, I know this word! [laughs] But culturally hmmm yes. (A2, lines 792-803)
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It is not easy to understand in this excerpt what exactly the mediator wanted to say with her explanation of saying goodbye in emails. What she originally intended to say was that the Brazilian girl, Letícia, used the typical Brazilian way of saying goodbye informally in an email (i.e. sending ‘kisses’ or ‘hugs’ to the interlocutor). However, as Letícia wrote the email in German, she translated the Brazilian way literally into German and, therefore, wrote “*Küsse*”. What the mediator wanted to say is that in emails between Germans, it is not common practise to send kisses or hugs to the interlocutor (as this is quite intimate and more restricted to close relationships in families, e.g. sending kisses to one’s sister or husband). It is more common to send ‘*Viele Grüße*’ or ‘*Liebe Grüße*’ (many regards, kind regards) to colleagues and friends.

In this case, therefore, the mediator has the role of the native speaker or teacher of German explaining intercultural issues to the participants. Most of the students had not yet had this intercultural experience, as the majority had never been to Germany or another German-speaking country until that date, and had experienced little contact with native speakers of German. The mediator has had this intercultural experience as it was her third year living in Brazil and had spent an even greater amount of time experiencing the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture (through Brazilian friends, Portuguese studies at university, etc.). It is possible to say that she was already aware of these different intercultural aspects, and as mediator in this group meeting she was passing this information on to the students. She alerted them of the fact that differences exist in the use of specific expressions in each language, and that one usually should be aware of different conventions and traditions (not only with regard to greetings and saying goodbye).

Thus, the mediator also has the role of increasing awareness of and sensitivity to cultural issues, especially in those learning contexts in which telecollaboration between speakers of different languages is the main aim of the exchange, as it is in the case of teletandem²⁰⁰.

In another excerpt, we can see how the mediator shared her experiences in relation to defining learning objectives for her teletandem.

²⁰⁰ Funo (2015) analyses three different peer mediation groups to discover evidence of definitions of culture which emerge in these peer group mediation sessions and how cultural identities of learners and mediators are constituted in the reports and reflections stimulated in the sessions.

Excerpt 120:

<p>Mediadora: Então. E olha, sabe [parte incompreensível] agora os meus objetivos são. por exemplo, na semana passada foi... ehm... escrever uma candidatura em português, currículo em português, como se faz aqui no Brasil porque é diferente da Alemanha. No começo eu traduzia tudo,né, aí meu parceiro falou, neee isso não se diz não, isso é errado, isso... né. Agora, assim, agora por exemplo, eu tenho dificuldade de falar... com bons verbos em português. Eu falo muito fazer, colocar, coloca isso, faz isso, e ser, estar, ter... são meus verbos principais, e quase tudo eu falo com esses verbos. E agora, então para melhorar isso, estou preparando pequenas apresentações falando sobre temas, sei lá, o primeiro tema foi sobre, ehm, os chilenos, ehm, esses mineiros chilenos. Né. Aí eu escrevi algumas palavras chaves e tentei fazer uma mini apresentação usando, UTILIZANDO verbos. Como... içar! (A4, linhas 899-911)</p>	<p>Mediator: Ok. And look, you know [part incomprehensible] now my objectives are, for example, last week it was... ahm... writing an application in Portuguese, curriculum vitae in Portuguese, how you do this here in Brazil, because it's different in Germany. Initially I translated everything, then my partner said, noooo, you can't say it like this, that's wrong, that's... you know. Now, for example, I have difficulties saying... good verbs in Portuguese. I use <i>fazer</i> [to make], <i>colocar</i> [to put], put this, make that, and <i>ser</i> [to be], <i>estar</i> [to be], <i>ter</i> [to have] a lot... those are my main verbs, and I say nearly everything with these verbs. And now, to improve this, I am preparing small presentations talking about topics, I don't know, the first topic was about, ahm, the Chileans, ahm, the Chilean mineworkers. Right? So I wrote down some keywords and tried to create a mini presentation using, UTILISING verbs. Such as... <i>içar</i> [heave/hoist]! (A4, lines 899-911, my translation)</p>
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In this excerpt we can see how the mediator tries to define learning goals for herself. She is analysing her needs and the situation, which is that she is presently living in Brazil, collecting data for her PhD thesis, without a permanent job, and so, is searching for a job (possibly even in Brazil). As a result of this situation, she practised to write applications in Portuguese and according to Brazilian norms with the help of her teletandem partner. In the second case, she discovered that she is only using a limited number of verbs – very practical and useful verbs which can be used for a number of expressions, but of course in a limited way. One of her goals, therefore, is to increase her vocabulary in relation to Portuguese verbs. In this comment, she did not explain every strategy she used to achieve her goal (merely stating that she was preparing small presentations), but the important aspect was the fact that she was talking about her objectives and the precedent needs she felt in relation to her foreign language competency.

Initially, she analysed her needs and then tried to achieve them by testing different strategies such as writing cover letters and CVs and correcting them together with her teletandem partner. She did not discuss the evaluation of learning objectives – and may not have completed these anyway – but instead, she was showing the peers how she chose her teletandem topics, directing them in relation to her language needs, thereby, hopefully leading them to reflect on their own needs and wishes. In the subsequent comments made by the participants, they do not say anything relating to their own learning goals which could show how the mediator's comment

could have influenced their reflection. They only comment on the learning goal of the mediator (Hugo: You want to speak formally in Portuguese? (A4, line 925²⁰¹). Unfortunately, the battery of the audio recorder drained a few seconds later and so it is not possible to know how the peer group mediation session ended.

On another occasion, the mediator shares her experiences of correction and feedback in teletandem. In this excerpt, the mediator shares some of her experiences in relation to taking notes before and during the teletandem session as well the corrections she received from her teletandem partner.

Excerpt 121:

<p>Mediadora: Mas eu sempre queria fazer isso, mas eu também, não consegui. Pelo menos, assim, não sei se é uma dica assim da minha experiência, assim, eu tive um caderninho também para o meu teletandem, porque aí eu escrevi tipo tema de hoje, eu não fiz assim, tipo, cinco minutos antes da, da aula, escrevi rapidinho algumas coisas, ou várias [durante a sessão], só pra saber, e as coisas principais assim que a minha parceira me corrigiu, isso eu anotei. Olha Clara, de novo pela quintamilhoenégisma vez, sei lá como se chama isso [risos] você fez isso, aí vou anotando. porque só quando eu anoto alguma coisa com a minha mão, parece que fica mais gravada na cabeça. (AS3, linhas 650-658)</p>	<p>Mediator: But I always wanted to do this, but I also didn't manage it. At least, well, I don't know if this is a tip from my experience, like, I also had a notebook for my teletandem because it was there where I wrote down the topic of the day, I didn't just wrote things down five minutes before the, the session, I write down some things, or many [during the session], just to know, and main things such as what my partner corrected, that's what I wrote down. Look Clara, again for the fivehundredthwhatever time, I don't know how to say this [laughs], you did this, and then I wrote this down. Because only when I write something down by hand it seems to stay recorded in my head. (AS3, lines 650-658, my translation)</p>
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First of all, we can see in this excerpt that the mediator is conscious of sharing aspects of her teletandem experience with the peers (“I don’t know if this is a tip from my experience”). In this part of the peer group mediation session, the group was talking about the last question concerning corrections in teletandem (What do you do with the corrections of your partner?), and the learners commented on how they dealt with the corrections. The mediator relates her personal tactic of taking notes before and during the teletandem session which is closely related to corrections she received from her teletandem partner. In her case, she needs to write down the corrections received from her partner in order to internalise them better. As she said at the beginning of her enunciation, she is not sure if this may be a tip for one or another peer, because she knows that learners have different strategies regarding their learning. Nevertheless, she stimulates reflection by sharing her own experiences, making the peers to think about similar

²⁰¹ Original: “Hugo: Você quer falar formalmente em português?” (A4, line 925)

situations in which they have received corrections from their partners and how they deal with this kind of situation.

Excerpt 122:

<p>Mediadora: E às vezes eu, porque num caderno você, você acho que mais vezes, você abre o caderno para olhar alguma coisa do que abrir uma pasta [digital], para outra dentro da pasta para procurar um chat pra – só se você faz realmente, você é disciplinada, que as vezes eu tento, as vezes consigo, muitas vezes não consigo, mas ehm, assim é uma dica, as vezes isso ajuda um pouco se você tem, um bloquinho só, com algumas coisas, talvez ajude. Não sei. Por exemplo Taís, você também tem já muuitas experiências de teletandem [risos]. (A3, linhas 665-672)</p>	<p>Mediator: And sometimes I, because in a notebook you, you, I think, you open the notebook more times to reread something than open a [digital] file, to open another file in the file to look for a chat to – only if you are really, really disciplined, something what I try sometimes, sometimes I do it, many times I don't do it, but, ahm, well, a tip, sometimes it helps a bit if you have, only a small notepad, with some things, maybe it helps. I don't know. For example, Taís, you too already have a lot of experience in teletandem [laughs]. (A3, lines 665-672)</p>
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The mediator in this excerpt is trying to justify the strategy of taking notes before and during the teletandem session. She is probably aware of the fact that it is a strategy that works for her but need not necessarily work for others, because she is using expressions like “maybe” and “I don't know” whilst commenting that a real notepad would be more easily accessible for rereading annotations if one was a disciplined learner. Nevertheless, it might be a strategy for one of the peers or may lead one or more students to test it and stick to it or try other strategies.

I think that she also wanted to emphasise the fact that it is important for the learning process to structure linguistic and cultural topics which are addressed during the teletandem session in order to prevent the session from being a mere conversation or chat between two people with different languages. As it was made explicit in section 1.1 about the characteristics of tandem learning, it is crucial to separate a teletandem session from a simple chat. In both situations, learning takes place but in the teletandem session it is a more conscious context and therefore, should be used in a more conscious way, i.e. being aware of learning something from the teletandem partner, and accepting and internalising error correction with gradually increasing frequency and negotiating correction styles.

The following excerpt is not from the mediator herself but shows the way in which the students sometimes turn to her and specifically ask for her opinion and experiences.

Excerpt 123:

<p>Leandra: e então, aproveitando a dúvida da Lena, tipo, o que é mais legal pra você ensinar a gramática? é você preparar por exemplo uma aula sobre gramática e já trazer algumas</p>	<p>Leandra: well, listening to the doubt of Lena, which is the best way to teach grammar? Is it, for example, preparing a class about grammar and bring some pre-prepared sentences and</p>
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<p>frases prontas e mostrar ou você (...) você coloca isso no contexto da conversa, sabe? o que é mais legal, você preparar, chegar tipo assim, hoje vamos falar sobre a preposições tais tais e tais. então, isso, isso, isso, isso, isso, isso. o que é mais ... viável?</p> <p>Lena: para você que já fez tandem. [risos]</p> <p>Leandra: Fazer uma aula mesmo? sabe, como se fosse uma aula mesmo? (AS 2, linhas 168-175)</p>	<p>show them or (...) should you put this in the context of the conversation, you know? What is better, preparing something and arriving at the session such as, today we will talk about prepositions x, y and z. So, it's like this and this and this and this. What is more viable?</p> <p>Lena: for you who has already done teletandem [laughs]</p> <p>Leandra: Make a real class? You know, as if it were a real class? (AS 2, 168-175, my translation)</p>
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Two of the participants, Lena and Leandra, are unsure about how to address grammatical issues in the teletandem sessions. Leandra already states two possible ways, a more traditional one, e.g. preparing something as if it were a 'real class', which for her means presenting the grammatical topic in an inductive style to her teletandem partner, and a more 'natural' way, i.e. by embedding the grammatical topic in the normal conversation. She does not specify in which way this could be carried out, but considers the possibility. By asking the mediator about her opinion – and Lena reinforces the question with the sentence 'for you, who has already done teletandem' – they show a degree of confidence in the mediator, they value her opinion and demonstrate that they know that she has experience as a teletandem learner and therefore, might give suggestions.

As a result, they may not specifically want guidance from a teacher or a native speaker of German but from someone who has experience in teletandem. The fact that the mediator is confident in talking about issues involving teletandem (due to having over than two years of experience, not only as learner but also as project assistant) gives her a certain credibility when talking about this subject.

However, other roles also exist which the mediator takes on during the peer group mediation sessions by sharing different kind of experiences with the participants. For example information, facts and experiences as a German teacher at Brazilian higher education institutions:

Excerpt 124:

<p>Mediadora: Isso é alguma coisa boa, por exemplo. O que eu percebi com os meus alunos na Unicamp e já vi aqui também, só nessa, nessa aula que fiquei, com a Cassiana. [confusão] Todo mundo pegou as coisas, assim, do alemão. Livro didático, blocos, sei</p>	<p>Mediator: This is a good thing, for example. What I realised with my students at Unicamp [abbreviated name of a Brazilian university] and I also perceived this here, only in this, this class I saw with Cassiana [name of a German teacher] [many voices at once] Everybody got out their things, well, of German. Textbook,</p>
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<p>lá, caneta E [bate palmas] dicionário! (A1-1, linhas 333-337)</p> <p>Mediadora: [risos] e já queria jogar todos os dicionários fora! Na Unicamp a mesma coisa. E todo mundo assim, aí eu perguntei uma coisa em alemão, aí – ah, eh, mas só um momentinho, aí tchhhhh começou a (folhear?). Olha, você, na realidade na Alemanha, você não vai ter tempo para pegar seu dicionário, ficar lá olhando todas as palavras [risos], tem que se virar, você não sabe uma palavra, tenta descrever. ... Claro, no primeiro, segundo ano talvez ainda, eh::, (precisa usar o dicionário?) [confusão de vozes] --- não, claro, eu sei, entendo, até pra mim às vezes é difícil de explicar as coisas que eu não sei, ma:s isso é alguma coisa que, acho assim, uma boa coisa pra vocês, deixem (..) eh::, deixam o dicionário pra ffchhh (..) não utilizam tanto. (...) (A1-1, linhas 341-352)</p>	<p>notepad, whatever, pencil AND [claps hands] dictionary! (A1-1, lines 333-337)</p> <p>Mediator: [laughs] and I wanted to throw away all those dictionaries! At Unicamp [another public university in Brazil] it was the same. And everybody like, then I asked them something in German and then – ah, eh, just a second, and then tchhhhhhh they started to (skim?). Look, you, in a real situation in Germany, you won't have time to get your dictionary and start looking for all the words [laughs], you have to get through it another way, you don't know a word, try to describe it... Of course, in the first, second year, maybe you still, e::hm, (need to use a dictionary?) [many voices at once] – no, of course, I know, I understand, sometimes it's also difficult for me to explain things that I don't know, bu:t this is something that, I guess, it's a good thing for you, let (..) a::hm, let the dictionary for ffchhh (..) don't use them so much. [...] (A1-1, lines 341-352, my translation)</p>
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Why are the other roles of the mediator also an important aspect? Even if the enunciations made by the mediator about subjects which are not directly related to teletandem, they are still subjects related to language learning in general and to other learning contexts (like German classes for Brazilian university students). This leads the participants to think about different language learning contexts and lets them compare the different contexts. In this case, as can be seen in the excerpt above, the participants were stimulated to think about the use of a dictionary (digital vs. paper) in a more traditional classroom context and in a teletandem session. Why would they use a dictionary anyway? Would they use it differently in the two contexts? With which purpose? And what could be ways to avoid using it? These could be some questions they could reflect on in that or in a later moment.

The mediator also adds to the discussion the possibility of staying abroad in one of the German-speaking countries. As it is difficult for many of the Brazilian students in teacher education to take part in an exchange to one of their target language countries due to financial and geographical reasons, they might not think too much about the real possibility to go or stay for some time abroad. So when the mediator mentions the idea of being in Germany and it being quite complicated to use a dictionary in each situation one does not know a word, this might suddenly make the students to think about a whole new reality. They learn German not only to eventually become German teachers in their home country, but also to be able to use this language in Germany and other German-speaking countries. I do not intend to say that they never considered this before, but it is something so distant from their reality, to get to travel to

Europe, for example. So when the mediator brings up the idea of them being in Germany and having to use German, it might boost their motivation for dedicating themselves more to the language learning.

4.2.2 The mediator as questioner

Generally, the mediator asked many questions in order to stimulate the participants to consciously reflect on certain topics. Of course, it is not only through questions that one promotes reflection but also through narratives of experiences, for instance, as we have seen in the previous category, and other ways are possible as well.

In this category, we can find different types of questions the mediator asked the participants. Primarily, we could identify the formal questions the mediator had chosen in advance which were in line with the main topic chosen for the peer group mediation session and which were usually presented at the beginning of the session, as we can see in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 125:

<p>Mediadora: [...] Ok. Então agora eu queria que vocês pensassem, um pouco sobre essas quatro perguntas. O que vocês corrigem? No seu parceiro? Por que vocês corrigem? Em que momento e como? E o que vocês fazem com as correções recebidas do seu parceiro, enquanto e depois da sessão? Assim, uns cinco, dez minutos vocês podem... tem um pouco de papel aqui... anotar algumas palavras chaves só para vocês, não sei se vocês querem papel, vocês também podem anotar no seu. Bom, tudo bem? Tá. (A3, linhas 176-182)</p>	<p>Mediator: [...] Ok. So now I would like you to think a little bit about these four questions. What do you correct? In your partner's speech? Why do you correct? In which moment and how? And what do you do with the correction you receive from your partner, during and after the session? So, five, ten minutes you can... here is some paper... take some notes only for yourselves, I don't know if you want some paper, you can also take notes in your. Well, everything ok? Ok. (A3, lines 176-182, my translation)</p>
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The mediator usually prepared up to four questions regarding the main topic of the session. In this case, four questions regarding correction procedures in teletandem sessions were asked. With these general questions (What do you correct in your partner's speech? Why do you correct you partner? In which moments do you correct and how? And what do you do with the correction received by your partner, during and after the session?), the mediator wants the participants to enter the main topic by starting to think about several aspects concerning correction style in dialogic/conversational learning contexts like teletandem. With this procedure as a starting point, reflection is initiated and can be deepened throughout the peer discussion.

Another type of questions are questions that make one enter a topic more deeply. Usually, there is a first question which is then followed by one or more that guide the reflection in one specific direction, focusing on a specific aspect.

Excerpt 126:

<p>Mediadora: (...) aí... falando rapidinho só sobre este exemplo, essa música, tudo bem. Como a gente poderia escolher uma música? o que vocês acham o que é mais importante, assim, em primeiro lugar? (A1-1, linhas 189-191)</p>	<p>Mediator: (...) so... talking quickly only about this example, this music, ok. How could we choose a song? What do you think is more important, in first place? (A1-1, lines 189-191)</p>
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In this case, the first question is how one could choose a song to work with for the teletandem session. The next question guides the reflection in a specific direction, i.e. which aspects should be considered in the first place when choosing a song for a pedagogical aim. What motives should guide the decision and why is it important to think about it? Usually, it is not hard for learners to choose music and/or lyrics to work with in teletandem because music is, in many cases, detrimental to the life of (young adults) and adolescents. With the second, more directing question, the mediator wants to draw their attention to the reasons to choose specific music. She wants them to think about the context, the partner, the reasons why they want to work with a particular piece of music. Considering the fact that the students are in teacher education courses makes this even more useful to talk about as these decisions or reflections must be done in teaching contexts as well.

Excerpt 127:

<p>Mediadora: Mas vocês tiveram algumas dificuldades, assim de contatar? Com seu parceiro agora, assim, não com outros talvez, tá? [risos] eh, agora foi rápido, eles – quem escreveu primeiro? vocês ou eles? (A1-2, linhas 478-481)</p>	<p>Mediator: But did you have any difficulties, in relation to contacting [your partner]? With your partner now, not with others maybe, ok? [laughs] ahm, now it was quick, they – who wrote first? You or they? (A1-2, lines 478-481)</p>
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Here we observe the same style: the mediator asks one main question, she wants to know whether the participants had difficulties in contacting their teletandem partners, and then she specifies what she wants to say with several other questions. Actually, she could have left the main question as is because with a more open question she leaves the direction of the reflection and discussion to the learners. By asking several more questions and specifying the direction

the mediator runs the risk to lose aspects regarding contact difficulties just because she narrowed the focus down to a specific aspect. On the other hand, we can argue that she still might feel insecure in relation to the group, her role as mediator and her not being a native speaker of Portuguese and therefore, having the wish to explain herself a little bit more and thus, completing a question with more questions.

Another case is asking specific participants particular questions. In a group, the dynamic is usually that some participants are outgoing, talkative and participate a lot while others are somewhat shy and let others talk while they are take on the roles of listeners. That might be one reason why the mediator sometimes turns to a specific member of the group in order to get information from this person. Another reason might be that the mediator in fact already knows some of her peer group members and, in a specific thematic context, knows that one participant in particular could give an interesting answer fitting the topic.

Excerpt 128:

<p>Mediadora: O que foi que mais... o que vocês, tipo, qual – ai, o meu português às vezes – ehm, por exemplo, vocês acharam coisas em comum? que cada um, eh, isso foi assim, assim, assim com todo mundo. ou por exemplo alguém pode falar um pouco sobre quem já fez uma sessão de teletandem, quem ainda não chegou até lá, talvez fazendo... uma pequena... repetição. Não precisa ser tão grande como agora no pequeno grupo, né. Maria, você fez uma sessão hoje, não é? (A1-2, linhas 330-336)</p>	<p>Mediator: What was more... what did you, like, which – ah, my Portuguese sometimes – ahm, for example, did you find anything in common? That each one, am, this was like this and that with everyone. Or for example could someone talk a little bit about who has already done a teletandem session, who still did not do any, perhaps giving... a small... revision. It does not need to be big like you've done in the smaller groups, ok? Maria, you had a session today, hadn't you? (A1-2, lines 330-336, my translation)</p>
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In this excerpt, the mediator asks what the participants experienced during their first days and weeks of teletandem. More precisely, she wants to know what the learners did in their first teletandem session. As the mediator knew that participant Maria had done a teletandem session the same day, she turns to her specifically at the end of her enunciation and asks her directly. Sometimes, it is better to ask a specific person to start the discussion. Teachers, mediators or moderators who lead groups of participants know that when a question is asked it usually takes some time for someone of the group to answer, as usually everybody waits for one person to answer. We can consider it a strategy to ask a specific person to start with an experience report in order to stimulate others to contribute afterwards and thus, get a discussion started.

The next excerpts show a very similar situation in which the mediator continues to ask a specific participant in order to get more information about a specific topic or learning aspect.

Excerpt 129:

Mediadora: humhum, humhum. O que você gostaria fazer, além disso? (A2, linha 409)	Mediator: hmhm, hmhm. What would you like to do instead? (A2, line 409, my translation)
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Excerpt 130:

Mediadora: Mas mesmo assim as sessões funcionam bem entre vocês duas. Assim tipo, ... ou será que a sessão as vezes também é um pouco... parece que ela não quer mais? OU? (A5, linhas 515-517)	Mediator: But nevertheless the sessions are working well between you two. Like, ... or is the session sometimes a little bit... does it seem that she doesn't want anymore? OR? (A5, lines 515-517, my translation)
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In both excerpts, the mediator gets personal and wants to obtain further information related to the actual conversation topic. In peer group mediation sessions, there is always some tension between more personal topics and more general topics which are of interest to the whole group such as different correction styles. Discussion on these general topics then provoke exchange of experiences, new influences, ideas and strategies to the peers. However, sometimes one of the learners has a specific problem which is not necessarily of great interest to the others – an interpersonal issue between the tandem partners, for example. So the mediator should be aware of this fact and find a balance between individual attention for each learner and the group interests as a whole. In the case of a major individual problem of one learner, it is advisable to schedule a one-to-one session where the personal questions can be discussed in a more private setting, away from the others, and with the attention from the mediator solely on the learner.

Sometimes, it also becomes visible that the mediator was too detailed in her questioning. She could have asked more open questions and simply have waited for the answers of the participants, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 131:

Mediadora: Sim, depois, nossa, mas por que estou fazendo isso? Mas acho que... provavelmente ouvindo essas gravações aqui [risos] ... vai ser uma coisa engraçada também. Sabe, depois de transcrever tudo. ... Eh. Mas então... Foi uma sessão de TT, o que vocês – o que foi isso? Qual parte da sessão foi? O que vocês podiam reconhecer? O que vocês ouviram? Deu pra entender mais ou menos o alemão, não sei? Falam um pouco	Mediator: Yes, afterwards, oh my, why am I doing this? But I guess... listening to this record here [laughs]... will be something funny, too. You know, after having transcribed everything. ... Am. Well... It was a teletandem session, what did you – what was it? Which part of the session was that? What could you identify? What did you hear? Could you understand the German, I don't know?
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sobre suas impressões, sobre o que vocês viram. (A5, linhas 25-31)	Tell me a little bit about your impressions, about what you have seen. (A5, lines 25-31)
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Actually, the last sentence (“Tell me a little bit about your impressions, about what you have seen.”) would have been sufficient to initiate the reflection and discussion about the video the participants have just watched. All previous questions have actually influenced the thinking of the learners and already directed it to some specific points like “it is a special part of the teletandem session”, for instance.

In other cases the mediator passes a question, which was directed to her, on to the other participants because she does not want to answer it right away and first wants to hear what the other participants have to say or because she does not want to dominate the discussion.

Excerpt 132:

<p>Hugo: eu não entendo o que é um OBJETIVO de aprendizagem</p> <p>Mediadora: O que é um objetivo de aprendizagem, né?</p> <p>Célia: Eu acho assim, a gente enquanto estudante de alemão, né, tem duas perspectivas, perspectivas de estudantes quem tá aprendendo [parte incompreensível] ai, por exemplo, você dá aula, e ela já deu aula. Hoje dei aula de alemão [risos]. Quando EU preparo uma aula de alemão, eu sempre penso: ... e:m direcionar as coisas mas nunca dar aulas de mão beijada. Sabe, assim. O, o meu objetivo mesmo... com uma aula em si, é fazer com que as pessoas cheguem num ponto x sem [parte incompreensível] faço assim. E [parte incompreensível].</p> <p>Mediadora: Mas isso é um objetivo de aprendizagem?</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Célia: Eu acho que meu objetivo de aprendizagem [risos] no teletandem eu já alcancei há ummmmm tempo, o meu objetivo era mesmo perder um pouco a trava que eu tinha de falar.</p> <p>Mediadora: aham.</p> <p>Célia: aí...</p> <p>Mediadora: E isso foi um dos objetivos pra você?</p>	<p>Hugo: I don't understand what a learning GOAL is.</p> <p>Mediator: Yes, what is a learning goal?</p> <p>Célia: I think that we as learners of German, right, we have two perspectives. Perspectives of learners who are learning [incomprehensible part] So, for example, you give classes, and she has given already classes. Today I gave a German class [laughs]. When I prepare a German class I always thi:nk... about guiding the things but I never give classes very easily. You know. My, my real objective... in relation to a class, is making the people come to a specific point without [incomprehensible part] I do it like this. And [incomprehensible part].</p> <p>Mediator: But is this a learning goal?</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Célia: I think that I already achieved my learning objective [laughs] in teletandem a loooooong time ago. My objective was to lose the anxiety/the break I had when I had to talk.</p> <p>Mediator: Aham.</p> <p>Célia: so...</p> <p>Mediator: And was this one of the goals for you?</p> <p>Célia: ONE of them, yes.</p>
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<u>Célia:</u> UM dos, é.	<u>Mediator:</u> Did you have others? (A4, lines 25-68)
<u>Mediadora:</u> Você teve outros? (A4, linhas 25-68)	

In this excerpt the mediator does not answer the question Hugo asks right at the beginning of the meeting, before any individual reflection has actually started. The mediator repeats the question and therefore, redirects it to the peer group and waits for another learner to answer it. Célia tries to answer it but does not really speak of learning objectives but more about teaching objectives, which is why the mediator repeats the question and actually questions the answers of Célia, which, in turn, is the type of question we have seen in the excerpts before, when the mediator turns to one of the participants individually to try to get more specific information about the actual conversation topic.

Excerpt 133:

<u>Mediadora:</u> Eu acho que sim. Não sei, o que vocês acham? Acho que aqui é uma mistura entre feedback e correção. Né, que tipo, motiva o outro: nossa, você já está no caminho certo. tá ótimo, e tal tal tal. Né. E além disso, vou te mostrar, né, essas correções, vou propor algumas coisas, [parte incompreensível] né. Talvez no primeiro, não sei. E... (A5, linhas 432-436)	<u>Mediator:</u> I think yes. I don't know, what do you think? I think it is a mixture of feedback and correction. The kind that motivates the other: wow, you're already on the right way. It's very good and blablabla. Right? And above this I will show you the corrections, I will suggest some things [incomprehensible part], ok. Maybe in the first, I don't know. And ... (A5, lines 432-436)
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In this excerpt, the mediator still does not want to answer the question but shares her opinion anyways. We can observe her train of thought in her statement. First, she answers a question of participant Taís as to if there are different types of feedback (written and/or oral feedback, for example) “I think yes.”, but she probably realises that she does not want to give her opinion right away, so she continues with “I don't know, what do you think?” giving the question back to her interlocutor. Nevertheless, she continues with her opinion, maybe because she already is in a thinking flow about the question she heard. In the mediator's statement that follows the above, we can see how she does not want to share her opinion, probably to not influence the learners with her personal convictions. She continues:

Excerpt 134:

<p>Taís: Mas existiu um feedback assim, fechadinho, certinho, que deve ser sempre utilizado?</p> <p>Mediadora: Mas eu não sei se isso também é... porque, se o feedback tava assim, sabe, vocês têm que fazer assim. Seria mais ou menos o que você, sabe... vai ter uma folha e aí você vai cair no padrão assim, nenene nenenenenene (A5, linhas 438-443)</p>	<p>Taís: But did there exist a feedback like, a right one, that should be used?</p> <p>Mediator: But I don't know if this is also... because, if the feedback was this way, you know, you have to do it like this. It would be more or less what you, you know... there is a sheet and then you will fall in this pattern, nenene, nenenenene (A5, lines 438-443)</p>
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In this case, Taís and the mediator talk about a feedback system which was employed at the German partner university and which was an online sheet for giving feedback about the teletandem session which should be filled out by all German-Portuguese teletandem participants after each session. The mediator does not approve this form of feedback very much because she fears that the learners will adopt a specific pattern and always tick the same boxes or will always answer the same to finish the task fast. This would mean that the evaluation of the teletandem sessions would not be very productive, and this pattern could be a potential risk. This possible problem has not been proven, yet, and here it is only expressed as a concern of the mediator as she thinks that it could possibly happen.

In addition, asking more provocative questions is another type of questions to help cause reflection on a specific topic and stimulate discussion.

Excerpt 135:

<p>Mediadora: Mas, assim, uma certa intimidade não pode, também, acabar um pouco com as regras? Tipo, você vai só... porque eu tive isso também com a Letícia. (A3, linhas 505-506)</p>	<p>Mediator: But, well, a certain intimacy could not, also, break with the rules? Like, you will only... because I had this a little bit with Letícia. (A3, lines 505-506)</p>
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In this excerpt, the mediator is questioning the intimacy between two teletandem partners, i.e. the friendship and the good understanding between two learners. She knows from her experience that a great understanding and a growing friendship can influence a teletandem partnership in relation to the topics addressed in the teletandem sessions, for instance. From my own experience as teletandem learner, it may happen that if you grow close to each other,

personal topics get far more interesting and may keep you from addressing rather specific or technical themes which could provide you with more complex vocabulary, for example.

Excerpt 136:

<p>Célia: (...) não anoto as expressões, mas acabo de ficar meio perdido, não fixo tão bem, né, que é isso é uma falha mesmo, eu deveria fazer um...</p> <p>Mediadora: Será que é uma falha?</p> <p>Célia: Eu acho que é! Eu acho que é. (A4, linhas 112-115)</p>	<p>Célia: [...] I don't take notes of expressions, but I end up a little bit lost, I don't memorise things so well, and this is an error of mine, I should do...</p> <p>Mediator: Do you think it is an error?</p> <p>Célia: I think it is! I think it is! (A4, lines 112-115)</p>
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In this excerpt, the mediator provokes Célia by asking her if she really thinks that it is an error of her that she is not memorising expressions and vocabulary. We could interpret this situation as follows: Célia points out an error she makes because she knows (or got to know in this peer group mediation meeting or before) that the teletandem context is more than just chatting with a foreigner and that note-taking, for example, is one possible important factor for supporting the memorisation of new words and sentences. She is honest and says that she does not memorise “things” and that this, in her opinion, is a mistake. The mediator, thus, questions her attitude of thinking of it as a mistake. The mediator believes that different learners have different strategies to memorise or to “learn” new forms and expressions of a foreign language, so she probably wants to know why Célia is judging her own attitude as wrong. Maybe the mediator should have asked “why” Célia thinks it is wrong because after her question Célia only confirms her thought but does not explain the reason why, and after this the discussion takes another direction. Provocative questions are interesting as they have potential to stimulate more reflection on a certain topic but they should be asked broadly so that the reflection has a chance to evolve.

Another type of questions are general, open questions posed by the mediator to learn about the general condition of the participants and also about general doubts and questions they might have in relation to the whole telecollaboration project:

Excerpt 137:

<p>Mediadora: Ah legal, não, isso é ótimo. Assim, e em geral, vocês estão satisfeitos</p>	<p>Mediator: Oh great, no, this is really wonderful. And in general, are you satisfied with your partners? (...) (A6, lines 350-351)</p>
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então com seus parceiros, né? (...) (A6, linhas 350-351)	
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Excerpt 138:

<u>Mediadora:</u> Vocês tem dúvidas, perguntas, comentários que vocês queriam fazer? (A1-2, linhas 225-226)	<u>Mediator:</u> Do you have any doubts, questions, comments you would like to make? (A1-2, lines 225-226)
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In both excerpts, there can be seen the general type of questions which the mediator asks in order to get information about the general state of the participants in relation to the telecollaboration project, tandem partners and the mediation sessions. Certainly, those general questions are integral and somehow of course natural part of the question inventory of each teacher, project coordinator or, in this case, mediator or advisor, as it is of utmost importance to receive sincere feedback on the course of action and the outcomes of any project.

4.2.3 The mediator's reflections in regard to teletandem

The peer group mediation was carried out in the teletandem learning context. This implies special characteristics, i.e. the use of technology and self-directed learning. The mediator considered such a fact important to regularly come back to specific aspects of the teletandem learning context. We can say that, in this case, we have a kind of digital literacy from the mediator to the learners, i.e. she tried to familiarise the participants with the tools and other possibilities which can be used in teletandem. Of course, the participants could have discovered many of those things like software and hardware by simply conducting teletandem sessions for some time. However, mediation sessions with a teletandem specialist, as a space of information and learning experiences exchange, generally offer the possibility to present ideas, procedures and specific tools in relation to teletandem. In this respect, during the peer group mediation sessions, the mediator pointed out the importance of the use of the camera during teletandem sessions, and showed some programs which facilitate the exchange between the learners (Talk&Write, for example); this is a question of social practice within the group, i.e. the mediator is passing a digital literacy on to a community of practice (in this case: learners of foreign languages in teletandem).

In this category, the references in regards to teletandem are summarised and show which aspects of teletandem were important for the mediator, as, for example, the use of the webcam in teletandem.

Excerpt 139:

<p>Mediadora: (...) Eu me lembro ainda, acho que foi <i>tragen</i>, acho que foi a coisa do <i>Rotkäppchen</i> [<i>chapéuzinho vermelho</i>]? e assim, ela me (perguntou?) algumas palavras, o que é <i>tragen</i>? <i>Trägt eine rote Mütze, oder so</i>. [Veste um chapéu vermelho, ou algo assim.] <i>Tragen</i>, então, pode ser assim, tipo, <i>eine Tasche tragen</i> [carregar uma bolsa] [levanta e faz gestos e movimentos] aí eu fiquei na câmera assim, [todos riem], ou <i>Kleidung tragen</i> [faz os movimentos], <i>eine Hose tragen, ja, eine Mütze tragen</i>, aí eu tentei assim explicar assim, porque, acho que você lembra melhor se o seu parceiro tá fazendo coisa engraçada, né, aí você, ah, <i>tragen</i>, acho que foi isso quando meu parceiro fez isso. Por isso a câmera, é (boa/importante?). ... Ajuda! (A1-1, linhas 354-364)</p>	<p>Mediator: (...) I still remember, I think it was <i>tragen</i>, I think it was the <i>Rotkäppchen</i> [redhood] thing? And, then she (asked?) me some words, what is <i>tragen</i>? <i>Trägt eine rote Mütze, oder so</i>. [She uses a red hood, or something like this] <i>Tragen</i>, so this can be, like <i>eine Tasche tragen</i> [carry a bag] [she stands up and makes some movements], and then I stood like this in the camera [everybody laughs] or <i>Kleidung tragen</i> [makes the movements], <i>eine Hose tragen, ja, eine Mütze tragen</i> [use trousers, use a hood/cap], so I tried to explain it this way, because, I think you remember better when your partner is doing funny things, right, so you, ah, <i>tragen</i>, I guess this was when my partner did this and that. That's why the camera is (good?important?)... It helps! (A1-1, lines 354-364)</p>
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The webcam is an important tool for teletandem. It differentiates this mode of tandem learning in relation to e-tandem in chats or emails. According to Telles (2009), teletandem without the use of a webcam cannot be considered teletandem. It should be considered as an e-tandem, for instance. With the use of the webcam, one has a quite different perspective – one can act in front of the teletandem partner and show objects or even interpret situations, for instance. In this respect, the webcam is a crucial tool for the learning process. The partner can show specific cultural artefacts of his surroundings or in a more simple way, can show specific objects, colours or images (see Telles, 2009, for details).

Another factor the mediator addresses in relation to teletandem is the correction style. There are many different ways of correcting the teletandem partner and be corrected by the partner but each pair has to find his own way.

Excerpt 140:

<p>Mediadora: é, acho que vocês vão perceber isso durante as suas sessões, que tem que achar o seu caminho de corrigir. Alguém vai gostar receber mais correção, outros não, eu acho que... do que eu vi agora, dos seus objetivos, o que vocês queriam fazer no TT, pelo menos pelos questionários que já recebi, é muito falar, a pronúncia essas coisas. Esses, me parece, são os objetivos, assim, né, que têm prioridade. então aí, realmente assim, podem falar para eles: ahh, não precisam corrigir toda a gramática, se por acaso seu parceiro tá corrigindo cada</p>	<p>Mediator: yes, I guess you will realise this during your sessions, that you will have to find your way of correcting. One likes to receive more corrections, others not, I think that... what I have seen so far, of your objectives, what you wanted to do in teletandem, at least through the questionnaires I have already received, it is a lot of conversation, pronunciation, these things. Those, I guess, are the objectives, right, that have priority. So then, really, you can tell them: ahh, you don't need to correct all the grammar, if for instance your partner is</p>
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<p>coisinha que vocês fazem errado de conjugação, de declinação que é uma coisa terrível em alemão. assim, falam, tudo bem, só fala as coisas, assim, mais graves, lá no final da sessão. porque vocês podem fazer assim, vocês falam por exemplo coisas que (...??) e os últimos quinze minutos vocês vão utilizar para falar sobre o que vocês acharam da sessão, tipo, achei legal, ah, eu queria mais me focar nisso, queria fazer mais isso, e na correção. e só as coisas graves de pronúncia, que as vezes, é melhor fazer já na hora. Falar, olha, né, aqui é "liquiDificador" e não liqui..fifica <i>irgendwas</i>, <i>ja</i>? [risos] por exemplo, uma palavra muito difícil. [risos] Liquidificador. ehm, que são coisas mais, acho que é uma coisa que vocês vão sentir também. agora dá pra corrigir essa coisa agora, ah, ela fez cinco vezes errado essa conjugação, vou falar lá no final para ela anotar, olha, é eu fui e não eu foi. não é. (A1-2, linhas 529-550)</p>	<p>correcting every little mistake you make in conjugation, in declination, which is something terrible in German, so, then tell them, ok, just tell me the things, the heaviest ones, at the end of the session. Because you can do it like this, you say things that (???) and the last fifteen minutes you will use to talk about your opinion about the session, like, I thought it was great, ah, I wanted to focus more on this, I wanted to do more that, and the correction. And only the heavy things of pronunciation which sometimes it's even better to correct in the same moment. Saying that, look, it's "liquiDificador" [mixer] and not liquid...fifica something, ok? [laughs] for example, a very difficult word. [laughs] Liquidificador. Am, those are things, I think it is something you will feel, too. Now it's better to correct this, ah, she committed this error in conjugation five times, I will explain it at the end so that she can take notes of it, look, it's <i>eu fui</i> [I went] not <i>eu foi</i>, right? (A1-2, lines 529-550)</p>
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The correction style depends on the needs and learning objectives of the learners. When they want to focus on conversation, it is not necessary to stop the conversation flow and correct every tiny mistake of grammar or pronunciation. But if a learner wants to focus on specific grammar rules, then another correction style might be necessary.

What is very important is to negotiate this with the teletandem partner. This is why it is important to be aware of one's own needs and objectives for the learning process because knowing this we can easily come up with topics for the teletandem sessions, the amount of linguistic structural input like grammar and correction styles, for example.

Correction is important because teletandem is not just a situation in which we talk with a foreign friend to use a foreign language. Teletandem encompasses more than that. The correction provides us with more input and makes us more aware of our learning and analysis with our native and foreign languages.

The mediator also talks about tools which are used in teletandem. This fact has to do with digital literacy.

Excerpt 141:

<p>Mediadora: sim? Então aí tem um software que é <i>talk and write</i>. Acho que aqui eles têm, se vocês fazem aqui tem, na verdade aqui acho que já tá junto com o skype, sei lá. Na verdade, você tem que pagar para esse serviço. Acho que quando você baixa só a</p>	<p>Mediator: yes? So there is a software which is <i>talk and write</i>. I think they have it here, if you make teletandem here, I think that here it comes already with skype, I don't know. Actually, you have to pay for the license. I think when you download the free version you</p>
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versão simples, você pode usar 10 minutos, e depois acho que tem que esperar um pouco e depois ativar de novo. Mas como aqui eles, eles trabalham junto com essa empresa que criou o <i>talk and write</i> , e é legal porque você utiliza um programa junto, ne, tipo, com, duas canetas dentro do programa e você pode começar a, também, a desenhar. funciona como um lousa na verdade. [...] (A2, linhas, 317-330)	are able to use it for 10 minutes, and then you have to wait a little bite and then you can activate it again. But as here, they work together with the company which created the talk and write, and it is great, because you use the program together with, like, with two pencils within the same program. And you can start to, also, to draw. It works like a blackboard actually. [...] (A2, linhas 317-330)
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Depending on the group and the case, one should consider to present tools to the participants which might be useful for them and they might not know those, yet. In this specific case, the mediator explains the functions of the programme Talk&Write which joins the communication programme Skype and works like a digital blackboard on which one can write and draw in a shared window and also share documents with the conversation partner. The full version of Talk&Write was available in the Teletandem Lab at UNESP Assis so that students were able to use all functions when they carried out their teletandem sessions in the lab. Otherwise, the free version with fewer features and limited session time could be used by everyone individually.

There are interesting programmes, applications and other tools available that support the learning of languages and which are effective when one cannot immerse oneself in the target culture or not physically face-to-face with the communication partner. In a presential face-to-face tandem, the tandem partners can get paper and a pen, they can go out together and visit places, for instance. In a distance tandem, this is not possible but resources like the internet that offers possibilities such as going through a virtual museum or using communication tools that work like paper and pen provide language learners with similar experiences without them ever having to leaving their houses. This is one of the big advantages of teletandem for learners who live in very distant regions and who are not able to travel a lot to get these experiences with other cultures.

Another important aspect for the learning of languages in (tele)tandem is responsibility and reciprocity in relation to the tandem learner and what they negotiate for their language learning partnership.

Excerpt 142:

Mediadora: É. e aí, eh, aí (...?) mas, vocês querem que, né, o seu parceiro responde às suas necessidades, então tem que... mas se	Mediator: Yes. And, and... (?) but, you want to, right, your partner meets your needs, so you have to... but if it is a lot, you can also
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for muito, você também pode falar, olha, sabe, essa coisa de em casa ou na casa, você pode falar assim, na verdade, tanto faz, todo brasileiro vai te entender se você fala: eu estudei na Brasília ou em Brasília, vocês vão entender perfeitamente, talvez um pouco uhuhuu. (?) (A1-2, linhas 561-566)	say, look, you know, this thing of <i>em casa</i> or <i>na casa</i> , you can say it both ways and actually, it is the same, every Brazilian will understand you when you say: <i>eu estudei na Brasília</i> or <i>em Brasília</i> [I studied in Brasília], you will understand it perfectly, even if maybe a little uhuhuuu (?) (A1-2, lines 561-566)
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In this excerpt, we can see how the mediator touches upon the subject of reciprocity. If one wants that the tandem partner meets one's needs than he needs to engage himself, too, to fulfil the needs of the learning partner. This means that there must be constant negotiation about addressed topics in the tandem sessions, the employed correction style, the form of feedback, etc. The second part of the excerpt treats a grammatical theme but the message here is the negotiation between the two partners, to achieve reciprocity

Excerpt 143:

Mediadora: é, é uma responsabilidade que você tem no TT. Um pouco. Se você escolheu: vou fazer! Ai pelo menos um certo tempo, né, ... (A3, linhas 557-558)	Mediator: yes, yes, it is a responsibility you have in teletandem. A little bit. If you have chosen: I will do it! At least for a certain time, right... (A3, lines 557-558)
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In this excerpt, the mediator talks about ones' responsibility regarding a teletandem partnership. If I decide to engage in a teletandem, I must be aware of the fact that my teletandem partner will expect a certain commitment in our joint work. Entering this learning context, both partners must take responsibility for the other partner, as if it was a kind of contract between two learners. Especially in institutionally-integrated teletandem projects (Cavalari & Aranha, 2014), the responsibility factor is very important because evaluation of learners are usually an integral part of the teletandem interaction. One's own investment in the tandem exchange also highly depends on the partner one is matched with.

In relation to teletandem, we can also point out that it is a specific learning context which differs from the traditional classroom context. It highlights interesting aspects such as autonomy or the linguistic and cultural exchange with a native speaker.

Excerpt 144:

Mediadora: porque parece, na verdade, do que você tá falando agora que o teletandem na verdade é uma forma muito boa para você aprender mais alemão... porque VOCÊ pode decidir o que VOCÊ quer aprender , não é	Mediator: because it seems that, actually, what you are talking about right now that teletandem actually is a very good form for you to learn German... because it is YOU who can decide what YOU want to learn ,
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<p>ehhh <i>Passwort, Seite 35, Heute lernen wir über wie schreiben wir eine Bewerbung.</i> – no terceiro ano! [risos] (A5, linhas 773-777)</p> <p>Mediadora: e:, na verdade, e aí ainda tem o <i>Muttersprachler</i> que realmente pode ficar em cima da coisa de pronúncia, né, essas coisas ou que pode falar sobre realidades da Alemanha... então, na verdade, é uma forma até super boa para você. Mas então, acho que você tem que virar meio "por favor, faça isso" né? Aí você... (A5, linhas 781-785)</p>	<p>it's not <i>Passwort, Seite 35, Heute lernen wir über wie schreiben wir eine Bewerbung.</i> [Textbook, page 35, today we will learn about how to write an application] – in the third year! [laughs] (A5, lines 773-777)</p> <p>Mediator: yeah, actually, and there is still the native speaker who can really focus on the pronunciation, and those things, or who can tell you about the reality in Germany... so, actually, it is really a very good opportunity for you. But well, I think you have to turn to her and say "please, do this and that" right? And then you... (A5, lines 781-785)</p>
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The mediator emphasises the advantages of the teletandem context and clearly compares it with other learning contexts. She does not judge the learning contexts or aims to insinuate that one is better than the other. On the contrary, in different learning contexts we can find different emphases such as more autonomy and self-direction, in others maybe a more guided grammar learning. It is good to be aware of the different advantages each context provides. And knowing which learning context best suits oneself means that one can chose the best strategies from certain options in order to influence one's own learning of a foreign language most effectively.

Another aspect in relation to teletandem are technical problems which can occur:

Excerpt 145:

<p>Mediadora: Ontem aconteceu isso aqui, a gente tava aqui, né, querendo um outro TT com, com Alemanha lá, e... a chuva começou, tipo, duas e, não, uma e meia, quando queríamos começar aqui com TT. Ainda tentei mandar uma mensagem de celular para, pra a responsável lá [risos] só que minha bateria acabou ... acho que ela nem recebeu, não sei. [risos] [...] (A5, linhas 849-855)</p>	<p>Mediator: Yesterday happened this here, we were here, right, really wanting to do teletandem with Germany and... the rain started, like at, two o'clock and, no, half past one, when we wanted to start the teletandem here. I still tried to send a message with my mobile phone to, to the contact person over there [laughs] but my battery was empty... I guess she didn't receive it anyway, I don't know. [laughs] [...] (A5, lines 849-855)</p>
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In a learning context which is highly dependent on electrical energy, a stable internet connection and specific hard- and software, it is normal that smaller or larger technical problems can impact the teletandem meetings. Slow or unstable internet connection or compromised video and audio transfers may lead to difficulties in understanding the partner because the audio falters or comes with acoustic noise. In Brazil, for instance, internet connections in rural areas are intermittently unstable and have low data transfer. During periods

of heavy rainfall and thunderstorms, one must expect power failures and internet disconnects which can compromise the teletandem sessions.

Also, if learners are not very confident in utilizing a computer or programmes and the internet, they will experience additional challenges. When teletandem sessions are held in a teletandem lab, it is easier to help learners who have difficulties because usually, experienced monitors are available or in some cases technical staff of the lab who can help and support the participants experiencing technical issues. When learners implement their teletandem interaction from their homes, technical support turns out to be somewhat of an obstacle. Nevertheless, young people today are generally very comfortable with using social networks, communication applications and notebooks, tablets and smartphones and know how to resolve their technical problems up a certain point.

However, it is useful to touch on the subject not only with the participating learners but also with coordinators and participants from the partner universities, as not all countries provide the same level of internet connection speeds, universities are not always in a position to provide the latest hard- and software to guarantee smooth virtual conversations, some labs don't have technicians at hand, and not all learners have the same level of digital literacy.

4.2.4 The Mediator and directiveness

Considering recent articles about advising, coaching or mediation in language learning (Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014; Mynard & Thornton, 2012; Mynard, 2012), we note that directiveness is a current question discussed by practitioners and researchers in the field. Theoretically, most learner support approaches are based on a strictly non-directive approach (Augustin, 2012; Mehlhorn et al, 2005; Spänkuch, 2014, and others), especially the theories that cite Roger's humanistic counselling method. However, practice is showing us that advisors and mediators often use directive statements in their advising/mediation activity. It was observed in different studies that advisees, in fact, ask for suggestions and directions when they are looking for support in an advising session (Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014; Mynard & Thornton, 2012). They know that they are getting support from a language learning specialist and learners often expect them to help solve their learning problems concretely. But the question is that giving suggestions or proposing different possibilities or strategies does not necessarily mean that the advisor/mediator sets the direction for the learner. Having the possibility to choose from and test different suggestions may shorten the way to identify one's own preferences regarding one's own learning process. Depending on the learning context and

on the specific learner support setting, some level of directiveness may be absolutely acceptable.

Analysing the discourse of the mediator throughout the six peer group mediation sessions and some of her diary entries as mediator and researcher of the project, we can see that in the first two mediation sessions, she spoke much more than in the following four sessions. In the researcher diary, we can read sections in which she reflected on and criticised herself for suggesting and commenting too much on the learners' contributions during the mediation sessions. Thus, we can see that she was aware of the question of directiveness in mediation sessions. However, a sensitive and attentive mediator certainly notices how to act in different moments and that sometimes it may be appropriate to intervene and give some direction to the learner, i.e. using one's own opinion "consciously, i.e. in the sense of knowing that one is offering a directive attitude and using it carefully without prescribing it. I agree with Claußen and Deutschmann (2014, p. 104) who defend the position that it is more important to reflect and transparently use the chosen elements of an advising approach employed in a specific context instead of sticking dogmatically to specific procedures and tools prescribed in a theory:

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It seems less important to us to attribute fixed elements to specific labels or to insist dogmatically on specific processes, procedures and tools, what should be rather observed is the reflective and above all transparent dealing with emphasis and adaptation of the used elements depending on the respective direction.²⁰² (Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014: 104, my translation)

Coming back to the data, we will now analyse excerpts of the mediator's discourse when she commented and reacted to contributions of the learners in the discussions about language learning in the PGM. Especially in the first mediation sessions, as already mentioned above, we can observe that the mediator provided more suggestions, presented more strategies or explained certain procedures, as we can see in the next excerpts.

Excerpt 146:

<p>Mediadora: E aí, vocês podem por exemplo falar, olha Chris, né, nesse caso, eu vou procurar em casa e vou, aí talvez você pode até fazer um desenhinho, sabe, com seta, aí, você manda antes da próxima aula na semana</p>	<p>Mediator: And then you can say, for example, look Chris, yes, in this case, I will take a look at home and I will, and then maybe you can draw something, you know, with an arrow, then you'll send it to her before</p>
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²⁰² Original: "Weniger wichtig erscheint uns dabei festschreibende Zuordnungen von Elementen zu bestimmten Labels oder das dogmatische Beharren auf bestimmten Abläufen, Vorgehensweisen und Instrumenten, eher der reflektierte und v.a. transparente Umgang mit den Gewichtungen und Anpassungen der für die jeweilige Ausrichtung verwendeten Elemente ist zu beachten"

para ela e ela pode dar uma olhada e depois vocês discutem, né, o que ela entendeu da sua explicação, essas coisas , tudo né. (A1-1, linhas 316-321)	the next session of the week and she can take a look at it and then you discuss it, right, what she understood of your explanation, those things , everything, right. (A1-1, lines 316-321)
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In this excerpt, the mediator responds to a comment of participant Leandra, in which Leandra asked some questions in relation to the best way of explain the mother language to the teletandem partner. Her peers also shared their opinions in regard to Leandra's questions so the whole part of the conversation was similar to a brainstorming of strategies which could be used to communicate rules of the Portuguese language to the teletandem partners. One participant talked about her personal experiences as Portuguese teacher, Leandra herself talked about her private German lessons she takes outside university and in this sense, strategies are shared.

In this excerpt, the mediator explains step by step what Leandra COULD do. She elaborates the procedure in great detail and mentions every single step. At the same time, she also uses words such as 'maybe', 'for example' or 'all those things' which alleviate a her directive statement to a certain extent. Thus, the mediator tries to make it sound like her own experiences so that it does not seem too directive.

Excerpt 147:

<p>Mediadora: e aí você fala assim: <i>und es gibt ein Museum in Park</i>. Ou, sabe, coisas que você sabe fazer, (...) ou mesmo se for assim: <i>es gibt – Museum – in Park</i>. tipo assim, você vai conseguir, porque realmente ...</p> <p>Lena: ehh então! e aí, eu vi que minha aula (?) não era muito produtiva, não tava me apresentando nada, ne, tipo, e o vocabulário assim porque aí palavras que não conheço eu vou procurar e é isso. Mas só (...) ajudando nada (?)</p> <p>Mediadora: (...) eh. talvez seja uma boa estratégia de você pegar imagens e você coloca só a palavra-chave, para você, embaixo da imagem. essas coisas que você não sabe, né? e eu descobri que alguns verbos, tipo, <i>machen, gehen, sein, haben</i>, você pode expressar muita coisa. em português eu também uso ser, estar – que já é difícil, né – e ter, fazer, colocar. colocar é ótimo! colocar serve quase para tudo. [risos] com esse repertório de faculdade (...) [risos] aí você faz umas expressões – mimimi – até chegar no ponto!</p>	<p>Mediator: and then you say like this: <i>und es gibt ein Museum im Park</i> [and there is a museum in the park]. Or, you know, things you know how to do, (...) or even if it would be like this: <i>es gibt – Museum – im Park</i>. Like this, you will be able to do it, because really...</p> <p>Lena: yeees! And then I saw that my session (?) was not so productive, it didn't give me anything, yeah, like, and the vocabulary because words which I don't know, I will look them down and that's it. But... (...) doesn't help anything (?).</p> <p>Mediator: (...) yes. Maybe it's a good strategy to get some images and you just put the keyword, for yourself, under the picture. The things you don't know, right? I discovered that some verbs like <i>machen</i> [make], <i>gehen</i> [go], <i>sein</i> [be], <i>haben</i> [have] you can express many things. In Portuguese I also use <i>ser, estar</i> – which is already difficult, isn't it – and <i>ter, fazer, colocar</i>. <i>Colocar</i> is wonderful! <i>Colocar</i> serves for nearly everything [laughs] with this faculty (...) [laughs] then you do some expressions – mimimi – until getting to the point.</p>
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<p><u>Lena:</u> aham.</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Não sei se vai funcionar, mas pode tentar.</p> <p><u>Lena:</u> não, não, vou tentar sim. (A1-2, linhas 270-291)</p>	<p><u>Lena:</u> aham.</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> I don't know if it will work, but you can try it.</p> <p><u>Lena:</u> No, no, I'll try! (A1-2, lines 270-291)</p>
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In the first part of this longer excerpt, the mediator once again exhibits a more directive attitude to show that it is possible to express something in the foreign language even when one has a low level in the foreign language, and she wants to encourage Lena to try it. This is probably why she gives such detailed examples for what she could concretely say to her teletandem partner. In the second comment, in response to Lena, the mediator uses the word 'maybe' to admit that there is a possibility that the strategy may not work. Using a new strategy, thus, is a matter of testing and experiencing it. Moreover, she gives a hint about her own language learning to cite a concrete example; in fact, the mediator always seeks to give specific examples so that the learners will understand. In the third comment, the mediator, once again, alleviates by saying "I don't know if it will work, but you can try it". She wants to make it very clear that she is not sure, too, if her tips and suggestions will work. It is observable that there exists a kind of tension in the mediator: on the one hand, she feels obliged or urged to give concrete tips or suggest strategies; on the other hand, she uses words and sentences to alleviate what she said before. Maybe this is also a strategy to prevent frustration on the part of Lena because perhaps, the suggested strategies will not work with her the way they worked with other learners.

Excerpt 148:

<p><u>Maria:</u> (...) e sobre a lição que tive ontem na aula de alemão.</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> Dica! Desculpe, dica para você. Falem sobre propaganda na tevê sobre cerveja no Brasil e na Alemanha – super interessante.</p> <p><u>Maria:</u> É, nós falamos disso. (A1-2, linhas 350-353)</p>	<p><u>Maria:</u> (...) and about the lesson I had yesterday in the German class.</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> A tip! Sorry, but a tip for you. Talk about beer advertising in Brazilian and German TV – very interesting.</p> <p><u>Maria:</u> Yes, we talked about this. (A1-2, lines 350-353)</p>
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In this situation, the mediator interrupts Maria's speech with a comment that disturbs the reflection of Maria. The mediator apologises but, actually, she should know (and, indeed, she is aware of it as the researcher's diary and her reflections suggest) that she should let the learners

talk. Possibly, we can see here how much the mediator feels like a peer and somewhat forgets about her supposedly rather unobtrusive role as mediator. She only intended to share best practices in relation to a conversation topic Maria had with her teletandem partner (about beer) – but she could have done this in another way and certainly not by interrupting a reflection and conversation flow.

In other cases, the mediator also tries to alleviate her directivity by using comments like the following:

Excerpt 149:

<p><u>Mediadora:</u> Pode fazer. EU acho que sim. O que vocês acham? (A2, linhas 121-122)</p> <p>[...]</p> <p><u>Mediadora:</u> então, eh, às vezes surgem essas dúvidas. Então, bom. [tosse] Eu não tenho também, como sempre, não tenho uma coisa que, ô, tem que ser assim... (A2, linhas 186-188)</p>	<p><u>Mediator:</u> You can do it. I think yes. What do you think? (A2, lines 121-122)</p> <p>[...]</p> <p><u>Mediator:</u> Ok, so, sometimes there are these doubts. Ok, good. [clears throat] I also don't have, like always, I don't have anything that is the only way... (A2, lines 186-188)</p>
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In this excerpt, we see how she tries to be less directive through the selection of her words. She emphasises the word 'I', demonstrating that SHE thinks that the learner could do something or not, and she continues by passing the questions on to the peers by asking what they think about the situation. She does not want to be the only one sharing her opinion, because her opinion could be valued more due to her role as mediator and language learning specialist.

In the second comment, we can see a similar procedure: she frankly states that she does not have the only solution for the problem ("I don't have anything that is the only way..."). But do those comments have any effect on the peers? Does it help to tell them that she simply does not have proper solutions or the best strategies? Maybe, she should not say anything at all or not offer any suggestions and experiences? I think that if the overall goal of mediation sessions is to promote learner autonomy and reflection, then it is definitely important to clarify before and also during the mediation what the role of the mediator is and what the role of the learner is. This includes the fact that the mediator (or advisor) cannot (and will not, if even she could) provide perfect solutions for all kinds of possible difficulties and questions a learner brings to the mediation session. However, this does not mean that the mediator should never give any advice or tips – as already mentioned above, if a range of offered possibilities leads the learners to creative solutions for their problems, why should they be deprived of these possibilities?

In some cases, I think (and here I am speaking as author about my own role as mediator), that there was too much directiveness.

Excerpt 150:

<p>Mediadora: E assim, e você também pode falar sobre isso com seu parceiro, pode falar, olha, acho que pra próxima vez eu vou preparar, ou você pode preparar alguma coisa que a gente pode conversar mais sobre o tema, e você pode pedir, né. "Ah, você pode me mandar alguns sites – por exemplo sobre Hamburg? Eu vou dar uma olhada e depois eu já vou te fazer perguntas ou você me pergunta o que..." né? para ... porque pode ser assim, a apresentação pode ser ... (A2, linhas 533-539)</p>	<p>Mediator: And, you can also discuss this with your partners, you can say, look, I think next time I will prepare, or could you prepare something that we could talk more about this topic, and you can ask for this. "Ah, could you send me some websites – for example about Hamburg? I will take a look and then I will ask you some questions or you ask me what.." you know? To... because it can be, the presentation can be... (A2, lines 533-539)</p>
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The mediator's explanation here is very detailed. She says exactly what the students should say, and this is somewhat exaggerated. The mediator should believe in the the students' self-sufficiency. It is important to mention that the learners must talk with their partners, that the negotiation between teletandem partners is an essential aspect for a successful teletandem partnership and that is what the mediator did. Sometimes, the students might not feel comfortable asking their partners for something or agreeing on certain procedures for their sessions, for instance. For example, in Brazil, it is not common to respond with a direct "no" to questions or invitations from an interlocutor. Cultural behaviours such as this cannot be considered a rule but maybe a "behavioural tendency" and they might influence the communication behaviour of a teletandem pair. The mediator should be aware of the cultural behaviours of the two interacting cultures and should address the subject in the peer group mediation sessions.

Excerpt 151:

<p>Mediadora: Sim, alguma coisa, uma imagem, né? Não sei, ou você manda já uma lista com vocabulário antes, para ela já dar, e faz mesmo, tipo, <i>Stuhl</i> – cadeira, mesa, porque as vezes é mais fácil assim, né. Ou você coloca imagens, tipo né, e coloca a palavra talvez assim também. [mostra algo num papel] Né, a palavra em português ao lado. Para ela já se preparar um pouco, né. E depois vocês podem fazer atividades, talvez ... eu sei que tem ... um desenho, mas não sei se tenho no meu computador, se você me escrever uma mensagem no email, eu posso</p>	<p>Mediator: Yes, something, a picture, right? I don't know, or you send a list with vocabulary beforehand so that she can take, and do it like this, like <i>Stuhl</i> – chair, table, because sometimes this is just easier, isn't it? Or you put some images, like, and you put a word maybe like this [shows something on a paper]. The word in Portuguese next to it. So that she can prepare herself a little bit. And then you can do some exercises, perhaps... I know that there is... a drawing, but I don't know if I still have it on my computer, if you send me an e-mail, I can look for it. Because, there are two</p>
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procurar se tenho. Porque, tipo, são dois quartos, um quarto é bem organizado e o outro totalmente bagunçado, né. Aí você fala, tipo, ao lado da cadeira tem uma lâmpada... por exemplo, né. [parte incompreensível] (A2, linhas 628-639)	rooms, one room is organized and the other one totally untidy. Then you say, like, next to the chair is a lamp... for example, right. [part incomprehensible] (A2, lines 628-639)
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This case is very similar to excerpt 150, where the mediator delivers a very detailed explanation of how to work with a special subject in the teletandem session. Maybe she did not need to explain it in such detail and let the learners imagine more. She could have asked: what do you think you could do? And she could have let the participants create ideas, hypotheses; this would have stimulated reflection much more. Also, group reflection is more productive because many ideas shared in a brainstorming come together and can have a larger educational impact on the other peers.

It is interesting that the mediator is offering didactic material such as drawings (with which she works in her German classes). She combines experiences from her traditional classroom teaching as German teacher with possible activities for the teletandem context. On the other hand, it is important to articulate contexts in which participants can look for materials and strategies themselves. They should, at least, make an attempt to think about those things on their own in the beginning since support can be provided by the mediator at any time. Maybe a resource of materials could be established, where the tandem learners can get inspiration. Such pools already exist, for example, the materials produced within the Seagull tandem project of University of Greifswald²⁰³.

Excerpt 152:

Mediadora: Assim, uma ...dica, talvez. Porque eu tive o mesmo problema, muitas vezes. Ehm... especialmente antes de uma prova de português, na verdade... bom... eu sempre queria me concen... sabe, já preparar minha cabeça pra, assim, melhor já ficar com português na cabeça. Nada de espanhol, nada de outra língua. Aí, ou eu li textos em português, antes, tipo, meia hora, peguei qualquer coisa, na verdade. Só pra... "os dados por mim gerados" sabe, pra ver alguma coisa de português, sabe, pra já tipo, klkl, ligar ... o português, né? Ou eu ouvia música antes, muitas vezes eu ouvi, tipo, no carro indo pra faculdade, eu coloquei alguma coisa em	Mediator: Well, a... tip, maybe. Because I had the same problems many times. Ahm... especially before a Portuguese exam, for instance... well... I always wanted to concen... you know, prepare my head already for, better to get some Portuguese in my head. Not Spanish and no other language. So then I read some texts in Portuguese, beforehand, like, half an hour before, I read something aleatory, actually. Just to... "data generated by myself", you know, just to see something in Portuguese, you know, to, klkl, start... the Portuguese, yeah? Or I listened to some music before, many times I listened to music, like, in the car going to university, I put anything in
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²⁰³ Seagull-tandem.eu/material Available in different languages, for German there are materials from level A1 to B2.

português, né, música brasileira, só pra ouvir o som, pra... (A6, linhas 280-290)	Portuguese, Brazilian music, just to hear the sound of it, to... (A6, lines 280-290)
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Once again, in this excerpt, the mediator uses words like „maybe“ to lessen the intensity of her comments. She says that it is only a tip which *can* be used, if one wants to do so. Once again, she wants to appear less dominant and makes use of these linguistic devices to soften her directiveness. Moreover, she forges a bridge to a ‘personal’ problem: the way she mentally prepared for an exam in Portuguese because it has always helped her to listen or to read to Portuguese texts or music in order to submerge myself in the language. Pointing out personal difficulties in language learning is one of her justifications of giving this kind of tips. As one or another strategy has helped herself, these strategies may also help other learners.

The last excerpts of this category are taken from the researcher and mediator diary (which were written in German²⁰⁴) and show how the mediator reflected on her directiveness during the data collection and the implementation of the peer group mediation sessions.

Excerpt 153:

<p>“Was interessant dabei ist [beim 2. Peergruppentreffen], dass sich die 3 mit ihren Fragen direkt an mich wenden und eine Lösung und gute Ratschläge von mir erwarten. So typisch Lehrer-Schüler. ☺“ (RD 1, p.47, 10.10.2010)</p> <p>“Ich bin gerade bei der Transkription von GT3, wo ich mit einem fast 8minütigen Monolog beginne. Ok, das hatte auch seinen Sinn, weil ich generell etwas über Lerntagebücher sagen wollte, aber ich habe das Gefühl, dass ich VIEL zu belehrend war! Ich hätte das anders angehen sollen! Ich weiß aber auch, dass ich wusste, wie wenig Zeit mir noch bleibt im Semester + dass ich keine Zeit mehr verlieren konnte.“ (RD1, p. 165, 25.01.2011)</p>	<p>“What is interesting [at the second peer group mediation session] is that the three participants turned directly to me with their questions and expected solutions and advice from me. Typical teacher-student ☺.” (RD 1, p.47, 10/10/2010)</p> <p>“I am momentarily at the transcription of group meeting 3 which I started with a nearly 8 min monologue. Ok, there was some sense in it, because I wanted to say something general about the learning diaries, but I had the feeling that I was TOO instructive! I should have done this differently! But I also know that I knew that there was just little time left in the semester and that I couldn’t lose more time.” (RD1, p.165, 25/01/2011)</p>
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In this part, we actually see a blend of two roles, the mediator and the researcher. Nevertheless, we can follow her reflection in these two excerpts. The mediator and researcher perceives that she has talked too much in some situations in the peer group mediation sessions,

²⁰⁴ Not all diary entries were written after listening to the recorded mediation sessions. The second entry in the following excerpt (153) was done after having listened to a few of the recorded mediation sessions.

that she might have been too instructive and that this might not have been productive at all for the learners.

She also thinks that the students sometimes turn to her directly and want to hear concrete suggestions about what they should do, as was explained already at the beginning of this section.

This type of reflection on her actions during the mediation sessions is important as it may lead to changes in the mediator's behaviour in future sessions. This is why different researchers in the field strongly suggest introductory trainings for new mediators and further training for experienced mediators in order to learn or continue how to reflect on one's own practice by analysing audio recordings of mediation or advising sessions (Kleppin, 2003; Kodate & Foale, 2012; Toth & Marthin, 2014).

4.2.5 Answering Research Question 2

What is the role of the mediator? How do they conduct and inform the peer group mediation sessions for teletandem?

The second research question of this study on peer group mediation in teletandem addresses the mediator's perspective in the PGM and seeks to outline the role of the mediator in this type of learner support setting. Of course, the tentative of delineating a role of a mediator is based on data of only one mediator. Thus, my proposal of a role of a mediator for PGM sessions can just be considered as a first version which may be developed further by future studies.

The following figure aims to synthesise the findings about the mediator which data suggested in the four categories regarding the mediator.

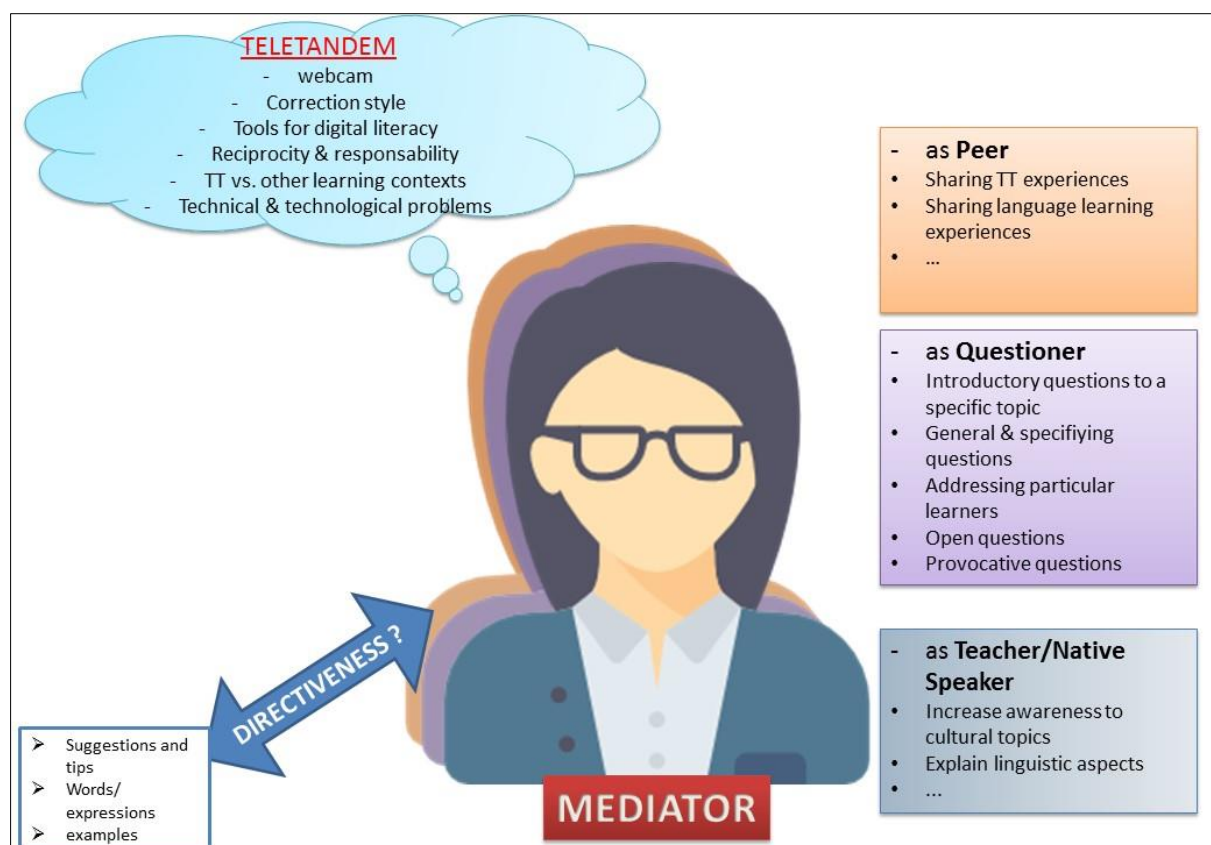


Figure 12. Synthesis of the findings regarding the second research question.

The centre of the figure shows the mediator. To her right we see her shadows which symbolise the different roles the mediator may take on in the PGM sessions. Above the mediator are her reflections about language learning in teletandem which she shares during the PGM, and on the left side is the relation to directiveness. Directiveness is not bound to the mediator as it is the variable which is most changeable (depending on the mediator, the mediation context and the participants, the directiveness may be stronger or weaker).

The main objective of the learner support offered by the mediator during the German-Portuguese teletandem was to promote reflection and discussion on foreign language learning in telecollaboration projects. Her focuses were on the following themes: (a) teletandem as a learning context, (b) German as foreign language, (c) Portuguese as foreign language, (d) reciprocity, (e) learner autonomy and (f) individual learning processes. Reflection and discussion on these matters were initiated in different ways, as shown in the data.

First, she planned thematic questions and main topics to guide the peer group mediation sessions. Next, she left the agenda of these reflections and discussions open to allow learners' freedom to choose the topics that they wanted to discuss and that they felt were important to them.

Regarding the roles of the mediator, there is to say that there are probably more than these three roles suggested by the data. In the category *The mediator as peer*, it is possible to identify the substantial and constant role that a mediator may play as a peer group mediator. In specific situations, for example when the mediator shared experiences of learning in teletandem with the other participants (excerpt 117), the mediator was accepted as a peer (excerpt 123). The mediator revealed herself as part of the community of teletandem practitioners, even with a different pool of experiences. Thus, we can say that the mediator in the role of a peer shared her experiences within the teletandem context, with her learning of foreign languages (such as phonetics, corrections styles, amongst others) but was seen as a more experienced peer (see excerpts 118, 123).

When the mediator assumed other roles, she usually wanted to stimulate reflection on learning in different contexts – in particular to compare it with the teletandem context. When she entered the role of the native speaker of German or a teacher, for instance, she shared experiences from another perspective from different teaching and learning contexts. The learners should reflect on different learning contexts in order to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of the various contexts, and to be better equipped to act appropriately in the respective contexts (see excerpts 119, 124).

In relation to the category *The mediator as questioner*, different types of questions could be observed that were posed by the mediator to promote reflection on the learning process and related topics. The mediator used formal, prepared questions to guide discussion towards a specific topic, as can be seen in excerpt 125. In this case, the mediator had prepared four questions around the topic ‘corrections in teletandem sessions’ in order to guide the group reflection to this main topic.

On other moments of the PGM, the mediator also used more probing questions to specifically direct reflection on a certain topic. The discussion turned to the use of music in teletandem sessions and the mediator used this interesting turn in the discussion to deepen reflection on this aspect, as can be seen in excerpt 126 (“... talking quickly about this example [...] How could we choose a song? What do you think is more important in first place?” A1-1, lines 189-191).

She also used more personal questions, which were usually directed at a specific participant of the study in order to provoke certain reactions from the participant. In excerpt 128, there is an example of how the mediator addresses participant Maria in order to get specific information of her teletandem case: “Maria, you had a session today? Hadn’t you?” (excerpt 128).

General, evaluative questions about the telecollaboration project were also part of the repertoire (excerpts 137, 138 – such as “Are you satisfied with your partners?”) as well as more provocative questions which were left open in order to give the participants the chance to reflect more deeply on affirmations they had made before (see excerpt 135 for an example).

On other occasions, closed questions were formulated (i.e. triggering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses), especially in the questionnaires²⁰⁵, which entailed that the mediator inadvertently had restricted the possible range of answers. Open questions allow room for new input, new ideas and thus, more interaction, reflection and discussion. The mediator should therefore pay attention to formulating open questions in order to allow discussions to evolve.

Concerning the category *The Mediator’s reflections in regard to teletandem*, data suggests that by frequently initiating reflection on the specific learning context of teletandem, the theme was of great importance to the mediator. The teletandem context is a virtual learning environment of intercultural contact (Telles, 2015a); learners use a computer, the internet and communication software to talk to each other and can view and speak to each other via webcam, headphones, loudspeakers and a microphone. Some learners had not experienced this before, making it important to consider levels of digital literacy and ways in which the mediator could support the learners by helping them to familiarise themselves with information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to learn foreign languages. In the specific case of this teletandem project, this meant (a) knowing how to use the communication software, (b) how to record teletandem sessions and (c) being able to sufficiently use the internet with its many resources such as texts, videos, music, programmes, etc. The mediator specifically highlighted the importance of the webcam in teletandem, which distinguishes teletandem from other forms of electronic tandems (such as chat or email), and demonstrated useful programs such as Talk&Write, which can be used as part of teletandem sessions to support language learning activities (such as note-taking of vocabulary input) that are developed by the tandem partners (see excerpts 139, 141).

Another peculiar aspect for the (tele)tandem context is the correction style, as two learners help each other with the learning of the respective native or proficient language of the partner. The mediator emphasised the fact that the negotiation of correction styles between the teletandem partners is very important in order to benefit and learn more from the native partner (excerpt 140).

Considering the specific case of this study, in which the learners on both sides were students of language courses at university, with the Brazilian students in teacher education whilst the

²⁰⁵ See appendix D

German students undertook translation training, we expect that the learners already have a certain awareness of foreign language learning as they study and work intensively with two or more languages during their studies at university. However, a teletandem partnership can consist of learners with completely different backgrounds such as engineering students, housewives or recently-settled immigrants, for example. Especially with regards to learners who are not studying or working with languages as their main occupation, mediators have an important role to initiate reflection, awareness and eventually provide clarification or an explanation of corrections forms and styles.

Whilst the mediator believed in all three main principles of tandem learning (autonomy, reciprocity and the separation of languages), the principles of autonomy and reciprocity constitute the basis of the mediation sessions. One of the central aims of mediation sessions is to support and promote autonomous language learning. As reciprocity and responsibility are crucial factors for balance and symmetry in the teletandem partnership as well, the mediator drew attention, explicitly or implicitly, to both principles during mediation sessions. Reciprocity implies that both learners feel satisfied regarding the achievement of their learning objectives and that they benefit equally from their learning in tandem. They feel that their needs are taken seriously and addressed by the partner, which, in turn, implies an investment of responsibility from both partners in the teletandem partnership (see excerpts 142, 143).

However, as can be seen in the data, learners occasionally do not perceive this reciprocal relationship, usually due to the fact that they believe that they are investing more time or effort than the partner (the case of Leandra and her teletandem partner, excerpt 74, 75). The mediator is an important figure as he/she can initially support the learner who addresses this with the mediator by discussing negotiation strategies, for example. Secondly, the mediator can also try to intervene directly in the partnership as long as he/she is directly involved in the teletandem project. This intervention could be implemented by contacting the other coordinator or by emailing both teletandem partners trying to initiate a negotiation between them, for instance. However, this course of action should only be followed when the partners are not able to communicate and negotiate between themselves independently.

Commonly recurring technical problems of teletandem projects are sometimes addressed by the mediator as well (see excerpt 145). As the teletandem sessions rely entirely on the perfect functioning of the IT structure, even small technical problems which affect the power supply, computers or the internet connection can significantly interfere with the flow of a teletandem session. Technical problems, thus, can lead to frustration and demotivation on the side of the learners, but can also have an impact on the project coordinators. Therefore, it is advisable to

always check the IT structure first and secure the assistance of IT colleagues (e.g. technical staff of universities, for instance) and, secondly, to raise awareness of the fact that technical problems may occur whilst demonstrating viable troubleshooting steps, so that issues do not come as a surprise to the participants.

With the category *The mediator and directiveness*, we can confirm recent findings of other authors (Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014; Mynard, 2012). Several authors report that in handbooks, early scientific papers and workshops for advisor training, for example, directiveness is usually treated with a negative connotation and mediators are held to avoid any kind of directiveness in advising/mediation sessions. However, the practice of mediators and advisors show the opposite (Claußen & Deutschmann, 2014; Mynard, 2012, and this study). In this study, the mediator showed directive attitudes, usually by giving concrete advice and suggestions in relation to didactic procedures and attitudes regarding the teletandem partner for the teletandem sessions (excerpts 146 and 150, for example).

The researcher's diary also demonstrates that she was conscious of her directiveness (excerpt 153) and tried to control it by a variety of techniques such as holding back in discussions, non-committal lexical choices ('maybe', 'I don't know', etc.), and turn-taking (giving the turn back to the peers) (see excerpts 147, 152). On the other hand, the mediator had also detected a certain expectation from the learners that they would receive directive comments, suggestions or tips from the mediator herself ("Clara, what would you do?").

This aligns with the findings of other studies such as those undertaken by Carter (2001) and Mynard and Thornton (2012) and the affirmations of Claußen and Deutschmann (2014), which show that, depending on the context, the target group and the situation, it is up to the situationally-aware and attentive mediator to choose the level of directiveness.

In this last section of the second part of data analysis, the second research question was answered. By analysing the mediator's speech during the PGM sessions and also considering parts of her researcher's diary, I attempted to outline the role and the actions of the mediator in PGM sessions. Data suggests that the role of the mediator actually consists of various different layers such as 'the peer', 'the teacher', 'the native speaker', and 'the questioner'. Even more roles are imaginable, although data did not show them in this particular study.

The mediator of this study was mainly concerned with promoting reflection on language learning in teletandem, i.e. specific aspects of this learning context such as autonomous learning (with discussions about learning needs, learning goals, evaluation, etc.), reciprocity, correction styles, technical and technological problems, amongst others. Cultural issues were seldom discussed in the PGM, as could be seen in the data. One of the reasons certainly is that the

mediator did not focus on cultural issues for her research and, therefore, did not promote specific reflection on culture during the mediation sessions. In Funo's study (2015), we can see that other mediators have other research foci and, therefore, give their mediation sessions another emphasis. In any case, it is advisable for mediators to consider all these different aspects around foreign language learning (cultural issues, intercultural dialogue, linguistic aspects, learning process, amongst others) and promote reflection on each of these aspects during the mediation sessions.

In the next section, the third research question will be answered followed by the final considerations about this work.

4.3 Part 3: Research question 3 – Characteristics of peer group mediation sessions

What are the characteristics of a peer group mediation setting?

With regard to this third, more general research question, I intend to not only draw on the empirical data but also to examine certain parts of section 2.9 which refer to the mediation sessions which have been taking place at UNESP since 2012. This is in addition to the study of other works by Salomão (2008), Cavalari & Aranha (2014), and Funo (2015) in order to complement their first descriptions of the initial mediation sessions in the *Teletandem Brasil* project.

Using the findings of the data analysis from the first and second research questions, details of the descriptions of section 2.9 and information of table 7 (Criteria grid for forms of learner support in teletandem, p. 143), the below list of characteristics of a peer group mediation setting in teletandem learning contexts could be compiled.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PEER GROUP MEDIATION SESSIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING IN TELECOLLABORATION	
Theoretical basis	Vygotsky's concepts of 'mediation', 'zone of proximal development' and 'scaffolding' (1962, 1978)
Main objective	Promote reflection on intercultural and language learning
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reflect on learning strategies and tactics- Reflect on evaluation of learning process- Reflect on autonomy, reciprocity and language use- Exchange of ideas, difficulties, questions and experiences
Implementation	Group of learners from one side of the teletandem project [a virtual joint PGM with both groups would be possible]
Frequency	Biweekly, weekly meetings (depending on teletandem setting)
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mediator's notes- Learner biographies- Learner diaries- Videos of teletandem sessions- Questionnaires

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online platforms for discussion/enquiries - [other tools such as transcripts of teletandem interactions are possible]
Language	Native language of participants; [other options are possible such as the L2 used in TT sessions]
Topics for discussion and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning process (needs, goals, ways, methods, strategies, evaluation) - Correction styles - Autonomy and reciprocity - Emotions and feelings - Preparation of TT sessions - Relation with TT partner - Culture (inter-/transculturality)
Mediator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One mediator (maybe two, a mediator and an assistant) - Has different roles (peer, teacher, native speaker, questioner,...) - Varying use of directiveness

Table 21. Characteristics of peer group mediation sessions for language learning in telecollaboration

Compiling the characteristics of peer group mediation sessions in the language learning context teletandem, we initiate the list with the theoretical basis. Vygotsky's concepts of mediation, zone of proximal development and scaffolding (as described in section 2.2.2) build the basis and give the name of this type of learner support. The main objective of PGM is the promotion of reflection on issues concerning intercultural and language learning as they are the main pillars of the learning context teletandem. More specific objectives of this type of learner support are the reflection on learning strategies and tactics, on evaluation of the learning process, on the principles of tandem learning (autonomy, reciprocity and language use) and especially the exchange of ideas, difficulties, questions and experiences between the participating peers.

PGM are usually realised face-to-face with only one group of learners within the teletandem project, i.e. with the learners of one institution such as the Brazilian students of German in this study. However, this does not hinder a realisation of a virtual PGM in which the learner groups of both sides (Germany and Brazil, for example) meet with their mediators at a videoconference. The frequency of the PGM usually vary depending on the teletandem setting. If PGM is realised directly after group interactions, the frequency of the PGM depends on the

frequency of the teletandem group interaction. In practice, teletandem interactions are carried out weekly. In TT settings with individual teletandem sessions (the learners meet on days of their choice), a longer period between the PGM might be more productive. From practice we know that individual TT sessions are more vulnerable to be postponed and cancelled. In this case, biweekly PGM might be a practical solution to adequately accompany the learners with a certain frequency.

The use of different tools in PGM is possible. Mediator's notes and some online platforms for asynchronous discussion between the peers and mediator and for information-giving are the tools which are mostly used. Other options are learner biographies, learner diaries, questionnaires and videos or transcripts of recorded teletandem sessions in order to discuss examples of practice.

Concerning the use of language for discussion and reflection in the PGM, there are also different approaches (Funó, 2015). In this study, the mediator opted for the native language of the peers for two reasons: first, the mediator thought that reflection on the own learning process is always easier in one's native language and secondly, the linguistic competencies of the participants of this study were still too low (A1-A2) to expect advanced discussion or reflection in German.

Topics for discussion in this type of learner support can vary depending on the mediator. However, these topics are usually addressed in PGM: the learning process (with its needs, goals, ways, methods, strategies, evaluation), correction styles, autonomy and reciprocity, emotions and feelings, preparation of teletandem sessions, the relation with the teletandem partner and different cultural aspects, specifically inter- or transcultural questions regarding the two cultures in the teletandem.

Usually, one mediator is accompanying one group of PGM. In some cases, it is also possible that students participate as assistant mediators or tutors to learn from the mediator and the mediation sessions and to assist the mediator with several tasks including note taking or preparing of video excerpts. As already described in detail in section 4.2.5, answering the second research question, the mediator has different roles throughout the mediation process and can be more or less directive.

The compilation of the characteristics of peer group mediation session emerged through the description of some peer group mediation sessions in the *Teletandem Brasil* project (such as Elstermann et al., 2015; Elstermann, 2014b; Funó, 2015) and through the analysis of the data of this study. First of all, this list does not claim to be complete and finished. Other studies might add more characteristics and of course, as already mentioned, each PGM is a different

context with different participants and mediators which makes the whole learner support context variable. Secondly, the characteristics are derived directly from the practice of such mediation session in teletandem. Nevertheless, I think that these findings can also be useful for other telecollaboration projects, or at least have a productive impact on other projects and on new research interests in relation to telecollaboration and learner support.

5 Final comments and future perspectives

This dissertation on learner support in telecollaboration projects aimed at exploring peer group mediation sessions which are used as learner support in teletandem learning contexts. To date, peer group mediation was object of only a few scientific studies (Funo, 2015; Helmling, 2001; Kao, 2012; Wadl, 2011). However, this form of learner support is increasingly used in telecollaboration projects such as the *Teletandem Brasil* project. As long-time mediators in several teletandem projects, my colleagues and I felt that the time had come for a deeper understanding and a conceptualisation of peer group mediation sessions wherefore the idea for this study originated.

For my research project, I implemented peer group mediation (attended voluntarily by Brazilian learners of German) in addition to individual Portuguese-German teletandem sessions. In regular meetings the participants and I, as mediator, talked about aspects relating to teletandem, foreign language learning, and learner autonomy which either the participants or myself deemed important or necessary for reflection. The following research questions guided the study:

- ✓ Which impressions, beliefs, and questions regarding their language learning and learning in teletandem are expressed by learners in the peer group mediation sessions?
- ✓ What is the role of the mediator? How do they conduct and inform the peer group mediation sessions for teletandem?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of a peer group mediation setting?

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 and 2 provided a discussion of relevant theories in regards to the study. Chapter 1 described the teletandem learning context. It examined definitions of tandem learning and gave a brief description of the history of tandem learning and the different existing forms of tandem focusing particularly on the most recent form of tandem: teletandem (Telles, 2006, 2009).

In chapter 2, I presented a detailed overview of learner support in language learning. As this study has a strong cross-cultural character²⁰⁶, concepts of specific learner support settings from different countries and cultures were compared and discussed. In addition to this, characteristics of different learner support settings such as individual advising sessions or peer group mediation sessions were presented as well as strategies and techniques of the

²⁰⁶ See my explanations in the introduction of this dissertation.

advisor/mediator. At the end of the chapter, the focus was placed on learner support in relation to tandem projects in order to merge the two main subjects which built the basis of this study.

In chapter 3, I described and discussed the methodological design of the study. A discussion about qualitative research methods was followed by a description of research context, participants, and instruments, and data analysis approach and procedures.

In chapter 4, I presented, analysed and discussed the qualitative data. This chapter was divided into three parts. The first section focused on the perspective of the learner, and the second on the perspective of the mediator. The first two research questions were answered after part 1 and 2, respectively. The third section answers the third research question and presented a proposal of characteristics for peer group mediation sessions.

Finally, in this last part of the dissertation, the findings of the study and its limitations will be summarised. It then will discuss pedagogic implications for teacher education, telecollaboration projects and learner support. In addition, potential focal points for future research will be proposed

Main findings and implications for teletandem practice, learner support and teacher education

First of all, the learners' perspective of their language learning in teletandem was investigated. The findings of data analysis showed that the learners bring many different ideas, concerns, and questions regarding their teletandem interactions for reflection and discussion into the peer group mediation sessions. Mediators should be aware of this fact, be open to the learners' impressions and concerns regarding their teletandem experiences and use their impulses to deepen reflection.

Different aspects in relation to individual learning processes were important, especially the use of cognitive and sociocultural-interactive tactics and strategies (Oxford, 2011). Learning objectives were also a major topic of discussion and it could be seen that the definition of learning objectives, and especially their purpose, were mostly unknown among the learners. This shows that different aspects around the learning process are important to the learners even if they are not always aware of all the aspects regarding their learning processes. Therefore, mediation sessions should promote reflection on these topics.

Another topic which was widely discussed was the preparation of teletandem sessions including finding a topic for future teletandem sessions, selection of learning materials and questions about how to explain certain linguistic and cultural content to the teletandem partners. It was found that the preparation of teletandem sessions made a difference for the learning

outcomes of the participants of this study, especially the ones with lower L2 competency. The main objective of the teletandem sessions was the free and spontaneous communication with a native speaker for nearly all participants of this study and they usually chose culture related topics for their interactions.

Data analysis also suggested that the learner support given to the participants of this study contributed to their staying power in the teletandem project and that the joint reflection and discussion with the peers and the mediator helped them overcome initial difficulties; it also motivated them. However, based on the data and personal experience, learners have little information about possibilities of learner support or are not aware of the advantages learner support has. This is why learner support should be disseminated more widely among students and even within the educational institution in order to reach a larger public and make learner support more popular. The introduction in the teletandem context is very important, especially for learners with little or no experience in this specific telecollaborative context and in autonomous learning in general.

The second perspective of this study was placed on the mediator. The data showed that the mediator conducted the peer group mediation sessions in two different ways. On the one hand, she had prepared general topics for some of the PGM sessions in order to promote reflection on language learning related topics she thought were important to discuss. On the other hand, the mediator reserved slots (and two times entire PGM sessions) for open discussions in which the participants had the liberty to discuss what they wanted. Nevertheless, we could see that she always sought to guide the PGM sessions around topics related to the teletandem context and language learning: technological issues and tools for digital literacy, correction styles, reciprocity and responsibility in learning, learning process and learning goals, to name a few.

During the PGM, we could see that the mediator slipped into several roles. Sometimes, she shared her experiences as a practitioner of teletandem and, in this aspect, could be seen as a (more experienced) peer. In other moments, she explained topics in the role of a German teacher, when linguistic issues arose, for example. She also assumed the role of the native speaker of German, especially when she talked about aspects of the German culture. On other occasions, she acted as ‘questioner’ and stimulated reflection and discussion in the group with a great variety of questions.

Another aspect of the mediator’s perspective is the case of directiveness in the actions of the mediator. The mediator aimed to be non-directive during the PGM as she had learned from her theoretical readings about advising before she had started the study. Nevertheless, data shows (and the mediator herself registered the fact in her diary) that she had quite directive

moments in which she clearly suggested the participants how to act in or how to plan their teletandem sessions. As the participants of this study occasionally had even asked for clear instructions and suggestions and clearly appreciated the help, this study corroborates affirmations of other authors such as Claußen and Deutschmann (2014) and Mynard and Thornton (2012), who state that depending on the context, the target group, and the situation, it is up to the situationally aware and attentive mediator to choose the level of directiveness.

Furthermore, there is to consider that the concept of (non-)directiveness is actually borrowed from the Rogerian based concept of advising in language learning. Taking a look at Vygotsky's mediation concept, we do not find any hints for the idea that the mediating person should interfere as little as possible in the mediation process. On the contrary, Vygotsky claims that children (and I think we can expand this to learners in general) internalise and transform the help they receive from others (mediators or peers, as it is the case of mediation and even the teletandem context) and use what they have learned independently in subsequent problem-solving situations (see section 2.2.2).²⁰⁷ Thus, we could hypothesise that initial help and suggestions made by the mediator may even contribute to a quicker development of autonomous actions – maybe this idea could become object of a future study.

In relation to the third part of data analysis, regarding the characteristics of peer group mediation sessions, there is to say that PGM seems to be appropriate for telecollaboration projects with several groups in different countries as it is the case of institutionally- integrated teletandem (TTii, Cavalari & Aranha, 2014) in the *Teletandem Brasil* project, for instance. However, these group meetings also have advantages for individual teletandem interactions: individual learners who work independently with a teletandem partner meet with peers to exchange their experiences and reflect jointly on their learning processes. Especially given the fact that individual advising settings are much more time- consuming for advisors/mediators, PGM learner support offered for language learners who work in independent or free teletandems could be a good alternative for the offering institution.

In the realm of the *Teletandem Brasil* research project, this study contributes to the first deeper understanding of the peer group mediation sessions which practically started already a

²⁰⁷ Combining two distinct theories for learner support in this study might, of course, be criticised. In fact, several times throughout the realisation of this study, my supervisors mentioned the problems which could arise when considering both theories. Nevertheless, I have been influenced by both theories and throughout my practice as mediator in this study (and other mediation situations in other projects) I based my actions on both. The idea of mediating and giving support (scaffolding) during mediation clearly draws upon Vygotskian ideas, even if I tried to be as little directive as possible. I think that the knowledge of the concept of directiveness helped to not guide and suggest too much during mediation sessions. My understanding of the idea of scaffolding is exactly the one of knowing how to 'dose' the help we give as mediators. Furthermore, some practical conversational techniques borrowed from advising concepts helped me guide the reflection and discussion in the mediation sessions. Under these circumstances, I think it is possible to use elements of several learner support theories.

years ago but to date had only two studies accompanying the work of the mediators (Funo, 2015 and this dissertation). This study discussed important terms and concepts in the field of advising, coaching and mediation for language learning in the theoretical chapters which contribute to a better understanding of different concepts of the different participating countries and cultures. Especially in Europe, we can find many contributions to advising and coaching in language learning which are based on Rogers' humanistic counselling approach whereas the Brazilian mediation in language learning – as the term already suggests – is grounded on the Vygotskian principle of mediation and zone of proximal development. Having clarified these differences, dialogue between project coordinators and mediators around the world regarding learner support in teletandem may be facilitated. In addition, I set out to provide a first criteria grid organising the different forms of learner support in teletandem projects which might help going in the direction of a conceptualisation of these different forms of learner support in this specific Teletandem project.

Regarding the area of learner support in language learning, I wanted to find out more about peer group mediation sessions in general, contributing for a first conceptualisation which can be further tested and modified. Also I wanted to gain greater insights into the role of the mediator in this setting: what are his/her tasks and actions? Knowing more about the learners will also help to improve mediation sessions. Of course, every group and every learner is different but through different studies about learners in the same context (higher education, Brazilian university, etc.), it is possible to establish main characteristics which may be repeatedly found and so mediators and coordinators might be better prepared for this kind of learners and their experiences and expectations. This study wanted to make a major contribution for further discussion and research especially in the relatively new area of learner support in the Brazilian academic context of Applied Linguistics. Not only with the empirical study, but also with the compilation of information about learner support in general.

In the area of teacher education in Brazil, as participants of this study were all in teacher education, this study wants to contribute how different learner support settings are possible to implement not only in telecollaborative projects such as teletandem but also in the normal classroom context or different autonomous learning contexts. Teachers-in-training should be trained in these alternative support settings so that they are able to use and implement support for autonomous learning in their future schools and other educational institutions. Teachers might work as mediators in the future, so this study – in a modified version – might become a kind of 'Practical Guide for Mediators' in order to give practical help for the work in learner support settings.

In the area of telecollaboration, this work contributes in the sense of one model of learner support for learners who work in telecollaboration projects. There are many works on telecollaboration projects but a lot of them are not talking about specific learner support and this study might give ideas for future TC projects in order to implement learner support in their learning activities.

Limitations of the study

Over the course of the past several years and the duration of this PhD research study (just as long), I saw myself confronted with various difficulties and problems which revealed a number of limitations of this study. An insufficient preparation of the questionnaires used in this study, for example, led to a limited result concerning the answers of the questionnaire. As the questionnaires were not the main source of the data, this slip fortunately did not have a large effect on general findings and the results were still usable to triangulate with other data (see chapter 3, Methodology).

Concerning the group of participants, there is to mention that I only collected data of the Brazilian side, i.e. all data about the learners has only been sourced from Brazilian learners. Apart from emails from the German students, there was no data collection of the German teletandem and learner support context. It would have been interesting to compare the two groups in relation to the selected categories.

Regarding the selected method, I discovered during the analysis process that content analysis with the Grounded Theory has its limitations. The Grounded Theory with its coding and selection of categories represents a more stable side of the data as it shows the recurring topics present in the data. However, another very interesting and substantial aspect is the actual interaction between the peers and between the peers and the mediator which was not examined in this work. This aspect would have been better presented using conversation or discourse analysis, for instance.

Last but not least, I am conscious about the fact that the results of this study in this learning context may not be transferred to other learning contexts as people, behaviours and contextual backgrounds vary from situation to situation. Even a study with the same preconditions and the same participants would probably result in different findings because the participants themselves would have changed: their learning habits, their linguistic competences, etc. Nevertheless, the results found here shed light on practices and reflections that may occur in peer group mediation settings in teletandem learning contexts, in relation to teletandem learners as well as in relation to mediators in those learning contexts.

The most important finding I have made during this confrontation with difficulties and limitations within this study is probably the growth as language learner, mediator, and especially as researcher. Confronting oneself with data collection problems and analysis complications increases reflection on theoretical and methodological aspects and lets one learn and grow with the mistakes made before. I certainly feel a lot better prepared for my next research project.

In regards to my thoughts on transculturality in the introduction of this dissertation, I would like to comment, now that I am closing this dissertation, that this transcultural work in regards to theories, methodology, research participants, learning contexts and scientific contexts made this work (regarding the process and the result) extremely interesting. Furthermore, it made me, personally, much more sensitive to intercultural, cross-cultural, and transcultural aspects, especially in academia, even if I occasionally found myself overwhelmed by the challenges, which emerged from cultural clashes, which I had not anticipated at the beginning of the research study.

Future perspectives

First of all, I would like to indicate some considerations for practice. The *Teletandem Brasil* project is steadily growing – so is the importance of learner support. However, practitioners and researchers within the project have noticed the lack of qualified mediators. I hope that this study can contribute important aspects in relation to learner support in teletandem and that with the help of the findings, a mediator training can be built in the near future. First successful tentatives of mediator workshops already took place (Funo & Elstermann, 2012), but should be further developed and implemented regularly. Also, regular meetings between mediators in which their practice can be discussed could be an improvement of ongoing mediator activities. Other institutions already promote advisor training (such as *Ruhr Universität Bochum*, Kanda University of International Studies, and others, see section 2.8). Certainly, the type, circumstances and language learning projects of each institution must be taken in account when preparing a mediator training, but examples and experiences from other institutions can serve as a model and inspiration to outline one's own mediator training. Audio recordings and transcripts of mediation sessions, and new literature on advising and mediation practice could be used in these mediator trainings.

Even if the research and the literature about learner support in language learning continues to grow, as can be seen particularly in recent years²⁰⁸, there are still areas in the field of learner support which need further in-depth research in order to be able to improve learner support for language learners.

Firstly, it would be interesting to better understand the reasons as to why learners actually meet with a learning advisor/mediator (when their participation is voluntary), and conversely, why they do not take up these offers or fail to avail of further learner support once they have started. When learners make use of learner support, what are their individual objectives? This aspect is not bound to a specific type of learner support but can be explored through different settings.

Two questions which emerged from the study in this dissertation might be worth exploring. During the first analysis of the main data, it was interesting to see that many of the participants were worried about *how to teach their native language* (Portuguese) to their German teletandem partners. The learning context tandem is characterised by the mutual help of two learners who are native or proficient speakers of two different languages, respectively. However, they are not expected to be *teachers* of their native or proficient language. Their roles are more defined to be helpers according to Brammerts and Kleppin (2001). The fact that the participants of my research talked about teaching in particular can probably be explained by their background in the university course: all participants were enrolled in teacher training and would become language teachers in the near future. To confirm this hypothesis, it would be interesting to conduct another study with a second group of participants with another profile, for example learners of German as foreign language not enrolled in a foreign language teacher training university course.

The second question is thematically close to the first question. Regarding the topics which this specific group of learners (Brazilians, students in public Brazilian universities) brought to the PGM sessions, it would be interesting to discover whether learners in other countries (and thus, with different educational backgrounds) bring different topics to PGM sessions, i.e. if the educational background makes a difference to the concerns and questions learners have in regards to their language learning in teletandem.

After having summarised the main findings of my study and their implications for several areas of research and discussing some limitations of the study, I will finish this work with these

²⁰⁸ Two books on advising in language learning were published in 2012 (Mynard & Carson, 2012; Mynard & Ludwig, 2012), and the Journal SiSAL about Studies in Self-Access Learning which was first published in 2010, frequently features articles on advising in language learning (see sisaljournal.org, last access on 19.06.2014). There is also the recent study of Funo (2015) on how culture is perceived in mediation sessions.

questions for possible future studies. As I mentioned in the preamble of the dissertation, I am conscious about the fact that ‘[e]ach publication is merely a [small] contribution to a continuous professional conversation’ (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 25) and with this in mind, I hope that my contributions will have an impact on the professional conversation and that other researchers might get inspired to continue research on peer group mediation settings.

6 Appendix

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Appendix A –Consent Form



TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO

Eu,....., na condição de participante do projeto “*Teletandem português – alemão*”, autorizo a pesquisadora Anna-Katharina Elstermann a utilizar os dados por mim gerados no referido projeto em sua pesquisa de doutorado, *Mediação e reflexão sobre o processo de aprendizagem de português e alemão em teletandem*, realizada junto à UNESP – Assis e à Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Alemanha. Estou ciente de que:

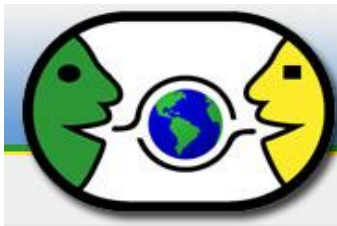
- Os dados por mim gerados serão submetidos à análise da pesquisadora do projeto.
- Os dados produzidos por mim durante o projeto tais como, biografia, diário de aprendizagem, e-mails e transcrição dos encontros presenciais, serão analisados pela pesquisadora, e a mesma poderá requerer minha colaboração na pesquisa para a realização de um diálogo reflexivo e/ou questionário.
- Meus dados serão analisados por meio do paradigma interpretativista, em especial da Teoria Fundamentada.
- Os procedimentos de análise dos dados garantirão meu anonimato estando assegurada minha integridade ao longo de toda a pesquisa.
- No caso de aplicação de questionários ou entrevistas, terei o direito de não responder a perguntas que me causem constrangimento de qualquer natureza.
- Autorizo a publicação de meus dados, desde que sejam mantidos os procedimentos de anonimato.
- Sou participante da pesquisa, sendo assim tenho direito a esclarecimentos antes e durante a pesquisa acerca da natureza da pesquisa de que participo, da metodologia e métodos de análise dos dados por mim gerados. Terei acesso também ao texto integral produzido pela pesquisadora, sobre os quais poderei expressar minha crítica, caso o solicite.
- Poderei me recusar ou retirar meu consentimento, em qualquer fase da pesquisa, sem penalização alguma e sem prejuízo ao meu cuidado;
- Minha participação na pesquisa será muito relevante para o projeto de doutorado da pesquisadora, para o projeto Teletandem Brasil e para minha própria formação, pois poderei aprender muitas coisas acerca do meu modo de aprender e ensinar línguas estrangeiras, por exemplo, contudo não serei pago pela minha participação na referida pesquisa, nem receberei nenhum benefício de ordem monetária.

Data: _____

Assinatura do (a) participante:

Assinatura da pesquisadora:

Appendix B – Learner Biography



Teletandem Brasil

Línguas estrangeiras para todos

Fragebogen/ Questionário

1. Allgemeine Daten. / Dados gerais.

Name, Vorname:	.....
Sobrenome, nome:	.....
Studienadresse:	
endereço durante o semestre:	
Straße:	.....
Rua:	.....
PLZ-Ort:	.....
CEP-Cidade:	.....
E-Mail:	.....
e-mail:	.....
Telefon:	.....
Telefone:	.....
Studienfach:	.....
Curso:	.....
Studiensemester:	.....
Semestre:	.....
Muttersprache(n):	.....
Língua(s) materna(s):	.....
Fremdsprache(n):	.....
Língua(s) estrangeira(s):	.....

Wieviel Stunden pro Woche möchtest du im Teletandem Deutsch lernen?

Quantas horas por semana quer aprender alemão no Teletandem?

_____ h

Wofür möchtest du deine Sprachkenntnisse erweitern?

Para quais fins quer aprofundar os seus conhecimentos linguísticos?

Zutreffendes bitte ankreuzen, Mehrfachantwort möglich. – *Assinale. Mais do que uma resposta é possível.*

☐ Für das Studium. / *Para os meus estudos na faculdade.*

☐ Für ein späteres Studium in der Zielsprache. / *Para futuros estudos na língua estrangeira.*

☐ Für den Alltag. / *Para o dia-a-dia.*

☐ Sonstiges. / *Outros:* _____

2. Meine Sprachlernbiografie / Minha biografia de aprendizagem de línguas

Por favor, preencha cuidadosamente as tabelas que encontrará abaixo com informações sobre o processo de aprendizagem das línguas estrangeiras que já aprendeu, respondendo às seguintes perguntas. Para ter uma ajuda veja os exemplos.

Nas tabelas a seguir, dê um resumo sobre as suas experiências na aprendizagem das línguas estrangeiras que domina. Com isso, o mediador terá informações valiosas e úteis para uma primeira sessão de mediação com você e poderá lhe dar melhores sugestões e ajuda.

Quais línguas já aprendi?

- Línguas que aprendi na escola ou em cursos de língua (duração, carga horária, objetivos, conteúdos, métodos didáticos, meios didáticos, tipo de provas/testes...);
- Línguas com as quais cresci;
- Regiões de línguas nas quais morava por um tempo;
- Uso de língua no trabalho, na formação, em viagens, com amigos...
- Contato com línguas por TV, rádio, cinema, arte, música, livros, imprensa, internet etc.

Como me senti durante a aprendizagem de línguas?

- De que maneira aprendi bem e, ao mesmo tempo, gostando da aprendizagem? O que foi muito importante e enriquecedor?
- O que me desmotivou acerca da aprendizagem de línguas e acerca da línguas que aprendi ou ainda estou aprendendo?

Exemplo (Portugues como LE)

1998-1999	<i>Aulas particulares de português brasileiro; 1 hora por semana, 1 ano mais ou menos; livro: Avenida Brasil 1; no começo foi difícil de aprender a pronúncia certa (nasais), mas como já tinha aprendido francês e espanhol, o vocabulário e a gramática não foram tão difícil assim. Gostei das aulas.</i>
08/1999 – 02/2000	<i>Intercâmbio escolar no Brasil; não tenho aulas de português, mas vou num colégio de segundo grau e frequento todas as aulas junto com os alunos brasileiros. Vivendo num país de língua portuguesa motiva muito e a aprendizagem vai muito mais rápida. Para melhorar ainda mais, leio livros em português.</i>
2003-2008	<i>5 anos de estudos de português na faculdade; geralmente 10-15 horas de português por semana; gramática, tradução, redação, pronúncia, literatura, linguística etc. Aulas com professores portugueses em português, outras aulas em alemão. Não me sinto muito bem falando português, parece que esqueci muito desde a estadia no Brasil. Com os anos melhora.</i>

Desde 2003		<i>Regularmente, assisto filmes (de cinema, novelas) e leio livros (literatura brasileira – p.ex. Paulo Coelho, Machado de Assis...) em língua portuguesa. Frequentemente me comunico com amigos brasileiros por email, chat ou „ao vivo“.</i>
2008-2009		<i>Trabalho como professora de alemão no Brasil. No trabalho, pouco comunicação em português devido aos colegas que falam alemão e tb na sala de aula mais uso do alemão. Linguagem do dia-a-dia com vizinhos etc. tudo em português. Me sinto bem falando português. Consigo dizer tudo que quero.</i>
		<i>Etc. etc.</i>

Agora você:

Primeira língua estrangeira: _____

Período		Experiências

Segunda língua estrangeira: _____

Período		Experiências

Terceira língua estrangeira: _____

Período		Experiências

3. Lernziele/ *Objetivos de aprendizagem*

Was möchtest du dieses Semester im Teletandem lernen?








O que pretende aprender no Teletandem este semestre?

Bitte notiere deine Prioritäten:

Por favor, indicar suas prioridades:

(4 = hohe Priorität bis 1 = niedrige Priorität, 0 = möchte ich nicht machen)

(4 = prioridade alta até 1 = prioridade baixa, 0 = não pretendo fazer)

Fertigkeit <i>habilidades</i>		Priorität <i>prioridade</i>	Bemerkungen <i>comentários</i>
Hören <i>Escutar</i>			
Sprechen <i>Falar</i>			
Lesen <i>Ler</i>			
Schreiben <i>Escrever</i>			
Grammatik <i>Gramática</i>			
TEST Strategien <i>estratégias p/ testes</i>	TEST		
Wortschatz <i>vocabulário</i>			
Aussprache <i>pronúncia</i>			
Anderes <i>Outros</i>			

Welches Ziel / welche Ziele willst du in diesem Semester für deine Fremdsprache erreichen?
Qual o seu objetivo para a aprendizagem da sua língua estrangeira durante esse semestre?

Wie arbeitest du zur Verbesserung deines Wortschatzes/ deiner Grammatik?
De que maneira trabalha para melhorar o seu vocabulário / a gramática?

Wie liest du längere und schwierigere Texte in einer Fremdsprache?
Como lê textos longos e mais difíceis na língua estrangeira?

Was machst du, wenn du in einer Fremdsprache schwierige Vorträge, Vorlesungen etc. hörst?
O que faz quando escuta palestras ou conferências difíceis em uma língua estrangeira?

Bemerkungen // Comentários:

Gegenwärtiger Kenntnisstand: // Conhecimentos atuais:

Bitte kreuze auf der nächsten Seite „Raster zur Selbstbeurteilung“ für jeden Fertigkeitsbereich die Stufe an, die deiner persönlichen Meinung nach zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt für dich zutrifft. Zum Beispiel: Hören: A2, Lesen: B1 usw.

Por favor, assinale na tabela de auto-avaliação na página a seguir o nível de cada uma das suas habilidade conforme a sua própria opinião sobre os seus conhecimentos linguísticos atualmente. Por exemplo: Escutar: A2, Ler: B1 etc.

Wenn du dir nicht sicher bist oder deine Selbsteinschätzung überprüfen möchtest, kannst du einen DIALANG Test durchführen. Im Anschluss an den Test (DIALANG) erhältst du eine ausführliche Bewertung (mit Angab der Stufen) deiner Fertigkeiten bezogen auf die einzelnen Bereiche. Der Test ist zumDownload unter www.dialang.org verfügbar.

Se não estiver seguro com as suas respostas ou se quiser verificar a sua auto-avaliação, pode fazer o teste DIALANG. Ao terminar esse teste (DIALANG) receberá uma avaliação detalhada (com os níveis A-C) sobre as suas habilidades em relação às diferentes áreas. Este teste está disponível como download no site www.dialang.org.

Muito obrigada pela sua cooperação! ☺

Vielen Dank für deine Mitarbeit! ☺

Compreender	A1 Sou capaz de reconhecer palavras e expressões simples de uso corrente relativas a mim próprio, à minha família e aos contextos em que estou inserido, quando me falam de forma clara e pausada. <input type="checkbox"/>	A2 Sou capaz de compreender expressões e vocabulário de uso mais frequente relacionado com aspectos de interesse pessoal como, por exemplo, família, compras, trabalho e meio em que vivo. Sou capaz de compreender o essencial de um anúncio e de mensagens simples, curtas e claras. <input type="checkbox"/>	B1 Sou capaz de compreender os pontos essenciais de uma sequência falada que incida sobre assuntos correntes de trabalho, da escola, dos tempos livres, etc. Sou capaz de compreender os pontos principais de muitos programas de rádio e televisão sobre temas actuais ou assuntos de interesse pessoal ou profissional, quando o débito da fala é relativamente lento e claro. <input type="checkbox"/>	B2 Sou capaz de compreender exposições longas e palestras e até seguir partes mais complexas da argumentação, desde que o tema me seja relativamente familiar. Consigo compreender a maior parte dos noticiários e outros programas informativos na televisão. Sou capaz de compreender a maior parte dos filmes, desde que seja utilizada a língua-padrão. <input type="checkbox"/>	C1 Sou capaz de compreender uma exposição longa, mesmo que não esteja claramente estruturada ou quando a articulação entre as ideias esteja apenas implícita. Consigo compreender programas de televisão e filmes sem grande dificuldade. <input type="checkbox"/>	C2 Não tenho nenhuma dificuldade em compreender qualquer tipo de enunciado oral, tanto face a face como através dos meios de comunicação, mesmo quando se fala depressa, à velocidade dos falantes nativos, sendo apenas necessário algum tempo para me familiarizar com o sotaque. <input type="checkbox"/>
Ler	Sou capaz de compreender nomes conhecidos, palavras e frases muito simples, por exemplo, em avisos, cartazes ou folhetos. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de ler textos curtos e simples. Sou capaz de encontrar uma informação previsível e concreta em textos simples de uso corrente, por exemplo, anúncios, folhetos, ementas, horários. Sou capaz de compreender cartas pessoais curtas e simples. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de compreender textos em que predomine uma linguagem corrente do dia-a-dia ou relacionada com o trabalho. Sou capaz de compreender descrições de acontecimentos, sentimentos e desejos, em cartas pessoais. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de ler artigos e reportagens sobre assuntos contemporâneos em relação aos quais os autores adoptam determinadas atitudes ou pontos de vista particulares. Sou capaz de compreender textos literários contemporâneos em prosa. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de compreender textos longos e complexos, literários e não literários, e distinguir estilos. Sou capaz de compreender artigos especializados e instruções técnicas longas, mesmo quando não se relacionam com a minha área de conhecimento. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de ler com facilidade praticamente todas as formas de texto escrito, incluindo textos mais abstractos, linguística ou estruturalmente complexos, tais como manuais, artigos especializados e obras literárias. <input type="checkbox"/>
Falar (<i>interacção oral</i>)	Sou capaz de comunicar de forma simples, desde que o meu interlocutor se disponha a repetir ou dizer por outras palavras, num ritmo mais lento, e me ajude a formular aquilo que eu gostaria de dizer. Sou capaz de perguntar e de responder a perguntas simples sobre assuntos conhecidos ou relativos a áreas de necessidade imediata. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de comunicar em situações simples, de rotina do dia-a-dia, sobre assuntos e actividades habituais que exijam apenas uma troca de informação simples e directa. Sou capaz de participar em breves trocas de palavras, apesar de não compreender o suficiente para manter a conversa. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de lidar com a maior parte das situações que podem surgir durante uma viagem a um local onde a língua é falada. Consigo entrar, sem preparação prévia, numa conversa sobre assuntos conhecidos, de interesse pessoal ou pertinentes para o dia-a-dia (por exemplo, família, passatempos, trabalho, viagens e assuntos da actualidade). <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de conversar com a fluência e espontaneidade suficientes para tornar possível a interacção normal com falantes nativos. Posso tomar parte activa numa discussão que tenha lugar em contextos conhecidos, apresentando e defendendo os meus pontos de vista. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de me exprimir de forma espontânea e fluente, sem dificuldade aparente em encontrar as expressões adequadas. Sou capaz de utilizar a língua de maneira flexível e eficaz para fins sociais e profissionais. Formulo ideias e opiniões com precisão e adequo o meu discurso ao dos meus interlocutores. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de participar sem esforço em qualquer conversa ou discussão e mesmo utilizar expressões idiomáticas e coloquiais. Sou capaz de me exprimir fluentemente e de transmitir com precisão pequenas diferenças de sentido. Sempre que tenho um problema, sou capaz de voltar atrás, contornar a dificuldade e reformular, sem que tal seja notado. <input type="checkbox"/>
Falar (<i>produção oral</i>)	Sou capaz de utilizar expressões e frases simples para descrever o local onde vivo e pessoas que conheço. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de utilizar uma série de expressões e frases para falar, de forma simples, da minha família, de outras pessoas, das condições de vida, do meu percurso escolar e do meu trabalho actual ou mais recente. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de articular expressões de forma simples para descrever experiências e acontecimentos, sonhos, desejos e ambições. Sou capaz de explicar ou justificar opiniões e planos. Sou capaz de contar uma história, de relatar o enredo de um livro ou de um filme e de descrever as minhas reacções. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de me exprimir de forma clara e detalhada sobre uma vasta gama de assuntos relacionados com os meus centros de interesse. Sou capaz de explicar um ponto de vista sobre um dado assunto, apresentando as vantagens e desvantagens de diferentes opções. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de apresentar descrições claras e detalhadas sobre temas complexos que integrem subtemas, desenvolvendo aspectos particulares e chegando a uma conclusão apropriada. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de, sem dificuldade e fluentemente, fazer uma exposição oral ou desenvolver uma argumentação num estilo apropriado ao contexto e com uma estrutura lógica tal que ajude o meu interlocutor a identificar e a memorizar os aspectos mais importantes. <input type="checkbox"/>
Escrever	Sou capaz de escrever um postal simples e curto, por exemplo, na altura de férias. Sou capaz de preencher uma ficha com dados pessoais, por exemplo, num hotel, com <u>nome</u> , morada, nacionalidade. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de escrever notas e mensagens curtas e simples sobre assuntos de necessidade imediata. Sou capaz de escrever uma carta pessoal muito simples, por exemplo, para agradecer alguma coisa a alguém. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de escrever um texto articulado de forma simples sobre assuntos conhecidos ou de interesse pessoal. Sou capaz de escrever cartas pessoais para descrever experiências e impressões. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de escrever um texto claro e pormenorizado sobre uma vasta gama de assuntos relacionados com os meus centros de interesse. Sou capaz de redigir um texto expositivo ou um relatório, transmitindo informação ou apresentando razões a favor ou contra um determinado ponto de vista. Consigo escrever cartas evidenciando o significado que determinados acontecimentos ou experiências têm para mim. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de me exprimir de forma clara e bem estruturada, apresentando os meus pontos de vista com um certo grau de elaboração. Sou capaz de escrever cartas, comunicações ou relatórios sobre assuntos complexos, pondo em evidência os aspectos que considero mais importantes. Sou capaz de escrever no estilo que considero apropriado para o leitor que tenho em mente. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sou capaz de escrever textos num estilo fluente e apropriado. Sou capaz de redigir de forma estruturada cartas complexas, relatórios ou artigos que apresentem um caso com uma tal estrutura lógica que ajude o leitor a perceber-se dos pontos essenciais e a memorizá-los. Sou capaz de fazer resumos e resenhas de obras literárias e de âmbito profissional. <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C – Learner Diary (first and second version)



Diário de aprendizagem

Protocolo de sessão de Teletandem No. _____ // Data:

Nome:

Meus objetivos hoje:

Tema(s):

Descreva brevemente a sua interação com o seu parceiro e sua aprendizagem em teletandem. Oriente-se nas perguntas a seguir:

1. O que aprendi hoje? Foi divertido, interessante e/ou útil?
2. O que gostei muito na sessão de hoje?
3. O que funcionou e o que não funcionou tão bem? Por quê?
4. O que quero melhorar na próxima sessão?
5. Estou satisfeito com o que fiz da minha parte na sessão de hoje?
6. Estou satisfeito com o que meu parceiro fez na sessão de hoje?
7. Consegui entender tudo? Fiz perguntas ao meu parceiro?
8. O meu parceiro me corrigiu? O que corrigiu? Eu entendi as correções dele a ponto de poder evitar tais erros futuramente?

Atingi os meus objetivos por hoje ou não?

→ **SIM.** – Como? Por quê?

→ **NÃO.** – Por quê não? Quais podem ser as razões?



Diário de aprendizagem (**NEW VERSION**)

Protocolo de sessão de Teletandem No. _____ // Data:

Nome:

Meus objetivos hoje:

Tema(s):

Descreva brevemente a sua interação com o seu parceiro e sua aprendizagem em teletandem. Oriente-se nas perguntas a seguir:

1. Descreva um pouco a sua sessão de teletandem de hoje. O que seu parceiro e você fizeram hoje?
2. Escreva algo sobre os aspectos que realmente gostou na sua sessão de teletandem.
3. E o que pode dizer sobre prováveis dificuldades, problemas ou aspectos que não gostou tanto? Conte algo sobre isso.
4. Pense sobre os estilos de correção que você e seu parceiro adotaram. Como está conseguindo trabalhar com eles?
5. Descreva alguns dos seus objetivos que tem para a próxima sessão.
6. Outros comentários que gostaria de acrescentar:

Atingi os meus objetivos por hoje ou não?

→ **SIM.** – Como? Por quê?

→ **NÃO.** – Por quê não? Quais podem ser as razões?

Appendix D1 – Final questionnaire (first version)



Abschlussfragebogen / Questionário Final

Caros alunos,

Em primeiro lugar, queria agradecer sua participação no projeto *Teletandem Brasil-Alemanha* neste semestre. Vocês me ajudaram muito no meu projeto de doutorado e, por isso, consegui coletar bastante dados até agora. Para finalizar a coleta de dados e o ciclo deste semestre queria pedir somente mais um favor : responder a este pequeno questionário, sendo o mais detalhado e honesto possível. Por favor, sejam críticos, dêem francamente suas opiniões e sugestões para que assim eu possa melhorar a mediação e as reuniões de Teletandem em grupo.

Vamos lá então! ☺

1. Sua parceria de Teletandem

- a. Conseguiu entrar em contato com seu parceiro? ☐ sim ☐ não
- b. Quantas vezes (mais ou menos) fizeram sessões de Teletandem este semestre?

- c. Pretende continuar nas férias e/ou no semestre que vem? ☐ sim ☐ não
- d. Está satisfeito com a sua parceria de Teletandem? ☐ sim ☐ não
Por quê?
- e. Você acha que sua parceria de Teletandem foi um sucesso? (Conseguiu o que queria? Foi como esperava?)

2. Seus objetivos de aprendizagem

No primeiro questionário tinha perguntas sobre os seus objetivos de aprendizagem (p.ex. Escutar, falar, gramática etc.) e a prioridade destes objetivos.

- a. Você acha que conseguiu atingir os seus objetivos neste semestre? Quais sim, quais não? Explique o porquê e dê exemplos se for possível.
- b. Você conseguiu testar ou experimentar novas estratégias de aprendizagem? Algumas que ainda não utilizou na faculdade, mas que pôde testar na sua parceria de Teletandem? Se sim, quais?

3. Mediação e reflexão

- a. Escreveu um diário de aprendizagem? ☐ sim ☐ não
Por quê?
- b. Se escreveu um diário, quantas vezes conseguiu escrever? Como escreveu (diretamente depois da sessão, alguns dias depois, somente no final do semestre...)?
- c. Se escreveu um diário, voltou a ler o que já tinha escrito? Se sim, isso ajudou em alguma coisa? Se sim, de que maneira?
- d. Você foi nas reuniões de Teletandem em grupo?
Se sim, o que te elas te trouxeram ou o que te ajudou ou não ajudou para a sua parceria de TT?
Se não, por quê não foi? (Falta de tempo, outros compromissos, não viu necessidade...)
- e. Se você esteve nas reuniões, elas ajudaram a refletir mais sobre o seu TT? Ajudaram a mudar seu comportamento no TT? Suas estratégias de aprendizagem? Testar novas “coisas”? Se sim, o que mudou? Quais foram estas “coisas” que testou? Quais foram estas estratégias?
- f. E para finalizar, você iria novamente a uma reunião de Teletandem em grupo? Ou se ainda não conseguiu ir este semestre, teria interesse em participar no semestre que vem? Por quê?

English translation of the questions.

First part:

- a. Did you establish contact with your teletandem partner? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 - b. How many times did you meet your partner in teletandem sessions during this semester? _____
 - c. Do you pretend to continue in summer break or even next semester? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 - d. Are you satisfied with your teletandem partnership? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Why?
- Do you think that you had success with your teletandem partnership? (Could you reach what you wanted? Was it the way you expected your teletandem to be?)

Second part:

In the first questionnaire there were some questions about your learning goals (f. ex. listening, speaking, grammar, etc.) and the priority of those goals.

- a. Do you think that you achieved your goals for this semester? Which ones did you achieve? Which ones not? Explain why and give examples if possible.

Could you test new learning strategies? Some that you have not used so far at university but that you were able to test in your teletandem experience? If yes, which ones?

Third part:

- a. Did you write in a learner diary? ☐ YES ☐ NO Why?
- b. If you wrote a diary, how many times could you make entries? How did you write (after the session, some days after the session, only at the end of the semester...)?
- c. If you write a diary, did you read your entries again? If yes, was this any help for you? If yes, in which way?
- d. Did you go to the teletandem advising sessions?
If yes, how was the impact of those sessions on you or in which way did they help you or did not help you for your teletandem partnership?
If no, why didn't you go? (no time, other commitments, I didn't feel the necessity to go...)
- e. If you were in the advising sessions, did they help you to reflect more about your teletandem experiences? Did they help you to change behavior in relation with the teletandem sessions? Or in relation to learning strategies? To test "new things"? Of yes, what has changed? Which were those "things" that you changed? Which strategies did you test?
- f. And finishing this questionnaire... would you participate again in advising sessions for teletandem? Or if you had no chance to participate this semester, would you be interested in participate next semester? Why?

Appendix D2 – Final questionnaire (revised version)



Abschlussfragebogen / Questionário Final (Revised)

Caros alunos,

Em primeiro lugar, queria agradecer sua participação no projeto *Teletandem Brasil-Alemanha* neste semestre. Vocês me ajudaram muito no meu projeto de doutorado e, por isso, consegui coletar bastante dados até agora. Para finalizar a coleta de dados e o ciclo deste semestre queria pedir somente mais um favor : responder a este pequeno questionário, sendo o mais detalhado e honesto possível. Por favor, sejam críticos, dêem francamente suas opiniões e sugestões para que assim eu possa melhorar a mediação e as reuniões de Teletandem em grupo.

Vamos lá então! ☺

1. Sua parceria de Teletandem

- a. Conseguiu entrar em contato com seu parceiro? ☐ sim ☐ não
- b. Quantas vezes (mais ou menos) fizeram sessões de Teletandem este semestre?
- c. Pretende continuar nas férias e/ou no semestre que vem? ☐ sim ☐ não
- d. Está satisfeito com a sua parceria de Teletandem? ☐ sim ☐ não

Por quê?

- e. ~~Você acha que sua parceria de Teletandem foi um sucesso? (Conseguiu o que queria? Foi como esperava?)~~ **Descreva sua parceria de teletandem.**

2. Seus objetivos de aprendizagem

No primeiro questionário tinha perguntas sobre os seus objetivos de aprendizagem (p.ex. Escutar, falar, gramática etc.) e a prioridade destes objetivos.

- a.) ~~Você acha que conseguiu atingir os seus objetivos neste semestre? Quais sim, quais não? Explique o porquê e dê exemplos se for possível.~~ **Quais foram seus objetivos de aprendizagem para sua parceria de Teletandem? De que maneira você trabalhou para atingir tais objetivos?**
- b. **Escreva sobre o que você sabe de estratégias de aprendizagem e de que maneira você as utiliza na sua aprendizagem em geral e em específico no teletandem.** ~~Você conseguiu testar ou experimentar novas estratégias de aprendizagem? Algumas que ainda não utilizou na faculdade, mas que pôde testar na sua parceria de Teletandem? Se sim, quais?~~

3. Mediação e reflexão

- a. ~~Escreveu um diário de aprendizagem? O sim O nao. Por que sim? Por que nao?~~
Conte a sua experiência com o “diário de aprendizagem”.
- b. ~~Se escreveu um diário, quantas vezes conseguiu escrever? Como escreveu (diretamente depois da sessão, alguns dias depois, somente no final do semestre...)?~~
- c. ~~Se escreveu um diário, voltou a ler o que já tinha escrito? Se sim, isso ajudou em alguma coisa? Se sim, de que maneira?~~ Qual foi a influência da mediadora em relação ao seu trabalho com o diário?
- d. ~~Você foi nas reuniões de Teletandem em grupo?~~
Se sim, o que te elas te trouxeram ou o que te ajudou ou não ajudou para a sua parceria de TT?
Se não, por quê não foi? (Falta de tempo, outros compromissos, não viu necessidade...)
Conte a sua experiência com as reuniões de mediação em grupo que aconteceram de 15 em 15 dias junto com a mediadora. Reflita também sobre a relação entre as reuniões de mediação em grupo e suas sessões de teletandem com seu parceiro.
- e. ~~Se você esteve nas reuniões, elas ajudaram a refletir mais sobre o seu TT? Ajudaram a mudar seu comportamento no TT? Suas estratégias de aprendizagem? Testar novas “coisas”? Se sim, o que mudou? Quais foram estas “coisas” que testou? Quais foram estas estratégias?~~ Fale sobre o papel da mediadora em relação as suas experiências de aprendizagem no teletandem.
- f. ~~E para finalizar, você iria novamente a uma reunião de Teletandem em grupo? Ou se ainda não conseguiu ir este semestre, teria interesse em participar no semestre que vem? Por quê?~~ Quais seriam os motivos para você participar de reuniões de mediação?

English translation of the revised questions

First part revised:

- a. Did you establish contact with your teletandem partner? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- b. How many times did you meet your partner in teletandem sessions during this semester? _____
- c. Do you pretend to continue in summer break or even next semester? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- d. Are you satisfied with your teletandem partnership? ☐ YES ☐ NO
Why?
- e. Describe your teletandem partnership.

Second part revised:

In the first questionnaire there were some questions about your learning goals (f. ex. listening, speaking, grammar, etc.) and the priority of those goals.

- a. Which were your learning goals for your learning in teletandem? In which way did you work to achieve those goals?
- b. Relate what you know about learning strategies and in which way you use them in your learning in general and for teletandem in special.

Third part revised:

- a. Talk about your experience with the “learner diary”.
- b. Which was the influence of the advisor in relation to your work with the diary?
- c. Relate your experiences with the advising sessions that happened all two weeks with the advisor. Also reflect about the relation between the advising sessions and your teletandem sessions with your partner.
- d. Talk about the role of the advisor in relation to your experiences in learning in teletandem.
- e. Which are (or could be) your motives in participating in advising sessions?

Appendix E – Summary of results of learners' biographies

1. Dados pessoais

Curso: 11 Letras, 1 Psicologia (mas depois não recebeu parceiro)

Semestre: 4º (2), 6º (8) , 8º (2)

Língua Materna: Português (12x)

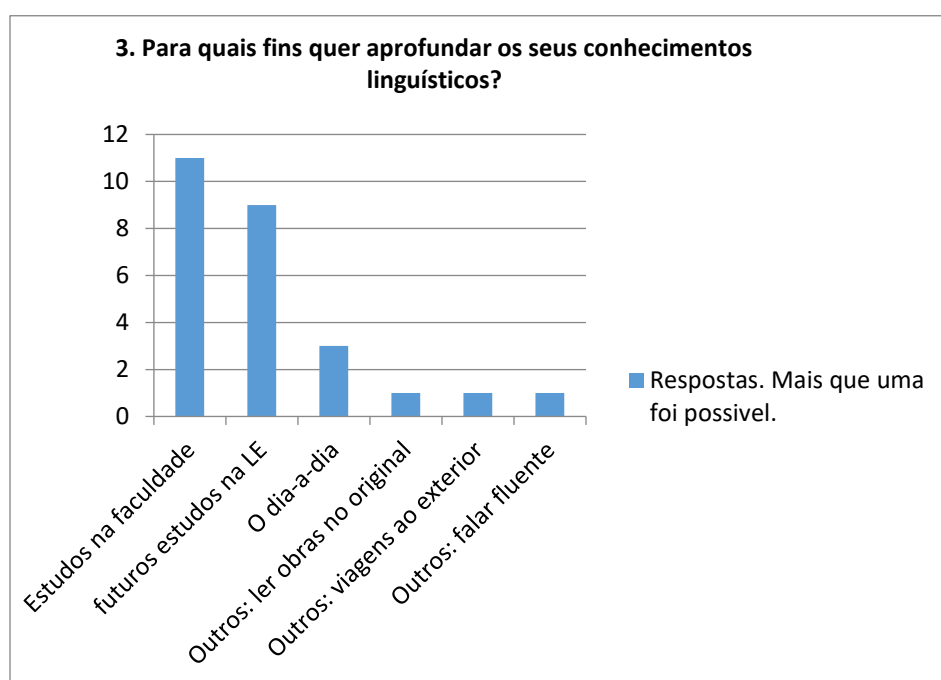
Línguas Estrangeiras: Inglês e Alemão (3x), só Alemão (9x)

Sexo: Fem. (11), Mas (1)

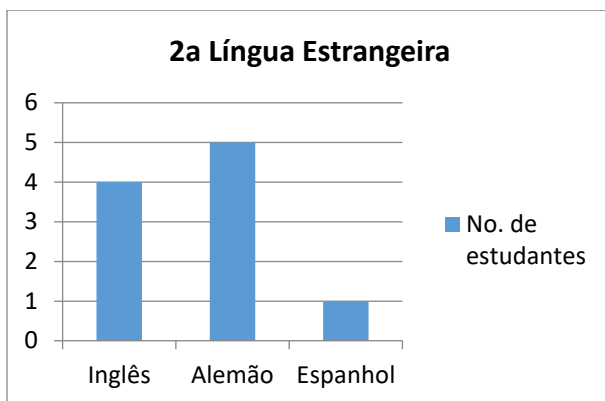
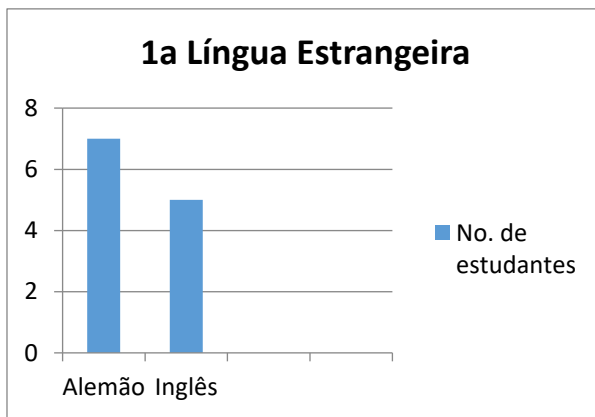
Recebeu Parceiro: sim (10) não (2)

2. Quantas horas por semana quer aprender alemão no TT? 2-4 horas

3. Para quais fins quer aprofundar os seus conhecimentos linguísticos?



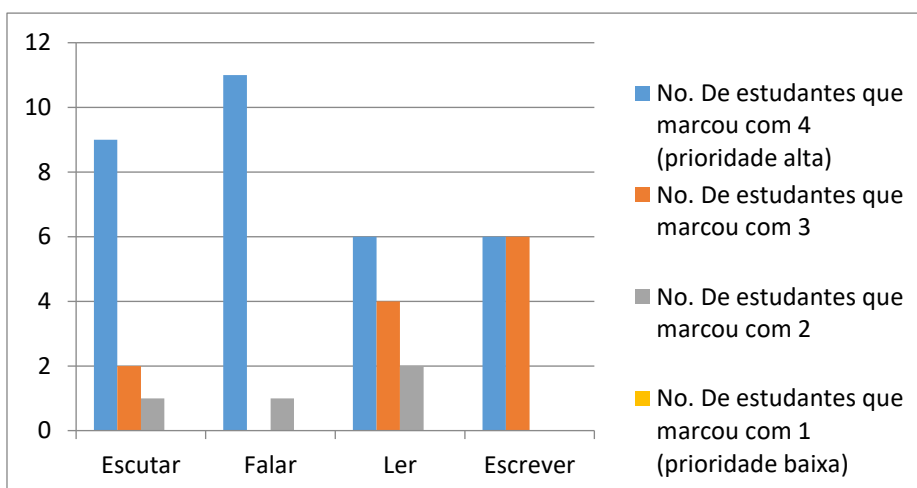
4. Experiências com Línguas Estrangeiras.



➤ Duas pessoas ainda aprenderam uma terceira LE: **Espanhol**.

5. Objetivos de aprendizagem

Parte 1: Escutar, falar, ler e escrever



Comentários:

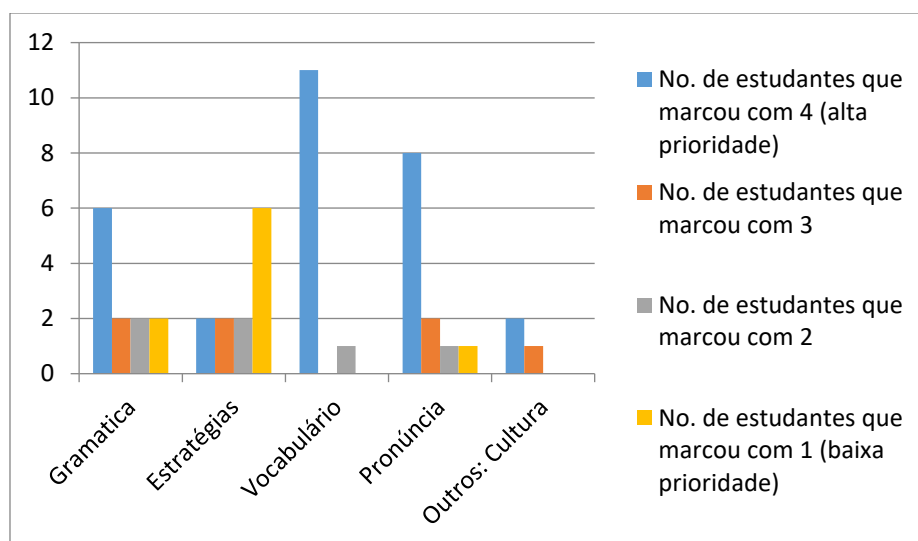
Escutar: Uma boa escuta ajuda na fala. / Preciso prestar mais atenção aos detalhes. / Com calma ouvir a pronúncia do meu parceiro./ Muitas vezes, não entendo bem, por isso preciso de mais tempo.

Falar: Meu maior desejo é poder falar espontanea- e livremente, pois uma língua é viva e eu preciso me “soltar”. / Preciso usar mais orações subordinadas e conjunções. / Tentar falar alemão mesmo me sentindo muito inseguro quando falo. / Tenho grandes dificuldades de falar, de me comunicar em geral.

Ler: Tenho dificuldades em provas e trabalhos quando preciso ler. Falta vocabulário. / Tento ler mais sobre política e economia. / Melhorar a leitura, como também a pronúncia, intensidade e compreensão.

Escrever: Agora prefiro falar melhor do que escrever. / Eu escrevo muito mal... tenho que melhorar 100%. / Tentar escrever as palavras corretamente e memoriza-las. / Ainda cometo erros na ortografia com algumas palavras e na sintaxe.

Parte 2: Gramática, Estratégias, Vocabulário, Pronúncia, Outros: Cultura



Comentários:

Gramática: Bem diferente do que no português ; precisa de muita prática para dominá-la, por isso “falar bem” é tão importante. / Preciso melhorar na sintaxe mais complexa. / No TT, não quero focar na gramática, porque já fazemos muito isso na aula da faculdade. / Melhorar meus conhecimentos gramaticais e aprender o que ainda não sei, para poder falar e escrever mais fluente.

Estratégias para provas: Estou atualmente fazendo todos os modelos possíveis das provas B2. / A prova é uma boa forma para ver o nosso desenvolvimento. Além disso, pode-se variar nas provas e aplicar uma prova por habilidade. / Agora estou mais ocupada com a fluência do que com testes.

Vocabulário: O mais importante agora. Sem V. Não sei nada. / Vocabulário específico da área de política e economia. / Ainda não sei falar fluentemente e como na sala de aula só fazemos gramática, preciso melhorar o vocabulário. / Me falta vocabulário na hora de construir frases.

Pronúncia: Minha pronúncia não é ruim, mas o meu “bloqueio” na hora de falar também limita minha pronúncia. / Agora não quero falar como um nativo... só quero falar corretamente! / Prestar atenção à pronúncia do parceiro. / Muito importante para o desenvolvimento da produção oral.

Cultura: Cultura alemã; / Aprender mais sobre a cultura alemã./ Aprender algo sobre a cultura alemã.

Comentário geral:

Estou no 4º semestre e acredito que ainda estou tendo um contato inicial com a língua alemã, portanto pretendo dar prioridade à leitura, escrita, gramática, ao vocabulário.

6a. Qual seu objetivo para a aprendizagem da sua língua estrangeira durante esse semestre?

- Melhorar minha capacidade de falar sem parecer um robô ou sem o uso de dicionário. (1)
- Ter maior conhecimento do vocabulário e da gramática através do contato com um parceiro de teletandem. (2)
- Aperfeiçoar o vocabulário e trabalhar a fala, juntamente com a gramática. (3)
- Eu preciso conseguir uma boa nota no teste de proficiência B2 por motivos profissionais... (4)
- “soltar” a minha fala em alemão, criar uma quantidade de vocab. Novo, cometer menos erros na fala, aprender expressões e um pouco sobre cultura. (5)
- Aumentar a minha capacidade de falar e compreender alemão. (6)
- Conhecer a cultura, melhorar cada vez mais a comunicação. (7)
- O meu objetivo este semestre é aprender gramática e adquirir muito vocabulário, para aprimorar minha fluência, já que pretendo ser uma professora de alemão e também quero ir à Alemanha trabalhar e estudar ano que vem. (8)
- Tentar desenvolver minhas habilidades e superar minhas dificuldades. (Nr. 9)
- Meu objetivo é a compreensão e também aprender a me comunicar. (10)
- Durante este semestre gostaria de aprender a ler e escrever bem no idioma, reconhecer mais facilmente as palavras. (12)
- Tem como objetivo me comunicar nas formas básicas de diálogo; expandir o vocabulário [sic], praticar a gramática, lendo e escrevendo. (nr. 13)

6b. De que maneira trabalha para melhorar o seu vocabulário / a gramática?

- Uso muito o dicionário, mas às vezes acho que ele mais atrapalha do que ajuda. Quanto à gramática gosto de fazer tabelas. (1)
- Ouvindo música, vendo filmes (2)
- Procuro buscar o significado de todas as palavras que não conheço no Arbeitsbuch e faço todos os Hausaufgabe. (3)

- Eu tento estudar todos os dias um pouco... faço modelos de provas disponíveis na internet, faço exercícios do livro EM de gramática e faço teletandem – quando possível – quatro vezes por semana. (4)
- Procuro fazer exercícios além do livro que uso na faculdade (Passwort). (5)
- Faço os cursos on-line da Deutsche Welle e leio, quando posso, alguns livros de contos. (6)
- Estudando em casa, fazendo tabelas para facilitar a memorização. (7)
- Procuro estudar a matéria passada em aula, ouvir música e tentar ler algumas reportagens do Deutsch Welle [sic]. Além de fazer teletandem. (8)
- Uso somente o que é transmitido em sala de aula. (9)
- Conversando e também procurando notícias na internet. (10)
- Com cursos de escrita e audio feitos pela internet. (12)
- Mantenho estudo individuais [sic], de alemão, de 5 à 10 horas semanais. (13)

6c. Como lê textos longos e mais difíceis na LE?

- Gosto de primeiramente de lê-lo todo, mesmo que não o entenda por completo. Depois vou traduzindo aos poucos. (1)
- Com a ajuda do dicionário. Faço uma primeira leitura, destacando as palavras que não conheço. Numa segunda leitura, procuro essas palavras no dicionário. (2)
- Para ler, procuro primeiro observar as palavras que conheço e a disposição da gramática. Após isso vou verificar alguns termos aos quais desconheço até então. (3)
- Geralmente eu faço uma primeira leitura para entender o tema... depois faço uma segunda leitura grifando os pontos que não entendi e os que eu acho mais importantes... depois faço uma leitura com dicionário. (4)
- Com ajuda de dicionários e muitas vezes do professor. (5)
- Com o auxílio de dicionário e consulta de professor. (6)
- Leio com um dicionário ao meu lado e as expressões que ainda não conheço, pergunto ao meu professor. (7)
- No alemão ainda tenho um pouco de dificuldade, pois não tenho muito vocabulário, então tento ler com um dicionário ao lado e bem devagar, prestando atenção. (8)
- Procuro entender pelo contexto, ligando palavras conhecidas e destacando palavras-chave. (9)
- Procuro entender o contexto. Depois procuro o significado de palavras-chave que não conheço. (10)
- Talvez consiga pronunciar o texto, mas dificilmente entenderei do que o texto trata. (12)
- Consulto o dicionário ou auxílio de um docente, e em seguida, anoto a palavra ou expressão em um glossário. (13)

7.. Comentários gerais:

- Acho que a melhor maneira de aprender uma língua é viajar ao país da língua alvo. A espontaneidade é uma das melhores formas de aprender, acredito eu. No Instituto Goethe utilizamos muitos jogos para trabalhar com a língua. (1)
- Acho que Teletandem é um meio eficaz de melhorar a LE e eu quero me dedicar ao máximo para atingir meus objetivos e também os do meu parceiro. (7)

8. Níveis de Alemão.

	Compreender/ Escutar	Ler	Falar (interacao oral)	Falar (producao oral)	Escrever
(1)	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
(2)	B1	B1	A2	A2	A1
(3)	B1	B1	B1	A2	B1
(4)	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2
(5)					
(6)	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
(7)	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
(8)	A2	A2	A1	A1	A2
(9)	-	A2	-	A1	-
(10)	B1	a2	a2	a2	a2
(12)	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1
(13)	A1	A2	A1	A1	A1

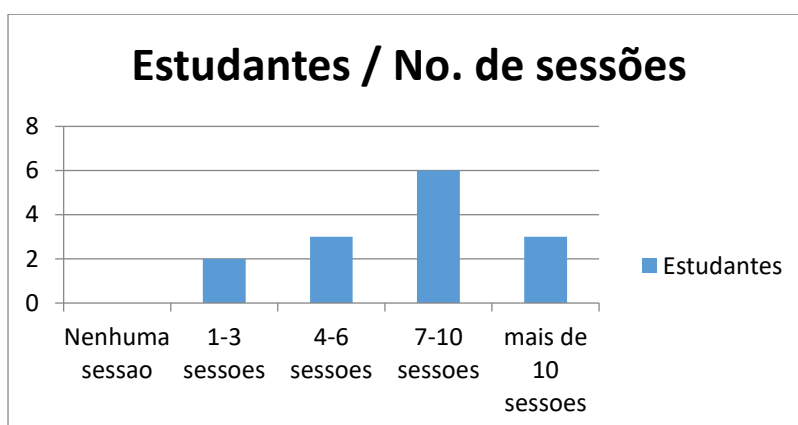
Appendix F – Summary of results of the Final Questionnaire

1. Parte: Sua parceria de TT

a) Conseguiu entrar em contato com seu parceiro?

Sim	14
Não	--

b) Quantas vezes (mais ou menos) fizeram sessões de TT este semestre?



c) Pretende continuar nas férias e/ou no semestre que vem?

Sim	12
Não	2

d) Está satisfeito com a sua parceria de Teletandem?

Sim	12
Não	2

As pessoas que estavam satisfeitas com a sua parceria apontaram os seguintes aspectos:

- muitos temas abordados
- uma experiencia divertida, legal
- uma imagem positiva do parceiro (responsável, divertido, simpático, entender-se bem, paciente, interessado, dar e receber conselhos/sugestões)
- ajuda mútua (*não foi mais especificado*)
- acharam horários que para ambos foram viáveis
- objetivos de aprendizagem em comum
- conhecer a língua e cultura alemã
- desconstruir preconceitos (o alemão = frio, distante, antipático)

As pessoas que não estavam satisfeitas com sua parceria anotaram o seguinte:

- problemas com internet

- a falta do parceiro nos encontros
- conversas desestruturadas

e) Você acha que sua parceria de Teletandem foi um sucesso? (Conseguiu o que queria? Foi como esperava?)

11 participantes responderam com uma tendência positiva quanto a essa resposta, uma pessoa esteve dividida [Ainda não é um sucesso, mas está cada vez melhorando.] e duas pessoas acharam que não tiveram sucesso com suas parcerias. Estas apontaram que os encontros foram raros e a conexão ruim o que levou à dificuldade de ouvir o outro. Assim, não conseguiram chegar aos resultados esperados e ficaram decepcionados com o teletandem. Infelizmente, não explicaram mais detalhadamente o porquê e os acontecimentos, também falha minha que não deixei o questionário mais aberto. Os participantes que acharam a sua parceria um sucesso mencionaram, em geral, um aumento na aprendizagem sobre a cultura e língua alvo e que atingiram os seus objetivos. Em específico, falaram sobre o intercâmbio das culturas, que praticaram e melhoraram a produção oral e escrita, como também o vocabulário e a gramática. Dois participantes sublinharam também a atividade do parceiro, que ele se interessava para a aprendizagem do português e perdia a timidez de falar na LE. Para dois participantes a experiência no TT foi muito mais agradável do que o esperado.

2. Parte: Seus objetivos de aprendizagem

No primeiro questionário tinha perguntas sobre os seus objetivos de aprendizagem (p.ex. Escutar, falar, gramática etc.) e a prioridade destes objetivos.

a) Você acha que conseguiu atingir os seus objetivos neste semestre? Quais sim, quais não? Explique o porquê e dê exemplos se for possível.

A maioria dos participantes respondeu que atingiu os objetivos de aprendizagem antes colocados na biografia. Mais destacados foram os seguintes objetivos: melhorar habilidade falar e escutar, ampliar o vocabulário. Também foi mencionado que adquiriram mais conhecimentos sobre a cultura alemã e perderam o medo de falar na LE.

Algumas pessoas escreveram somente que conseguiram atingir os objetivos ou , pelo menos, alguns, mas não especificaram quais foram e de que maneira foram atingidos.

Outras duas pessoas deixaram claro que conseguiram só uma parte dos objetivos porque não tiveram muito tempo para realizar as sessões de TT, ou que conseguiram praticar bem a fala, mas menos a habilidade da escuta – só que isso não faz muito sentido porque se vc elabora um diálogo com seu parceiro, automaticamente terá que ouvir o que o outro tem a dizer. Talvez esse participante tenha percebido que a fala se desenvolveu mais rapidamente do que a habilidade de entender o que o outro está dizendo. Ou ele perdeu rapidamente o medo de falar, mas ainda ficou tenso no momento em que teria que ouvir e entender o outro.

Um participante anotou que, no início, não tinha objetivos estabelecidos e que se só depois de ter entendido melhor o que o TT significava, ele conseguiu estabelecê-los. Sendo assim, as experiências foram muito mais positivas do que ele esperava.

Mais um participante ainda apontou que conseguiu passar em todas as provas para os quais estudava junto com o parceiro no TT e por isso acredita que atingiu os objetivos.

b) Você conseguiu testar ou experimentar novas estratégias de aprendizagem? Algumas que ainda não utilizou na faculdade, mas que pôde testar na sua parceria de Teletandem? Se sim, quais?

Pelas respostas das pessoas dá para ver que a maioria nem estava consciente que estava usando estratégias durante o TT. Por isso, vemos que as respostas são muito vagas e superficiais. Certamente foi também um erro meu de ter pensado que a questão das estratégias seria algo claro para os alunos. Alguns confundem habilidades (falar, escrever, ler...) com estratégias.

Somente alguns participantes destacaram algumas estratégias novas que utilizaram durante as sessões de TT como, p.ex.:

- trabalhar com músicas (ajuda na aprendizagem com novas palavras e a linguagem do dia-a-dia)
- uso de imagens, vídeos e música
- Desenvolver uma certa autonomia para aproveitar mais no TT

3. Parte: Mediação e reflexão

a. Escreveu um diário de aprendizagem?

Sim	9
Não	5

Por quê? / Por quê não?

Lendo as respostas da pergunta por que escreveram um diário, percebe-se que a maioria das nove respostas positivas somente escreveu um diário porque eu, a mediadora e pesquisadora, o pedi. A maioria desses casos, pelo menos, adicionou que acharam a experiência interessante ou útil... se isso é verdade ou não, não consigo julgar. Minhas perguntas foram tão direcionadas que os participantes quase não tinham como responder de outra maneira. Parece então que essa leve obrigação (não desejada) por minha parte levou alguns aprendizes a ter novas experiências e conhecimentos. Algumas outras respostas positivas foram:

- para observar o desenvolvimento da sessão, analisar o progresso e detectar dificuldades
- refletir sobre por que fazer TT e como fazer TT. O projeto é maravilhoso e com o diário temos como ter uma noção do desenvolvimento da parceria e dirigir os seus objetivos.

Nas respostas negativas percebe-se que os alunos se sentiram um pouco mal por responder que não: [Não, desculpe! / Comecei um, mas tive que parar por questões familiares e depois não lembrava mais. / não tive tempo]

- b. Se escreveu um diário, quantas vezes conseguiu escrever? Como escreveu (diretamente depois da sessão, alguns dias depois, somente no final do semestre...)?**

Cinco alunos escreveram no diário diretamente após a sessão de TT. Duas pessoas tb anotaram durante a sessão. E cinco pessoas também anotaram alguns dias após da sessão. Desses 5 duas mencionam que não foi um problema de anotar depois porque basearam-se nas anotações feitas durante a sessão.

- c. Se escreveu um diário, voltou a ler o que já tinha escrito? Se sim, isso ajudou em alguma coisa? Se sim, de que maneira?**

A maioria dos participantes nunca mais voltou a ler os diários. Os três que releram o que escreveram anotaram claramente que tiraram proveito dessa leitura porque ajuda a lembrar as coisas que foram aprendidas, estabelecer novos objetivos para o próxima sessão. Um aprendiz escreveu sobre uma experiência boa com os diários: "Um dia, achei dois diários perdidos no meu programa de email... justo em um tempo que eu não tinha tempo para nada... e isso me deu um impulso de não terminar a minha parceria de TT!"

- d. Você foi nas reuniões de Teletandem em grupo?**
Se sim, o que te elas te trouxeram ou o que te ajudou ou não ajudou para a sua parceria de TT?
Se não, por quê não foi? (Falta de tempo, outros compromissos, não viu necessidade...)

A maioria dos participantes só participou uma ou duas vezes nas reuniões de reflexão em grupo. Porém, todos mencionam vários aspectos positivos que essas reuniões trouxeram para eles no contexto de aprendizagem em TT:

- uma experiencia interessante, pois pude esclarecer algumas perguntas que eu tinha sobre o TT, e recebi dicas dos outros sobre o que eu poderia melhorar nas minhas sessões.*
- as discussões com e experiencias dos outros fez com que eu comecei a refletir sobre minha sessões. É bom para ter novas ideias.*
- foi bom ouvir as experiencias dos outros e compara-las com as próprias*
- recebi dicas dos colegas sobre como corrigir meu parceiro e como falar sobre temas diversos*
- me ajudaram principalmente na preparação e no desenvolvimento das sessões porque discutimos várias estratégias de aprendizagem e ensino*
- me ajudou a planejar meu TT e como tratar alguns temas*
- aprendemos trocando experiencias*

➔ *Bom, são respostas bastante vagas, quase ninguém explica mais profundamente o que trouxe para cada um. Pelo menos foi algo positivo e parece que a mediação ajudou sim nos TTs.*

- e. Se você esteve nas reuniões, elas ajudaram a refletir mais sobre o seu TT? Ajudaram a mudar seu comportamento no TT? Suas estratégias de aprendizagem? Testar novas “coisas”? Se sim, o que mudou? Quais foram estas “coisas” que testou? Quais foram estas estratégias?**

- recebi mais ideias para escolha de temas e mais tarde, corriji algumas coisas no meu TT que fiz “errado” → mas não explica o que exatamente

- percebi que podia me desenvolver muito se eu tentasse coisas que outros também faziam. Também fui inspirada a escrever textos e trocar correções com minha parceira

- Mostramos mais músicas e filmes, falamos sobre literatura

- tentei utilizar as “técnicas” discutidas nas mediações, p.ex. imagens e sons, como corrigir etc.

- p.ex. como dar um feedback ao parceiro

- pensar sobre novas formas de interação com minha parceira. Não somente quanto às línguas alemão-portuguesa, mas também quanto a correções e diálogos. Uma estratégia minha era responder uma pergunta da minha parceira em português para que ela precise se esforçar entender a LE, e depois tentei responder o mesmo em alemão para me esforçar na LE. Se não conseguimos nos entender, utilizamos o inglês como língua franca. → explica algumas estratégias mais explicitamente.

- f. E para finalizar, você iria novamente a uma reunião de Teletandem em grupo? Ou se ainda não conseguiu ir este semestre, teria interesse em participar no semestre que vem? Por quê?**

Todos responderam que iriam sim. A maioria não explicou por que. Talvez não queriam dizer que não para não me deixar brava ou chateada... não sei. Duas pessoas também mencionaram que a mediação influenciou de forma positiva as suas experiências no TT.

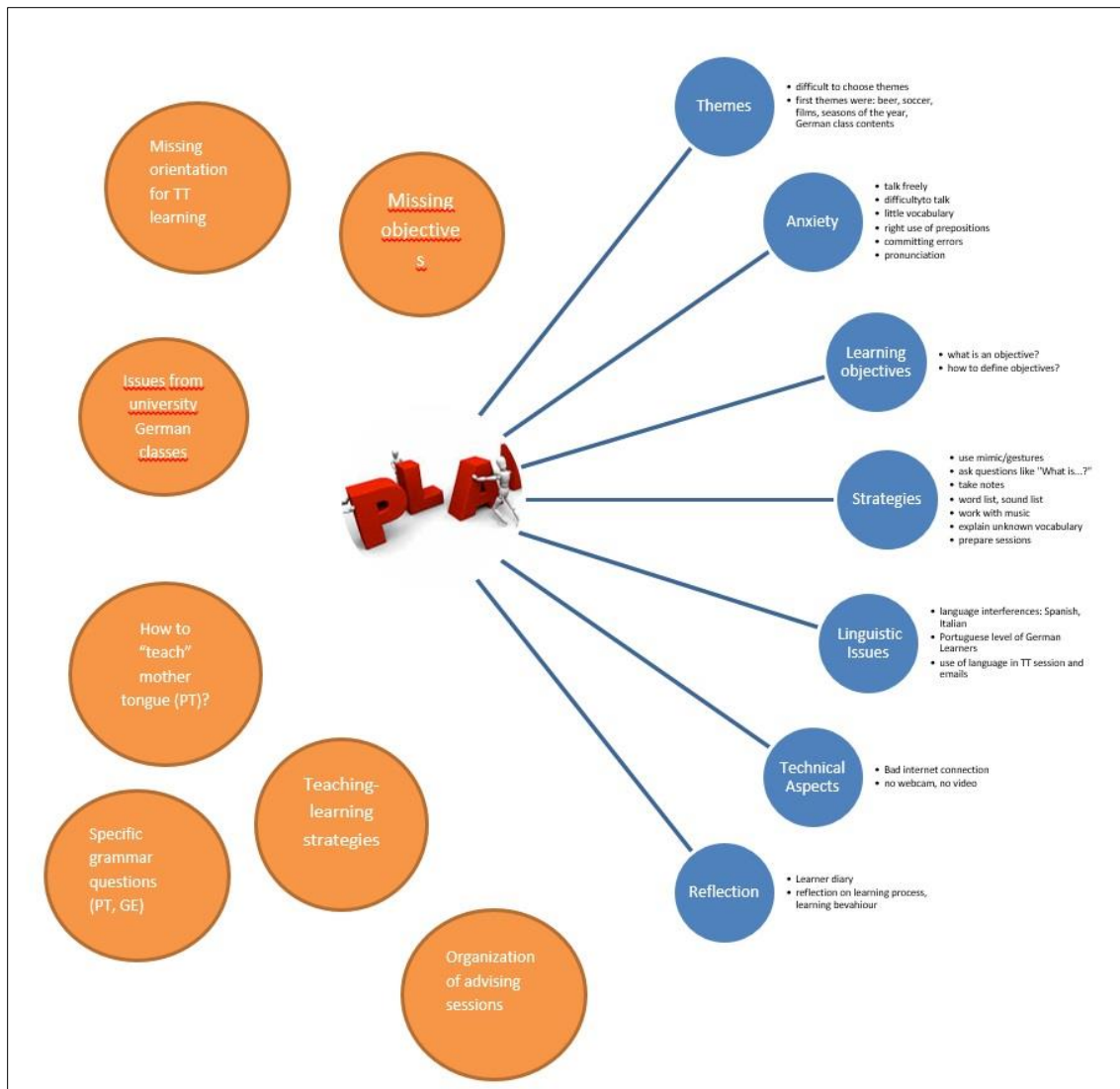
Appendix G – Synthesis of spontaneous and related topics of mediation sessions

First peer group mediation session

1 st peer group meeting → Main subject: Initial phase of a tandem partnership						
Main subject	<div>Initial phase of tandem</div>					
Directly related subjects	Themes for sessions	Anxieties	Learning objectives	Strategies:	Linguistic issues	Around the TT session
Single items that belong to subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -difficult to choose -first themes were: beer, German class contents, soccer, films, seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - talk freely, -difficulty to talk, -little vocabulary, -use of prepositions, -making mistakes, -pronunciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -how to determine -what is a learning objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -use questions like "What is...?" -mimic, gestures -Taking notes in chat and notebook vs. just remembering -List with words/sounds for pronunciation -work with music, -explain vocabulary not translating, -prepare session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Portuguese level of tandem partner - Use of language in the skype sessions and emails - Language interferences: Spanish, Italian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Phases: conversation, feedback & correction -Productivity of a tandem session - Authentic communication -Cancel sessions in advance
	Technical Aspects	Reflection				
	No webcam = no video, bad internet connection → audio and video problems	Learner diary Reflection about learning process/ <u>behaviour</u>				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Missing objectives ➤ Missing an orientation/advising/introduction for TT ➤ How to teach mother language = Portuguese ➤ Learners of German have very different language levels ➤ Didactic material used at university is not appreciated by learners of German ➤ Vocabulary & grammar in the traditional German class and other contexts ➤ German language in comparison with other languages more difficult ➤ Traditional learning context class room vs. learning context teletandem ➤ Specific grammar questions ➤ Organization of advising sessions ➤ Teaching-learning strategies ➤ different learning objectives, depends on individual
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Table of 1st PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics



Graphic of 1st PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Second peer group mediation session









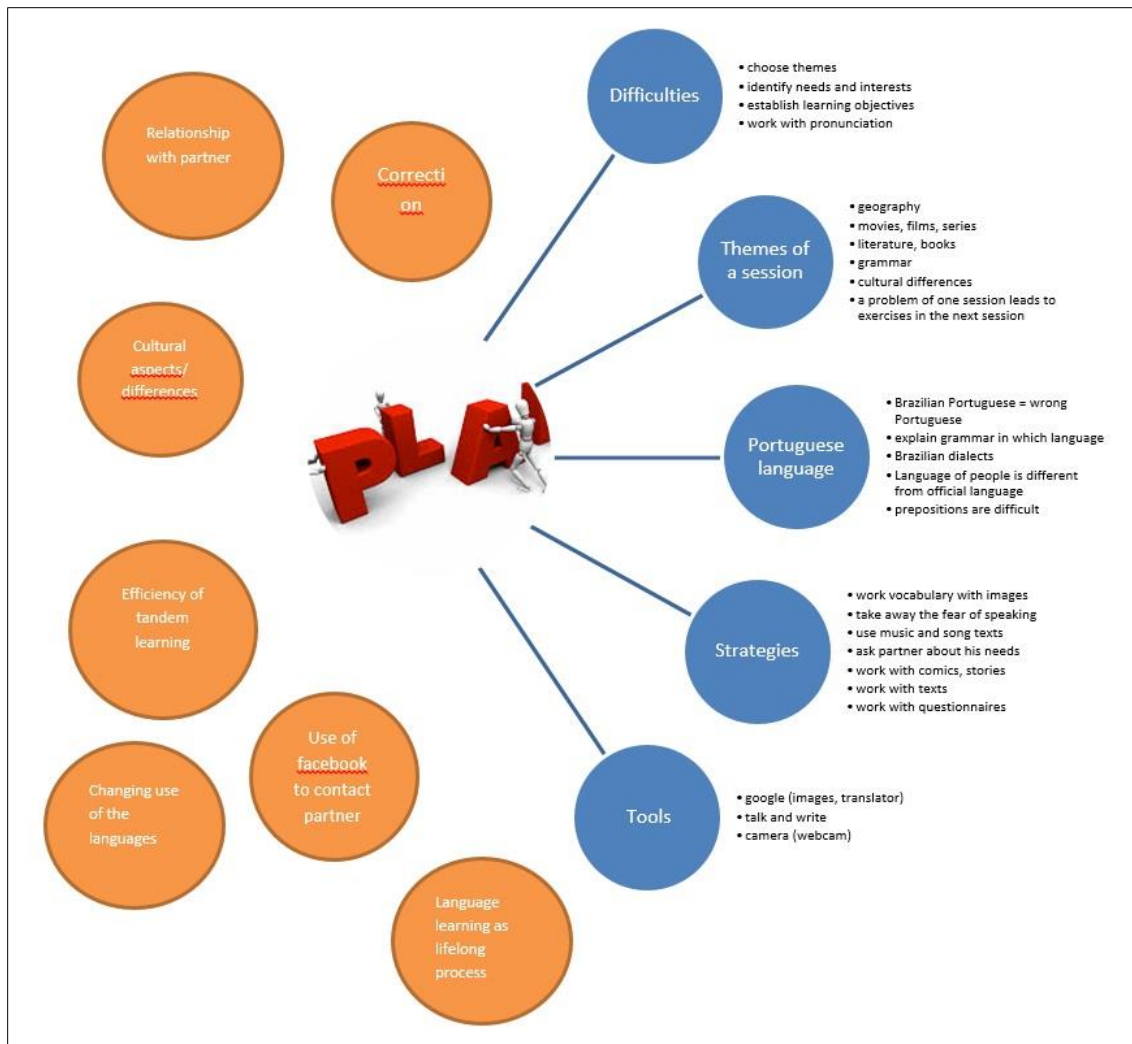
2 nd peer group meeting → Main subject: how to plan a teletandem session						
Main subject						
Directly related subjects	difficulties	themes for a session	Portuguese grammar/language	Strategies:	Tools:	misc
Single items that belong to subject	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -how to choose a theme? - need to identify needs and interests in order to establish objectives which may guide the planning -How to work with pronunciation in tandem? 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cities -Favorite films -Famous bands -Literature -Soccer -Regional Cultural differences -TV series -Furniture -Subordinated clauses -Future tense -Pronunciation practice -Application for a job A problem from one session leads to exercise in next session 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Difficult to explain grammar rules of mother language to tandem partner -Brazilian = wrong Portuguese -Language of the people is different than the official language -Different Brazilian dialects -Which language do you use to explain grammar? -Examples of exercises -Prepositions are really difficult -Subordinated frases 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -take away the fear to speak -vocabulary: work with images -use music and songtexts -ask partner what he wants/needs -concrete ideas to explain grammatical phenomena -send material before the session -a comic, a story to work on a subject -The use of texts in TT sessions -Work with personal questionnaires 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google images, translator, -Talk and write -camera 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Auto evaluation and learning diary - reciprocal needs: partner and you -learning objectives
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Correction of partner ➤ Comprehension is important for communication, doesn't need to be everything grammatically right ➤ Relationship with the partner ➤ Language learning as lifelong process ➤ Use of facebook to stay in touch with the tandem partner ➤ Changing use of the languages ➤ Relation of male-female in tandem 			

Table of 2nd PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics



Graphic of 2nd PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Third peer group mediation session








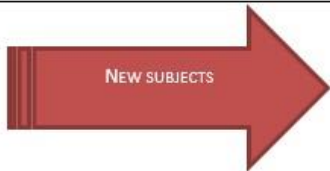
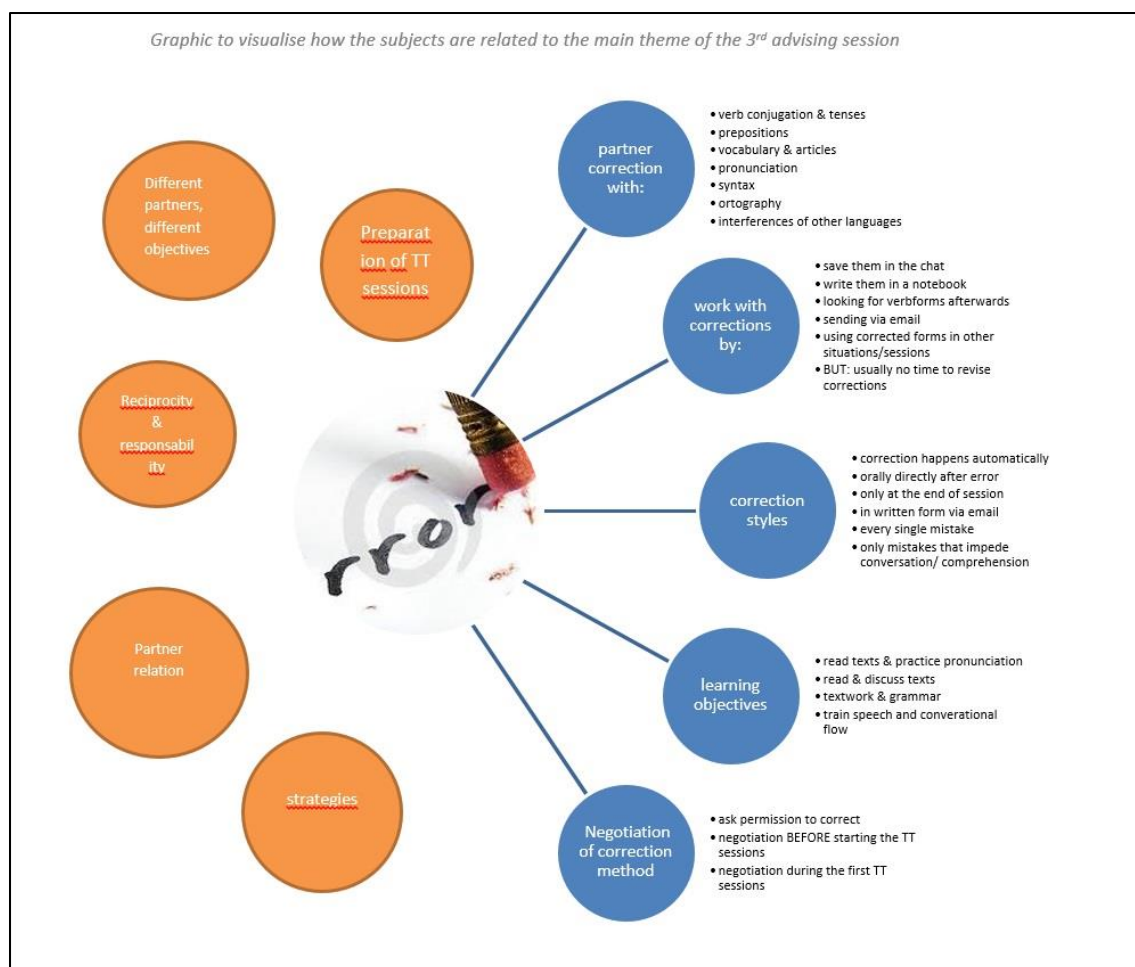
3 rd peer group meeting						
→ Main subject: Correction in teletandem sessions						
Main subject	<div style="text-align: center;"> correction  </div>					
Directly related subjects	correction of partner	work with correction done by partner	correction styles	learning objectives	Negotiation of correction method	misc
Single items that belong to subject	 -conjugation, -prepositions, -vocabulary, -pronunciation, -verb tenses, -articles, -syntax, -orthography, -interferences from other languages (Spanish, Italian) → which way is the best to correct this?	 -save corrections in the chat -take notes of corrections, -notebook only for TT, -look for verb conjugation afterwards, -corrections of texts directly in word or via email, -oral corrections saved in chat, → usually no time to revise later/at home. -Try to repeat the correction and use the right form in another session again. → individual preferences	 -correction happens automatically, -correction is done orally directly after the mistake, -correction is done at the end of the session, -correction is done after the session in written form via email, -correction is done via chat directly after the mistake, -correction of every single mistake, -correction only of the aspects that are incomprehensible.	 -read texts & work with pronunciation, -read texts and discuss, - <u>textwork</u> & grammar , -train speech and conversational flow, - <u>Textwork</u> vs oral communication	 -ask permission to correct, -negotiation BEFORE starting the session, -negotiation in the first sessions	 - Learning diaries -Learning is not only grammar -Preparation of TT sessions -Strategies for preparation of TT sessions - Too much intimacy/ friendship could disturb the rules
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex: 1;">  </div> <div style="flex: 2;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparation of TT session ➤ Different partners, different objectives ➤ Work with the partner reduces egoism (reciprocity!) ➤ Reading texts ➤ Reciprocity & responsibility ➤ Relation of the partners ➤ Strategies: prepare a <u>voc</u> list for partner, send sth for the session a day earlier </div> </div>						

Table of 3rd PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

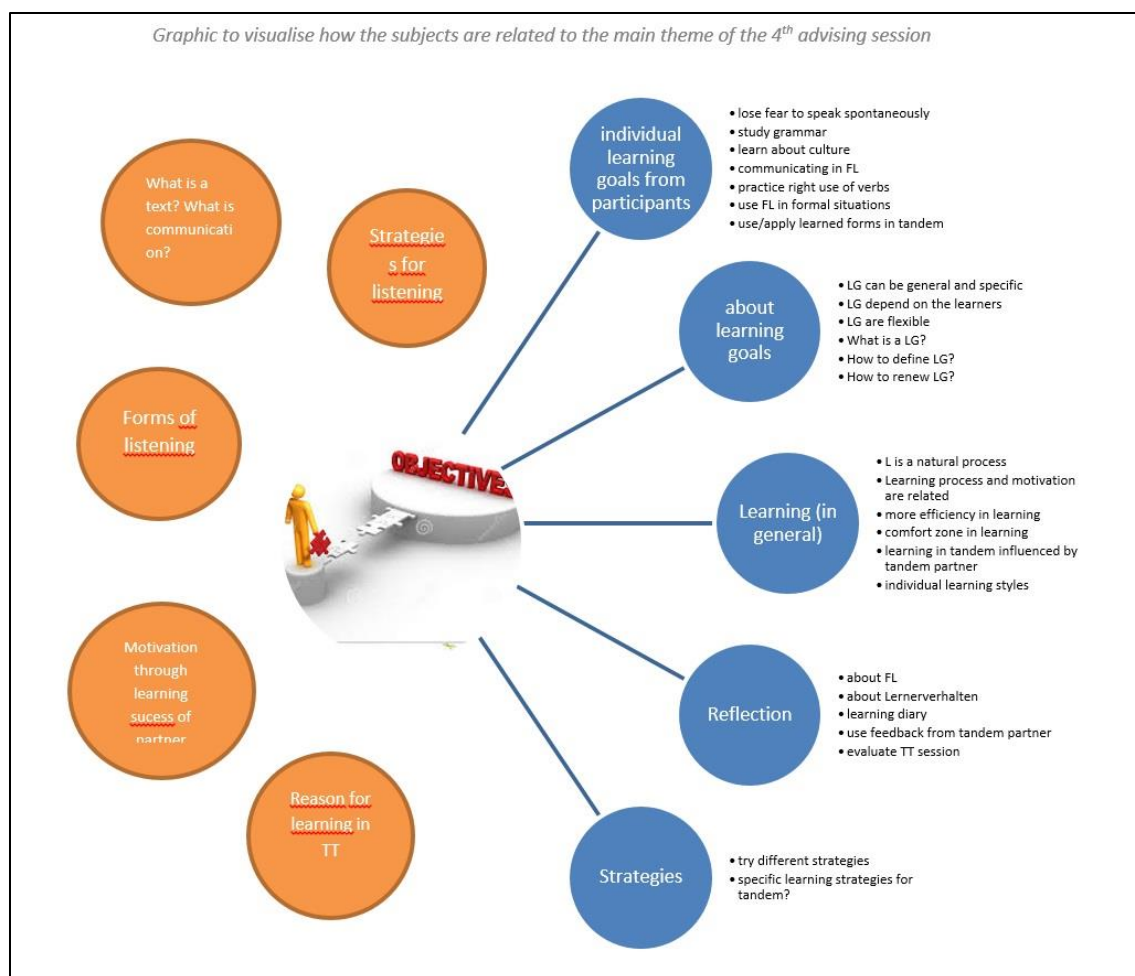


Graphic of 3rd PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Fourth peer group mediation session

4 th peer group meeting						
→ Main subject: Learning goals						
Main subject	<div>Learning goals</div>					
Directly related subjects	individual learning goals are	Learning goals can be:	Learning in general	Reflection	Strategies	misc
Single items that belong to subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lose fear to speak <u>spontaneously</u>; - <u>study</u> grammar; - aplicar o aprendizado; - learn about culture; - communicating in FL; - use of verbs; - use language in formal situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - specific - flexible - depend on the learner - What is it? - Why establish it? - <u>how</u> to renew it? - difficult to find goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - L is a natural process - L process and motivation are related - How to be more efficient in learning? - Staying in a comfort zone - Learning in tandem is influenced by the tandem partner - Individual learning styles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection about foreign language - Learning diary - Evaluating TT session afterwards (or not) - Use feedback from partner - Reflect learning proceedings (<u>Lernverhalten</u>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try different strategies - Learning strategies for tandem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two perspectives: teacher, learner - Difficulty in staying with a theme for the session - Classroom learning context vs. virtual learning context - Have patience with oneself - Varieties in German language
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repetition as strategy to memorize vocabulary ➤ Strategies for listening, for reading ➤ Different forms of listening (detail, global) ➤ Motivation through learning success of tandem partner ➤ What are the reasons for learning in <u>TELEtandem</u> ➤ What is/defines "communication"? ➤ What defines a "text"? 		

Table of 4th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics



Graphic of 4th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Fifth peer group mediation session

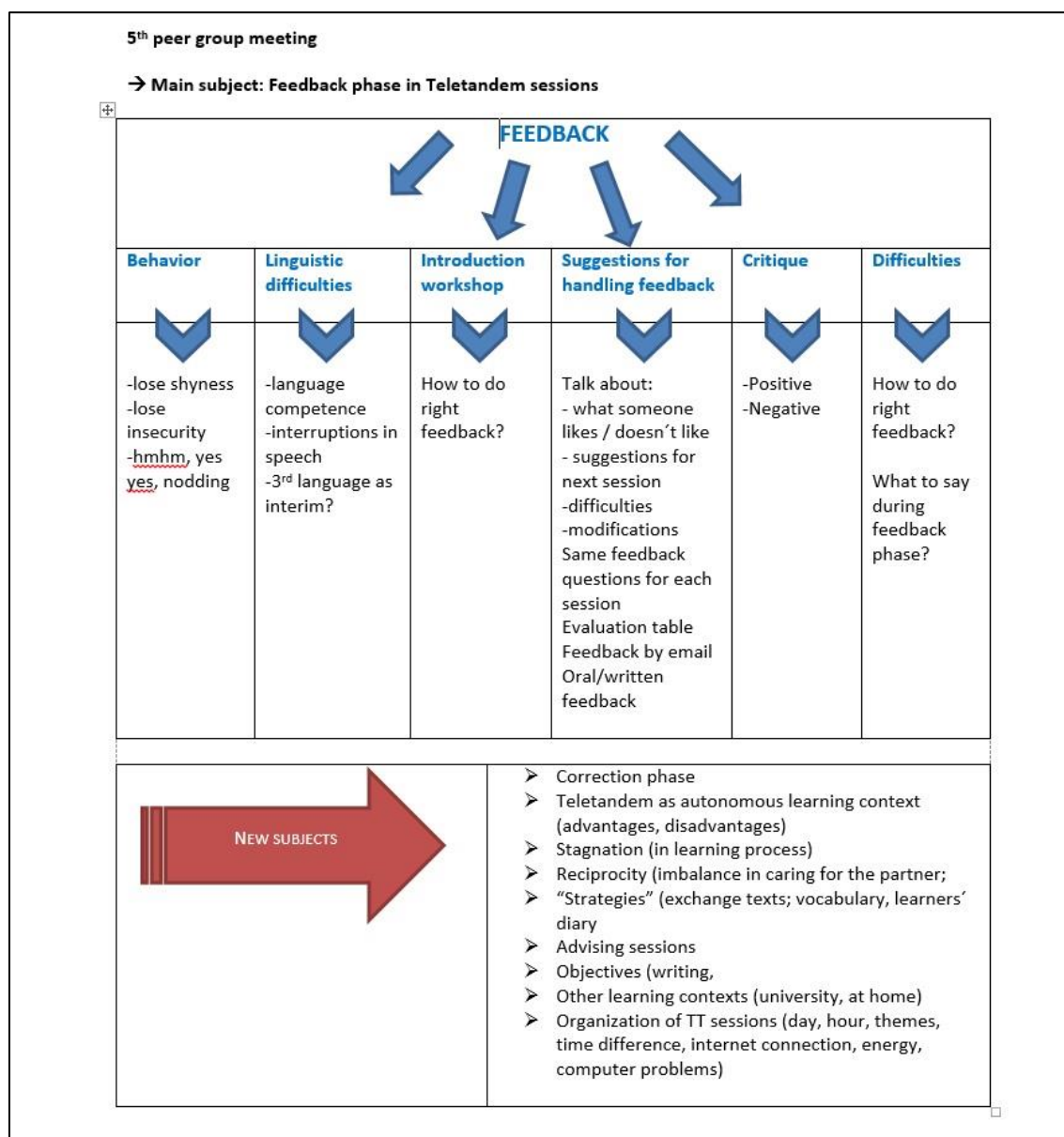
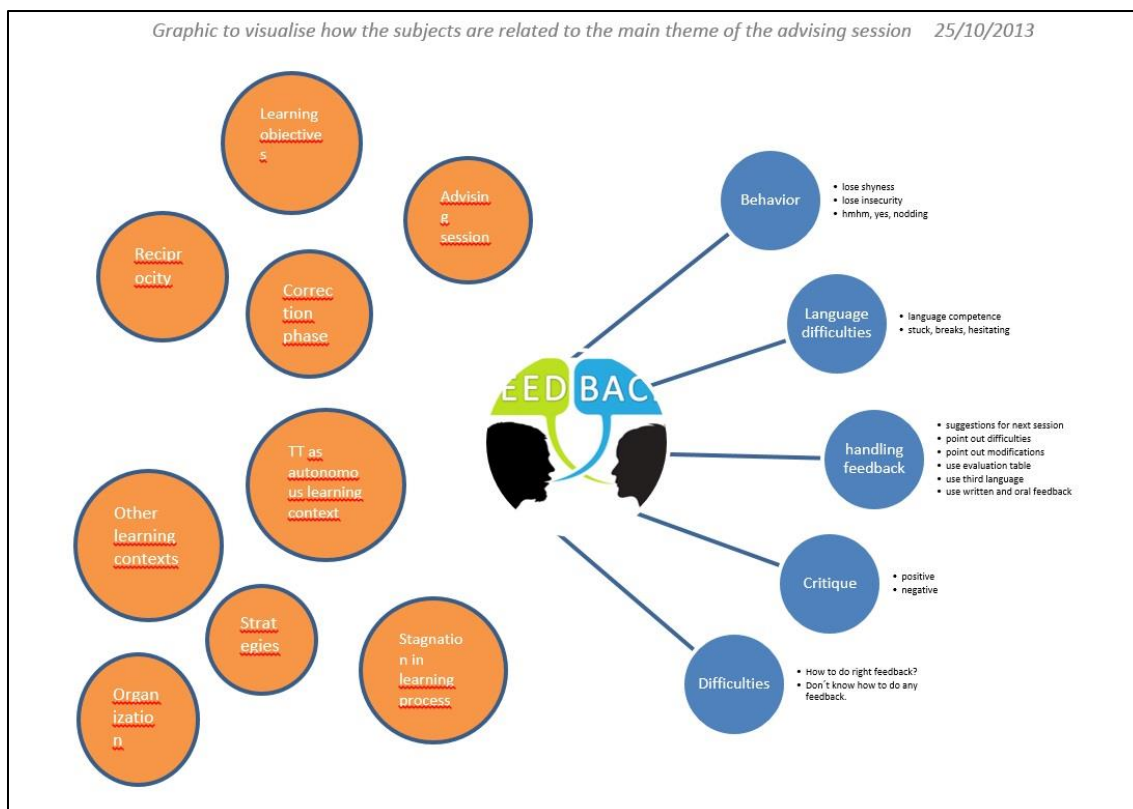


Table of 5th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics



Graphic of 5th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Sixths peer group mediation session

6th peer group meeting

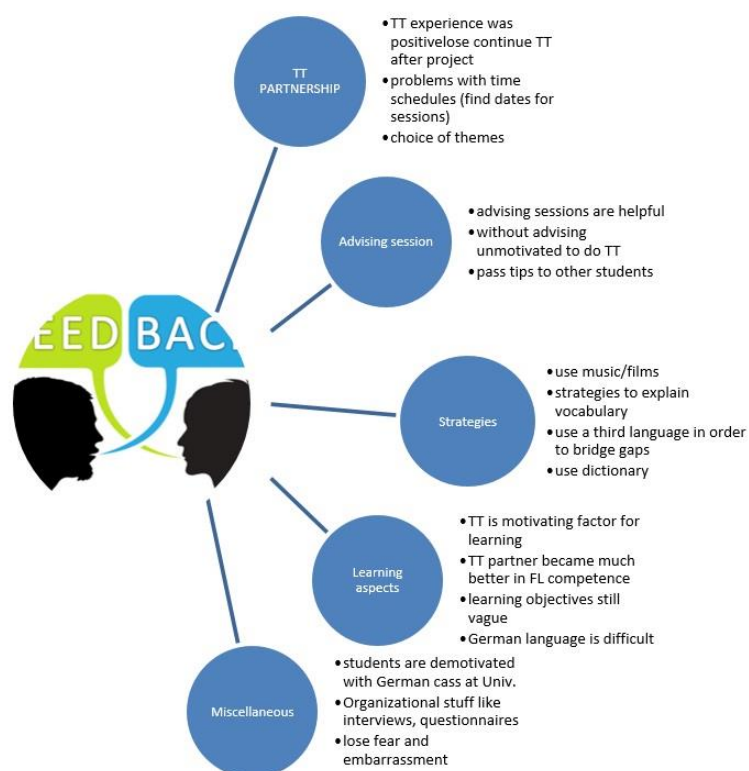
→ Main subject: Evaluation of advising sessions for TT

<div>MEDIATION for TT</div>					
TT partnership	Advising sessions	strategies	??	learning aspects	Misc
<div>▼</div> <div>-TT experience = positive - continue TT after project - Problems with time schedules (find dates to meet) - Themes and correction were negotiated - choice of themes is important</div>	<div>▼</div> <div>-advising = helpful -without advising unmotivated to continue TT - Pass tips to other students</div>	<div>▼</div> <div>use music/films for learning - strategies to explain vocabulary - use of a 3rd language to bridge gaps -use of the dictionary during TT</div>	<div>▼</div> <div>-Work with texts during <u>eTandem</u> during holidays -ways of working with a theme</div>	<div>▼</div> <div>- partner became so much better during TT - TT is a motivating factor for learning German - learning objectives are still vague -German is a difficult language</div>	<div>▼</div> <div>-Students are demotivated with the German class at university -organizational stuff about the interviews and final questionnaires - speaking speed - loose fear and embarrassment</div>
<div>NEW SUBJECTS</div>					

Here it is quite difficult to decide which themes popped up spontaneously and which were guided by questions from the mediator because the mediator only asked them to talk about their TT and mediaton session experiences. In some moments, the mediator asked questions in order to obtain more detailed information about an aspect but she did not ask any very directing questions.

Table of 6th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Graphic to visualise how the subjects are related to the main theme of the 6th advising session 25/10/2013



Graphic of 6th PGM with spontaneous/new subjects and directly related topics

Appendix H – 15 Guidelines for Mediation

AS QUINZE DIRETRIZES PARA A MEDIAÇÃO

Seria interessante e pertinente se o professor-mediador:

- 1- Estabelecesse uma boa relação com os interagentes, de forma a criar uma atmosfera de segurança e confiança permanente entre eles.
- 2- Promovesse uma atmosfera informal e descontraída que instigasse os interagentes a verbalizar suas ansiedades, suas necessidades e dificuldades sem constrangimentos ou receios.
- 3- Tentasse diminuir a assimetria entre ele e os interagentes, pois ambos deveriam ser “cúmplices” nesse processo de ensinar e aprender virtualmente, trabalhando colaborativamente a fim de atingir um objetivo em comum.
- 4- Procurasse não prescrever um modo que ele acredita estar correto, evitando realizar, assim, uma prática pedagógica diretiva que impossibilita a reflexão e autonomia do aprendiz.
- 5- Negociasse constantemente com os interagentes com relação: aos horários de mediações; produção e entrega de dados de pesquisa; tipo de recursos do MSN Messenger utilizados durante a mediação (câmera, áudio etc.), entre outros.
- 6- Partisse sempre das necessidades dos interagentes, vivenciadas em sua prática.
- 7- Não condenasse a prática pedagógica do interagente para não baixar a sua auto-estima e não fazer com que ele se sinta incapaz e inferior aos demais.
- 8- Sugerisse, pelo menos em um primeiro momento, alternativas para que o aluno pudesse refletir e decidir qual seria a mais viável e adequada para ser colocada em prática.
- 9- Avaliasse as alternativas apresentadas pelos interagentes frente a outras alternativas.
- 10- Fizesse uso, num segundo momento, da supervisão colaborativa, dando liberdade para que os interagentes reflitam sobre sua prática, compreendam suas ações e desenvolvam uma maior capacidade crítica.
- 11- Encorajasse os interagentes, apontando os aspectos positivos e, posteriormente, realizasse reflexões a cerca de questões conflituosas.
- 12- Colaborasse para focalizar melhor o problema e ajudasse o interagente a generalizar uma questão, caso o professor perceba que não se trata de um caso isolado, mas sim de um problema que persiste durante toda a sua prática.
- 13- Procurasse não trabalhar com respostas prontas, mas, sim, instigasse o interagente a buscar o melhor caminho para que ele aprenda a refletir e encontrar, de maneira autônoma, soluções para possíveis problemas, tornando-os aptos para a resolução de situações conflituosas com os quais inevitavelmente se depararão em suas experiências pedagógicas futuras.

14- Não avaliasse a prática do aluno em “mal”; “melhor”, “pior”, pois nenhuma prática deve ser julgada, já que não existem práticas melhores ou piores do que outras, mas práticas diferentes e adequadas ou não para determinadas contextos.

15- Sugerisse, caso haja necessidade, leituras teóricas voltadas para a necessidade do interagente.

Quadro 6: As quinze diretrizes para a mediação

(Fonte: Teletandem News, Ano 1, n. 1, p. 7).

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