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"Our interaction was very productive": levels of reflection in learners' diaries in teletandem

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1. Introduction

- 1 Research on the use of reflective journals or learning diaries¹ in foreign language education has increased in the last decades (Bailey, 1991; Moon, 2004, 2010; Cavalari & Del Monte, 2021), since, as stated by Moon (2004, 2010), keeping a diary may promote optimal conditions for reflection, metacognition, and autonomous learning. These studies have also shown that diaries may be a powerful instrument to investigate students' interpretations, feelings, and attitudes towards learning experiences. Moon (2004; 2010), who examined the use of diaries in different learning contexts, proposes a generic framework that characterises diary entries into four categories or levels, which range from merely descriptive to deeply reflective writing.
- 2 In the current research, we examine learning diaries written within the context of a teletandem project (Telles, 2006), which is a model of telecollaboration in which two two interlocutors of different mother tongues interact in order to learn the other person's language. Each speaker wants to practise his/her L2, which is a well-known language to his/her partner. Teletandem is guided by the principles of autonomy, reciprocity and separation of languages². In line with other research in the field of autonomous learning, some studies carried out in telecollaboration contexts (Luz, 2009; Cavalari & Del Monte, 2021) have shown that keeping diaries seems to promote focus on relevant aspects of the learning process, such as setting goals, planning and selecting resources, assessing learning process and outcomes, and exploring emotions related to the learning process. These publications, however, are based on case studies that have

approached diaries from the perspective of autonomous learning theories. In the present study, a large corpus is examined from the theoretical perspective of reflection. The analysis is based on (i) Moon's framework (2004), which investigated reflective diaries in diverse educational contexts, and on (ii) Garcia et al. proposal (2017)'s in which teletandem blogs have been examined to highlight emerging metacognitive operations that characterise reflection and autonomization. Data are a set of a corpus, compiled by 350 diaries written in English and stored in MulTeC (Multimodal Teletandem Corpus) (Aranha & Lopes, 2019; Aranha & Wigham, 2020). This dataset was created by means of a quantitative investigation carried out by the authors (Leone et al., ongoing). The authors scrutinized diaries written in English from 16 different cohorts (TeleTandem English Learning Diaries). Using a tool for exploring corpora (ie, Sketch engine), they found that the most frequent and evenly distributed word was "interaction." Considering that participants are expected to learn "in interaction" in the teletandem context, we focus on what they say about it in order to investigate levels of reflection in the fragment in which the key word occurs. We seek to answer the following research questions: What do participants say when they refer to teletandem "interaction"? How reflective are the diary entries in which teletandem "interaction" is mentioned?

- 3 We expect the results of this study may contribute to the growing body of research on reflective diaries and language learning within virtual exchange programs and particularly to language learning in teletandem.

2. Background of the study

- 4 The concepts of learning diaries, reflection in learning diaries, and metacognitive awareness shape the current research. They are described in subsection 2.1; in subsection 2.2, the learning environment, in which current study's data have been developed, is illustrated.

2.1. Reflection in diaries: developing a conceptual framework

- 5 Research on the use of diaries in educational contexts has been grounded in different theoretical perspectives that have led to varied definitions of this pedagogical task. In the context of language education, a simple and clear definition of diaries is given by Bailey and Ochsner (1983, p. 189): a diary is an "account of a second language experience as recorded in a first-person journal." Several authors (Bailey, 1991; Liberali, 1999; Moon 2004) state that diaries have been shown to report affective factors, language learning strategies, perceptions of language learning experience and students' interpretations of different events. They are based on introspection if they are written during the learning experience, and they are retrospective if they are written immediately after (immediate retrospection) the activity or even years later (delayed retrospection). In introspective and retrospective diaries, the writing process is always a medium by which "what happens in the head" is represented in order to be read by others as well (Moon, 2004, p. 80). Diaries are, therefore, a unique representation of events which are not always easy to interpret since students may either just communicate ideas in an unclear way or express concepts and opinions only to gain the teacher's sympathy or support. In fact, as pointed out by Bailey (1991, p.

64-65), diary analysis is a "doubting and believing game", meaning that the researcher must keep in mind that the written text might not be an exact representation of what authors had in "their head."

- 6 Some studies on the use of diaries in educational contexts (Liberali, 1999; Moon, 2004, 2010) revealed that reflection and metacognition are two important aspects of writing journals. Moon (2004, p. 82) states that in formal education the view of reflection should go beyond a common-sense approach. In everyday matters, reflection is associated with thought aimed at organizing unusual events and "relatively complicated, ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is already based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess" (Moon, 2004, p. 82). Rather, in the academic context, reflection should be "more tangible and directed"; it should be a deep process (Moon, 2004, p. 83) which, in turn, is related to a stated outcome, such as reflective writing.
- 7 The process of reflection is shaped by the conception of knowledge, by the approach to learning, and by emotional factors. Moon's (2004, p. 32-43) description of "structure of knowledge" regards knowledge of disciplinary contents (eg, science). For the current research, the content is related to foreign language learning; therefore, the conception of knowledge regards how learners understand language and culture and how they see themselves as L2 speakers. This conception concerns how developed the construct of communicative competence is in the learner's mind (eg, Do they think that language is just grammar? Are they aware of the socio-pragmatic dimensions of the communication process? Do they consider cross-cultural problems which might affect communication?).
- 8 The second notion, ie, approach to learning, refers to the learner's beliefs and attitudes for language learning, to the learner's awareness of the existence of different stages in language knowledge and to the learner's awareness of strategies and knowledge that might affect the learning process. The approach to learning also shows the extent to which students are able to "commit" themselves to improve their language learning. The conception of knowledge and the approach to learning are two related notions: the way learners monitor and manage their learning is strongly influenced by the idea of knowledge they have (Moon, 2004). For instance, a student who thinks that grammar accuracy is the only relevant component of language competence (and that errors must always be corrected in order to improve their competence in L2) will probably monitor just this aspect of their learning experience and, in learning diaries, may report and/or analyse and discuss the interaction from this narrow perspective (Moon, 2004).
- 9 Moon (2004) distinguishes two levels for descriptive writing and two levels for reflective writing. The first level of descriptive writing is a mere report of events; the second level refers to descriptive accounts that reveal "points of reflection" and mentions of emotional reactions which do not advance learning (Moon, 2004, p. 214). The third and fourth levels of writing are meaningful reflective writing. In the third level, experience is "subjected to reflection" when the learner expresses "willingness to be critical of the action of self or others" (p. 215) with little attention to behaviors and events from different perspectives (p. 216). The fourth level of writing is characterized by deep reflection in which a clear metacognitive stance is taken and one's own processes are discussed and criticized, examining thoughts, considering also "the view of motives of the other" (Moon, 2004, p. 216). Furthermore, the diary author expresses awareness of the emotional state relevance. Deep reflection is associated with

"transformative learning", the ability to gain a profound understanding of the learning experience and to revise knowledge (Moon, 2004). Learners who reflect deeply seem to be more "committed" to the learning process and outcome, strive to overcome individual evidence and self-question/assess behaviors in relation to goals (eg, professional) in favour of a renewed vision of the learning experience.

- 10 Because metacognition is a distinguishing feature of reflective diary writing, as proposed by Moon (2004), it seems relevant to review how this concept has been explored in other studies. Garcia et al. (2017, p. 4) define metacognition as "the process of reflecting on how one learns." They investigated a collective blog completed during a teletandem exchange between French and Australian university students in order to develop a descriptive typology of metacognitive operations. Based on the premise that metacognition is a means of developing autonomy, the authors (following Holec, 1981; O'Leary 2014) used the following categories for data analysis: (i) setting goals, (ii) planning learning activities by selecting relevant resources and/or possible learning strategies, (iii) evaluating one's own learning and learning strategies, (iv) making explicit the emotional dimensions of learning and taking control of them.
- 11 Results revealed that three types of metacognitive operations are present in the blog. The first type involves rare operations, such as setting learning goals and choosing learning activities to reach the established goals. The second type includes the following frequent operations: planning learning activities and the (self-)evaluation of learning. According to the authors, the frequent operations are usually related to teletandem-specific features, such as (i) assessment of mutual understanding between partners, (ii) comparison of the two partners in terms of their skills in their respective foreign languages, and (iii) assessment of a growing awareness of one's own language. The third type refers to the emotional dimensions of learning, ie, students' management and monitoring of their emotions related to learning, such as their anxiety before their first teletandem session. The authors remark that the emotional dimension may be present in the other operations, which means that this metacognitive operation—managing emotions—pervades the other two. These results are based on data from a collective blog, a tool used to foster teletandem participants' reflection. Taking into consideration that, in Moon's framework, reflective writing fosters *metacognition that supports learning* (p. 86), it seems crucial to carry out the same metacognitive operations in the analysis of teletandem diaries.
- 12 With respect to exploring the potential of corpus tools in aiding qualitative analysis of learning diaries, the studies by Flowerdew (2002) and Helm (2009) are worth considering. Flowerdew describes a qualitative application of corpus processing tools "to identify teacher education students' attitudes towards language learning and language in general" (Flowerdew, 2002, p. 231). He identifies keywords and then examines the stretches of text in which these words occur to build up a picture of students' preoccupations as language learners in relation to positive (eg, aware, confident) and negative (eg, afraid, anxious) feelings, as well as strategies (eg, memory, cognitive practice).
- 13 Helm (2009) cites Flowerdew's paper on keywords to examine data from a telecollaborative context: two groups (25 participants) of Italian university students of English L2. As with our context, diaries were written after the oral sessions (an average of nine diaries per student). Adopting a task-based approach, students were required to write a weekly diary after their sessions and reflect upon the following issues: their

expectations, the relationship between language and culture, texts they were given to read about language, culture and social identity. In line with Flowerdew and Helm, the current study examines the learning diaries as a useful tool for research on reflection within telecollaboration, particularly on teletandem, which is a complex context to learn a foreign language.

2.2. Teletandem based pedagogical scenarios at São Paulo State University (UNESP) and data collection

- 14 This study is based on the teletandem pedagogical scenario as it is implemented at UNESP. As stated by Aranha and Leone (2017), the scenario comprises two macrotasks: a teletandem oral session (one-hour Skype conversations on a weekly basis) and a mediation session (support offered by the teacher by means of different tools). Each macrotask comprises different tasks whose purpose is to promote language learning in teletandem. The microtasks students are expected to carry out are: answering pre- and post-session questionnaires, writing learning diaries, and exchanging texts (writing a text in their foreign language and revising a text in their mother tongue). The learning diary is written every week after the oral session—either in English or in Portuguese.
- 15 Before participants start the project, during the tutorial (or preparation phase), the teacher presents guiding questions that may help them write the diaries. These are the guidelines offered to students during the tutorial³:
- 16 After each teletandem oral session, it is essential that you write a learning diary entry. This will help you reflect upon what happens during the sessions and how you can benefit from the experience. When you write your diary, try to reflect on the topics that were discussed during that specific session. What did you learn? Go back through the learning goals you set when you answered the initial questionnaire. Explain how your participation in the project has helped you achieve them. If you conclude that you might be on the wrong track, think about ways to make adjustments.
- 17 Make comments about (i) moments in which there was any conflict, or you faced any difficulty; (ii) the causes for that; (iii) how (or if) the problem was solved. Has your partner been supportive of your learning process? How? Did you negotiate these issues during the session?
- 18 No explicit definition of reflection is offered, and students are encouraged to present their thoughts about the experience, evaluations of the learning process, and difficulties they might be facing.

3. Methods

- 19 This exploratory study aims to characterize students' reflection in learning diaries when they talk about their interaction within teletandem setting as it is implemented at UNESP - São José do Rio Preto (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014; Cavalari & Aranha, 2016). The methodology is a qualitative thematic analysis which builds on a quantitative result from a previous study which used Sketch Engine tools (Leone et al., ongoing).

3.1. Data

20 Data are composed of fragments of 350 learner diaries written in English in which "interaction" occurs as the most frequent word (Leone et al., ongoing). The learner diaries are stored in MulTeC (Multimodal Teletandem Corpus) (Aranha & Lopes, 2019), which comprises a total of 664 diaries written both in Portuguese and in English. In this paper, the dataset is named TTEndLD-KW-interaction (Teletandem English Learning Diaries-Keyword-interaction). The fragment selection process consisted in different steps. Initially, we used a function of Sketch engine that shows 500 characters left and right of each occurrence of the word "interaction." This procedure revealed that, in some cases, text belonging to the same diary entry appeared in different fragments. So, the next step was to merge those fragments with overlapping texts. Currently, the length of each extract may vary according to the position and number of occurrences of the word "interaction." The shortest fragments are those in which the keyword interaction appeared at the beginning or at the end of the fragment. The longest fragments (which were merged), contain around 1,000 characters, and "interaction" appears twice. Currently, TTEndLD-KW-interaction is comprised of 333 fragments.

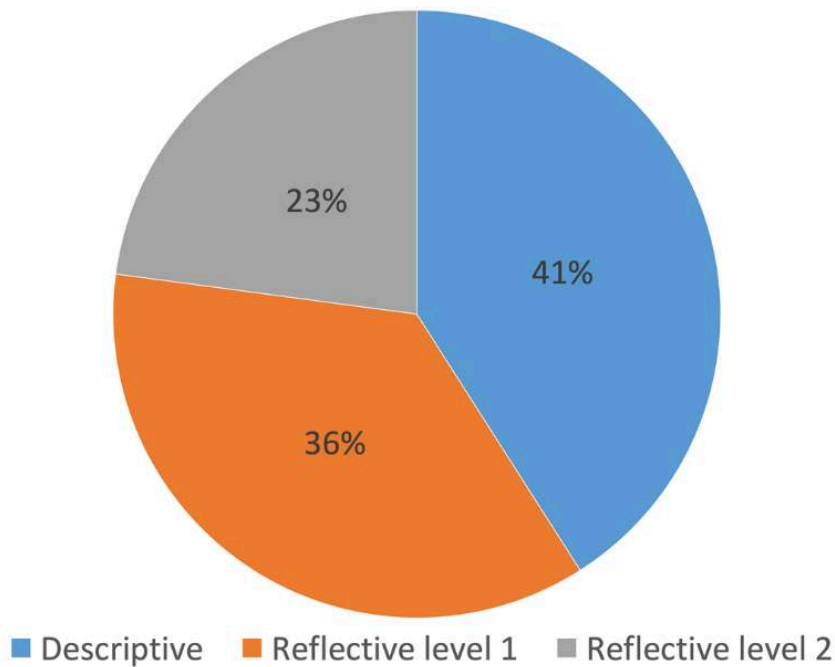
3.2. Analysis procedures

21 Data analysis was based on Moon's framework (2004), which proposes two levels of descriptive writing and two levels of reflective writing. Since the purpose of the paper is to examine teletandem diaries as a potential tool fostering reflection, the two descriptive levels were considered one single category, which included "a mere description of facts" and "descriptive writing with some points of reflection" (Moon, 2004, p. 215). The degree of reflection was inferred on the basis of Garcia et al. (2017)'s metacognitive operations, ie, setting goals, selecting resources (rare operations), (self)evaluating learning and planning learning activities (frequent operations), and managing emotions (pervading operations). Data were analysed using Excel, which makes it possible to tag fragments and then "filter data" according to specific codes. Both top-down and bottom-up processes were used to characterise the features in each reflective level. All three authors analyzed data separately and then shared the results for debriefing. When different views emerged, researchers discussed to reach consensus.

4. Findings

22 Findings show that most fragments (n =196;-59%) revealed some degree of reflection as participants write about their "interaction" in teletandem. An essential feature of reflection is the learners' assessment of their learning experience in interaction. A minority of fragments (n =136;-41%), on the other hand, were mere recalling of events.

Figure. 1–Distribution of descriptive, reflective level 1 and level 2 in the dataset TTEndLd-KW-interaction (Teletandem English Learning Diaries-Keyword-interaction).



23 In the following sections, these categories are presented and analysed.

4.1. The descriptive category

24 Out of 333 extracts, 136 (41%) were coded as descriptive, as they reveal the participants' recalling of some events that occurred in interaction.

25 Extract 1 is representative of the others in this category: the description of what participants did during the interaction offers an idea of the chronology of topics discussed, and there is no reference to how (or if) this discussion may have contributed to their learning.

Extract 1. Description: *I apologised for being a bit late* (TTEndLd-KW-interaction, 2013, I8F6, D6)⁴

On our sixth interaction, I apologised for being a bit late and explained that I was in a queue waiting to buy my lunch ticket for today. I then explained how the lunch system here works, and how early we have to wake up on Friday mornings in order to buy lunch tickets for the whole week. She then told me that, like me, she isn't very good at cooking, although last week she and her boyfriend made a wisteria cyrup with mushrooms, and that they picked the wisteria flowers and the mushrooms themselves

26 In other fragments, a short description of topics is followed by a form of evaluation of the interaction, as in extract 2.

Extract 2. Description: *This time she accepted my correction* (TTEndLd-KW-interaction, 2012, I9F12, D4)

The fourth interaction took place on the 3rd of April. Firstly, we talked about the text she wrote about a Brazilian film entitled *Ônibus 174*. This time she accepted my correction. Later on, we discussed some American accents,

especially the Philadelphian one that she finds hilarious. This interaction didn't take long, but I enjoyed it very much. My American colleague is a very good speaker!

- 27 The fact that the student enjoyed the interaction (*I enjoyed it very much*) could be considered as evidence of appraisal or assessment. However, because this appraisal is based on a description (*we talked about the text she wrote (...) she accepted my correction...*) of events that happened during the interaction, it does not focus on the participant's learning process and does not seem to represent a metacognitive operation that characterises reflection. This type of fragment shows that sometimes students write about the interaction, but do not reflect on it in relation to their learning experience. This resembles the common-sense concept of "reflection", as proposed by Moon (2004; see section 2.1).

4.2. Reflective level 1: a first step towards meaningful reflection

- 28 Out of 333 extracts, 120 (36%) were coded as reflective level 1. In this category, as students write about interaction, they express awareness of some learning opportunities fostered by the environment. They show a metacognitive stance when they assess the experience (eg, *interesting, amazing, cool, good, productive, funny, awful, bad, terrible*). Evidence for evaluation is weak, as students refer to (i) Internet connection; (ii) linguistic explanations; (iii) comparisons with previous experiences; (iv) description of procedures; (v) types of information exchanged; (vi) evaluation of the information given by the partner. The assessment may be followed by metacognitive operations (setting goals, selecting resources or planning, for example).
- 29 One example is extract 3, in which the author assesses the experience, mentioning learning goals which can be understood when she mentions the areas in which she thinks she has improved (ie, culture).

Extract 3: Reflective level 1: *In a whole I really enjoyed our conversation today!* (TTEndL-KW-interaction, 2012, I8F2, D6)

The **interaction** today was pretty good, we talked about variety things. We started talking about the difference of TV network here and there, and how it works. Then, we talked a lot about politics and how it is on our hometown. She showed me a tourist point of her city and also told me something I thought it was really interesting: the lakes from Georgia are not natural. Another thing it was about road trips movies. In a whole I really enjoyed our conversation today! Looking at my goals from the beginning of the interaction I see that I'm reaching them, but not on a big difference. The two texts I wrote, my partner didn't come to the interaction so we couldn't discuss about it and also with her not coming it's hard to improve my conversation skills. But, in general I really liked the interactions and think that I'm improving. Also, what I know about the culture are getting bigger and I can see that most of the things I knew it was partially true.

- 30 Initially the student refers to her learning goals and considers she has not improved that much (*Looking at my goals from the beginning of the interaction I see that I'm reaching them, but not on a big difference*), but then she considers her opinion, recognizing that she was improving (*But, in general I really liked the interactions and think that I'm improving*). This unsecure/inaccurate way of assessing the experience seems to be a first step towards reflection.

- 31 In extract 4, I8M11 positively evaluates the interaction (*it was a good interaction*), and gives reasons for that: (i) managing understanding; (ii) duration of the talk; (iii) overcoming technical problems. I8M11 describes his motivation to join the teletandem project, expressed as a learning goal to "practice speaking in English with a native speaker to improve my pronunciation, make fewer mistakes, and speak more easily."

Extract 4. Reflective writing 1: *It was a good interaction* (TTEndLD-KW-interaction, 2015, I8M11, D1)

I think I said that my main focus at Teletandem was to actually practice speaking in English with a native speaker to improve my pronunciation, do fewer mistakes, and speak more easily. With that in mind I can say that it was a good **interaction**, we manage to understand each other really well and we were able to chat for about half an hour. We had problems with the headset in the beginning but after that everything went fine, we asked things in general to get to know each other more.

- 32 Some of the details of this student's goals are related to the specificities of teletandem interaction since the oral interaction with a native/expert speaker may offer him opportunities to check pronunciation, and how good or easy the communication in English feels for him. He then adds that "with that in mind I can say that it was a good interaction." In this part of the diary, I8M11 evaluates and monitors the learning experience based on his learning goals (*with that-the goals-in mind, I can say that it was a good interaction*) and he includes his partner's participation (*not perspective*) in his evaluation (*we manage to understand each other really well and (...) chat for half an hour*). Setting goals and monitoring task and language progress towards those goals is evidence of a metacognitive operation, which still seems to be lacking a more analytical approach. (eg, by giving examples).

- 33 In extract 5, I9F3 shows "willingness to be critical of the action of self" (Moon, 2004, p. 215) and uses metacognitive operations when she monitors the communication process in relation to grammar (*There were a few moments where one of us had some little difficulties about grammar while speaking*). The learner says that they discussed similarities between Spanish and Portuguese and the difficulties of learning one of the romance languages when one already knows the other. The participant also acknowledges the causes of their difficulties (*grammar; structure problems*) and recognizes the joint work (*we worked it out together*) as the resource used to overcome the problem.

- 34 Extract 5. Reflective writing 1: *There were a few moments when one of us had some little difficulties* (TTEndLD-KW-interaction, 2012, I8M7, D2)

The first interaction was great. We presented ourselves to each other and shared some personal information like hobbies, interests and etc. First, we talked about the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese. We both agreed on how difficult it is to either learn the Spanish language when one has already learned Portuguese, or to learn Portuguese when one already know Spanish. There were a few moments where one of us had some little difficulties about grammar while speaking. We both had small sentence structure problems, but we worked it out together.

- 35 Although in the aforementioned extracts an attitude for reflection emerges, the conception of learning and of knowing a language in support of the evaluation or opinions is not well developed; the topic is just mentioned, the two languages are not

actually compared in the diary, and there is no discussion of how this can impact the teletandem learning experience. Although goals are mentioned, they are not analytically explored.

- 36 In this lower level of reflection, the qualification (use of adjectives) of the experience and the description (sequence of topics discussed such as comparison of two languages, ie, Spanish and Portuguese) alone do not seem to characterize a deep metacognitive operation (such as self-evaluation), which is expected to occur in the process of diary writing. However, when these elements are articulated in relation to a metacognitive operation (such as setting a learning goal), they seem to indicate the participant's attempt to establish relationships between the experience (interacting in teletandem) and their learning assessment. What participants consider relevant when they make judgements about the interaction may be considered a first step towards a deeper reflection about their learning experience.

4.3. Reflective level 2: noticing complexity in teletandem learning

- 37 This category is the most narrow in TTeNLD-KW-interaction. Out of 333 fragments, 76 accounts (23%) were considered reflective level 2, which is also based on the learners' assessment of interaction and the presence of other metacognitive operations (setting goals, selecting resources and planning learning). Our analysis suggests that what distinguishes these fragments from those in level 1 is the fact that assessment of interaction involves features which are task-related and teletandem-specific. The following examples show evidence of this level of reflection.
- 38 In extract 6, the student reflects on the learning experience when he (i) says he is achieving his goals (ie, learning more vocabulary for his future profession), (ii) considers the used resources and (iii) evaluates the feedback offered by his partner. He recognises the partner's participation in his language learning when he mentions and praises her feedback (*My partner's feedback has been amazing*).
- 39 Extract 6: Reflective writing 2: *My partner's feedback has been amazing* (TTeNLD-KW-interaction, 2012, I8M13, D3)

(...) the bird", which are all necessary knowledge for me as a translator and professional reader. In what concerns my initial purposes and goals about participating in Teletandem, I believe the main ones are being accomplished. They were to improve my communication skills (in interactions with foreign people, particularly) and to learn interesting vocabulary, which will be amazingly useful to my future profession. About the resources that were used during my interaction, there was just one: she copied a dictionary definition of "interchangeable" and pasted it for me. My partner's feedback has been amazing: she is just as interest and eager as I am, and that's exactly the feature I was looking for.

- 40 In this fragment the experience is also monitored in relation to goals, which are explicitly expressed in terms of "improving communication skills in interactions with foreign people" and learning "interesting vocabulary." Goals are also considered in regards to the author's "future profession." This participant performs both rare (ie, setting goals) and frequent metacognitive operations (ie, self-evaluation of learning), as highlighted in Garcia et al. (2017). He focuses on teletandem specific features of learning such as: the use of digital resources, electronic dictionaries, and opportunities

to receive feedback from his partner during interaction. The participant explores possible reasons for the positive assessment he makes of his partner's feedback (ie, *amazing*). First, by giving him feedback, his partner shows two main personal features: being a motivated and active speaker and learner (ie, *interest and eager*). These two human aspects are thus acknowledged as supporting learning endeavours and language development (*she is just as interest and eager as I am, and that's exactly the feature I was looking for*). Second, because he and his partner seem to share the same motivation for learning, the participant's expectations seem to be met. Sharing purposes, as stated by Aranha & Leone (2016), seems to guarantee successful partnerships.

- 41 Extract 7 reveals "thought about thought" related to monitoring and evaluating their partner's and one's own learning (Garcia et al., 2017). I8F7 reflects on her partner's learning experience, giving examples, and trying to understand the reasons for her partner's incorrect production in L2. Besides I8F7 highlights the "problem" she has in writing (*On her composition, she misused some accents, using crasis instead of acute accents*) and she also considers the influence of Spanish as a reason for the misuse in Portuguese. Then, she compares the recent interaction with a previous one, stating that the last one was better since she felt "more confident in talking without pauses." A conception of language as vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling, which guides the monitoring of the teletandem experience, emerges and the author shows willingness to capture features of the learning process when he mentions examples of problems and misuses (*crasis instead of acute accents*). The different aspects of the learning process that are mobilised in this learner's assessment of the experience reveal a more complex and analytical stance.

- 42 Extract 7. Reflective writing 2: *On her composition, she misused some accents, using crasis instead of acute accents*. (TEnLD-KW-interaction, 2013, I8M1, D3)

Today's interaction was very fun. We started talking about a soccer game between the Brazilian national team and the Portuguese one, which took place in Boston. In the sequence, we moved on to the corrections I made on the composition U0F1 wrote. All in all there were not many mistakes on her composition. Actually, I could just pointed out some words she used incorrectly for probably the influence of Spanish. Other aspect I suggested her was how she had used accents. On her composition, she misused some accents, using crasis instead of acute accents. The next topic we went through was a book a had read to present a seminar. I summarize part of the plot and give her an insight into what took the author to write the book. I personally think this interaction was better the previous ones as I felt more confident to talking without pauses. Also, U0F1 helped me with some words or spellings I was not sure. At first there were some minor conection complications due to signal weakness, but it soon normalized and remained stable until the end of the session.

- 43 In extract 8, I8F8 evaluates the interaction and reflects on her partner's as well as on her own learning experience. She states that "our interaction was very productive" and presents the criteria that allowed her to judge the session, thus providing evidence of a metacognitive stance. The metacognitive operations emerge as monitoring and evaluating the learning experience in relation to individual performance (*most of her mistakes are based on the influence of Spanish*) and in regards to language knowledge and task (*I learned a lot today, for example, it is better to use regardless instead of independently*). She highlights the best practice and selection of strategies (*I thought it was better for us to*

discuss further about our mistakes) in relation to the teletandem task (text exchange and revision). She evaluates her written production (*U0F28 writes very well in Portuguese*) and tries to understand the reasons for her mistakes (*her mistakes are based on the influence of Spanish*). She also contrasts Portuguese and Spanish (a language her partner also speaks) by giving an example of the interfering effect that Spanish has on Portuguese (she wrote "enseñar" instead of "mostrar"). As I8F7, I8F8 shows her ability to also understand the experience from the point of view of the interlocutor, highlighting what is useful for her (*I thought it was very good for her to notice that*). This attitude is coherent with teletandem principles, particularly with that of reciprocity, intended as "assisting the other in language learning" (Koch, 2021, p. 3). By giving the example of possible transfer from another known L2, I8F8 also shows her willingness to understand the process and the nature of language learning and knowledge.

44 Extract 8. Reflective writing 2: *I thought it was very good for her* (TTELD, 2013, I8F8, D7)

Today, our interaction was very productive. Since we corrected together both of our essays during the interaction, I thought it was better for us to discuss further about our mistakes. U0F28 writes very well in Portuguese and most of her mistakes are based on the influence of Spanish, for instance, she wrote "ensinar" instead of "mostrar", because in Spanish the verb to show is "enseñar", and I thought it was very good for her to notice that. I learned a lot today, for example, it is better to use regardless instead of independently, which is an influence of Portuguese, as well as when I used "social and professionally" and she said that I should put "lly" on social also (in Portuguese we can't do that). I noticed that I started most of my sentences with so and she suggested me to avoid it, as well as to try to write shorter sentences than I usually do. On the whole I believe I learned a lot more about the English grammar than in the other interactions and I believe it was helpful for her as well.

45 In extract 9, the metacognitive stance emerges as monitoring and evaluating the experience. The learner's assessment is based on (i) the comparison of the last interaction with the first one (*Comparing to our first interaction I think we both have improved our oral and writing skills*), (ii) the teletandem task of text exchange and revision (*We started talking about the topic I write in my composition. I felt more comfortable discussing some linguistic issues I am used to do in my regular classes*), and (iii) perception that there is strategy to be used in future experiences, which is related to the metacognitive operation of "planning" (*I think if we selected some specific topics before the interaction we could read about these topics and I would feel more confident to speak since...*). This last aspect of the assessment seems to be motivated by his need to manage his emotions and feel more confident (*I think if we selected some specific topics (...) I would feel more confident to speak since...*). Since the diary refers to the last interaction, we can consider this learning principle and this good practice to be a hint of commitment to new learning experiences.

46 Extract 9. Reflective writing 2 *Comparing to our first interaction* (2012, I8M16, UGA3i, D7)

Our last teletandem interaction was really good. We started talking about the topic I write in my composition. I felt more comfortable discussing some linguistic issues I am used to do in my regular classes. The conversation both flowed in English and in Portuguese. Comparing to our first interaction I think we both have improved our oral and writing skills. However, I think if we selected some specific topics before the interaction we could read about

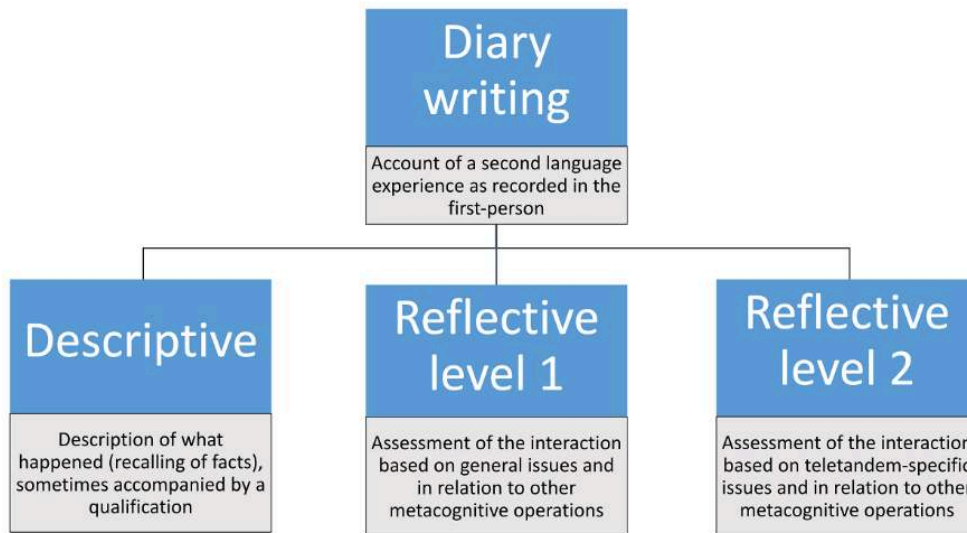
these topics and I would feel more confident to speak since I could study some commonly used vocab, terminology and expressions. To sum up, I think I learned a lot with this experience and I would like to participate again.

- 47 In deep reflective accounts, learners monitor, assess, and evaluate the interaction from their own perspective and/or from that of their partner. They compare different learning experiences in relation to teletandem tasks. Besides, their judgment is related to the other metacognitive strategies, such as planning, setting goals, selecting resources, and managing emotions. As a result of their work, some of them highlight best practices which promote language learning and language production, as well as oral interaction. Deep reflective accounts show a well-developed critical orientation to one's own and to the other's experience.

5. Final remarks

- 48 The present study aimed to examine what learners say about the teletandem oral "interaction" in their diaries and how (or if) they reflect upon it. Results reveal that 41% of the fragments featured mere descriptions of the events that occurred during the interaction, while most (59%) of them presented some degree of reflection. This finding corroborates the notion proposed in other research (Moon, 2004, 2010) that writing diaries may promote reflection, which is a fundamental aspect of autonomous learning. Reflection, in our data, seems to be based on the assessment of the interaction, which, in turn, is in alignment with Garcia et al. (2017)'s proposal that assessment represents a frequent metacognitive operation. Our findings also indicate that other metacognitive operations (setting goals, planning, selecting resources, managing emotions) support or motivate the judgments made by learners.
- 49 At reflective level 1, aside from the presence of metacognitive operations, assessment is explained by presenting general topics discussed during the session—mainly cultural issues, which are usually discussed in a telecollaborative learning environment (Helm, 2009).
- 50 In reflective level 2, the conception of language, communication and the metacognitive stance involve a more critical consideration of the experience and a more focused metacognitive knowledge. Learners take the teletandem experience into consideration as they explain or justify their assessment. They mention different viewpoints which are teletandem-specific (eg, the teletandem task, their partner, and their own goals) and sometimes relate teletandem learning with their future profession. Data also indicate that participants (i) mention language issues related to the task or the teletandem interaction; (ii) consider conflicting ideas and compare learning experiences with their partners; (iii) highlight the best practice and strategies in order to improve conditions for learning in teletandem; (iv) evaluate the interaction and the learning experience from their partner's perspective as well as from their own; and (v) monitor the task by reflecting on different task accomplishment stages during the interaction. These aspects of reflective writing are considered to be evidence of critical and analytical thoughts and a grasp on the complexity of language learning experience within teletandem interaction. Figure 2 is an attempt to summarise our findings.

Figure 2—Learners' diaries in télé tandem.



- 51 These findings may be related to the questions presented to participants in order to guide their writing. The first question (*When you write your diary, try to reflect on the topics that were discussed during that specific session? What did you learn?*) may encourage learners to present a descriptive list of topics or a recollection of events they considered relevant. As for the presence of metacognitive operations, the second question explicitly mentions the need to refer to the learning goals they set in the initial questionnaire as they assess their experience. This seems to be an adequate prompt to assist learners in establishing a relationship between their knowledge of language and of learning with their experience in tele tandem interaction. At the same time, there is no question related to the specific features of tele tandem that seem to assist in their learning, which seems to be a relevant feature of deeper reflection. This may indicate that the guiding questions could be revised or reframed so that learners are able to understand what they should write about and how to be reflective. Furthermore, a framework of reflection could be presented to participants in order to help them become reflective.
- 52 As is evident from the descriptive fragments reported in the current paper, some diary entries are taken from the fourth and sixth entries. This means that, by writing diaries, some learners do not actually develop the capacity to reflect. Further research, based on entire diaries written by a selection of students, should take this into account when trying to measure any improvement in reflective ability over time as a result of writing. For such a longitudinal study, the dataset should be composed of entire diaries, thus overcoming a limitation of the current analysis, which is based on fragments.

6. Author contributions

- 53 The paper is the result of a writing partnership. However, to accomplish some countries' academic requirements, we specify that Paola Leone is responsible for sections 2.1, 3, 3.2, and 4.2 of the current paper and for coordinating the study; Solange Aranha is responsible for sections 1, 2.2, 3.1, and 4.1; Suzi Spatti Cavalari is responsible for the abstract in English, sections 2, 4, 4.3, and 5.

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NOTES

1. In this study, we follow Moon (2010), for whom learning journals and reflective diaries are terms often used interchangeably.
 2. In more recent papers (Leone & Telles, 2016), due to several investigations about this very principle, many cases of translanguaging during teletandem sessions were found. With the development of plurilingual approaches in telecollaboration (ie, intercomprehension; Garbarino & Leone, 2020; Leone 2022), the strict separation of languages is no longer considered to be necessary. However, this paper is based on Telles (2006), who considered it as a criterion for implementing a teletandem session.
 3. Instructions to learners were translated by the authors. The original text can be found in the website: <https://teletandemriopreto.wixsite.com/ibilce/como-produzir-o-diario>
 4. The information reports: name of dataset; year, person identification, gender, and place in the lab; number of diary (eg, D1, ie, diary after the first session).
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ABSTRACTS

This investigation aims to analyze what Brazilian participants say about teletandem interaction in their diaries and how (or if) they reflect upon it. Data are elicited from 350 diaries written in English and stored in MulTeC (Multimodal Teletandem Corpus) (Aranha & Lopes, 2019) and compiled by 333 fragments of text in which the most frequent word, "interaction", (Leone et al., ongoing) occurs. The analytical framework is based on Moon's (2004) reflective writing and Garcia et al. (2017)'s proposal of metacognitive operations. Results reveal that 41% of the fragments featured mere descriptions of the events that occurred during the interaction, while most (59%) of them presented some degree of reflection. In our data, reflection seems to be based on: (i) the assessment of the interaction, in line with Garcia et al. (2017)'s proposal that assessment represents a frequent metacognitive operation; (ii) recognition of different elements that are relevant for language learning in teletandem, ie, partner's collaboration and task specificities. Our findings also indicate that the other metacognitive operations (setting goals, planning, selecting resources, managing emotions) support or motivate the judgments made by learners. This finding corroborates the notion proposed in other research (Moon, 2004, 2010) that writing diaries may promote reflection, which is a fundamental aspect of autonomous learning.

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'analyser ce que des participants brésiliens disent de l'interaction télé-tandem dans leurs journaux de bord et comment (ou si) ils y réfléchissent. Teletandem (Telles, 2006) est un modèle de télécollaboration dans lequel sont impliqués deux experts et apprenants de deux langues différentes. Chaque locuteur souhaite pratiquer sa L2, qui est une langue bien connue de son partenaire. Les études sur l'utilisation des journaux de bord dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères se sont multipliées au cours des dernières décennies (Bailey, 1991 ; Flowerdew, 2002 ; Moon, 2004, 2010). Certaines portent sur l'apprentissage autonome et se concentrent sur le contexte de la télécollaboration (Helm, 2009 ; Luz, 2009 ; Cavalari & Del Monte, 2021). Jusqu'ici, les recherches ont montré que la rédaction d'un journal semble favoriser la concentration sur des aspects pertinents du processus d'apprentissage, tels que la fixation d'objectifs, la planification et la sélection de ressources, l'évaluation du processus

d'apprentissage et des résultats et l'exploration des émotions liées au processus d'apprentissage. Ces publications sont cependant basées sur des études de cas qui ont abordé les journaux du point de vue des théories de l'apprentissage autonome. Dans la présente étude, un important corpus est examiné sous l'angle théorique de la réflexion. Les données sont un ensemble d'un corpus, compilé par 350 journaux écrits en anglais et stockés dans MulTeC (Multimodal Teletandem Corpus) (Aranha & Lopes, 2019 ; Lopes, 2019). Cet ensemble de données a été créé au moyen d'une enquête quantitative menée par Leone et al. (sous presse), qui ont examiné les journaux intimes écrits en anglais de 16 cohortes différentes (TeleTandem English Learning Diaries). À l'aide d'un outil d'exploration de corpus (à savoir Sketch Engine), les auteures ont constaté que le mot le plus fréquent et le plus uniformément distribué était "interaction". Considérant que c'est dans "l'interaction" qu'on s'attend à ce que les participants apprennent dans le contexte du télé-tandem, dans la présente étude, nous nous concentrons sur ce qu'ils disent à ce sujet afin d'étudier les niveaux de réflexion dans le fragment dans lequel ce mot-clé apparaît. Le cadre analytique est basé sur l'écriture réflexive de Moon (2004) et sur la proposition de stratégies métacognitives de Garcia et al. (2017).

Les résultats révèlent que 41% des fragments comportaient de simples descriptions des événements survenus pendant l'interaction, tandis que la plupart (59%) présentaient un certain degré de réflexion. Dans nos données, la réflexion semble être basée sur : (1) l'évaluation de l'interaction, en accord avec la proposition de Garcia et al. (2017) selon laquelle l'évaluation représente une opération métacognitive fréquente ; (2) la reconnaissance de différents éléments pertinents pour l'apprentissage des langues en télé-tandem, à avoir la collaboration du partenaire et les spécificités de la tâche. Nos résultats indiquent également que les autres opérations métacognitives (établissement d'objectifs, planification, sélection de ressources, gestion des émotions) soutiennent ou motivent les jugements portés par les apprenants. Cette constatation corrobore la notion proposée dans d'autres recherches (Moon, 2004, 2010) selon laquelle la rédaction de journaux de bord peut favoriser la réflexion, laquelle est un aspect fondamental de l'apprentissage autonome.

INDEX

Subjects: Recherche

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