

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS:
ESTUDOS LINGUÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS

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**THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF
INTERCULTURALITY IN THE PROJECT
TELETANDEM BRASIL: FOREIGN
LANGUAGES FOR ALL**

Tese submetida ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do Título de Doutor em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Gloria Gil.

Florianópolis

2019

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Schaefer, Rodrigo

The co-construction of interculturality in the
project Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for
all / Rodrigo Schaefer ; orientador, Gloria Gil,
2019.

597 p.

Tese (doutorado) - Universidade Federal de Santa
Catarina, Centro de Comunicação e Expressão,
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos
Linguísticos e Literários, Florianópolis, 2019.

Inclui referências.

1. Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. 2.
Telecollaboration. 3. Teletandem. 4. Intercultural
communication. 5. Interculturality. I. Gil, Gloria
. II. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos
Linguísticos e Literários. III. Título.

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Esta Tese foi julgada adequada para obtenção do Título de “Doutor em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários”, na área de concentração Estudos da Linguagem e aprovada em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

Florianópolis, 28 de fevereiro de 2019.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not fail to thank the following people who, for different reasons, were important in the trajectory of this research:

First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my advisor Gloria Gil for her patience, dedication, companionship and encouragement, and for having helped me to improve academically.

Professors Gloria Gil, José Marcelo Freitas de Luna, Celso Henrique Soufen Tumolo and Robert O'Dowd for their valuable contributions in the qualifying exam of my research in 2017.

Professor João Antonio Telles, who kindly opened the doors of the teletandem laboratory for the development of my research.

Teachers, practitioners, researchers and other people involved in the TTB project, especially Rozana Aparecida Lopes Messias, Amable Daiane Custódio Ribeiro, João Antonio Telles, Gabriela Rossatto Franco, Micheli Gomes de Souza, Maisa de Alcântara Zakir, Daniela Garcia, Marcella Martins and Letícia Moraes, who spared no efforts to make everything work well in the data collection of my research in 2016.

Professors Suzi Marques Spatti Cavalari and Solange Aranha, who allowed me to participate, at the beginning of 2016, in the discipline *Ensino-aprendizagem de*

línguas estrangeiras in-tandem: Teorias, práticas, tecnologias e a formação do professor para este contexto. Thanks to these professors' experience and knowledge, as well as to the discipline itself, I could get acquainted with theories on FL learning in teletandem.

The participants of my research for their generosity,
trust, help and dedication.

Professor Celso Henrique Soufen Tumolo, who provided
advices and directions in the first year of my research.

Professor Robert O'Dowd, who helped me enormously
in the first steps of the data analysis during the period in
which I studied at University of León, Spain.

My friend Nayara Salbego, who kindly read my work
and provided countless constructive comments.

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI), for
having been solicitous with me at all times.

Professor José Marcelo Freitas de Luna, who, previously
in my Master's course, introduced me to the "world of
Academy", which decisively encouraged me to start my
doctorate and pursue an academic career.

My father (in memoriam).

My family, especially my mother, without valuable
support I could not have achieved this objective in my
life.

My friends Juliane Trevisol and Vera Frantz for having
accompanied me in this four-year trajectory: laughter,
coffee shops and different doctoral-related
conversations.

ABSTRACT

The Internet has had a significant impact on the field of teaching and learning of foreign languages, since it has provided students with virtual contact with speakers of other languages and cultures. Telecollaboration, which can be defined as the use of online technologies for the development of linguistic abilities through interaction with people from different cultures (O'Dowd, 2013), enables language learners to engage themselves in the intercultural dialogue. One mode of telecollaboration is teletandem (Telles, 2015a), which, according to Vassallo (2009), can be characterized as videoconferencing between two interactants who are learning each other's language. In teletandem, these interactants change their roles: at times as learners of a foreign language and at other times as tutors of their mother tongue or other languages. This qualitative research, grounded mainly on theories which address the intercultural communication (Byram, 1989, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Filho & Gil, 2016; Gil, 2016; Kramsch, 1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2007), aimed at understanding how the co-construction of interculturality took place within the thematic project called *Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all*. In order to achieve this goal, two research questions were outlined: (1) what central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?; (2) what central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated? Different procedures for data collection were adopted with a view

to triangulating the data, in the sense that the *corpus* of this study is comprised of an initial semi-structured questionnaire, reflective diary comments, teletandem sessions, mediation sessions, experience reports, semi-structured interviews and Facebook private messages. By using an ecological perspective (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) as a theoretical backdrop to analyze the data, the outcomes showed three central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality, namely “stereotyped views”, “superficial level of meaning negotiation” and “superficial level of exploration”. The results also showed two central aspects that favored this co-construction: “the emergence of rich points” and “the possibility of hearing other points of view”. Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that the co-construction of interculturality was a process, that is, it occurred over time. In other words, instances following the teletandem sessions were necessary to foster this co-construction. The research results suggest that moments of further reflection in the mediation sessions allow for contestation and the participants’ decentering from fixed cultural representations.

Keywords: Interculturality; intercultural communication; teletandem; telecollaboration; online teaching and learning of foreign languages.

RESUMO

A Internet tem exercido um impacto significativo na área de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras, uma vez que ela tem proporcionado aos alunos o contato virtual com falantes de outras línguas e culturas. A telecolaboração, que pode ser definida como o uso de tecnologias *online* para o desenvolvimento de habilidades linguísticas por meio da interação com pessoas de diferentes culturas (O'Dowd, 2013), permite aos aprendizes de línguas se engajarem no diálogo intercultural. Um modelo de telecolaboração é o teletandem (Telles, 2015a), o qual, segundo Vassallo (2009), pode ser caracterizado como videoconferência entre dois interagentes que estão aprendendo a língua um do outro. No teletandem, esses interagentes trocam seus papéis: ora como aprendizes de uma língua estrangeira, ora como tutores de sua língua materna ou de outras línguas. Esta pesquisa qualitativa, alicerçada principalmente em teorias que abordam a comunicação intercultural (Byram, 1989, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Filho & Gil, 2016; Gil, 2016; Kramsch, 1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2007), teve o objetivo de compreender como ocorreu a co-construção da interculturalidade no projeto temático *Teletandem Brasil: Línguas estrangeiras para todos*. Para alcançar esse objetivo, duas perguntas de pesquisa foram delineadas: (1) que aspectos centrais obstaculizaram a co-construção da interculturalidade no contexto do teletandem investigado?; (2) que aspectos centrais

favoreceram a co-construção da interculturalidade no contexto do teletandem investigado? Diferentes procedimentos de coleta de dados foram adotados com vistas a triangular os dados, no sentido de que o *corpus* deste estudo é composto por um questionário semiestruturado inicial, comentários em diários reflexivos, sessões de teletandem, sessões de mediação, relatos de experiência, entrevistas semiestruturadas e mensagens privadas no Facebook. Utilizando uma perspectiva ecológica (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) como base teórica para analisar os dados, os resultados mostraram três aspectos centrais que obstaculizaram a co-construção da interculturalidade, a saber, “visões estereotipadas”, “nível superficial de negociação de sentido” e “nível superficial de exploração”. Os resultados revelaram também dois aspectos centrais que favoreceram essa co-construção: “a emergência de “pontos ricos”” e “a possibilidade de ouvir outros pontos de vista”. Ademais, a análise dos dados mostrou que a co-construção da interculturalidade foi um processo, isto é, ocorreu ao longo do tempo. Em outras palavras, instâncias após as sessões de teletandem foram necessárias para favorecer essa co-construção. Os resultados da pesquisa sugerem que momentos de maior reflexão nas sessões de mediação permitem a contestação e a descentralização de representações culturais fixas dos participantes.

Palavras-chave: Interculturalidade; comunicação intercultural; teletandem; telecolaboração; ensino e aprendizagem *online* de línguas estrangeiras.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU – American University

BU – Brazilian University

E – Emily

EcP – Ecological perspective

F – Fiona

FL – Foreign Language

FLs – Foreign Languages

L – Lucas

M – Monique

N – Nayara

O – Osnilo

R – Researcher

S – Sofia

SCT – Sociocultural Theory

TTB – Teletandem Brasil: Foreign languages for all

Z – Zilma

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The memories bring forth the language, and the language brings forth the memories. (Van Lier, 2004, p. 1)

Language is a defining quality of what it means to be human. (Van Lier, 2004, p. 1)

This qualitative research, grounded mainly on intercultural theories (Byram, 1989, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Filho & Gil, 2016; Gil, 2016; Kramersch, 1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2007) starts out from the assumption that the relationship between language and culture must be viewed as

inseparable and situated in specific social contexts, in which language learners participate in the processes of meaning-making.

The advent of the Internet has produced general changes in education and, in particular, in foreign language (henceforward FL^{1 2}) classroom, since it has expanded the opportunities to practice and learn FLs as well as for intercultural meetings. As claimed by O’Dowd (2013), “one of the major contributions of the internet to foreign language (FL) education has been its potential to bring language learners into virtual contact with members of other cultures and speakers of other languages” (p. 123). Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino

¹ Or in the plural: FLs (foreign languages).

² Even though I prefer “additional language” to “foreign language”, taking into account that the latter is many times linked to the myth of the native speaker’s supremacy and to prejudice towards non-native speakers of a language, I made the decision to make use of “foreign language” because this term is mostly used in research in the teletandem context.

(2013) state that digital technologies “have the potential to place learners in situation of intercultural communication where they can explore the language and culture they are learning in real world interactions” (p. 119).

Made it possible by the Internet, a profusion of digital resources such as maps, videos and images can help users to learn other languages. For O’Dowd (2007), the use of these communication tools in the area of teaching and learning of FL allows for integration and dialogue amongst people from different cultures. This way, in spite of the fact that these communication tools can “work against intercultural understanding” (Kern, 2014, p. 354), at the same time they can be regarded as potential helpers in the construction of interculturality.

One of the ways to foster this contact between

members of different cultures is through telecollaboration, defined by O’Dowd (2013) as “the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their foreign language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work” (p. 123). The author adds that from the mid-1990s, an increased attention to social and intercultural aspects in FL teaching and learning “led to the emergence of more complex forms of exchange” (p. 128) in telecollaboration. As a result, the author claims that from the aforementioned period onwards telecollaborative exchanges came to provide “fluid connections between students’ online interactions with their partners and what was being studied and discussed in the local classrooms” (p. 128).

One of the modes of telecollaboration is called teletandem (Telles, 2015a; Telles & Vassallo, 2006; Vassallo & Telles, 2006), which is also the specific context of this investigation. It can be characterized as videoconferencing between two interactants who are learning each other's language (Vassallo, 2009), in which they swap their roles: at times as learners of a FL and at other times as tutors of their mother tongue or other languages.

Taking into consideration that, as was explained earlier, telecollaboration provides the contact among people from different cultures, this investigation aimed at understanding how the co-construction of interculturality took place within a telecollaborative project called *Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all*.

The next section will cover in a more detailed way the overall objective and also the research questions that supported the development of this study.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this investigation was to understand how the co-construction of interculturality, i.e., the intercultural dialogue, took place within the thematic project called *Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all* (henceforward TTB). To achieve this goal, I outlined the following research questions:

1. What central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

2. What central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

These research questions were answered on the basis of the participants' data analysis. The participants, the research setting and the collection instruments will be presented in Chapter 3.

1.2 Research Motivation and Relevance

As suggested in the epigraph by Van Lier (2004) at the beginning of this chapter, “the memories bring forth the language, and the language brings forth the memories” (p. 1). Hence, I also sense that presenting with greater richness some memories regarding my academic and professional experiences is appropriate to explain why I embarked on the journey of teaching and

learning languages.

The choice of the object of this research was to some degree due to my professional activities and my academic background. From the earliest age, I was very fascinated by other languages and cultures. And this has been the case up to now, as I have been devoting myself to learning other languages apart from English, such as Italian and German.

In addition to studying FLs, I am also fond of language teaching, which is why I started my studies in *Letras – Portuguese / English* in 2004. I have been a teacher of Spanish, Portuguese and English since 2007, a profession that I am proud to be able to exercise. I am also a translator of French, English, Portuguese and Spanish. In the second half of 2009, I majored in *Letras – Spanish*. Two years later, in 2011, I completed a

specialization *lato sensu* in Interdisciplinary in Teaching Practice. In 2013, I finished another specialization *lato sensu*: Translation in Spanish. I concluded my Master's degree in Education in February 2014, and my investigation was on assessing intercultural communicative competence of university students.

Furthermore, generally speaking, I have always been very keen on digital technology, and I started to be particularly interested in understanding how people learn in online spaces not too long ago. Having been a teacher over the past decade, I had an experience hitherto unknown in a teaching institution in 2012. In addition to the challenge of dealing with students who were, for the most part, older than thirty years old, taking into account that I had gained more experience with children and adolescents until that time, this institution implemented a

blended learning program in the curriculum, which means that students took part in many activities on an online platform. My curiosity would increasingly awaken when I tried to make sense of how my students interacted with each other and with me on this virtual platform. I knew deep inside that the way in which they learned was different from the classroom context, but my theoretical knowledge on online learning was too limited.

Then, in the second half of 2014, I participated in some classes of the discipline *Tópico especial em lingüística aplicada: Pesquisas Qualitativas em Linguística Aplicada*, at UFSC, with professor Gloria Gil, where the intercultural component in FL teaching and learning was debated. Also in this semester, I took part as an audit student in the discipline *Tecnologias em*

Ensino e Aprendizagem with professor Celso Tumolo.

This in part shed light on the subject of online learning and helped me to define my research pre-project for the PhD entrance exams that were close to happening. After such experiences, there was no more doubt: since the object of my Master's research was interculturality, in my doctorate I was going to focus on interculturality again, but now from another theoretical perspective and in one online context.

Although I had decided that I would deal with interculturality in one online context, I still did not know exactly what specific online context it would be, which I actually defined only a year after I started my doctorate, when, as will be better explained in Chapter 3, I had the opportunity to contact the coordinator of the TTB project at the end of 2015. Then, he allowed me to carry out my

investigation within this project.

The way in which my research can contribute to the teletandem context can be explained by two main reasons. About the first, the need to look at cultural aspects in the thematic project TTB was pointed out by Telles (2011). Similarly, Telles (2015b) highlights that “the intercultural dimension of teletandem interactions has not been sufficiently explored” (p. 4). Concerning the second reason, I adopted an ecological perspective (henceforward EcP) (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), which, in a more holistic view (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008), can help to draw attention to different instances beyond the teletandem sessions.

1.3 Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, which are organized in the following manner: Chapter 1 presented the objective of the study as well as the research motivation and relevance. In Chapter 2, I deal with the relevant literature to ground this study. In Chapter 3, I address the method used, the context of investigation, an overview of the participants and the procedures for data collection and analysis. The data analysis and discussion are shown in Chapter 4. At last, in Chapter 5 final considerations are made and some conclusions and suggestions for further research and pedagogy are presented.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to provide the theoretical background for this research, this chapter is organized as follows: in Section 2.1 I will introduce the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), due to the fact that it provided the theoretical backdrop for this research. Then, in Section 2.2 I will deal with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (henceforward SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), since knowledge in this dissertation is considered to be socially co-constructed. After that, in Section 2.3 I will present the perspective of culture that influenced my research. Section 2.4, for its part, will draw attention to identities, because the participants' cultural identities in teletandem, such as their experiences and life stories, "come into play" in the

processes of meaning-making. Section 2.5 will be devoted to discussing discourse and discourse analysis. Later, in Section 2.6 the intercultural approach to FL teaching and learning will be reviewed, bringing contributions to the field from authors such as Byram (1989, 1997), Kramsch (1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014) and Risager (1997). Finally, I will deal with telecollaboration in Section 2.7 and teletandem in Section 2.8.

2.1 Ecological Perspective

Van Lier (2004) clarifies that an EcP concentrates on the relationships that language learners establish with the environment, as the latter has symbolic, physical and social characteristics that can exert influence on their interaction. In a similar fashion,

Haugen (2001) explains that Language Ecology, or Ecolinguistics, focuses on the “study of interactions between any given language and its environment” (p. 57). Regarding educational research and practice, according to Van Lier (2004), an EcP resonates in theories of scholars such as Bakhtin and Vygotsky. Kramsch and Steffensen (2008), on their turn, argue that investigations that adopt an EcP “must prompt us to rethink the relationship of individuals and various learning environments beyond the classroom, e.g., study abroad and distance learning” (p. 24).

Kramsch and Steffensen (2008) state that one of the central features of the EcP is holism, which presupposes that “everything is part of an undividable whole” (p.18) and that language cannot be viewed as a mere system of rules, closed, abstract, finished and

dissociated from the interference of the social. For the authors, a holistic view has three characteristics. The first is interaction, which refers to the idea that there is not a mono-direction relationship amongst individuals, but rather mutuality, meaning that all parties are affected in a variety of ways. Interconnectedness, the second characteristic, stands for the connection between each part of the whole with any other parts and the whole. Finally, the third characteristic, interdependence, “implies that a linguistic phenomenon’s mode of existence changes if other phenomena change or cease to exist” (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008, p. 18).

For Van Lier (2004), an EcP can be approached in two ways: shallow or deep. On one hand, the shallow way focuses on solving problems, but without seeking to understand more deeply what could have caused such

problems. On the other hand, the deep way, which is in harmony with holism (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008), of one the core features of an EcP as presented previously, aims at understanding, in a critical, deeper and comprehensive way, the causes underlying these problems. Hence, it can be stated that the deep way may help in better understanding, in a holistic manner, the co-construction of interculturality in online spaces when it comes, for example, to intercultural conflicts and to the discussions of different perspectives.

According to Kramsch and Steffensen (2008), “a dialogical point of view” (p. 19) is at the heart of a holistic perspective, because:

- (i) It is in dialogue that the personal, the situational, and the cultural merge;
- (ii) it is in

dialogue that interconnectedness, interdependence, and interaction of language unfold; (iii) dialogue provides the breeding ground for the creation and maintenance of sociocultural and linguistic diversity; (iv) dialogue offers a possibility for realizing our potential for changing ourselves and our surroundings. (p. 19)

In the light of an EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramersch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) and the dialogical view (Kramersch & Steffensen), thus, teletandem can go far beyond the idea that language learners are empty vessels to be filled by explanations provided, for example, by the teacher. As stated by Veloso and Almeida (2009), autonomy, one of the principles of

teletandem which will be presented in Section 2.8, prevents language learners from being consumers of teaching syllabus, which enables them, through dialogue, to take a major control over the learning process. This view is echoed by Van Lier (2014), who, referring to the context of teaching and learning languages from a sociocultural perspective, asserts that autonomy stands for “the authorship of one’s actions, having the voice that speaks one’s words, and being emotionally connected to one’s actions and speech” (p. 8).

To conclude, I would like to point out that, as already explained, the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) provided the theoretical backdrop for my investigation. In other words, this perspective allowed me to have a more organic look as concerns the reality of my data.

In the next section, I will focus on SCT, and for two main reasons. First because this theory, according to Van Lier (2004), is in consistence with the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004). In addition, as from a sociocultural perspective knowledge is socially co-constructed (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), an EcP helped to provide a situated and contextualized outlook on meaning negotiation. The second reason is due to the fact that teletandem was conceived and developed on the basis of a sociocultural perspective (Telles, 2015a).

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

In line with Vygotsky (1978, 1986), knowledge and meanings are socially co-constructed through language. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning happens

first socially and, subsequently, higher mental functions are developed. Furthermore, the author explains that historical and cultural features contribute to this development. From this perspective, individuals are part of a particular cultural context through which they learn by constructing and negotiating social meanings.

One of the central aspects of SCT is mediation, also called “symbolic mediation”. For Vygotsky (1978, 1986), the relation of the human being with the world is not direct, but mediated through the following elements: 1) instrument; and 2) sign. The first mediating element, instrument, increases the possibilities of the transformation of nature and regulates the actions on the objects when the human being interacts with the world around. For example, the use of the computer (instrument) in teletandem allows the contact between

two people who aim to learn each other's language. The second mediating element, sign, has the capacity to bring about internal changes, since it regulates the actions on the people's psyche. The author defines language as a central psychological instrument, because through it human beings can develop higher mental functions.

Another central construct in SCT is The Zone of Proximal Development (henceforward ZPD). The author defines it as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86). In this "zone", therefore, someone who is more experienced helps the other, who is less experienced, to learn and become more autonomous

within her/his potential. For instance, in teletandem sessions, through collaborative learning, one participant helps the other to learn the FL.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) introduced the concept of “scaffolding”, which is actually closely related to ZPD. Scaffolding is the support mechanism that helps the less experienced to learn in her/his ZPD where necessary. For the authors, such a support “enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (p. 90). For example, regarding the teletandem context, the teacher-mediator can offer different perspectives and ask the language learners questions in the mediation session³ with the purpose of promoting moments of further reflection. Hence, the support mechanism here would be

³ See p. 137 for a definition of “mediation session”.

“the offer of other perspectives” and “asking questions”.

For Vygotsky (1981), the development and transformation of individuals occurs on the basis of four genetic domains: phylogenetic⁴, sociocultural⁵, microgenetic and ontogenetic. He claims that “everyday human behaviour can be understood only by disclosing the presence of four general fundamental genetic stages through which behavioural development passes” (p. 156). Two of these genetic domains, which are fundamental in this work, are the “microgenetic” and the “ontogenetic”. Microgenetic concerns specific situations that are experienced by individuals which can modify their higher mental functions. Ontogenetic, on the other

⁴ “Phylogenetic” refers to the evolution of living organisms by means of their gradual adaptation to the environment. This evolution occurs through a slow process of transformation over long periods of time.

⁵ “Sociocultural” since social interactions are the basis of higher cognitive processes.

hand, refers to the whole history of each individual, and the different transformations that, through dialectical interactions, occur along her/his life, from birth to adulthood. From an EcP, Van Lier (2004) claims that this ontogenetic realm “includes the interactional processes in which social meanings become internalized, and the use of language and signs, linked with the development of higher mental functions” (p. 12).

These two genetic domains can be related to tetetandem in the following way: microgenetic on the grounds that learning takes place within a relatively short period of time and in particular instances, e.g. in one teletandem session, in one mediation session, and so forth. Ontogenetic since learning occurs through a process or through different instances, e.g. interactants⁶

⁶ “Interactants” is the name given to the two partners who are learning each other’s language in teletandem sessions. Although

can discuss in the mediation session a specific linguistic aspect that had first been tackled in the teletandem session.

I relate SCT, which converges with the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) presented previously, to Phipps's and Gonzales's (2004) concept of "linguaging", which stands for how people, through language, produce meanings, interact and shape the world around them. Hence, linguaging suggests that "through language they [people] become active agents in creating their human environment" (Phipps & Gonzales, 2004, p. 2). For the authors, teaching and learning occurs socially, or "inextricably interwoven with social experience" (p. 2), which allows "to enter the linguaging of others [and] to understand the

most of times I will use "participants" instead of "interactants", sometimes I will use "interactant(s)", mainly in Chapter II.

complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own” (p. 3). Indeed, in teletandem sessions, through languaging, interactants can understand the functioning mechanisms of their partner’s language as well as discuss different cultural topics, which can enrich their experience as FL learners.

In conclusion, in this section I discussed some of the socio-interactionist principles by Vygotsky (1978, 1986) such as mediation, ZPD and the ontogenetic domain. After this presentation of SCT, in the following section I will conceptualize culture, since this term “seems to be a starting point for understanding the whole discussion about interculturality and language teaching” (Filho, 2015, p. 5). Moreover, I regard it as necessary to provide a brief explanation on the conceptualization of culture for two reasons. First, my study draws on the

assumption that culture cannot be separated from language (Agar, 1994; Byram, 1997; Filho & Gil, 2016; Gil, 2016; Kramsch, 1993, 1998; Risager, 2007; Schaefer, 2014). Second, even implicitly, culture is always part of the context of FL teaching and learning (Genc & Bada, 2005).

2.3 Conceptualizing Culture

Eagleton (2000) explains that the Latin root of the word “culture” is “colere”, and adds that the concept of this term, until the sixteenth century, was linked mainly to land cultivation, e.g. land preparation and afterwards the harvest. Furthermore, culture referred to “anything from cultivating and inhabiting to worshipping and protecting” (p. 1).

For Hall (1997) and Kumaravadivelu (2008),

culture can be deemed as one of the most complex terms to be conceptualized. For the latter, one of the reasons for this complexity is that cultures “are interconnected so closely that each can be considered a hybrid culture” (p. 27). The authors suggest that it is necessary to look at different fields to define culture, e.g. Anthropology, Cultural Studies and Sociology. In fact, one of the first definitions of culture comes from the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, for whom “taken in its wide ethnographic sense, [culture] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (1871, p. 1).

Milton Bennett (1993), who is engaged in research on intercultural communication, developed the two following concepts of culture: “objective culture”

and “subjective culture”. The former refers to concrete products institutionalized by the people of a social group, such as artwork, movies and music. Subjective culture, in turn, concerns the psychological aspects of a group of people, e.g. everyday behavior and people’s thinking. Regarding the teletandem context, interactants negotiate cultural meanings linked to concrete products (objective culture) in teletandem sessions such as films and literary works, but they can also relate these products to cultural values, ideological perspectives, and the like (subjective culture).

Within the field of Applied Linguistics, in his 2002 work, Anthony Liddicoat, whose research studies focus on the relationship between intercultural understanding and language teaching and learning, mentions two views of culture: a “static” and a

“dynamic”. A static view of culture does not focus attention on the relationship between language and culture, and its main objective is the transmission of cultural contents. In this regard, Filho and Gil (2016) claim that language “is not simply a code through which culture can be transmitted, and culture is not simply a collection of information, or national products that can be systematically conveyed through a linguistic code” (pp. 1501-1502). In contrast, a dynamic view of culture, which I also adopted in my research, concentrates on the relationship between language and culture and requires language learners to actively engage themselves in the process of meaning negotiation and identity construction through situated discursive practices (Liddicoat, 2002).

In Dervin’s (2014) study, in which the author analyzed how the participants constructed interculturality

in chat sessions, it was suggested that “we need to change the way we use culture as an explanatory element when analyzing situations of interculturality” (p. 193).

Actually, some scholars, as will be presented in the following paragraphs, have been giving attention to what culture means in today’s world, “in our era of accelerated globalization and the accompanying increase of intercultural encounters” (Dervin, 2014, p. 191).

One of the authors who focused on the definition of culture is Hall (1997). From a post-structuralist perspective, he brought into focus the term “cultural turn”, meaning that culture has been conceived as a continuous process of construction and not merely as set of cultural practices and products that can be assimilated or learned. For him, “meaning is thought to be *produced* - constructed - rather than simply 'found'” (p. 5).

Another scholar who has turned the spotlight on what culture means in today's world is Kumaravadivelu (2008). He asserts that this term is mostly used as a noun, which can produce "the wrong impression that it is an object or thing or a museum place" (p. 10). As opposed to this vision, the author claims that culture should be understood as a dynamic and continuous process of meaning-making. Also, he makes clear that culture entails an action-generating feature, and adds that what it *does*, rather than what culture *is*, is more important. In a similar way, Dervin (2014) underlines that studies dealing with interculturality should focus on the following:

What is happening between people when they co-construct actions, discourses, identities, etc.

rather than on the old, tired, and simplistic concept of culture. In other words, practitioners and researchers should move from the idea that people are cultural objects to that of people negotiating representations on themselves, their experiences, and their environment. (p. 193)

Hall's (1997), Dervin's (2014) and Kumaravadivelu's (2008) view of culture, as shown above, is consistent with Kramsch (2011), for whom it is currently "seen less as a world of institutions and historical traditions, or even as identifiable communities of practice, than as a mental toolkit of subjective metaphors, affectivities [and] historical memories (p. 355). The author adds that through these subjective aspects "we make meaning of the world around us and

share that meaning with others” (p. 355).

In this section, I conceptualized the concept of culture. I showed how in my research I am based on the view that culture is a dynamic and continuous process of meaning-making. From this perspective, the relationship between language and culture in the teletandem context is seen as part of situated discourses, where interactants co-construct their cultural identities. With that in mind, in the following section we will move to our next focus of discussion: identities. I feel that devoting a section to identities is appropriate since, as Rodrigues (2013) puts it, “any interaction amongst peoples and cultures, naturally, will trigger cultural identities involved in the interaction process” (p. 153, own translation⁷). Seen in these terms, the co-construction of interculturality in

⁷ Original quote: “qualquer interação entre povos e culturas, naturalmente, desencadeará identidades culturais envolvidas no processo de interação”.

teletandem takes place on the basis of the participants' life stories, experiences, interests, affiliations, world views, and so on.

2.4 Conceptualizing Identities

For Tajfel and Turner (1979), the human being is defined by the division between “we” and “them”, and they add that this division plays a role in the process of social categorization, e.g. “Spanish people have this way of seeing the world, whereas we, Brazilians, think that way”; “the English take the afternoon tea, while we don’t usually do this”; “Brazilians like parties, while in Chile people usually don’t go to parties”, and so forth. The authors add that through the process of social categorization the members of a social group, as a way to reinforce their self-image, can find negative aspects in

relation to other groups. As a result, stereotypes can emerge and give vent to various forms of prejudice, since they accentuate the differences between different social groups.

Tajfel's and Turner's (1979) conceptualization of identity converges with Silva (2000), Woodward (2000) and Telles (2015b). For the latter, the "marking of difference" (p. 5) is a very common aspect of the intercultural encounters in teletandem. Silva (2000), on his turn, makes clear that identity refers to what "one is" and difference to what "the other is". From this angle, Woodward (2000) argues that "difference is what separates one identity from the other" (p. 42, own translation⁸).

Hall (1992), by looking back over past centuries,

⁸ Original quote: "a diferença é aquilo que separa uma identidade da outra".

presents three conceptions of identity. The first, Enlightenment subject, is based “on a conception of the human person as a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action” (p. 275). From this perspective, the individual would display “identical” identities throughout his life. Regarding the second conception, Sociological subject, identities are experienced on the basis of the interaction “between self and society” (p. 597). He explains that the individual, just as the Enlightenment subject, has an essence of what is “the real me” (p. 597), but “it is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds “outside” and the identities which they offer” (p. 597). As concerns the third conception, Post-modern subject, the individuals’ identities regarded as stable in the past are

giving way to new forms in Late Modernity⁹. For the author, individuals may display contradictory and unresolved identities, and adds that the processes of identification have become more problematic and variable.

Bauman (2001), in many respects similar to Hall (1992), distinguishes two conceptions of identity: 1) “solid” and 2) “liquid”. Solid identity, which is in keeping with Hall’s (1992) definition of Enlightenment subject, is viewed as an attachment to static views of culture, gender, nation, among others. For Bauman (2001), such an attachment defines people within fixed categories and confined by geographical borders.

Regarding liquid identity, the second conception,

⁹ According to Giddens (1991), Late Modernity describes today’s vastly developed global societies. It may also be referred to an extension (or development) of Modernity, which, according to the author, relates to different modes of behavior and institutions established initially in post-feudal Europe.

identities are seen as fragile, fluid and eternally provisional. This vision of identity is somewhat similar to Hall's (1992) definition of Post-modern subject, for both of them conceptualize the nuances of social transformations in our era.

Both Hall's (1992) conception of Post-modern subject and Bauman's (2001) definition of liquid identity are in line with what Said (1999) and Block (2007), from a poststructuralist perspective, understand by identity construction. For the former, identities should be seen as an ongoing process of construction rather than finished or static. In fact, in line with Telles (2015b), it is on the basis of individual experiences that interactants in teletandem, in a dynamic and continuous process, construct their identities through interaction with others. This is also consistent with Block (2007), for whom:

Identity work occurs in the company of others – either face-to-face or in an electronically mediated mode – with whom to varying degrees individuals share beliefs, motives, values, activities and practices. Identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future. (p. 27)

Seen in this light, my research is based on Block's (2007) definition of identities, for whom they should be regarded as “socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language” (p. 27).

This section concentrated on some theoretical

conceptions regarding identities as well as the poststructuralist perspective (Bauman, 2001; Block, 2007; Hall, 1992; Said, 1999) on which my research is grounded. In the next section, I consider it relevant to conceptualize discourses and discourse analysis because, as will be seen further on, my study is based on the assumption that language and culture are materialized in situated discourses.

2.5 Conceptualizing Discourse and Discourse Analysis

According to Phipps and Gonzales (2004), discourse is constructed “together with someone who embodies the discourse” (p. 88). In teletandem, for instance, learners negotiate meanings with their peers in discourses where they tell stories, jokes and their plans

for the future. Thus, interactants co-construct their identities (Telles, 2015b) while, for instance, they explain cultural particularities about the country and the city where they live in, tell life past events, and the like.

Discourse is defined by Kramsch (1993) as “the process through which we create, relate, organize and realize meaning” (p. 11). For her, it is directly determined by the political and social context, which can be the basis for better understanding ideological constructions that encompass intercultural relations. By the same token, for Gee (1989) “discourses are ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes” (pp. 6-7).

In my study, I concur with the post-structuralist

perspective on discourse by Filho and Gil (2016). The authors, based on Jordão (2006), explain that the world around us only makes sense due to our impressions and interpretations that we have, and this process of “making sense of things” is made possible through language. In this line, the authors assert that “if we consider that there is no possible reality beyond the observer, all that remains is discourse” (p. 1502).

I see that discourse analysis can help me in interpreting my participants’ interactions because, according to Fairclough (2003), discourse analysis:

Is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life ... this means that one productive way of doing

social research is through a focus on language, using some form of discourse analysis. (p. 2)

Moreover, on the grounds that, as language-in-use – or discourse –, takes place in real-time communication (Blommaert, 2005), it is “simultaneously encapsulated in several layers of historicity, some of which are within the grasp of the participants while others remain invisible but are nevertheless present” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 130). That being said, as discourses plays a role in the construction of “social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief” (Fairclough, 1993, p.134), discourse analysis allows to better understand what is “hidden” in the participants’ utterances and possible reasons why they exteriorize particular worldviews.

In line with Dervin (2014), the concept of “voice” is at the heart of discourse. For Blommaert (2005), this concept “must be situated at the intersection of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis” (p. 15) and adds that “[it] stands for the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so” (p. 4). For this to be possible, individuals employ in interactions discursive means (e.g. specific pronouns) that are within their reach and according to the specificity of each context. Thus, understanding the different voices that language learners employ in discourse can help to understand how the negotiation of meaning occurs, since, according to Roulet (2011), “any discourse is always associated with former discourses and voices” (p. 209).

After having presented definitions of discourses

and discourse analysis, in the next section I will provide a discussion regarding the intercultural approach to FL teaching and learning, as this approach is central to the development of this study.

2.6 The Intercultural Approach

Many scholars, among them Byram (1997), Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), Corbett (2003), Crozet and Liddicoat (1999), Filho and Gil (2016), Gil (2016) and Kramsch (1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014), have proposed the adoption of an intercultural approach to FL teaching and learning, for language and culture, as has already been said, cannot be separated from one another (Agar, 1994; Byram, 1997; Filho & Gil, 2016; Gil, 2016; Kramsch, 1993, 1998; Risager, 2007; Schaefer, 2014). In other words, speaking

a FL cannot be limited only to knowledge of grammatical rules followed by its use in different sociocultural interactions. By the same token, Kramersch (2009a) claims that the structural system, with its pragmatic rules, is no longer sufficient to understand people's interaction in the twenty-first century.

For Gil (2016), the relationship between language and culture has been widely discussed in the field of applied linguistics in recent years. The author claims that a possible way to deal with such a relationship is through an intercultural approach. For that reason, in the next subsection I will discuss some conceptualizations about the interaction between language and culture related to the intercultural approach.

2.6.1 The relationship between language and

culture. Agar (1994) argues that utterances produced by users of a language are historically and culturally determined. Because of that, the FL area should not be only limited to teaching formal aspects of language, such as vocabulary, grammar, phonetics and morphology, but it should also deal with cultural aspects. The author names “languaculture”, or “language plus culture”, the intrinsic relationship between language and culture. Regarding “languaculture”, Thorne (2006) makes clear that “langua” “extends beyond words and sentences to discourse” (p. 6).

Agar (2006) explains that when two “languacultures” come into contact, rich points, or intercultural misunderstandings, can arise. For him, rich points can be understood as “those surprises, those departures from an outsider’s expectations that signal a

difference between LC1 and LC2 and give direction to subsequent learning”¹⁰ (2006, p. 2). In a similar way, O’Dowd (2012) asserts that intercultural misunderstandings “should be exploited as ‘rich points’ for learning (p. 352) and for Belz (2002) they “should not be smoothed over or avoided ... indeed, they should be encouraged” (p. 76). Belz (2007), in turn, defines rich points as “pieces of discourse that indicate that two *languacultures* or conceptual systems have come into contact” (p. 145).

Risager (2007, p. 166) identifies two positions regarding the relationship between language and culture in FL teaching: 1) “language as being closely linked to its culture” and; 2) “language as a communication tool”.

The first position is strictly linked to a national-romantic

¹⁰ LC1 = language and culture / languaculture 1; LC2 = language and culture / languaculture 2.

current or “a closed universe of language” (p. 166).

Although language and culture are seen as intrinsically linked, this position does not harmonize with the idea that cultural boundaries in today’s world are more fluid. Regarding the second position, language as a communication tool, language is conceived as a communication tool and is not related to any respective culture, which means that culture is neutral. The author adds that this view “denies the culture-bearing and culture-creating potential of human languages” (p. 166).

With her poststructuralist view, Risager (2007) is critical of how Agar (1994, 2006) conceptualized languaculture. Actually, she questions some scholars who considered the semantic-pragmatic (e.g. Agar, 1994, 2006) or poetic dimensions (e.g. Friedrich, 1989) in this term, but did not address sociolinguistics research. In

this sense, she proposes a systematic definition of this term.

She maintains that the vision one has of language is important in order to conceptualize the relationship between language and culture. Thus, grounding on Vygotsky (1978, 1986), who argues that language constitutes a tool for action and thought, she came with two different visions regarding this relationship: “linguistic practice” and “linguistic resources”. The first vision has to do with written texts and oral interactions that “take place between people in real time (p. 168). It can also be associated with paralinguistic features, such as gestures, tone and pitch of voice and body language. Linguistic resources, the second vision, is related to the idea that the various linguistic resources that individuals use when they communicate are “developed as part of

the biography of the subject” (Risager, 2007, p. 169), for they are carried out by individuals themselves.

Therefore, for Risager, languaculture cannot be viewed as separated from learners’ cultural identities, since they bring their own life experience to the fore in interactions. From this perspective, the process of FL learning occurs in particular ways from learner to learner. Otherwise said, languaculture implies that learning another language is a personal process, forming a coherent whole with the learner’s history as a speaker, listener, reader and writer. This way, the author argues that every time a text (oral or written) is produced in intercultural encounters, languacultura can contribute to better understanding individuals’ utterances, essentialist views underlying their discourses, among others. Similarly, Kramsch (1998) claims that taking into

consideration the relationship between language and culture as part of the learners' individual biography helps in understanding how they co-construct meanings.

Risager (2007) warns that in languaculture (Agar, 1994, 2006) is implicit the vision of “one language = one culture”. She makes clear that language and culture are linked, but not in one inextricable way. The author names this strict link between language and culture “national perspective”¹¹, which focuses on national references. The author presents the following features of this perspective:

- (1) The sole aim is a national standard norm of native-language use and a standardised

¹¹ Although the author makes use of the term “paradigm” (national paradigm), I decided on using “perspective” instead of “paradigm”. How I see it, the word “paradigm”, according to its definition in dictionaries, expresses “an example” or serves as a standard or model, and this is not my intention in this research.

languaculture; (2) the teacher is a native speaker and uses the standard norm; (3) teaching is only in the target language and its standard norm; (4) subjects and discourses concentrate on cultural and social relations (incl. literature) in the country or one of the countries where the language is spoken as the first language, and then only ‘the majority culture’. (p. 191)

For the author, the idea of “language area” underlying the national perspective is also problematic, since, although countries are separated by national boundaries, “languages are not bound by territory” (p. 168). In effect, regarding the teletandem context, although some learners reside in the United States and in England, where they interact with their Brazilian peers,

some of them are actually from different countries where English is not the official language, e.g. Argentina, Spain and Mexico.

As an alternative for the national perspective, Risager advocates a “transnational perspective”. She states that when worldviews linked essentially to national views are overcome, new horizons and possibilities can be glimpsed in FL teaching. The objective of the transnational perspective is to explore changes that have occurred in today’s world and, furthermore, to acknowledge the linguistic and cultural complexity of transnational flows. Risager provides the following features of this perspective:

- (1) The sole aim is not a national standard norm of native-language use and room is found for

more inclusive language norms and various languacultures; (2) the teacher does not need to be a native speaker in the standard language, so long as he/she has a high level of competence; (3) teaching is not only in the target language but, if necessary/possible, also in other languages, e.g. the students' first language. (p. 194)

It can be claimed that the close relationship between language and culture from the national perspective in the context of teletandem should always be questioned, such as the idea that one learner has a specific accent or a cultural behavior because she/he was born and lives, for instance, in the United States. This way, I agree with Jørgensen (2008), for whom the strict relationship between national languages with traditional

boarders should be put at stake. Moreover, cultural boundaries have proved to be more complex and fluid recently, that is, there has been a continuous movement across and through cultural boundaries (Baker, 2015).

As explained in Section 2.3, a “static view of culture” (Liddicoat, 2002) does not concentrate on the interaction between language and culture. As opposed to this view, in my research I am based on the assumption that language and culture are materialized in situated discourses. In other words, the relationship between language and culture is not seen as two distinct entities and completely independent of each other. Instead, “language and culture are dialectically related [and] materialized in socio-historically situated ‘discourses’” (Filho & Gil, 2006, p. 1501).

In this subsection I explored the interaction

between language and culture related to the intercultural approach. First, I focused on Agar's (1994, 2006) conceptualizations of this interaction followed by Risager's (2007). Lastly, I presented the dialectical relationship (Filho & Gil, 2016) between language and culture on which my research is based. Having done that, in the next subsection I will deal with some theoretical contributions by Byram (1989, 1997) to the intercultural approach, for they proved to be of significant importance to understand the reality of my data.

2.6.2 Interculturality according to Byram. For Byram (1997), gaining knowledge of other people's values and behaviors, respect for other cultures, adaptation to different contexts, openness to other viewpoints and personal desire to know other cultures

should be part of FL teaching and learning. About this, Byram (1989) stresses that:

One of the contributions of foreign language teaching to pupils' education is to introduce learners to and help them understand "otherness". Whether it be in linguistic or cultural terms, learners are confronted with the language of other people, their culture, their way of thinking and dealing with the world. (1989, p. 25)

Byram (1997) suggests that learners' interactions involve both "declarative knowledge" and "procedural knowledge". While the former has to do with factual knowledge about people from other cultures, the latter refers to appropriate ways of interacting with people

from different cultural contexts. He adds that both knowledge and meaning are relational in nature, as people's interaction depends upon specific contexts.

For the author, intercultural communicative competence, which encompasses both declarative and procedural knowledge, refers to the ability to use language in interactions with people from other cultures. He proposes five components (or what he names *savoirs*) for this competence, namely: (1) attitudes; (2) knowledge; (3) skills of interpreting and relating; (4) skills of discovering and interacting; and (5) critical cultural awareness. In what follows, I will present each of these components.

(1) Attitudes (or *savoir être*): they refer to a “willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviors, and to analyze them from the viewpoint

of the others with whom one is engaging” (p. 34). This way, attitudes are linked to the individuals’ ability to relativize their own culture and develop their ability to respect and value the culture of the other. According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), such an attitude can help language learners “to step outside their taken for granted perspectives” (p. 29).

(2) Knowledge (or *savoirs*): it is related to knowledge of other cultures and the self in social interactions. It also means having knowledge in a more general sense. The author emphasizes that being aware of how knowledge may influence behaviors and perceptions in interactions is necessary.

(3) Skills of discovery and interaction (or *savoir apprendre/faire*): it has to do with “the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and

the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (p. 61).

(4) Skills of interpreting and relating (or *savoir comprendre*): it concretely means having the ability to interpret a document or event of another culture and relate it to her/his own culture.

(5) Critical cultural awareness (or *savoir s’engager*): as maintained by Byram (1997), the reciprocal relationship amongst the first four components referred to above should lead to an “evaluative orientation” (p. 43), which refers to the examination and interpretation of cultural differences. Indeed, Byram (2012) highlights that this component should be viewed as a core aspect in his intercultural model, which is linked to the individual’s ability to “identify and

interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures" (Byram, 1997, p. 53). According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), such a critical cultural awareness can help language learners "to act on a [sic] the basis of new perspectives" (p. 29).

According to Byram (1997), cultural representations come into play when people from different cultures meet, in the sense that there is the tendency to perceive the other as a representative of a certain nationality. For Risager (2007), "cultural representations are built up in discourses, and they convey images or narratives of culture and society in particular contexts" (p. 180). As stated by Jovchelovitch (2007), "the reality of the human world is in its entirety made of representation: in fact there is no sense of reality

for our human world without the work of representation” (p. 11).

Hall (1997), in turn, explains that “representation *is* an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture” (p. 15). He adds that cultural representations allow individuals to construct their identities and to intersubjectively exchange meanings about the “real” and “imaginary” worlds linked to people, objects and event. From this perspective, Dervin (2014) states that people use these cultural representations to position themselves and “to claim common identities” (p. 194) and adds that the more people interact with others in a variety of contexts, “the more varied representations one co-constructs and re-interprets” (p. 194).

Despite the fact that cultural representations are

“an essential part” of meaning-making, as Hall (1997) pointed out previously, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) warn that an exclusive focus on national cultural representations “reduces the individual from a complex human being to someone who is seen as representative of a country or 'culture’” (2002, p. 9). The authors also argue that such a focus can cause the emergence of stereotypes, in the sense that they “are based on feelings rather than reason” (p. 27). About this, Byram (1997) claims that having the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures involves being able to overcome stereotyped representations, since they can trigger negative visions of other groups. In order for this to happen, Kumaravadivelu (2008) maintains that “a critical awareness of the complex nature of cultural understanding” (p. 64) is needed. Similarly, Byram,

Gribkova and Starkey (2002) claim that FL teaching should help language learners “to examine and challenge generalisations or stereotypes, and suggest or present other viewpoints” (p. 25).

Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) assert that teachers, owing to the fact that an intercultural approach can lead to the “transformational engagement of the learner in the act of learning” (p. 42), can help students in the process of distancing from “their preexisting assumptions and practices” (p. 26), where “the borders between self and other are explored, problematized and redrawn” (p. 42). In effect, O’Dowd’s (2003) study, which involved email exchanges between five pairs of university learners of English and Spanish, revealed that “the development of distancing” (p. 136) was one of the fundamental characteristics for the

construction of interculturality. As Helm (2016) puts it, such a process of distancing can be possible through dialogue, which “entails critical thinking and aims to reveal assumptions and biases, so they can be re-evaluated” (p. 153). In the same vein, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) add that distancing from one’s cultural assumptions enables language learners “to see the unfamiliarity of the cultural representations” (p. 116).

Although Byram’s (1997) intercultural model has been widely used to analyze intercultural interactions, it has also been criticized over the years. Next, I would like to mention two points of critique.

The first point refers to the fact that the author’s model cannot be extended to every context where intercultural encounters take place. Helm and Guth (2010) state that “Byram’s model was not developed for

telecollaboration contexts” (p. 70). For the authors, this model was intended for contexts such as the classroom and period of residence abroad. They underline that online interactions, however, do not occur “necessarily between native speakers or speakers who have in-depth knowledge of the so-called ‘national’ target culture” (p. 70).

The second point of critique is that in Byram’s model culture is frequently a synonym for national references of cultures. For Risager (2007), as this model is founded on a nationalist concept of language, generalizations regarding specific social groups, countries and people can arise. Helm and Guth (2010) warn that this attachment to national constructs, as it does not recognize the cultural diversity in online interactions, can result in a limited view of culture.

In order to overcome the narrow vision between language and culture, Müller-Hartmann and Kurek (2016) state that, far beyond the intercultural speaker “who mediates and builds relationships between two interlocutors involved in interaction” (p. 132), symbolic competence¹² (Kramersch, 2006, 2009a, 2011; Kramersch & Whiteside, 2008) can be deemed as an extension of Byram’s (1997) intercultural model, since it provides special attention to the complex and multifaceted reality of intercultural encounters in today’s world. The need to recognize a symbolic dimension in interactions had already been emphasized by O’Dowd in 2006:

Apart from knowledge of the target culture and attitudes of openness toward and interest in other

¹² Symbolic competence (Kramersch, 2006, 2009a, 2011; Kramersch & Whiteside, 2008) will be discussed in Subsection 2.6.3.

cultures, effective intercultural interaction includes the skills of being able to discover and understand the *symbolic* [emphasis added] meaning that is attributed to behaviors in different cultures. It also involves an awareness that one's own way of seeing the world is not *natural* or *normal*, but culturally determined. (p. 86)

Following the discussion in this subsection on Byram's theoretical approach to interculturality, in the next subsection I will present Kramsch's theorizations, since they were essential to interpret my data. Also, in spite of the fact that Byram's theoretical contributions were of utmost importance for my research, I side more with Kramsch (1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b,

2011; 2013, 2014) because, as I have already explained, she advocates that discourse, which is directly influenced by the political and social context, should be considered as the basis for analyzing intercultural relations.

2.6.3 Interculturality according to Kramersch.

First and foremost, Byram (1997) did not theoretically support the relationship between language and culture building on discourse in his work *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*.

Hence, I would like to highlight, as suggested before, that my research is based on Kramersch's (1993, 1998, 2009a, 2011) view that the language and culture interaction related to interculturality is constructed within the discourse realm.

In her work *context and culture in language*

teaching in 1993, Kramersch noted that FL education had not yet considered that “culture is a social construct, the product of the self and the other perceptions” (p. 205). For her, the interaction between “the self” and “the other” presupposes the deconstruction of fixed representations as well as of the world itself. The author thus suggested four lines of thought for the intercultural approach in FL teaching:

(1) Establishing a sphere of interculturality.

Kramersch argues that interculturality is not about teaching factual information, but about reflecting between “the self” and “the other”.

(2) Teaching culture as an interpersonal process.

The author makes clear that as meanings emerge through interaction with “the other”, teachers should provide opportunities for understanding “otherness” instead of

only dealing with cultural facts.

(3) Teaching culture as difference. For her, with the purpose of not reducing culture simply to national traits, there should be reflection upon aspects such as gender, age, regions and ethnic groups in the classroom.

(4) Crossing disciplinary boundaries. The author claims that it is necessary to extend readings beyond usual disciplines that are academically recognized for the teaching of culture, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnography and Semiotics.

The reflection about the self and the other made possible by the lines of thought previously presented can lead to interculturality (Kramsch, 1993), which stands for “an awareness and a respect of [sic] difference, as well as the socio-affective capacity to see oneself through the eyes of others” (Kramsch, 2005, p. 553). In

the same vein, Bredella (2002) states that interculturality is the ability to “reconstruct the context of the foreign, take the others’ perspective and see things through their eyes. This implies that we are able to distance ourselves from our own categories, values and interests” (p. 39). With the objective of favoring interculturality, Ware and Kramsch (2005) explain that “a willingness to imagine another person as different from oneself, to recognize the other in his or her historicity and subjectivity” (p. 202) is paramount.

In 1993, Kramsch coined the term “third place”. She defined it as a hybrid space or as a constant mediation between different cultures, e.g. between “C1” and “C2”¹³. For her:

¹³ For Kramsch (1993), C1 = Culture 1; C2 = Culture 2.

The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2 is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view on C1 and C2. It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish. (1993, p. 210)

More recently, Kramsch explains that the third place refers to:

A sphere of interculturality that enables language students to take an insider's view as well as an outsider's view on both their first and second cultures. It is this ability to find/establish/adopt this third place that is at the very core of

intercultural competence. (2011, pp. 354-355)

The third place has also been conceptualized by other scholars¹⁴. For instance, Kumaravadivelu (1998) associates this concept with “hybridity”, which concerns a continuous and dynamic process of cultural identity construction. Also regarding hybridity, Soler and Jordá (2007) explain that “culture is constructed by negotiating differences, establishing a third sphere of interculturality among individuals who use language in the interpersonal process of cultural construction” (p. 35). In a similar way to Jordá (2007), Filho and Gil (2016) claim that “by assuming that interculturality depends on a dialogical

¹⁴ Studies focused on the third place have been carried out in different areas of knowledge, such as Cultural Studies, Semiotics, Education and Linguistics. Actually, it gained notoriety mainly after Bhabha’s (1994) research. The author posits that communication is not restricted to the immediate interaction among people. In contrast, it relates to a meaning construction process that occurs externally to the environment, which may extend beyond the awareness level of the speakers.

interaction, it is possible to re-affirm that ‘third places’ are never constructed by a single person, but they are *co-constructed* through the interaction among students and teachers” (p. 1517). Lopes and Freschi (2016), on their turn, state that the third place:

Is in that non-geographic place where I seek to stop placing all the other people under my cultural parameter, attempting to free myself from judgments, aiming at observing the other on the basis of herself/himself to learn more about her/him and myself. (p. 53, own translation¹⁵)

The third place, that is, the metaphorical place

¹⁵ Original quote: “Se constitui naquele lugar não geográfico em que procuro deixar de colocar todos os demais sob o meu parâmetro cultural, procurando desnudar-me de julgamentos, objetivando observar o outro a partir dele mesmo para aprender mais dele e de mim mesmo”.

where cultural representations can be discussed in more depth, can be associated with three other metaphors: 1) “discursive faultlines” (Kramersch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009); 2) “intercultural episodes” (Gil, 2016) and; 3) “transgression” (Kramersch, 2013). For Kramersch (1993), discursive faultlines concern the moments in which cultural representations are contested at the third place. As explained by Menard-Warwick (2009), these discursive faultlines, that is, “areas of cultural difference” (p. 30), are “pedagogically valuable because they index the cultural areas that need to be explored in order to work toward interculturality” (p. 30). Regarding the second metaphor, intercultural episodes (Gil, 2016), which is similar to Kramersch’s (1993) and Menard-Warwick’s (2009) definition of discursive faultlines, are related to moments when “the learners are interactively

engaged in the practice of meaning-making which results from confronting multiple possible interpretations of their and other's culture(s)" (p. 345). The third metaphor, transgredience (Kramersch, 2013), stands for:

The ability of speakers to see themselves from the outside ... Through transgredience, language learners learn not only to use the language correctly and appropriately, but to reflect on their experience. They occupy a position where they see themselves both from the inside and from the outside – what I have called a “third place”. (p. 62)

At the third place, conflicts can be overcome through the intercultural dialogue. For Kramersch (1993),

teachers can help language learners understand what can cause intercultural conflicts, but they cannot teach directly how to solve them, since “what we should seek in cross-cultural education are less bridges than a deep understanding of the boundaries. We can teach the boundary, we cannot teach the bridge” (Kramsch, p. 228). This is because, according to Galloway (1999), “bridges” are always interpreted from the perspective of the other person, and therefore cannot be fully “accurate”. In this connection, Helm (2016) claims that conflicts “ought to be recognized as an inevitable part of intercultural dialogue” (p. 152), and they should be viewed as “transformative agents” (p. 152). Furthermore, Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) makes clear that discussing the boundaries between the “self” and “the other” can lead to interculturality.

In more recent studies, Kramsch (e.g. 2006, 2009a, 2011) questions her own concept of the third place, because, similar to what Baker (2015) and Jørgensen (2008) pointed out in Subsection 2.6.1, cultural boundaries have proved to be more fluid in today's world. Hence, she suggests that "the notion of Third Culture must be seen less as a PLACE than as a symbolic PROCESS of meaning-making that sees beyond the dualities of national languages (L1-L2)¹⁶ and national cultures (C1-C2)¹⁷ (p. 355). Beyond the metaphor of the third place, Kramsch (2011) claims that it is necessary to recognize a symbolic dimension that pervades the process of meaning-making in interaction, as it helps in understanding others. For Kramsch (2009a), the meaning of symbolic is linked "not only to

¹⁶ Language 1 / Language 2.

¹⁷ Culture 1 / Culture 2.

representations of people and objects in the world but to the *construction* of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and values through the use of symbolic forms” (p. 7).

Kramersch (2011) sees that “symbolic forms construct subjective realities such as perceptions, emotions, attitudes, and values” (p. 7) and adds that “the self that is engaged in intercultural communication is a symbolic self that is constituted by symbolic systems like language as well as by systems of thought and their symbolic power” (p. 354). Meeting Vygotsky’s SCT presented in Section 2.2, Kramersch (2009a) claims that one of these symbolic forms is language itself, since “it mediates our existence through symbolic forms or signs that are conventional and represent objective realities” (p. 7). In these terms, learners, through language, do not

only construct “their own and others” (Kramersch, 2013, p. 68) but also discursively construct subjective symbolic representations, such as ideological views and stereotyped portrayals. This concurs with Norton (1997), for whom language learners are “constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaged in identity construction and negotiation” (p. 410).

In line with the notion of a symbolic process of meaning negotiation, Kramersch (2006) suggests that, in order to understand other people’s positioning and attitudes, “we have to understand what they [people] remember from the past, what they imagine and project onto the future, and how they position themselves in the present” (p. 251). In addition, such a symbolic

dimension “calls for an approach to the training of language teachers that is discourse based, historically grounded, aesthetically sensitive, and that takes into account the actual, the imagined and the virtual worlds in which we live” (Kramersch, 2011, p. 366).

Thus, instead of the third place, Kramersch (2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011) proposes the term symbolic competence¹⁸. It seems that the main reason why the author has reconceptualized the third place metaphor concerns the fact that, similar to Byram’s (1997) intercultural model, the third place may suggest fixed and homogeneous spaces between cultures (e.g. “my culture” x “your culture”). Kramersch (2011) herself states

¹⁸ Actually, in 1993, Kramersch already pointed out the existence of a symbolic dimension permeating the dialectical interaction between language and culture. Also, Kramersch and Steffensen (2008) explain that in the 1990s sociolinguistics already agreed that “a language is not just a mode of communication but a symbolic statement of social and cultural identity, especially in the increasingly multilingual environments in which L2 learners found themselves” (p. 20).

that this term, besides being deeply rooted in a vision of nation-state and its institutions, is reinforced by a modernist perspective of culture as part of a common history, language and imaginings.

Kramersch and Whiteside (2008) argue for a symbolic competence at the heart of the intercultural dialogue. For the authors, it can be defined as “the ability not only to approximate or appropriate to oneself someone else’s language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used” (p. 664) as well as a “mindset that can create relationships of possibility” (p. 668). Kramersch (2011), on her turn, defines symbolic competence as follows:

It is the capacity to recognize the historical context of utterances and their intertextualities, to

question established categories like *German, American, man, woman, White, Black* and place them in their historical and subjective contexts. But it is also the ability to resignify them, reframe them. (p. 359)

On the basis of Kramsch's and Whiteside's (2008) and Kramsch's (2011) quote presented above, it can be argued that a symbolic dimension goes beyond a mere negotiation of meanings for the sake of a "successful development" in intercultural encounters. Also, the idea of symbolic competence surpasses the functional understanding of language highly regarded by the communicative approach to FL teaching, e.g. the language used to effectively meet specific purposes in communicative acts. From this perspective, Vinall

(2016) claims that a symbolic dimension gives close attention to “how meaning is constructed in the texts in relation to their historical and political contexts, to the readers’ own positionality and subjective experiences, and to the cultural values and beliefs that are attached to these meanings” (p. 1).

For Kramersch (2011, p. 357), there are three key dimensions of symbolic competence, which can also be seen as symbolic dimensions of language that permeate intercultural interactions. The first of them is called symbolic representation, which places emphasis “on what words say and what they reveal about the mind” (p. 357). The second dimension, symbolic action, draws attention to “what words do” (p. 357) as well as to people’s intentions that can be revealed through the use of specific words. Finally, the third dimension, symbolic

power, focuses on what words “reveal about social identities, individual and collective memories, emotions and aspirations” (p. 357).

Vinall (2016, pp. 4-5), by drawing from Kramsch’s (2011) conceptualization of symbolic competence as well as from her three core dimensions as shown above, developed three specific features of symbolic competence: 1) relationality; 2) transgression, and; 3) potentiality. Relationality is linked to the idea that meaning does not lie, for example, only in one text, in a single person or in a single modality (e.g. written language and images), but rather “in the relations, reframings, and dialogues that emerge between them” (p. 4). Transgression, the second feature, means that it is necessary to have language learners reflect upon worldviews, the language through which they produce

utterances and even about themselves. To put it another way, transgression involves problematization and development of a critical attitude towards cultural representations. Finally, potentiality is connected with the view that meaning “points to the potential for another [meaning], in what becomes an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing (p. 5).

As has already been said, Müller-Hartmann and Kurek (2016) suggests that Kramersch’s symbolic competence can be seen as an extension of Byram’s (1997) intercultural model. They add that “the increased cultural hybridization of learners’ identities warrants a fresh look at ICC, which has been provided by Kramersch’s (2009b) notion of symbolic competence”¹⁹ (p. 131). Thus, reflection upon historical, ideological and

¹⁹ “ICC” means Intercultural Communicative Competence, referring to Byram’s (1997) intercultural model.

social aspects can be a way of promoting the co-construction of interculturality in online intercultural encounters. To make this possible, Kramersch (2011) recommends that teachers:

(1) Use communicative activities as food for reflection on the nature of language, discourse, communication and mediation; (2) pay attention to what remains unsaid, or may even be unsayable because it is politically incorrect or disturbing ...; (3) bring up every opportunity to show complexity and ambiguity ...; (4) engage the students' emotions, not just their cognition.
(p. 364)

In a nutshell, a symbolic dimension in FL

teaching and learning can enable learners, through contestation or moments of reflection, recognize the intertextualities underlying their utterances and place them in their historical contexts. Also, symbolic competence can help learners to resignify, reframe, and (re)contextualize worldviews by playing with the tension between text and context, which can be made possible by the following Kramersch's (2009b) questions: "who is speaking, for whose benefit, within which frame, on which timescale, to achieve what effects? What are the ideological value and the historical density of words?" (pp. 117-118).

In this subsection, I presented some of Kramersch's theoretical perspectives on interculturality. Among other aspects, it was seen that the author contends that interculturality should be regarded as an interpersonal

process and that the relationship between language and culture materializes in situated discursive practices.

I have presented so far the theoretical background for my research. In Section 2.1, I presented the EcP. In Section 2.2, I dealt with some of the socio-interactionist theories by Vygotsky (1978, 1986), and in Section 2.3 I discussed the concept of culture. In Section 2.4, in turn, I conceptualized identities, while in Section 2.5 I focused on discourse and discourse analysis. Ultimately, in Section 2.6 I provided a discussion on the intercultural approach to FL teaching and learning. In the next section, I will direct our attention to telecollaboration, since teletandem is the specific “mode of telecollaboration” (Telles, 2015a, p. 604) in my investigation. Then, in Section 2.8 I will concentrate on teletandem.

2.7 Telecollaboration²⁰

It has been claimed that the advent of the Internet can contribute to the process of teaching and learning. For example, Dudeney and Hockly (2007) explain that the Internet makes knowledge more accessible to people in general and increases the speed of exchange information, while Warschauer (1997) stresses that it has a huge impact on Education. With regard specifically to the area of FL teaching and learning, Thorne (2006) claims that digital technologies, facilitated by the use of the Internet, favors “actual interaction with expert speakers of the language” (p. 3). Moreover, Kern, Ware and Warschauer (2004) posit that digital technologies enable language learners to “enter into a new realm of

²⁰ The term “telecollaboration” has been replaced by *Online Interaction and Exchange* (OIE) most recently (e.g. O’Dowd, 2012; Lewis & O’Dowd, 2016).

collaborative enquiry and construction of knowledge, viewing their expanding repertoire of identities and communication strategies as resources in the process” (p. 254).

Computer-assisted language learning (henceforth CALL) is an area dedicated to the study of the relationship between technology and language teaching and learning. For Thomas, Reinders and Warschauer (2013), CALL “has evolved from a relatively narrow area of specialist interest to a more widespread activity characterized by an increasing range of subfields”, and this is due to numerous technological advances made possible by the Internet.

For Helm (2015), a subfield of CALL is telecollaboration which, according to O’Dowd (2013), has had extensive presence in research and activities in

the area of CALL for more than three decades. One widely referenced definition of telecollaboration is provided by Belz (2003), for whom:

Telecollaboration involves the application of global computer networks to foreign (and second) language learning and teaching in institutionalized settings. In telecollaborative partnerships, internationally-dispersed learners in parallel language classes use Internet communication tools such as e-mail, synchronous chat, threaded discussion, and MOOs²¹ (as well as other forms of electronically mediated communication), in order to support social

²¹ MOO, according to Wikipedia, stands for “a text-based online virtual reality system to which multiple users (players) are connected at the same time”. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOO>.

interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchange. (p. 2)

Thorne (2006) explains that telecollaboration offers different opportunities for interaction, such as small-group work, whole class exchanges and pair work. For him, activities “around shared information and media (literature, films, scholarly texts) and collaborative, interpretative and investigative activities” (p. 7) can be part of telecollaborative projects. Furthermore, the author highlights that telecollaboration has been claimed as an important pillar of the intercultural turn in the area of FL teaching, since through activities such as those mentioned previously participants can learn another language and also interact with learners of other cultures. In this connection,

O'Dowd (2012) emphasizes that “online intercultural exchange has gone on to become one of the main pillars of computer-assisted language learning (CALL)” (p. 344).

For Belz (2007), telecollaboration can be characterized as ethnographic, dialogic and critical. Ethnographic because learners can observe, analyze and interpret the behavior of their online partners. Dialogic in the sense that learners' utterances arise out of interaction with others. Finally, critical since, “learners are not passive receptacles of received knowledge (i.e. a facts-and-figures approach to culture learning), but rather active participants in a dynamic process of knowledge construction” (Belz, 2007, p. 138).

In teletandem, in line with Belz's (2007) explanation above, it is also possible to promote

interaction and dialogue between language learners from different cultures. Indeed, telecollaboration is also regarded by other researchers as an opportunity for the intercultural dialogue. For instance, through dialogue and by working collaboratively “participants explore identities and difference, personal experience and emotions, which contribute to awareness of self and others” (Helm, 2016, p. 153). O’Dowd (2003), in his turn, argues that “on-line discussions allow learners to express their ideas and then to clarify and redefine them through feedback and through the other perspectives to which they are exposed” (p. 133). In addition, similar to O’Dowd (2003), Tella and Mononen-Aaltonen (1998) feel that the intercultural dialogue through telecollaborative activities allows for “interaction between self and other and the incorporation of the

latter's conceptual horizon to one's own perspective" (p. 14).

I should like to present, drawing from the work by O'Dowd and Lewis (2016), two examples of telecollaborative projects²² which aim at promoting the intercultural dialogue. The first project is The Cultura Exchange Programme. It is a hybrid learning environment created by Gilberte Furstenberg at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), in the United States. Since the beginning, the main objective of Cultura is to teach language and culture as inseparable and to bring students "to be deeply involved first-hand in the foreign culture and on an almost daily basis" (Furstenberg, p. 248). One of the

²² I decided to describe only two projects because of two reasons. First, due to their representativeness in this area. Second, because the presentation of more examples would be beyond the scope of this study. In fact, special focus will be laid on teletandem further on.

ways to achieve this goal is by promoting discussion about different cultural topics in forums with the purpose of making them reflect on the different points of views presented during the telecollaborative exchanges.

Another way to teach language and culture as interactively related, as Furstenberg (2016) explains, is by carrying out an activity named “parallel texts” (Belz, 2002), where the objective is to make students compare “similar types of documents or texts drawn from the two different cultures - then discuss, and exchange viewpoints with each other” (Furstenberg, 2016, p. 252).

The second project is *The Cultnet Intercultural Citizenship Project*, which has existed for almost two decades and has the participation of more than 200 researchers. It is developed in partnership with members of an informal network of researchers who are interested

in the teaching of FL and in interculturality. Byram (2016) explains that the objective of this project is to promote, through subprojects, education for citizenship in the area of FL teaching and learning between students and teachers from European secondary schools and universities. He also notes that, based on the theory of citizenship and criticality, subprojects, in addition to having students get to know each other or learn something about the other through the intercultural dialogue, should also help them develop intercultural citizenship. Similarly, this project starts from the principle that teaching and learning should promote critical thinking and critical cultural awareness.

In this section, in addition to having presented a definition and some characteristics of telecollaboration, I provided a description of two telecollaborative projects.

In the next section, I will focus on teletandem, the specific mode of telecollaboration in my research.

2.8 Teletandem

Tandem refers to an online mode of autonomous FL learning (Brammerts, 2003). Brammerts (1996) makes clear that learning FLs in tandem involves two people of different languages working in partnership “to learn more about one another’s character and culture, to help one another improve their language skills, and often also to exchange additional knowledge for example, about their professional life” (p. 10). O’Dowd (2012), in turn, explains that “tandem learning is essentially a language learning activity that involves language exchange and collaboration between two partners who are native speakers of their partners’ target language” (p.

343).

Tandem has three guiding principles: autonomy, reciprocity and separate use of both languages (Brammerts, 2003; Telles & Vassallo, 2006; Vassallo & Telles, 2006). Autonomy is related to the responsibility that participants have for both their own learning and the learning of her/his partner. Reciprocity concerns the mutual support and interdependence between two learners who are engaged in equivalent commitment, and both of them aim at achieving intended results in this partnership. Separate use of both languages, in turn, refers to the same amount of time used to practice the two languages.

Consistent with a sociocultural perspective, autonomy and interdependence are important aspects in tandem learning (Rocha & Lima, 2009; Veloso &

Almeida, 2009. According to Rocha and Lima (2009), apart from the need to be autonomous in order to develop her/his language skills, language learners must be aware that the learning of her/his online partners will be contingent upon mutual efforts. Veloso and Almeida (2009), on their part, emphasize that the development of autonomy occurs socially, despite the generalized idea of autonomy as an individual and isolated process. The authors claim that as “language learning is socially situated”²³ (p. 150), teletandem is more associated with collaboration than other contexts of FL teaching and learning.

Still regarding the concept of autonomy in tandem, interactants have the opportunity to discuss topics that emerge spontaneously along the online

²³ Original quote: “a aprendizagem de línguas é socialmente situada”.

exchanges. This is what Vassallo and Telles (2006) call “natural process of interaction” (p. 98), meaning that “such interaction is content- and information-oriented, that arises from learners’ own communicative needs, and that it is triggered by their attempt to communicate with the other” (p. 98). In a similar fashion, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), referring to online exchanges in general, name such an opportunity “active construction of each other’s cultures” (p. 116), in the way that in online interactions “the cultural content is not presented as a fixed body of cultural information but as a dynamic, created, and emerging through interaction” (p. 116).

The virtual tandem exchanges in works by scholars such as Brammerts (1996) and Appel and Mullen (2000) were carried out through written interactions. Later, in 2006, Telles and Vassallo

proposed a different type of tandem, named teletandem, which includes the use of video, synchronous voice and written interaction. The authors state that teletandem has similar features to face-to-face tandem²⁴, in the sense that interactants, for example, can see their partners as well as watch their gesticulations. Telles (2015a) summarizes teletandem as follows:

A mode of telecollaboration - a virtual, collaborative and autonomous context for learning foreign languages in which two students help each other to learn their own languages (or language of proficiency). They do so by using the text, voice and webcam image resources of

²⁴ In face-to-face tandem participants share the same physical space (Vassallo & Telles, 2006).

VOIP²⁵ technology (such as Skype), and by adopting the three principles of tandem learning: autonomy, reciprocity, and separate use of both languages. (p. 604)

Teletandem sessions can be either institutionally “non-integrated” or “integrated” (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014, 2015; Leone & Telles, 2016). Regarding non-integrated teletandem sessions, Leone and Telles (2016) explain that they take place more autonomously, are characterized as extra-curricular activities and are not part of curricular classroom contents. Integrated teletandem sessions, on the other hand, “are embedded in regular foreign language lessons” (Aranha & Cavalari, 2015, p. 763). Moreover, they “happen during class time

²⁵ VOIP - Voice over Internet Protocol.

and they are assessed as any other component of the foreign language course” (Leone & Telles, 2016, p. 245).

2.8.1 The thematic project teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all²⁶ (TTB²⁷). The TTB project, which is run at a state university in São Paulo’s countryside by researchers, practitioners and teachers, was created to enable college students from Brazil to interact with college students from other countries. Telles (2015a) makes clear that it was developed “from a socio-cultural perspective” (p. 605), and adds that it focused “on the vygotskyan concepts of ZPD – zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and mediation” (p.

²⁶ Project name in Portuguese: *Teletandem Brasil: línguas estrangeiras para todos*.

²⁷ See <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/> for further information on TTB.

605)²⁸. Leone and Telles (2016), on their part, explain that the work by scholars such as Brammerts (2003) and Lewis and Walker (2003) provided inspiration for the creation of this thematic project.

In 2006, at the initial stage of the project, Vassallo and Telles (2006) suggested that interactants engage in one-hour sessions, twice a week (changing the language at each meeting), covering a total of two hours per week. More recently, teletandem sessions have been occurring once a week and within an average of thirty minutes for each language.

Since 2011, in its new version, TTB thematic project has been called *Teletandem: Transculturality in online communication in foreign language by webcam*

²⁸ See p. 41 for a definition of mediation, p. 42 for ZPD and p. 43 for scaffolding.

(own translation²⁹) and the cultural component has been given special attention. Telles (2011) adopted the concept of “transculturality” (Welsch, 1999) as the central epistemological axis of this project, for it points out the need to reconceptualize culture, which must be viewed “as characterized by *hybridization*” (Telles, 2011, p. 2) in today’s world.

Telles (2011) highlights that the TTB project, until the year of publication of its new version (2011), had not “deepened the growing evidence that emerged over the studies of *teletandem as a learning context of cultural aspects* inherent in the virtual communication in *teletandem*” (p. 4, own translation³⁰). In this way, as was

²⁹ Project name in Portuguese: *Teletandem: Transculturalidade na comunicação on-line em língua estrangeira por webcam*.

³⁰ Original quote: “aprofundou nas crescentes evidencias surgidas ao longo dos estudos acerca do *teletandem como um contexto de aprendizagem de aspectos culturais* inerentes à comunicação virtual em *teletandem*”.

already said, this research seeks to bridge a gap by focusing on interculturality.

Following this presentation of teletandem, in the next subsection I will explain what mediation sessions mean in the context of teletandem, since I included data from the mediation sessions in my investigation.

2.8.2 Mediation sessions in the teletandem

context. Online intercultural contact in general does not necessarily ensure an in-depth intercultural understanding (Belz, 2002; Kern, 2000; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Lopes & Freschi, 2016; O'Dowd, 2013; Telles, 2015b; Thorne, 2006), “although the potential is there” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 118). Along the same lines, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) highlight that “exposure to

interaction of itself does not necessarily equate with intercultural learning” (p. 111) and Thorne (2006) warns that “tandem learning may have significant limitations” (p. 8) when it comes to enabling students to “constructively engage in intercultural communication” (p. 8).

For Helm (2013, 2016), Kern (2014) and O’Dowd (2016), cultural differences are not often discussed in more depth in telecollaborative exchanges, and the discussion about such cultural differences is frequently averted. For Helm (2016), this happens because language learners’ focus “is on phatic exchanges between learners and [there is] a concern to avoid tensions and misunderstandings” (p. 151). According to O’Dowd (2016), learners do not go deeper in cultural differences because they tend to pay more attention to

“what cultures may have in common at a superficial level” (p. 277), which can “have little effect on students’ understanding of the partner culture or to lead to a critical reflection on students’ own culture” (p. 277).

Moreover, “while potentially helpful for saving face” (Ware, 2005, p. 66) or to prevent “loss of face” (Ware & Kramsch, 2005, p. 196), avoiding deeper discussion “can lead to “missed” communication, or missed opportunities for approximating the kind of rich, meaningful intercultural learning that instructors often intend with telecollaborative projects (Ware, 2005, p. 66). As a result of the superficial level of exploration, Belz (2005) alerts that online exchanges may result in the “retreating into self, reinforcing stereotypes and myths and even creating new, more negative stereotypes” (p. 27).

O’Dowd and Eberbach (2004) argue that the presence of a teacher-mediator in telecollaborative environments is a vitally important element for the deepening of intercultural issues. Thorne (2006), in turn, explains that “teacher-mediation plays a critical role in facilitating more sophisticated understandings of self and others in intercultural interaction” (p. 8). By the same token, Ware and Kramsch (2005) stress that “teacher involvement, far from being peripheral in online learning, has been made even more important, precisely because students engage across complex linguistic and cultural lines in their computer-mediated discourse” (p. 191).

According to Helm (2016), in most telecollaborative projects reported in research “teachers organize the communication and tasks, motivate

students, monitor activities and provide feedback and support for learners, but the communication between learners is not usually moderated” (p. 151). Regarding specifically the context of teletandem, the online sessions themselves are not moderated by an expert-teacher either. However, the mediation sessions, that is, moments that happen after the online sessions (Leone & Telles, 2016), can be a way of promoting moments of further reflection (Lopes & Freschi, 2016), as will be seen further below.

For Salomão (2012), the mediation session in teletandem is an opportunity for the narration of experiences by those who experienced them, that is, the participants themselves. In line with the author, it can be said that both the latter and the teacher-mediator can compare ideas, share views, confront opinions, raise

questions, and so on. In this vein, Leone and Telles (2016) define mediation session as follows:

Moments that follow interactions in teletandem. During these sessions, students have the opportunity to dialogue and exchange experiences with a mediator - a teacher of foreign languages. These discussions focus on (a) aspects of language, (b) culture and (c) partners' relationship. The mediation activity aims at giving students a teacher supported context (*scaffolding*) to reflect on the teaching and the learning experiences during the teletandem session. (p. 244)

Furthermore, Funo (2015) explains that

mediation sessions can occur both in virtual and offline moments, and either in groups, which is most common, or between the teacher-mediator and the participant. Also, they can be arranged in advance or even without prior scheduling. During these meetings, “the teacher-mediator must be, above all, a guide for the partners” (Rocha & Lima, 2009, p. 234, own translation³¹).

With regard to interculturality, Rocha and Lima (2009) argue that the teacher-mediator’s role in the teletandem context is, in addition to “trimming the edges and prevent disinterest, misunderstandings and cultural clashes from happening between the interactants” (p. 240, own translation³²), to mediate the contact between Brazilians and foreigners. They add that it is necessary to

³¹ Original quote: “O mediador deve ser, sobretudo, um guia para os parceiros”.

³² Original quote: “aparar as arestas e evitar que ocorra desinteresse, mal-entendidos e choques culturais entre os interagentes”.

stress to learners the importance of respecting their online partner's individuality. Similarly, they should pay attention to cultural differences, for the sake of not compromising the language learning process, causing possible constraints or the eventual partnership breakdown. For Lopes and Freschi (2016), in turn:

The role of the mediator in this process of development of intercultural competence is, so to speak, essential. A problematizing approach to group discussion seems to be the most effective alternative, viewing the mediator as a stimulating figure for the necessary reflection in this regard.
(p. 69, own translation³³)

³³ Original quote: “O papel do mediador neste processo de desenvolvimento da competência intercultural é, por assim dizer, indispensável. A proposta da problematização no grupo nos parece ser a alternativa mais eficaz, tendo no mediador a figura instigante

As can be seen in the quote above, the authors suggest that the role of the teacher-mediator in teletandem is of key importance to promote further reflection. Also regarding the role of the teacher-mediator, Telles (2015b) points out that “if not appropriately mediated by the foreign language teacher, the virtual, autonomous, and collaborative context of teletandem may backfire into a series of cultural essentialisms and prevent students’ dynamic and diverse understandings of culture” (p. 5). In fact, as will be seen in Chapter 4, the mediation sessions allowed me, as a teacher-mediator, to go deeper into some fixed cultural representations and to question essentialist views.

After discussing mediation sessions in

da reflexão necessária para tal”.

telecollaborative exchanges in general and, more specifically, in the teletandem context, in what follows I will revise some studies on interculturality within the context of the TTB project. This review was of significant importance because, on the basis of it, I was able to look at specific aspects that, in general, became visible both in these studies and in my research. Besides that, this review helped me to theoretically support my analysis, which will be presented in Chapter 4.

2.8.3 Review of studies on interculturality in

teletandem. Mendes's (2009) study sought to understand the beliefs of undergraduate English teachers with regard to English language and the United States, as well as the implications of a growing worldwide sense of anti-Americanism in this context. Some of these feelings

of anti-Americanism exposed by some participants were “America as a superpower in decline” and “America as the center of the world”. At first, the author looked at beliefs and attitudes of the group of undergraduate teachers and, secondly, he analyzed data from teletandem sessions between one participant from that group and a participant from a university of the United States. The study showed that the participants tended to associate English language with specific countries, notably England and the United States. Interestingly, despite this sense of anti-Americanism, the data analysis revealed the coexistence of feeling of admiration and “of adoration regarding everything linked to the EUA ... characterizing a conflict of beliefs about that country” (p. 97, own translation³⁴).

³⁴ Original quote: “de adoração por tudo que esteja ligado aos EUA ... caracterizando um conflito de crenças a respeito daquele país”.

The objective of Benedetti's (2010) study was to present the potential of teletandem for intercultural learning. The author highlights four potential applications for the teletandem: "negotiation of meanings in real-time", "focus on language and corrective feedback", "co-construction of the learning process" and "development of intercultural communicative competence". Regarding the latter, by drawing on Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, as presented earlier in Subsection 2.6.2, the author states that learners in this online context "find fertile ground for the comparison between the languages and the cultures" (p. 49, own translation³⁵). Also, she highlights that this comparison paves the way for elucidating differences and similarities

³⁵ Original quote: "encuentra tierra fértil para la comparación entre las lenguas y las culturas".

between “the two cultures” (p. 49), which may promote intercultural understanding. As can be seen, the author associates intercultural learning with national homogeneous cultures (the two cultures). One of the author’s conclusions is that teletandem has the potential to foster intercultural communicative competence, because it allows interactants to actively participate “in the learning process in a situation of direct contact with a competent speaker in the target language, with whom they negotiate meanings, test hypotheses and strategies of social behavior, confront linguistic and cultural values” (p. 55, own translation³⁶).

Salomão’s (2011) study aimed at analyzing Brazilian in-service teachers’ concepts and beliefs

³⁶ Original quote: “del proceso de aprendizaje en situación de contacto directo con un hablante competente en la lengua meta, con quien negocia significados, prueba hipótesis y estrategias de comportamiento social, confronta valores lingüísticos y culturales”.

regarding language and culture. The author analyzed the data from teletandem sessions as well as from a blended course. She underlines that before the teletandem sessions started, the teachers had a static and factual view of culture, but after these sessions they came to see it also as an interpersonal process. To put it another way, although at the outset it was possible for the author to infer that the pre-service teachers' view of culture was linked to "Culture with the capital "C" (History and social institutions) or culture (everyday customs, traditions and practices)" (p. 270), a rather vision "which resides not on the concept of culture as a block of national characteristics, but of a variety of factors related to age, genre, regional origin, ethnic background and social class began to be expressed after the Teletandem interactions" (p. 270). The author suggests that, in order

to favor the conception of culture as an interpersonal process which is characterized by elements such as “pluralization of one’s cultural identity as well as power relations present in society” (Hall, 2006 as cited in Salomão, 2011, p. 272), the view of culture in the teletandem context should go beyond the transmission and explanation of national cultural references.

Rodrigues’s (2013) study investigated the potential of teletandem to foster the co-construction of intercultural competence between a Brazilian and a Uruguayan. The researcher analyzed excerpts from six teletandem sessions, three diaries produced by the Brazilian participant, a semi-structured questionnaire applied to both participants and personal notes of the Uruguayan participant. The results revealed that the teletandem sessions were favorable to the intercultural

contact and fostered the co-construction of the participants' intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Meyer, 1991), understood as the ability to interact adequately and flexibly with people from other cultures. In effect, the two participants elucidated different linguistic-cultural aspects and were open to learning from each other. Interestingly, the author claims that evidence of intercultural competence emerged even in the cases when there was the co-construction of homogenous cultural facts, e.g. "Valentina, through her reflections, explains to Marcelo important information in order to visualize her culture, the culture of Uruguay and the culture of Sweden with regard to the act of eating" (Rodrigues, 2013, pp. 168-169, own translation³⁷). As

³⁷ Original quote: "Valentina, por meio de suas reflexões, apresenta à Marcelo conhecimentos importantes para que ele visualize sua cultura, a cultura do Uruguai e a cultura da Suécia em relação ao ato de comer".

was the case in Benedetti's (2010) study previously described, Rodrigues linked culture to a national framework, that is, "one nation = one culture" (O'Dowd, 2003, p. 120).

The review of the research presented so far showed that: (1) Mendes's (2009), Benedetti's (2010) and Salomão's (2011) studies actually explored interculturality "at introductory levels" (Telles, 2015b, p. 4), meaning that interculturality, as already said in Chapter 1, has not been sufficiently investigated; (2) with the exception of Rodrigues (2013), the central focus of these studies was not on interculturality necessarily, and two of them (Mendes, 2009; Salomão, 2011) had another main object of study, that is, analysis of undergraduate teachers' beliefs and; (3) only in Rodrigues's study the theoretical background of the

intercultural approach was the principal basis for understanding the reality of the data. Next, I will describe three more studies that focus on interculturality in teletandem.

Telles's (2015b) study had two objectives: 1) to show how Performative Theory³⁸ can help to understand how the constitution of national identities occurs and, based on these analysis results; 2) to reflect on pedagogical implications upon FL pedagogy. Drawing insights from studies about Performative Theory, Telles (2015b) argues that "teletandem discourse is basically characterized by performances of differences" (p. 5), and adds that learners' stable and essentialized conceptions of the world "are performatively produced and not merely represented in their (intercultural) discursive

³⁸ For Kulick (2003 as cited in Telles, 2015b, p. 6), "performativity is the process through which the subject emerges" (p. 140).

practices” (p. 7). Hence, as meaning is performatively produced, the author alerts that teletandem sessions “may fall into shallow performances of sedimented and pre-given representations of self and other” (p. 1), meaning that the discussions in teletandem “involve common sense, and are essentialist in nature” (p. 4).

Excerpts from three teletandem sessions of a partnership between a learner of Portuguese and a learner of English were analyzed. The analysis showed that teletandem is a context where participants can express ideologies and their subjectivities. For the author, these ideologies “might go unnoticed if not appropriately dealt with by the teachers who are responsible for the session mediations” (p. 23). Although Telles (2015b) did not analyze data from mediation sessions, he points out that these moments can promote critical thinking as well as

“critical appreciation of identity and difference” (p. 25) if appropriately and critically explored by teacher-mediators.

Souza’s (2016) study investigated the process of meaning negotiation and the emergence of misunderstandings during exchanges between learners of Portuguese and learners of English. Transcripts of a total of nine teletandem sessions, written profiles of two focal partnerships and narratives about the misunderstanding experience of thirteen Brazilians were part of the *corpus*. The results showed that intercultural misunderstandings were little or superficially negotiated by the participants, and were linked to concepts such as culture, ideological divergences (or conflicts and shocks), failed communication, language proficiency, and so forth. For instance, with respect to “ideological divergences”,

Souza points out that one of the participants related situations of misunderstandings with “conflicts and shocks triggered by ideological divergences” (p. 129, own translation³⁹). Regarding “level of proficiency⁴⁰” (p. 123), the author explains, on the basis of what one of the participants had underlined, that misunderstandings also arise “in the linguistic level of understanding of the intended meanings due to the partner’s difficulties, seemingly, of oral comprehension” (p. 123, own translation⁴¹). Actually, the author did not use the theoretical background of the intercultural approach to interpret the data, but rather Critical Discourse Analysis was the basis for this. Although this study involved data

³⁹ Original quote: “conflitos e choques desencadeados por divergências ideológicas”.

⁴⁰ Original quote: “nível de proficiência”.

⁴¹ Original quote: “no nível linguístico de compreensão dos significados pretendidos por dificuldades do parceiro, aparentemente, de compreensão oral”.

from the mediation sessions, the author analyzed narratives of the participants rather than their actual interaction in these sessions. Souza (2016) stresses the need for future research to strive to understand the way through which intercultural misunderstandings are negotiated in mediation sessions.

Lopes's and Freschi's (2016) study aimed at discussing the relevance of the identification of potential sequences for intercultural learning (Borghetti, Beaven & Pugliese, 2015)⁴² as opportunities for better self-understanding and self-criticism and for the development of intercultural competence in mediation sessions.

Drawing on Belz (2003), the authors define intercultural competence as “the awareness and/or understanding of

⁴² For Borghetti *et al* (2015), such potential sequences involve the following: “(1) exemplifications and equivalences between phenomena; (2) communicating understanding to others and; (3); adapting to others' contributions (p. 44).

foreign attitudes, their beliefs and also their linguistic practices” (p. 50, own translation⁴³). They argue that “what an interactant says about herself/himself, about her/his culture and her/his people is not usually questioned by her/his partner” (p. 55, own translation⁴⁴). The authors identified these potential sequences based on situations that they defined as “discursive paraphrases”, that is, “the reiteration of discourses disseminated in a society without the concern or intention of deconstructing them” (p. 51, own translation⁴⁵). To achieve this goal, excerpts from four teletandem sessions of different partnerships were analyzed. Through the

⁴³ Original quote: “a tomada de consciência e/ou compreensão das atitudes estrangeiras, de suas crenças e também de suas práticas linguísticas”.

⁴⁴ Original quote: “aquilo que um interagente diz de si mesmo, de sua cultura e de seu povo não costuma ser questionado pelo parceiro”.

⁴⁵ Original quote: “a reiteração de discursos veiculados numa sociedade sem a preocupação nem intenção de rompimento com eles”.

analysis, the authors identified potential sequences for intercultural learning, e.g. prejudice and essentialized worldviews. Especially because of space limitation, the authors did not include data from mediation sessions in their *corpus*, but they indicated the relevance of addressing in these sessions topics that were previously identified in teletandem sessions as potential sequences for intercultural learning. The authors warn that “without an active mediation ... students may not develop the *intercultural competence*” (p. 68, own translation⁴⁶). For this reason, one of the authors’ conclusions is that identifying homogenous worldviews firstly in teletandem sessions can be characterized “as a pedagogical implication to be discussed in mediation

⁴⁶ Original quote: “sem uma mediação atuante ... os alunos podem não desenvolver a *competência intercultural*”.

sessions” (p. 70, own translation⁴⁷).

In both Telles’s (2015b) and Lopes’s and Freschi’s (2016) study it was pointed out that research dealing with fixed cultural representations in mediation sessions is necessary. This is because teletandem sessions can be a site for the construction of essentialized visions with regard to people, countries, cultural references, and so forth.

In this subsection, I presented a review of studies that dealt with interculturality in teletandem. This review identified a lack of studies that adopted an EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004). Therefore, as it was said in Chapter 1, an EcP was used in this research because, from a more holistic perspective (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008), it can help to look at

⁴⁷ Original quote: “como uma implicação pedagógica a ser discutida nas mediações”.

different instances extending beyond the teletandem sessions.

2.9 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, which was divided into eight sections, I presented, first, the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) that I used as a theoretical backdrop for my research, in the sense that it helped me to focus my attention on instances beyond the teletandem sessions. Secondly, I provided an overview of SCT (1978, 1986). Thirdly, I set a discussion to problematize the concept of culture, taking into account the contributions of authors such as Dervin (2014) and Kramsch (2011). Fourthly, I presented a discussion regarding identities based on theorizations, among other authors, by Bauman (2001), Block (2007)

and Hall (1992). After that, I revised theories on the intercultural approach mainly in the light of Byram (1989, 1997) and Kramsch (1993, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013, 2014). Then, I drew our attention to telecollaboration, and, finally, to teletandem.

The following chapter presents the method of this investigation by showing, firstly, an overview of the approach that guided my research; secondly, the objective and the research questions; thirdly, the research setting and the participants and, fourthly, the procedures for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3 – METHOD

In this chapter, my purpose is to explain the method. Such a venture will begin with the approach that guided my research: qualitative. Further on, in Section 3.2 I will present the objective and the research questions. Then, I will advance on the description of the research setting in Section 3.3, on the research participants in Section 3.4, on the procedures for data collection in Section 3.5 and, finally, on the procedures for data analysis in Section 3.6.

3.1 A Qualitative Research

The approach used to carry out this research is qualitative, due to my interest in understanding a particular phenomenon from the perspectives of the local

context. Typically, studies in the area of telecollaboration whose focus is on interculturality “tend to use qualitative data” (Lewis & O’Dowd, 2016, p. 49).

As opposed to quantitative methodologies, “there is far less control and structure in qualitative research” (McKay, 2006, p. 13), since the real interest lies in looking at how human beings interpret, perceive and understand the surrounding world. For Patton (1985), a qualitative research presupposes “an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there” (p. 1). A qualitative approach, thus, enabled me to examine personal, situational, social and cultural aspects related to teletandem in a thorough and holistic way, which is indeed in line with the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) of this research.

Furthermore, being both the researcher and the teacher-mediator helped me to understand how the co-construction of interculturality happened in a more comprehensive way. Taking on both these two roles provided me with a way to have a closer rapport and trust with my research participants.

For Nunan (1991), also consistent with the EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), one of the characteristics of the qualitative approach to research is its holistic vision, given its purpose of understanding human behavior in its totality and globality. Thus, in order to understand how the co-construction of interculturality occurred, I engaged myself with the participants in their natural setting for an extended period of time, where I turned my attention to various features that could be affecting their

subjectivities, such as perceptions and emotions. Put in other words, I dived into the specific context of my investigation, actively participated, wrote extensive reflective diary comments and also took on the role of an observer. Furthermore, I invited two participants of the Brazilian University (henceforward BU) to attend interviews and mediation sessions, write experience reports, and so forth.

This qualitative investigation can be considered a “case study” because I aimed at understanding how the co-construction of interculturality took place by examining in depth, and in a holistic way (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008), two partnerships in particular. As stated by Duff (2014), “the cases are normally studied in depth in order to provide an understanding of individuals’ experiences, issues, insights, developmental

pathways, or performance within a particular linguistic, social, or educational context” (p. 233). Also, Faltis (1997) suggests that “interpretive case studies in language and education are analytical descriptions that illustrate, support or challenge existing theoretical assumptions about teaching and learning” (p. 146).

3.2 Objective of the Study and Research Questions

As presented in Chapter 1, the overarching objective of this investigation was to understand how the co-construction of interculturality, i.e., intercultural dialogue, took place within the thematic project called Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all (TTB), and the research questions were the following:

1. What central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

2. What central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

3.3 The Research Setting

In this section, I will describe the context of my research, that is to say, the two campuses of the BU (Campus 1, Subsection 3.3.1; Campus 2, Subsection 3.3.2) that were important for the development of my research.

3.3.1 Searching for my research setting. When I started my PhD, as already said in Chapter 1, my initial

goal was to investigate interculturality in online environments, but I had not yet decided on a specific context to develop my research. As my readings progressed, I came across studies on telecollaboration, but I realized the existence of a universe of telecollaborative models and a range of projects in several countries: which one should I choose?

I was also concerned, especially in the two first terms, because I had not found an online project at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, nor did I know of another university in Santa Catarina or in another state in Brazil where my research could be carried out. I even thought that I would have to change the specific context, for example, the classroom, although the focus would have continued to be on interculturality.

Hopefully, later on, at the end of 2015, I came

into contact with the creator and coordinator of TTB. He suggested that I enroll in a discipline in the first half of 2016 at one of the university campuses (henceforward Campus 1).

On this campus, I had access to the TTB database. The initial idea was to analyze teletandem sessions that were stored in this database. However, later on I realized that only watching these online sessions would not suffice to have a more holistic view (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008) of my research participants, since I did not know anything about them. Additionally, there would not be any intervention by the researcher in terms of data-collection. Due to these concerns, I decided that once and for all the database would not be the best option for the development of my research.

Generally speaking, my stay on Campus 1

allowed me the following: 1) to get acquainted with theories on FL learning in teletandem; 2) to get a closer look at how the project worked; 3) to participate in teletandem sessions as an interactant, which enabled me to understand in practical terms the theoretical bases of teletandem; 4) to observe how the teacher-mediators conducted the teletandem sessions and the mediation sessions and; 5) to help the teacher-mediators with the progress of the teletandem sessions and the mediation sessions, e.g. assisting the interactants with their doubts about language use and with technical restrictions. Namely, I was able to better understand my specific research context.

3.3.2 The actual research setting. Between September and the beginning of December 2016, I spent

some time in another university campus (henceforward Campus 2⁴⁸). In this period, I could know the five groups of students who would be on my own responsibility as a teacher-mediator, specify the methodological procedures of my research and collect the data.

For Creswell (2007), gaining access to the specific research context is one of the first steps for the process of data collection. In this sense, I initially began this process on Campus 2 by getting to know the laboratory where the teletandem sessions were carried out, where I met the coordinators of TTB and also some teachers, practitioners and researchers who were involved in this project. Furthermore, I got a chance to know the internal environment of the university, apart

⁴⁸ Shortly before my stay on Campus 2, the research project that developed this study was duly approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina with the Approval Number 1.762.956.

from having a look at the city first-hand where the BU is located.

3.4 Research Participants

After a meeting with TTB teachers and the coordinators, it was agreed that, among the five groups that were assigned to me, as explained earlier, a group of seven participants of the BU in partnership with a group of seven participants of an American university (henceforward AU) would provide data for this investigation⁴⁹. Yet, I ended up collecting data from only two participants of the BU (Sofia and Lucas) and two participants of the AU (Emily and Fiona), as will be explained in more detail further bellow. To help me

⁴⁹ For ethical issues, a consent form was signed by the participants. The Model of The Free and Informed Consent Term that was signed by both the participants of the BU and the AU can be found in Appendix A.

carry out the teletandem activities, such as paring up the participants of the BU with the participants of the AU and contacting the teacher-mediator of the AU on a weekly basis, I was helped by a local teacher-mediator⁵⁰ and also one assistant (monitor).

The teletandem activities of the group of the BU were institutionally non-integrated (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014, 2015; Leone & Telles, 2016), which means that they were not integrated in a course or discipline, and most of the participants were undergraduate students of different courses, e.g. Psychology, *Letras*⁵¹ and Nursing. In contrast, the teletandem activities of the group of the AU were integrated in a discipline called Advanced Portuguese Conversation.

The following table shows the participants'

⁵⁰ This teacher-mediator did not participate in the mediation sessions.

⁵¹ Language Arts.

profile regarding the participants of the BU: Sofia and Lucas⁵², from whom I actually ended up researching for this dissertation⁵³. I obtained this information through the initial semi-structured questionnaire, which will be described in the following section.

Table 1. <i>Participants' Profile regarding the Group of the BU</i>	
Sofia	She was born in the State of São Paulo and was currently residing in the city where the BU is located. She was 27 years old in the period of the data collection. She held a degree in <i>Letras</i> with certification as a teacher of English. She had been studying English for the past seven years, spoke a little Spanish and was learning German.
Lucas	He was born and was residing in the State of São Paulo. He was 21 years old in the period of the data collection and was an undergraduate nursing student ⁵⁴ . He had been studying English

⁵² Fictitious names in order to safeguard the participants' identity.

⁵³ A table with the other participants' profile regarding this group of the BU can be seen in Appendix B.

⁵⁴ He completed his degree one month after having answered the

	for about three years, and knew no FL other than English.
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The participants of the BU communicated with me in a variety of ways: on Facebook⁵⁵ (inbox messages), by email, on WhatsApp Messenger⁵⁶ and through cellphone text messaging. This made possible to arrange the time and date for the semi-structured interviews, to know whether the participants had already written their weekly experience report, to give me prior notice in the case where they would arrive late or miss any teletandem session, among other data collection-related questions.

The participants of the BU interacted with the following participants of the AU: Emily and Fiona. Hence, these were the official partnerships: Sofia –

initial semi-structured questionnaire.

⁵⁵ It refers to a popular social networking website.

⁵⁶ It is a cross-platform instant messaging application.

Emily; Lucas – Fiona.

The next table presents the participants' profile regarding the group of the AU⁵⁷: Emily and Fiona⁵⁸.

They were the respective teletandem partners of the participants of the BU, and I obtained this information through the initial semi-structured questionnaire.

Table 2	
<i>Participants' Profile regarding the Group of the AU</i>	
Emily	She was born in Ohio and was currently residing in the city where the AU is located. She was 27 years old in the period of the data collection. She was pursuing her Master's degree in International Development. She had been studying Portuguese for the past two semesters, but six years before, during her undergraduate years, she had had a first contact with that language. She also spoke Spanish.
Fiona	She was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She had already lived in Cooperstown, New York, and

⁵⁷ A table with the other five participants' profile regarding the group of the AU can be seen in Appendix C.

⁵⁸ Fictitious names in order to protect the participants' identity.

	<p>was currently residing in the city where the AU is located. She was 19 years old in the period of the data collection. She was an undergraduate Justice and Peace student and had been studying Portuguese for the past three years. She knew no FL other than Portuguese.</p>
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The participants of the AU, as explained before, attended a discipline named Advanced Portuguese Conversation that occurred from the last week of August to the first week of December. Each class lasted one hour and fifteen minutes. The teletandem sessions with the group of the BU took place once a week.

3.4.1 Description of the partnership Sofia and

Emily⁵⁹. Sofia and Emily drew upon the teletandem sessions to deal with cultural topics related, for example, to literature, classical music and poetry. Topics of this

⁵⁹ I obtained this information through my data, e.g. teletandem sessions, the initial semi-structured questionnaire and Sofia's experience reports.

nature opened space for them to express their identities in different ways, such as through anecdotes, stories and past experiences. Moreover, especially from the sixth teletandem session onwards, the discussion about these subjects, in which both participants were interested, helped to build up a common ground between them.

Sofia had already lived in two states of the Northeast of Brazil. She explained several times that she had an emotional connection with the Northeastern region, especially because her mother was born in this part of the country and her father had been living there for many years.

As a teacher, I realized that Sofia could express herself well in English, despite restrictions when the topic was of a more abstract nature. She voiced many times that she would like to live abroad for a while,

mainly to improve her English skills. She also revealed that she had been nourishing an “old dream” of living in Germany because of her fascination with the German language as well as with cultural aspects of that country, which may explain why she was learning German in the data collection period. Also, she highlighted that she would enjoy being able to travel around Latin America and visiting the United States.

Sofia showed considerable interest in various topics linked to classical music, Brazilian Popular Music⁶⁰ and literature, especially Portuguese classical works. For example, in the first teletandem session, she told Emily that she was fond of the Brazilian musical genre Bossa Nova and some singers such as Vinicius de Moraes and Tom Jobim. Another example was when

⁶⁰ Música Popular Brasileira (MPB).

Sofia underlined in her experience report that Eça de Queiroz was the novelist she most liked. Also, in some online sessions she recited poems and read sections of the lyrics of well-known Brazilian songs.

In relation to Emily, in the first teletandem session she explained that she had started to learn Portuguese because of the sounds and structure of this language and also because she wanted to use it in her job in the future.

As a teacher of languages, I can say that she could not express herself well in Portuguese. Actually, the way she communicated in this language was comparable to learners who are in early stages of learning a FL. Interestingly, Sofia proved to be quite sensitive to Emily's Portuguese proficiency, and in the last mediation session she remarked that she had noticed

a significant improvement with regard to Emily's ability to speak Portuguese.

In one experience report, Sofia explained the following about Emily: “a minha interagente possui um contato relativamente grande com a língua portuguesa, visto que ela viveu em alguns países do continente africano que tem o português como língua oficial”⁶¹ ⁶². In fact, Emily had already lived in Africa to participate in volunteer activities.

Emily explained in the first teletandem session that she had never visited Brazil, and what she knew about this country was based on movies. It was clear to me that she liked Brazilian music, especially because in

⁶¹ Own translation to English: “my interactant has a relatively large contact with Portuguese language, since she had lived in some African countries where Portuguese is the official language”.

⁶² As will be explained in Section 3.6, I will present the translation to English as a footnote whenever the data was originally in Portuguese.

one teletandem session she told Sofia that Bossa Nova⁶³ was “the best part of Brazil”.

3.4.2 Description of the partnership Lucas and Fiona⁶⁴. When seen as symbolic representation (Kramsch, 2011), the online discussions between Lucas and Fiona showed a constant shuttling between each cultural context in which they participated before, which helped to shape their conversation and the context of interaction of the teletandem sessions. Lucas, for example, had already taken part in an exchange program in a European country, and had brought this experience to the fore several times in the teletandem sessions. Fiona, in turn, mentioned many times her participation in

⁶³ A Brazilian musical genre.

⁶⁴ I obtained this information through my data, e.g. teletandem sessions, the initial semi-structured questionnaire and Lucas’s experience reports.

an exchange program in Brazil a few years before the collection period of my research.

These participants had an opportunity, within a dynamic, continuous and subjective process, to talk about different cultural issues. This made it possible for them to delve into experiences that stimulated the exchange of opinions and their engagement in situations that inspired different feelings such as concern and indignation.

I would say that Lucas could express himself relatively well in English, although he was barely able to externalize his line of thought when the content of the conversation was more abstract. He had shown a strong excitement about this language, which can be explained partially because he had a deep desire to live in the United States once he would have had completed his

university studies.

In February 2016, he took part in a one-month exchange program in a European country, an experience that made him very proud of. Among the activities he had been engaged are his participation in an English course and the visit to two other European countries.

He had more than twenty partnerships with different American universities in the second half of 2016, which shows how significant the participation in teletandem sessions was for him, and he actually underscored this importance many times throughout the teletandem interactions with Fiona. Amongst all of the teletandem partners at that moment, on some occasions he remarked that Fiona was the one for whom he had a more friendly feeling.

Fiona had had the opportunity to participate, a

few years earlier, in one exchange program in São Paulo's countryside. She confirmed many times how much she had taken pleasure in this experience and how much she fully identified with Brazil in various aspects. Teaching English in public schools was one among many activities that Fiona had carried out in Brazil. Also, she had visited many places including some cities in the Northeast, South, Midwest and Southeast. She would return to this country to spend ten days on vacation in July 2016, that is, a few months before the teletandem sessions with Lucas started. She had already been to Ireland and China.

From the very first teletandem session, I could realize that Fiona had a good command of Portuguese, despite some cases of mispronunciation, errors of prepositions and gender, e.g. definite and indefinite

articles. This participant proved to have appropriated slang and language vices while she had been in Brazil, which helps to demonstrate in part her abilities in expressing herself in Portuguese. For instance, in her language production, some uses such as “tá” – shortened form of the third person of the verb “estar” (to be) in the present tense or in its infinitive form – and “cê”, reduced form of “você” (you) – were recurrent. Some slangs such as “tipo”⁶⁵ and “cara”⁶⁶ were common as well.

3.4.3 Selection criteria for the participants of the BU. From the outset of the collection process with this group, I aimed at collecting material from all the initial seven participants, but I realized that there was a

⁶⁵ “Tipo” may span different meanings, such as “for example”, “so”, among other things.

⁶⁶ “Cara” is used in informal situations, which means “boy”, “man” and “dude”, as a way of addressing each other.

need to have a more attentive look at fewer participants. To make this possible, I reduced the number of participants, that is to say, I focused my attention, as already said, on the participants Sofia and Lucas with their respective partners of the AU (Emily and Fiona).

I chose the participants of the BU for the following reasons: 1) in addition to having displayed heightened motivation, they proved to be very genuinely dedicated, assiduous, committed, solicitous and interested in anything throughout the process; 2) I noticed more enthusiasm and interest on the part of these participants, principally when they reported in the mediation sessions the topics that they had discussed in the teletandem session and; 3) as I read the first two experience reports of these participants, I became fully aware that they described their line of argumentation and

opinions with more detail and also made every effort to explain the topics discussed with their respective online partners of the AU.

It is important to make it clear that the partnerships between the participants of the BU and the participants of the AU had already been defined when I selected the participants of the BU to provide data for my research. Due to this fact, but also because I had direct contact only with these participants, I was able to establish criteria selection only for the participants of the BU.

3.5 Procedures for Data Collection

Since in qualitative research a range of tools can be used, as soon as I started the process of data collection, apart from obtaining data from the teletandem

sessions and the mediation sessions, I also considered important to employ other means in order to take a more holistic approach (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008) to this process. Thus, this study comprised a combination of different instruments: an initial semi-structured questionnaire, experience reports, semi-structured interviews and reflective diary comments. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) posit the following about the use of different research materials in qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews,

conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. (p. 3)

Thus, as I was concerned to improve the quality of the analysis process, I used different data collection procedures, as said above, with a view to triangulating the data. As stated by Maxwell (1996), triangulation decreases the risk that the outcomes of a study reproduce biases or limitations of a single procedure. This way, different procedures helped me to look beyond the teletandem sessions to broader contextual features.

In fact, it is important to say here that before I went to the BU, my initial goal was to understand how the co-construction of interculturality took place only in teletandem sessions. Then, I found it necessary to enlarge the scope of my research to include the so called

‘mediation sessions’, already referred to in Chapter 2. I decided to do so because, shortly before my stay on Campus 2, I was able to participate in an eight-hour course called *IV mediator development course in teletandem: interactions in focus*⁶⁷, promoted by teachers, researchers and coordinators of TTB, which was aimed at developing teacher-mediators in teletandem. So I realized that I could also collect data from the mediation sessions and apply different instruments, although at first I did not aim to use these data for my analysis. Interestingly, right at the beginning of the collection period, I came to see that both the mediation sessions and the use of different instruments were helping me to encourage further reflection among

⁶⁷ Name of this teacher-mediator development course in Portuguese: *IV Curso de Formação de Mediadores em Teletandem: Interações em foco*. It took place in September 2016. See <https://mediacaoteletandem.blogspot.com/2016/09/programacao-iv-curso-de-mediadores.html> for further information on this course.

the participants and to understand the reality of my data more holistically.

The following table provides a summary description of the different data collection instruments that I used, namely initial semi-structured questionnaire, reflective diary comments, teletandem sessions video-recordings, mediation sessions audio-recordings, experience reports, semi-structured interviews audio-recordings and Facebook private messages:

Table 3		
<i>Summary Description of the Data Collection Instruments</i>		
Name of the instrument	Objective of the researcher	Observations
Initial semi-structured Questionnaire.	To establish the participants' profile.	Participants answered this questionnaire at home. It was sent by emails to them as an invitation to

		access the questions on Google Forms.
Reflective diary comments.	To note down my reflections and impressions of any possible aspects related to the participants during the teletandem sessions, mediation sessions and semi-structured interviews.	I stored my reflective comments on my computer.
Teletandem sessions.	To analyze the participants' interaction in order to understand how the co-construction of interculturality took place.	These sessions happened on Zoom ⁶⁸ and were video-recorded. The average duration of each session was one hour and fifteen minutes.
Mediation sessions.	To discuss with the group of the participants of the BU different	These sessions were audio-recorded and were expected to last

⁶⁸ Zoom combines online meeting, video conferencing and mobile collaboration. It also provides cloud-based video communication.

	issues regarding the teletandem sessions.	thirty minutes each. The participants opted to speak in Portuguese in almost all the mediation sessions.
Experience reports.	To allow participants to recount their experience regarding their weekly experience in the teletandem sessions.	Participants wrote their report at home. It was sent them by email as an invitation to access the report on Google Forms. There was an invitation in relation to each of the teletandem sessions.
Semi-structured interviews.	To understand more fully what the participants of the BU reported in the experience report.	The semi-structured interviews took place at different times, according to the availability of the participants Sofia and Lucas. These interviews were audio-recorded.
Facebook	To deal with a	I had not

private messages	specific issue that came to the fore in the middle of the data collection process.	previously thought about using Facebook private messages. However, due to some particular circumstances, I ended up including these messages as data.
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In what follows, I will describe in more detail each of the procedures for data collection presented on Table 3.

3.5.1 Initial semi-structured questionnaire.

The initial semi-structured questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix D, was designed in order to gain more insight into the participants' profile, such as origin and age. I asked them to answer this questionnaire at home. At first, my intention was to send by email the

questions as an attached file, but I realized that some participants failed to download the Word file and then resend it to me. I finally decided to send an email invitation to access the questions at Google Forms. The questions were common to all of the participants and only I had access to their answers.

3.5.2 Reflective diary comments. During and after the teletandem sessions, after the mediation sessions, after the interviews and after reading the participants' experience reports, I made entries into a reflective diary in my computer to register my impressions about the participants' opinions, worldviews and behavior, unforeseen situations, and so forth. Another objective of this instrument was to sidestep researcher bias, as I could resort to this material at a later

date to validate my interpretations of the data.

It was based on these notes and observations, which I stored in the word processor Microsoft Word, that, to some extent, I prepared questions to carry out the “complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions)” and, in the upcoming months, the “final semi-structured interview”, which will be presented further along.

3.5.3 Teletandem sessions. The teletandem sessions occurred via Zoom. There were nine teletandem sessions scheduled in the institutional timetable. A few minutes before the sessions started, the participants of the AU sent an email with a request access, in link form, to the participants of the BU. The predicted duration of each session was one hour and fifteen minutes, though

the actual average length was one hour. The topics discussed in the teletandem sessions were not suggested by the teacher-mediator, consistent with one of the guiding principles of teletandem, autonomy (Brammerts, 2003), as showed in Chapter 2.

The participants themselves could choose the language they wanted to start speaking in each teletandem session. If they decided to talk first in Portuguese during the first thirty-five minutes, during the following remaining forty minutes they would talk in English. In this case, in the following teletandem session they were expected to speak first in English.

The participants of the AU themselves, through the request of their teacher-mediator, were in charge of video recording the teletandem sessions and making them available in a shared folder on Google Drive. I was

rarely able to watch the teletandem sessions the week after the last session for two reasons. First, many times the participants of the AU would take many days, sometimes weeks, to make the video recordings available to me. Second, I had little time to do that, bearing in mind that I was carrying out different activities related to the data collection and I was also the teacher-mediator of other groups.

The next table presents the date and length of time of each of the ten teletandem sessions regarding the partnership Sofia and Emily:

Table 4	
<i>Sofia's and Emily's Teletandem Sessions</i>	
Date of the teletandem session	Length of time of the teletandem session
28/09/2016	00:34:42
05/10/2016	00:22:33

19/10/2016	00:51:20
26/10/2016	00:55:55
02/11/2016	01:00:50
09/11/2016	00:48:14
16/11/2016	00:53:41
23/11/2016	00:43:04
30/11/2016	01:04:49
07/12/2016	00:50:56

As can be seen on Table 4, the teletandem sessions recorded had less than one hour and fifteen minutes, which was the length of time estimated for each session, as explained earlier. This was due to, among other aspects, technical restrictions. Although there were nine teletandem sessions scheduled in the institutional timetable, Table 4 shows that there were actually ten sessions. This is because the teletandem session on November 2nd was not scheduled in the institutional timetable because it was a national holiday in Brazil, but Sofia and Emily decided to interact. Finally, although on

November 23th the teletandem session was cancelled because of the beginning of the Thanksgiving Day celebrations in the United States, Sofia and Emily interacted.

The following table presents the date and length of time of each of the ten teletandem sessions as regards the partnership Lucas and Fiona:

Table 5	
<i>Lucas's and Fiona's Teletandem Sessions</i>	
Date of the teletandem session	Length of time of the teletandem session
28/09/2016	00:56:54
05/10/2016	00:21:48
19/10/2016	00:54:12
26/10/2016	00:45:59
09/11/2016	00:48:35
14/11/2016	01:10:51
16/11/2016	00:47:08
30/11/2016	00:38:29
07/12/2016	01:04:44
07/12/2016	00:37:44

Just as was seen in relation to Table 4, Table 5 shows that some teletandem sessions recorded had well less than one hour and fifteen minutes, the predicated duration. Besides that, in order to compensate the November 9th session, since Fiona could not attend, Lucas and Fiona scheduled an extra teletandem session on November 14th, and, therefore, this session was not scheduled in the institutional timetable. Even though there were nine teletandem sessions scheduled in the institutional timetable, as was explained previously, the table above shows that there were in fact ten sessions, because these participants decided on scheduling an extra teletandem session on December 7th. Finally, although a teletandem session was scheduled on November 23rd, it was cancelled due to the beginning of

the Thanksgiving Day celebrations in the United States.

3.5.4 Mediation sessions. The mediation sessions with the group of participants of the BU, which took place shortly after the teletandem sessions, were aimed to discuss with them aspects related to their online interactions, e.g. any difficulties that they might have faced, what they could learn, an aspect in particular that they would like to share with the other participants, among others. They were audio-recorded and took place in the teletandem laboratory. The participants of my study decided to speak in Portuguese in nearly all the mediation sessions, although for Telles (2015b) “mediation sessions can be conducted in either the native or target language” (p. 607).

The next table presents the date and length of

time regarding each mediations sessions with the group of the participants of the BU as well as the number of participants present in each of them.

Table 6		
<i>Mediation Sessions with the Participants of the BU</i>		
Date of the mediation session	Length of time in each mediation session	Number of participants in each mediation session
28/09/2016	00:29:07	05
05/10/2016	00:14:10	05
19/10/2016	00:22:54	03
26/10/2016	00:30:38	06
09/11/2016	00:21:52	04
16/11/2016	00:24:58	06
30/11/2016	00:21:10	04
07/12/2016	00:28:50	05

As Table 6 shows, there was a total of eight mediation sessions. Moreover, each session was expected to last about thirty minutes but, due to some

specific reasons, such as the number of participants in each session and the time availability of them, the amount of time ranged between fourteen to twenty-nine minutes.

3.5.5 Experience reports. Through the experience reports, the participants could collect their thoughts and submit their personal impressions concerning their weekly experience in the teletandem sessions, e.g. how each online session had been, the topics they had discussed, what they had learned, any situation in particular they would like to highlight, and so on.

I sent both the participants of the BU and the participants of the AU an invitation every week to write their experience reports through Google Forms. The

open-ended question was always the following: “how was your experience in teletandem today? Would you like to report something that stood out in today’s teletandem interaction?”⁶⁹

As will be seen further, questions for the semi-structured interviews were prepared on the basis of each Sofia’s and Lucas’s experience report.

I had a lot of difficulty in having the participants of the AU write the experience reports, and I received a total of only three reports from them during the whole process of data collection. Because of that, from the fourth teletandem session onwards I decided to stop with the attempts to collect complementary material from these participants, e.g. the initial semi-structured

⁶⁹ This question was available for the participants in Portuguese: “como foi a sua experiência com o Teletandem hoje? Você gostaria de relatar algum aspecto que sobressaiu para você na sessão de interação de hoje?”.

questionnaire, interviews and experience reports. It may be that this low participation is due to the fact that the participation in relation to the students of the AU in these extra activities was not compulsory. Furthermore, since these participants had other activities to do, answering the initial semi-structured questionnaire, writing experience reports and participating in interviews could have been too much involvement added to their participation in the teletandem sessions. Sofia, one of the participants of the BU, for instance, sent me a message explaining that her online partner, Emily, had made it clear that she was not going to write the experience reports because it was a voluntary activity.

The next table shows the date of the teletandem sessions to which each of Sofia's experience report refers to and the date that she made each of them

available on Google Forms.

Table 7	
<i>Sofia's Experience Reports</i>	
Date of the teletandem session to which each of the experience report refers	Date when each of the experience reports was available on Google Forms
28/09/2016	29/09/2016
05/10/2016	17/10/2016
19/10/2016	24/10/2016
26/10/2016	29/10/2016
02/11/2016	08/11/2016
09/11/2016	11/11/2016
16/11/2016	28/11/2016
23/11/2016	30/11/2016
30/11/2016	06/11/2016
07/12/2016	13/12/2016

I consider important to explain that I always asked my participants to write their experience reports in the period between the end of each mediation session and, at most, a few hours before the next teletandem

session. However, Table 7 shows that, specifically to the teletandem sessions of October 5th and November 16th, Sofia wrote her experience report only twelve days after these online sessions. Also, she actually sent me her experience report referring to the teletandem session of November 16th via Facebook private message.

The next table presents the date of the teletandem sessions to which each of Lucas's experience report refers to and the date that he made each of them available on Google Forms.

Table 8	
<i>Lucas's Experience Reports</i>	
Date of the teletandem session to which each of the experience report refers	Date when each of the experience reports was available on Google Forms
28/09/2016	05/10/2016
05/10/2016	05/10/2016

19/10/2016	26/10/2016
26/10/2016	03/11/2016
09/11/2016	16/11/2016
14/11/2016	01/12/2016
16/11/2016	05/12/2016
30/11/2016	05/12/2016
07/12/2016	12/12/2016

As can be seen from Table 8, Lucas took more than two weeks to write his experience reports referring to the teletandem session of November 14th and November 16th. He made it clear to me that this delay was due to his involvement with different activities at that moment. Even though Lucas and Fiona scheduled a teletandem session extra on December 7th, he only wrote one experience report referring to these two sessions.

3.5.6 Semi-structured interviews. The participants of the BU Sofia and Lucas were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews, since, through

question that I had previously prepared, I wanted to understand in more detail what they had recounted in their experience reports. The questions were prepared based on what these participants had written in their experience reports. I prepared the questions on the basis of these reports, and not on the teletandem sessions, mainly because, as I explained earlier, the participants took a long time to make the teletandem video recordings available in the shared folder on Google Drive.

The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and held in the teletandem laboratory and sometimes in classrooms of the BU. The last interviews, however, were video-recorded via Zoom, since I was no longer in the city of the BU. The questions were predetermined but highly adaptable. Precisely because

these interviews were semi-structured, moving instead towards a conversation or dialogue, I found myself completely at ease in raising other questions on the basis of the participants' answers. This way, I could explore in more detail the meanings they assigned to different topics and react quickly as they appeared, but I always valued their own perspectives without imposing my own views.

There was an interview related to each of the weekly experience report of the participants. The interviews occurred from the beginning of November 2016 through December 2016, and according to the time availability of each participant. My initial purpose was to carry out only one interview during the whole data collection process, and near the last day of this process. Yet, as I felt the need to go deeper into some topics, I

came to the conclusion that I should conduct an interview in relation to each of Sofia's and Lucas's experience report.

Before starting each of the interviews, I would provide the participant with the experience report that s/he had written, so that s/he could re-read it and recall specific aspects that had been discussed in the teletandem session.

In addition to the interviews regarding each of the experience reports, three complementary interviews were scheduled:

1) Complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions) – I prepared the questions for this interview based mainly on my reflective diary comments until that moment. Of all, this was the first interview I made.

2) Complementary semi-structured interview about the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers – I prepared the questions for this interview on the basis of the participants' answers in the initial semi-structured questionnaire.

3) Final semi-structured interview – the questions for this interview were prepared considering the entire period of data collection as a whole.

The following table presents the name assigned to each of the interviews that I carried out with the participant Sofia, the dates of application, the length of time and the number of questions regarding each interview.

Table 9

Sofia's Interviews

Name of the interview	Date of application	Length of time	Number of questions
Complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions)	08/11/2016 and 10/11/11	00:28:10 00:18:12	17
Complementary semi-structured interview about the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers	10/11/2016	00:27:17	08
Semi-structured interview A (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 28/09/2016)	16/11/2016	00:14:05	07
Semi-structured interview B (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 05/10/2016)	16/11/2016	00:13:51	08

Semi-structured interview C (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 19/10/2016)	16/11/2016	00:25:28	11
Semi-structured interview D (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 26/10/2016).	17/11/2016	00:13:09	08
Semi-structured interview E (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 02/11/2016)	17/11/2016	00:11:36	05
Semi-structured interview F (referring to Sofia's experience report	17/11/2016	00:13:15	07

about the teletandem session on 09/11/2016)			
Semi-structured interview G (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 16/11/2016)	30/11/2016	00:07:47	04
Semi-structured interview H (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 23/11/2016)	14/12/2016	00:26:19	07
Semi-structured interview I (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 30/11/2016)	14/12/2016	From 00:00:01 to 00:13:40 (total length of 00:13:40)	04
Semi-structured	14/12/2016	From	03

interview J (referring to Sofia's experience report about the teletandem session on 07/12/2016)		00:13:41 to 00:21:54 (total length of 00:08:13)	
Final semi- structured interview	14/12/2016	From 00:21:55 to 00:43:26 (total length of 00: 21:31)	07

As can be seen on Table 9, the length of time of each interview varied quite considerably, inasmuch as it depended heavily on the topic discussed in question, the time availability of this participant, the number of questions in each interview, and so forth. Additionally, for reasons related to the time availability of this participant, questions from 1 to 11 of the complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions) were

applied on November 8th, while questions from 12 to 17 were applied on November 10th. Lastly, the three interviews I, J and the final semi-structured interview were video-recorded⁷⁰ sequentially in the same file. Hence, on the table above I showed the division of the amount of time for each of these three sessions. This single video file has the length of 00:43:26.

The questions related to each of the interviews referred to on Table 9 can be seen from Appendix E to Q.

The following table presents the name assigned to each of the interviews that I conducted with the participant Lucas, the dates of application, the length of time and the number of questions regarding each interview.

⁷⁰ Interviews H, I, J and the final semi-structured interview were video-recorded via Zoom, since I was no longer in the city of the BU.

Table 10			
<i>Lucas's Interviews</i>			
Name of the interview	Date of application	Length of time	Number of questions
Complementary Semi-structured interview (diverse questions)	07/11/2016	00:24:52	17
Complementary semi-structured interview about the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers	07/11/2016	00:14:02	09
Semi-structured interview A (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 28/09/2016)	08/11/2016	00:17:28	04
Semi-structured interview B (referring to Lucas's experience report about the	08/11/2016	00:23:15	07

teletandem session on 05/10/2016)			
Semi-structured interview C (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 19/10/2016)	08/11/2016	00:15:41	06
Semi-structured interview D (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 26/10/2016)	17/11/2016	00:40:33	08
Semi-structured interview E (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 09/11/2016)	01/12/2016	00:13:27	03
Semi-structured interview F (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 14/11/2016)	01/12/2016	00:30:45	10
Semi-structured interview G	07/12/2016	00:40:01	14

(referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 16/11/2016)			
Semi-structured interview H (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 30/11/2016)	07/12/2016	00:40:39	14
Final semi-structured interview	07/12/2016	00:39:54	10
Semi-structured interview I (referring to Lucas's experience report about the teletandem session on 07/12/2016)	15/12/2016	01:04:45	20

As was the case with Table 9, Table 10 shows that the length of time of each interview that I carried out with the participant Lucas varied quite considerably, as it depended a lot on the topic under discussion, the time

availability of this participant, the number of questions in each interview, and so on. Moreover, for different reasons, the final semi-structured interview was applied before interview I⁷¹, even though the former was intended to be the last one.

The questions related to each of the interviews referred to on Table 10 can be seen from Appendix R to CC.

3.5.7 Facebook private messages. I had not previously thought about using these messages in the data collection period. However, I included them here as a methodological tool because in the middle of the data collection process one of the participants of the BU, Sofia, sent me some messages via Facebook about a

⁷¹ Interview I was video-recorded via Zoom, since I was no longer in the city of the BU.

specific issue, then I decided to use them as data. Our conversation through this channel took place over the course of a week. In addition, as said earlier, this participant sent me one of her experience reports as a private message via Facebook.

3.5.8 Transcription of the data. To transcribe the data, I used the transcription criteria proposed by Marcuschi⁷² (2006), which provided the basis for outlining my own transcription conventions. They can be seen on Table 11 below:

Table 11

⁷² Researchers in teletandem, such as Zakir (2015) and Souza (2016), transcribed their research data based on Marcuschi's (2006) transcription proposal, with adaptations. Due to specificities of my data, I decided, on the basis of the criteria proposed by the author, to create my own transcription criteria.

<i>Transcription Conventions</i>	
Event	Code for transcription
Text omitted	[...]
Pauses, but without any discrimination of duration	...
When words or utterances were not comprehensible	(incomprehensible)
Researcher's comments	(())
To indicate the participant's emphasis on words	UPPERCASE LETTERS
Exclamation mark	!
Question mark	?
To indicate foreign words that were not uttered either in Portuguese or English (e.g. words in Spanish) or words uttered in the other language (e.g. in English while the participants were practicing Portuguese)	<i>Italics</i>
Participants' quotes	“ ” (quotation marks)
To indicate that the participant's utterance or word was transcribed exactly as it was produced	[sic]
Truncation (shortening or reduction of a word)	I transcribed as it was uttered with the use of asterisk (e.g. chil* = children)
Words uttered differently from standard Portuguese and English or colloquialisms	No code: I transcribed as they were uttered (e.g. tá = está; pra = para)
<i>Note.</i> Adapted from Marcuschi, L. A. (2006). <i>Análise da</i>	

conversação. São Paulo: Ática. 96 p.

Video and audio data were not fully transcribed, but only the parts deemed relevant for analysis (Erickson & Shultz, 1981). To facilitate and optimize the transcription process, I used *transana*⁷³ program. I stored these transcripts in the word processor Microsoft Word.

3.6 Procedures for Data Analysis

For Dörnyei (2007), in qualitative research the findings are “ultimately the product of the researcher’s subjective interpretation of the data” (p. 38). Effectively, the data collected underwent a long process of interpretation and reflection. As stated by Fritzen (2012), the researcher, throughout her/his investigation, should pursue a process involving much reflection and

⁷³ See <http://www.transana.org/> for further information on *transana* program.

comparison between the data collected, her/his own experience in the field and the theoretical background. Therefore, to understand how the co-construction of interculturality occurred, I triangulated the data from the teletandem sessions with the data from the mediation sessions as well as with the different instruments, that is, the initial semi-structured questionnaire, my reflective diary comments, the participants' experience reports and the semi-structured interviews.

Despite the fact that the theoretical background provided in the Review of Literature (Chapter 2) was essential to support the discourse analysis in Chapter 4, I would like to make it clear that a few quotes and concepts used in the analysis were not actually discussed in Chapter 2, and this is due to two specific reasons. Firstly, some concepts were not central or recurrent in

the process of the co-construction of interculturality, although they, to a certain extent, played a part in this process as well. In some cases, I included the definition of these concepts in the footnotes. Secondly, most of the quotes that were not presented in Chapter 2 were provided by authors used in this research, among them Kramsch, Telles, Byram, O'Dowd and Liddicoat and Scarino. Carrying out the data analysis in this way enabled me to go beyond the theoretical framework provided in Chapter 2 and to theoretically support my arguments according to the specificity of each situation and on the basis of what the data gradually displayed. But I should like to reiterate that the main authors, concepts and quotes used to understand the reality of my data were duly presented in the Review of Literature.

On Table 12 below, I present the phases of the

data analysis period.

Table 12	
<i>Phases of the Data Analysis Period</i>	
Phase of the data analysis period	What I did
First phase (June 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I read the participants' answers in relation to the the initial semi-structured questionnaire • I watched all the video recordings of the teletandem sessions • I pre-selected the cultural topics that would be analyzed • I checked whether these pre-selected topics were also addressed in instances that followed the teletandem sessions, e.g. in the experience reports, mediation sessions or interviews
Second phase (from July to August 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I selected the cultural topics that would be analyzed • I watched again the video recordings of the teletandem sessions, but with an increased focus on the parts where the

	<p>participants discussed the cultural topics I had pre-selected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I read the participants' experience reports and my reflective diary comments with special attention to the cultural topics selected • I heard the audio recordings of the mediation sessions and the interviews with a special focus on the cultural topics selected
Third phase (from September 2017 to February 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I transcribed the relevant data for analysis • I analyzed the data • I read different texts to better understand my data and to theoretically support my interpretations
Fourth phase (from March to July 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I refined and deepened the analysis • I continued to read different texts to better understand my data and to theoretically support my interpretations

As can be seen on Table 12, in the first phase of the analysis period I basically watched all the video recordings of the teletandem sessions and pre-selected

the cultural topics that would be part of the analysis, as long as they were addressed again in at least one instance after the teletandem session, e.g. in the experience report, mediation session or interview. In the second phase, I paid more attention to the data relating specifically to the cultural topics I ended up selecting. In the third phase, period during which I participated in my doctoral exchange program⁷⁴ (Split PhD), I transcribed and analyzed the data and wrote the text of the analysis (Chapter 4). In the fourth phase, in addition to having continued to read different texts regarding telecollaboration, teletandem and interculturality, I deepened the analysis and wrote the text of the data discussions.

⁷⁴ This program is named “Doutorado Sanduíche” in Brazil, where students have the opportunity to complete part of their doctorate in a foreign institution. I spent six months at University of León, in Spain.

It should be noted that when I started the period of the data analysis, I had already watched the teletandem sessions, read all the experience reports and the participants' initial semi-structured questionnaire. In fact, this procedure was essential because I used some of this data to write the text of my qualifying proposal⁷⁵. This way, even before the data analysis period, I had the chance to acquire a more holistic view (Kramersch & Steffensen, 2008) of my data, that is to say, the interconnection, interaction and interdependence (Kramersch & Steffensen, 2008) between my multiple collection instruments.

I used as units of analysis five “culture-related sets of episodes” (Telles, Zakir & Funo, 2015)⁷⁶, that is,

⁷⁵ The qualifying exam of my research took place on May 30, 2017.

⁷⁶ For Telles, Zakir and Funo (2015), *episódios relacionados à cultura* (culture-related episodes) refer to “any part of a dialogue in which the focus is on some explanation, questioning or curiosity

sets of several interactive episodes where the same cultural topic was discussed. In each culture-related sets of episode (Telles *et al*, 2015) there was a central cultural topic discussed, e.g. *Programa Bolsa Família* or *students' behavior of Brazil and the United States*. Also, in each culture-related sets of episodes (Telles *et al*, 2015) there is a specific theme that emerged. That is, there are three themes for research Question 1, which concern the central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality, and two themes for Research Question 2, which refer to the central aspects that favored this co-construction.

I outlined the following criteria to choose each of the five cultural topics: 1) they should have been

about aspects of one's own culture or the partner's culture" (p. 374, own translation). In my research, I borrowed from the authors the concept "culture-related episodes" but, due to specificities of my investigation, I adapted it to "culture-related sets of episodes".

discussed more or less deeply along the teletandem sessions, since many times interactants began to address a topic but shortly after they changed it completely; 2) they should portray cultural representations (cultural values and peoples' behaviors) and; 3) the same topic should be approached again in at least one instance after the teletandem session, e.g. in the mediation session, experience reports, interviews or even another teletandem session.

The major focus of attention in the data analysis was on the two participants of the BU, Sofia and Lucas, forasmuch as it was with them that I was able to gather complete research material. In other words, in addition to the recordings of the teletandem sessions and the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers, I could obtain with these participants data from the interviews,

experience reports and mediation sessions, which allowed me a more holistic view (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008) as regards their interaction with their respective partner of the AU.

I analyzed the excerpts in the original language, since I considered it appropriate to present in the body of the text the participants' utterances exactly as they were produced. Apart from that, I should explain that I will make available the translation to English as a footnote whenever the data was originally in Portuguese.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I explained the method of this research. First, I presented the qualitative approach that guided my research. Second, the objective and the two research questions were shown in Section 3.2. In Section

3.3, in turn, I provided the research context and the research participants were presented in Section 3.4. The procedures for data collection were explained in Section 3.5 and, lastly, in Section 3.6 I concentrated on the procedures for data analysis. The following chapter will provide the analysis and the discussion of the data.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Noting that the general objective of this investigation was to understand how the co-construction of interculturality took place within the thematic project *Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all*, the purpose of this chapter is to present the qualitative data analysis and, after that, the discussion. As a form of organization for this chapter, the data analysis will be presented in Section 4.1, while Section 4.2 will concentrate on a discussion regarding how the co-construction of interculturality occurred drawing on what the data analysis showed.

4.1 Data Analysis

The objective of this section is to present the data analysis, which will make it possible to answer the two research questions, namely:

1. What central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

2. What central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?

Throughout these discursive analysis, we will come across with stories, future desires, funny situations and anecdotes that arouse during the online exchanges between Lucas x Fiona and Sofia x Emily. Thus, we will embark upon the “world”, that is to say, the discursive practices constructed in these “*saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations*” (Gee, 1989, p.

6), where these participants engaged themselves in the process of “negotiating new subject positions” (Block, 2007, p. 27). Also, we will see how these “ways of being in the world” (Gee, 1989, p. 6), which occurred fairly spontaneously both in the teletandem sessions and in other instances, helped (re)create the learning context and the process of meaning negotiation.

With the purpose of organizing the presentation of the data analysis, I divided this section into two main subsections. Subsection 4.1.1, *central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality*, which is divided into three subsections (4.1.1.1, 4.1.1.2 and 4.1.1.3), will answer research questions 1. Subsection 4.1.2, *central aspects that favored the co-construction of interculturality*, which includes two subsections (4.1.2.1 and 4.1.2.2), is devoted to answering research

question 2.

4.1.1 Central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality. The goal of this subsection is to answer research question 1: *What central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?*. Three central themes arose, namely: “stereotyped views” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.1), “superficial level of meaning negotiation” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.2) and “superficial level of exploration” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.3). In each of these three subsubsections, I used as units of analysis, as explained in Chapter 3, “culture-related sets of episodes” (Telles *et al.*, 2015), that is, sets of several interactive episodes where the same cultural topic was discussed.

The title of each of the three subsubsections

referred to above is formed by four elements and in the following order: the number of the culture-related sets of episode (Telles *et al*, 2015), the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality (always between quotation marks), the central cultural topic discussed and, lastly, the partnership (Lucas x Fiona / Sofia x Emily).

4.1.1.1 Culture-related sets of episodes 1 –

“stereotyped views” in the topic about Programa Bolsa

Família⁷⁷: partnership Lucas and Fiona. In this

teletandem session, Lucas, the participant of the BU,

asked Fiona, the participant of the AU, whether she

would like to discuss any specific topics. She then

suggested Brazilian politics. A little later, he brought up

⁷⁷ It refers to a Brazilian program of direct transfer of a monthly stipend to families in a situation of poverty, so that they can overcome their situation of economic vulnerability.

a more specific topic on politics: Programa Bolsa Família. The following excerpt depicts how this topic, in keeping with Kramsch (2011), was being interactively constructed on the basis of a symbolic process, which awakened in Lucas different emotions and feelings:

1. L: Eu não sou a favor de Bolsa Família já ouviu falar quando você esteve aqui?
2. F: Aham⁷⁸ aham eu ia te perguntar isso também.
3. L: Não sou a favor... não sou a favor... porque

⁷⁸ The interjection “aham”, in Portuguese, and its equivalent “uh-huh”, in English, is used, according to Cambridge Dictionary (see <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/uh-huh>), “to agree with or show understanding of something that has just been said” as well as “to express agreement to what has just been said, or to mean yes”. This way, I used “aham” in the excerpts in Portuguese and “uh-huh” in the excerpts in English. I also made use of “uh-huh” in the cases where I translated, as footnotes, the excerpts from Portuguese to English.

a pessoa se lopera⁷⁹ em cima do governo.

4. F: Aham.

5. L: Certo? tipo assim ah eu tenho cesta

alimentar... eu tenho uma renda e não vai querer

procurar trabalho... pra trabalhar. (Excerpt 1 /

teletandem session / original in Portuguese⁸⁰ /

Lucas and Fiona / 26-10-2016)

This excerpt shows how Lucas expressed indignation and took a stance against on Programa Bolsa

⁷⁹ The meaning of “aloprar” in Portuguese-language dictionaries is “to lose your head” or “to get very nervous”. However, Lucas used “se lopera”, and without letter “a”, to refer to someone who is satisfied with her/his current condition or who lives at someone else’s expense, according to what he explained to me a few moments before starting an interview.

⁸⁰ Own translation to English:

“1. L: I’m not in favor of Bolsa Família have you heard of it when you were here?

2. F: Uh-huh I was going to ask you about it too.

3. L: I’m not in favor... I’m not in favor... because the person lives at the expense of the government.

4. F: Uh-huh.

5. L: Right? like ah I have basic monthly food basket... I have an income and I don’t want to seek work... to work.”

Família. In turn (2) Fiona confirmed that she had already heard about this Brazilian social program. Then, in turn (3) Lucas made a gross generalization about the people who are benefited from it, and in his assertion it was explicit that they all beneficiaries live at the expense of the Brazilian government. In line with Tajfel and Turner (1979), through a process of social categorization (we, not beneficiaries of Bolsa Família / they, beneficiaries of Bolsa Família), Lucas constructed an identity of someone who had stereotyped views regarding these beneficiaries, the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 1. For Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), stereotypes occur when a person prejudges other people based on her/his own assumptions, which, according to the authors as well as to Tajfel and Turner (1979), can

cause a negative view of these people, as was the case with Lucas in turn (3). In turn (5), he suggested that these beneficiaries do not demonstrate an interest in looking for a job, which represents another stereotyped portrayal.

One must consider that Fiona had the chance to learn from Lucas, and she was seeing a cultural aspect from an insider's perspective, that is to say, from Lucas's eyes. Similarly, besides providing Fiona with information on Programa Bolsa Família, Lucas also expressed his opposing position and took a critical view of this topic. However, this dialogue did not seem to favor Lucas's decentering from his homogeneous perspectives. As Kramsch (1993) reminds us, with a view to adopting a sphere of interculturality, the interaction between "the self" and "the other" should not

merely rely on the transmission of information, as seemed to be occurring between Lucas and Fiona. In the next excerpt from the teletandem session, it is possible to observe how Fiona put forward her point of view on the topic:

1. F: Quando pessoas abusam o [sic] sistema é fica complicado né?
2. L: Isso exatamente e tem muita gente que abusa do sistema... é o que eu não gosto.
3. F: Aham ah⁸¹ é complica* é porque... tem aqui também mesma coisa nos Estados Unidos... é complicado porque tem essa mentalidade de usar o sistema de “OK eu to recebendo um pouco eu

⁸¹ I used in the excerpts both in Portuguese and English the interjection “ah”, which expresses, according to Cambridge Dictionary (see <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pt/dicionario/ingles/ah?q=Ah>), understanding, pleasure, surprise, among other possibilities.

vou gastar em álcool e... droga mas eu não vou fazer nada pra melhorar a minha vida”. (Excerpt 2 / teletandem session / original in Portuguese⁸² / Lucas and Fiona / 26-10-2016)

In turn (1), it is implied that Fiona agreed with Lucas’s stereotypical view in Excerpt 1, since her discourse in this turn may suggest that “the beneficiaries of Bolsa Família do indeed abuse the system”. In turn (3) she compared this topic to what “occurs” in the United States, that is, that beneficiaries of income transfer programs also “take advantage of the system”. As can be

⁸² Own translation to English:

“1. F: It’s complicated when people abuse the system isn’t it?”

2. L: Yes exactly and there are a lot of people that abuse the system... it’s what I don’t like.

3. F: Uh-huh ah it’s complica* it’s because... here there is also the same thing in the United States... it’s complicated because there’s this mentality of using the system of “Ok I’m receiving a little I’m going to spend on alcohol and... drugs but I’m not going to do anything to make my life better.”

seen, even though Fiona provided such a comparison, this piece of interaction did not prompt a possible confrontation of ideas in an attempt to make Lucas see his opinions on the beneficiaries of Programa Bolsa Família from another perspective.

4.1.1.1.1 Looking on the bright side of Programa Bolsa Família. It is important to point out that Lucas did not address this particular topic during the mediation session, neither did he mention it in his experience report. However, this subject was discussed in the interview. Initially, Lucas reported that his former boss once told him that whoever is a beneficiary of Programa Bolsa Família “não gosta muito de trabalhar”⁸³. Moreover, Lucas acknowledged that this program indeed

⁸³ Own translation to English: “doesn’t feel like working”.

fights hunger, but even though her mother had already depended and her aunt was depending at that moment on such financial resource, he was thoroughly against it. In order to fight against fixed cultural representations, Kumaravadivelu (2008) stressed earlier the need for a critical approach to cultural representations. In a similar way, Kern (2000) argues that “intolerance must be acknowledged as a cultural fact and explored through discussion that frames opposing perspectives critically” (p. 256). With that in mind, the next excerpt from the interview shows the moment when I engaged Lucas in distancing from his cultural representations and helped him reflect upon this topic:

1. R: Mas a sua opinião é de que... por exemplo quem recebe o Bolsa Família... não gosta muito

de trabalhar.

2. L: Não gosta muito de trabalhar... ou às vezes folga nas costas do governo.

3. R: É? Mas você acha que isso acontece com todos que recebem o Bolsa Família?

4. L: Não vou generalizar.

5. R: Aham.

6. L: Mas a maioria sim. (Excerpt 3 / semi-structured interview / original in Portuguese⁸⁴ / 17-11-2016)

Building on Lucas's explanations, in turn (1) I let

⁸⁴ Own translation to English:

“1. R: But your personal opinion is that... for example who receives Bolsa Família... isn't so fond of working.

2. L: Isn't so fond of working... or sometimes takes advantage of the government.

3. R: Really? but do you think this happens to all of those who receive Bolsa Família?

4. L: I will not generalize.

5. R: Uh-huh.

6. L: But I think so for most people.”

him know what I considered to be his vision until that moment. In turn (2), he continued with his explanations and thus reinforced his stereotyped vision (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Tajfel & Turner (1979) of the beneficiaries of the social program under discussion, that is, that none of them “is into working” and that on some occasions they take advantage of the government. In turn (3) I endeavored to facilitate an opportunity to Lucas “step outside [his] taken for granted perspectives” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p. 23), and then open up for different viewpoints (*savoir s’engager*) (Byram, 1997). Although in turn (4) he said that he did not intend to generalize, which shows that he, albeit very timidly, had a decentering attitude from his positioning, in turn (6) he reiterated his view that the majority of these beneficiaries have no interest in working.

Later on, possibly as a result of my questioning in turn (3) (Excerpt 3), Lucas again seemed to be able to stand back from his “preexisting assumption” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 26), as he could see Programa Bolsa Família from another angle, which validates Byram’s (1997) notion of *savoir être* and *savoir s’engager* presented in Chapter 2. For instance, he explained that “as crianças estão indo para a escola”⁸⁵ and that there was a reduction in school dropout rates by students who belong to families benefited by this program. In relation to the health sector, and stressing that he also worked in this area, he claimed that “a saúde ganhou muitos pacientes, sabe?”⁸⁶. Furthermore, Lucas made clear that this financial social aid had encouraged many families to be up to date with preventive exams, such as prenatal

⁸⁵ Own translation to English: “children are going to school”.

⁸⁶ Own translation to English: “the health sector has gained many patients, you know?”

examinations and Papanicolau⁸⁷, which, according to him, played an important part in the decreasing number of breast and cervical cancer cases.

Regarding what Vinall (2016) names “potentiality” (p. 5), it may be argued that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place in the course of this interview, mainly because Lucas managed to see himself from the outside, what Kramsch (2013) names “transgression” (p. 62), and, as a result, he was able to bring also some positive aspects of Bolsa Família. That is to say, as this dialogue urged him to look beyond stereotypical images of beneficiaries of Bolsa Família, his stable perceptions were, to a certain extent, resignified (Kramsch, 2011; Vinall, 2016).

⁸⁷ A laboratory examination in Brazil with the purpose of preventing and detecting early signs of cervical cancer.

In Subsubsection 4.1.1.1, it was seen how Lucas had shown an unfavorable position towards Programa Bolsa Família. Also, this participant displayed stereotyped opinions in respect to this program, the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 1. In what follows, culture-related sets of episodes 2 is presented, which addresses another central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality: superficial level of meaning negotiation.

4.1.1.2 Culture-related sets of episodes 2 – “superficial level of meaning negotiation” in the topic about cultural differences between the State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil: partnership Sofia and Emily. Whereas it is quite common that, in order to

get to know each other, participants introduce themselves in the first teletandem session, Sofia, the participant of the BU, and Emily, the participant of the AU, provided information on their age, what they were studying, their personal preferences, and so forth. In response to a question from her partner, Sofia explained that she was born in a city of the State of São Paulo, and that she was currently living in this same state, but in another city. She also noted that she had already lived in two states in the Northeast of Brazil, as already explained in Chapter 3. The next excerpt from the teletandem session depicts the impressions that Sofia had of having lived in these places:

1. S: But it's ((the Northeast)) COMPLETELY completely different from here.

2. E: Yeah.

3. S: I I maybe I... when I lived there I thought
ah... they are... ah... here and there are different
countries... ah... for me it's similar like that
because ah...

4. E: Yeah.

5. S: The weather is very different the food is
different the behavior of the people is different...
ah... the the... way to... the way to... ((facial
expression indicating that she did not know how
to say in English)) ah...

6. E: Say that in Portuguese... ((laughing)) ((they
both laughed)) I need to practice.

((in turns (7) and (9), Sofia alternated her speech
between Portuguese and English))

7. S: O... o... *obrigada o jeito das pessoas se*

vestirem é muito diferente it's very different.

8. E: Uh-huh.

9. S: The clothes are different ah... *eu* yes

((giving a shy laugh)) it's very different... maybe

because there it's ah very hot and here is colder

and the people ah... ((facial expression indicating

that she did not know how to say in English))

esqueci de falar (incomprehensible) *mas as*

pessoas se vestem de uma forma diferente... eu

acho que aqui no Estado de São Paulo... nós

somos um pouco mais conservadores...

10. E: Huh⁸⁸.

((from this moment onwards the participants

moved to Portuguese and did not speak in

⁸⁸ In English, the interjection “huh” (“hum” in Portuguese), can indicate, according to Written Sound (see <http://www.written-sound.com/index.php?term=huh>), affirmation, surprise, disbelief, agreement, among other possibilities.

English anymore))

11. S: Um pouco mais é... conservadores.

12. E: E... e por que... ah... ((facial expression indicating that she did not know how to say in Portuguese)) morou... ah... ao [sic] Nordeste? para trabalho? ou...

13. S: Porque eu queria mudar... a minha vida.
((she laughed and made gestures with her hand))

14. E: Wow!

15. S: Queria dar uma mudança na minha vida e foi... mudou muito porque... é muito diferente assim é... tudo o clima a comida o comportamento das pessoas a forma de se vestir... é... num primeiro momento... é... assim que eu cheguei foi um choque ((finger quotes when she said shock))... cultural... muito grande

muito grande... é... as pessoas lá são mais abertas... aqui as pessoas são um pouco mais... mais... demora mais tempo... pra fazer amigos... é bastante diferente... bem diferente... mas eu gosto muito daqui é... eu gosto muito... do clima eu não gosto de calor. ((she laughs))

16. E: ((she laughs))

17. S: Eu gosto muito de frio e aqui faz mais frio que lá... mas também gosto muito... a minha mãe... é... ela é... cearense... cearense é o nome que a gente dá para a pessoa que... nasce no estado do Ceará é...

18. E: Aham OK.

19. S: Do Nordeste do Brasil... e... eu gosto muito da cultura deles... das músicas são muito interessantes. (Excerpt 4, teletandem session /

original in English from turn 1 to 6; alternation
 between Portuguese and English in turns (7) and
 (9)⁸⁹; original in Portuguese from turn 11 to 19⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Own translation to English:

“(in turns (7) and (9), Sofia alternated her speech between Portuguese and English))

7. S: O... o... *obrigada* ((thank you)) *o jeito das pessoas se vestirem é muito diferente* ((the way how people dress is very different)) it’s very different.

8. E: Uh-huh.

9. S: The clothes are different ah... *eu* ((I))... yes ((giving a shy laugh)) it’s very different... maybe because there it’s ah very hot and here is colder and the people ah... ((facial expression indicating that she did not know how to say in English)) *esqueci de falar* ((I forgot to say)) (incompreensível) *mas as pessoas se vestem de uma forma diferente* ((but people dress in a different way))... *eu acho que aqui no Estado de São Paulo... nós somos um pouco mais conservadores* ((I think that here in the State of São Paulo... we are a little more conservative)).

10. E: Huh.”

⁹⁰ Own translation to English:

“(from this moment onwards the participants moved to Portuguese and did not speak in English anymore))

11. S: A little bit more ah... conservative.

12. E: And... and why... ah... ((facial expression indicating that she did not know how to say in Portuguese)) lived... ah... in the Northeast? to work? or...

13. S: Because I wanted to change... my life ((she laughed and made gestures with her hand)).

14. E: Wow!

15. S: I wanted a change in my life and it did change... it changed a lot because... it’s very different like ah... everything the climate the food people’s behavior the way of dressing... ah... at a first

/ Sofia and Emily / 28-09-2016)

As is evident from this excerpt, Sofia created representations of two cultural entities: the two states of the Northeast, where she had lived, and the State of São Paulo, where she was born and was currently residing. Some binary oppositions pertaining to these two larger entities evoked by Sofia throughout this excerpt are “here is colder vs there is hotter”, “the food from here vs the food from there” and “here people are more reserved

moment... ah... as soon as I arrived the *choque* ((shock)) ((finger quotes when she said shock))... *cultural* ((culture)) ((that is: culture shock))... was very big very big... ah... the people there are more open ((meaning unreserved))... here people are a little more... more... it takes longer... to make friends... it's very different... very different... but I really like here... I really like... the climate I don't like the heat. ((she laughs))

16. E: ((she laughs))

17. S: I really like the cold and it's colder here than there... but I also really like... my mother... ah... she is... *cearense*... *cearense*... is how we call a person who... is born in the state of Ceará like...

18. E: Uh-huh OK.

19. S: Of the Brazilian Northeast... and... I really like their culture... the songs are very interesting.”

vs there people are less reserved”. Woodward (2000) argues that “an identity is always produced in relation to another” (p. 47, own translation⁹¹) and that “identities are constructed through the marking of difference” (p. 40, own translation⁹²). This “marking of difference” meets Telles (2015b), for whom “teletandem discourse is basically characterized by performances of differences” (p. 5). In effect, Sofia constructed these identities on the basis of the comparison between the cultural groups in question, and, through these markings of difference, she put forward particular characteristics which help to indicate her connection with both the State of São Paulo and the two states of the Northeast.

In turns (1) and (3), Sofia emphasized that the

⁹¹ Original in Portuguese: “uma identidade é sempre produzida em relação a uma outra”.

⁹² Original in Portuguese: “as identidades são fabricadas por meio da marcação da diferença”.

two Northeastern states and the State of São Paulo are considerably different from one another, and in turn (5) she mentioned two differences between these two regions of Brazil: the food and people's behavior.

In turn (6), after realizing that Sofia was having a hard time expressing herself in English, Emily asked her to speak in Portuguese. Hence, it is possible to say that when the two participants switched to Portuguese, the amount of time devoted to speaking in English was decreased, which touches one of the principles of teletandem: separation of languages. Indeed, Sofia's and Emily's focus was on negotiating meanings, or, as explained by Liddicoat and Scarino and (2013), on "the interaction itself (p. 115), regardless of whether they were speaking in English or in Portuguese. It became evident that Emily gained more insights from her partner

when the conversation was in Portuguese, given that Sofia could express herself with greater ease and spontaneity. Since Sofia found it particularly hard to communicate in English, it seemed that she lost her train of thought when she said “I forgot” in turn (9). From turn (11) until the end of that session the participants did not speak in English again. It is visible how Sofia’s restricted ability to speak in English had an impact on the participants’ interaction.

Also in turn (6), as a result of Emily having noted that Sofia was struggling to express herself in English, there was a humorous effect⁹³ (Carter, 2004; Crystal, 1996) on the participants, despite the fact that Sofia’s

⁹³ According to Carter (2004), “giving pleasure” (p. 82), which is linked to humorous situations regarding the creative use of language in a discourse, stands for moments where language learners entertain themselves. Moreover, Crystal (1996) names this creative use of language “language play”, that is, “when people manipulate the forms and functions of language as a source of fun for themselves and/or for the people they are with” (p. 328).

laughter had been somewhat “shy”. As this situation caused embarrassment to Sofia, Emily laughed with the aim of putting forward a positive face, that is, someone who was concerned about making her partner feel more comfortable and, for this, she suggested that Sofia speak in Portuguese. In addition, it may be that Emily added “I need to practice” (Portuguese) as a strategy to soften her previous utterance “say that in Portuguese”, and as a means not to make Sofia lose face. This strategy, specifically in the context of teletandem, is named “negotiation of face” (own translation⁹⁴) by Souza (2016, p. 132). Therefore, it can be said that this humorous situation (Carter, 2004; Crystal, 1996) had the function of providing the maintenance of harmony between the participants, taking into account that a loss of face (Ware

⁹⁴ Original quote: “Negociação da face”.

& Kramersch, 2005) or a face-threatening act⁹⁵ (Brown & Levinson, 1987) was about to happen. Indeed, in turn (7) Sofia thanked her partner's suggestion and, in turns (7) and (9), she alternated her speech between Portuguese and English. As already explained, from turn (11) the participants spoke only in Portuguese until the end of that session. Consequently, although I would always stress to Sofia⁹⁶ the necessity and importance of practicing the two languages within an equal amount of time, the participants ended up speaking more in Portuguese than in English.

In turn (9) Sofia displayed an essentialized view concerning people of the State of São Paulo when she claimed that “we are a little more conservative”. Hence,

⁹⁵ For Brown and Levinson (1987), interaction entails the use of face-threatening acts “that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (p. 65).

⁹⁶ Actually, I would always highlight this need not only to this participant, but also to all the other participants of the BU.

in her discourse it is implied that she is among the people in this larger entity (the State of São Paulo) who are “a little more conservative”, as opposed to the people of the other larger entity (the two Northeastern states), who are “less conservative”. Telles (2015b) reminded us that essentialized cultural representations, such as the ones verbalized by Sofia, are characteristic in the context of teletandem. In turn (10) Emily agreed with Sofia’s viewpoints.

Later on, in turns (13) and (15), in response to Emily’s question in turn (12), Sofia explained that she decided to live in the Northeast because she intended to start a new phase of her life. In turn (15) she highlighted that cultural differences were so considerable that, once she arrived in that part of the country, she experienced

culture shock⁹⁷. Interestingly, this culture shock was due to Sofia's experience in another state of the same country, not in a different country, to the point of stating, as can be seen in turn (3), that the two regions in question "are different countries". Also in turn 15, Sofia attached importance to the fact that in both states of the Northeast people "are more open". Some time after that teletandem session, she even voiced the following in her experience report: "talvez eu seja mais "paulista" do que eu gostaria"^{98 99} (emphasis in the original). Besides that, in another teletandem session, she stated that she felt "half *paulista*" and "half a Northeasterner", and that she was very proud of it. Shortly after, in turn (17) Sofia

⁹⁷ For Oberg (1960), this term refers to a series of reactions, such as anxiety and feelings of surprise, confusion and disorientation, when people first arrive in another country or place.

⁹⁸ Own translation to English: "maybe I am more "paulista" than I would like to be".

⁹⁹ "Paulista" refers to a native or inhabitant of the State of São Paulo, Brazil.

clarified that it is colder in the State of São Paulo than in the two Northeastern states and that she liked the cold weather very much. On the other hand, she stated that she also liked Ceará (a Northeastern state), and this may be partly because her mother is from that Brazilian state. In turn (19), Sofia said that she liked the “culture of the Northeast” and that the music of this part of the country is very interesting.

It can be claimed that the meaning negotiation in this dialogue achieved a superficial level, the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 2. Firstly, echoing Helm (2013, 2016), O’Dowd (2016) and Kern (2014), even though Emily was given insight into the topic, the cultural differences voiced by Sofia were not discussed in more detail, and she actually smoothed

over them. In line with Ware (2005), an opportunity to go deeper into the cultural topic in question was missed, what the author calls ““missed” communication” (p. 66). Secondly, Emily did not contest Sofia’s generalizing subject positions in the discursive faultlines (Kramsch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009) and neither did she put forward her points of views in reaction to the cultural aspects evoked by Sofia, especially when the latter claimed that people from the State of São Paulo are a little more conservative.

Later in that online session, Sofia said the following: “é muito interessante... é... ter vivido lá ((in the two states of Northeast)) e poder comparar... poder ter essas duas é... visões”¹⁰⁰. However, although it is necessary to open up to the “other” in interactions and

¹⁰⁰ Own translation to English: “it’s very interesting... ah... having lived there ((in the two states of Northeast)) and to be able to compare... to have these two visions”.

compare different cultures (Byram, 1997), as Sofia did in Excerpt 4, her comparisons remained restricted to a personal level and her cultural representations were not problematized.

4.1.1.2.1 Allowing for an initial process of decentering from generalizing cultural representations.

In the teletandem session a month and a half later, the topic about cultural differences between the two Northeastern states vs. the State of São Paulo was again referred to by Sofia. Later in the mediation session, where Osnildo¹⁰¹, Nayara and Monique were present, Sofia addressed this topic after Osnildo expressed outrage over the fact that his online partner Williams had asked him if he was keeping an affective relationship

¹⁰¹ On that day, Osnildo was a substitute for a participant of the BU who was absent.

with someone:

1. O: Foi nosso primeiro contato né?... eu sempre acho por parte deles... uma invasão quando eles perguntam se eu to namorando... tipo eu acho... eu olho pra pessoa assim mas eu penso... “quem te deu essa liberdade”?
2. ((everybody laughed out loud))
3. O: ((he laughed a great deal)) “Ai eu te conheço?”.
4. ((everybody laughed))
5. O: Né?
- [...]
6. O: Eu fico meio... acanhado
(incomprehensible) já quer saber da minha vida...
7. N: É mais como o contrário isso né? tipo os

brasileiros quererem saber coisas mais íntimas e os americanos ficarem “hum.... esse aí?”

8. O: ((he laughed)) É!

9. S: Mas hoje eu comentei uma coisa com a Emily eu achei muito... como vocês tavam falando... é... eu acho que paulista no geral... eu tava falando com ela... tem umas diferenças culturais assim... e paulista a gente É um pouco mais conservador assim a gente a gente é mais frio... comparando com o Nordeste por exemplo... aí ela falou assim ah ela achou interessante essa... essa diferença... porque as pessoas têm uma ideia como que os brasileiros muito aberto [sic] NÃO É ASSIM.

10. N: Acho que no Rio Grande do Sul tipo o Sul ainda MAIS fechado ainda.

11. M: Eu acho que tipo... é o espaço de São Paulo até o Rio Grande do Sul porque o Paraná...
12. (incomprehensible)
13. O: PORQUE EU SOU PROFESSOR!
14. N: Também!
15. ((some participants laughed)) (Excerpt 5 / mediation session / original in Portuguese¹⁰² / 16-

¹⁰² Own translation to English:

“1. O: It was our first contact, right? I always think on their part... an invasion when they ask if I’m dating... I think like... I look at the person like but I think... “how dare you ask that”?

2. ((everybody laughed out loud))

3. O: ((he laughed a great deal)) “Hey do I know you?”.

4. ((everybody laughed))

5. O: Isn’t it?

[...]

6. O: I feel a bit... ashamed (incomprehensible) already wants to know about my life...

7. N: It’s more like the opposite right? like Brazilians want to know more intimate things and then Americans think “huh... this guy?”

8. O: ((he laughed)) YEAH!

9. S: But today I discussed something with Emily I found it very... as you were saying... like... I think that Paulista in general... I was talking to her... there are some cultural differences like... and Paulista we ARE a little more conservative like we are we are colder... when compared to Northeast for example... then she said like ah she found it interesting this... this difference... because people have an idea that Brazilians are very open IT’S NOT LIKE

11-2016)

In this excerpt, it can be seen that an intersubjective co-construction of identities encompassing cultural representations was in progress. For Woodward (2000), “difference is what separates one identity from the other” (p. 42, own translation¹⁰³). Thus, by drawing on the cultural differences voiced throughout this excerpt, the participants were “constructing their own and others” (Kramsch, 2013, p. 68).

In turns (2) and (4) laughter broke out among the

THIS.

10. N: I think that in Rio Grande do Sul like the South even MORE reserved.

11. M: I find that like... it's the space between São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul because Paraná...

12. (incomprehensible)

13. O: BECAUSE I AM A TEACHER!

14. N: Too!

15. ((some participants laughed))”

¹⁰³ Original quote: “a diferença é aquilo que separa uma identidade da outra”.

participants because of Osmar's comments, and in turn (6) he claimed that he felt ashamed when he had to deal with issues related to his personal life.

Both Nayara in turn (7) and Sofia in turn (9) attributed characteristics to people in terms of larger and fixed entities, and generalizations of this nature also occurred on the part of Nayara in turn (10) and Monique in turn (11). Sofia used "in general" in turn (9) probably with the intention of making it clear that her comment did not regard all the people from these regions, even though a predominant homogeneous tone is echoed. The following is implicit in Sofia's discourse: "I had Emily see that not all the people in Brazil are open", although at the same time she provided her classmates with fixed cultural representations.

It is implicit in Osnildo's comment in turn (13)

that the fact that he is a teacher represents sufficient grounds for, in a first online encounter, not asking him questions of a personal nature. In turn (14) Nayara agreed with Osnildo, and some participants in turn (15) laughed at his positioning.

Taking into account that it is necessary to challenge stereotyped representations (Lopes & Freschi, 2016; Telles, 2015b) and suggest other viewpoints (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002), the next excerpt shows how I provided the participants with another interpretation as regards the topic under discussion:

1. R: Eu vejo que as diferenças são muito mais individuais do que necessariamente se sou brasileiro se eu sou da região X ou tal... [...] então eu acho também que parte um pouco do... do...

individual.

2. S: É.

3. R: Ou seja cada pessoa recebe de acordo com a sua história... de acordo com aquilo que pensa... das suas convicções... né? claro... pode sim haver também influência de onde a pessoa está... de onde ela mora de onde ela vem... tudo tem... né?
((Osnildo got back to talking about the topic that triggered the present discussion))

4. R: E o que vocês acham disso que eu expliquei vocês concordam ou não?

5. S: Concordo.

6. ((other participants said “sim / yes”))

7. R: É?

8. S: Não necessariamente a região mas a pessoa.

9. N: Ponto de vista.

10. S: É ponto de vista estereótipos.

11. O: Mas também pode ser coisa minha também quem sabe da próxima vez eu tento me soltar mais “to namorando”.

12. ((everybody laughed))

13. R: Ou também nem que não esteja namorando mas diz “olha to namorando”.

14. O: É.

15. N: “To namorando todo mundo”.

16. ((everybody laughed out loud for a few seconds)) (Excerpt 6 / mediation session / original in Portuguese¹⁰⁴ / 16-11-2016)

¹⁰⁴ Own translation to English:

“1. R: I see that differences are much more individual than necessarily whether I am Brazilian or whether I am from the region X and so on... [...] then I also think that it’s a matter of the... of the... individual.

2. S: Yes.

3. R: That is, each person receives according to her/his history... according to what she/he thinks... to her/his convictions... isn’t it? of course... there can be also influence of where the person is... of

In turns (1) and (3), I attempted to make my participants aware that perspectives and behaviors also vary from person to person and that these cultural differences are not solely related to the fact that people pertain to a specific social group. Sofia in turns (5), (8) and (10), other participants in turn (6) and Nayara in turn (9) agreed with me, and in turn (8) Sofia proved to be

where she/he lives in of where she/he comes from... everything... right?

((Osnildo got back to talking about the topic that triggered this discussion))

4. R: And what do you think of this of what I explained do you agree with or you don't?

5. S: I agree.

6. ((other participants said "sim / yes"))

7. R: Really?

8. S: Not necessarily the region but the person.

9. N: Point of view.

10. S: Yes point of view stereotypes.

11. O: But this could just be in my mind, who knows next time I try to let myself go "I'm dating".

12. ((everybody laughed))

13. R: Or even if you are not dating but you say "hey I'm dating".

14. O: Yeah.

15. N: "I'm dating everybody".

16. ((everybody laughed out loud for a few seconds))"

able to capture the essence of my positioning when she said “not necessarily the region but the person”.

It can be claimed that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place in Excerpt 6. As stated by Kramsch (2011), in order to open pathways for the deconstruction of fixed representations teachers should “bring up every opportunity to show complexity and ambiguity” (p. 364). In this way, I suggested and brought forward other viewpoints (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002) in turns (1) and (3), since I was interested in having my participants interpret the cultural topic in question from a different angle. This seems to have given vent, in turns (8) and (10), to an initial process of Sofia’s displacement from her cultural generalizations. Byram (1997) names such a process *savoir être* and Kramsch (2013) “transgression” (p. 62).

In turns (12) and (16), the participants burst out laughing. As was seen in Excerpt 4, Osnildo had already made the participants laugh when he complained that he felt uncomfortable when someone asked him, at a first contact, whether he is dating. In turn (11), he said jokingly that in a next opportunity he would say “I’m dating” to his online partner, and I also embraced this funny moment in turn (13). As a reaction to my last comment, in turn (15) Nayara appropriated the “voice” (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet, 2011) of a well-known Brazilian song¹⁰⁵ section (*to namorando todo mundo*¹⁰⁶). Prompted by this participant’s funny comment, this situation reached its most humorous effect (Carter, 2004; Crystal, 1996). It can be argued that this

¹⁰⁵ The title of the song is “Aquele 1 %”, by Marcos and Belutti. The lyrics can be found at <https://www.vagalume.com.br/marcos-e-belutti/aquele-um-por-cento-part-wesley-safadao.html>

¹⁰⁶ Own translation to English: “I’m dating everybody”.

moment of humor had the following functions: a – to provide a moment of fun between the participants themselves and the teacher-mediator; b – to awaken a sense of unity and harmony between the participants themselves and the teacher-mediator and; c – to reestablish the humorous atmosphere that had taken place in turns (2) and (4) of Excerpt 5, keeping in mind that that funny instance had been replaced by a “more serious” moment from turn (9) onwards (Excerpt 5) but mainly on my part when I presented a different perspective in turns (1) and (3) in Excerpt 6.

Later, in her third-to-last experience report, Sofia returned to the issue of the two states of the Northeast where she had already lived vs. the State of São Paulo:

Citei que, em geral, as pessoas que nascem na

região norte ou nordeste do país tendem a ser muito mais calorosas do que as que nascem na região sudeste [...] talvez eu seja mais “paulista” do que eu gostaria e quiçá esse fato me conceda a contragosto algumas marcas mais ou menos comuns, muito embora sempre exista as exceções. Excerpt 7 / Sofia’s experience report / original in Portuguese¹⁰⁷ / 30-11-2016 / emphasis in the original)

It can be said that the co-construction of interculturality was in progress in this excerpt since, when compared to Sofia’s prevailing homogenous tone

¹⁰⁷ Own translation to English: “I said that, in general, people born in the North or Northeast of the country tend to be much warmer than those born in the Southeast region [...] maybe I am more “Paulista” than I would like to be and perhaps this fact gives me unwillingly some more or less common marks, although there are always exceptions”.

in Excerpts 5 and 6, it is remarkable how this participant in this experience report drew upon modalizations such as “*em geral / in general*”, “*tendem a ser / tend to be*”, “*mais ou menos comuns / more or less common*” and “*sempre exista as exceções / there are always exceptions*”. For Belz (2007), one of the markers of the construction of interculturality “might be a gradual softening of the way in which one positions herself with respect to the 'absolute' truth of utterances” (p. 156). To put it another way, while in Excerpts 5 and 6 Sofia had demonstrated a tendency to place people’s characteristics of the two larger entities in question “in the same box”, in Excerpt 7 she probably used modalizers to avoid generalizing assumptions.

In Subsubsection 4.1.1.2, it was shown that Sofia

constructed homogeneous cultural representations concerning people from the State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil. It was then explained that the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 2 was the “superficial level of meaning negotiation”, as the cultural representations highlighted by Sofia were not discussed in greater depth or contested in the teletandem session. Furthermore, Emily did not position herself in reaction to Sofia’s comments. In the next subsection, in culture-related sets of episodes 3, “superficial level of exploration”, another central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality, is presented.

***4.1.1.3 Culture-related sets of episodes 3 –
“superficial level of exploration” in the topic about***

Brazilian and American students' behavior:

partnership Lucas and Fiona. In the next excerpt from the teletandem session, Lucas asked Fiona what her view about Brazilian and American teachers was:

1. L: Deixa eu só fazer uma outra pergunta pra você que eu sempre tive dúvida.
2. F: Aham.
3. L: Quando você veio pro Brasil... qual é... a visão do... aqui você viu que a visão do professor é uma porcaria... né? ninguém valoriza eles sabe? quem valoriza eu já tive professores de sair chorando da sala de aula... como que é a visão do professor tanto nos Estados Unidos quanto você achou aqui no Brasil?
4. F: Então... eu acho *isso* uma coisa é... é pouco

uma coisa de cultura porque em geral vocês são mais barulentos [sic] em geral né? ((smiling and making gestures with her hands to place greater emphasis on what she was explaining))

5. L: É.

6. F: É o Brasil né? tem mais begunça [sic] em geral... então... é diferente sabe?

((Fiona began to explain that in her country the students go to the classroom where the teacher is awaiting them))

7. F: Ah... mas assim... não é a mesma coisa tipo a gente não joga papel nunca vi isso na minha vida...

8. L: Aqui é normal. ((laughter))

9. F: Eu nunca vi os como fala? ((imitating someone who is whistling))

10. L: Assobio. (Excerpt 8 / teletandem session / original in Portuguese¹⁰⁸ / Lucas and Fiona / 19-10-2016)

The dialogue in this excerpt, which depicts how Lucas and Fiona were discursively co-constructing their

¹⁰⁸ Own translation to English:

“1. L: Let me just ask you another question about something I’ve always had doubt.

2. F: Uh-huh.

3. L: When you came to Brazil... what is... your vision about... here you saw that the vision about teachers is a garbage... right? nobody values them you know? who values I already had teachers who left the classroom crying... how are teachers viewed both in the United States and in Brazil according to what you found when you came to Brazil?

4. F: So... I think this is... it’s related to culture because in general you are noisier in general, right? ((smiling and making gestures with her hands to place greater emphasis on what she was explaining))

5. L: Yes.

6. F: It’s Brazil right? there’s more disruption in general... then... it’s different you know?

((Fiona began to explain that in her country the students go to the classroom where the teacher is awaiting them))

7. F: Ah... but like... it’s not the same thing we don’t throw paper at each other I’ve never seen this in my life...

8. L: Here this is normal. ((laughter))

9. F: I’ve never seen the how do you say? ((imitating someone who is whistling))

10. L: Whistle.”

opinion on this topic, is inside a larger conversation about differences and similarities in relation to some aspects of public education schools in the above two countries, such as how to get into college, the quality of FL education and problematic student behavior. As can be seen, the participants' conversation developed around students' behaviors in the classroom, although Lucas's question in turn (3) had in fact been centered on Fiona's more general view about teachers in the two countries at stake. Lucas and Fiona underlined more negative than positives aspects from the moment they began to talk about Brazilian public schools. In some occasions, Lucas even used slangs or swearwords, such as "damn it" and "shit", to emphasize his discontent.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that Fiona expressed her views building on her exchange

experience in São Paulo's countryside, as I explained in Chapter 3, and that she was a teacher of English in a public school during her stay in Brazil.

In turn (1), Lucas let Fiona know that he had a doubt, and Fiona, in turn (2), showed willingness to hear Lucas's question stated in turn (3). In line with Byram (1997), demonstrating an interest in cultural aspects of the other is a core aspect of intercultural communication. In effect, in turn (3) Lucas was interested in knowing from Fiona how teachers are seen in her country.

In turn (3), even before Lucas finished stating the question, he added that the vision that one has about Brazilian teachers was "porcaria / garbage"¹⁰⁹, which emphatically signals his dissatisfaction with the situation of teachers in his country. Evidently, Lucas expressed

¹⁰⁹ "Porcaria / garbage" stands for "of poor quality, very low in quality".

his negative view while he was still framing the question, which may have had an effect on Fiona's answer afterwards.

In this excerpt, Lucas constructed a reductionist and solid representation on this topic, and another general statement is being dialogically constructed when he argued that “ninguém valoriza eles ((teachers)) sabe?”¹¹⁰. Although Lucas was developing his line of reasoning on the basis of previous experiences, that is to say, he had already witnessed distressing teachers due to students' problematic behaviors, he expressed a feeling of inferiority through which he reinforced a negative national vision attributed to teachers in Brazil. This is in line with what the writer Nelson Rodrigues, in the 1950s, called “complexo de vira-latas”, a recurring phenomenon

¹¹⁰ Own translation to English: “nobody values them ((teachers)) you know?”.

in the discourse of Brazilians, where they display a feeling of inferiority in relation to other countries. Put in other words, a sense of inferiority in relation to cultural aspects of their country, as was the case with Lucas in this excerpt, as opposed to an overvaluation of those of other people's.

In turn (4), Fiona remarked that the topic under discussion was associated with cultural differences between the two countries concerned. Also in this turn, she uttered a homogenous voice (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet, 2011) when she claimed that Brazilians are “noisier”, and she used the word “in general” in order not to include all the Brazilian students in the “category of noisy students”. In turn (5) Lucas seemed to have agreed with the word that Fiona had used to qualify Brazilian students in turn (4). Interestingly,

Fiona, in turn (6), in a more conclusive way, stated that “it’s Brazil, right?”, implying that “noisy” is characteristic among Brazilian students, in addition to having assigned another description to their behavior: rowdy (turn 6). Also in turn (6), in her discourse it is implied that American students are less disruptive than Brazilian students. In turn (7) Fiona clarified that, unlike in Brazil, “students do not throw paper at each other” in her country. In turn (8), Lucas agreed that this is an ordinary behavior among Brazilian students, and he laughed at his own comments. Then, in turn (9) Fiona made sounds with her mouth, as she did not know how to say “whistle” in Portuguese, to explain that in her country she had never seen someone whistle in the classroom.

As can be seen in Excerpt 8, Fiona discursively

developed her line of thought by drawing upon several negative characteristics of Brazilian students and upon the duality between Brazil x the United States. That is to say, by stressing the difference between “we” and “them”, Fiona voiced her own perspective about students’ behavior (“they, the Brazilians, throw paper at each other”, while “we, from the United States, do not do this”). In this regard, Telles (2015b) highlights that the marking of difference in the context of teletandem is a fairly common feature, with a focus on negative aspects.

It can be considered that through the dialogue in Excerpt 8, Lucas and Fiona could know each other’s points of view about the cultural topic in question. However, it appeared that Lucas did not have the chance to distance himself from his fixed cultural representations. This can be explained because although

knowledge of other cultures is deemed as an essential element (Byram, 1997), the discussion remained at a superficial level of exploration, the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 3. Moreover, Lucas's opinions were left unchallenged, since Fiona did not further question his generalizations. Similarly, although in some instances Fiona was careful not to generalize, for example, when she used "in general" in turns (4) and (6), Lucas missed an opportunity (Ware, 2005) to further problematize her cultural representations. Still regarding the superficial level of exploration into this topic, even though Fiona's comments were also based on her experience as an exchange student in Brazil, she did not explain in greater detail her views about teachers of Brazil and the United States, in response to Lucas's

question in turn (3). O’Dowd’s (2006) quote may shed light on why this happened:

While videoconferencing may be suited to interaction based on students’ own experiences or their personal opinions on specific topics ..., it may not be suitable when they are “put on the spot” and asked to report factual information about general issues in their society with which they may be unfamiliar or have not thought about to any great extent. (p. 105)

Later in that teletandem session, Fiona also made it clear that in her country, just as in Brazil, there are educational problems, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

1. F: Mas eu também... a [sic] Estados Unidos também [sic] tem os problemas de escola sabe? é tipo é como você falou não é igual o Brasil.
2. L: Não não é.
3. F: Mas de jeito nenhum não é tipo de [sic] sistema perfeito mas... (Excerpt 9 / teletandem session / original in Portuguese¹¹¹, Lucas and Fiona / 19-10-2016)

As can be seen in turn 1, Fiona emphasized that problems also exist in her country, but she did not go beyond this shallow comparison. In other words, she did not provide more details about her country's public

¹¹¹ Own translation to English:

“1. F: But I also... in the United States there are also school problems you know? it's like it's like you said it's not like in Brazil.
 2. L: No it's not.
 3. F: Sure not at all it's not the type of perfect system but...”

schools, nor did she mention examples of such challenges. This could explain why Lucas actually did not react to her comments. Again, just as in Excerpt 8, in Excerpt 9 there was not further exploration into the topic, but rather a dialogue in which a mere exchange of information seemed to be taking place, which remained constant and without necessarily leading to different insights into the perspective of the other. This meets O'Dowd (2016), who claims that online partners are likely to pay greater attention to "what cultures may have in common at a superficial level" (p. 277). In the same vein, participants can be less willing to discuss certain topics than actually to further explore them as a means to avoid a loss of face (Ware & Kramsch, 2005) or a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While Ware and Kramsch (2005) coins this shallow approach to

cultural issues in online spaces as “the illusion of commonality” (p. 200), Ware (2005), in a similar fashion, names it “assumption of similarity” (p. 66).

4.1.1.3.1 Promoting further reflection. Excerpts 8 and 9 illustrated how Lucas’s and Fiona’s discourses “work[ed] against intercultural understanding” (Kern, 2014, p. 354). One possible way to fight against these static views was to pose further questions in the mediation sessions, where the topic about public schools between Brazil and the United States came to light by Lucas. This was also an occasion to draw this participant’s attention to the discursive complexity inherent to his utterances.

Initially, as a result of the knowledge gained through the conversation with Fiona in the teletandem

session, Lucas let his teacher-mediator and his classmates know, among other things, that in the United States “students do not whistle or throw paper at each other”. Byram (1997) states that it is paramount that language learners “elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents and events (p. 53). In this sense, in this mediation session Lucas showed that he had learned something from this “event” (in this case, a few aspects linked to American students’ behavior) in the teletandem session and explained them to his classmates and to the teacher-mediator in that mediation session. The next excerpt from the mediation session depicts how I had Lucas see the topic about public schools from other angles:

1. R: Mas assim uma sugestão pro próximo encontro...

é de repente que vocês é... vocês podem claro...
ainda trazer à tona essa conversa... de repente né?
Educação esse tema.

2. L: SIM.

3. R: Mas assim também tentar aprofundar um pouco...
será que... o que ela relatou não é... do ponto de
vista da experiência dela e da escola dela somente?

4. L: ISSO foi.

5. R: Será que é realmente o sistema TODO escolar que
procede que é assim? claro se é um sistema deveria
ser... mas no Brasil nós também temos né?
realidades distintas.

6. L: FOI... foi isso que eu falei pra ela.

7. R: ((inaudible due to voice overlap)) Diferente por
exemplo de São Paulo né?

8. L: Foi foi isso que eu falei pra ela eu falei assim não

tem escolas aqui que nem parece que são públicas...

9. R: Aham.

10. L: Belo Horizonte por exemplo passou ((probably on TV)) uma escola lá tudo organizado... só que tipo de cem por cento... né gente? vamo dizer aí que... noventa e sete por cento não é assim... né? ah... tudo que a gente falou foi dentro da nossa visão da escola que a gente tem na nossa cidade... da escola que a gente estudou... do que é visto na TV e etc... (Excerpt 10 / mediation session / original in Portuguese¹¹² / 19-10-2016)

¹¹² Own translation to English:

“1. R: But like a suggestion for next meeting... you may like... you can of course... still bring up this conversation... maybe right? Education this topic.

2. L: YES.

3. R: But like try also to go deeper... I wonder if... what she reported is actually... from the point of view of her experience and of her school only?

4. L: YES it is.

5. R: Is it actually the WHOLE school system like this? of course if it's a system it should be... but in Brazil we also have right?

In turn (1) I invited Lucas to address this issue again in the following online session with Fiona (even though this had not been done), and, in turn (3), to explore in more depth her vision about the situation of teachers of the United States. In turns (3) and (5), Lucas was called on to distance himself from his perspectives (Kramsch, 1993). In other words, in line with what Kramsch (2013) names “transgredience” (p. 62), I invited him to see himself, or his own opinions, “from

different realities.

6. L: YES.... I told her this.

7. R: ((inaudible due to voice overlap)) Differently for example from São Paulo right?

8. L: Yes yes I told her this I said like there are schools here that don't even seem to be public...

9. R: Uh-huh.

10. L: Belo Horizonte for example it was shown ((probably on TV)) a school everything organized there... but like considering a hundred per cent... right guys? Let's say that... ninety-seven per cent is not like this... right? ah... everything we commented was on the basis of our vision of the school that we have in our city... of the school where we studied... of what is shown on TV and etc...”

the outside” (p. 62). Actually, I was seeking to make Lucas realize that one single reality could not be representative for all Brazilian schools. In turns (4), (6) and (8), on the basis of Lucas’s words, it is implied that this participant relativized with Fiona his views on the topic in question, even though, as far as I could see when I would watch the teletandem session some days after that mediation session, this relativisation was not the case. In turn (10), he mentioned an example of a Brazilian school where “everything is organized”.

As stated by Kramersch (1993), the capacity for decentering is a key feature to construct the third space. This way, it can be argued that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place, where a process of distancing (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; O’Dowd, 2003), even though timidly, was in progress. For Liddicoat and

Scarino (2013), decentering enables participants to realize what is unfamiliar as regards cultural representations. Indeed, although in turn (10) Lucas ratified his pessimistic view of Brazilian schools, it appears that my questions made him also see that there is a school in Brazil where the quality of education provided to society stands out, in spite of the fact that he did not give more details about it.

Some time after that teletandem session, Lucas mentioned in his experience report what Fiona had told him in the teletandem session about Brazilian students' behavior:

Ela disse que não se conformou de ver como os alunos lidam com as professoras e principalmente como as professoras são vistas aqui no Brasil, ela

disse que nos EUA ela nunca viu ninguém jogando papel na cara da professora. (Excerpt 11 / Lucas's experience report / original in Portuguese¹¹³ / 26-10-2016)

As can be seen, Lucas repeated what Fiona had explained to him in turn (7) of Excerpt 8, it is, that unlike in Brazil, “in the United States students do not throw paper at each other”.

At a later date in the interview, I had the opportunity to discuss again the cultural topic in question. Just as the participants in Mendes's (2009) study, who exhibited a sense “of adoration regarding everything linked to the EUA” (p. 97), Lucas expressed

¹¹³ Own translation to English: “She said that she had not felt comfortable for having seen how students deal with teachers and especially how teachers are seen here in Brazil, she said that in the USA she had never seen someone throwing paper at the teacher's face”.

admiration for a particular aspect of the United States since, in response to my question on how he felt about having had the chance to learn from Fiona some differences regarding the school system between Brazil and the United States, he stressed that “nossa incrível lá ((in the United States)) é uma coisa que funciona TUDO”¹¹⁴.

Then, I asked Lucas whether he and Fiona had drawn upon their own experience while they were speaking about that topic in the teletandem session, and I also asked him whether they had resorted to a few parameters in order to ground their arguments. He acknowledged that they had discussed that subject in the light of their own experience and that it might probably have remained at a superficial level. The following

¹¹⁴ Own translation to English: “gee incredible EVERYTHING really works there ((in the United States))”.

excerpt from the interview describes the moment in which I engaged him in further reflection:

1. R: E... você teve esse cuidado de falar pra ela assim “olha nós estamos falando... sobre esse perfil do professor aqui”.
2. L: Nossa então eu não deixei isso aí especificado pra ela não! Eu generalizei.
(laughing)
3. R: E será não seria interessante falar pra ela voltar...
4. L: Sim interessante sim.
5. R: Né? porque talvez ela tenha entendido de outra forma né Lucas?
6. L: Sim verdade! (Excerpt 12 / semi-structured

interview / original in Portuguese¹¹⁵ / 08-11-
2016)

In turn (1) I asked Lucas whether he had been careful to let Fiona know that they were talking about a specific teacher profile, and in turn (2) he acknowledged that he had indeed generalized in the teletandem session (Excerpt 8). In turn (4) Lucas agreed to debate this topic again in another online session with her, although this debate would actually not occur.

It can be argued that the co-construction of interculturality was occurring in Excerpt 12. This is

¹¹⁵ Own translation to English:

“1. R: And... were you careful to tell her like “hey we’re talking... about this teacher profile here”.

2. L: Boy I didn’t make clear that to her! I generalized. ((laughing))

3. R: And wouldn’t it be interesting to ask her to return...

4. L: Yes it’s interesting yes.

5. R: Right? because perhaps she may have understood in a different way right Lucas?

6. L: Yes true!”

because Lucas having acknowledged that he actually had generalized in the teletandem session (Excerpt 8) the cultural topic under discussion could be showing that there was at least an initial process of decentering, a process that Kramsch (1993) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) claim to be especially relevant in intercultural encounters.

In Subsubsection 4.1.1.3, it was seen that both Lucas and Fiona expressed solid impressions regarding Brazilian students' behavior and the view about Brazilian and American teachers. For instance, in Excerpt 8, Lucas claimed that nobody values Brazilian teachers. Fiona, on her turn, underlined that in the United States, contrary to what happens in Brazil, "students do not throw paper at each other". Even though these

participants were able to know each other's vision on this topic, their discussion achieved a superficial level of exploration, the central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 3.

After having answered research question 1 in Subsection 4.1.1, which addressed the central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality, in the next subsection I answer research question 2, which focuses on the central aspects that favored the co-construction of interculturality.

4.1.2 Central aspects that favored the co-construction of interculturality. This subsection aims at answering research question 2: *what central aspects*

avored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated? The two following central themes arose: “the emergence of rich points” (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1) and “the possibility of hearing other points of view” (Subsubsection 4.1.2.2). In each of these two subsections, I used as units of analysis “culture-related sets of episodes” (Telles *et al*, 2015), that is, sets of several interactive episodes where the same cultural topic was discussed, as was explained earlier.

Therefore, the title of each of the two subsections referred to above is formed by four elements and in the following order: the number of the culture-related sets of episode (Telles *et al*, 2015), the central aspect that favored the co-construction of interculturality (always between quotation marks), the

central cultural topic discussed and, finally, the partnership (Lucas x Fiona / Sofia x Emily).

4.1.2.1 Culture-related sets of episodes 4 – “the emergence of rich points” in the topic about the conflicting relationship between Donald Trump and latinos: partnership Sofia and Emily. At times, it was possible to notice how Sofia was creating a negative feeling regarding her partnership with Emily. For instance, in one mediation session, she clarified that although her partner could reasonably communicate in Portuguese (which was not the case, as I realized), there was no possibility of further deepening the discussions, and that those teletandem sessions were not as advantageous as her other online sessions, with other partners, at that moment. She even described her

experience with Emily as “maçante / boring” and both the other participants and I offered in that mediation session some suggestions with the intention of helping her. Also, in one experience report, she claimed that she was not getting along well with Emily:

Percebo que a interação não se dá de uma forma tão orgânica, tão natural e um outro fator que possivelmente atravanca um pouco essa fluidez, uma espécie de “pedra do meio do caminho” consiste no meu conhecimento superficial da língua estrangeira em questão. (Excerpt 13 / Sofia’s experience report / original in Portuguese¹¹⁶ / 24-10-2016)

¹¹⁶ Own translation to English: “I realize that the interaction does not take place in such an organic, natural way and another factor that possibly makes this fluidity a little difficult, a sort of “stone in the middle of the road” consists of my superficial knowledge of the

As can be seen, she pointed out that her online exchange was not “organic / natural”, and made it clear that one of the reasons for this might be her restricted abilities to communicate in English. Seeing that many times she proved to have a keen interest in classical works of literature, she mentioned an excerpt from a poem¹¹⁷ by a famous Brazilian poet¹¹⁸ to place greater emphasis on this restriction. This is in line with the following function for creativity in discourses by Carter (2004): “expressing identities”¹¹⁹ (p. 82). That is, Sofia appropriated the verse of this poem in order to help her

foreign language in question”.

¹¹⁷ The name of this poem is “No Meio do Caminho”. See <https://www.culturagenial.com/poema-no-meio-do-caminho-de-carlos-drummond-de-andrade/>.

¹¹⁸ His name was Carlos Drummond de Andrade.

¹¹⁹ For Carter (2004), “expressing identities” (p. 82) is a function for the creative use of language, which is related to the idea that through such a creative use the person shows who she/he is and the way how she/he wants to be recognized as.

to construct an identity of someone who was not satisfied with that partnership.

4.1.2.1.1 Moments that triggered the emergence of rich points. In the teletandem session nine days after the experience report (Excerpt 13) had been written, Sofia let Emily know that one week prior to that session some people in Brazil had held a demonstration in support of Donald Trump, then candidate for president of the United States. The coming excerpt illustrates how this event outraged Sofia:

1. S: Você acredita?
2. E: ((she laughed out loud))
3. S: ((she laughed)) Como eu não eu não consigo acreditar numa coisa dessa pra mim é...

[...]

4. S: Eu simplesmente acho isso completamente... COISAS ((smiling)) é muito é absurdo porque... é... então... é as pessoas que foram... que foram... que são... a favor do Trump... ah... estavam... ah... discutindo e brigando com as pessoas que são... contra... e... aí... é enfim apareceu a polícia e tudo mais.

5. E: São... são brasileiros que... são... a favor?

6. S: Eu acho... BOA PERGUNTA BOA PERGUNTA BOA PERGUNTA.

7. E: ((she laughed))

8. S: Porque eu acho que eram todos brasileiros... mas acho que eles esqueceram que eles são latinos e que... o Trump... ODEIA latinos. ((she laughed))

9. E: ((she laughed))

10. S: Acho que eles esqueceram dessa parte é uma parte importante né? é uma coisa importante de se lembrar... mas infelizmente acho que eles se esqueceram... e eu acho tão complicado Emily... é... nós temos tantos problemas aqui pra se preocupar com os problemas dos Estados Unidos... temos problemas o suficiente aliás tem muitos problemas... então acho bem difícil... mas... enfim né? ((she giggled))

11. E: *Sí...* ah... *yo...* ((taking a little while to speak)) *listo lista* para a eleição e... ah... *de todo... por eso...* não sei ah... *ridiculousness.*

12. S: Completamente... completamente... acho acho que *listo* em português dissemos [sic]... é... dizemos *pronto* eu não tenho certeza eu vou

confirmar porque meu espanhol não é bom ((she laughed)) [...] é o mesmo que *all read* ((she attempted to say *all ready*)) né? você queria dizer [...].

13. E: Aham. ((the expression on her face seemed to indicate that she did not understand))

14. S: *I'm all read* ((she attempted to say *all ready*))... “eu estou pronto” nesse sentido?

15. E: *No sé...* ah...

16. S: ((she giggled))

17. E: Não sei posso... ah... pesquisar (incomprehensible)

18. S: Ok... aham... OK.

19. E: Aham.

20. S: Ah... ah... assim é... tem alguma pergunta que você gostaria de fazer... sobre algum...

21. E: Ah... ((thinking for a few seconds))...
 não... não sei em particular ah... ((she kept
 thinking for several seconds))

22. S: Ah eu tava então vou ((she giggled)) eu
 tava lendo um texto sobre... a música
 afroamericana... eu achei muito interessante...

(Excerpt 14 / teletandem session / original in
 Portuguese¹²⁰ / Sofia and Emily, 02-11-2016)

¹²⁰ Own translation to English:

“1. S: Can you believe it?

2. E: ((she laughed out loud))

3. S: ((she laughed)) Because I can't believe in something like that
 to me it's...

[...]

4. S: I simply find this completely... THINGS ((smiling)) it's very
 it's pure nonsense because... like... so... like the people who went...
 who went... that are... in favor of Trump... ah... they were... ah...
 arguing and disputing with the people who are... against... and...
 then... like finally the police showed up and you know.

5. E: They are... are Brazilians who... are... in favor?

6. S: I think so... GOOD QUESTION GOOD QUESTION GOOD
 QUESTION.

7. E: ((she laughed))

8. S: Because I think they were all Brazilians... but I think they
 forgot that they are *latinos* and that... Trump... HATES *latinos*. ((she
 laughed))

In turn (2) Emily laughed in reaction to Sofia's comments, and this may have been induced by Sofia's

9. E: ((she laughed))

10. S: I think they forgot that part it's an important part right? it's an important thing to remember... but unfortunately I think they forgot it... I think it's so complicated Emily... like... we have so many problems here then they worry about the problems of the United States... we have enough problems by the way there are many problems... so I find it very difficult... but... anyway right? ((she giggled))

11. E: *Sí...* ah... *yo...* ((taking a little while to speak)) *listo lista* for the election and... ah... *de todo... por eso...* I don't know ah... *ridiculousness.*

12. S: Completely... completely... I think I think that *listo* we say in Portuguese... like... we say *pronto* I'm not sure I'll check it because my Spanish isn't good ((she laughed)) [...] it's the same as *all read* ((she attempted to say *all ready*)) isn't it? you meant [...].

13. E: Uh-huh. ((the expression on her face seemed to indicate that she did not understand))

14. S: *I'm all read* ((she attempted to say *all ready*))... "eu estou pronto" in this sense?

15. E: *No sé...* ah...

16. S: ((she giggled))

17. E: I don't know I can... ah... search (incomprehensible)

18. S: Ok... uh-huh... OK.

19. E: Uh-huh.

20. S: Ah... ah... like... is there any question you would like to make... about some...

21. E: Ah... ((thinking for a few seconds))... no... I don't know in particular ah... ((she kept thinking for several seconds))

22. S: Ah I was then I'm going ((she giggled)) I was reading a text on... African-American music... I found it very interesting..."

smiling expression, or perhaps simply because she intended to show that she agreed with Sofia (I agree with you that this is actually odd). By expressing humor (Carter, 2004; Crystal, 1996), Sofia in turn (3) was able to reinforce her displeasure and her critical tone towards that event. This display of discontent unfolded throughout turn (4), and she even uttered “things” as a means of sidestepping another word that could be regarded as profane or offensive for that particular moment, but Sofia ended up choosing a “more suitable” word: absurd. Sofia’s expression of uncertainty and admiration in turn (6) as a reaction to her partner’s question in turn (5) made Emily laugh again in turn (7), maybe because she was surprised to learn that in Brazil there could be a demonstration in favor of a candidate who was running for president in another country (and in

her country!).

Shortly after, in turn (8) Sofia said that she *supposed* that the people who participated in the protest were Brazilians, which meets what O’Dowd (2006) reminded us earlier, it is, that videoconferencing may not be appropriate when participants are asked to discuss issues of which they do not have much knowledge or have not considerably dealt with. Also in turn (8), Sofia stated emphatically that Donald Trump had an aversion to Latin Americans, which once more allowed room for laughter in turns (8) and (9). In turns (8) and (10), Sofia explained that the Brazilians who participated in the demonstration in favor of Donald Trump were not aware of their “membership in the *latinos* group”. Quite possibly, the fact that Sofia had access to different media discourses that portrayed a conflicting relationship

between the then candidate and *latinos*, especially Hispanics, caused a tension between “her sense of belonging to the *latinos* group” and “the Brazilians who took part in the demonstration in support of Donald Trump”. She added in turn (10) that these Brazilians should be concerned about the problems of their own country, and not of the United States. In turn 11, when Emily uttered “ridiculousness”, it was implied that she was in agreement with what Sofia had said in turns (8) and (10).

In turn (11) it can be noted that Emily had a hard time expressing what she wanted to say in Portuguese, and she even employed linguistic elements of Spanish. In turn (12), Sofia realized that “listo” is not used in Portuguese. As she was not sure if the translation of “listo” from Spanish to Portuguese was “pronto”, she

told Emily that she would check this information. Also in this turn, Sofia laughed maybe as a way of not appearing to be “rude” for having corrected Emily’s utterance, and Sofia further clarified that her uncertainty was because she did not know Spanish very well, which could be an indication of Sofia’s attempt to protect Emily’s face. In turns (12) and (14), Sofia intended to find an equivalent of “pronto” in English, but that did not help much because she pronounced the expression “all ready” in a manner that Emily, in turns (13), (15) and (17), may not have understood. In turn (16) Sofia giggled probably because she realized that a communication breakdown was taking place and her partner was losing face in view of this, and, as a way of making Emily feel more comfortable, Sofia asked her, in turn (20), if she had any questions, which caused another

instance of embarrassment by Emily in turn (21), because she either had no questions or did not know how to make a question in Portuguese. Yet again, in turn (22) Sofia managed to protect Emily's face by suggesting a discussion of a topic in which both of them had an interest.

Considering that Donald Trump's candidacy for president really became an interesting focus of media coverage at that time, part of Sofia's opinion on this topic may have been formed based on different media "voices" (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet, 2011). This converges with Vinall's (2016) concept of "relationality" (p. 4), as Sofia's cultural representations may have emerged through the relations between the various dialogues circulating in society at that time. This is also in line with Risager (2007), for whom cultural

representations “convey images or narratives of culture and society” (p. 180).

Emily at no time contested or problematized Sofia’s comments, which remained rather superficial (O’Dowd, 2016) and did not give way to the deconstruction of Sofia’s solid impressions. Just when Emily was going to present her own perspective in turns (11) and (13), she failed to develop her line of thought probably because she could not express herself well in Portuguese.

A day after that teletandem session, Sofia sent me a private message via Facebook whose content revolved around her relationship with her partner. Maybe she felt at ease in writing to me in part because throughout the process of data collection I sought to develop a close rapport and trust with my participants, as I said in

Chapter 3. The next excerpt from a Facebook private message shows that Sofia's motivation to carry out the teletandem interactions with Emily seemed to be dying:

Tem as relações de poder e eu percebo que há por parte de alguns interagentes uma certeza que vem não sei de onde que os fazem pensar que são superiores / A interação com a Emily é sempre, tortuosa, complicada, mas vou detalhar melhor nos relatos, percebo que ela não se prepara muito, não há um grande interesse nesse sentido infelizmente / Notei outro ponto sobre o qual havíamos conversado, tenho uma grande dificuldade para entender o sotaque dela, há sim uma falta da minha parte, visto que eu não possuo uma fluência na língua, mas não consigo

enxergar um real esforço da parte dela em se
 fazer entender, o que torna tudo mais
 complicado, mas enfim, dias melhores virão,
 aliás, interações melhores chegarão, assim eu
 espero...rs. (Excerpt 15 / Facebook private
 message /original in Portuguese¹²¹ / Sofia, 03-11-
 2016)

As can be seen in this excerpt, Sofia's ideological
 perception of the presence of unequal power relations
 (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) in the interaction with

¹²¹ Own translation to English: "There are the power relations and I realize that there are on the part of some interactants one certainty that I don't know where it comes from which makes them think they are superior / The interaction with Emily is always, tortuous, complicated, but I'll give more detail in the reports, I realize that she doesn't prepare enough, there is no great interest in this regard unfortunately / I noticed another aspect which we had talked about, I have a great difficulty to understand her accent, there is of course a fault on my part, since I don't speak fluently the language, but I can't see a real effort on her part to make herself understood, which makes everything more complicated, but anyway, better days will come, in fact, better interactions will come, at least I hope...rs".

some of her American interactants and, by extension, with Emily, was making room for a negative feeling about her partner, which is consistent with Dervin (2014), for whom power relationship “determines what takes place in intercultural encounters” (p. 193). Said in other terms, it appears that Sofia’s perception of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) led to the emergence of an intercultural misunderstanding. Just as in Mendes’s (2009) study the participants displayed a feeling of anti-Americanism, Sofia’s sense of “anti-Americanism” could be linked to her view that “Americans think they are superior”.

It may be the case that as the online sessions with Emily as well as with other partnerships with American universities progressed, Sofia developed a pessimistic outlook towards Emily. For example, in a private

Facebook message a few days later, Sofia highlighted that “geralmente sou eu quem leva os assuntos então há inclusive a questão do ego presente, no caso o meus”¹²². This concurs with Dervin (2014), for whom people build more cultural representations as they interact in different contexts.

As was seen in Chapter 2, Souza’s (2016) study showed that situations of failed communication – or communication breakdown – can cause intercultural misunderstandings. In effect, Sofia having stated in the Facebook private message that “percebo que ela não se prepara muito”¹²³ (Excerpt 15) may be linked to the communication breakdown in Excerpt 14, which could have been one of the catalysts for the emergence of rich

¹²² Own translation to English: “I am the one who usually proposes the subjects then there is even the issue of ego here, mine in this case... rs”.

¹²³ Own translation to English: “I realize that she doesn’t prepare enough”.

points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) or intercultural misunderstanding. That is, the fact that Emily had not asked any questions in turn (21) of Excerpt 14 might have enhanced Sofia’s perception that her partner was “not interested”, which may have also resulted in her view that there was the presence of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) underlying her online exchanges (Emily considers herself superior, and she doesn’t care either about me or the conversation). Actually, Sofia had sometimes pointed out both in the mediation sessions and in her experience reports that she was the one who always asked questions and suggested the topics for discussion. However, it is quite possible that Emily had not been able to ask a question because she could not express herself sufficiently well in Portuguese.

Sofia's perception that there was the presence of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) in this partnership may be linked to what she had already mentioned in the mediation session and in her experience report. For example, in the first mediation session, she had underlined that she did not look favorably on Brazilians who, broadly speaking, are better informed about cultural aspects of the United States than of the countries of Latin America, since, according to her, Latin America "é a nossa cultura"¹²⁴. In her first experience report, she observed that "somos tão bombardeados com as "novidades" vindas das terras norte americanas e nos esquecemos da nossa própria identidade latina, brasileira"¹²⁵ (emphasis in the original). In that way,

¹²⁴ Own translation to English: "is our culture".

¹²⁵ Own translation to English: "we are so bombarded with "news" coming from the North American lands and we forget our own Latin identity, Brazilian".

Sofia was conveying an identity of someone who did not resign herself to the “bombardment of news coming from the United States”. The existence of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) implied in Sofia’s discourse (bombardment of news) and also explicitly mentioned in Excerpt 15 may be closely related to the emergence of the intercultural misunderstanding in question.

The content of the message that Sofia sent me made me deeply concerned, since I realized that she was losing her motivation to talk to her partner. Also, this could be negatively affecting these participants’ interpersonal interaction as a whole, which could eventually cause the break-up of this partnership. Therefore, I decided that I could help Sofia work on the skill of interacting (Byram, 1997) with her partner.

The emergence of these rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012), understood as situations that can cause intercultural misunderstandings, prompted me to consider that, instead of offering Sofia “ready-made recipes” or, according to Kramersch (1993), “bridges” (p. 228), I could help her think about what was causing her pessimistic view, with the goal of overcoming it. This concurs with Kramersch (1993), who claims that, instead of seeking to “teach the bridge” (p. 228), teachers should facilitate “a deep understanding of the boundaries” (p. 228) and help language learners in the process of overcoming cultural conflicts. Hence, with the purpose of “teach[ing] [Sofia] the boundary” (Kramersch, 228), but also because I found that discussing this sort of situation in writing would be a somewhat difficult enterprise, my first suggestion was that she

mentioned this event in her experience report so that we could talk about it in the interview as soon as possible.

4.1.2.1.2 Helping Sofia overcome her negative perception of her online partner. The following excerpt from the Facebook private message describes my reactions to Sofia's critical viewpoint on her partner:

Bom dia / Não, não é ego (na minha opinião).
Acho que vc, como mesma disse, está sugerindo os assuntos que gosta, já que não percebe essa iniciativa de sua parceira. Talvez, você devesse perguntar para ela se você assim está OK para ela. Quem sabe, Sofia, você pudesse perguntar para ela se ela está gostando, se está tudo bem, se ela gostaria de falar sobre algum assunto

específico... o que vc acha? (Excerpt 16 /
 Facebook private message / original in
 Portuguese¹²⁶ / researcher / 08-11-2016)

One day after this Facebook private message, in the teletandem session Sofia and Emily spoke about Donald Trump's victory in the United States presidential elections, which took place the day before that teletandem session. The next excerpt illustrates how this event affected the participants, but mainly Emily, emotionally:

1. S: Como você está depois de ontem? ((she

¹²⁶ Own translation to English: “Good morning / No, it’s not ego (in my opinion). I think that you, as you said, are suggesting the topics that you like, since you don’t see this initiative on the part of your partner. Maybe, you should ask her whether it’s OK for her like this. Maybe, Sofia, you could ask her if she is enjoying, if everything is all right, if she’d like to talk about a specific topic... what do you think?”.

giggled)) a vitória.

2. E: Horrível (incomprehensible)... ah... ((she started to cry, lowered her head and put her hands over her eyes)) (incomprehensible)

3. S: É muito é muito complicado né? Imagino.

4. E: Yeah.

5. S: Mas dias dias melhores virão é... todo mundo ta aqui sem entender... e sem... sem compreender como que isso pode ter acontecido... eu não to acreditando... e sabe o que eu fico mais... indignada é que muitos latinos votaram no Trump eu to... não to acreditando nisso. ((she giggled))

6. E: Não... ah... ((she was still crying)) não posso não sei ah... entender e.... *yeah*. (Excerpt

17 / teletandem session / original in Portuguese¹²⁷

/ Sofia and Emily / 09-11-2016)

In turn (2), after qualifying candidate Donald Trump's victory as "awful", Emily started to cry. In turn (3) and especially at the outset of turn (5), Sofia attempted to comfort Emily, despite the fact that one week before the former had revealed an unfavorable opinion on her experience with the latter (Excerpt 15). In turn (5), Sofia was also outraged at the *latinos* who voted

¹²⁷ Own translation to English:

"1. S: How are you after what happened yesterday? ((she giggled)) the victory.

2. E: Awful (incomprehensible)... ah... ((she started to cry, lowered her head and put her hands over her eyes)) (incomprehensible)

3. S: It's very it's very complicated isn't it? I imagine.

4. E: Yeah.

5. S: But better days days will come like... everybody is here without understanding... and without... without understanding how this could have happened... I can't believe it... and you know what makes me more... indignant is that many *latinos* voted for Trump I am... I can't believe it. ((she giggled))

6. E: No... ah... ((she was still crying)) I can't I don't know ah... understand and.... yeah.

for the candidate elected, and in turn (6) Emily could barely speak because of her feelings at that moment.

Later on in the mediation session, Sofia referred to the event of candidate Donald Trump's victory and explained that this left Emily in a state of sadness. She qualified the fact that she had asked her online partner about how she was feeling after the result of the elections as an inappropriate attitude because she already knew that Emily had an adverse view of this candidate. She noted the following: "eu fiquei até assim um pouco ah... impressionada e assustada porque ela nunca demonstrou muito as emoções... então para mim foi uma surpresa"¹²⁸. She also stressed that Emily was "more open" and that the "things were on the way" between them. It may be said that with Emily's "display of

¹²⁸ Own translation to English: "I was even like a little ah... impressed and frightened because she had never let the emotions show enough... so it surprised me".

feeling” in Excerpt 17, Sofia came to realize that her partner was “different” from her other partners of the AU who, as she had referred to in the Facebook private message that she sent me (Excerpt 15), consider themselves to be “superior”, which shows that her perception regarding Sofia was changing.

Except 18 below from the experience report, written two days after that teletandem session (Excerpt 17), also describes Sofia’s opinion about her latest online interaction (Excerpt 17) with Emily:

A interação de hoje foi bastante atípica, a minha interagente estava profundamente emocionada devido ao resultado das eleições norte americanas, ela parecia bastante abalada, então o assunto girou basicamente em torno disso, e

devido ao fato de estarmos vivendo algo bastante semelhante no Brasil nos sentimos unidas pela dor de alguma forma, ela me fez perguntas a respeito da nossa situação e eu relatei as minhas impressões. (Excerpt 18 / Sofia's experience report / original in Portuguese¹²⁹ / 11-11-2016)

It can be seen from this excerpt that Emily having expressed her sadness in the teletandem session (Excerpt 17) had an impact on Sofia, and she even stated that they “felt united” because in Sofia's country some important political events were also under way.

Linking back to Van Lier (2004), an EcP can be

¹²⁹ Own translation to English: “Today's interaction was quite atypical, my interactant was deeply moved by the outcome of the North American elections, she seemed touched enough, so the subject basically revolved around it, and due to the fact that we are experiencing something quite similar in Brazil we felt united by the pain in some way, she asked me questions about our situation and I reported my impressions”.

approached in a deep way, meaning that the causes underlying the emergence of problems can be understood in a critical, deeper and comprehensive way. In line with the deep way, hence, I set out to understand in a more holistic manner (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008) what was causing this intercultural misunderstanding. In this way, a few days before Sofia wrote the experience report (Excerpt 18), I had started to conduct the interviews, which allowed for an appropriate occasion to discuss with this participant her view that there was the presence of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) in that partnership.

During these moments of exchange and dialogue with this participant in the interviews, I began to include my personal impressions. More importantly, by discussing with Sofia the cultural boundaries between

“her self” and “the other’s self” (Emily’s), in keeping with Crozet and Liddicoat (1999), my objective was that she could at least mitigate her negative feelings.

Particularly, I was not able to notice Emily’s lack of engagement, as Sofia had already suggested, and I actually told her that there were quite interesting aspects in that partnership, for instance, the discussion of various cultural topics. On the contrary, I considered that Emily always asked different questions. In addition, she was kind and receptive to Sofia’s comments.

In the light of Sofia’s explanations in the interviews, but also taking into account that I always watched the teletandem sessions as soon as possible, I came to realize that this intercultural misunderstanding could also be associated with these two participants’ lesser ability to communicate in the FL, what Souza

(2016) names “level of proficiency^{130 131}” (p. 123). As was seen in Excerpt 15, Sofia claimed in her experience report that she had trouble understanding Emily (in English) and that she “was not fluent in English”. Therefore, one of my suggestions to her in the interview but also in one mediation session was that she could ask Emily to speak more slowly in English. In the same vein, Emily’s lesser ability to communicate in Portuguese could also be an underlying cause of Sofia’s pessimistic view, which might have contributed to Sofia’s perception that her partner was neither motivated to strike up a conversation nor very receptive to the topics she proposed to talk about. Indeed, as has already been said (Excerpt 14), the communication breakdown could have been because Emily had had a hard time in

¹³⁰ Original quote: “nível de proficiência”.

¹³¹ As was seen in Chapter 2, in Souza’s (2016) study the level of proficiency was linked to the emergence of misunderstandings.

understanding what Sofia was explaining in Portuguese.

Over the weeks, it was possible to see that Sofia was developing a more optimistic opinion, and the participant herself acknowledged this in the second-to-last mediation session when she observed that “eu percebo que a interação com a Emily a cada semana fica melhor assim a gente cria mais afinidade”¹³². Effectively, Belz (2007) explains that one of the indicators that point to the construction of interculturality is the “decrease in the use of negative judgment over the course of a partnership” (p. 156). A week later in the last mediation session, Sofia, once again, talked about her interaction with Emily. The next excerpt shows her considerations:

1. S: Embora tenha... demorado um pouco mais

¹³² Own translation to English: “I can see that my interaction with Emily gets better every week like we are bonding”.

pras coisas acontecerem acho que ela é um pouco mais introvertida um pouco mais tímida... é... eu percebo que isso foi satisfatório também assim então é... foi uma coisa construída assim eu vejo muita vantagem nesse aspecto.

2. R: Aham.

[....]

3. S: A gente tem muita coisa em comum e isso nos aproxima sem dúvida alguma... e...

[...]

4. S: Enfim é só... só tem que falar coisas elogiosas porque é foi tudo muito bacana assim... e acho que vou ter uma amiga assim por muito tempo então é muito bacana.

5. R: Então mudou a sua perspectiva em relação a ela?

6. S: Total.

7. R: Né? em questão da afinidade... mudou?

8. S: Sim sim... é eu vejo que ela é ainda muito
TÍMIDA é.... então eu tenho que ser mais ah...
expansiva eu geralmente falo muito mais do que
ela... e eu vou tentando trazer ela pro assunto
assim alguma coisa que possa ser relevante pras
nós duas né? não só pra mim.

[...]

9. S: Então foi uma experiência muito...

enriquecedora... e eu acho que cresci muito

assim... uma experiência de crescimento

pessoal... enorme... muito bacana. (Excerpt 19 /

mediation session / original in Portuguese¹³³ / 07-

¹³³ Own translation to English:

“1. S: Although... it took a little longer for things to happen I think she’s a little more introvert a little shier... like... I realize that this was satisfactory too like so ah... it was something constructed so I

12-2016)

This excerpt evinces how Sofia changed her perception in relation to her online partner. In turn (1), Sofia suggested that such a change occurred at a slow pace, which she looked favorably. In turn (3), she made plain that many features in common strengthened the ties between them. Although she didn't mention what those

see a lot of advantage in this aspect.

2. R: Uh-huh.

[....]

3. S: We have many things in common and this brings us closer undoubtedly... and...

[...]

4. S: Anyway like only... I've got only complimentary things to say because it was everything very nice like... and I think I'm going to have a friend like for a long time so it's very cool.

5. R: So was your perspective on her changed?

6. S: Totally.

7. R: Right? regarding affinity... was there any change?

8. S: Yes yes... like I see that she is still very SHY like.... so I have to be more ah... expansive I usually talk much more than her... and I try to get her involved in the subject like something that may be relevant to both of us right? not only to me.

[...]

9. S: So it was a very... enriching experience... and I think I grew up a lot like... an experience of personal growth... enormous... very nice."

features were, two of them could be the fact that they were the same age and that they were interested in the same subjects, as Sofia had highlighted in the experience and in the interview. In turn (4), she even highlighted that a friendship was formed between them. In turn (8), in response to my question in turns (5) and (7), she acknowledged that she was more communicative than Emily. Actually, although there is an estimated balance of each participant's positioning (Souza, 2016) in the teletandem sessions, Sofia revealed a greater predisposition to position herself more frequently in comparison with her partner. Also in turn (8), she explained that she sought to discuss topics in which both were interested. Finally, in turn (9) Sofia underscored that the experience with Emily was enriching and provided significant personal growth. This is in keeping

with the concept of “linguaging” (Phipps & Gonzales, 2004, p. 2), in the sense that linguaging, through the encounter with the other, can enable language learners to “understand the complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own” (p. 3).

On the issue of rich points, O’Dowd (2012) asserts that:

Intercultural communication in face-to-face contexts and out of the classroom is also often characterized by misunderstandings and the need to deal with different behaviour and beliefs. It is therefore fair to argue that these cases of ‘failed communication’ should be exploited as ‘rich points’ for learning. (p. 352)

Maybe due in part because I regarded this intercultural misunderstanding as “rich points for learning”, as suggested by O’Dowd (2012) in the quote above, it may be argued that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place in Excerpt 19. This is because, through a process of decentering, in line with what Bredella (2002), Kramersch (2005) and Ware and Kramersch (2005) understand by interculturality, as presented in Chapter 2, Sofia proved to be able to overcome her pessimistic view of her partner, since she evaluated her own attitudes, put herself in her partner’s shoes and became aware of what aspects could be negatively influencing her interaction with Emily. Furthermore, she recognized in turn (8) some aspects that could benefit that partnership, such as dealing with topics with which they identified themselves. Her

attitudes also meet Belz (2007), for whom interculturality involves “modifying or re-evaluating one’s evaluations of other societies, cultures and individuals as well as re-analysing one’s evaluations of the self” (p. 155). In short, it is possible to say that “empathy” is a common aspect regarding Belz’s (2007), Bredella’s (2002), Kramsch’s (2005) and Ware’s and Kramsch’s (2005) vision of interculturality, that is, an ability to put oneself in someone else’s position. Actually, Sofia showed such ability in relation to her online partner.

In essence, three reasons could help explain why Sofia overcame her pessimistic perception of her online partner. Firstly, her surprise because Emily was deeply moved by Donald Trump’s victory in the presidential elections (Excerpt 17). Secondly, Sofia’s self-reflection

(Belz, 2007) on this partnership (Excerpt 19). Thirdly, my role as a teacher-mediator in the mediation sessions, interviews and Facebook private message. As stated by Lopes and Freschi (2016), Rocha and Lima (2009), Telles (2015b), Thorne (2006) and Ware and Kramersch (2005), the teacher-mediation in online learning is of key importance to promote a more in-depth reflection on intercultural issues.

In Subsubsection 4.1.2.1, it was seen how the communication breakdown in Excerpt 14 may have been one of the triggers for the occurrence of rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012). As I explained previously, the emergence of these rich points was the central aspect that favored the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 4, as

through them it was possible to help Sofia overcome her pessimistic view of her online partner. In the coming subsection, I present another central aspect that favored the co-construction of interculturality: the possibility of hearing other points of view.

4.1.2.2 Culture-related sets of episodes 5 – “the possibility of hearing other points of view” in the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples: partnership Lucas and Fiona. The next excerpt from the teletandem session demonstrates how Lucas expressed an interest in knowing Fiona’s position on homo-affective union and on child adoption by same-sex couples:

1. L: A respeito do casamento gay você é contra

ou você é a favor?

2. F: Favor.

3. L: Favor... e adotar criança?

4. F: Como assim adotar?

5. L: Esse... esse... esse casal gay adotar uma criança o que você acha?

6. F: Aham... claro *a hundred per ce** cem por cento... eu amaria se os meus pais fossem... um casal gay.

7. L: Oi?

8. F: Eu conheço muito [sic] casais gay que são muito gente boa... trata... mas assim... o jeito que eu fui criada... eu tenho família eu tenho pessoas da minha família super conservador [sic] que não gosta [sic]... mas... aqui na faculdade eu tenho muito amigo gay.

9. L: Entendi.

10. F: Onde eu morava tem muito [sic] casais gay
[sic] que eles são tipo são pais maravilhoso [sic].

((the monitor told Lucas to start speaking in
English))

11. L: Ah in English for now.

12. F: English? OK.

13. L: Yes.

14. F: What about you, what's your opinion on
that?

15. L: My opinion? ah... *como que fala eu sou a
favor?* How can I say?

16. F: I'm... I am... in favor.

17. L: I am in favor but in... have a children [sic]
not... my opinion.

18. F: Ah, OK!

19. L: Yes because...
20. F: Do you think so... getting married... yes
and then...
21. L: Yes.
22. F: Having kids no...
23. L: No yes.
24. F: OK, OK... why... why?
25. L: Because when the... children... go to
school it's... everyone joke [sic] with the
children.
26. F: Uh-huh.
- [...]
27. F: You know I know a lot of Brazilian
guys... who... said you know if I saw a gay guy
on the street I'd hit him up... and I say WHY?
WHY?

28. L: Yes yes... one day here in Brazil a... gay boy died... in the... *paulada* ((making gestures with her hands to imitate a person who is hitting someone with a stick))... how can I say *paulada* do you know? do you know *paulada*?

29. F: I don't know the word *paulada*...

POULADA [sic]

30. L: Do you know *pau*?

31. F: Yeah!

32. L: Yes. ((making gestures with his hands and making a sound with his mouth to imitate a person who is hitting someone with a stick))

33. F: Ah OK OK I understand. (Excerpt 20 / teletandem session / original in Portuguese from turn (1) to (10)¹³⁴; original in English from turn

¹³⁴ Own translation to English:

“1. L: About gay marriage are you against or are you in favor?”

(11) to (35) / Lucas and Fiona / 26-10-2016)

This excerpt displays the importance of the other (Fiona's viewpoints) when discussing the self (Lucas's viewpoints). In turn (1), Lucas was able to elicit information from his partner (Byram, 1997), in the same manner as Fiona could ask Lucas's opinion in turns (14) and (24). Hence, through this dialogue, Lucas had a chance to know his partner's perspectives on this topic.

2. F: In favor.

3. L: In favor... and adopting a child?

4. F: How come adopting?

5. L: This... this... this gay couple adopting a child what do you think?

6. F: Uh-huh... of course *a hundred per ce** a hundred per cent... I would like very much if my parents were... a gay couple.

7. L: What?

8. F: I know a lot of gay couples who are very nice people... they treat... but like... the way I was raised... I have a family there are very conservative people in my family who don't like it... but... I have a lot of gay friends here at the university.

9. L: I got it.

10. F: Where I used to live there are many gay couples who are like wonderful parents. ((the monitor asked Lucas to start speaking in English))”

In this regard, Byram (1997) states that it is of paramount importance to discuss different cultural subjects, such as traditions, behaviors, institutions and cultural products, from the perspective of the “other”. In turn (2), in response to Lucas’s question in turn (1), Fiona said that she was in favor of same-gender marriage. On the question whether she was for or against child adoption by same-sex couple in turns (3) and (5), she replied in turn (6) that she fully agreed with it and stressed that she would like very much if her parents were a same-sex couple.

In turns (8) and (10), Fiona provided more information to support her argument in favor of adoption. For example, in turn (8) she explained that there is conservatism on the part of some people in her family, and in turn (10) she remarked that she knew

many same-sex couples who take care of their children very well. Also in turn (8), Lucas did not correct Fiona when she said “*muito casais*”¹³⁵, bearing in mind that “*muito*”, in this case, should be used in the plural, since it accompanies the noun “*casais*”. In turn (10), the pronunciation of “*pais maravilhoso*” instead of “*pais maravilhosos*”¹³⁶, was not corrected by Lucas either. In turn (9), Lucas indicated that he had understood his partner’s position.

In turn (14), Fiona wanted to know Lucas’s perspective and in turn (17) he said that he was in favor of homo-affective union, but he did not agree with child adoption by same-sex couples. At the end of this same turn, Lucas underlined that his vision was personal, which could point to an attempt not to go against Fiona’s

¹³⁵ Own translation to English: “many couples”.

¹³⁶ Own translation to English: “marvelous parents”.

opinion, who was in favor.

In turn (24), Fiona was interested in knowing why Lucas had such an unfavorable opinion regarding child adoption by same-sex couples, and in turn (25) he explained that it was due to bad jokes (or prejudice) that children encounter in schools, an opinion Fiona seemed to agree with in turn (26). Interestingly, in turn (25) Fiona did not draw Lucas's attention to the way he expressed the sentence "everyone joke with the children". Fiona really understood his partner, even though he had used "joke" as a word to express an action (verb), and he actually meant "everybody makes fun of the children".

In turn (27), Fiona expressed deep indignation since some Brazilians told her that they would beat up a gay guy if they saw him on the street. In turn (28), Lucas

recounted that a gay boy had been beaten to death in Brazil, but Fiona, in turn (29), did not understand the meaning of “paulada” used by Lucas in turn (28). Then, with a view to making Fiona understand what he meant by “paulada”, Lucas made gestures with his hands in turn (28) and, in turn (32), he made a sound with his mouth to imitate a person who is hitting someone with a stick. About the use of different means in oral communication language, Rymes (2010) makes clear that users appropriate various communicative resources to be understood, such as gestures, clothing, different postures and body language. In turn (33) Fiona confirmed that she had understood Lucas’ anecdote.

At the end of that teletandem session, Lucas asked Fiona what her future expectations about this topic were. The next excerpt portrays what she was expecting:

1. F: Ah... I hope that it's better... it's very divided really divided... you know like... this side and this side and I hope that it... you know comes together and I hope that people... 'cause I think I'm pretty... the role of social things... for me like I hope that people become more understanding of other people you know? that we can teach people that it's like... even if we don't... like how you are like... even if you don't agree... I mean even if you're not that... you can respect it... respect.

2. L: Yes... I understand you. (Excerpt 21 / teletandem session / original in English / Lucas and Fiona, 26-10-2016)

In order to understand other people's positioning,

Kramersch (2006) maintains that it is necessary to take into consideration past experiences that they remember, what they project in the future “and how they position themselves in the present” (p. 251). With that in mind, it is possible to understand Fiona based on the way in which she projected herself towards the future, which also helps to reveal how she positions herself in the present, that is, regarding the importance of respecting and understanding other people. This way, she demonstrated “an awareness and a respect of [sic] difference” (Kramersch, 2005, p. 553). In turn (2), Lucas said that he had understood his partner’s point of view.

In summary, it can be claimed that in Excerpts 20 and 21 Lucas had the chance to hear from his partner other points of view about the topic in question.

Furthermore, perhaps because Fiona realized that he held

strong essentialist representations, she seized “the right moment” to state her viewpoint in turn (1) of Excerpt 21. And she did so in a very subtle way maybe not to leave the impression that she had not agreed with Lucas’s opinions in Excerpt 20. Bearing in mind that “cultural stances can be problematized” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 116), it could be said that this problematization somehow was underway when Fiona stressed that she wished that people would become more understanding of others.

4.1.2.2.1 Continuing to see the same topic from other points of view. As was shown in Excerpt 20, Lucas had a chance to hear the opinion of someone who had a different perspective on homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples. He also mentioned this

topic later in the mediation session, where he was given an opportunity to continue to come across different points of view. Initially, Lucas reported that he had told Fiona that he was in favor of same-sex marriage but not of child adoption by same-sex couples, due to, as noted earlier, different forms of prejudice associated with machismo. Although Lucas had heard from Fiona that she was aware of same-sex couples who take care of their children very well, the next excerpt from the mediation session shows how his concern with children continued:

1. L: Como que a criança vai crescer numa escola? e os amiguinhos sabendo que o... é pai com pai mãe com mãe e etc.? aí eu disse que nisso eu não sou a favor e ela disse que era e foi

legal que houve aquele debate entre eu e ela “por que que você não gosta por que que você é contra”? mas não em forma de briga foi em forma de debate mesmo.

2. R: E mas Lucas só uma curiosidade você disse que você não é a favor... mas somente por esse motivo ou há mais algum?

3. L: Não assim eu sou a favor do casamento gay normal de boa eu sei respeitar.

4. R: Mas quanto à adoção de filhos por um casal do mesmo sexo?

5. L: Porque... não sou sabe o por quê Rodrigo? porque ta ele chega numa universidade por exemplo se for menina até VAI assim só que sabe? mais ou menos assim? agora um moleque por exemplo... sabe? aquele negó* “ah fica

quieto” “o seu pai é... é gay que não sei o quê”
 então eu acho que mexe com o psicológico da
 criança mexe com o biopsicossocial dela...
 entendeu? (Excerpt 22 / mediation session /
 original in Portuguese¹³⁷ / 26-10-2016)

In turn (1), Lucas offered more detailed
 descriptions as compared to the teletandem session with

¹³⁷ Own translation to English:

- “1. L: How is the child going to grow up in a school? and her/his little friends who know that the... it’s father with father mother with mother and etc.? then I said that I’m not in favor of that and she said she was and it was good because there was a debate between her and me “why don’t you like it why are you against it”? but not in the form of argument it was actually in the form of debate.
2. R: And but Lucas just a curiosity you said you’re not in favor... but only for this reason or is there any other?
3. L: OK like I’m in favor of gay marriage it’s OK I do respect.
4. R: But regarding child adoption by same-sex couples?
5. L: Because... I’m not in favor do you know why Rodrigo? because like he arrives at the university for example if it is a girl it may even be OK but you know? something like this? but a boy for example... you know? that thin* “hey shut up” “your dad is... is gay whatever it may be” so I think there are psychological consequences for the child there are biopsychosocial consequences... did you get it?”

Fiona, and this may be because the topic was being discussed in Portuguese. He also claimed that the teletandem sessions were particularly suited for the debate of ideas. In turns (2) and (4), I asked Lucas whether there were any other reasons for his argument against child adoption by same-sex couples. In turn (5), he repeated his concern at the fact that these children may be discriminated against in society, and the tone of his voice appeared to convey his disapproval. Not long after in this mediation session, he also highlighted the bureaucracy involved in the adoption process, a negative aspect for him, although it can be said that there is also a complex bureaucratic process when it comes to child adoption by heterosexual couples.

Soon after, as a way of providing further reflection, I asked all of the participants whether they

had any opinion on this topic. The following excerpt from the mediation session shows how Zilma was critical of Lucas's view:

1. Z: Eu acho que Lucas está certo em partes porém ele tá errado em outras porque... esse casal gay ele tem... ele quer ele quer esse afeto de um filho... entendeu?

2. L: É.

3. Z: Então mexe com as duas partes sim ((psychological and biopsychosocial)) a criança vai sofrer muito... porém ela... pode ter certeza que se esses pais lutaram tanto pra ter ela eles vão dar muito amor.. e tem muitas crianças com filho... filhos de pais héteros que não têm esse amor que... esses pais homossexuais podem dar...

a educação também pode ser muito boa...
 preparar o psicológico do filho... “olha filho... é...
 na sua escola é meio diferente porém... nós
 vamos te dar muito amor”... preparar a cabeça da
 criança... pra que essas pessoas... hipócritas... é
 não julgarem dessa forma entendeu?

4. L: Certo.

5. Z: ((she looked at another participant)) É pra
 ele ENTENDER... porque aí... pensa assim o
 seguinte... se a base é boa... não vai cair tão fácil
 então não vai ser qualquer papinho que vai
 derrubar a criança. (Excerpt 23 / mediation
 session / original in Portuguese¹³⁸ / 26-10-2016)

¹³⁸ Own translation to English:

“1. Z: I think Lucas is right in some ways but he’s wrong in others
 because... this gay couple has... it wants it wants this affection of a
 child... did you understand?

2. L: Yes.

3. Z: Then of course there are consequences ((psychological and

In turn (1), Zilma underlined that in some respects she did not agree with Lucas's remarks, and she suggested another way of interpreting this topic, a vision with which Lucas seemed to agree in turn (2). In turn (3), she gave substance to her argumentation also as a reaction to Lucas's comments on the psychological state of children, and she stated that some same-sex couples can dialogue with their children about forms of prejudice that they may encounter in school. In turn (3), Zilma

biopsychosocial)) the child will suffer a lot... but she/he... you can be sure that if these parents fought so hard to have her/him they will give out lots of tendering love... and there are many children with child... children of heterosexual parents who don't have this tendering love that... these homosexual parents can give... education can also be very good... to prepare the child's mind... "hey my son... like... it's a little different in your school but... but we're going to give you lots of tendering love"... to prepare the child's mind... so that these people... hypocritical... won't judge like this did you understand it?

4. L: Right.

5. Z: ((she looked at another participant)) so he can UNDERSTAND it... because then... think about the following... if the foundation is good... it won't fall down so easily so the kid won't be affected negatively by any small talk."

used the adjective “hypocritical” to qualify people who are prejudiced. Her opposition to Lucas’s comments became even more apparent when, at the very beginning of turn (5), she addressed another participant in the classroom and then said “É pra ele ENTENDER”¹³⁹, which suggests that she had used the word “hypocritical” in turn (3) in a way that Lucas could have a clearer idea of what she was attempting to explain. Forasmuch as in Zilma’s discourse is implicit that Lucas is amongst the people who are “hypocritical”, the fact that she uttered the voice (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet (2011) of “these hypocritical people”, but without looking at Lucas when she said that, might have helped to sidestep a possible direct confrontation with him.

It is evident how in these discursive faultlines

¹³⁹ Own translation to English: “so he can understand it”.

(Kramersch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009) Lucas's comments clashed with Zilma's view. At the same time, this piece of interaction made room for Zilma, by positioning herself at the third place (Kramersch, 1993, 2013), to offer another possibility of interpretation (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) about the topic. Moreover, through her thought-out explanation, she was helping him to "*make the strange familiar and the familiar strange*" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p. 19) or, in a similar way, "to see the unfamiliarity ... [of his] cultural representations" (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 116).

After that, I questioned Zilma, but also addressing the other participants, if she believed that the participation of both a woman and a man in the upbringing of children was vital. Then, she said that she

considered this important, but in her understanding happiness is the fundamental element, which suggests that she did not mind if the union of this couple is homo-affective or hetero-affective. The subsequent excerpt from the mediation session shows the moment when Lucas, by resorting to the voice (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet (2011) of a sacred religious book, came back to the scene to provide Zilma, his other classmates and me with more explanations:

Eu tenho esse conceito comigo desde quando eu ia à Igreja sabe? de cantar a Bíblia e ler... diz que o homem veio homem então ele tem que morrer homem a mulher veio mulher ela tem que morrer mulher e nenhum pode vestir o que é da mulher e nem a mulher vestir o que é do homem... sabe? e

eu acho que vira assim uma família assim eu
 acho de ponta cabeça mas isso que você falou...
 Zilma também concordo cem por cento. (Excerpt
 24 / mediation session / original in Portuguese¹⁴⁰
 / 26-10-2016)

It is interesting to note that Lucas was judging this topic according to his own framework of reference, and was unaware that his utterances were “shaped by broader cultural and historical forces” (Kern, 2014, p. 344). Also, even after he had heard Zilma’s perspective in Excerpt 23 and Fiona’s in Excerpt 21, his positioning reveals that he was not able to realize how his own

¹⁴⁰ Own translation to English: “I’ve had this concept since I attended the Church you know? I used to recite the Bible and read it... it says the man came man then he has to die man a woman came woman she has to die woman and no one can wear what is proper to woman nor a woman can wear what is proper to man... you know? and I think that the family becomes dysfunctional but what you said... Zilma I also agree one hundred per cent”.

worldviews played a key role in the exploration of this topic. But his discourse in Excerpt 24 appeared to be contradictory to what he had explained when he took into consideration what Zilma had said (“Zilma I also agree one hundred per cent”), which might be indicating that in some way he was fostering his skills of discovery and interaction (Byram, 1997) with his classmate.

After Lucas said that each person has her/his own opinion on that topic, I remarked that the opinions were somewhat different amongst the participants. The following excerpt depicts how Lucas’s principles seem to have collided with Nayara’s, who also positioned in that mediation session:

1. R: Será que tudo isso que você está... é...
relatando e que nós estamos discutindo aqui...

não pode ser... tão somente uma construção social?

2. L: Também!

((Nayara asked for permission to speak))

3. N: Eu concordo em partes com a... Zilma.

4. R: Zilma.

5. N: Zilma disse com o que você ((looking at the teacher-mediator)) ta falando... eu acho que é importante... a visão... da criança do homem e da mulher mas eu acho que não é essencial eu acho que o mais importante o mais essencial é o amor.

6. L: É.

7. N: Então se o casal homossexual der o amor à criança isso que importa... e em relação a isso que você falou ((looking at Lucas)) de se preocupar com as piadinhas... é em relação ao

homossexuais um homossexual por te abraçar ou um preto ou... o filho... esse filho desse casal homossexual as piadinhas na escola a gente se preocupar com isso a gente não ta também... fazendo com que esse preconceito continue?

8. L: Continue exatamente!

9. N: Porque essa preocupação com isso... a preocupação do que o que outros vão pensar... significa que eu também to pensando naquilo.

(Excerpt 25 / mediation session / original in Portuguese¹⁴¹ / 26-10-2016)

¹⁴¹ Own translation to English:

“1. R: Don’t you think that what you are... like... reporting and what we are discussing here... could be... just a social construction?

2. L: Also!

((Nayara asked for permission to speak))

3. N: I agree in part with... Zilma.

4. R: Zilma.

5. N: Zilma said regarding what you ((looking at the teacher-mediator)) are saying... I think it’s important... the vision... of the child of the man and of the woman but I think it’s not essential I think the most important the most essential is love.

It became apparent that the atmosphere of this conversation was of a heated debate. In line with O’Dowd (2012), the way in which this dialogue was being carried out “contrasts with interaction that involves an unreflective exchange of information” (p. 350), for Nayara provided her “expression of direct opinions and reactions to the submissions of others” (O’Dowd, 2012, p. 350). “Submissions of others”, in this case, refers to: a) Zilma’s positioning in Excerpt 23; b) the question, as was seen before, that the teacher-mediator had raised on the participation of both a man and a woman in the

6. L: Yes.

7. N: So what matters is whether the homosexual couple gives tendering love to the child... and what you said ((looking at Lucas)) about worrying about jokes... like about homosexuals a homosexual hugging you or a black person or... the child... the child of this homosexual couple the jokes in school if we worry about this aren’t we also... allowing this prejudice to continue?

8. L: To continue exactly!

9. N: Because the concern with that... the concern with what the others are going to think... means that I am thinking about that too.”

upbringing of children and; c) Lucas's discourse up to that point.

In turn (1) in Excerpt 25, I asked everyone in the group, but also addressing Lucas, about whether it was “possible to claim” that the issue under discussion was the outcome of a social construction. In this sense, my questioning in turn (1) was intentionally raised to bring Lucas to perceive that his “way of seeing the world is not *natural* or *normal*” (O’Dowd, 2006, p. 86), but actually Nayara was the one who followed up on that moment of reflection in turns (5) and (7). It could be said that in these two turns, but also in turn (9), she took on the position of a “teacher-mediator”, since she also provided the group with further reflection. This way, she was acting as an “intercultural speaker” (Byram, 1997, p. 132), for she showed her ability to be a negotiator and

mediator of different viewpoints at that moment.

Still in turn (7), Nayara revealed her critical approach when she suggested that Lucas's concern with "bad jokes" in schools could reinforce existing prejudice, and in turn (8) Lucas seemed to agree with Nayara's positioning. In the latter's remark in turn (9), it may be implied that Lucas, just as "the others who are prejudiced", is prejudiced. Also in turn (9), Nayara having taken on the voice (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet, 2011) of "I" instead of "you" shows her skill of interaction (Byram, 1997), bearing in mind that the use of the pronoun "you" could have produced a loss of face (Ware & Kramersch, 2005) or a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

In Excerpt 25, it could be considered that Nayara was developing symbolic competence (Kramersch, 2006,

2009a, 2009b, 2011; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008) since, by contributing with alternative perspectives, she was attempting to “shape the very context” (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664). Moreover, she acted according to what Kramsch (2013) names “transgradience” (p. 62), that is, she brought about a space in which Lucas, her classmates and the teacher-mediator could see themselves both from the inside and the outside.

A few days after that mediation session, in his experience report, Lucas’s vision on child adoption by same-sex couples was put forward again. The next excerpt demonstrates how he voiced this topic:

Eu falei para ela ((Fiona, in the teletandem session)) que eu também não era contra o casamento Gay mais que eu era e sou contra a

adoção por esses tipos de casais, falei para ela como a criança vai crescer na escola com o machismo que existe hoje em dia nas escola, nas ruas, em fim em todo lugar, eu disse para ela que é uma coisa que mexe com o Psicológico da criança. (Excerpt 26 / Lucas's experience report / original in Portuguese¹⁴² / 03-11-2016)

This excerpt depicts how his position contrary to child adoption by same-sex couples continued. What seems to be noteworthy is that he showed empathy toward children and concern about prejudice, as it had been the case in Excerpts (20) and (22). Also in this

¹⁴² “I told her ((Fiona, in the teletandem session)) that I was not against same-gender marriage but that I was and I am against adoption by these kinds of couples, I told her how will the child grow up in school with the existing sexism in schools these days, in the streets, anyway everywhere? I told her that it’s something that affects the psychological state of the child”.

experience report, he claimed that he had liked the mediation session (Excerpts 22, 23, 24 and 25) because he could hear different viewpoints. Nearly two weeks after this experience report (Excerpt 26), in the interview Lucas's opinion was also favorable regarding the mediation session, as can be seen in the next excerpt:

1. L: Foi um assunto muito interessante que teve debate ((banging his fist on the palm of his left hand)) na na... sala entendeu? aquele dia eu achei que ia até MORRER.

2. R: Na sessão de mediação aquele dia?

3. L: Isso isso isso foi muito legal gostei.

(Excerpt 27, semi-structured Interview, original in Portuguese¹⁴³, 17/11/2016)

¹⁴³ Own translation to English:

“1. L: It was a very interesting subject because there was a debate

In turn (1), Lucas highlighted the opportunity to steer debate during the mediation session. He even stressed what he was saying by making gestures (Rymes, 2010), not to mention that the tone in his voice was tinged with excitement. In this turn, when he underlined that “aquele dia eu achei que ia até morrer”¹⁴⁴, illustrates how he had felt when he experienced his classmates’ counter-arguments. Quite possibly, Lucas put into use the figurative language resource “to die” with reference to when Zilma and Nayara (Excerpts 23 and 25, respectively) had brought forward their own perspectives, which may suggest that he had felt

((banging his fist on the palm of his left hand)) in the in the... classroom did you understand? that day I thought I was even going TO DIE.

2. R: In the mediation session that day?

3. L: Yes yes yes it was very good I liked it.”

¹⁴⁴ Own translation to English: “that day I thought I was even going to die”.

uncomfortable in the face of those clash of ideas. In turn (2) I tried to get more details about this, but in turn (3) Lucas only said that he had liked the discussion in that mediation session. The following excerpt from the interview portrays when Lucas recalled Zilma's discourse in the mediation session (Excerpt 23):

1. L: Aí foi que nem a Zilma falou que... eu achei muito legal o que ela falou também que é pra vida quando...

[...]

2. L: “Lucas, mas pensa o seguinte comigo... quando... o alicerce é forte a estrutura não cai fácil” beleza... só que se a estrutura não... e se a estrutura cair?... como vai cair? (Excerpt 28 / semi-structured interview / original in

Portuguese¹⁴⁵ / 17-11-2016)

In turn (1), Lucas revealed the significance that Zilma's comment had had for him when he said (1): “é pra vida”¹⁴⁶, which could be a sign that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place. That is to say, in the mediation session (Excerpt 23, but also in Excerpt 25) he had had the opportunity to continue to hear, just as it had been the case in the teletandem session (Excerpts 20 and 21), other points of view regarding the topic in question, the central aspect that favored this co-construction in culture-related sets of

¹⁴⁵ Own translation to English:

“1. L: What Zilma said that... I found it very nice what she said too that it's for life when...

[...]

2. L: “Lucas, but think the following... when... the foundation is strong the structure doesn't fall down easily” OK... but what if the structure doesn't... what if the structure falls down? how will it fall down?”

¹⁴⁶ Own translation to English: “it's for life”.

episodes 5. Hence, it could be argued that such an opportunity helped Lucas to decenter (Bredella, 2002; Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), albeit very timidly, from his cultural representations and, at the same time, to display an openness to hear other viewpoints. Moreover, it might be claimed that the mediation session (Excerpts 23 and 25) enabled Lucas to foster his skill of interaction and discovery (Byram, 1997) with his classmates, who had different opinions from his.

In turn (2) (Excerpt 28 above) Lucas brought up the metaphor that Zilma had used in Excerpt 23:

“quando... o alicerce é forte a estrutura não cai fácil”¹⁴⁷.

Even though Zilma had said this sentence slightly

differently, that is, “se a base é boa... não vai cair tão

¹⁴⁷ Own translation to English: “when... the foundation is strong the structure doesn’t fall down easily”.

fácil”¹⁴⁸, the meaning is pretty much the same. As is plainly evident, Lucas was able to bring to the conversation in this interview an aspect that he had heard and that had been meaningful to him at another time (in the mediation session). Indeed, not only he repeated what he had heard from Zilma, but he also proved to be able to question and recontextualize his classmate’s metaphor: “e se a estrutura cair... como vai cair?”. The fact that Lucas put at stake Zilma’s metaphor meets what Vinall (2016) calls “potentiality” (p. 5), in a way that meaning “becomes an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing” (Vinall, 2016, p. 5).

The next excerpt from the interview also reports on Lucas’s concerns about the topic in question:

¹⁴⁸ Own translation to English: “if the foundation is good... it won’t fall down so easily”.

SÓ QUE EU SOU CONTRA ADOTAR liberar
 é... tipo liberar a criança pra esse tipo de... de
 família como que uma criança vai crescer? com
 dois homens ou com duas mulheres? entendeu?
 como que... esses dois homens como essas duas
 mulheres vai [sic] tratar... o filho da crian* do
 filho deles... como vô como vó? como vai ser?
 entendeu? aí tem também a reunião de pais...
 entendeu? na escola... como que os pais vão se
 apresentar? como que a criança vai levar um
 amiguinho pra brincar em casa? depois chega a
 fase da adolescência tem aquele negócio de
 zoação de brincadeira não é verdade? (Excerpt 29
 / semi-structured interview / original in
 Portuguese¹⁴⁹ / 17-11-2016)

¹⁴⁹ Own translation to English: “BUT I AM AGAINST ADOPTING leaving like... for example leaving the child under the responsibility

It could be said that Lucas had not questioned Zilma in the mediation session (Excerpt 23) because he might have been intimidated by an impending loss of face (Ware & Kramsch, 2005) or face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), or because there were the presence of five classmates. In the interview, maybe because Lucas and I had created an enhanced rapport, it seems to me that he felt more comfortable, which might have helped him to create greater openness and spontaneity.

Excerpt 29 illustrates that this participant

of this kind of... of family how is the child going to grow up? with two men or with two women? did you get it? how are... these two men how are these two women going to call... the child of their chil* of their child... grandfather or grandmother? how is it going to be like? did you understand? then there is the parent-teacher meeting... did you get it? at school... how are parents going to introduce themselves? how is the child going to take her/his little friend to play at home? so the adolescence period arrives and with it the act of mockery and bad jokes isn't that true?''

continued to hold the view that the children of a same-sex couple suffer serious consequences by virtue of the pressure that society impose. Similarly, in this interview he even claimed that these forms of prejudice, for psychological reasons, can lead them to commit suicide.

In brief, at no point did I, in the mediation session and the interview, and Zilma and Nayara, in the mediation session, suggested that Lucas's visions were "wrong" or "right", especially because he had the right to maintain his opinions or not as well as to agree or not with our viewpoints. This finds resonance in the following Belz's (2007) assertion: "becoming an intercultural speaker does not mean agreeing with your partner's point of view or convincing your partner of the validity of your own point of view" (p. 152). Instead, Zilma, Nayara and I were aiming at making him see his

cultural representations in a different way, for instance, when Zilma and Nayara explained to him in the mediation session (Excerpts 23 and 25) that children can receive affection and love from same-gender parents. Otherwise speaking, in keeping with Kramsch and Whiteside (2008), who define symbolic competence as a “mindset that can create relationships of possibility” (p. 668), we were endeavoring to have Lucas interpret the topic from other perspectives (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) and to prevent him from drawing a static opinion.

In Subsubsection 4.1.2.2, it was shown that the possibility of hearing other points of view was the central aspect that favored the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 5. In

other words, Lucas had the chance to come across other viewpoints (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) as regards the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples by both Fiona, in the teletandem session, and his classmates in the mediation session.

After having answered research question 2 in Subsection 4.1.2, which concentrated on the central aspects that favored the co-construction of interculturality, in the next section I will provide a discussion about the way how the co-construction of interculturality occurred in my data.

4.2 Discussion: Explaining How the Co-construction of Interculturality Took Place

In this section, based on the data analysis presented previously, I will focus on how the co-construction of interculturality took place in my data. In Subsection 4.2.1, I show that this co-construction was a process, that is, it occurred over time and through different instances. Then, in Subsection 4.2.2, I explain how the teletandem sessions, mediation sessions, experience reports and interviews played a part in the process of the co-construction of interculturality.

A close look at discourse in the data analysis presented in Section 4.1 helped me to understand the “*symbolic meaning[s]*” (O’Dowd, 2006, p. 86) underlying the participants’ verbalizations and, besides that, how they transited through a multitude of personal and social identities while they were negotiating meanings. Within a Bakhtinian vision (1981), these

symbolic meanings, in addition to having being produced socially, were continuously appropriated by the participants. This is consistent with Norton (1997), who claims that language learners continuously (re)organize “a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (p. 410) when they express themselves in the FL but also in their own language. Otherwise speaking, my participants were “engaged in identity construction and negotiation” (Norton, 1997, p. 410).

Before presenting the discussion in the following subsection, I would like to highlight two important points regarding the data analysis. First, as was seen in Chapter 2, Kramersch has reconceptualized her metaphor of the third place in more recent publications (2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). Although many times the third place (Kramersch, 1993, 2013) can be linked to national

cultures, this concept really helped me to understand the reality of my data, mainly in relation to the idea that interculturality involves a continuous and interpersonal process of meaning-making. In other words, in my data cultural representations could be submitted to further discussion at the third place (Kramsch, 1993, 2013), as will be seen further along.

The second point concerns Byram's intercultural model (1997). Even though I agree with the critiques of this model by some authors as presented in Chapter 2, mainly with respect to the fact that it can be restricted to a national framework of culture, it is important to underscore that it was useful to interpret the data of my research, especially as regards the component "critical cultural awareness". In this respect, Byram's model converges with Kramsch's (2006, 2009a, 2011) approach

to interculturality, in the sense that a critical view of fixed representations are paramount when people from different cultures interact. Actually, in 2012 Byram himself stresses that a critical cultural awareness should be regarded as a central point in his 1997 intercultural model.

In Section 4.1, as a way of providing theoretical support for the data analysis, I used some theoretical constructs concerning the area of interculturality and telecollaboration as well as theoretical contributions by authors such as Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993, 2005, 2011), Lopes and Freschi (2016), O'Dowd (2003, 2006) and Telles (2015b). In the discussion in Subsection 4.2.1 and Subsection 4.2.2 further below, although I will continue to use theories of this area, the sociocultural perspective by Vygotsky (1978, 1981, 1986) will serve

as a basis for an organic view regarding the data analysis.

I should likewise clarify that I will continue to use an EcP (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), as presented in Chapter 2, to support my arguments in this discussion. As already explained, holism is one of the central features of the EcP (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008), in the sense that it addresses particular aspects of interactions. Therefore, this perspective provided a rather holistic vision to help me develop this discussion.

4.2.1 Showing that the co-construction of interculturality was a process. As explained in Chapter 2, for Vygotsky (1981) two of the four genetic domains for the study of higher mental functions are microgenetic

and ontogenetic. As regards the former, the analysis itself of every single excerpt presented in Section 4.1 can be defined as microgenetic, since my outlook was focused on the different “microevents” where meaning negotiation was taking place. Referring to the other domain, ontogenetic, in my data there were other instances directly linked to these “microgenetic situations”, which were interactively involved in the process of the co-construction of interculturality. Having said that, drawing on the data analysis¹⁵⁰ presented in Section 4.1, in the next few paragraphs I will explain how the co-construction of interculturality was a process (ontogenetic), as it seems to have occurred over time and through different instances.

In culture-related sets of episodes 1

¹⁵⁰ I took the decision to present other excerpts in Section 4.2, when necessary, as a way of giving substance to my arguments.

(Subsubsection 4.1.1.1), Lucas's stereotyped views, one of the central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality, about *Programa Bolsa Família* were not contested in the teletandem session (Excerpt 1). Later in the interview (Excerpt 3), I took the opportunity to go a little deeper into this topic and, probably as a result of my questioning along that interview, he also noticed positive aspects of this program, which indicates that the co-construction of interculturality seemed to be taking place. For instance, it became manifest that he stood back from his oversimplified view when he claimed that there was a decrease in the number of students who drop out of school, bearing in mind that the students' families must keep their children enrolled in school in order to receive the financial benefit of Programa Bolsa Família. This also shows that Lucas had the chance to look

beyond his stereotyped representations about this social program.

In culture-related sets of episodes 2 (Subsubsection 4.1.1.2), Sofia's generalizations about the topic cultural differences between the State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil remained unchallenged in the teletandem session (Excerpt 4). In other words, meaning negotiation in this online session was superficial, a central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality. Later, she would come back to the topic about these cultural differences in the mediation session (Excerpt 5). As it was already explained, one of the characteristics of the collaborative learning for Vygotsky (1978) is the role of someone more experienced to find ways to help the less

experienced to learn, what he calls ZPD¹⁵¹. Specifically in culture-related sets of episodes 2, “learning” is linked to the help provided by the teacher-mediator in order to favor the co-construction of interculturality. That is to say, shortly after in that mediation session (Excerpt 6), I offered an “intercultural bridge” to Sofia as well as to the other participants in the sense that I explained to them that perspectives and behaviors also vary from person to person. Furthermore, I highlighted that the cultural differences that were being discussed at that moment were not only associated with the fact that people pertain to a specific social group. Perhaps due to my explanation, at least an initial level of decentering from Sofia’s generalizing view seemed to be happening when she said “*não necessariamente a região mas a pessoa*”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Zone of Proximal Development.

¹⁵² Own translation to English: “not necessarily the region but the

and “é ponto de vista estereótipos”¹⁵³, which thus indicated that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place. Further evidence that this co-construction was occurring would emerge later in Sofia’s experience report (Excerpt 7), since she used modalizers possibly with the intention of not generalizing. Indeed, this may have been an outcome of the moment of reflection that had happened in the mediation session (Excerpt 6).

Despite the fact that in the teletandem sessions there is always the presence of *the other*, Sofia and Emily’s online interaction not only in Excerpt 4 but also in Excerpt 14 (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1) seemed to have taken more the form of a monologue than a dialogue itself. Specifically in culture-related sets of episodes 2 (Excerpt 4), such a form of a monologue appeared to be

person”.

¹⁵³ Own translation to English: “like points of view stereotypes”.

related to the superficial level of meaning negotiation, one of the central aspects that hindered the co-construction of interculturality. According to Helm (2016), through dialogue “participants explore identities and difference, personal experience and emotions” (p. 153). However, it was Sofia who made comments most of the time, whereas Emily rarely presented her vision or raised questions. The latter, for the most part, answered with “aham / uh-huh”, “yeah” or “hum / huh”, most likely to indicate that she was hearing Sofia or agreeing with her. Perhaps, as already seen, this is one of the reasons why the meaning negotiation remained superficial and, besides that, why Sofia did not have the chance to redefine some of her generalizing points of view in the teletandem session (Excerpt 4).

According to Vygotsky (1978), meanings are

socially co-constructed, which implies that the presence of “the other” is necessary for this co-construction. Therefore, it can be said that even if Emily did not present her own opinion in reaction to Sofia’s comments or raised questions more frequently in the teletandem session in Excerpt 4 but also in Excerpt 14 (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1.1), the mere online presence of this participant did play a part in the process of the *co-construction* of meanings. For instance, as explained previously, Emily uttered the interjection “wow” in Excerpt 4 and many times she used “aham / uh-huh”, which probably showed to Sofia that her partner was hearing her or paying attention to her comments.

There were technical problems with Zoom right at the beginning of this teletandem session where Sofia highlighted culture differences between the State of São

Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil (Excerpt 4). In fact, different technical problems, such as the link to access the teletandem sessions on Zoom, adjustments of the computer's audio / volume and video-recording of the sessions, were quite frequent throughout the period of data collection. Malinowski and Kramsch (2014) feel that limitations of this nature lead participants to “devote all their attention to the technology itself at the expense of deeper negotiation of social and cultural meanings, let alone worldviews” (2014, p. 175). In her experience report, Sofia stressed that “devido a alguns problemas técnicos, a interação foi um pouco mais curta do que de costume”¹⁵⁴. In the interview, I asked her if these technical restrictions had affected the online session itself, and she made clear the following: “só o tempo

¹⁵⁴ Own translation to English: “due to some technical problems, the interaction was a bit shorter than usual”.

mesmo mas eu não acho que seja algo que... tenha assim impacto muito significativo eu acho que não...

tranquilo”¹⁵⁵. Although Sofia stated that she had not noticed any impact on the online interaction itself, she did acknowledge that the amount of time (to practice the languages) was affected. In fact, it took the computer technician fifteen minutes to have these problems finally solved, and the duration of the video was thirty-four minutes, taking into account that in relation to the other partnerships the average duration was fifteen minutes longer. Sofia and Emily therefore had fifteen minutes less to engage themselves in the “negotiation of social and cultural meanings” (Malinowski & Kramsch, 2014) and also to practice the FL that they were learning.

Another example is when during a teletandem session

¹⁵⁵ Own translation to English: “just the amount of time itself but I don’t think that... there is like a very significant impact I don’t think so... it’s okay”.

Lucas's and Fiona's dialogue was interrupted by technical problems, which had an impact on the way how their conversation unfolded.

In culture-related sets of episodes 3 (Subsection 4.1.1.3), the comparison of differences and similarities with reference to the topic about Brazilian and American students' behavior in the teletandem session (Excerpts 8 and 9) remained superficial, a central aspect that hindered the co-construction of interculturality. Later in the mediation session, Lucas repeated some generalizations that Fiona had let him know in the teletandem session, namely that "students do not throw paper at each other in the United States", and my question (Excerpt 10) helped him realize that there was a school in Brazil with better quality of education, which might be a signal that he was looking beyond his

generalizations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). In other words, although in the teletandem session (Excerpts 8 and 9) the topic had remained stereotyped, shortly after in the mediation session (Excerpt 10) there was a decentering opportunity (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), albeit timidly, by Lucas, which shows that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place. Later in the interview (Excerpt 12), in response to my contestation, another initial step towards decentering took place when he acknowledged that he had indeed generalized. As it had been the case in the mediation session (Excerpt 10), such an acknowledgement might be indicating that the co-construction of interculturality was occurring.

As I have already said, in culture-related sets of

episodes 2 (Subsubsection 4.1.1.2), it appeared that the conversation between Sofia and Emily in the teletandem session (Excerpt 4) was more in keeping with characteristics of a monologue than a dialogue itself. I do not suggest, however, that contestation and at least initial steps of deconstruction in relation to fixed representations are always fostered when one participant further reacts more often to the other participant's comments. For instance, not only regarding the topic about comparisons and similarities between the Brazilian and American students' behavior (Subsubsection 4.1.1.3) but also about Programa Bolsa Família (Subsubsection 4.1.1.1), the interaction between Lucas and Fiona was in line with what Helm (2016) understands by dialogue, as already presented, where both the participants contributed with their own opinions and asked each other

different questions. Nevertheless, as already explained, in the majority of cases Lucas's stable cultural representations remained uncontested, which did not allow this participant to deconstruct them in the online sessions.

In this connection, Thorne (2006) argues that deeper cultural understanding may not happen in tandem models. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), on the other hand, assert that "real-time interactions do not give participants time to reflect on the interaction or on how language and culture are relevant to the interaction" (p. 115). This is because, according to the authors, "the participants' focus is on the interaction itself, not on aspects of intercultural learning or behavior" (p. 115). As Lopes and Freschi (2016) reminded us, in teletandem sessions the two partners do not generally question each other's

comments. In addition, Helm (2013; 2016) remarks that in telecollaboration there seems to be a tendency to avoid issues that require further investigation or that are of a more complex nature. Lastly, Kern (2014) points out that cultural difference are often played down in virtual exchanges to prevent conflicts.

Still, the superficial level of discussion in teletandem sessions might be explained because the teletandem sessions occur in a spontaneous way, keeping characteristics of informal as well as day by day conversations. In Telles's (2009) study, for example, the participants explained that "the webcam images give them feelings of closeness, informality, reality, credibility and mutual identification" (p. 70) in their online sessions. It may be the case that precisely because of these characteristics, mainly closeness, informality

and mutual identification, the participants of my research did not demonstrate a willingness to take a stance against her/his partner, with a view to avoiding, among other possibilities, “loss of face” (Ware & Kramsch, 2005, p. 196) and conflicts (Kern, 2014).

As the data analyses showed, there was a tendency of the participants to delve themselves into issues equated to national references of culture, given that these references are firmly rooted in discourses and the participants of my research, therefore, appropriated such discursive realities and negotiated their meanings in their online interactions. For example, while in Excerpts 8 and 9 (Subsubsection 4.1.1.3) the discussion between Lucas and Fiona revolved around the behavior of school students from Brazil vs. the United States, in Excerpts 1 and 2 (Subsubsection 4.1.1.1) these participants talked

about the Brazilian income transfer program “Bolsa Família”. However, in Excerpt 4 (Subsection 4.1.1.2) Sofia highlighted cultural differences linked to two larger entities not as national references, but rather as regional references (The State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil). This attachment to a national duality (Kramsch, 2009a, 2011) was also evidenced by Menard-Warwick (2009), for whom the culture representations “were generally of national cultures” (p. 42). Moreover, in Salomão’s (2011) study the participants’ view of culture was also associated with national references prior to the start of the teletandem sessions.

In a similar fashion, the review of studies in the context of teletandem in Chapter 2 revealed that the view of culture by Benedetti (2010) and Rodrigues (2013) was

actually linked to national references. However, linking back to Salomão (2011), culture as an interpersonal process should be viewed as part of the “pluralization of one’s cultural identity” (Hall, 2006 as cited in Salomão, 2011, p. 272). Indeed, although the participants of my research were aware that in the teletandem sessions each of them was from a different country, the content of the conversations was not completely limited to national cultures, since it was also related to idiosyncratic aspects of their cultural identities. For example, in the course of the online sessions the participants developed explanations with particular reference to their previous experiences and their own perspectives. Hence, the process of meaning negotiation often occurred in the interplay between a national framework of culture and personal contributions, in which the participants proved

to be part of both national and local identities.

In culture-related sets of episodes 4 (Subsection 4.1.2.1), the co-construction of interculturality took place through more instances when compared to culture-related sets of episodes 1, 2, 3 and 5. Before anything else, I would like to clarify that the main focus of attention in the analysis was not on the topic about the conflicting relationship between Donald Trump and *latinos*, but rather on the intercultural misunderstanding (rich points) that emerged. Additionally, this topic in particular was not addressed in offline instances (e.g. mediation sessions, experience reports or interviews) following the teletandem session (Excerpt 14), but it was discussed again in another online session (Excerpt 17).

Initially, in the teletandem session (Excerpt 14) there was an instance of communication breakdown,

which could have been one of the reasons why Sofia would send me a Facebook private message (Excerpt 15) the day after that teletandem session. Then, in the teletandem session (Excerpt 17), Sofia would be surprised because Emily was touched by Donald Trump's victory in the presidential elections in the United States, and Sofia had previously showed dissatisfaction with her partner (Excerpt 15). In effect, in the weeks that followed I would realize that this teletandem session (Excerpt 17) had represented the beginning of a significant change of this participant's pessimistic perception of Emily. For instance, two days after that teletandem session (Excerpt 17), a display of empathy would be clear in Sofia's experience report (Excerpt 18), especially when she said that "nos

sentimos unidas pela dor de alguma forma¹⁵⁶”, referring to the fact that in Brazil at that time major events in the political scenario were also happening. A few weeks later in the mediation session (Excerpt 19), there were concrete signs that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place, because Sofia seemed to have overcome her pessimistic view of her online partner. Actually, this co-construction was due to Sofia’s ability to see herself “through the eyes” (Kramsch, 2005, p. 553) of Emily, especially when she voiced the following in the mediation session (Excerpt 19): “eu vou tentando trazer ela pro assunto assim alguma coisa que possa ser relevante pras nós duas né? não só pra mim¹⁵⁷”. It could be suggested that the conversations that Sofia had had

¹⁵⁶ Own translation to English: “we felt united by the pain in some way”.

¹⁵⁷ Own translation to English: “I try to get her involved in the subject like something that may be relevant to both of us right? not only to me”.

with her teacher-mediator in the interviews and in the Facebook private messages over that period also had a part in the overcoming of Sofia's negative view.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the human being is constituted by a dialectical interaction with her/his socio-cultural environment and this interaction with the other allows a transformations in herself/himself.

Actually, it may be said that it was precisely the dialogue with the "other", that is, both with Emily, her classmates and her teacher-mediator in the mediation sessions, with her teacher-mediator in the interviews as well as through Facebook private messages, that may have favored a possible transformational engagement of Sofia (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978, 1981).

This is in harmony with Helm (2016), for whom misunderstandings should be seen as part of intercultural

encounters as well as “transformative agents” (p. 152). In comparison to culture-related sets of episodes 1, 2 and 3, in which the co-construction of interculturality had provided mere initial steps of decentering from the participants’ viewpoints, in culture-related sets of episodes 4 (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1) it appears that there was a possible more concrete transformational engagement (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978, 1981) of the participant in question, Sofia.

O’Dowd (2012) explains that there have been heated debates on the issue of whether “instances of intercultural communication breakdown should be seen as something problematic or as opportunities for learning” (p. 350). Indeed, the data analysis of my research showed that the emergence of rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) was the central aspect

that favored the co-construction of interculturality in culture-related sets of episodes 4. As Agar (2006) reminded us, rich points can “give direction to subsequent learning” (p. 2). In fact, Sofia’s discomfort occurred unexpectedly in the teletandem session (Excerpt 14) and this participant expressed feelings of insecurity in the Facebook private message (Excerpt 15). Therefore, it could be argued that it was through these feelings of “confusion” as well as through moments of dialogue in the mediation sessions and in the interviews that Sofia had the chance to compare and reflect about “the self and the other”, which appeared to have helped this participant overcome her negative feelings. This finds resonance in Helm (2016), for whom the exploration of identities and difference through dialogue “contribute to awareness of self” (p. 153).

As said in the analysis, in Excerpt 14 (Subsubsubsection 4.1.2.1.1) Emily had a hard time speaking Portuguese, and this may be one of the reasons why she did not position herself more often or did not feel encouraged to put forward her own viewpoints. About variable levels of language ability, Helm (2016) cautions that they “can create inequalities of participation” (p. 157). This point corroborates with Souza (2016), in the sense that in her study the level of proficiency was linked to the emergence of misunderstandings in teletandem sessions. Indeed, due to these language restricted abilities, Emily may have not understood Sofia’s explanations regarding the meaning of “listo” in Portuguese, causing a communication breakdown in the teletandem session (Excerpt 14). This, added to the fact that also in that teletandem session

Emily had not been able to make a question, bearing in mind that Sofia had previously asked her partner if she would have liked to do so, may explain why Sofia would send me a Facebook private message (Excerpt 15) the day after that teletandem session (Excerpt 14) complaining about the interaction with her partner, where she noted that “ela ((Emily)) não se prepara muito, não há um grande interesse nesse sentido infelizmente”¹⁵⁸.

In culture-related sets of episodes 5 (Subsection 4.1.2.2), regarding the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples, Lucas had the chance to hear other points of view (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), a central topic that favored the co-construction of interculturality. Even though Fiona told

¹⁵⁸ Own translation to English: “she ((Emily)) doesn’t prepare enough, there is no great interest in this regard unfortunately”.

her partner in the teletandem session (Excerpt 20) that she knew couples who are “wonderful parents” because they treat their children very well, and, shortly after (Excerpt 21), she showed to him the need to respect cultural differences, there was no a concrete evidence of a possible decentering from Lucas’s opinions.

Later in the mediation session, both Zilma, Nayara and the teacher-mediator – and not only the teacher-mediator, therefore – paved the way in the “ZPD” (Vygotsky, 1978) for moments of reflection on “implicit” and “explicit” values and perspectives (Byram, 1997) underlying Lucas’s arguments. Through this “intercultural bridge” that we had offered to him, in terms of “transgression” (Vinall, 2016, p. 5), his cultural representations could be contested at the third place (Kramsch, 1993, 2013). In addition, the way the third

place seemed to be taking place in culture-related sets of episodes 5 is consistent with Filho and Gil (2016), for whom it is co-constructed through interaction among language learners and the teacher.

It would only be in the interview (particularly in Excerpt 28) that there appeared to be a concrete sign that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place. This was possible because, by recalling what Zilma had explained in the mediation session (Excerpt 25), mainly that what she said “é pra vida”¹⁵⁹, it seems that he displayed openness to hear other viewpoints (Byram, 1997; Rodrigues, 2013), which also could be showing that a process of decentering (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), albeit very timidly, was in progress. Such a display of openness had

¹⁵⁹ Own translation to English: “is for life”.

also been observed in the experience reports that he would write eight days after the mediation session (Excerpts 22, 23, 24 and 25), in which he stated that he had liked the discussion in the mediation session because he had been able to hear different points of view.

As was seen earlier, the rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) in culture-related sets of episodes 4 allowed for the overcoming of Sofia’s negative vision in relation to her online partner, and such rich points were particularly linked to “intercultural misunderstanding” or “conflict”. However, I maintain that the discussion about different cultural representations regarding the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples that happened in the mediation session (culture-related sets of episodes 5 / Excerpts 22, 23, 24 and 25 /

Subsubsection 4.1.2.2.1) is more specifically related, instead of rich points, to discursive faultlines (Kramsch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009). This is because it was precisely the discussion of different points of view – or cultural differences – in the discursive faultlines that eventually led to the co-construction of interculturality.

When it comes to the co-construction of interculturality, the interpersonal process to understand otherness, in line with Filho and Gil (2016) and Kramsch (1993), is essential. In this sense, still regarding culture-related sets of episodes 5, due to the possibility of hearing different viewpoints in these discursive faultlines (Kramsch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009), it could be argued that a possible transformational engagement of Lucas (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978, 1981), which could be observed in a more concrete way

in the interview (Excerpt 28), seemed to be occurring. In keeping with Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), this possible transformational engagement was accomplished through exploring, problematizing, and redrawing the borders between the self (Lucas's viewpoints on the topic – Excerpts 20, 22, 24) and the other (Fiona's viewpoints on the topic in the teletandem session – Excerpts 20 and 21; Zilma's, Nayara's and my viewpoints on the topic in the mediation session – Excerpts 23 and 25).

As was the case with Emily in Excerpt 14 (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1.1), restrictions with regard language ability also affected Lucas's interaction with Fiona. The excerpt below from the interview illustrates Lucas's reference to this:

1. R: Você considera que esse aspecto ((Lucas's

reference to his restricted ability in English)) em específico reflete nas sessões de interação com a sua parceira?

2. L: SIM Rodrigo lógico... porque tipo assim quando ela ta falando em português... o assunto é... sem... sem... sem travar cê entendeu?

3. R: Aham.

[...]

4. L: Agora comigo é essa perca [sic] de tempo cê entendeu? porque eu não tenho domínio do inglês quando [sic] ela tem em português... sabe?.

(Excerpt 30, semi-structured interview, original

in Portuguese¹⁶⁰, 08/11/2016)

¹⁶⁰ Own translation to English:

“1. R: Do you consider that this aspect ((Lucas’s reference to his restricted ability in English)) in particular reflects in the teletandem interactions with your partner?

2. L: YES Rodrigo of course... because like when she’s speaking in Portuguese... the topic is... without... without... freezing up did you

In effect, in Excerpt 20 (Subsubsection 4.1.2.2) in turn 25 but also throughout that excerpt as a whole, Lucas did not develop his point of view on child adoption about same-sex couples as much as Fiona did. This concurs with Kern (2014), who states that language ability “can affect learners’ negotiation of meaning and cultural understanding” (p. 344). At the beginning of that teletandem session (Excerpt 20), Lucas had clarified the following: “pra mim o problema é que a hora que a gente trocar de língua eu vou apanhar bastante pra conseguir falar mas vamo [sic] vou conseguir”¹⁶¹. Interestingly,

get it?

3. R: Uh-huh.

[...]

4. L: But with me it is this waste of time did you get it? because I don't have a good command of English as good as she does in Portuguese... did you understand?

¹⁶¹ Own translation to English: “the problem for me is that when we switch language I will have a hard time speaking but I shall make it”.

when Fiona wanted to know Lucas's point of view on child adoption by same-sex couples in turn (14), they had barely started speaking in English, which may have been one of the reasons why he did not provide his partner with more detail about the topic in question.

Succinctly, the way in which the co-construction of interculturality took place in culture-related sets of episodes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 converges with some theoretical concepts in particular presented in Chapter 2: intercultural episodes (Gil, 2016), discursive faultlines (Kramsch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009) and “transgradience” (Kramsch, 2013). This is because, bearing in mind that intercultural episodes are associated with moments when language learners are “interactively engaged in the practice of meaning-making (Gil, 2016, p. 345), some cultural representations could be further

discussed in the discursive faultlines (Kramersch, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2009). As a result, moments of reflection paved the way for the emergence of “transgradience” (Kramersch, 2013), in which the participants, through a process of decentering (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), to a lesser or greater extent, could see themselves from both the inside and the outside.

In this subsection, it was explained that the co-construction of interculturality was a process, since instances after the teletandem sessions, e.g. mediations sessions, experience reports and interviews, were necessary for this co-construction. After this explanation, in the next subsection I show how the teletandem sessions, mediation sessions, experience reports and interviews contributed to the process of the co-

construction of interculturality.

4.2.2 Showing how the teletandem sessions, mediation sessions, experience reports and interviews helped in the process of the co-construction of interculturality. Data analysis showed that the participants first had co-constructed fixed representations in the teletandem sessions and then, through different instances, namely mediation sessions, experience reports and interviews, opportunities for at least initial steps of a decentering attitude and, in some cases, signs of a possible transformation engagement of the participants, would come about. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that even though there were opportunities for the deconstruction of some stable cultural representation in different instances, it was necessary that the

participants initially co-constructed them in the teletandem sessions. From this perspective, both the teletandem sessions and other instances following these online sessions were necessary for the co-construction of interculturality.

Consistent with one of the principles of teletandem, autonomy (Brammerts, 2003), the participants had the chance to choose the cultural topics and to deal with them as best suited them. This is also called “active construction of each other’s cultures” by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 116) and “natural process of interaction” by Vassallo and Telles (2006, p. 98). In tune with the authors, the topics that were chosen to be discussed emerged spontaneously during the teletandem sessions, and without having been previously suggested, for example, by the teacher-mediator.

In the teletandem sessions, in terms of symbolic action (Kramsch, 2011), the participants, through language, produced meanings, externalized their thoughts, co-constructed identities, told stories of their lives, burst out laughing prompted by situations of humor, recollected memories, asked a plethora of questions, told anecdotes, asked for clarifications to confirm or refute assumptions they had about their partner's country, and so forth. In this sense, in line with Phipps and Gonzales (2004), my participants were "linguaging" (p. 3), since they were "given an extraordinary opportunity to enter the linguaging of others" (p. 3) and, by extension, to discuss different cultural topics.

In line with SCT (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), knowledge was therefore socially co-constructed through

language in the teletandem sessions. From this perspective, participants worked collaboratively to improve their language skills, to exchange cultural information about each other's country, to ask questions, to show curiosity about their partner's points of view, to provide explanations, among others. This is consistent with Benedetti (2010) and Brammerts (1996), for whom participants, through collaborative efforts, can share cultural information and learn each other's language. The coming excerpt from the experience report depicts how Lucas emphasized how the teletandem sessions made possible the discussion of different viewpoints:

Falamos vários assuntos em nossas interações e assuntos que deram um bom resultados de debate entre eu e ela, uma coisa que eu gosto muito, pois

visa o conhecimento de diferentes olhares, pois eu tenho uma visão e ela tem outra em minha opinião. (Excerpt 31 / Lucas's experience report / original in Portuguese¹⁶² / 03-11-2016)

Similarly, the following excerpt depicts how the teletandem sessions were significant for Sofia in response to my question about her experience in the teletandem sessions in general:

Ah são ((teletandem sessions)) muito proveitosas no geral [...] na época que eu comecei ((previous teletandem exchanges experiences)) era mais por questão de tentar melhorar meu inglês que era

¹⁶² Own translation to English: “We talked about several topics in our interactions and topics which generated a great deal of debate between her and me, and I really like this, because it allows for knowledge of different viewpoints, because I have a vision and she has another one in my opinion”.

muito pior que hoje ((smiling)) mas hoje também é uma troca de cultura de conhecimento é... tem interações aqui que eu chego e saio muito diferente [...] me faz diferente de alguma forma assim me transforma e eu acho isso muito enriquecedor. (Excerpt 32, semi-structured interview, original in Portuguese¹⁶³, 08/11/2016)

On the basis of what Lucas reported in Excerpt 31 and Sofia in Excerpt 32, it could be said that the teletandem sessions provided an opportunity to foster these participants' skills of discovery and interaction with their respective online partners and the exchange of

¹⁶³ Own translation to English: "Ah they ((teletandem sessions)) are very useful in general [...] at the time I started ((previous teletandem exchanges experiences)) I regarded them as a way of improving my English which was far worse than now ((smiling)) but now it's also an exchange of culture of knowledge ah... in some ((teletandem)) interactions I come and I leave very different [...] it makes me different in some ways like it transforms me and I find it very enriching".

different views (Byram, 1997; Rodrigues, 2013). Also, while Lucas was keen to highlight that these online sessions favored moments of debate with Fiona, Sofia pointed out that through the teletandem sessions she could engage herself in a process of culture and knowledge exchange. This meets Benedetti (2010), in the sense that language learners in teletandem sessions “find fertile ground for the comparison between the languages and the cultures” (p. 49, own translation¹⁶⁴). Consequently, it is possible to say that the teletandem sessions, in contrast to some contexts of language teaching that “close down dialogue and sterilise debate” (Kelly, 2004, p. xii), presented themselves in my data as a valuable opportunity for the discussion of diverse cultural topics and to practice the FL being learned.

¹⁶⁴ Original quote: “encuentra tierra fértil para la comparación entre las lenguas y las culturas”.

On the other hand, the data analysis showed that the mere sharing of cultural information or debate of ideas in most cases did not prove to be sufficient to at least promote initial steps of decentering, or, in line with Kramsch (2013), to develop “transgredience” (p. 62). Otherwise said, as already seen, the static viewpoints were hardly problematized during the teletandem sessions, which prevented the possibility of seeing the same topic through multiple perspectives and deconstruct stereotyped representations. In this connection, Telles (2015b) warned us that teletandem sessions “may fall into shallow performances of sedimented and pre-given representations of self and other” (p. 1). Similarly, Belz (2005) alerted us that telecollaborative exchanges can reinforce negative stereotypes and even create others, as happened in some

cases in my data.

Interestingly, in the teletandem sessions the participants often co-constructed stereotyped portrayals based on a process of social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) or on “the marking of difference” (Woodward, 2000, p. 40) between “we and they” (Telles, 2015b). Effectively, dichotomies in teletandem such as “the students’ behavior from Brazil vs. the students’ behavior from the United States”, “cultural differences between the State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil” and “beneficiaries of income transfer programs both of Brazil vs. the United States” played a part, on some occasions, in the creation and maintenance of cultural stereotypes (Belz, 2005; Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Naturally, the online sessions in the teletandem

context cannot be moderated by the teacher-mediator, as was already explained in Chapter 2. However, in the case of the mediation sessions, as a teacher-mediator I could occupy a position “in-between” my participants, and at the same time I acted as the one who fostered moments of in-depth reflection upon stereotyped cultural representations. As Telles (2015b) stressed earlier, the teletandem context can be a site for the construction of cultural essentialisms. Hence, in order to fight against fixed cultural representations, I engaged my participants in dialogues where they had the opportunity not only to discuss different aspects related to their online exchanges, but also to reflect about them. For Lopes and Freschi (2016) and Telles (2015b), it is necessary to go deeper into fixed cultural representations in the mediation sessions. Indeed, these sessions proved to be

of significant importance for the exploration of some issues that were, in line with Weaver (1986), less visible or below the “surface”, e.g. values, thought patterns and beliefs¹⁶⁵. As was already seen, a possible way to promote moments of reflection is through teacher-mediation (Lopes & Freschi, 2016; O’Dowd & Eberbach, 2004; Rocha & Lima, 2009; Telles, 2015b; Thorne, 2006; Ware & Kramersch, 2005). In addition, Ware and Kramersch (2005) posit that:

As students explore the nature of language and communication across cultures through their technology-mediated interactions, teachers will be pivotal in helping them take ... an

¹⁶⁵ Weaver (1986) developed the iceberg analogy of culture. For the author, the tip of the iceberg is related to cultural aspects that are observable, for instance, folklore, cooking, music, and so forth, while under the surface there are invisible cultural aspects, for example, values, beliefs, feelings, etc...

intercultural stance. They can help their students develop a decentered perspective that goes beyond comprehending the surface meaning of words to discovering the logic of their interlocutors' utterances. Their reflection on the logic underlying language will help them understand better their own reasoning and the cultural context from which it comes, as well as the viewpoints of others. It is this reflection that frames and fosters the intercultural stance of language learning. (p. 203)

Actually, it may be argued that the nature of the dialogues in the mediation sessions is in line with Helm (2016), in the sense that through dialogue it is possible to unveil cultural assumptions and further discuss them. In

this way, the data analysis indicated that through the mediation sessions it was possible to expand upon some specific topics that, for various reasons, had been insufficiently exploited in the teletandem session. Moreover, further reflection helped the participants to develop “an intercultural stance”, as suggested by the authors’ quote above.

Lucas highlighted the following in his experience report regarding one mediation session specifically:

O que mais gostei dessa interação foi que o assunto teve uma grande percussão no momento de mediação ((in the mediation session)) em sala de aula entre os alunos, uma coisa que pude perceber varias visões ambos olhares. (Excerpt 33 / Lucas’s experience report / original in

Portuguese¹⁶⁶ / 03-11-2016)

In the interview, Sofia also seems to have taken a favorable view about the mediation sessions:

Porque tem coisas que eu lembro que tem coisas que a gente conversava na mediação ((in the mediation session)) e que eu não tinha pensado eu falei “puxa vida é verdade!” então assim... olhar com um olhar diferente abrir né? poder expandir a mente poder expandir o olhar eu acho que é muito muito relevante muito bacana.

(Excerpt 34, semi-structured interview, original

¹⁶⁶ Own translation to English: “What I liked the most about this interaction was that the topic had great repercussion at the moment of mediation ((in the mediation session)) in the classroom among the students, one thing I could realize several visions both views”.

in Portuguese¹⁶⁷, 14/12/2016)

The two previous excerpts show how the two participants acknowledged that through their participation in the mediation session they had come across different perspectives (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This corroborates Lopes's and Freschi's (2016) argument, for whom the essentialist visions can be submitted to more in-depth discussions in mediation sessions.

Some topics discussed in the teletandem sessions were not addressed again in the mediation session, e.g. the topics about Programa Bolsa Família (Subsection

¹⁶⁷ Own translation to English: "Because there are things I remember that there are things which we talked about in the mediation ((in the mediation session)) and I hadn't thought I said "oh my God it's true!" so... seeing with a different eye opening it right? being able to expand your mind being able to expand your visions I think it's very very relevant very nice".

4.1.1) and about the conflicting relationship between Donald Trump and *latinos* (Subsection 4.1.2). About the latter topic, even though Sofia was able to have a decentering attitude and overcome her negative perspective of Emily, her view about *latinos* who voted for candidate Donald Trump (Excerpts 14 and 17), which could be associated with her essentialist vision that Donald Trump “hates” *latinos*, may have continued, perhaps because further opportunities for deeper reflection on this topic did not appear.

Regarding the teletandem sessions, it became apparent from the analysis that the genre of personal conversation, such as self-presentation of the participants, was recurrent. For O’Dowd (2012), “as opposed to objective factual information, the accounts that students receive from their partners tend to be of a

subjective and personalized nature” (p. 150) in telecollaborative interactions. According to Hanna and Nooy (2009), this more personal contact may not prepare students for other communicative exchanges (e.g. public discussions in forums), since they are less-relationship oriented. From this perspective, even if we consider that personal conversation represents a vitally important genre in telecollaborative spaces, at the same time it can be limiting since it “predisposes the student to launching conversations about the self that inevitably position him/her as the exotic little foreigner/the other. He/she may fail to learn strategies for opening and maintaining communication of other kinds (p. 195). On the other hand, the mediation sessions, despite the fact that they are not online exchange communication, allowed the participants to express not only their personal opinions,

but also to hear their classmates' and the teacher-mediator's viewpoints. In addition, they had the opportunity to further react to the other participants' as well as to the teacher-mediator's comments, which favored reflection on different cultural topics.

I would like to share some particularities regarding my experience as a teacher-mediator in the mediation sessions, which I deem to be relevant. First, I always sought the most appropriate time to bring forth my contributions, especially because I did not want to have an influence on the spontaneity of the participants' reports. Second, I always asked them to focus on the report of their online experience with their peers, but sometimes other debates were given rise during their explanations, which enriched the discussions. Third, some participants, in some situations, had

complementary or contrastive opinions as regards the other participants' arguments, which helped to promote more reflection.

Not only the mediation sessions but also the experience reports and the interviews played an important role in the process of the co-construction of interculturality. Evidently, Sofia's experience reports (e.g. Excerpt 18, Subsubsection 4.1.2.1.2) allowed me to prepare questions for the interview in order to help her overcome her pessimistic view of her online partner. Similarly, drawing on what Lucas had written in his experience report (Excerpt 11, Subsection 4.1.1.3) regarding the topic about Brazilian and American students' behavior, I could make questions for the interview (Excerpt 12) some time later, which resulted in a decentering attitude, even though timidly.

Besides that, I came to realize that the experience reports allowed the participants to reflect upon the experience they had with their partner in the teletandem sessions. For instance, Sofia pointed out in the interview that one of the positive aspects of the experience reports was that she could reflect on aspects that she had not noticed before.

It is necessary to emphasize that with the experience reports I was given more information about what my participants were discussing with their respective online partners of the AU. Afterwards, I could take action when it was the time, because these reports facilitated the process of preparing questions for the interview, as I said previously. In other words, it was possible to intervene pedagogically based on what the participants had written in their experience reports.

My personal impression regarding the mediation sessions is that the participants, on some occasions, did not display a willingness to share with their classmates and the teacher-mediator particular aspects that stood out in the teletandem sessions, which means that valuable opportunities to favor the co-construction of interculturality do not always emerge at these moments. However, in their experience reports, maybe because I was the only one who would have access to them, it appeared to me that the participants felt at ease in reporting aspects that had not been discussed in the mediation session, which opened up the possibility of at least addressing them in the interviews at a later date.

Despite the fact that the interviews are not part of the pedagogical context of teletandem and have been rather useful for me as a research instrument, they

proved to be moments for individual dialogue both with Lucas and Sofia. Indeed, interview could be understood here more as “individual conversations” than as a methodological instrument, as arranging an individual conversation with the interactant / participant is a possible pedagogical intervention that teachers can resort to in situations as the “intercultural misunderstanding” in Excerpt 15 (Subsubsubsection 4.1.2.1.1) or for other reasons. Furthermore, interviews could be related to mediation sessions, since, as was seen in Chapter 2, the latter can take place between the teacher-mediator and one participant (Funó, 2015), and not only in group. From this perspective, I considered the interviews as a sort of “mediation session”. In fact, as seen in Subsubsubsection 4.1.1.1, the topic about Programa Bolsa Família was not discussed again in the mediation

session, and the only opportunity to go deeper was in the interview (Subsubsubsection 4.1.1.1.1 – Excerpt 3).

Interestingly, in the last interview of the semester, I invited both Lucas and Sofia to give their opinion on their participation in the teletandem sessions and in the mediation sessions. Lucas, referring to the mediation sessions but also to the process as a whole, stressed that he had acquired knowledge and experience opportunities for his life. In the next excerpt, Lucas underlined, among other things, that he had started to take account of the need to avoid oversimplified views:

Me cresceu [sic] bastante... psicossocialmente...
espiritualmente tudo sabe? me fez ver mais a
vida... como ela é de verdade cê entendeu? é... a
não generalização [...] e não era essa a visão que

eu tinha sabe? (Excerpt 35, semi-structured interview, original in Portuguese¹⁶⁸, 07/12/2016)

Sofia, in turn, explained that the teletandem-related activities provided the following:

Uma série de coisas que eu acho que foi muito muito válido né? assim... é a gente olhar com um olhar mais atento... você como tem muito mais experiência pode... né? pôde nos ajudar nos auxiliar então eu acho que é muito relevante e isso fez muita diferença eu acho assim ao longo do processo... da evolução... (Excerpt 36, semi-

¹⁶⁸ Own translation to English: “I grew a good deal... psychosocially... spiritually everything you know? it made me see life more... how it really is did you understand? like... not to generalize [...] and this was not the vision I had you know?”.

structured interview, original in Portuguese¹⁶⁹,
14/12/2016)

Excerpts 35 and 36 show that Lucas and Sofia had a favorable view about their experience in the teletandem activities in general. Moreover, their discourse in these excerpts may suggest that such an experience helped them to promote a growing awareness of cultural differences, which could be a sign that a possible identity transformation (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978) was taking place.

As shown in Chapter 2, Salomão's (2011) study revealed that the participants displayed a static vision of

¹⁶⁹ Own translation to English: "A number of things I deemed to be very very valuable right? like... looking with a closer look... as you have much more experience you can... right? you could help us assist us so I think it is very relevant and this made a big difference I think like throughout the process... of the evolution..."

culture, but when the teletandem sessions were over, they started to see culture also as an interpersonal process and less stable. In a way similar to the participants of the study in question, this process of transformation also seems to have occurred with the participants Lucas and Sofia. For instance, the former's utterance in Excerpt 35 “a não generalização [...] e não era essa a visão que eu tinha sabe?”¹⁷⁰ appears to indicate that he was paying attention to the need of sidestepping cultural essentialisms. Similarly, Sofia's words in Excerpt 34 ““puxa vida é verdade”! então assim... olhar com um olhar diferente abrir né?”¹⁷¹ may also be an example of the vision of culture both as less stable and as an interplay between “a variety of factors”

¹⁷⁰ Own translation to English: “not to generalize [...] and this was not the vision I had you know?”.

¹⁷¹ Own translation to English: ““oh my God it's true!” so... seeing with a different eye opening it right?”

(Salomão, 2011, p. 270).

In this subsection, it was shown how the process of the co-construction of interculturality was aided by the teletandem sessions, mediation sessions, experience reports and interviews. Although the teletandem sessions provided the participants with the opportunity to share cultural information and discuss different topics, they did not suffice to foster at least an initial process of distancing from cultural generalizations. Nevertheless, as already explained, fixed cultural representations first had to be constructed in the teletandem sessions to foster a decentering attitude in instances following these online sessions.

Where the mediation sessions are concerned, the participants and the teacher-mediator, through contestation, explanations and problematization, in tune

with Vinall's (2016) concept of "transgression" (p. 5), could develop more fully different aspects regarding the participants' online interactions. This is in line with Lopes & Freschi (2016), who highlighted earlier that the problematization by the teacher-mediator is crucial. The experience reports, by the same token, allowed the participants to reflect upon their teletandem sessions, in addition to having made it possible for me to prepare questions for the interviews that would always take place some time later. Finally, the interviews turned out to be an opportunity for individual dialogue with the participants Lucas and Sofia, in which I could, as in the mediation sessions, engaged them in moments of further reflection.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided the analysis of the data and then, on the basis of this data analysis, I presented a discussion on how the co-construction of interculturality took place. Regarding research question 1, *what central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?*, the analysis showed three central aspects, namely “stereotyped views”, “superficial level of meaning negotiation” and “superficial level of exploration”.

In culture-related sets of episodes 1, in Subsubsection 4.1.1.1, questionings by the teacher-mediator subsequently to the teletandem exchanges session, that is, in the interview, were needed to make Lucas see beyond his stereotyped points of view about the beneficiaries of Programa Bolsa Família. For example, he realized that this program motivated its

beneficiaries to be up to date with preventive exams, which shows that the co-construction of interculturality was taking place. In culture-related sets of episodes 2, in Subsubsection 4.1.1.2, the process of meaning negotiation was shallow in the teletandem session, and one of the reasons for that may be because the online interaction between Sofia and Emily proved to be rather a monologue than a dialogue itself. Later, there was evidence that the co-construction of interculturality was occurring when Sofia made use of modalizers in her experience report, and possibly with the aim of not generalizing her points of view. Actually, this may have happened because I had drawn my participants' attention, two weeks before Sofia wrote the experience report in question, to the fact that cultural differences also vary from person to person, and that these

differences are not only linked to the fact that people live in specific countries or regions. In culture-related sets of episodes 3, in Subsubsection 4.1.1.3, the comparison of similar aspects regarding Brazilian and American students' behavior remained superficial. A little later, the moment of reflection in the mediation session favored at least an initial step towards decentering (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), taking into consideration that Lucas realized that in Brazil there was also a school with satisfactory quality of education.

With regard to research question 2, *what central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?*, the analysis revealed two central aspects: “the emergence of rich points” and “the possibility of hearing other points of

view”.

In culture-related sets of episodes 4, in Subsubsection 4.1.2.1, the emergence of rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) helped to promote the co-construction of interculturality, in the sense that the dialogue with Sofia in instances after the teletandem sessions (e.g. in the interviews and through Facebook private messages) led to the overcoming of her negative view in relation to her online partner. In culture-related sets of episodes 5, in Subsubsection 4.1.2.2, both in the teletandem session and shortly after in the mediation session, Lucas was given the opportunity to hear other viewpoints (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) on the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples. In addition, his cultural representations were submitted

to further reflection at the third place (Kramersch, 1993, 2013) in the mediation session. The fact that this participant maintained in his experience report that he had had the chance to come across different points of view in the mediation session reveals his openness to hear other perspectives (Byram, 1997; Rodrigues, 2013), and it also shows that a decentering attitude (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), albeit timidly, appeared to be in progress.

Drawing on the outcomes of the data analysis, it was possible to state in Section 4.2 that the co-construction of interculturality was a process, that is to say, it took place over time and through different instances. In other words, instances subsequent to the teletandem sessions, e.g. the mediation sessions, the experience reports or the interviews, were of significant

importance in order to favor the process of this co-construction, since most of times the participants co-constructed in the teletandem sessions fixed representations which were hardly contested.

The next chapter is dedicated to summarizing the findings, reflecting on my transformation process as a teacher and a researcher after having carried out this study and, lastly, offering suggestions for further research and pedagogy.

CHAPTER 5 – FINAL REMARKS

The purpose of this chapter, which is divided into three sections, is to conclude this dissertation. In Section 5.1 I will summarize the main findings obtained from the data analysis, while in Section 5.2 I will present a reflection on my transformation process as a teacher and a researcher after having carried out this investigation. Finally, in Section 5.3 I will offer suggestions for further research and pedagogy.

5.1 Summarizing the Findings

It must be noted that, differently from some contexts of teaching and learning languages in which the content is previously established, merely transmitted as factual information or serve as “an excuse for using

language” (Gil, 2016, p. 341), the topics that were addressed in the teletandem sessions, in keeping with Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) and Vassallo and Telles (2006), emerged spontaneously and on the basis of the participants’ experiences. This provided them with rich opportunities for the discussion of different cultural topics and to deal with them “under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (Byram, p. 61).

Consistent with the concept of “*linguaging*” by Phipps and Gonzales (2004), the participants of this research, through the discussion of different topics, had accessibility to the *linguaging* of the other. In other words, by drawing on their previous experiences, in the teletandem sessions they could engage themselves in the process of meaning negotiation with a person from other

cultural experiences, a process which, according to Phipps and Gonzales (2004), can “become more deeply human as a result” (p. 3).

The overall objective of this study was to understand how the co-construction of interculturality took place within the thematic project Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all. In order to achieve this goal, two research questions guided my study: (1) *what central aspects hindered the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?* and (2) *what central aspects favored the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context investigated?* In the next few paragraphs, the main findings will be summarized.

In relation to Research Question 1, the analysis of the data (Chapter 4) showed three central aspects that

hindered the co-construction of interculturality: “stereotyped views” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.1), “superficial level of meaning negotiation” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.2) and “superficial level of exploration” (Subsubsection 4.1.1.3). “Stereotyped views” because there were not opportunities for contestation in relation to Lucas’s stereotyped representations in regard to the topic about Programa Bolsa Família. “Superficial level of meaning negotiation” since the conversation as concerns the topic about cultural differences between the State of São Paulo and the Northeast of Brazil appeared to have taken more the form of a monologue than a dialogue itself. “Superficial level of exploration” because the cultural differences regarding the topic about Brazilian and American students’ behavior achieved only a superficial level.

With the exception of the two excerpts concerning the teletandem sessions (specifically Excerpt 20 of Subsubsection 4.1.2.2), there was rarely contestation in the teletandem sessions and the discussion on cultural differences remained on the surface, which did not allow for at least an initial process of decentering from stable cultural representations. In this respect, as already explained, interactants in teletandem sessions do not often question each other's comments (Lopes & Freschi, 2016). Kern (2014), in turn, highlights that cultural discussions in online spaces recurrently achieve a superficial level of exploration, and O'Dowd (2016) contends that this superficiality might not contribute to a critical reflection on intercultural issues.

Even though most of times the cultural topics

were not contested in the teletandem sessions, it is necessary to reiterate that it was precisely on the basis of fixed cultural representations constructed in these online sessions that it would be possible, in subsequent instances, e.g. in the mediation sessions, to promote opportunities for deconstruction and, in some cases, for a possible transformational engagement (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978) of the participants. This meets Lopes and Freschi (2016), who stressed that essentialized worldviews in teletandem sessions can be potential sequences for the intercultural learning, which can be facilitated in mediation sessions.

In point of fact, it was on the basis of the line of reasoning presented in the paragraph above that Research Question 1 in my study concentrated on aspects that hindered the co-construction of

interculturality and Research Question 2 on aspects that favored this co-construction. That is to say, although at the outset of the analysis period my interest already was in understanding aspects that hindered and favored the co-construction of interculturality, over this period I gradually became aware of the fact that, first, cultural essentialisms were emerging, and, in subsequent instances, they could be submitted to further reflection and eventually resignified.

With regard to Research Question 2, the analysis of the data revealed two central aspects that favored the co-construction of interculturality: “the emergence of rich points” (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1) and “the possibility of hearing other points of view” (Subsubsection 4.1.2.2). “The emergence of rich points” since the rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) that seemed to

have emerged in the teletandem session (Excerpt 14), where Sofia and Emily discussed the topic about the conflicting relationship between Donald Trump and *latinos*, might have paved the way for the overcoming of Sofia's pessimistic view of her online partner that would occur through different instances after this online session. "The possibility of hearing other points of view" because already in the teletandem session (Excerpts 20 and 21) Lucas had the chance to hear from Fiona another point of view on the topic about homo-affective union and child adoption by same-sex couples, and also because she emphasized the importance of respecting cultural differences. Moreover, in one experience report after this online session, Lucas showed openness to other perspectives (Byram, 1997; Rodrigues, 2013), since he claimed that he had had the opportunity to hear different

visions from his classmates in the mediation session.

This could also suggest that at least an initial decentering attitude by Lucas was occurring.

The results also revealed that the co-construction of interculturality was a process, that is, it occurred over time and through different instances. Put differently, instances subsequent to the teletandem sessions, e.g. the mediation sessions, the experience reports or the interviews, were essential with a view to favoring the process of this co-construction.

As I explained in Chapter 3, my initial objective in this study was to understand the co-construction of interculturality in teletandem sessions, which means that, naturally, I was planning to analyze only online sessions. It happens that when I participated in the course aimed at developing teacher-mediators in the context of

teletandem before starting to collect the data¹⁷², I realized that I could also include mediations sessions, experience reports and interviews as data collection, although at first I did not aim to use these data for the analysis. At the beginning of the data collection, then, I came to see that not only the mediation sessions but also the experience reports and the interviews could help me to take a more ecological research view (Haugen, 2001; Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), since I could understand more fully my participants, promote deeper reflections and intervene pedagogically whenever needed. Later, when I began to analyze the data, I realized that these methodological resources also played

¹⁷² As it was already explained in Chapter 3, I participated in a course named *IV mediator development course in teletandem: interactions in focus* in September 2016, which had the objective of developing teacher-mediators in teletandem. This course was organized by teachers, researchers and coordinators of TTB.

a valuable role in the process of the co-construction of interculturality, as will be explained in the following two paragraphs.

With reference to the experience reports and the interviews, as I said earlier, it was based on what the participants wrote in their experience reports that I could prepare different questions for the interviews and go deeper into some issues. Concerning the mediation sessions, some of the participants' cultural representations could be discussed in more depth by drawing on subjective aspects such as their emotions, perceptions and beliefs, which corroborates Kramsch's (2009a) view that it is necessary to consider symbolic dimensions that permeate intercultural interactions. Furthermore, as "several layers of historicity" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 130) are not always visible to

participants at the time of interaction, the data analysis showed that the moments of critical reflection in the mediation sessions allowed for contestation of sociocultural meanings underlying their personal points of view as well as for a decentering attitude. From this perspective, it can be said that the presence of the teacher-mediator played a major role in dealing with issues that were beyond the grasp of the participants.

In a nutshell, the mediation sessions, the experience reports and the interviews were invaluable as a means of making methodological choices and promoting further reflection during the process of data collection. Some time later, the process of data analysis made me understand that the use of different methodological resources, in addition to having enabled me to reject or confirm my interpretations, contributed to

the actual process of the co-construction of
interculturality.

5.2 Reflecting on my Transformation Process as a Teacher and a Researcher

The wings of transformation are born of patience and
struggle.

—Dickens, *Janet S.*

In all cultures people can be observed to project
multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are
context-dependent and may shift rapidly. At any
particular moment a person usually experiences his or
her articulated self as a symbolic, timeless whole, but
this self may quickly be displaced by another, quite

different ‘self’, which is based on a different definition of the situation. (Ewing, 1990, p. 251)

After having carried out this research, I must say that “the wings of transformation”, as suggested by the author of the first epigraph, did not seem to be occurring only with the research participants as shown in this work, but I consider that there was also a process of “change of my state of being a researcher and a teacher”. By this I mean that my view of what intercultural encounters and interculturality can stand for was changed, and this process of transformation took place at a slow pace and after much reflection, dedication and persistence.

In retrospect, I contend that I have been experiencing a process of transformation over the past

ten years, that is, since I started to teach FLs. For me, at the beginning of my career as a language teacher, both culture and interculturality were linked to the transmission of factual knowledge, and being “interculturally competent” suggested that students had to learn cultural information related to the countries whose first language was English or the other languages that I taught, for example, Spanish and Portuguese.

Later on, when I carried out the research of my Master’s degree, “winds of redefinition” started to accompany my journey as a teacher and a researcher, because I gradually became aware of the fact that the meaning of intercultural encounters and interculturality actually extended far beyond the association with factual knowledge and homogenous cultural representations. In other words, I came to understand that intercultural

encounters and interculturality were much more than just being open to learn cultural aspects of other countries or showing curiosity to other cultures from a national perspective.

At that time, I began to have access to texts by scholars in this area, such as Michael Byram, Darla Deardorff and Alvino Fantini. These readings, along with my master's research process, helped me greatly to improve my pedagogical practice, as I more than ever before came to emphasize to my students the need to show respect for cultural differences, to have an empathic attitude, that is, to place oneself in someone else's position, to relativize the "self" and to broaden our cultural horizons.

When I started my doctorate in 2015, opportunities for transformation continued to be part of

this trajectory. Right at the beginning of this research, my readings were enriched by theoretical contributions of scholars such as Claire Kramsch, Gloria Gil, João Antonio Telles and Julia Menard–Warwick. Then, little by little, I became aware that meaning negotiation is a process, and that it occurs through interaction in situated discourses.

Afterwards, as a result of this view of meaning negotiation, and within a more holistic view, my research helped me to realize that “intercultural encounters” are not only related to encounters among people from two different countries. As seen in Chapter 2, Benedetti’s (2010) study displayed a homogenous vision of culture when it was claimed that the observation of differences and similarities as regards the encounter between “two cultures” (Benedetti, p. 49) can

promote the development of understanding in intercultural encounters. Rodrigues's (2013) study also showed such a homogenous view of culture when it was argued that, through the intercultural encounter in the teletandem sessions, there was the development of intercultural competence in cases whereby, for instance, there was the exchange of knowledge about "the culture of Uruguay and the culture of Sweden"¹⁷³ (Rodrigues, p. 169). Instead, I contend that in my study the co-construction of interculturality took place through the crossing of borders between the self and the other, because each person carries within herself/himself "a particular world", that is, particular stories, life experiences, values and so forth. Evidently, such "particular world" is also linked to characteristics such

¹⁷³ Original quote: "a cultura do Uruguai e a cultura da Suécia".

as the origins of people and to the country where they live in, though the construction of this “world” does not depend only on these characteristics. In effect, as explained in Chapter 4, the participants’ idiosyncratic characteristics, for example, their cultural identities, also played a role in the process of meaning negotiation and, by extension, in the process of the co-construction of interculturality.

It is interesting to note that one aspect in common between Salomão’s (2011) study, which was presented in Chapter 2, and my research is that culture is viewed as an interpersonal process. And it is precisely on the basis of this interpersonal exchange of cultural experiences that people co-construct meanings and their identities in different discursive practices. Hence, I maintain that a reductionist perspective of “national

cultures” must be overcome by the vision of culture as pointed out earlier by Kramersch (2011), that is, “as a mental toolkit of subjective metaphors, affectivities [and] historical memories” (p. 355).

As regards the meaning of interculturality, data analysis made me realize that it was essentially a decentering attitude towards the self, the world and people, that is, a process of decentering from someone’s own cultural representations (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1993, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; O’Dowd, 2003). As Ware and Kramersch (2005) put it, a decentering attitude allows for an “intercultural stance” (p. 203). Effectively, such an attitude enabled the participants of my research to look beyond the superficial level of their utterances, and, in some cases, it favored a possible transformational engagement (Liddicoat & Scarino,

2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

When I started the data analysis process, mainly until the qualifying exam of my research, I was following specific definitions of interculturality in the literature. But now I see that this was preventing me from interpreting the phenomenon under investigation based on the reality of my own data and in a holistic manner (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008). It took me considerable time to understand that the meaning of interculturality was actually emerging from my data, and it was not necessary to rely on the theoretical models deemed to be “most appropriate”.

The way I see it now is that interculturality should not be viewed as “a thing” that is “out there” to be “possessed” or “acquired”. Besides that, I do not agree with the idea that someone can be “interculturally

competent” in any interaction due to this “acquisition”. My view is in tune with Ewing (1990), the author of the second epigraph presented at the beginning of this section, in the sense that people may have different attitudes, behaviors, and opinions depending upon specific contexts where they are interacting. My vision also meets Belz (2007), who questions the following: “can an individual be considered to be an intercultural speaker if she exhibits a readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to the meanings, beliefs and behaviours of one group, but not with regard to a second group?” (p. 156).

Lastly, it is possible that in the future new horizons open up for me regarding the meanings of interculturality. That is, I am looking forward to allowing that “the wings of transformation”, as

suggested by the first epigraph presented at the beginning of this section, continue to offer me opportunities to redefine both my teaching practice and my understanding of interculturality.

5.3 Offering Suggestions for Further Research and Pedagogy

Although in my research the data that I analyzed provided valuable insights into how the co-construction of interculturality occurred, further investigations in other contexts with the aim of expanding the understanding of aspects that can hinder and favor this co-construction would be needed. In what follows, I will point out some suggestions for future research in other contexts.

As the analysis showed, the application of

different research techniques, mainly the experience reports and the interviews, helped me in understanding more deeply my data. Additionally, the use of different methodological procedures allowed me to “read between the lines” the participants’ utterances as well as to interpret different “voices” (Blommaert, 2005; Dervin, 2014; Roulet, 2011) in their discourses. Thus, I suggest that future research should also include methodological resources, such as the ones I used but also others where necessary, to better understand the co-construction of interculturality in the teletandem context.

In my study, I collected the data over a university semester, making it difficult to determine the extent to which the learning that my participants accomplished through different instances was applicable in other situations. For example, taking into account Sofia’s

perception that there was the presence of unequal power relations (Dervin, 2014; Salomão, 2011) in her interaction with some of her American partners (Subsubsection 4.1.2.1.1), it is not possible to know whether she actually continued to have an optimistic view about Emily after the end of that teletandem partnership. In addition, it was not possible to determine whether she began to have a more favorable perception about other American partners with whom she might have interacted in subsequent semesters. With regard to Lucas, it is difficult to know whether he indeed avoided generalizations, as he had explained in the interview (Excerpt 35), with other partners in following semesters. Evidently, this was not in the scope of my research. What I really want to point out is that longitudinal research in teletandem could help to understand the

process of the co-construction of interculturality over a longer period of time, for instance, over two semesters. O’Dowd (2016) also reinforces this need. For him, research in telecollaboration “have not attempted to evaluate the impact of virtual contact and exchange on learners over a period any longer than one university semester” (p. 284).

As explained in Chapter 3, the teletandem activities of the group of the BU were institutionally non-integrated (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014, 2015; Leone & Telles, 2016), which means that they were not bound to classroom contents or to a language syllabus. Bearing in mind that teletandem activities can also be institutionally integrated (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014, 2015; Leone & Telles, 2016), future research could investigate aspects that hinder and foster the co-

construction of interculturality in the classroom by having participants reflect on their online interactions. As O’Dowd (2016) puts it, “practically none of the studies used classroom interaction transcripts or field notes to explore how teachers engaged with learners in the analysis of their online interactions” (p. 282).

As the data showed, situations where the participants expressed humor and appropriated creative linguistic features were present in some moments of both the teletandem sessions and the mediation sessions. Hence, future research could investigate how humor (Bell, 2009, 2013; Carter (2004); Norrick, 2010) and creativity or language play (Carter, 2004; Cook, 1997, 2000; Crystal, 1996) can have a part in the process of the co-construction of interculturality. Besides that, there were times where technical problems interfered in the

process of meaning negotiation. Future investigations may thus focus in a more detailed way, within an ecological vision (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Van Lier, 2004), on how not only technical problems, but also other possible aspects of the environment (where participants are interacting) can have an impact on the co-construction of interculturality.

As I explained in Chapter 4, some cultural topics discussed in the teletandem sessions were not addressed again in the mediation session. One possible reason why this happened is because each participant only had on average five minutes to report her/his experience.

Another reason, as was already said, is perhaps because some participants were not willing to share some aspects of their online interactions with their classmates and the teacher-mediator. As a suggestion, practitioners, teachers

and researchers may benefit from finding a way to systematize how the participants can tell their experience in the mediation sessions, provided that this systematization does not inhibit the participants' spontaneity.

The analysis also revealed that there is clearly a demonstrable need for the teacher-mediator to be willing to deal with intercultural issues in mediation sessions, in addition to being fully committed to the process of deconstructing cultural essentialisms. About this, Telles (2015b) warns that "if the teacher is not critically well informed about such issues, the mediation session may not transcend the level of mere reports of experience, in turn perpetuating stereotypes and sedimented conceptions of self and other" (p. 24), while Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) underscore that:

If technologically mediated interactions are to become experiences that provide opportunities for learning, the interaction needs to be converted into learning through *reflection*. That is, learners need to become aware of what it is that they are experiencing and how they understand that experience, and also to be able to *decenter* [emphasis added] from that experience to explore different possible understandings. (p. 118)

In order to favor a critical approach regarding the learners' fixed cultural representations, teachers-mediators can highlight "complexity and ambiguity" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 364) as well as what is underlying the participants' viewpoints, that is, "what remains

unsaid” (p. 364). With this in mind, I contend that teacher-mediators can encourage discussions that go beyond superficial representations. In the same vein, Kramsch’s (2009b) following questions, as already presented in Chapter 2, can be employed during these offline moments: “who is speaking, for whose benefit, within which frame, on which timescale, to achieve what effects? What are the ideological value and the historical density of words?” (pp. 117-118). This way, teacher-mediators can help to foster a process of resignification of homogenous views.

As concerns the experience reports, my suggestion is that participants write them always up to a maximum of three days after each of the teletandem sessions, otherwise the participants can fail to recall important aspects of their online sessions. For example,

although I often stressed the need to write the reports at the latest until the day after each teletandem session, Sofia had written one of her experience reports only six days later, and she highlighted the following in her text regarding one of the topics that she had discussed with her online partner: “não me recordo ao certo”¹⁷⁴. In fact, in this particular experience report I noticed that she did not describe her experience in more detail.

As was seen in Chapter 2, Rocha and Lima (2009) emphasize that the role of the teacher-mediator in teletandem is to “trim the edges and prevent disinterest, misunderstandings and cultural clashes from happening between the interactants” (p. 240, own translation¹⁷⁵). I do agree with the author that the teacher-mediator should

¹⁷⁴ Own translation to English: “I can’t exactly remember”.

¹⁷⁵ Original quote: “aparar as arestas e evitar que ocorra desinteresse, mal-entendidos e choques culturais entre os interagentes”.

“trim the edges” and avoid disinterest, but I wonder to which extent it would be necessary to explicitly warn participants to avoid conflicts. Effectively, the data analysis presented in Chapter 4 showed that through rich points (Agar, 2006; Belz, 2007; O’Dowd, 2012) it was possible to promote the co-construction of interculturality. Moreover, the heated debate in the mediation session (Subsubsection 4.1.2.2.1) helped Lucas see the same topic from other angles (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Indeed, my suggestion is that in mediation sessions teacher-mediators always underline the need to respect the individuality of their online partners as well as cultural differences in general, but it must also be taken into account that intercultural misunderstandings can be viewed as an opportunity for a possible transformational engagement of the

participants' identity, as it seemed to have been the case with Sofia and Lucas. In essence, in lieu of sidestepping intercultural misunderstandings, teacher-mediators might instead embrace them as a way of favoring the co-construction of interculturality. By the same token, Belz (2002) argues that intercultural conflicts "should be encouraged" (p. 76) and not avoided.

As the data analysis showed, there was little corrective feedback between the participants in the teletandem sessions, even though I always stressed in the mediation sessions and in the interviews the need to correct each other's linguistic production. This may have happened because, according to Vassallo (2010), the participants' main focus in teletandem sessions is on the conversation itself. Also, Thorne (2006), referring to Kötter's (2002) piece of research, explain that language

learners in tandem “may not address repeated and significant linguistic errors” (p. 8). However, Vassallo and Telles in 2006 drew attention to linguistic correction as follows:

In the *Teletandem Brasil Project*, we advise that a phase of *focus on form* should take place, either during or in the final part of the Tandem meetings. These are moments in which participants explicitly discuss linguistic rules, lexicon and errors. (p. 101)

Benedetti (2010) makes clear that teletandem “advocates a specific instant to focus on the language and on the correction of the production” (p. 51, own

translation¹⁷⁶). Furthermore, Lopes and Freschi (2016) draws attention to the fact that participants “leave aside linguistic issues that formed their initial motivation for their participation in Teletandem” (p. 68, own translation¹⁷⁷). Therefore, with the aim of the participants “not leaving aside linguistic issues”, my suggestion is that teachers and researchers always explain to them the importance of linguistic correction, even though the researcher’s object of study is not directly focused on linguistic phenomena, as was the case in my investigation.

In sum, one of the drawbacks of teletandem sessions, as Telles (2015b) reminded us earlier, is that the discussions are “essentialist in nature” (p. 4). Indeed,

¹⁷⁶ Original quote: “preconiza un instante específico para el enfoque en la lengua y en la corrección de la producción”.

¹⁷⁷ Original in Portuguese: “deixar à margem questões linguísticas que constituíram a motivação inicial para suas participações no Teletandem”.

as my research showed, mediation sessions did pave the way for more reflection on fixed cultural representations. This way, in line with Lopes and Freschi (2016), the teletandem context can be benefited from the mediation sessions as well as from the role of the teacher-mediator.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Model of the Free and Informed Consent Term

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO

(Elaborado de acordo com Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE) baseado na Resolução 466/2012 e o Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos (CEPSH) da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

Eu, RODRIGO SCHAEER, doutorando da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), convido você a participar de um projeto de pesquisa sobre a relação entre língua e cultura no ensino e aprendizagem de línguas adicionais, supervisionado pela pesquisadora Dra. Gloria Gil. Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar deste estudo por estar inserido no ambiente / projeto que visamos pesquisar: *Teletandem: Transculturalidade na comunicação on-line em língua estrangeira por webcam.*

Título do Projeto: A construção da interculturalidade nas sessões de Teletandem.

Objetivo do estudo: Compreender como acontece a construção de assuntos culturais nas sessões de interações do Teletandem.

Antes de assinar este termo de consentimento livre e esclarecido, gostaria de explicitar os detalhes de sua participação:

Os dados por você gerados serão submetidos à análise do pesquisador do projeto, com o objetivo de compreender como acontece a construção de assuntos culturais nas sessões de interações de Teletandem.
Serão feitas gravações em áudio/vídeo das sessões de teletandem com o seu parceiro, assim como de uma eventual entrevista por você concedida. Igualmente, será coletada sua contribuição num questionário online e nos textos em fóruns de discussão, de acordo com a sua vontade e tempo disponíveis.
Embora na pesquisa qualitativa não exista desconforto ou riscos físicos, você como participante poderá se sentir desconfortável ou constrangido em compartilhar informações pessoais, confidenciais ou falar sobre alguns tópicos que causem incômodo. Por isso, deixamos claro que você não precisará responder a qualquer pergunta ou compartilhar informações, caso a considere de ordem pessoal ou sinta qualquer desconforto em falar.
Caso você venha a sentir desconforto ou constrangimento, comunique aos pesquisadores para que sejam tomadas as devidas providências e imediatamente abandonaremos o uso de qualquer possível informação que seja avaliada por você, participante, como imprópria.
Por meio de sua participação na pesquisa, poderemos compreender mais acerca das formas de aprender e de ensinar línguas estrangeiras, assim como o modo de como você dialoga / conversa assuntos culturais com seu

parceiro.
<p>Você terá o meu acompanhamento e minha assistência durante todo processo de coleta de dados. Da mesma forma, você poderá, em qualquer momento do processo de coleta, entrar em contato comigo pelo e-mail (rodrigochaef2@gmail.com) ou com a pesquisadora Glória Gil (glorigil@gmail.com).</p> <p>Caso suas dúvidas não sejam resolvidas pelos pesquisadores ou seus direitos sejam negados, favor recorrer ao Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos (CEPSH) da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, localizado no setor de periódicos da Biblioteca Universitária Central. Ou, se preferir, poderá estabelecer contato eletrônico com o CEPSH através do endereço: http://cep.ufsc.br/contato/.</p>
<p>Daremos, antes e durante a pesquisa, explicações acerca de sua metodologia e seu método de análise dos dados.</p>
<p>Esclarecemos que manteremos em anonimato, sob sigilo absoluto, durante e após o término do estudo, todos os dados que identifiquem o participante da pesquisa, usando apenas, para divulgação, os dados inerentes ao desenvolvimento do estudo.</p>
<p>Você não será pago por sua participação no projeto, sendo que os ganhos decorrentes da mesma serão no âmbito de sua aprendizagem e de sua experiência de participação.</p>
<p>Referente a sua participação nos questionários, sessões de mediação, fóruns / relatos de experiência e entrevistas, você terá o direito de não responder às perguntas que lhe causem constrangimentos de qualquer natureza.</p>
<p>O participante terá os seguintes direitos: a garantia de</p>

esclarecimento e resposta a qualquer pergunta; a liberdade de abandonar a pesquisa a qualquer momento sem prejuízo para si ou para seu tratamento (se for o caso); a garantia de que caso haja algum dano a sua pessoa (ou o dependente), os prejuízos serão assumidos pelos pesquisadores ou pela instituição responsável, inclusive acompanhamento médico e hospitalar (se for o caso). Caso haja gastos adicionais, os mesmos serão absorvidos pelos pesquisadores.

Para análise dos dados, as transcrições das suas falas serão consideradas e utilizadas. Ou seja, não utilizaremos sua imagem e nem fotos.

Por meio de sua participação na pesquisa, aprenderemos muitas coisas acerca do seu modo de aprender e de ensinar línguas estrangeiras assim como você constrói conhecimentos culturais com o seu par, sendo esses os benefícios que você terá com sua participação no projeto.

Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Eu

_____ ,
após ter recebido todos os esclarecimentos e ciente dos meus direitos, concordo em participar desta pesquisa, bem como autorizo a divulgação e a publicação de toda informação por mim transmitida, exceto dados pessoais, em publicações e eventos de caráter científico. Desta forma, assino este termo, juntamente com o pesquisador, em duas vias de igual teor, ficando uma via sob meu poder e outra em poder dos pesquisadores.

Assinatura do participante
Assinatura do pesquisador

Assis, ____/____/____.

DADOS DO PARTICIPANTE	
Nome:	
Data de nascimento:	
Endereço:	
Telefone para contato:	
E-mail:	
DADOS DO PESQUISADOR	
Nome:	RODRIGO SCHAEFER
Endereço:	Florianópolis, SC.
Telefone para contato:	47 9183 0865
E-mail:	rodrigochaef2@gmail.com

Appendix B – The other participants’ profile of the BU

Nayara	She was born in the State of São Paulo and was currently residing in the city where the BU is located. She was 21 years old in the period of the data collection. She was an undergraduate <i>Letras</i> student with certification as a teacher of English. She had been studying English for the past five years and spoke a little Spanish.
Helena	She was born in the State of São Paulo and was 19 years old in the period of the data collection. She was an undergraduate <i>Letras</i> student with certification as a teacher of English. She had been studying English for about nine years, and knew no FL other than English.
Clarice	She was born in the State of São Paulo and currently was residing in the city where the BU is located. She was 21 years old in the period of the data collection. She was an undergraduate Psychology student in that period and had been studying English for the past four years. She knew no FL besides English.
Monique	She was born in Rio de Janeiro, had lived much of her life in the state of Paraná and currently was residing in the city where the BU is located. She was 21 years old in the period of the data collection and was an

	undergraduate <i>Letras</i> student with certification as a teacher of Japanese. She had been studying English for the past nine years and spoke a little Japanese and German.
Pietro	He was born in the State of São Paulo and was 27 years old. He held a degree in Biological Sciences. He had been reading scientific studies of his area in English for the past two years, but his previous contact with English was practically nil.
Zilma	She was born in the State of São Paulo and was currently residing in the city where the BU is located. She was 17 years old in the period of the data collection. She had started to study English a short time before having answered the initial semi-structured questionnaire and also knew some Spanish and Japanese.
<p><i>Note:</i> The participant Pietro dropped out of the <i>teletandem sessions</i> and Monique replaced him definitively. That is why there are eight participants on the table above instead of seven.</p>	

Appendix C – The other participants’ profile of the AU

Dolores	This participant did not answer the initial semi-structured questionnaire and did not write a short paragraph containing basic information about her.
Barbara	She was born in the United States. She had already lived in Michigan, and was currently residing in the city where the AU is located. She had been studying Culture and Politics.
Williams	This participant did not answer the initial semi-structured questionnaire and did not write a short paragraph containing basic information about him.
Amy	She was born in Southern California and currently was residing in the city where the AU is located. She was 20 years old in the period of the data collection. She had been studying Science, Technology and International Political Issues (My free translation for <i>Ciência, Tecnologia e Assuntos Políticos Internacionais</i>). Besides Portuguese, she spoke Spanish.
Virginia	She was born in Greenwich, Connecticut. She had already lived in London and Madrid, and was currently residing in the city where the AU is located. She was 19 years old in the period of the data collection. She had been studying Justice and Peace. In addition to Portuguese, she spoke Spanish and French.
<i>Note:</i> As these participants did not answer the initial	

semi-structured questionnaire, the teacher-mediator of the AU suggested that they write a short paragraph in a single file, which was shared with me on Google Drive, containing basic information about them. Out of these five participants, three of them answered.

Appendix D – Initial semi-structured questionnaire

- 1 - Em qual turma do Teletandem você está matriculado?
- 2 – Nome completo:
- 3 – Gênero
() Masculino
() Feminino
- 4 – Idade?
- 5 – Qual é seu nível de conhecimento da língua estrangeira?
() Iniciante
() Intermediário
() Avançado
- 6 – Você consegue ler, ouvir, falar e escrever bem na língua estrangeira? Como você se autoavalia em relação a cada uma dessas quatro habilidades linguísticas?
- 7 – Você gosta de falar a língua estrangeira que será praticada nas sessões de Teletandem? Por quê?
- 8 – Quanto tempo faz que você começou a aprender a língua estrangeira que será praticada nas sessões de Teletandem?
- 9 – Você já praticou Teletandem anteriormente? Se sim, quantas vezes? Como foi/foram a(s) experiência(s)?
- 10 – Por que você começou a participar das sessões de Teletandem?
- 11 – O que você mais gostaria de aprender nas sessões de Teletandem com seu parceiro estrangeiro? Existem aspectos linguísticos e culturais específicos que você gostaria de aprender? Quais?
- 12 – Qual é o seu curso de graduação?
- 13 – Em qual cidade e estado você nasceu? E onde você

reside atualmente?

Appendix E – Complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions): participant Sofia

- 1 – Como é para você participar das sessões de Teletandem?
- 2 – Em sua opinião, participar das sessões de Teletandem é uma experiência diferente daquela de sala de aula e dos livros didáticos? Se sim, em que sentido?
- 3 – De um modo geral, como tem sido a sua experiência com a sua parceira?
- 4 – Como você se autoavalia em relação a essa experiência com a sua parceira até o presente momento?
- 5 – Qual a sua opinião sobre o Relato de Experiência?
- 6 – Qual a sua opinião sobre as sessões de mediação?
- 7 – Em sua opinião, a sua parceira consegue se expressar / comunicar bem em português? E quanto à habilidade auditiva de sua parceira?
- 8 – Você tem percebido problemas técnicos nas sessões de Teletandem? Se sim, quais? Você sabe dizer como isso reflete na sessão de interação com sua parceira?
- 9 – Como você se sente quando fala em português durante as sessões de interações?
- 10 – Como você se sente quando fala em inglês durante as sessões de interações?
- 11 – Você tem conseguido se comunicar / expressar bem em língua inglesa com a sua parceira? E quanto a sua habilidade auditiva?
- 12 – Como é para você interagir nas sessões de Teletandem com alguém do gênero masculino ou feminino?
- 13 – Em sua opinião, você tem desenvolvido suas habilidades em língua inglesa através dessa parceria?

14 – Você fala outras línguas além do inglês? Você fala bem esses idiomas?

15 – Em sua opinião, há alguma diferença se a sessão do Teletandem é iniciada em português ou em inglês?

16 – Como está sendo poder interagir com sua parceira pelo Zoom? É a primeira vez que você usa o Zoom no Teletandem? Em que o Zoom pode ser, em sua opinião, melhor ou pior em comparação ao Skype? Existem vantagens ou desvantagens em usar o Zoom em comparação ao Skype?

17 – Como você e sua parceira têm lidado com as correções linguísticas?

Appendix F – Complementary semi-structured interview questions about the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers: participant Sofia

1 – Você informou que considera o seu nível de conhecimento em inglês como intermediário. Tal nível de conhecimento, em sua opinião, influencia as sessões de Teletandem com a sua parceira de Georgetown?

2 – Você disse no Questionário Inicial que você gostaria que houvesse um enfoque linguístico maior e uma preocupação maior com as correções linguísticas por parte dos participantes das universidades estrangeiras. Você demonstrou também um interesse quanto à prática da escrita durante as sessões. Isto tem ocorrido nas sessões de interações com sua parceira de Georgetown?

3 – Você disse que você começou a participar das sessões de Teletandem porque gostaria de ser, de certa forma, “uma porta voz pra os que nao conhecem o Brasil e poder apresentar com base nas minhas vivencias a minha visao, as minhas impressoes, enfim, a minha perspectiva.”. Poderia explicar melhor isso? Você pensa que tem alcançado esse objetivo nas sessões de Teletandem com a sua parceira de Georgetown?

4 – Você disse também que outro motivo que levou você a começar a participar das sessões de Teletandem é o seguinte: “Fora o aspecto da língua há também as questões culturais que muito me interessam, ou melhor, uma troca de culturas, de experiências, de vivências, de maneiras distintas de ver a vida ou não necessariamente. Talvez seja uma forma de nos conhecermos melhor enquanto brasileiros diante do olhar "de fora", do outro”. Poderia explicar melhor isso? Você pensa que tem

alcançado esse objetivo nas sessões de Teletandem com a sua parceira de Georgetown?

5 – Você disse que as experiências advindas das mais de vinte parcerias que você teve no Teletandem desde 2010 “... foram muito interessantes inclusive como troca de cultura, de vivências e algo que eu me forço a fazer que eh desconstruir os estereotipos, acredito ser essa uma das grandes contribuições que o teletandem me proporcionou”. Poderia explicar melhor isso? De que forma você tem conseguido desconstruir os estereótipos?

6 – Você disse que um dos aspectos que mais gosta da língua inglesa é a sonoridade da língua. Poderia falar mais sobre isso?

7 – Você escreveu o seguinte sobre algumas experiências anteriores que você teve no Teletandem: “...de maneira geral, me enriqueceram, me acrescentaram como pessoa por motivos vários”. Poderia explicar melhor isso? Quais são esses “motivos vários”?

8 – Você é formada em Letras com habilitação em inglês. Em sua opinião, sua formação influencia a interação no Teletandem com a sua parceira de Georgetown?

**Appendix G – Semi-structured interview A
(questions): participant Sofia**

1 – Você disse que houve problemas técnicos durante a sessão de 28-09? Você sabe dizer como isso reflete na sessão de interação com sua parceira?

2 – Você disse que a sua parceira, a Emily, mostrou-se muito solícita para você. Em quê sentido? Poderia explicar isso melhor? Você sabe dizer como isso repercutiu na sessão de interação entre vocês?

3 – Você disse que a Emily explicou para você que a experiência dela na África a transformou. Você lembra mais detalhes sobre isso? Em que sentido ‘a transformou’? Poderia contar mais um pouquinho sobre isso?

4 – Você disse que tem um sonho de conhecer a América Latina. Por quê? Poderia explicar isso melhor? Por quê?

5 – Em que sentido você disse que a América latina, muitas vezes, “...é tão próxima e tão distante da nossa”. O que seria o ‘nossa’? Poderia explicar isso melhor? Você diz também assim “...situação que eu vejo com muito pesar, com uma dor de fato”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

6 – Você disse que “... somos tão bombardeados com as "novidades" vindas das terras norte americanas e nos esquecemos da nossa própria identidade latina, brasileira...”. Em que sentido? Poderia explicar isso melhor? O que seria, para você, ‘identidade latina’ ou ‘identidade brasileira’?

7 – Você poderia explicar melhor o porquê de ter relacionado o trecho da música de Ednardo “Eu tenho o sol e areia/Eu sou da América, sul da América/South

America” com o ‘bombardeio’, para usar suas palavras, com as novidades norte-americanas?

**Appendix H – Semi-structured interview B
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Você disse que houve problemas técnicos na sessão de hoje. Você sabe dizer como isso refletiu na sessão de interação com sua parceira?
- 2 – Na sessão de 05-10-16, Você não interagiu com a Emily, e sim com a Virginia. Como foi trocar de interagente? Você poderia explicar?
- 3 – Você disse que “...somos parte integrante dessa identidade latina”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?
- 4 – Gostaria que você falasse um pouquinho mais sobre o processo de ‘alienação’ que você relatou a cerca do país Estados Unidos.
- 5 – O que é para você cultura ‘americanizada’?
- 6 – Não entendi a relação que você faz, nos seus dizeres, do utópico progresso do Brasil com o adjetivo “ufanista”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?
- 7 – Poderia explicar melhor, por favor, a relação que você faz entre o personagem Policaropo Quaresma com a palavra ‘ufanista’ e com o nosso país?
- 8 – Você gosta da obra Policarpo Quaresma? E por que você decidiu mencionar essa obra no seu relato?

**Appendix I – Semi-structured interview C
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Na sessão de 19-10 a Emily, sua parceira, interagiu em casa. Como foi para você o fato de ela ter interagido em casa e não no laboratório da Universidade de Georgetown?
- 2 – Você gosta da literatura portuguesa, isso? Poderia explicar melhor esse seu gosto por essa literatura?
- 3 – Você consegue recordar o porquê de você e sua parceira terem iniciado o assunto sobre literatura?
- 4 – No Relato de Experiência você explicou que obras do escritor Eça de Queiros lhe “...proporcionaram descobertas sobre a vida, sobre as pessoas, inclusive sobre mim mesma e indubitavelmente foi algo muito transformador todo esse processo”. Você poderia explicar isso melhor?
- 5 – Por que você gosta de Fernando Pessoa?
- 6 – Você disse que a sua parceira, Emily, já viveu na África onde o português é língua oficial. Em sua opinião, como isso repercute na comunicação entre vocês?
- 7 – Explique melhor quando você diz, em relação à língua inglesa, que “... a interação não se dá de uma forma tão orgânica, tão natural e um outro fator que possivelmente atravanca um pouco essa fluidez, uma espécie de "pedra do meio do caminho" consiste no meu conhecimento superficial da língua estrangeira em questão”. Em sua opinião, como isso repercute na comunicação entre vocês?
- 8 – Por que você se interessa sobre referentes culturais da Alemanha? Como você percebe a presença de características culturais da Alemanha no sul do Brasil?

9 – Apesar de você já ter explicado, em linhas gerais, o porquê de querer morar em Berlim, você poderia expandir um pouco esse seu interesse pela capital da Alemanha?

10 – Você poderia explicar melhor, apesar de já ter escrito um pouco, quando diz que Berlim constitui uma cidade multicultural?

11 – Você poderia explicar melhor o que quis dizer nessa parte de seu relato? “É assim na Alemanha e pode ser assim com a gente também, dentro de um aspecto mais intimista, acredito sempre que há em nós um sebastianista louco vislumbrando o quinto império e é de fundamental importância que resgatemos todos os dias esse idealista que ocultamente somos”.

**Appendix J – Semi-structured interview D
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Você poderia explicar melhor o porquê de você considerar que a sessão de interação de 26-10 foi uma das mais satisfatórias?
- 2 - Por que você pensa que maior afinidade / intimidade é um processo que facilita a comunicação?
- 3 - Por que você pensa que não houve diversidade de assuntos discutidos nessa sessão?
- 4 - Como você se sente quando tem a oportunidade de discutir assuntos sobre literatura com a sua parceira?
- 5 - Quem sugere iniciar assuntos voltados à literatura: você ou a sua parceira?
- 6 - Você poderia falar um pouquinho mais sobre quando você diz que os ideais de felicidade, nas suas palavras, “podem se transformar baseado em nossas vivências”.
- 7 - Você lembra como vocês chegaram a discutir sobre o assunto ‘felicidade’?
- 8 – Como foi discutir com a sua parceira o assunto ‘felicidade’?

**Appendix K – Semi-structured interview E
(questions): participant Sofia**

1 – Neste dia, você interagiu em casa e a Emily no laboratório. Em sua opinião, como foi ter interagido em casa e não na sala de computadores da (name of the BU)?

2 – Em que sentido você disse que há relações de poder na interação com a Emily?

3 – Em que sentido as conversas são ‘complicadas’ e ‘tortuosas’?

4 – Por que você diz que percebe desinteresse por parte da Emily? De que forma essa relação pode estar influenciando as interações de vocês?

5 – Você sabe explicar por que vocês retomaram do último encontro, 26-10, o assunto “felicidade”?

**Appendix L – Semi-structured interview F
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Como você se sentiu em ver a sua parceira comovida pelo desfecho das eleições dos Estados Unidos?
- 2 – Qual a sua opinião sobre a vitória de Donald Trump como novo presidente?
- 3 – Explique melhor quando você diz que “...foi também interessante perceber que a partir de uma situação em que há uma empatia, uma identificação a conversa acaba fluindo de uma maneira muito mais natural e também melhor”.
- 4 – Explique melhor quando você diz que “tem sido cada vez mais bacana conversar com ela”.
- 5 – Por que você acha que a maior dificuldade em relação à interação de você está em inglês? Quando vocês falam em português, você não percebe eventuais dificuldades?
- 6 – No relato da sessão de interação de 02-11 você havia dito que as conversas estavam sendo ‘complicadas’ e ‘tortuosas’? Como você explica o fato de agora estar gostando de conversar com sua parceira?
- 7 – Por que você define sua parceira como introspectiva? Como isso pode influenciar a interação de vocês?

**Appendix M – Semi-structured interview G
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Como você se sentiu ao perceber que a Emily tem um vasto conhecimento sobre a nossa história? Você se refere à história do Brasil?
- 2 – Como você se sentiu ao discutir o assunto sobre política com a Emily?
- 3 – Você poderia contar um pouquinho mais sobre o envolvimento do seu pai com a política especialmente em relação ao PT?
- 4 – Você lembra o que conversou com a Emily acerca do golpe que você referiu na democracia brasileira?

**Appendix N – Semi-structured interview H
(questions): participant Sofia**

1 – Poderia explicar melhor quando você diz que a sua experiência com a Emily tem sido cada vez melhor?

2 – Em que sentido você diz que você e a Emily têm bastantes gostos, filosofia de vida e sonhos em comum?

3 – Você acredita que a geração de você e da Emily, em razão de que ambas têm a mesma idade, pode ajudar a desconstruir algumas questões relacionadas ao sexismo e ao conservadorismo, é isso? Isso de que forma em sua opinião?

4 – Você poderia explicar melhor o assunto que você e a Emily discutiram sobre a sua experiência no Nordeste relativa à cobrança que você considera existir no tocante à aparência, e isso principalmente por parte das mulheres?

5 – Por que você acha que a cobrança quanto à aparência ocorre mais por parte das próprias mulheres?

6 – Por que você pensa que as pessoas que nascem no Norte ou Nordeste do Brasil tendem a ser bem mais calorosas do que as que nascem no Sudeste?

7 – Em que sentido você se considera ‘mais paulista’ do que realmente gostaria? Mesmo que a contragosto de sua parte, para usar as suas palavras, em que sentido o fato de você ser paulista permite a você algumas ‘marcas’ mais ou menos comuns? Quais marcas são essas?

**Appendix O – Semi-structured interview I
(questions): participant Sofia**

- 1 – Você lembra como vocês iniciaram a discussão referente ao acidente do Chapecoense?
- 2 – Explique melhor quando você diz que a música clássica exerce grande fascínio em você.
- 3 – Por que você considera que o Rap é um ritmo marginalizado?
- 4 – Por que você afirmou que o Rap sempre fez bastante sentido para você?

**Appendix P – Semi-structured interview J
(questions): participant Sofia**

1 – Você relatou que as sessões de interações com a Emily levaram você a refletir sobre os assuntos que vocês discutiram e que resultaram num crescimento pessoal. De que forma isso foi possível?

2 – Como foi essa experiência de pode retomar, nessa sessão de interação, assuntos que já haviam sido discutidos em sessões anteriores?

3 – Como você percebeu que você desenvolveu maior facilidade para compreender a Emily? Isso em inglês?

**Appendix Q – Final semi-structured interview
questions: participant Sofia**

1 – Qual a sua opinião sobre mim em relação a ter sido o professor-mediador de vocês?

2 – Como foi para você ter participado dessas atividades comigo, tais como Sessão de Mediação, Relato de Experiência e Entrevista?

3 – Como você avalia a sua experiência com a sua parceira no Teletandem? O que você mais gostou e o que menos gostou?

4 – Você percebeu que desenvolveu suas habilidades em língua inglesa por meio dessa experiência com sua parceira de Georgetown? Explique.

5 – Sendo o professor-mediador de vocês durante todo esse tempo, percebi que alguns assuntos como Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, as eleições presidenciais dos EUA, entre outros, foram bastante recorrentes, ou seja, sempre vinham à tona conforme os eventos acima se aproximavam. Notei, também, que o acidente que ocorreu, a 29 de novembro, com o time de futebol da Chapecoense não emergiu no Teletandem com muita expressividade, a despeito de essa notícia ter tido repercussão na mídia em vários países do mundo. Você concorda com essa minha observação? Se sim, por que você acha que isso acontece?

6 – Existe alguma coisa que você gostaria de comentar? Ou alguma mensagem final?

Questão específica

7 – Você várias vezes me contou que, sobretudo no início, você tinha certa dificuldade de interagir com a Emily. O que você pensa do fato de, conforme o Lucas

comentou conosco em uma conversa informal, conversa entre ele e a Emily ter sido produtiva e ele ter gostado muito dela?

Appendix R – Complementary semi-structured interview (diverse questions): participant Lucas

- 1 – Como é para você participar das sessões de Teletandem?
- 2 – Em sua opinião, participar das sessões de Teletandem é uma experiência diferente daquela de sala de aula e dos livros didáticos? Se sim, em que sentido?
- 3 – De um modo geral, como tem sido a sua experiência com a sua parceira?
- 4 – Como você se autoavalia em relação a essa experiência com a sua parceira até o presente momento?
- 5 – Qual a sua opinião sobre o Relato de Experiência?
- 6 – Qual a sua opinião sobre as sessões de mediação?
- 7 – Em sua opinião, a sua parceira consegue se expressar / comunicar bem em português? E quanto à habilidade auditiva de sua parceira?
- 8 – Você tem percebido problemas técnicos nas sessões de Teletandem? Se sim, quais? Você sabe dizer como isso reflete na sessão de interação com sua parceira?
- 9 – Como você se sente quando fala em português durante as sessões de interações?
- 10 – Como você se sente quando fala em inglês durante as sessões de interações?
- 11 – Você tem conseguido se comunicar / expressar bem em língua inglesa com a sua parceira? E quanto a sua habilidade auditiva?
- 12 – Como é para você interagir nas sessões de Teletandem com alguém do gênero masculino ou feminino?
- 13 – Em sua opinião, você tem desenvolvido suas habilidades em língua inglesa através dessa parceria?

14 – Você fala outras línguas além do inglês? Você fala bem esses idiomas?

15 – Em sua opinião, há alguma diferença se a sessão do Teletandem é iniciada em português ou em inglês?

16 – Como está sendo poder interagir com sua parceira pelo Zoom? É a primeira vez que você usa o Zoom no Teletandem? Em que o Zoom pode ser, em sua opinião, melhor ou pior em comparação ao Skype? Existem vantagens ou desvantagens em usar o Zoom em comparação ao Skype?

17 – Como você e sua parceira têm lidado com as correções linguísticas?

Appendix S – Complementary semi-structured interview questions about the initial semi-structured questionnaire answers: participant Lucas

1 – Você informou que considera o seu nível de conhecimento em inglês como intermediário. Tal nível de conhecimento, em sua opinião, influencia as sessões de Teletandem com a sua parceira de Georgetown?

2 – Você escreveu no questionário, em relação ao inglês, que é “...uma língua que atualmente é necessidade de saber falar”. Você poderia explicar isso melhor?

3 – Você acabou respondendo duas vezes o Questionário Inicial. Num deles você diz que não teve experiência prévia no Teletandem. Em contrapartida, no outro você disse que já teve, anteriormente ao presente semestre, outra experiência no Teletandem. Se de fato você já teve alguma experiência anterior no Teletandem, você lembra como foi? Você pensa que, de alguma forma, referida experiência prévia repercute na sua experiência atual com a parceira de (name of the AU)?

4 – Você disse que um dos motivos que levou você a fazer Teletandem foi o objetivo de, nas suas palavras, “conhecer uma nova cultura”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

5 – Você escreveu que uma das coisas que gostaria de aprender nas sessões de Teletandem é, principalmente, nas suas palavras, “...a respeito dos países dos meus parceiros”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

6 – Você disse que umas das razões pelas quais você gosta da língua estrangeira praticada nas sessões de Teletandem é que “...a gente está sempre de a par com outras culturas e novas visões no conhecimento

cultural”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

7 – Você escreveu também que começou a participar das sessões de Teletandem porque, nas suas palavras, “...irei crescer Bioposicossócialmete cada dia dia mais após a cada interação”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

8 – Você escreveu que, nas sessões de Teletandem, “... é possível eu ensinar sobre minha cultura e apreender com meu interagente sobre suas culturas, valores, interesses e expectativas para o futuro...”. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

9 – Na pergunta que fiz sobre o que especificamente você gostaria de aprender nas sessões de Teletandem, você respondeu o seguinte: “Nada a declarar pois quero fazer do Interagente algo natural, espero que tudo flua com o tempo”. Poderia explicar isso melhor? O que você quer dizer com, “natural” e “fluir com o tempo”.

**Appendix T – Semi-structured interview A
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Você disse que a sua colega não é de origem estado-unidense, e sim irlandesa. Como você se sentiu quando soube disso?

2 – Você tem certeza que ela nasceu na Irlanda e não nos Estados Unidos? Eu entendi que os avós dela são irlandeses, mas ela é estado-unidense.

3 – Como foi saber que a sua parceira já visitou tantos lugares do Brasil? Você pensa que isso reflete na forma como ela se expressa / se comunica em português com você?

4 – Você disse que sua parceira “expressava o amor o carinho pelo país querendo saber de varias coisas que fiquei muito feliz em poder contribuir com minha interagente”.Você poderia explicar isso melhor? Contribuir com o quê?

**Appendix U – Semi-structured interview B
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Você relatou que houve problemas técnicos na sessão de 05-10-16. Você sabe dizer como isso reflete na sessão de interação com sua parceira?

2 – Você disse que a experiência da sessão de 05-10 foi bastante interessante em razão, nas suas palavras, das “...mesmas vontades e interesses nossa como interagentes do projeto”. Você poderia explicar isso melhor?

3 – Gostaria que você explicasse quando diz que “...fomos bem naturais e agimos como agimos em nossos dia dia, pois teve vários momentos que percebi que está vamos em um assunto que acredito foge do padrão de pessoas que não são do mesmo país, cultura, língua e etc...”. O que você quis dizer com “naturais”? Explique melhor o que você diz sobre “assunto que foge do padrão” entre pessoas de diferentes países, línguas, cultura, etc..

4 – O que você quis dizer que a conversa foi “bem aberta”?

5 – Você consegue lembrar as motivações que levaram vocês a discutirem sobre assuntos tais como sexo, festas e namoro?

6 – Apesar de você ter relatado brevemente, você poderia explicar qual é a sua visão sobre o Funk?

7 – Você descreveu a opinião de sua parceira de que o Funk Brasileiro, assim como o Rap dos Estados Unidos, é “só de depravação, Drogas, Prostituição e etc”. Poderia comentar mais sobre isso?

**Appendix V – Semi-structured interview C
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Você disse o seguinte: “Sinto que em quanto estamos falando Inglês o assunto não fluía tão bem quanto estamos falando Português”. Você considera que esse aspecto em específico reflete nas sessões de interação com a sua parceira? Se sim, de que forma?

2 – Você disse que quando vocês estão falando em inglês o assunto não “flui tão bem”. E você comenta também que isso lhe faz sentir, nas suas palavras, um “estrovo”. Você poderia falar mais sobre isso?

3 – Você disse que a sua parceira já visitou o Brasil. Em sua opinião, de certa forma, como você pensa que isso reflete nas sessões de Teletandem com sua parceira?

4 – De um modo geral, como você se sentiu ao saber de algumas diferenças referentes ao sistema escolar entre Brasil e Estados Unidos? Vocês discutiram essas diferenças com base nas experiências de cada um de vocês dois ou, por exemplo, em alguns parâmetros nacionais?

5 – Em sua opinião, considerando o que vocês dois conversaram acerca da condição dos professores no Brasil, você pensa que esse aspecto em particular repercute em todas as escolas do nosso país?

6 – De um modo geral, o que você pôde aprender após essa discussão relativa a alguns aspectos do sistema escolar do Brasil e dos Estados Unidos?

**Appendix W – Semi-structured interview D
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Como vocês lidam com o fato de que, como você relatou, você e sua parceira têm visões diferentes sobre alguns assuntos? Você disse “bem legal isso” referindo-se e essa divergência de ideias. Poderia explicar melhor isso?

2 – Como você se sente ao abordar nas sessões com a sua parceira temas polêmicos tais como casamento gay e adoção? E em relação a sua parceira?

3 – Explique melhor quando você diz que a política brasileira está “um lixo”.

4 – Você relatou que sua parceira disse que o Brasil precisa de uma reforma no cenário político, e, nas suas palavras, “...está muito difícil de viver aqui e de falar que somos Brasileiros”. Poderia explicar isso melhor? O que é ser brasileiro para você?

5 – Você disse, nas suas palavras do Relato de Experiência, que apesar de todas as inconsistências na política do Brasil “temos uma grande qualidade é que podemos passar pelos piores momentos do país sempre estamos felizes”. Explica melhor isso, por favor? Como você se sentiu quando sua parceira disse que, quando estava fazendo intercâmbio no Brasil, o povo brasileiro está sempre feliz, apesar das dificuldades políticas do país?

6 – Você relatou o seguinte sobre a discussão que teve com sua interagente sobre adoção e casamento gay: “...Eu falei para ela que eu também não era contra o casamento Gay mais que eu era e sou contra a adoção por esses tipos de casais, falei para ela como a criança

vai crescer na escola com o machismo que existe hoje em dia nas escolas, nas ruas, em fim em todo lugar, eu disse para ela que é uma coisa que mexe com o Psicólogo da criança”. Você poderia falar sobre isso melhor? E em que sentido ‘machismo’, nesse caso?

7 – Como você se sentiu quando na sessão de mediação você percebeu que alguns de seus colegas de classe tinham opiniões diferentes às suas e outros demonstraram ideias semelhantes?

8 – Você escreveu que a sua parceira disse que nos Estados Unidos há bastante preconceito e que, no Brasil, há maior mistura de algumas raças. Como você vê isso?

**Appendix X – Semi-structured interview E
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Nesse dia você interagiu com a Barbara: como foi? Qual a diferença que você sentiu em relação a Fiona, sua parceira?

2 – Por que você pensa que, mesmo que tenha sido a primeira vez que você e a Barbara interagiram, e, portanto, você não tinha um vínculo maior como tem com a Fiona, vocês tenham discutido sobre diversos assuntos?

3 – O que é ‘sangue brasileiro’ para você?

**Appendix Y – Semi-structured interview F
(questions): participant Lucas**

- 1 – Como foi vocês dois interagirem ambos de suas respectivas casas?
- 2 – Explique melhor quando você diz que “Em minha opinião fazer de casa foi bem legal por que pude mostrar para ela qual era minha realidade e pude perceber que realmente é uma pessoa muito humilde”.
- 3 – Você lembra o que a sua parceira explicou sobre o Donald Trump não ter ganhado pelo voto popular?
- 4 – Como você se sentiu quando a sua parceira expressou a sua tristeza e inclusive disse que chorou por conta da derrota de Hillary Clinton?
- 5 – Em que sentido você disse que não há necessidade de ficar tão triste tal como a sua parceira ficou pelo resultado das eleições dos Estados Unidos?
- 6 – Não entendi muito bem quando você disse que a Fiona lhe disse “...para não desistir do Inglês por mais difícil que esteja os EUA.”. Por que ela lhe disse isso?
- 7 – Por que mesmo você disse que não gosta do Brasil e por que pretende um dia se mudar?
- 8 – Explique melhor quando você disse que “Fico muito triste em falar a respeito de meus sentimentos com o Brasil mais prefiro ser verdadeiro do que ser falso de falar uma coisa que não é real e que não gosto.”
- 9 – Em que sentido você considerou a chegada de sua mãe à interação como um ‘estorvo’?
- 10 – Em que sentido você considera o português de sua parceira ‘bom’ e que sua mãe apresenta ‘erros’ de português?

**Appendix Z – Semi-structured interview G
(questions): participant Lucas**

- 1 – Você disse que vocês comentaram sobre a diferença entre interagir de casa e do laboratório. Você consegue recordar o que discutiram sobre isso?
- 2 – Por que você pensa que o livro 50 Tons Mais Escuros é bastante polêmico? Você está gostando da leitura?
- 3 – Por que vocês começaram a discutir sobre o livro 50 Tons Mais Escuros?
- 4 – Você gosta de ler livros?
- 5 – Você lembra o porquê de vocês terem começado a falar sobre livros?
- 6 – Você suspeita a razão pela qual a Fiona não tenha mostrado muito interesse em falar sobre o livro 50 Tons Mais Escuros?
- 7 – Em que sentido você considera a sua parceira de (name of the AU) ‘liberal’?
- 8 – Explique melhor quando você diz que sente um pouco de receio pelo fato de a Fiona, nas suas palavras, conhecer mais lugares do Brasil do que você. Por que você acha que, por ser nativo, deveria conhecer minimamente as cidades turísticas, tal como a Fiona, mesmo sendo estrangeira, conhece?
- 9 – Em que sentido você acha que, nas suas palavras, “a bagagem de conhecimento da Fiona com o Brasil é melhor que a...” sua.
- 10 – Como você se sentiu quando a Fiona lhe disse que visitou a favela do Rio de Janeiro e que as favelas dessa cidade oferecem uma oportunidade a mais de turismo para pessoas de fora que vêm visitar o Brasil?

11 – Explique melhor quando você diz que “Pensei em falar a realidade das favelas Cariocas mais tem hora que devo que me controlar para não acabar com o meu país que um estrangeiro tanto ama, pois muitas das vezes acredito que devo tomar um certo cuidado para não acabar com o país de onde eu venho, mais que as favelas não são 100% conforme ela alega e de que as pessoas são super ótimas e etc... Não é”.

12 – Como você se sentiu quando a Fiona disse que gosta mais do inglês britânico do que o americano?

13 – Por que você perdeu o foco de atenção em razão de que a Fiona usou o celular enquanto conversava com você?

14 – Você acredita que o fato de a Fiona estar cansada refletia no modo como vocês conversavam durante a sessão?

**Appendix AA – Semi-structured interview H
(questions): participant Lucas**

- 1 – Na sessão de interação desse dia você interagiu na sala (classroom name of the AU). Como foi a experiência? Por que você ficou tímido pela presença de outras pessoas nessa sala a ponto de não praticar seu inglês com a Fiona?
- 2 – O que da cultura Alemã você gosta e que, assim como a língua alemã, atrai tanto sua atenção?
- 3 – Por que você quer aprender alemão?
- 4 – Por que você se surpreendeu quando ela lhe disse que já visitou a China?
- 5 – De acordo com o seu relato, você pensa que no Brasil temos uma variedade cultural muito pequena. Em que sentido?
- 6 – Você comeria carne de cobra, cachorro ou escorpião tal como se faz em alguns países? Como você percebe essa prática cultural?
- 7 – Por que você decidiu propor uma dinâmica para ser realizada durante a sessão de interação com a Fiona?
- 8 – Por que você acha que o ambiente da sala (classroom name of the AU) tenha influenciado o desenvolvimento da dinâmica que você aplicou com a Fiona? E por que você pensa que, se não fosse esse ambiente, esta sessão de interação teria sido a melhor de todas?
- 9 – Você chegou a comentar na Sessão de Mediação desse dia que determinados assuntos você não incluiu nessa dinâmica. Quais foram esses temas? Por que mesmo vocês não discutiram esses assuntos?
- 10 – Você disse que em (a European country's name), na sua experiência de intercâmbio, você comeu, num jantar

preparado pelos seus colegas japoneses, um peixe preparado por eles. Conforme você explicou, por ser diferente de seus hábitos culturais, você comeu aquele prato por respeito. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

11 – Como foi a sua experiência de ter comido o prato de peixe e ter tomado o chá os quais foram preparados pelos seus colegas japoneses em (a European country's name)?

12 – Por que você ofereceu a tradicional Caipirinha para seus colegas japoneses?

13 – Por que você acha que a Fiona gostou da Caipirinha e seus colegas japoneses, pelo contrário, não gostaram?

14 – Por que você pensa que a Fiona estava um pouco 'travada' com o português nesse dia?

**Appendix BB – Final semi-structured interview
questions: participant Lucas**

1 – Qual a sua opinião sobre mim em relação a ter sido o professor-mediador de vocês?

2 – Como foi para você ter participado dessas atividades comigo, tais como Sessão de Mediação, Relato de Experiência e Entrevista?

3 – Como você avalia a sua experiência com a sua parceira no Teletandem? O que você mais gostou e o que menos gostou?

4 – Você percebeu que desenvolveu suas habilidades em língua inglesa por meio dessa experiência com sua parceira (name of the AU)? Explique.

5 – Sendo o professor-mediador de vocês durante todo esse tempo, percebi que alguns assuntos como Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, as eleições presidenciais dos EUA, entre outros, foram bastante recorrentes, ou seja, sempre vinham à tona conforme os eventos acima se aproximavam. Notei, também, que o acidente que ocorreu, a 29 de novembro, com o time de futebol da Chapecoense não emergiu no Teletandem com muita expressividade, a despeito de essa notícia ter tido repercussão na mídia em vários países do mundo. Você concorda com essa minha observação? Se sim, por que você acha que isso acontece?

6 – Existe alguma coisa que você gostaria de comentar? Ou alguma mensagem final?

Questões Específicas:

7 – Conte um pouquinho sobre a sua experiência de intercâmbio em (a European country's name). O que essa experiência acrescentou à sua vida.

- 8 – Você chega a comentar essa sua experiência em (a European country's name) com seus diferentes interagentes no Teletandem? Por quê? Como foi comentar esse assunto com a Fiona algumas vezes?
- 9 – Numa de nossas conversas, você explicou que, agora que terminou a faculdade de Enfermagem, gostaria de estudar Letras-Inglês. Poderia, por favor, falar um pouquinho mais sobre isso?
- 10 – Você também chegou a me dizer, numa de nossas conversas, que não gosta de interagir no Teletandem com estrangeiros que conseguem se expressar melhor em português do que você consegue em inglês. Poderia explicar isso melhor?

**Appendix CC – Semi-structured interview I
(questions): participant Lucas**

1 – Você se lembra do porquê de terem começado a falar sobre namoro?

2 – Por favor, comente um pouco mais sobre isso que você escreveu: “Falamos quão grande a importância de termos interagido por fora do Tandem devido nossa liberdade para falarmos do assunto que quisermos e que queríamos ter falado a muito tempo mais devido as interações serem gravadas resolvemos ter interagido por fora”.

3 – Você se lembra como o assunto ‘namoro’ emergiu durante a sessão de interação? E por que se estendeu por vários minutos?

4 – Você se lembra do que a Fiona respondeu quando você pediu para ela explicar a diferença entre uma mulher brasileira e uma americana?

5 – Por que você prefere as mulheres americanas às brasileiras? Você disse que isso poderia estar relacionado a sua vontade de morar no exterior, isso? Poderia explicar isso melhor?

6 – Por que você acha que, conforme você escreveu no seu relato, a Fiona brincou com você ao dizer que “... se ela fosse homem as Brasileiras iriam ter que tomar cuidado com ela”?

7 – Qual é a sua opinião sobre os atores de filme pornográfico?

8 – O que foi melhor para você nesse dia: ter interagido no laboratório ou em casa?

9 – Por que mesmo no laboratório, nessa sessão em específico, vocês conversaram somente em português?

10 – Você escreveu que foi “...muito bom ter interagido em casa, por que ambos professores não iriam ter acesso e ninguém da sala iria ter o conhecimento de nosso assunto”. Mas você tem ciência de que eu tenho acesso ao vídeo que vocês interagiram de casa?

11 – Por que você disse que gostaria de se casar com uma americana?

12 – Não entendi quando você escreveu no relato que a Fiona lhe perguntou se você ‘pagaria’ para ela. Para o quê e em que sentido?

13 – Em que sentido você escreveu que “Eu levo minha interagente de boa, mais se fosse outra pessoa não a levaria como eu a levo”.

14 – Você diz conhecer várias pessoas de diversos países. Você gosta disso?

15 – A Fiona disse que não acreditar em namoro entre pessoas de duas nacionalidades diferentes, mas você, sim, acredita. Poderia explicar melhor isso?

16 – Vocês já haviam falado sobre favelas. Por que vocês retomaram o assunto? Já havíamos conversando sobre favelas em uma de nossas entrevistas, você está lembrado?

17 – Por que você disse que a Fiona ficou chocada quando você mostrou algumas informações acerca das favelas do Brasil?

18 – Você disse que a Fiona sempre ressaltou a importância de você morar nos Estados Unidos de forma legal. Você já pensou alguma vez de viver nos Estados Unidos ilegalmente?

19 – Por que você ficou feliz quando soube que o curso que a Fiona fará se chama História da Música Brasileira?

20 – Você disse que percebeu na Fiona um amor pelo

Brasil. Como você se sente em relação a isso?