



The use of computer tools to support meaningful interaction between learners: a look at four studies

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Four studies which focused on interaction in the virtual environment

- **Moraes (2003), on the use of emails in writing classes;**
- **Figueiredo and Gonçalves (2015), on the collaborative production of blogs in English language classes at the University;**
- **Souza (2003), on tandem language learning;**
- **Silva (2012), on the use of telecollaboration (teletandem) in ESP classes.**

The study by Moraes (2003)

- **Aim:** To contrast students' motivation when writing texts to be read by teachers and texts to be read by native speakers through e-mail communication.
- **Participants:** 18 adolescent students from an English course in the city of Goiânia and their partners from a school in England, as well as the teacher of the English students, who had already lived in Brazil.
- **Analysis:** The texts produced in the classroom and those written by email. The researcher interviewed the students and asked the English teacher to evaluate the email messages.

The study by Moraes (2003): some results

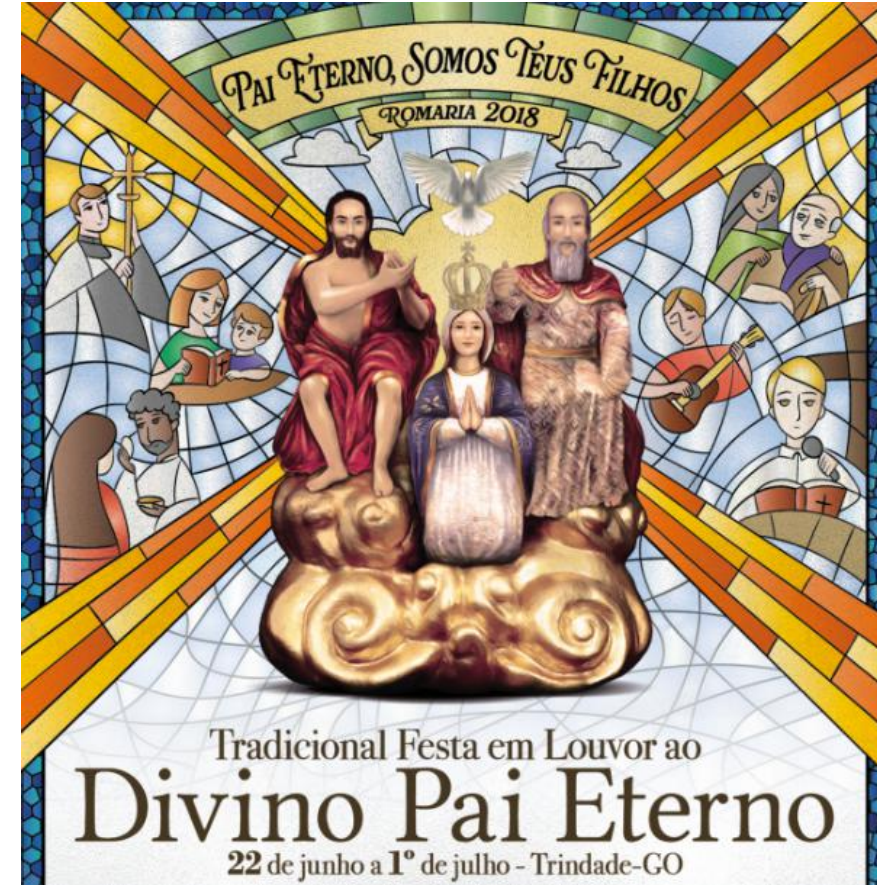
- **Brazilian students were more motivated to write using email, since they had a "real" reader for their texts.**
- **They found it more challenging, interesting and fun to write to their keypals.**
- **In writing, the teacher cannot only be concerned with grammatical competence, since other skills may also interfere with the understanding of messages, such as sociolinguistic competence.**

The study Moraes (2003): some results

Assessment of the native teacher:

Ms. Mylod: In activity three, the students chose to present the subject offering examples of Brazilian culture. However, they have forgotten that most English people have no idea what they are talking about - I myself have never heard of the Festa do Divino Pai Eterno.

Festa do Divino Pai Eterno



The study by Figueiredo and Gonçalves (2015)

- **Aim: to better understand the use of blogs in class and the implications of their use in FL learning.**
- **Participants: 17 students from the 4th semester of the UFG Letters Course, as well as the teacher during a semester.**
- **An analysis was made of the interaction between the students during the collaborative construction of the blogs and the blog postings produced, as well as an analysis of the students' perceptions about the work done.**

The study by Figueiredo and Gonçalves (2015): some results

The experience of collaboratively producing blogs allowed for face-to-face and virtual interactions:

Face-to-face interactions:

Sophia: Vamos gravar o que a gente tá falando. Ai, ela pediu pra gente ir pensando no que a gente vai falar.

Maria: Vamos escrever no papel porque eu acho melhor.

Eunice: Mas, falar o quê, hein? (olhando pra colega)

Sophia: Por exemplo: *My name is Maria Eunice, welcome to my blog. It's about Goiânia.*

Eunice: Introduce ourselves, vamos lá. *Welcome to our ...* como é que escreve *our* mesmo?

Sophia: É assim mesmo.

Maria: *Welcome to our blog?*

Eunice: É... bem-vindo ao nosso *blog*.

Sophia:

(Trecho da aula 2)

The study by Figueiredo and Gonçalves (2015): some results

Virtual interactions:

Your blog is realy, realy very beautiful.
Congratulation!

Figura 1: Comentário de Bruna e Helena para Morgana em 20/10/2008

Your country looks beautiful and you write about a lot of warmth. Perhaps my husband and I will put it on our place to visit list.

Figura 2: Comentário de pessoa estrangeira para Bruna e Helena em 12/10/2008

I have to say to you that it's not the Justice Palace but Planalto Palace where the president works.

Figura 3: Comentário de amigo de Carolina para Carolina em 10/12/2008

The study by Figueiredo and Gonçalves (2015): some results

- **Student's perception:**

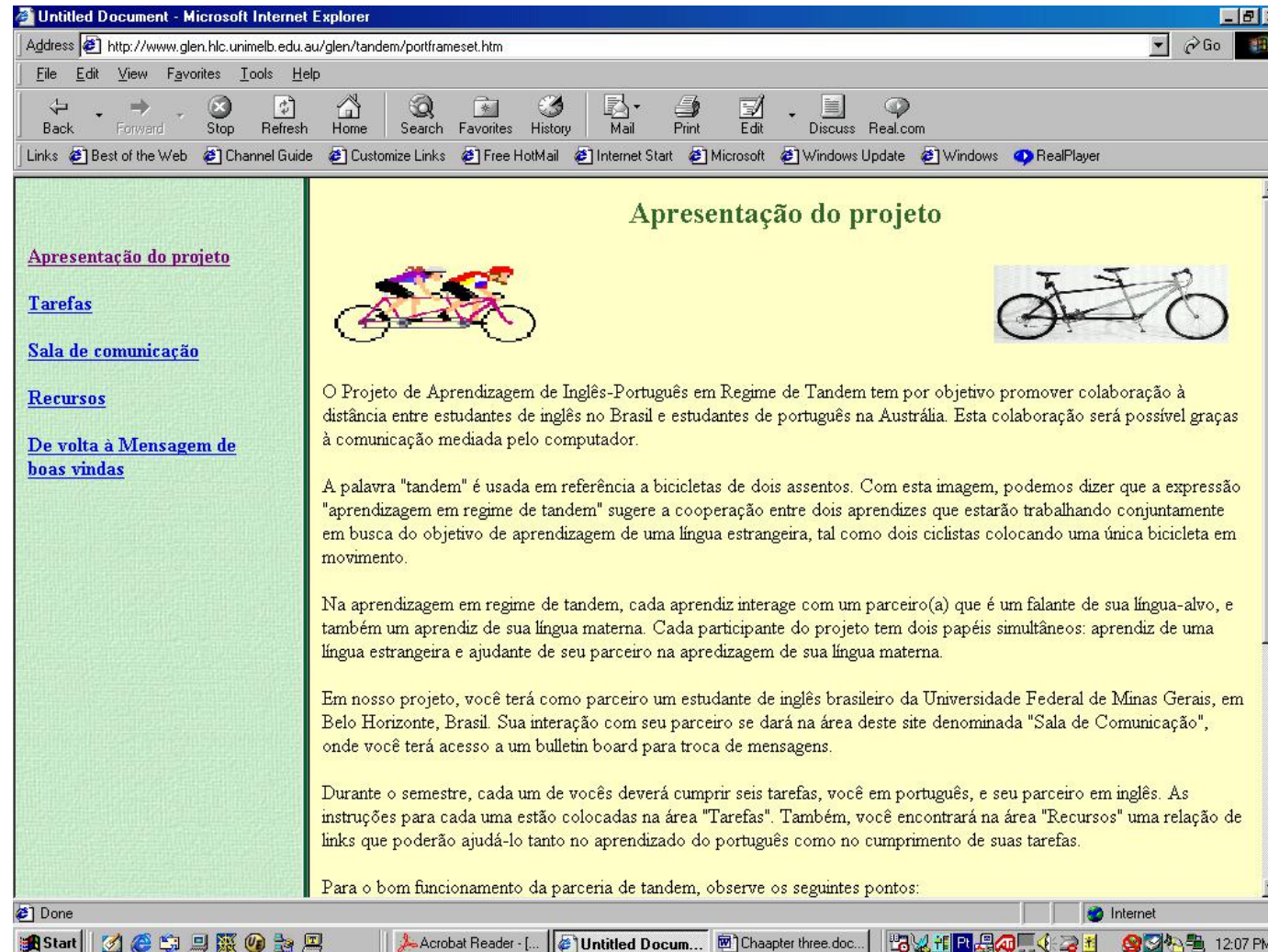
João: I think it was really cool. I do not particularly like the computer resource, but I must admit that it was a very productive activity. I was able to learn a lot from blogging. It was a different class in which we could practice our writing in English.

João: Maybe, I don't know, maybe it could look more like a class. It seems like, when you're in the lab, it doesn't look like an English class. Sometimes it bothers me.

The study by Souza (2003)

- **Aim: To verify how learners from two different cultures would realize their learning priorities through interacting with partners via the computer.**
- **To this end, a computer-mediated telecollaboration project was implemented, called the Portuguese-English Learning Project in Tandem Context.**
- **The cooperative nature of tandem learning becomes explicit in the very metaphor that gives it its name, since "tandem is the English word for two-seat bicycles, that is, in which the joint effort of two cyclists produces the movement" (SOUZA, 2003, p.29, n.4).**

The study by Souza (2003)



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar displays the URL: <http://www.glen.hlc.unimelb.edu.au/glen/tandem/portframeset.htm>. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Home, Search, Favorites, History, Mail, Print, Edit, Discuss, and Real.com. The Links bar shows various search engines and services like Best of the Web, Channel Guide, Customize Links, Free HotMail, Internet Start, Microsoft, Windows Update, Windows, and RealPlayer.

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a green background and contains a vertical list of links: [Apresentação do projeto](#), [Tarefas](#), [Sala de comunicação](#), [Recursos](#), [De volta à Mensagem de boas vindas](#). The right column has a yellow background and is titled "Apresentação do projeto". It features two images: a colorful tandem bicycle on the left and a black and white tandem bicycle on the right. Below the images, the text reads:

O Projeto de Aprendizagem de Inglês-Português em Regime de Tandem tem por objetivo promover colaboração à distância entre estudantes de inglês no Brasil e estudantes de português na Austrália. Esta colaboração será possível graças à comunicação mediada pelo computador.

A palavra "tandem" é usada em referência a bicicletas de dois assentos. Com esta imagem, podemos dizer que a expressão "aprendizagem em regime de tandem" sugere a cooperação entre dois aprendizes que estarão trabalhando conjuntamente em busca do objetivo de aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira, tal como dois ciclistas colocando uma única bicicleta em movimento.

Na aprendizagem em regime de tandem, cada aprendiz interage com um parceiro(a) que é um falante de sua língua-alvo, e também um aprendiz de sua língua materna. Cada participante do projeto tem dois papéis simultâneos: aprendiz de uma língua estrangeira e ajudante de seu parceiro na aprendizagem de sua língua materna.

Em nosso projeto, você terá como parceiro um estudante de inglês brasileiro da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, em Belo Horizonte, Brasil. Sua interação com seu parceiro se dará na área deste site denominada "Sala de Comunicação", onde você terá acesso a um bulletin board para troca de mensagens.

Durante o semestre, cada um de vocês deverá cumprir seis tarefas, você em português, e seu parceiro em inglês. As instruções para cada uma estão colocadas na área "Tarefas". Também, você encontrará na área "Recursos" uma relação de links que poderão ajudá-lo tanto no aprendizado do português como no cumprimento de suas tarefas.

Para o bom funcionamento da parceria de tandem, observe os seguintes pontos:

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "Internet". The Windows taskbar at the very bottom displays the Start button, several application icons (including Acrobat Reader, Untitled Document, and Chapter three.doc), and the system clock showing 12:07 PM.

The study by Souza (2003)

Participants: 4 Brazilian students (undergraduate students) from UFMG and 5 Australian students (undergraduate students) from the University of Melbourne, during 10 weeks in the second semester of 2001, who formed 3 doubles and 1 trio.

The study by Souza (2003): some results

Positive points: contact with uses of the language not present in textbooks; access to another culture; greater metalinguistic awareness.

Negative points: divergence in the expectations and motivations of the participants (language x culture, correction x absence of correction, linguistic acuity x communication); lack of interaction; lack of time to effectively participate in the project; tension caused by lack of collaboration.

Certain difficulties may arise from the difference of status with regard to the teaching of the two languages.

The study by Souza (2003): some results

Herbert:

Meu diário: Eu gosto esta ideia, é bem legal mas vai ser difícil a fazer sempre, todos os dias. Para mim 400 palavras gastará muito tempo.

Por ao outro lado, com isto rejeito vou aprender muito mas português do que estou aprendendo agora porque ficará sem vergonha a pergunta. tenho que ir para

Biology

tchau

(Souza, 2003, p. 221)

Helena:

my journal: Olá Ricardo...

Bem... novamente a minha parceira neste projeto nem deu as caras esta semana. Aliás, eu até hj não troquei nenhuma msg com ela na semana do Português. E mesmo escrevendo para ela, e expondo a situação, nada mudou. Nem sequer um retorno eu recebi. E por causa disto eu já perdi o entusiasmo q outrora tinha com este projeto. E eu não sei se irei continuá-lo

(Souza, 2003, p. 165)

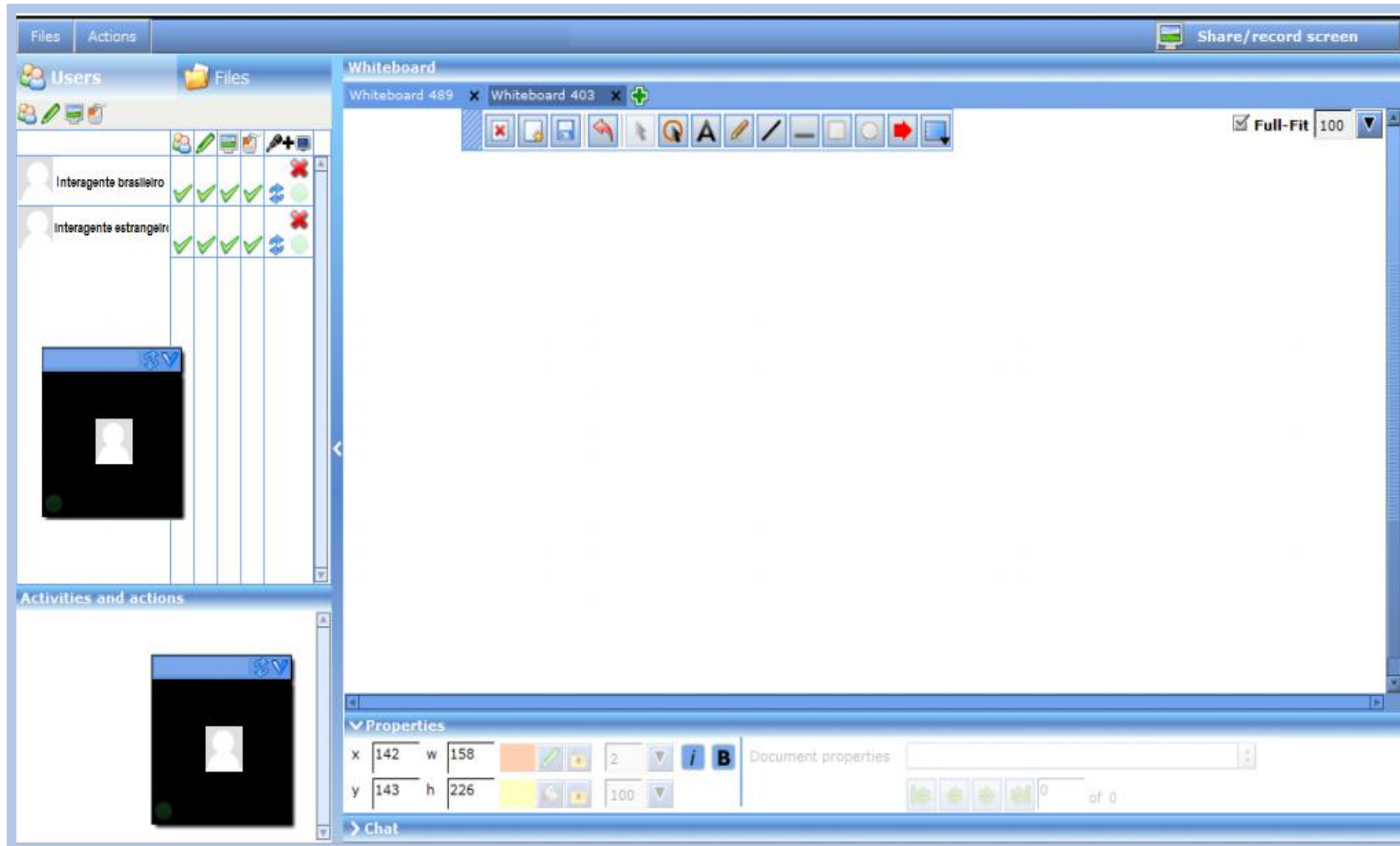
The study by Silva (2012)

Participants: three students of the IFG's Technological Course in Tourism, and four students from the Universities of Worms and Trier, in Germany, who interacted in the second term of 2010.

Aims:

- investigate how the participants learned Portuguese and English through teletandem interactions;**
- check which features of the Openmeetings application were used by Brazilian and foreign learners when interacting with each other;**
- analyze how and for what purpose these resources were used by the participants.**

Openmeetings



The study by Silva (2012): some results

Interactions on the English language

Natalie: No, ok, and then I have that I can to, to, to show for you the photos about our cities in this program *Openmeetings*, I will, I will pass, I will see ‘verificate’, ‘verificate’? exists this word? This word ‘verificar’?

Teego: [Chat] Verify.

Natalie: Oh, yes, ‘verify’. You have to teach me English too, yes? Because you learn much, much more than me.

Teego: No problem.

Natalie: Yes? So I want that you correct me when I’m wrong.

The study by Silva (2012): some results

Interactions on the Portuguese language

Gustavo: O plural, Lini. O plural é isso aqui ooh... O plural seria assim... O plural seria esse ooh... 'vocês foram'.

Lini: Hum.

Gustavo: 'Vocês foram'.

Lini: E 'nós'?

Gustavo: Nós? 'Nós fomos'.

Lini: 'Nós fomos'.

Gustavo: Very good! 'Nós fomos'.

Lini: 'Fomos'.

Gustavo: Muito bem, Lini. E para falar no futuro. Para falar sobre o futuro, in the future tense, é muito simples, você pode falar assim ooh, for example, eu, 'eu vou comer', 'eu vou comer'. Eu...

Lini: Como em espanhol? Ah, eu vou. Unhum.

Gustavo: Exactly. Like I'm going to, I'm going to. Eu vou, aah, dormir... I think you won't have problems with this.

Lini: 'Eu vou comer'. 'Eu vou dormir'.

The study by Silva (2012): some results

Interactions on cultural aspects

Natalie: And have you ever known about ‘pequi’?

Teego: ‘PEQUI’? No.

Natalie: It is a typical food here in Goiás, it is very good.

Teego: But what is it like?

Natalie: It is, it is for you have lunch, when you almoça, have lunch. It is uhmm salt, but it has... ((verifica no dicionário <<http://translito.com>> a tradução de ‘espinhos’)). I don’t know the pronunciation, but I think is ‘thorns’.

Natalie: [Chat] thorns

Teego: ‘Thorns’?

Teego: Like in a rose, like the flower of a rose? Can you write the really name for the ‘pequi’?

Natalie: [Chat] espinhos.

Teego: ‘ESPINHOS’?

Natalie: ‘Espinhas’ is ‘thorns’. How can you pronounce this word?

Natalie: [Chat] Pequi.

Teego: Pequi ((lendo o chat)).

Teego: ‘Thorns’ ((atendendo à solicitação da pronúncia)).

Natalie: ‘Thorns’. ‘Pequi’ has ‘thorns’.

Teego: Ok.

Natalie: So, you have to take care with it.

Pequi



UFG telecollaboration lab



Interaction in the virtual environment: some final remarks

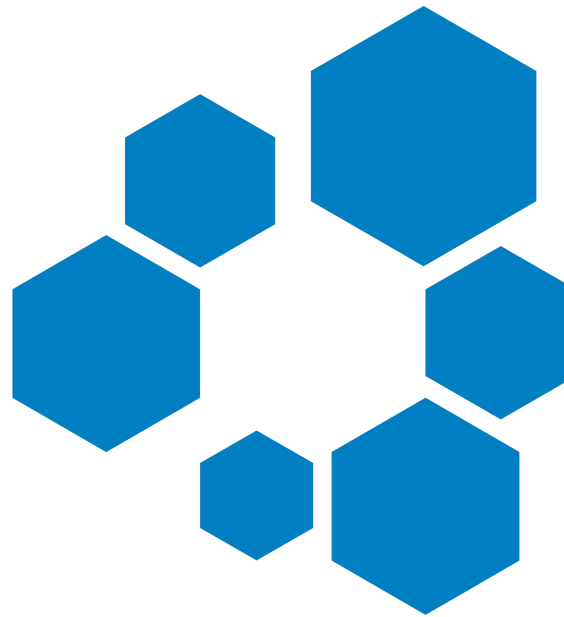
- **It promotes language learning as well as other language learning.**
- **It favors the co-construction of knowledge and autonomy.**
- **It may make the students become more motivated and more responsible for their learning.**
- **It provides not only opportunity for learning and developing the target language, but also the development of intercultural competence.**

Thank you!

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