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Peer Language Learning:
Blending Face-to-Face and Social Media Interactions

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Abstract / Summary

This publication introduces, gives an overview and exemplifies the concept of Peer Language Learning (PLL). PLL capitalizes the already existent terms of "peer learning" and "language learning" into one item referring to non-institutionalized (informal) adult language learning interactions. PLL is based on, yet expands beyond the traditional understanding of "language tandem" (Brammerts, 1996a).

Section one describes the concepts, principles and history of "peer learning", followed by a discussion around the expansion of PLL through social media, exposing the new dimensions which emerged with the evolution of the Internet and web 2.0. Section two focuses on analysing 14 instances of naturally - occurring PLL adult interactions (corpus PEER). Both the concepts and phenomena discussed in section one, and the analysis of PLL interactions of section two feed into the recommendations, which constitute section three.

The current publication is of interest for: PLL plurilinguals who, drawing from previous PLL experiences, could use the publication to integrate peer learning into their language learning; for teachers and coordinators of language learning programs; and also for researchers.

Body

Peer Language Learning: Theoretical considerations

1. What is Peer Language Learning (PLL)?

1.1. From Apprenticeship Learning to Informal Peer Learning

In previous times very few people would go to school in order to acquire skills necessary to accomplish different types of jobs. Talking about the evolution of apprenticeship, the way it came into place at first, and how it has evolved, Lave & Wenger (1991) show that one of the first ways to improve knowledge was for people to interact with each other. Over the centuries, people have always learned from each other, not only daily tasks that one could learn from the parents, but also jobs, in which the experienced persons could instruct the newcomers (Boud & Cohen, 2001). People engaged with each other in all types of activities and in all kinds of places, the 'skill/job' and the 'workplace' being one of the most common. Although the more experienced person was not a trained teacher/trainer, he/she was able to transfer his/her knowledge to others, and the apprentices would watch and try to reproduce/acquire what the experienced one did. It might not have been the best way to learn, and might not have given all the necessary skills to the apprentices, but this was aligned with the existent needs and training possibilities available. Furthermore, this kind of learning was matching the apprentices' expectations about specific skills and had the advantage of providing knowledge from experienced people who themselves had undergone a learning process (Boud & Cohen, 2001). One of the main features of this type of learning was the output, or the practice resulting from such learning: rather than acquiring their knowledge through passively watching the experienced peers, the apprentices were doing what the experienced ones were doing.

Nowadays, people go to school/institutions in order to acquire these skills and obtain recognition which is needed for most of the jobs; however, people still learn from one another while performing daily tasks, or when in a working environment, because studies don't always provide a complete understanding on what every job is about. Following the development of teaching/training institutions where people could learn from trained teachers or experienced trainers, the value of "apprenticeship" and the value of learning from and with each other, has diminished in recognition. It is now considered to be informal peer learning and not valued anymore by employers or different parties in official documents.

The current publication applies the notion of "peer learning" ("learning with and from each other") to language learning, and is referred to as "Peer Language Learning" (PLL). Peer Learning and Peer Language Learning in particular, come into focus as beneficial on at least three levels:

   i) Collaboration: peers working together, helping each other in their work

   ii) Levelling: peers have different degrees of expertise

A lot of the current research declares that PLL is beneficial and accomplishes many learning goals, not only in informal settings, but also in formal ones, like school settings or work contexts (Boud & Cohen, 2001). Block (2003) argues in favour of PLL, considering for example that input for language acquisition is necessary but not sufficient, and stating that we have to consider both the interaction and the output when designing language learning.

Language learning was previously considered as structural learning, where teaching was done in a one-way pattern, and the teachers were transmitting their knowledge to the students who were not necessarily able to put into practice this knowledge; in the recent years, it has encountered a social change. We have therefore switched the focus from linguistic competence to communication competence. It has now taken into account the social aspect of the learning process. This social change appeared during the last few decades (Block, 2003), and peer learning has become a popular concept in the learning environment.

Language "learning in tandem" started at the end of the Second World War and developed quickly in Europe. The original aim, from the political prospective, was to bring together the post-war European states and develop the multicultural and multilingual aspects. In that regard, it allowed people to discover another culture, it enabled them to talk more without the fear of being corrected all the time, and was more motivating since they could follow their own interest with their peers (Brammerts, 1996a). The process was a two-way, reciprocal learning situation, mutually beneficial for both parties involved (Brammerts, 1996a).

Nowadays, we do not have any doubts about the positive aspects of this approach and we are encouraged to develop it more over the coming generation with the improvements in technology supporting the development of such activities.

1.2. The Locus of Learning

Studies on exolingual interactions show that a foreign language learner can acquire the target language and some of its functionalities, through interactions with native speakers (Py et al., 1988, Py, 2000, Bartling, 1992).

By conceptualizing the "Séquences Potentiellement Acquisitionnelles" (SPA) in an exolingual context, Py et al. (1988) first define these SPA's as the ways the learners use their already acquired language knowledge to make autostructuration moves for producing utterances in the target language; the native speakers use heterostructuration moves to extend the learners' statements and thus their knowledge of the language (Matthey, 1996). In considering these aspects of learning, we can say that the learners restructure or extend their interlanguage and thus learn (Py, 2000).

Py et al. (1988) extend their explanation by considering that learners usually believe that having the norm as a reference to learn the language gives them a reference point, while also giving them the

possibility to adapt their learning process accordingly. In that regards, Py et al. (1988) refer to two ways of learning a language: learning the norm of the language and/or the construction of a system. These two aspects are complementary since the norm cannot exist without a system and vice versa. The learners can then develop their system and language skills through exolingual interactions with native speakers who are representatives of the norm.

This shows that not only learners can acquire a foreign language in a classroom environment with a teacher, but also through conversation with natives in the target language, considered as "natural settings". This is to demonstrate that we can learn from one another, if the 'other' can be considered a potential expert in the field.

In the same line of native/non-native speakers (NS-NNS) interaction, we mention Pica et al. (1996) who compared on one-hand interactions among language learners only and on the other hand interactions of language learners with native speakers. It has been demonstrated that both groups (learners-learners and learners-native speakers) received modified inputs and feedbacks from their respective non-native and native speakers in their dyads. Furthermore, some productions of the learners have been modified in relation to the inputs implemented by their dyads, and we can then consider that learning appeared during these interactions. As they mention, interactions offer language learners opportunities to extend their vocabulary and structures. They demonstrate that in NNS dyads there can be a limited source of modified input and output and the NNS speakers provide opportunities for feedback in a simplified form only.

We therefore align with Pica et al. (1996), who emphasise that participation in interactions plays an important role in language learning processes, specifically that the learners acquire input and obtain feedback through communication with native and non-native speakers in order to build up their knowledge of the language and thus produce modified outputs:

"some evidences show that participation in interaction can play an even broader role in the learning process by assisting language learners in their need to obtain input and feedback that can serve as linguistic data for grammar building and to modify and adjust their output in ways that expand their current interlanguage capacity."

(Pica et al., 1996, p. 60).

In terms of motivation, it has been shown that learners working together in groups develop greater motivation, initiative and have less anxiety in regards to their learning in comparison to learning with a teacher. Thus, they would produce more language capabilities, rich in terms of features and sociolinguistic functions.

1.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Language Learning vs. "traditional language learning"

The quotation used in the title makes reference at Cohen & Boud's work, helping us distinguish between student - teacher learning interaction in a classroom, peer learning within the classroom interaction, and peer learning outside the classroom environment:

"'Formalized' peer learning can help students learn more effectively, students learn from each other, they get more practice than traditional teaching and learning methods in taking responsibility for their own learning and, more generally, learning how to learn."

(Cohen & Boud, 2001, p. 3)

We understand classroom an institutionalized environment for language learning; the term "formalized" peer learning used by Cohen & Boud is thought of as embedded peer learning within the institutionalized classroom learning.

Brammerts (1996a), Paluka (2012) and Ullmo (2012), also bring into discussion the advantages and disadvantages of peer language learning over traditional language learning.

Brammerts mentions that "tandem learning" is considered authentic communication as opposed to communication with a teacher - where there could be more fear to speak and apprehension of making mistakes; thus inhibitions to talk.

In a PLL context, the learners help each other to learn and teach their respective languages, thus, there is some sort of mutual aid from both sides, and this reinforces their motivations to learn each other's languages, as well as help each other. In a teacher-student interaction, it only depends on how the teacher motivates the students to make them learn the language. The motivation is not triggered by a self-assumed responsibility within the group, but rather the responsibility falls on the teacher. Another important point is that, in peer learning, the peers can have tailor-made, personalised and individual learning, meaning that they can learn at their pace, with any of the tools available to them, and with any subjects of interest to them, when agreed upon with each other. In the classroom frontal teaching, although the teachers can adapt their teaching style to the students, they cannot always find common subjects, paces and tools for all the students.

In a PLL experience, the learners are more willing to tackle one another's problems since they had also faced issues during their own learning process. In the classroom, although the teachers are generally trained to help the learners face these problems, they do it from a teacher perspective rather than from a learner perspective.

A further aspect is the notion of interculturality; when learning a language with a native speaker, not only do we learn the target language, but also the culture of the country, since the other person brings all of his/her cultural background that can be shared with the learner. In PLL, this cultural aspect can be more interesting, since one can bring some life experience into the cultural part of the learning process. In the classroom, although the teacher can be a native speaker of the language and can transmit the cultural aspect of the language, it is not always the case.

Finally, peers have flexibility with regards to the meeting times, since they can both agree on the schedule, and meet in any place they want. In the classroom, the time is fixed and cannot be moved, since there is usually more than one person attending the class.

In a peer language learning setting, the peers are constantly interacting and conversing, thus they improve their speaking and listening skills, but also other skills that they want to work on. In a classroom context, the teacher usually chooses which skills to work on during the class, and generally, speaking and listening skills are not the priority, as with peer language learning. Moreover, peers can have a real-life conversation, rather than a simulated exchange as in the classroom.

Taking into consideration the fact that each peer has a life experience, which he/she will tend to use, we can relate this aspect to situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), namely that the language is learned within a certain context (i.e.: we learn the French that is spoken on the farm, the German used in the workplace, etc.).

PLL also has some disadvantages; for example, the consistency of the meetings might be lower than in a classroom context, as the peers are not paying for the meetings and thus do not consider this factor as motivating, unlike a class context where they usually pay fees to attend the class and are thus more motivated to go. The teacher can always find some motivational features to encourage the students to learn; as for peer learning, although they can have personalised learning, they are not trained teachers, and might not know how to teach or motivate one another. The classroom context has a structured setting where learning takes place in an organised, planned and progressive way, with a structured plan from low to high level; as for PLL, peers learn on a topic-based process, and might miss out some basic knowledge.

Usually, the peers are not trained teachers, so they need help in identifying learning goals, using learning methods and material, and cannot correct in the same way as a teacher would. In a classroom setting, the teacher would have thought about these aspects prior to classroom time and would then be able to adapt them to his/her class. Also, he/she can adapt his/her methods to the students' needs and ways of learning, which is not easy to do in a peer-learning environment, where the peers have different learning experiences.

Furthermore, peers might not have the same methods and aims for learning a foreign language, and thus adapting to each other and aligning in the interaction can be a challenge. A second challenge is the management of the gap between the language levels of the participants; we therefore understand learning not only in terms of language learning but also in terms of interactional strategies that support a fruitful learning partnership.

Most of the studies quoted above support the idea that PLL is not a learning process on its own, and cannot replace classroom learning, but can be seen as an alternative or a complement to language learning through another person (see Fig. 1): "it is not an alternative to traditional learning, but an important addition to the repertoire of teaching and learning activities that can enhance the quality of education" (Cohen & Boud, 2001, p. 4).

PLL is still considered as informal learning and cannot provide learners with a full understanding and knowledge of the target language (Vasallo & Telles, 2006):

"None of them will actually teach language. Rather, they will use language for sharing ideas, thoughts and cultural information regarding [their respective countries] and their world views. Each of them will try to autonomously learn [the other language], respectively, and try to use the languages in this real conversation, while being helped by his/her more proficient partner." (Vasallo & Telles, 2006, p. 2).

The following SWOT analysis sums up the points made throughout the section above:

Strengths	Opportunities
Mutual aid from both peers Collaboration between the peers Flexibility of time and space Constant interaction and conversation Real-life conversations	Tackle each others' problems Tailor-made learning process Interculturality Life experience Increasing motivation as per shared interests
Weaknesses Difficulties to identify goals Learning material to be created Considered as informal learning Peers are not teachers Lack of attendance due to lack of constraints	**Threats** Consistency might decline Demotivation Peers can also take on the mistakes of the other peer Learning is not linear

Fig 1: SWOT analysis of PLL

1.4. Tools to mediate the Peer Language Learning interaction

Regarding the use of tools, during their interactions, peers can make use of pre-existing tools. When they are interacting face-to-face, they can use teaching materials or objects in order to facilitate language learning. When interacting through social media or the Internet, the tools used are electronic devices (computer, mobile phone…) and software to be able to communicate (chat tools, emails, phone calls through Internet).

During these interactions, they may be developing some artefacts, such as explanations on paper, or through some Internet programs, or notes that can be reused in further sessions.

2. Origins of Peer Language Learning: European invention

As stated previously, PLL with its "tandem" reference, started at the end of the Second World War, when politicians had the idea of implementing a new form of language learning based on a mutual learning between two different language native speakers. It was originally to unite European states

and develop their multicultural and multilingual aspects. One of the main advantages was that it could be implemented in many different learning contexts, as referred to below.

The examples include holiday camps for youngsters created in the 1960s, between Germany and France, and the creation of the OFAJ (Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse, i.e. Franco-German Youth Office) in 1963 after a treaty signed by both French and German heads of state. This protocol aimed to "tighten the bonds between young people in both countries, to strengthen their mutual understanding and, to this effect, provoke, encourage and, where necessary, set up encounters and exchanges between young people'' (de Gaulle et all., 1963, Article 2). Their aim was to deepen the French-German relations from the youth point of view. This innovation was a huge success, as the organization was able to bring together some 8 million youngsters to take part in 300.000 exchange programs. Some of the main objectives consisted of strengthening links between young people in both countries, to contribute to the discovery of each other's culture and to encourage intercultural learning (OFAJ). Nowadays, it still continues to develop its practices and ideas towards new horizons.

Following this initiative, from 1973 to 1983, bi-national language classes for adults were created in Munich, initiated by the 'Volkshochschule München' in collaboration with the 'Anatolischer Solidaritätsverein' (Turkish organization), between Turkish immigrant workers and German social workers. This was in order to promote intercultural understanding as well as language learning (Byram, 2001; Stickler & Lewis, 2008). These classes had some success for a while but did not survive due to the lack of interest from the German speakers.

Then, Jürgen Wolff in Madrid developed a procedure between Spanish and German speakers. This enterprise became the basis of the current TANDEM Network, which has evolved to the association 'TANDEM International' which has a global licence under the Tandem Foundation.

In the 1980's, the concept was implemented in private language schools in Spain and Italy, between students and tourists. Later, it became a common practice among foreign and native students in some universities in Europe; as well as in schools on exchange programs with foreign pupils. It developed in other non-European countries with the creation of different associations within education centres, universities, Goethe-Institutes and later on, cooperation with the 'International E-Tandem Network' coordinated by Helmut Brammerts (1993).

Today, the 'International E-Tandem Network' continues to grow and improve academic cooperation and on-going teacher training, with the creation of the Foundation 'TANDEM Fundazioa' led by the pioneers of the original Tandem learning; it has developed not only in language schools and universities, but also in refugee centres and non-profit institutions. In addition, some training courses are organised within companies in order to develop language learning in specific working fields. Today, anybody can benefit from the peer language learning experience if he/she wishes to.

3. Some basic principles of Peer Language Learning

Considering the concept of Peer Language Learning, one should implement some basic principles in order to benefit fully from this experience:

a) The principle of reciprocity, which is based on the reciprocal benefit that each partner can get from the exchange built on a common understanding and devotion to each other's learning process. This means that each partner should make the effort for the other partner to learn, in terms of time, devotion and equal time for each language; but also, at a higher level, to focus on the learning objectives of the sessions and how to achieve them; thus, each of them should feel that they benefit from the partnership (Stickler & Lewis, 2008). This means that there should be some sort of reciprocal dependence and mutual support of the partners (Brammerts, 1996b) in order for them to participate and actively benefit from the learning experience.

b) The principle of autonomy relies on the fact that each partner is responsible for their learning as well as for their partner's learning. This encompasses collaboration and partnership in order for them to evaluate their weaknesses and strengths so as to acquire self-management skills - the bases for peer language learning (Stickler & Lewis, 2008). Furthermore, they can develop a certain form of debriefing activity after each session about their learning process, in order to improve and develop their learning experience. These shared reflections are essential for the well-being of the learning experience (Vassallo & Telles, 2006); Lamy & Goodfellow (1999, p. 43) refer to this as "reflective conversation".

c) During the meetings, interactions should be based on each partner's willingness and desire to learn the target language. When interacting with one other, each partner is committed to the learning experience of the other, and should take into consideration this aspect during the interactions. The notion of face-to-face interactions is based on the fact that both partners can directly interact on what the other says, and can eventually correct or react to what the other says.

In peer language learning, face-to-face interactions are based on the awareness that each partner has for the other's expectations to learn the target language. It involves mutual consent between them, and an understanding of what the other is expecting from the experience. The very beginning of peer language learning was conceptualised through face-to-face interactions, since other means of interactions were not developed enough at the time of its creation. In todays' world, this is still the prime way of communication involving all sorts of prosodic and paralinguistic information which facilitates understanding between the speakers (Stickler & Lewis, 2008).

d) The notion of collaboration is one of the most important principles to be included in the process of peer language learning, and is defined by Beatty (2003) as a process towards achieving a common goal; in the case of PLL, both learners need to work on the achievement of their reciprocal and own language learning. This implies that they should collaborate with regard to each other's learning, and should motivate each other in this process. A direct consequence to this process is that they do not only learn each other's language, but also learn about each other's interests, way of living, and most of all about their respective culture. Despite being a learner, each of them is not strictly speaking a teacher, but rather an expert informant on his/her own language and culture (Stickler & Lewis, 2008).

Thus, both are as much learners, as they are tutors, for the language learned and their own language and culture respectively.

e) Regarding what is done during each meeting, it is the role of both partners to first define what their aims and objectives are, and how to implement them. The subjects of the PLL meetings can go from basic chatting about their own lives, cultures and interests to deeper conversations about general topics such as their thoughts about their learning, everyday conversations needed in everyday lives, or any subjects that interest both partners. The way to enact these subjects depends greatly on the level of the peers, but also on their interests in the subjects. In such cases, they can start with a general understanding of the subject, and narrow it down to its specific forms and features. The idea behind this is not only to talk about an interesting subject, but also to develop vocabulary and knowledge on the subject for the benefit of both parties.

As a conclusion, we define the difference between a peer language learning group and people who are randomly meeting in a group. The PLL group would have a different approach to the communication and conversations constructed among them; they will be more focussed on the language learning aspect of their interactions, although this can also be considered as natural and informal. They might also correct each other's mistakes as and when necessary. Although the subjects discussed can be similar, each participant would make some effort to be understood by everybody, and they should consider one another's level of language and thus make the topic understandable. Also, the time should be equally divided amongst the languages of the interacting participants. In a PLL group, people should also reflect on their learning experiences, which does not need to be done in a group of people without language learning objectives. The other aspect of a PLL group is the necessity to meet up on a regular basis with pre-defined objectives. However, they could use this time to do the same thing as any other group would do, like having a coffee, watching a movie or so. A random group of people would probably meet as friends, without pre-defined objectives. The members of the PLL group do not need to be friends from the beginning, although some affinities can emerge through time. In a PLL group, people should be responsible for their learning and that of their partner, and there should be some commitment from each member of the group to attend each meeting and bring the knowledge of their language forward, in order to benefit as much as possible from the meetings.

4. Expanding tandem learning

4.1 Peer Language Learning: Speaking and writing aspects

"Speaking" and "Writing" are traditionally seen as part of the four skills to be developed in a classroom language learning context ("speaking" also referred to with the term "oral"): oral comprehension, oral expression, written expression, written comprehension. If we were to classify the use of the four skills in the Peer Language Learning context, we would notice that they are not understood separately (as separate exercises or as separate skills to be evaluated), but as resources in the construction of "talk". "Talk" is different from "speaking" as it can include a writing activity, reading a piece of written text, discussing a piece of symbolic resource (e.g. image), the use of

objects at hand as symbolic resources, etc. "Talk" is therefore understood here as "talk-in-interaction" (Schegloff, 2007).

Most of the face-to-face Peer Language Learning constructs "talk-in-interaction" with the learner taking notes and/or the expert taking up an editor's role, meaning that he/she writes down elements of "talk" for the learner. This construction of the interaction is similar to peer activities as constructed in a classroom. If a teacher gives the students the task to talk in groups on a certain topic and then report on the results, the students are not obliged to put anything in writing; research shows however that in some cases, they use the writing of a text/or of ideas in order to find and fix the answer to be delivered (in an oral form) to the class. So the talk gets fixed in writing and then delivered in a "talk" form again, similar to a PLL non-classroom activity. If a teacher gives the students the task to talk in groups on a certain topic and then produce a piece of text in writing, several permutations are possible: (i) all the participants agree on what they write and they all mark in writing (individually) the same text; (ii) all the participants agree on what they write and only one person in the group writes down the text; (iii) all the participants agree on what they write and they jointly write the text; (iv) the participants do not agree on what they write together beforehand and each participant decides on his/her own what to write continuing the text of the other participants. With reference to the second situation, when the students want to produce and agree on a written form, in PLL non-classroom situation we see two corresponding movements: either the expert takes the "editor" role and produces a correct written text, or the learner asks for the help of the expert to produce a written text in the target language.

The online interaction context is represented in our analysis section by 'chat data'. The chat lines that unfold are very similar to a face-to-face interaction in terms of adjacency pairs (greeting sequences, question-answer) for example and are considered to be a "conversation" (Mondada, 1999). The participants use a keyboard to mediate what is being constructed as 'talk-in-interaction'. The use of emoticons, or symbols (for example the use of "@" in the turn management emphasize the oral character of the chat exchange, contributing to its "talk" identity.

4.2 Multiplications of actors, from groups of two to larger groups

The management of 'talk-in-interaction' is challenged by the distribution of roles and turns at 'talk'. At least two perspectives turn out to be relevant in face-to-face interaction: the spatial arrangement and the management of symbolic resources (pen, paper, etc.). Unlike teacher-student talk, in PLL talk, the participants rarely distribute turns by calling one another's names out; rather, the spatial positioning (in a circle, directly opposite, sitting next to each other) has an influence in the deciding of who will get the next turn at talk. From this perspective, dyadic group talk seems to deploy less resources in the management of "who is talking next"; In multiple participant groups, the use of the generic "you" (we don't know which participant is being addressed), the overlaps (favouring repetitions and restarts), the silences, the distribution of expert-novice roles (who is asking the questions), etc. all make the decision of "who is talking next" more difficult.

When symbolic resources are easily accessible to all the participants (on a screen for example), there are more chances of a smooth talk-in-interaction; when the shared resources are small in dimension, the more participants we have, the more difficult it is for them to have access to the resource in order to exploit it for a new turn.

In chat interactions with more than two participants, overlap often occurs, causing a next-turn management problem, with several first pair parts in a row (Schegloff, 2007, 100). This is often solved by naming the participant in the second pair part turn (also through the use of a symbolic resource, "@", for example: "@ Ana"). In a two participant chat interaction, the participant who launches a first pair part would usually wait for the other participant's second pair part (e.g.: question-answer).

5. Looking towards the future: Social media

5.1 Potential of social media

The World Wide Web has developed enormously since its creation and over the last decades more features have been implemented. From its origins, the web was considered as unidirectional, where users played a passive role, as they would just receive information and read 'static' content created by experts (Stevenson & Liu, 2010), or chat and send emails; this was called Web 1.0. With the development of the web and the arrival of new technologies and new forms of communication, it has expanded its possibilities and capabilities, with new opportunities for the users to, nowadays, create, consume, edit content and collaborate with other users (Stevenson & Liu, 2010). Users now have a more active role in the development of this new form called Web 2.0. This implied the emergence of new tools/applications, allowing users to communicate in different ways. These new tools include, above all, social media, which helps users develop their creativity and collaborate with others, allowing them to interact on the web, by posting, commenting, editing and creating all kinds of information created and posted by other users. This revolution of the Net has not only made people express themselves more freely, but also made them collaborate and share more than ever before; as coined by Downes (2006, in Blattner & Lomicka, 2012, p. 4 f.),

"the emergence of Web 2.0 is a social transformation that enables and encourages communication, as these websites allow members to express themselves and to interact with others".

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define it as a "new platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion". Social media is used by everybody in the world now, and is not restricted to knowledgeable people or professionals (Bingham & Conner, 2010). Social media can be defined as, "the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). As Buffardi & Campbell (2008) put it, users of social networking Web sites try to maintain a Web presence and keep in contact with a large number of individuals as part of their daily routine. Stevenson & Liu (2010, p. 233) use a fair definition of Web 2.0, coined by O'Reilly as, "a collaborative environment in which users have the opportunity to

contribute to a growing knowledge base, assist in the development of web-based tools, and participate in online communities".

This emergence of social media is a factor to take into consideration when talking about any kind of communication (face-to-face communication, and also through the Internet). With the evolution of social media, one cannot rely on emails only, and needs to consider any sort of social media in order to interact at its best using the available tools provided by the Net. Social media was first used in private settings in our daily lives; it has now become more and more used in professional settings, and also in the learning environment. One of the first ideas behind using social media with peer language learning is that people can organise meetings without having to meet face-to-face. This main aspect is of prime importance since it allows participants to meet with worldwide partners, and also mix physical and online meetings with local people. The other aspect of social media is that the participants can use more than just the 'speaking' skill of learning - they can also use the writing and reading parts which are not necessarily used during physical meetings. Moreover, they can choose between synchronous and asynchronous communication. This last part is emphasised by the fact that not only can they can chat using the written form, but they can talk and watch each other through video-camera, as well as using white board tools provided by some software (Vassallo & Telles, 2006).

These forms of social media vary from different kinds of platforms and involve media sharing; media manipulation and mash-ups; instant messaging, chat and conversational arenas; online games and virtual worlds; social networking; blogging; social bookmarking; recommendation systems; wikis and collaborative editing tools; syndication (Conole & Alevizou, 2010). All these platforms are used in different ways related to the users' needs and desires and allows for the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). They allow members to communicate in a new way where everybody is a user as well as a producer of content. This means that not only users are creating and posting content on the web, which can be read and commented on, but also, they can interact with the people commenting and replying to them. In short, blogs are used to create user-created content, wikis allow multiple users to contribute to a knowledge base, and social networks allow users to develop online communities of shared interests (Stevenson & Liu, 2010).

Another feature of social media is that it allows people to meet, interact and exchange through the web whilst staying at home. This expansion of the face-to-face interactions has not only the advantage to saving time, but can also enable people to delocalise their interactions in terms of space and time. It is a process of delocalization of the face-to-face interaction to a non-face-to-face one. Thus, not only will they save time, but they can also interact from anywhere as long as an Internet connection is provided. This expansion of time and space helps the users to communicate more from different places at different times than if they had to meet in person. This offers a new dimension in terms of socialisation and personal communication (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012). Furthermore, not only can users have one-to-one communication, but also, with some platforms, they can expand their communication to one-to-many, or even many-to-many written or oral exchanges (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012). Thus, there can be multiple actors interacting at the same time or not, and on the same topic while being in a different place. This creates a new dimension in the world of communication and information sharing, because not only can people share and

communicate from anywhere, with whom they want and at any time, but also, they can manage to choose with whom they exchange and can define their communities in any way they want, on any platforms they choose. This creates new opportunities in terms of ways of communication as well as content creativity, design and possibilities.

In close relation to the development of social media, the term 'participatory culture' (Jenkins, 2006) has become more and more popular. This term is not new. Long before the age of the Internet, participatory culture was developed. It includes the notion of 'fandom' and the idea of a community, willing to allow people to participate and to contribute to the community. With the evolution of the Internet, this term has taken another dimension, allowing people from around the globe to connect to each other and create worldwide communities.

Jenkins (2006, p. 3) defines it in the following way:

"the term participatory culture contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands."

This shift has changed our ways of interacting with technology, and we have now become active participants, interacting with each other on different platforms, at any place, any time. The principles of participatory culture reside in the fact that anyone can contribute to others' contributions in order to develop, improve and react on these contributions. The main core of participatory culture is that everyone's contribution matters and is valued. "Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued" (Jenkins, 2010).

The idea to improve each others' contributions can develop the learning experience of the members of the community; as Jenkins (2010) coined it: "we throw ideas out in the world, and bring them back in an improved way, because of our engagement with communities".

To sum up the principles of participatory culture, it has:

"1/Relatively low barriers for engagement; 2/Strong support for sharing creation with offers; 3/Informal mentorship; 4/Members believe their contributions matter; 5/Care about others' opinions of self & work" (Jenkins, 2010).

5.2 Social media and Peer Language Learning

O'Rourke (2005) mentioned that interactions in CMC should be seen as socially and culturally situated activities engaged in by the learners as agents who co-construct not only shared meanings but also their own roles.

As seen earlier, social media has taken a role of great importance in our daily lives; but for some time it stayed at the stage of informal and non-educational social interactions (Stevenson & Liu,

2010). However, for the past few years, social media is expanding to include professional use; even in educational institutions, some teachers have discovered and are using the Web 2.0 tools for their classrooms as educational tools (Stevenson & Liu, 2010), (for example, the website "Whyville": http://www.whyville.net). In terms of language learning within institutional premises or in informal settings, social media has taken a big part in helping developing language learning with peers and/or teachers. Some people have even created foreign language learning websites that use the Web 2.0 for this purpose (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012), in order for users to share and learn new languages through social interactions; in other words, to interact directly with native speakers through the use of video, audio, or text-based chat (Stevenson & Liu, 2010). These websites include for example, "Palabea" (http://www.palabea.net), "Live Mocha" (http://www.livemocha.com), "Babbel" (http:/www.babbel.com) and so on. These websites allow users to have real-time conversations, which corroborate with the aspect of learning a language when travelling abroad, or when being in the country of the learned language.

In their article, Stevenson & Liu (2010) make a comparison between three different websites used for language learning, and how members use them. In this section, we are not going to make any comparison or statement on how to use such websites; however, we want to point out that these websites are the most used in terms of peer language learning through social media. Taking into consideration the fact that it can be difficult to find a foreign native speaker in a monolingual country, these websites are of great help in that concern, in the way that people don't have to travel to another country in order to meet a foreigner and thus improve their language by exchanging (Vassallo &Telles, 2006). They can meet through these websites and can communicate almost as if they were meeting physically.

Vassallo & Telles (2006) list some tools available for peer language learning online, these include:

"(a) synchronous communication by means of chats (reading and writing),

(b) voice communication resources (listening and speaking),

(c) image resources (video-conferencing device) through which one can see the facial expressions and body behavior of his/her partner on the other side

(d) the white board tool – a kind of electronic note pad on which one can write and draw sketches."

Nowadays people travel more than ever before, thus they can easily get to another country to learn a language. However, in order to maintain and improve their language learning, they need to constantly use the language and speak eventually with native speakers; and they cannot travel all the time to do this. With the technological advances described earlier, people can now meet through the websites mentioned above in the same way as if they were meeting face-to-face. However, there are some differences between both ways of communication. We previously discussed the expansion of interactions regarding social media in terms of space, time and information sharing with users. This applies to language learning in a way that is also beneficial for this purpose. As Stickler and Lewis (2008, p. 238) put it:

"in face-to-face spoken communication, prosodic and paralinguistic information facilitate understanding by giving crucial information about speakers' attitudes. In an online written communication, strategic sophistication and high levels of motivation are both required to sustain an exchange with someone you may never have met in person."

Other differences include the fact that people cannot fully express themselves if the communication is made through a video camera, as body language is an important factor in communication. Thus, the interactions take on another dimension because the learners need to create other ways of expressing themselves in order to be understood.

In his article, Brammerts (1996b) focuses on the "International E-Mail Tandem Network", created in 1992, to develop e-mail exchanges between German and English students. He explains some of the differences between both means of communication (face-to-face and digital), as per the written and asynchronous aspects of emails, which help students read emails from their partners multiple times, think through, and also make corrections. He also considers the real-life communication aspect, which a classroom doesn't have.

To come back to the collaborative aspect of social media, Stevenson and Liu (2010) emphasised that Web 2.0 has created tools which allow/enable a better collaborative environment among its users. Indeed, not only can they interact with different kinds of tools in order to meet up, but they can also use asynchronous tools in order to comment, post or react to anything that one learner puts onto the Internet. They can also work better on common goals, using the tools provided by Web 2.0.

With regards to the expansion of the conversation, social media makes it easier to add persons to the conversations, considering the aspects of time and space. Indeed, for most of the tools of Web 2.0, users can communicate with one or more members, by simply adding them to the conversations, and thus including them in it. They can then all contribute to the conversation, rather than having this one as synchronous or asynchronous; they can also participate towards common goals on a defined project and can interact and react about the process of the project.

As discussed previously, social media has contributed greatly to the evolution of peer language learning; hence, we can make some assumptions on how PLL can evolve into the future in relation to the new tools in place or under the development of Web 2.0. These include for example, "Scoop.it" or "Pinterest" where users can comment and interact about a certain subject related to their interest. Indeed, if the learners define and agree about a certain topic of their interests, they can then use some of the tools provided by Web 2.0 in order to collect information about these interests; later on, they can, as dyads or within a peer learning group, interact, comment and react on the information provided by social media, and the comments posted by others. Thus, not only can they find and discover information about what interests them, but also share them with others, and react to them. This creates a dynamic development of language learning using the tools provided by current and future social media. They could also use "Youtube" to share videos and comment on them or Wikis and Blogs to share personal information.

6. Individual initiatives and/or integrated teaching systems/devices

Considering the evolution of PLL in all the different aspects mentioned above, it has now developed in different domains, on an institutional, and also, individual level. Its emergence has grown from intercultural programs, where meetings were organised, including travelling to a foreign country. This was expanded to training programs at universities (accessories of Erasmus), with students going abroad to learn the target language. Later on, it was integrated into classroom contexts, at higher education, where students could have peers from other classrooms around the world. A further step has been taken to implement it directly into university programs, as a topic, where students can meet and write assignments about their experiences.

One of the major reasons for this implementation and development in these contexts is the enthusiasm of certain school systems and universities towards technology. Also, needless to say that the young population of the schools and universities, as well as the evolution of the Web and thus the development of social media, allowed peer language learning to develop more systematically.

Furthermore, this institutional level has been taken to implement peer language learning at individual levels, with the conception of websites to link peer learners together from all over the world. On this aspect, some people have taken the opportunity to educate themselves and consider self-learning, learning with a peer at their own pace and with any language they want to learn.

The creation of associations also contributes greatly to the development of peer language learning, which started in the early ages of peer language learning, and continued to develop afterwards. These help gathering foreign people together in order to learn languages.

Peer Language Learning in interaction: examples

The examples quoted below are part of the corpus PEER (Plurilingually Engaging intERactants), available online at www.dica-lab.org. The participants, students of an innovative master programme (Ziegler 2011), have several languages in their repertoire. The participants were asked to collect the audio recordings/chat logs of their interactions for one of the classes of the master programme.

What follows refers to short examples which illustrate and refer back to some of the concepts that have been discussed in the first section. The analysis uses the methodological tools of Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) and focuses, among others, on the negotiation of the plurilingual repertoire (Ziegler, Sert, & Durus, 2012), on the display of "teacher" identities (Ziegler, 2013) and the construction of meaning among peers (Ziegler, Durus, & Sert, 2013). The analysis of the examples is not exhaustive; we only refer to the elements which point to the ideas that we put forward in the first section.

The current section makes use of three types of data: (a) interactional data (collected in face to face meetings), chat data (collected online) & testimonials (collected via email). In transcribing the data

(Selting et al., 1998), we kept as close to the original as possible, meaning that we do not correct the language of the participants. The original recordings of examples 1a, 1b, 1c, and 3 can be found at http://dica-lab.org/research/data/data-extracts/.

a. Expert/NS vs. Novice/NNS

In example 1a below four peers participate in a PLL meeting for the first time. They all know each other as colleagues and they all have different first languages, Emilie being the only Luxembourgish national. Previous to line 1, Marc introduces the topic of the "gender" of the words in French and how that is difficult for him. Even though none of the participants below describes him/herself as a "native speaker (NS) of French", in the sense that French was acquired as a second, not as a first language (as a non native speaker NNS), Emilie however displays a certain language expertise in lines 5-6:

Example 1a
(audio recording available at http://dica-lab.org/research/data/data-extracts/)

```
001      Emi:    OUais=mais parce=que c=est dur parce=que <<p> bon> chaque
                 yes but because it=s difficult because well each
002              langue c=est différente;
                 language is different
003      Bet:    [OUI::;
                 yes
004      Mar:    [mm=hm
005->    Emi:    c=est différent (.) et même=eh même euh: moi je fais
                 it=s different and even even me I make
006->            parfois des fautes parce=que en français il=y=a DES MOts
                 sometimes mistakes because in French there are words
007->            par exemple: euhm. il=y=a aussi LA VOItu:re=
                 for example euhm there is also the car (fem.)
```

As Emilie launches herself into an expansion of "c'est dur" (en: it's difficult) introduced by "parce que": "chaque langue c'est differente" (en: because every language is different). Beth and Marc ratify her epistemic stance in lines 3 and 4. In lines 5-7 Emilie takes her argument further through a recycled turn beginning, followed by an "et" (en: and), described as a "continuer" in the literature. She then positions herself as an expert "même même moi" (en: even even I) and softened by "parfois" (en: sometimes). Even though Emilie has not acquired French as a first language, she is the expert in the current group interaction and she assumes that role; she shows her expertise by epistemic stances (l.1), positioning herself as an expert (l.5) and by giving examples (l.7).

b. Explicit vs. embedded illustrations

Example 1b is an expansion of example 1a and brings to the table the degree of explicitness of certain language explanations in PLL.

Example 1b

```
001     Emi:   OUais=mais parce=que c=est dur parce=que <<p> bon> chaque
               yes but because it=s difficult because well each
002            langue c=est différente;
               language is different
003     Bet:   [OUI::;
               yes
004     Mar:   [mm=hm
005     Emi:   c=est différent* (.) et meme=eh meme euh: moi je fais
               it=s different and even even me I make
                                *Lia laughs
006            parfois des fautes parce=que en français il=y=a DES MOts
               sometimes mistakes because in French there are words
007->          par exemple: euhm. il=y=a aussi LA VOItu:re=
               for example euhm there is also the car (fem.)
008     Mar:   =mm=hm
009->   Emi:   et uh:: en luxembourgeois <<p> c=e::st. DEN auto>=c=est
               and in Luxemburgish it=s the car (masc.) =it=s
010            LE voiture=
               the car (masc.)
011->   Mar:   =LE voiture
               the car (masc.)
012     Emi:   <<pp>yeah> donc; il=y=a=
               yeah so there=is
```

Emilie illustrates the stance produced in lines 1-2 "chaque langue c'est différente" with a first example in lines 6-7, "en français...la voiture", emphasizing the determiner "la" and a second example again with an emphasized determiner, "en luxembourgeois c=est den auto", with emphasis on "den", translated in line 10 into "le voiture" in order to illustrate the determiner in the masculine form, even though the correct form is in feminine, "la voiture" as stated in line 7. Marc produces a go-ahead token in line 9 and then repeats "le voiture" in line 12 followed by Emilie's acknowledgment token. The conversation then moves to a different topic.

Emilie's comparison is valid from the point that it marks the core of the discussion "the determiners" with an emphasis in all three cases: la, den, le. She does not however move the example at a meta-discussion level where she would say that the same word has different genders in French and Luxembourgish and that's why even for her, French is difficult (Luxembourgish being her first language and thus the expertise justified). Secondly, the item that Marc repeats in line 12 is not correct, as "voiture" takes a feminine determiner, "la" and not "le". Emilie acknowledges Marc's contribution as ratification (of the explanation/translation, not of the form) and does not treat it as problematic since she does not correct it.

c. Taking on someone' talk format

Example 1c is a continuation of example 1b and shows that the multilingual language awareness of the participants contributes to the maintaining of the topic introduced in lines 1-2 (example 1b) by Emilie, the topic being that gender determiners in French are difficult.

Example 1c
(audio recording available at http://dica-lab.org/research/data/data-extracts/)

```
013     Emi:    <<pp>yeah> donc; il=y=a=
                yeah so there=is
014     Mar:    =c=est comme [(allemand)?
                it=s like German
015     Emi:                 [=oui; il=y=a plein [trucs comme ça
                             yes there=are many things like that
016     Bet:                                    [<<pp> oui c=est comme
                                                 yes it=s like
017->           c=est la (par exemple) que: (.) j=AIME ÇA en anglais?
                it=s the (for example) that I like it in English that
018             qu=il=n==y=aucune [de ::s
                there=is= =no s
019     Emi:                      [verbes
                                   verbs
020     Mar:    verbes
                verbs
021     Bet:    verbes (.)
                verbs
022     Emi:    =yeah that=s good;
023->   Bet:    =et=et j=aime ça avec le chinois aussi; parce=que (.)
                =and=and I like it with Chinese as well because
024             [pour moi' pour moi le langue;=
                 for me for me the language
025     Mar:    [ce n=a=pa:s' ((cette sexualité (pour mots)?))
                 it doesn't have that sexuality for words
026->   Bet:    =le langue de chine est est=il=n=étais=pas de=uh uh
                =the language from China is is=it=wasn=t of
027             difficile' pour apprendre' parce=que:: (.) il n=est pa:s
                difficult to learn because it isn=t
028             beaucoup de *conjugation des verbes. et aussi: pas=de
                            *(english pronunciation)
                a lot of conjugaison of the verbs and also not
029     Mar:    de:=
                a
030     Emi:    =de sexe=
                =a sex
031     Bet:    [=sexe;
                 =sex
032     Mar:    [=˘m=hm:
033     Bet:    =oui; avec les mots; (.) e:t <<p> c=est (.) difficile
                =yes with the words and it=s difficult
034             ((laughing) comme ça)>
                            like that
```

```
035     Mar:    <<p> ((yeah that=s it>=
036     Emi:    =c c=est ça uh: la difficulté en français
                that's what's difficult in French
037     Mar:    mhm:;
```

In line 17-18 Beth displays her expertise of a NS of English, in a structure with an expansion: "j'aime ça ...que". Interestingly, Emilie orients to that with a turn in English, in line 22. Beth continues in French though, giving another example which supports her idea, namely the Chinese language (lines 23-24). She doesn't get the time to expand further as Marc takes the floor, overlapping (which can justify the repeated turn initial) and asking what looks like a clarification question in line 25: "it doesn't have that sexuality for words" (approximate translation). Beth produces an explanation which ends with a hesitation, taken up by Marc in line 29 and solved by Emilie in line 30. Emilie's completion is repeated, this often being a sign of acceptance. Beth is about to close the sequence in line 33, ratified by Marc in line 35. It is Emilie who produces another epistemic stance: "C=est ça la difficulté en français" (that's what's difficult in French), reinforcing her language expert identity.

c' Example 1c shows the participants recycling structures of the type "il y a" (l. 15, Emilie), in the opposite form "il n' y aucune" (l. 17, Beth); "c'est dur" (l.1, Emilie) and "c'est difficile" (line 1, Beth).

c'' A second conclusion refers to the situated use of languages: in line 17-18 Beth refers to English, her language of expertise and Emilie orients to Beth's turn with an agreement in English (l. 22)

c''' A third conclusion refers to the multilingual language awareness of the participants which allows them to sustain the topic and therefore the interaction.

d. NS expertise vs. NNS expertise

In example 2 below, four participants bring contributions to the development of the interaction. The participants discuss the pronunciation of a certain structure in French. Charles is the only NS of French in the interaction and all the participants have different first languages.

Example 2

```
001->   Joh:    euh cha=charles?
002             euh=en francais, (0.8) je ne sais pas
                euh=in French I do not know
003             mais normalment <<all>je=sais=pas>
                but normally I d=know
(...)
022->   Cha:    je sais PAS c=est c=est [très très informel
                I d=know it=s very very informal
023     Ale:                           [je sais pas
                                        I d=know
(...)
034->   Cha:    <<all>mais j=ne sais pas c=est difficile>
```

```
                        but I=don=t know it=s difficult
035             [=je=n sais pas
                 =I don=t know
036     Kat:    [(   ) je [sais pas
                      I=d know
037     Joh:           [je sais pas
                        I=d know
038->   Cha:    =je=n sais pas mais essaie d=le prononcer> un petit peu
                 I don=t know but try to pronounce it a little bit
039     Kat:    (je sais pas)
                 I=d know
040->   Joh:    =ah oui tres bien
                 =ah yes very good
(...)
053     Joh:    <<all>il y a quelque chose>
                      there is something
054     Ale:    sais pas
                 don=t know
055     Kat:    euh c=est une [jep=je pense euh
                      it=s a I=I think
056     Ale:                  [je ne sais pas
                               I do not know
057     Kat:    une=une mot une mot
                 a=a word a word
058->   Joh:    =un mot,
                 =a word
059     Kat:    euh en polonaise ((chuckling)) rzepa
                      in Polish rzepa
060     write on the board
061     (2.5)
062     Kat:    (jai) (pa) ((chuckling))
                 I=d have
063     Cha:    =jai pa et qu=est-ce [que c=est'
                 =I=d have and what is it
064     Kat:                         [(   )
065     Ale:    =(   )
066->   Kat:    c=est un légoume
                 it=s a vegetuble
067->   Cha:    un légume
                 a vegetable
```

At the beginning of the example Charles is oriented to as "the expert" in French (lines 1-2) and Charles assumes the attributed expertise (lines 22, 34, 38). However, Charles is not the only participant displaying expertise in French: John does it in line 40 when he produces an assessment of Kate's previous turn and in line 58 when he corrects Kate's previous turn. Kate then shows expertise in Polish and Charles orients to that with a repetition and a question (line 63). As Kate delivers the response in French, Charles corrects her pronunciation in the following turn (line 67).

e. Professional Teaching Practices vs. Spontaneous teaching practices

Examples 3 (interactional data) and 4 (testimonial) below, point to the same difficulty in PLL: how does one share what he/she knows?

e' In example 3 below Alexia, Charles and John negotiate their peer interaction: which languages they should use and with which language they should start first :

Example 3
(audio recording available at http://dica-lab.org/research/data/data-extracts/)

```
001     Ale:    on commence d'abord avec quoi, (.) français::
                we start first with what, French
002     Cha:    =ouais, <<all>et après on fait un peu d'allemand>
                =yes and after we do a bit of German
003     Ale:    mm=hm
(...)
004     Cha:    tu ne PARle pas allemand
                you don=t speak German
005     Ale:    mhm=mhm;
006     Cha:    mais tu veux le faire,
                but you want to do it
007     Ale:    oui=oui
                yeah=yeah

008     Cha:    ah::, bah c=est bon
                        it=s alright
(...)
009     Cha:    m=c=est pas grave kate=
                but it doesn=t matter kate
010     Kat:    =[<<p><all>=je parl' allemand>
                        I speak German
011->   Cha:    =[tu montre des objets (-)et tu dis le mot en allemand, (.)
                you show some objects and you say the word in German
012     Ale:    oui=oui [oui=oui
                yeah=yeah yeah=yeah
013->   Cha:            [et on répète=
                        and we repeat
014     Kat:    =okay
015->   Cha:    c'est tout (-) t'inquiète pas,
                that=s all don=t worry
016     Joh:    on commence en allemand
                we start in German
017     Cha:    <<all>comme vous voulez>
```

In line 11 Charles, a trained teacher takes the lead in organizing the interaction, even though he is not the one who has expertise in the German language. The expertise Charles displays refers to the teaching/exchanging procedure and not to the language itself.

e'' Example 4

Example 4 is taken from an email of a PLL participant.

"... genul asta de situatie nu mi s-a prezentat mai inainte si de aceea ma simt putin incomodat pentru ca nu prea stiu cum ar trebui sa procedez încât intrevederile noastre sa iti fie intr-adevar de folos pentru a avansa in studierea acestei limbi." (David, text in Romanian)

Our translation: [...I have never met this type of situation before and that's why I feel a bit uncomfortable because I don't know what I should do during our meetings so that you can really use it and that you advance in the study of this language].

David, one of the two participants of a PLL interaction confesses to being "uncomfortable" when put in the position of sharing his language knowledge; he therefore reaches for the advice of his peer participant, writing an email in Romanian, the language which represents his focus in the PLL interaction.

f. Planned topics vs. unplanned topics

Example 5 below is a testimonial (f') and is followed by examples 6 and 7 (f'', f''') which show at the interactional level the challenges the participants face when organizing the PLL sessions. This challenge seems to be even more serious when the group comprises more than 2 participants.

f'

In Example 5, Line talks about her experience with two groups of PLL: a group of 3 and a group of 5 participants:

Example 5

"Another factor is the tandem session structuring. In the case of the first group, the three members could discuss and decide on a format for their sessions. Since it was at times difficult to lead a conversation without a chosen topic for the one-two hour sessions, the group decided to choose topics for each session, where one of the members could make a short presentation and the rest of the time would be spent discussing and elaborating on the topic. With the group of five people, while attempts at structuring the sessions were made, it was difficult to come to a consensus and the members did not uphold the decided formats. Moreover, the members did not seem willing to prepare outside of the sessions since they had other commitments, therefore the sessions were rather improvised." (Line)

The first described experience, the interaction among the group of three people, is presented as positive as the participants negotiated beforehand the format of their PLL sessions: planned topics and planned speakers for each session. As to the second experience, with the five participants group, the "attempts" to structure were not successful, it was difficult to reach a decision accepted by everyone and when that was achieved the participants did not "uphold the decided formats".

f''

Example 6 represents the beginning of a chat conversation in a group of more than 2 participants. The chat format gives us extra information as to the time of the chat lines:

Example 6

1	21:00		Anne has just entered this chat
2	21:00	Anne	Bonsoir, Daria !
			Good evening Daria
3	21:02	Daria	Hello, Anne!!!) It seems we are alone here...
4	21:0	Anne	le gens sont tard...
			people are late
5	21:03	Anne	comment ca va ?
			how are you ?
6	21:03	Daria	To clarify: we are supposed to discuss the material we read now, arent we?
7	21:04	Anne	no,not this time;)

Anne entered the chat at 21.00 sharp allowing us to believe that the PLL meeting was established for that time. She greets Daria in French, who seems to have already been online. Daria greets Anne back in English in an enthusiastic way (signalized by the three exclamation marks) and she expresses her frustration of being only with Anne in a "we" form "it seems we are alone here" followed by three dots "...". Anne orients to that in French confirming that "people are late" (our translation), a turn also followed by three dots "...". Anne then initiates the first pair part of a conversation in French to which Daria does not respond; it might be that the two lines, 5 and 6 are in overlap and therefore produced in approximately the same time as the chat shows us. In line 6 Daria announces her intention (that could be to justify her use of English as opposed to using French): the clarification concerns the topic of the session. Daria formats the turn with a question-tag at the end, which asks for a yes or no answer. Anne aligns with the question and not surprisingly, aligns with the language, replying in English.

f'''

In Example 7, a chat interaction Daria overtly addresses the "aim" of the meeting:

Example 7

Daria	i will try to. soooooo) what is the aim of the meeting[tandem meeting]? (I have understood it in quite in other way)))

Just like in interactional data, "soooooo" is used as a resource to get back to the topic, or to the main point of business. After the question, Daria offers an account for it, justifying that she has understood it differently.

g. Group of two vs. group of more participants

g′

Example 8, a testimonial, presents a few advantages in favour of small PLL groups:

Example 8

"Firstly, to maximize the speaking time and provide more organizational flexibility to learners, it is better to have smaller tandem teams. This allows the situation to address the needs of each member more adequately, adjust to the needs and requirements of each learner, improve motivation and satisfaction levels and therefore increase learning opportunities. " (Lena)

In her testimonial, Lena conveys the participants as "learners" of the language before anything else. If we put her arguments in a teacher-learner context, her arguments would be in favour of a one-to-one/two language course instead of a "classroom" course: more speaking time for the learner, focusing on the particular needs of the learners, making sure their motivation and satisfaction levels are high, thus resulting in better learning opportunities. What is then the added value of a PLL group? Current studies have shown that PLL groups differ interactionally from teacher-student interactions and we mention here only a few elements: who asks the questions and what types of questions are asked, the length of the topical sequences (for how many turns and with how many participant's involvement the topic is being taken up and sustained), the resources that are being used (multilingual resources, cross-domains and cross-profession resources), etc. Our conclusion is that a PLL group of two risks becoming a teacher-learner or a teacher-student interaction, while a group of more participants would have less chance of that happening, the learning being then in favour of the interactional competences of the participants.

g″

Examples 6 (discussed in section f″), 9 and 10 testify – at the interactional level of a chat conversation - of the interactional work that a group bigger than two requires, and of the interactional competences that are being deployed when participants are late, either by the participants who are present (example 6) or by the ones who join the interaction later.

Example 6

1	21:00		Anne has just entered this chat
2	21:00	Anne	Bonsoir, Daria !
			Good evening Daria
3	21:02	Daria	Hello, Anne!!!) It seems we are alone here...
4	21:0	Anne	le gens sont tard...
			people are late
5	21:03	Anne	comment ca va ?
			how are you ?
6	21:03	Daria	To clarify: we are supposed to discuss the material we read now, arent we?
7	21:04	Anne	no,not this time;)

In example 6 the focus is on lines 3 and 4. In line 3 Daria is not happy with just a "we" group of 2 (herself and Anne) and qualifies that as being "alone". In line 4, Anne aligns with the previous line and makes a self-evident comment that the other participants are late, referring to them as "le(s) gens".

In examples 9 and 10 we have instances of participants being late and apologising for that:

Example 9

Patrice	hey everybody, sorry that i'm late, ca a neigé beaucoup et c'est pour cela que j'ai eu du retard ☺"
	hey everybody, sorry that i'm late, it was snowing a lot and that's why i'm late

Example 10

Bridgett	Desolee les amis, je suis en retard
	Sorry friends, I'm late

In both examples 9 and 10 the participants make a reference to the group of participants, using "everybody" and "les amis" preceded (in example 10) or followed (in example 9) by an apology formula and the self-evident truth that they are late. In example 9 we also have an account of why the participant is late within the same line. The fact that the PLL has more participants includes the option of participants being late, and thus the group offers a flexibility that a two participant group would not. Secondly, it can happen that one of the participants is not available; in a two participant group that would mean that the session does not take place while in a group of more participants this is not the case.

h. Bilingual vs. Multilingual

Example 11 below is a testimonial with regards to the number of languages used in a PLL group:

Example 11

"It may be more productive to limit the number of languages addressed in one tandem group. Although it gives the opportunity to practice more languages, the time provided for the practice was short, and the depth of practice was not satisfactory. It was also difficult to balance the group due to different languages' proficiency levels." (Lena)

The number of languages to be used in a PLL interaction is a point which should be addressed in one of the first meetings of the group, when the participants can agree on how they want to function together, what their priorities are and what is their understanding of the PLL group. Lena's first sentence refers to the idea of "limiting" the languages that the group addresses. Limiting the languages also means limiting the group's resources for solving interactional trouble (moments of misunderstanding), which might end in a raised level of frustration. The differences in "proficiency levels" exist in each person's repertoire (we do not have the same level of proficiency in all our languages), not only in the repertoire of the whole group; learning how to negotiate that in a group might be more beneficial than learning how to negotiate that for one's own use.

Examples 12 and 13 below show, at an interactional level (in chat data), meta-references to the languages of one's linguistic repertoire (German, French and English):

Example 12

1	21:28	Bridgett	Est ce qu'il ya de neige dans ton ville en Chine?
			Is there some snow in your city in China
2	21:28	Patrice	@bridgett, j'espere que les chèvres ne vont pas t'empecher
			@bridgett, I hope that the goats won't prevent you
3			de réflechir en toute tranquilité ;)
			from thinking in quietness ;)
4	21:29	Anne	Non,jamais!
			No, never!
5	21:29	Daria	eine grosse party insgesamt) meine Etern lieben
			a big party altogether) my parents love
6			meine Freunde so wie ich) das ist meine grosse familie!!
			my friends as much as I do) this is my big family!!
7	21:29	Daria	und ZWAR wie war ihr party thanksgiving?
			and ALSO, how was your thanksgiving party?
8	21:30	Patrice	wow das nenne ich mal eine gemeinschaft dann wirst du bestimmt
			wow that's what I call a community then you will certainly
9			sehr viel essen und trinken und dann kannst du dich nach Luxemburg rollen ;)
			eat and drink a lot and then you can roll by Luxembourg;)
10	21:30	Daria	na ja. schi fahren!
			oh well. skiing!

11 ->	21:31	Anne	Je ne comprends pas l'allemand):
			I don't understand German):
12	21:31	Patrice	thanks giving war super, sehr sehr viel zu essen aus vielen verschiedenen
			thanks giving was great, so, so much to eat from many different
13			gegenden, ich konnte nachher kaum noch das Steuer von meinem
			areas, afterwards, I could barely turn the steering wheel of my car
14			Wagen hin und her drehen
			back and forth
15	21:31	Patrice	oh desolé
			oh sorry
16	21:31	Bridgett	moi aussi, aucune mot
			me too, no word
17	21:31	Patrice	daria a dit qu'elle va faire la fete avec sa famille et ses copains
			daria said that she is going to party with her family and her friends
18		Bridgett	ahh!
19		Anne	tres bien
			very good
20	21:32	Patrice	et alors j'ai demandé si c'était plutot une fete
			and so I asked if it was more a traditional
21			tradtionnelle ou une grande fete avec des amis
			party or a big party with friends
22	21:32	Daria	aber sie haben noch nichts ukrainisches probiert! ;)
			but they still have not tried anything Ukrainian! ;)
(...)			
23	21:33	Daria	wow) i have also understood that!! ;)
24	21:34	Patrice	quoi?
			what?
25	21:34	Patrice	l'allemand ou le francais
			German or French
26	21:34	Patrice	alors daria, moi j'aimerai bien gouter une fois qqch d'ukranie,
			So daria, me I would like to taste once something from Ukraine
27			j'espere qu'ils vont te donner ton vis dans tres peu de temps ;)
			I hope they will give you your visa in a very short time ;)
28	21:35	Daria	the last thing I was mentioning about the French.
29			but yeah)) sie haben ist ganz seltsam %)
			but yeah)) they have is quite strange %)

Example 12 uses a longer stretch of data, to illustrate in chat interactional data, the use of English, French and German in a PLL interaction with four participants. In line 11 one of the participants, Anne confesses not to understand German after a few lines in German. In line 16, a second participant, Bridgett aligns with that statement. Patrice then translates Daria's line into French (l.16), acknowledged by both participants in lines 18 and 19.. We note the use of "change of state" token (Heritage, 1998) in lines 15, 18 and 23.

Example 13

Anne	non..non..je parle broken French
	no..no.. I speak broken French

In example 13, Anne qualifies her competences in French as "broken"; however, she uses French and also her other linguistic repertoire to support it.

i. Linguistic matching vs. interactional matching

In example 14 below Dan reflects on the construction of the PLL group beyond its "linguistic" purpose:

Example 14

 "While it is impossible to always chose partners which get along perfectly well, an appropriate choice of partner may also allow for more smooth and varied communication. Finding partners which match each others' needs not only linguistically but in relation to cooperation may allow a more synergetic experience with wider learning opportunities." (Dan)

Dan (original quote) mentions the need for a "smooth" and "varied" communication in PLL interaction. We understand that PLL is not only about 'teaching each other languages' in a very pragmatic vision, but it is about "cooperation" and "synergies".

j. Talk in a language vs. talk about a language

Examples 13 and 15 show the participants taking in one of their target languages (French) in an explicit (example 13) or less explicit (example 15) manner about their level of expertise in French:

Example 13

Anne	non..non..je parle broken French
	no..no.. I speak broken French

Example 15

Bridgett	Desolee pour clarifier en Anglais
	Sorry to clarify in English

From example 13 we see Anne qualifying her French as "broken", while nonetheless speaking in French. In Example 15 Bridgett apologises for previously having used English for a clarification, she does that nonetheless, in French.

k. Following the (interactional) agreement vs. breaking the agreement

PLL groups usually establish an agreement at the beginning of their collaboration: general agreements (which and how many languages, how often do we meet, where do we meet, what should be discussed, how should the discussions be organized, etc.) and interactional agreements (do we speak a language that one /some of the participants don't understand, do we use the languages that we have more competences in to support our other languages?) Any of these agreements can be broken as we see in examples 9 and 15 below:

Example 9

Patrice	hey everybody, sorry that i'm late, ca a neigé beaucoup et c'est pour cela que j'ai eu du retard 🙂"
	hey everybody, sorry that i'm late, it was snowing a lot and that's why i'm late

Example 15

Bridgett	Desolee pour clarifier en Anglais
	Sorry to clarify in English

In example 9, Patrice was late. He therefore (unwillingly) broke the agreement of being on time for the meeting. In example 15, Bridgett used English to clarify something in the interaction.

The analysis of the 15 examples above serves as basis for the following section which provides recommendations corresponding to the "a" to "k" analysis topics.

Peer language learning: Recommendations

The recommendations provided in the current section are based on the examples analysed above (see previous section) and are meant to serve as orientation for the setting up of a PLL experience.

a. Expert/NS vs. Novice/NNS

PLL interactions do not necessarily need a native speaker (NS) of the target language as part of the group. Very often, non-native speakers, learners of the same language (same or different levels) work very well together in PLL situations (example 1a).

Recommendation: NS does not equal expert and NNS does not equal non-expert

b. Explicit vs. embedded illustrations

Learning is a co-constructed, joint effort and one advantage of active/aware peer learning is to pay close attention to your interlocutors and to not take for granted what you/we think(s) that he/she knows, but rather work on a step-by-step basis when interacting. When we give an incorrect example for illustration (example 1b), then we would need to check if our interlocutors understood it as being correct or incorrect.

Recommendation: Check the comprehension level of your interlocutors before exiting an interactional sequence/topic.

c. Taking on someone' format

c' Taking on someone' talk format: "il y a" vs. "il n'y a pas"

Example 1c shows the participants' recycle structures of the type "il y a" / "il n' y aucune"; or recycle a pivot structure like "c'est": "c'est dur", "c'est difficile". The recycling of structures is not only as repetition or copying (and therefore lack of development), it can also represent valuable interactional competences by supporting the development and the combination of new structures, helping the learners to learn and helping the interaction to be maintained and to advance.

Recommendation: Explore the limits of what is grammatically possible through repetition: empower the learner/participant to recycle structures and encourage combinations of structures

c'' Taking on someone else's topic format

Once a topic is launched by a participant, it is up to the other participants to contribute to the topic's development. A speaker who holds expertise in English, testifies on the topic from her perspective of a NS of English; she then makes a reference to the Chinese language (one other participant in the interaction being a NS of Chinese). Topic is therefore another element that sustains the interaction, as the participants negotiate the topic. This is an important element to develop, to be aligned with

the topic and the more you are linguistically diverse, the better it is for developing this type of competence.

Recommendation: Keep your groups linguistically diverse and let them go for a topic that will hold them together

c''' Taking on someone else's language of reference

When one of the participants makes a reference to English, while speaking in French as a second language, one of the participants orients to her speech by using English. This can be explained by the situated nature of the interaction: we talk about English, we start speaking in English. Another possibility is the speaker's display of affiliation with the previous utterance, therefore not only acknowledging that it's true, that the English language is not that complicated when it comes to verbs, in French, but doing it in English, displaying in this way both affiliation and language identity.

Recommendation: Allow reference to elements that go with the target language/target culture even though they might not be present in the target language yet

d. NS expertise vs. NNS expertise

In a conversation of plurilingual speakers we do not only have "one expert" in a language, but different levels of expertise in the same language or in a different language. If the NS expertise might take a "teacher" format, the NNS expertise might not do any meta-language work, but could be active in correcting errors.

Recommendation: Don't be afraid of PLL with a NNS; a NNS of a language can show expertise in that language even with a NS being present

e. Professional Teaching Practices vs. Spontaneous teaching practices

e'

In order to become a teacher, one needs to do training, just like for most professions. In PLL, the peers without teacher training and who learned their languages in a teaching context (languages are taught and learned in a classroom) might find it difficult to act like a teacher and share their language expertise. The participant shares this concern at the interactional level, in her PLL focus language (French); research has shown that negotiation moments in the target language represent a locus of learning. PLL is not necessarily about teaching; it's about finding a way to share your knowledge in a context-situated way; professional teacher will provide professional teaching practices; someone who is not a teacher has a spontaneous teaching practice.

Recommendation: Support the interaction where spontaneous teaching practices can emerge, allowing for shared knowledge

e''

If example e' showed a moment of negotiation at the interactional level (one of the participants does "not know what to do in order to share her language knowledge"), example e'' represents an

example of the same idea at the meta-level: we discuss the fact that being in an expert position is difficult.

Recommendation: Voicing your joint experiences is good especially if you do that in the language that is at stake in the peer context

f. Planned topics vs. unplanned topics

f' Participation in PLL can be planned ahead from the format point of view and prepared from the topic point of view. On the other hand, participation in PLL can be improvised at the format and at the topic level. This is not to say that one form of organization is better than the other one. As long as the participants discuss their wishes and agree, the level of frustration should be low and the level of motivation high. When the participants have different wishes, they would need to negotiate the set up of the session in a way that satisfies all of them.

Recommendation: Whatever you choose, structured or improvised PLL interaction, make sure you discuss it and that all the participants are aware and agree to it

f'' The chat format on one side allows for alignment (use of the same non-verbal resources, ie: "..."), while it also creates instances of overlap and therefore misalignment (ie: turns produced in approximately the same time and inevitably, one of them is abandoned). From the very beginning of the interaction, one of the participants has as priority to confirm with the other participant the topic of the session. This is done in the language in which the participant (Daria) has expertise in (English), Daria interactionally places (through her language use) this moment outside the "learning" PLL area. This interactional situation is similar to language classrooms where the students would request the "organizational information" in their first language in order to start working on a task in a second language.

Recommendation: Experiment with several PLL set-ups (ie. face to face, chat) as they all have specific resources useful for the PLL interaction

Another form of misalignment could be the fact that the two participants use different languages in the same adjacency pair: "bonsoir"-"hello". In example 6, the two participants keep their respective language practice Anne (French) and Daria (English) up to the point when the format of the turn (tag-question) and the positioning of the turn (announced as a clarification question) makes Anne use English.

Recommendation: Breaking the 'language use contract' can sometimes mean just following the interaction

f''' The chat format allows the participant to display her intentions through the use of symbolic resources: repetition of the letters ("sooooooo") and brackets for providing an account for her asking the question. Two conclusions can be drawn from here: 1) that the "oral" character of the face-to-face interaction can be identified in the chat and 2) that the construction of the turns in chat interactions may differ from face-to-face: an account expressed with "because" in a face-to-face interaction can be signaled through brackets in chat interaction.

Written chat interaction display both written language structures and communicative language structures. Both are important but the (correct) written structures are not necessarily expected.

The written chat format makes certain things easier (i.e.: taking a turn) and in the same time is more demanding because you can not easily say elements like "mhm=mhm". Both the oral elements and written elements of the chat are equally important.

Recommendation: Do not expect perfect written language in doing a PLL chat. Chat interaction supports oral skills and puts them in writing and at the same time creates a platform for the written language.

g. Group of two versus group of more participants

g'

If the saying "less is more" applies in a marketing context and could even apply in a teacher-student learning context [less participants, more learning], we argue that in a PLL context it applies less. The interactional work done in a two participant PLL group differs from the interactional work done in a group of more participants and here lies the added value of the PLL exercise. Thinking of real life situations, we would probably be more often engaged in groups bigger than two people than in one-to-one interactions.

Recommendation: If you can choose, choose a group of more participants: the purpose of the PLL interactions is not to recreate a one-to-one teacher-student setting

g''

The "choice" in a dual structure (two people, yes and no, have and have not) is not always the best choice. When the choice is extended to a three-party structure, it allows for more flexibility in terms of permutations: two plus/minus one, one/one/one, two now-one later, etc. As to availabilities, even though it seems true that setting a date for a meeting is more difficult when more than two people are involved, it still offers the possibility to reconstruct the group based on the participants' availabilities: two now, the other two, next time. In terms of "choice" of diversity, the more languages, the more practices for being late we are exposed to, the more choice we have.

Recommendation: If you can choose, choose a group of more participants: it offers more flexibility, more availability and more cultural opportunities

h. Bilingual versus Multilingual

Limiting a PLL interaction to a bilingual mode (the agreement that two languages are used in the interaction) would mean excluding one's possibility of using his/her language repertoire in terms of: doing identities in a language (I can be a "colleague" in a language, a "father" in another language, a "learner" in another language, a "customer" in yet another language etc.), the situated context in which we are (integrating the PLL session in the setting the PLL session takes place or taking up the interactional situations that the setting/context provides at that very moment). Restricting the

languages use in PLL sessions could be beneficial for "one language" knowledge, but not necessarily for the whole linguistic repertoire of a person.

Recommendation: Allow the use of multiple languages, in an integrative vision of multilingual repertoires as opposed to a monolingual vision of the multilingual language repertoire

i. Linguistic matching vs. interactional matching

The participants usually agree upon the place where PLL interactions take place, as they don't usually take place in a classroom and do not follow a pre-established book. These interactions take place in coffee houses, in the participants' houses, in a park etc. The negotiation of the individual characteristics of the participants (where, how, how often, what, what about, etc.), are sometimes more important than a perfect language matching.

Recommendation: Spend time getting to know your PLL group, before establishing all the details of the PLL functioning

j. Talk in a language vs. talk about a language

Participant's use of other languages besides the situated language of the interaction (the language used in interaction at that moment), or other languages than the ones agreed upon is still valuable for their plurilingual repertoire.

Recommendation: Do not sanction meta-talk about a language: talking about a language is an important step towards talking in a language.

k. Following the (interactional) agreement vs. breaking the agreement

While it is important that the participants reach an agreement on the functioning of the PLL group interaction, we also have to keep in mind that agreements cannot always be kept as agreed.

Recommendation: Reaching an agreement on the PLL interaction is good; when the agreement is broken, negotiate and discuss the reasons

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(Based on the principle of taden language learning and computer-assisted language learning, the study gives an understanding of the tasks and context of tandem language learning, in order to design and implement a tabletop software prototype to enhance this way of learning)

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(This study focuses on whether L2 learners' interaction with other learners can address three of their supposed needs for L2 learning: their needs for L2 input modified toward comprehensibility, for feedback focused on form, and for modification of output. It analyses 5 dyads of both Native and Non-Native speakers of English)

Py, B., de Pietro, J-F., Matthey, M. (1988). Acquisition et contrat didactique: les séquences potentiellement acquisitionnelles dans la conversation exolingue. Actes du troisième Colloque Régional de Linguistique. Université des Sciences Humaines et Université Louis Pasteur. 99-119.

(The authors use both concepts of second language acquisition and analysis of exolingual conversations; they then illustrate through examples the merging of these two concepts. They further develop the analysis including the concept of SPA: Potentially Acquisitional Sequences, with their characteristics and through examples)

Py, B. (2000). La construction interactive de la norme comme pratique et comme représentation. Acquisition et Interactions en langue Étrangère. p. 77-97
(Reflecting on the notion of norm in language acquisition during verbal interactions between a Native-Speaker and a learner, the study investigates how this norm is manifested in discourse: as a practice in exolingual interactions or constructed as a representation)

Sacks, H, Schegloff, E.A. & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematic for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. Language, 50 (4). 696-735.
(The article sets the bases for the development of the methodological tools of Conversation Analysis)

Schegloff, (2007). Sequence Organization in Interaction: Volume 1: A Primer in Conversation Analysis. Routledge. New York.
(After reviewing the basis of Conversation Analysis on sequence organization and adjacency pairs, the author goes deeper in the analysis of adjacency pairs and what is preceding and following them. He then concludes with a summary of the whole book and domains of applications)

Selting, M., P. Auer, B. Barden, J. Bergmann, E. Couper-Kuhlen, S. Gunthner, C. Meier, U. Quasthoff, P. Schlobinski, and S. Uhmann. (1998). Gesprächanalytisches Transkriptionsystem (GAT). Linguistische Berichte 173: 91–122.
(The article describes the conventions used for the ttranscribing of speech).

Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age. Instructional Technology and Distance Learning.
(After referring to the different trends of learning, the study explore an alternative trend linked to nowadays technologies, called Connectivism, which rely on new principles of learning with technology)

Stevenson, M., Liu, M. (2010). Learning a language with web 2.0: Exploring the use of social networking features of foreign language learning websites. Calico Journal, 27(2), 233–259.
(The study presents the results of an online survey and a usability test performed on three foreign language learning websites that use Web 2.0 technology: Palabea (http://www.palabea.net), Live Mocha (http://www.livemocha.com), and Babbel (http://www.babbel.com))

Stickler, U., Lewis, T. (2008). Collaborative language learning strategies in an email tandem exchange. In: Hurd, Stella and Lewis, Timothy eds. Language Learning Strategies in Independent Settings. Second Language Acquisition (33). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 237–261.
(After reflecting on the history and principles of tandem language learning, the study focuses on the Tandem Project at the Open University. It analyses the interactions the tandem partners have through emails, and more specifically, their learning strategies)

Ullmo, P.-A. (2012). From Free online webinar: "Empowering future language learners: Formal and informal language learning through social media". Retrieved at http://www.elearningeuropa.info/fr/node/117106
(In the European context, the speaker makes a statement about the use of the Social Media to learn or practice languages, and the strategies developed by the learners. He also include the concepts of formal language learning in classrooms as well as informal language learning with Social Media)

Vassallo, M., & Telles, J. (2006). Foreign language learning in-tandem: Theoretical principles and research perspectives. The ESPecialist, 25(1), 1–37.
(First, the authors define and explain how Teletandem works, as an alternative in CALLT: Computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching; using the online writing, reading, audio and video resources of the Windows Live Messenger. Then they focus on one particular project and argue the applicability of the theoretical and practical principles)

White, C. (2008). Language learning strategies in independent language learning: An overview. In: Hurd, Stella and Lewis, Timothy eds. Language Learning Strategies in Independent Settings. Second Language Acquisition (33). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 3-24.
(Giving the origins of the concept of independent language learning, the study focuses on the learners' perspectives. Then, it relates the different language learning strategies used by the learners, and more specifically, in the context of independent language learning)

Ziegler, G. (2011). Innovation in learning and development in multilingual and multicultural

contexts. International Review of Education 57, no. 5, pages 685–703.
(After giving an excellent overview of the challenges of multilingualism in Luxembourg, the article focuses on higher education practices and more specifically, on the innovative MA programme "Learning and Development in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts")

Ziegler, G., Sert, O., & Durus, N. (2012). Student-initiated use of multilingual resources in English-language classroom interaction: Next-turn management. Classroom Discourse, 3(2), pages 187—204. DOI:10.1080/19463014.2012.716625
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19463014.2012.716625#.VDLb6xaD4Us
(Luxembourg's multilingual context is discussed with examples from a public school; the analysis focused on the teacher's management of the multilingual resources in frontal teaching situations).

Ziegler, G., Durus, N., & Sert, O. (2013). Plurilingual Repertoires in the ESL Classroom: The Case of the European School. TESOL Quarterly, pages 643-650. DOI: 10.1002/tesq.123 http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tesq.123/abstract
(The article discusses the use plurilingual repertoires of students in peer interactions in the very specific context of the European School of Luxembourg).

Ziegler, G. (2013). Multilingualism and the language education landscape: challenges for teacher training in Europe. Multilingual education, 3:1, 1-23. http://www.multilingual-education.com/content/3/1/1
(The article presents the results of a study carried among a group of stakeholders and language teachers on the topic of a common framework of language teacher education in Europe.)

For further information on "Tandem" learning:
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/slz/tandem/vereinbarungen.html
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/slz/tandem/tipps.html
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/slz/tandem/vereinbarungen.html
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/slz/tandem/links.html
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/v/autonomiemodell/index.html
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/v/autonomiemodell/lernen_managen/index.html
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/oct/30/english-test-migrants
http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/slz/tandem/tipps.html

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Bionotes

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Charles Max is a Professor at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Security, Reliability and Trust (SnT) of the University of Luxembourg. His background is in the learning sciences with an emphasis on learning with digital media and technology. He is the founder of the DICA research lab (Research on Dynamics in Interaction, Communication and Activity) that interconnects various research frameworks for studying Interactions with and through increasingly smart technologies and the impact they have on learning, working and living in socio-digital activity systems.

Richard Moreau is an alumnus of the master programme "Learning and development in multicultural and multilingual context", University of Luxembourg. He has been actively involved in teaching French as a foreign language in both professional contexts and in non-profit associations. Within the Web2LLP European project, he participated in the translation of social media handbooks for European projects managers, and in the design and delivery of online social media courses. He shares and constructs his research experience as a member of the DICA research lab (University of Luxembourg).

Gudrun Ziegler works in the area of Learning, Interaction and Multilingualism at the trilingual University of Luxembourg where she created and directed the Research Master – Learning and Development in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts (2007–2011), a programme which figures on the list of innovative approaches for multilingual education by UNESCO, Institute for Lifelong Learning. She received her PhDs from Sorbonne Nouvelle and Saarland University, specialising in language learning and interaction and was awarded "Inspiring woman of the year - Science, Technology, Research (2012)". Her international research projects focus on interaction, multilingual language development, teacher education in multilingual contexts and the construction of disciplinary knowledge in multicultural and multimodal learning environments. She served as editor of ForumSprache, a multilingual journal on language learning and teaching (2008–2011), and has edited special issues on the construction of literacy in diverse contexts, language acquisition and professionalization of language professionals.