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Blogs and the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence: report of a co-actional approach in Portuguese foreign language classroom

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Focusing on the topic of the development of the plurilingual and intercultural competence through the integration of electronic communicative practices both in foreign language classrooms and non-formal contexts, this work aims at defining and characterizing, in view of a co-actional perspective, a “pedagogical blog”, by considering it from three different axes: a personal and social dimension, a collaborative and co-actional dimension and the management of linguistic and cultural repertoires dimension. In order to do so, this contribution presents and describes a case study which will highlight how blogs can be used in order to develop plurilingual and intercultural competences: we will present the classroom dynamics developed by the blog “Falar pelos cotovelos”, a year-long project created within the scope of the teaching and learning of Portuguese as a foreign language, in a non-formal setting (non-scholar public). Throughout the discussion of this purposeful sampling, our analysis will allow us to consider pedagogical blogs as means of socialization, as instruments at the service of exolingual interaction and as time-spaces for languages and cultures.

Keywords: pedagogical blog; co-actional perspective; plurilingual competence; intercultural competence

1. Introduction

New questions in the areas of teaching and learning of languages and cultures have been arising as a consequence of the globalized world in which we live, where subjects’ geographical and on-line mobility and the increasing opportunities of social networking have become both a challenge and an opportunity for school and society. Accordingly, the notions of plurilingualism and interculturalism or, if one prefers, of plurilingual competence (PC) and (communicative) intercultural competence (IC/ICC) have also become key references to (re)think pedagogical interaction, objectives, contents and language teaching and learning activities (Beacco & Byram, 2003; Byram, 1997).

Both of them promote the development of a complex and interconnected network of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Indeed as previous works have shown (Araújo e Sá, De Carlo, & Melo-Pfeifer, 2011), PC relates to the interconnection of social and affective repertoires (attitudes, motivations, social representations on languages and the people), linguistic and communicative resources (such as the knowledge on different languages and semiotic resources) and cognitive and verbal abilities (such as the ability to connect diverse verbal data, interpret and relate it). This means that PC, as a resource made available, shared and changed in social contexts (Bono & Melo-Pfeifer, 2011), is available in

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This competence is mostly mobilized in intercultural exchanges (namely those appealing to the co-presence of individuals’ PC), where subjects mobilize and foster their intercultural competence: in fact, intercultural encounters are privileged opportunities for the exchange of linguistic and cultural stereotypes, their debate, exchange of linguistic resources present in the conversation and occasions of development of linguistic and cultural awareness (Araújo e Sá & Melo, 2007; Houghton, 2012).

So, simultaneously with other elements that have gained strength with the appearance and consolidation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), which aims at establishing common standards in terms of theoretical perspectives, methodology and assessment in foreign language education in Europe (Byram & Parmenter, 2012), we can highlight the introduction of a plurilingual approach (such as defined above) to language curricula together with an actional perspective (or co-actional, according to Puren, 2004), instead of the previous communicative approach to languages and cultures. The choice of the word “introduction” does not mean that such an approach or perspective was absent from teaching and learning practices “before the CEFRL”; by “introduction” we mean to stress the legitimacy these notions have acquired since the CEFRL came into force. Hence, if we agree with C. Puren in his understanding and description of eclectic practices of teaching and learning of languages, we may state that the introduction of the CEFRL legitimates the continuum between the communicative approach and the (co)-actional approach: the first directed towards the development of a communicative competence in a specific language, and the second towards the ability to co-act in situations marked by collaboration, namely with and between subjects with different sociolinguistic and cultural biographies (Andrade et al., 2003; Beacco & Byram, 2003; Council of Europe, 2001). This perspective is very useful in the context of Web 2.0 used as a pedagogical tool to improve not only the development of competences in a specific language (Portuguese as foreign language, in our case), but also to enhance intercultural and multilingual competences, since it is process-centred, related to the development of social skills, related to the encouragement of negotiation and mediation of communicative abilities and also related to co-performance achievement. The aforementioned advantages of the co-actional approach linked to the use of blogs, inspired the design of our project and will be illustrated throughout our empirical study (Section 4), which adopted a socioconstructivist approach. Our core interest is to analyse the discursive collaborative accomplishments (the different textual productions), related to the co-actional perspective guiding us, rather that on individuals’ perceptions of the work done (more adapted to a cognitive point of view).

Based on this brief contextualization, we can postulate that the development of PC and IC, as well as the preference for a co-actional approach, places the students in a privileged position of co-management of words and co-construction of knowledge (Bono & Melo-Pfeifer, 2008), namely when it comes to electronic communication practices (Warschauer, 1997, 2000), when these are integrated in formal contexts of the teaching and learning of foreign languages, through telecollaboration (Araújo e Sá, De Carlo, & Melo-Pfeifer, 2010; Belz, 2005, 2007; Wang & Vásquez, 2012).

Despite this contextualization and the use of different electronic communication tools in order to foster PC and IC, some research has been concluding that this kind of telecollaboration seldom goes further than the (inter)cultural surface (Elola & Oskoz, 2008). Audras and Chanier note that:

intercultural interactions observed in distance language learning/education programs, when they exist, are frequently circumscribed by the exchange of information about the target
culture (…). We rarely observe the risk-taking dimension which, in our opinion, shapes the authenticity and the existence of the act of meeting the Other, which is one of the features of the acquisition of an intercultural competence. (2007, p. 26) [our translation]

However, it is worth highlighting, from an exolingual perspective, such as the one that will constitute our object of study, that some work that has been carried out, focus on the development of PC and IC. Those studies emphasize different electronic communication tools (O’Dowd, 2007), such as discussion forums (Degache, López Alonso, & Séré, 2007), chats (Araújo e Sá & Melo, 2007) and e-mails (Belz, 2007). Until today, studies which have focused on blogs as a pedagogical space of development of such skills have been rare (as stated in Wang & Vásquez, 2012’s meta-analytical study; Belz & Thorne, 2006; Elola & Oskoz, 2008 provide however excellent examples). The main studies usually deal with the development of skills (namely reading and writing) and knowledge in a given target language (and not in many simultaneously), although several of their variables and formats are described and registered within the context of the classroom.

Within the scope of this study we aim to analyse and discuss the use of blogs in the teaching and learning of languages: our field will be Portuguese, a less commonly taught language despite the number of its speakers, and a language which has rarely been explored in the scope of the use of Web 2.0 with foreign language learning purposes (Wang & Vásquez, 2012). Despite not differing in terms of pedagogical issues from more commonly taught languages, except in terms of diversity and availability of materials and projects connecting teachers and students, we believe that “less commonly taught languages” (a rather negative designation) rarely become research scenarios, which diminishes their pedagogical visibility and their scholar status. Furthermore, this “invisibility” hinders teachers’ opportunities to engage in new collaborative dynamics, since it helps create a sense of isolation.

We will evince the potentialities and limitations of blogs in this particular context and we will also suggest forms of integrating and optimizing them in school contexts in the light of the co-actional perspective and of the development of PC and IC (whether we refer to less taught languages or not). For that purpose, we shall present three dimensions which will allow us to define a “pedagogical blog” in the sense that it was designed to develop those two competences through a co-actional approach: the personal and social dimension, the collaborative and co-actional dimension and the dimension of language and cultural repertoire management. Based on the explanation of those characteristics, we shall later demonstrate discursive marks of those three dimensions, illustrating them through an empirical study centred on the blog “Falar pelos Cotovelos”, created in the domain of Portuguese as foreign language teaching. We shall put forward, through discourse analysis, how the learners’ risk-taking attitude and involvement, two of the dimensions which Audras and Chanier point out as being absent from the previously cited studies (2007), may be potentialized through the articulation of those three dimensions in a pedagogical blog.

Following this contextualization of the present study and its intentions, we will try to answer the following research questions:

- how can a co-actional perspective and a pedagogical blog combine?
- how do the dimensions of pedagogical blogs merge in order to favour intercultural and PCs?

Finally, it is worth stating that, since we adopted a socioconstructivist perspective, our analysis and final discussion will focus on the collaborative work processes and the
co-construction of (social) meaning, by means of combining multilingual and intercultural resources. That is why the concept of report is used on our title rather than “evaluation” as we deliberately adopted an exploratory, descriptive and reflexive approach.

2. The pedagogical blog and the teaching and learning of languages and cultures: between promises and practices

Bibliography on electronic genres does not yet take into account the role of blogs in the teaching and learning of languages, in a relevant qualitative and quantitative manner, as Lamy and Hampel state they are rather “relatively untried” (2007, p. 147). However, existing studies tend to highlight the potentialities of this genre, namely by emphasising the creation and development of learning communities (cf. Ferrão-Tavares, 2007; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Wenger, 1998), the development of inter-cultural and PCs (Audras & Charnier, 2007; Belz & Thorne, 2006; Ferrão-Tavares, 2007; Tomé, 2007), the development of writing competences, as well as of learning autonomy and empowerment (Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010; Ducate & Lomicka, 2005, 2008; Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Lee, 2011; Pinkman, 2005) and also the development of interaction between peers (Dompmartin-Normand, 2008; Pinkman, 2005). Simultaneously, these studies show the motivational factor which presides over its use in school or university contexts (Almeida D’Eça, 2006; Ford, 2007; Pinkman, 2005), generally in the form of blended learning. They usually stress the interaction possibilities the blog generates and the way in which it includes its authors in a discursive community, no longer limited to a class or school, and in a community of authors in which publishing is a first step in authorship practice and a potential form of contact with the public.

However, a brief overview of the blogosphere points out that the blog appears to be used solely as an instrument which allows for the perpetuation of the same activities and contents used within traditional FL teaching (writing a composition about a certain theme, doing oral or written comprehension exercises, according to a concept or certain (stereo) types of progression...). In fact, the blog entries are generally the teacher’s initiative, as he/she is the one who carries out the mission of “meneur de jeu”, of vector of information and evaluator (Dabène, 1984), by including, in most cases, instructions for their students to follow and documents³ to be explored in the form of a “path” which would be the equivalent, in the classroom, to the sequence of pedagogical steps, thus perceiving the students as a unique category – “the class”. Additionally, many of the blogs observed recover or invigorate the pedagogy of oral and audiovisual methods used in lessons (in which students are physically present) or the “simulation pedagogy”.⁴ However, the changes that occur when these methods are transferred to the blogosphere remain veiled. Is it possible that we may just be facing a mirage or illusion created by the use of the Internet, a mirage anchored in the variety, in the accessibility and permeability that such an environment allows for? Also if, very frequently, online activities are carried out in the presence of the teacher, in one shared physical space (the computer room) and within the same period of time (class timetable), where does the old end and where does the new start? We may thus conclude that, despite all the promises, “blogs’ place as a learning tool is unclear” (Carney, 2009, p. 293).

From our point of view, a blog which is said to be pedagogical – if anchored in the CEFRL⁵ and in the actional perspective (chapter 2.1 of CEFRL, called “An action-oriented approach”), should contemplate three highly interdependent dimensions of an interactional nature: the personal and social dimension, the collaborative and co-actional dimension and the dimension of language and culture repertoire management. In fact,
these dimensions seem to be forgotten in the format which we briefly (and almost comically) described.

These should be understood in the light of the relationship with the concept of shared cognition, given that interaction, from a socioconstructive perspective, implies the co-construction of its contextual ingredients and of the scenarios in which it occurs. From this viewpoint, the concepts of interaction and situated cognition justify the purpose which, from our standpoint, presides over the construction of a pedagogical blog within the context of the teaching and learning of a language and of its culture – the co-construction of linguistic and cultural knowledge, situated but open (due to the durability of the written support which characterizes the blog) or, in other words, of knowledge which is local and global. Such an objective implies, in our understanding, relativising teachers’ traditional roles, complementing them with new roles (tutor, presenter of opportunities and perspectives, . . .) and giving greater responsibility and autonomy to learners in the creation and conduction of their destinies in the blogosphere: what type of blogosphere do they want? What do they want to publish? For whom? With what purposes? We could also question, as Ducate and Lomicka, “how and to what extent do these applications promote social interaction, in addition to the development of reading and writing skills?” (2008, p. 9).

3. The multidimensionality of a pedagogical blog

After these first remarks on the characteristics which allow us to propose guidelines for innovation and enrichment of practices through the exploration of a pedagogical blog, we shall now try to define each of the dimensions previously evoked (the personal and social dimension, collaborative and actional dimension and the dimension of language and cultural repertoire management), in the light of the CEFRL perspectives and of the development of PC and IC, providing examples of the potentialities offered by the blog.

3.1. Personal and social dimension

Reflecting upon this dimension requires perceiving language not only as an objective to be achieved (the famous “target-language”), but also (and above all) as an instrument of communication and construction of interpersonal relationships, which allows for the integration in a community, through the manifestation and statement of a different, creative and authentic identity. It means that this dimension is strongly related to the social and affective private spheres and to the inclusion and articulation of that private sphere in the community and the public discursive space (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008). In that sense, a pedagogical blog of a language and its culture should promote the interaction, not only between its authors (an intra-community blog) but, above all, between the authors and the “users” of the blog (an inter-community blog). This interaction will allow the enrichment of that manifestation of a personal and social dimension by the different (pluri)linguistic and (inter)cultural perspectives. To reflect upon this dimension implies, in the light of the actional perspective previously evoked, the rejection of simulation in favour of real interaction and role-playing, that is, in favour of the real practices of social actors. So, this dimension includes the attitudes and actions of provocation and involvement in interaction, as well as regulation strategies and circulation of discourse (for example, by talking to specific interlocutors, both in the initial posting and in the comment box).

This promotion is possible through different mechanisms. First, by resorting to some technical strategies such as the inclusion of links to other blogs (on the side menu or
through the postings themselves), the inclusion in the direct link of the name of the “user” who commented on the posting (which allows the authors to access their profile and blog) or the publishing of a personal profile. Second, there are mechanisms related to the structure of the text, such as the encouragement of participation through the use of vocatives or questions, or even through the inclusion of references such as a more or less anonymous you in the published text. Lastly, the insertion of a list of keywords pointing towards the different themes already discussed is another potentializing factor contributing to the invitation of external bloggers to participate, allowing the visualization and quick interpretation of the characteristics and interests of a certain community. Thus, these mechanisms encourage an interactive and interactional ambience in the blog as well as new interactional and social patterns (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008) which, as we have seen, constitute one of the main motivational elements and motives that lead learners to participate. Apart from that, when used in the foreign language class, blogs contribute to a greater awareness that an FL and, more specifically, writing in an FL, is not limited to school realities, but is part of social events.

3.2. Collaborative and co-actional dimension

This dimension is intimately related to the notion of collaboration and “task-action”. Collaboration in the sense that learning does not result from an epiphany which happens, but from the relationships, the interactions and co-actions which the subjects establish in multiple contexts, of which school and the classroom are only examples. Task-action because the notion of task (so popular during the communicative approach), evoking teaching and learning activities, is not enough to justify the collaborative dynamics which presides over the social activity in which learning is co-constructed, namely if one bears in mind the notions of PC and IC, which encourage and legitimize the learning that takes place in formal and informal contexts. In that sense, this neologism created by juxtaposition (“task” and “action”) allows us to approach the blog as a space of confluence of both those contexts, where learners-actors move. Such arguments allow us to illustrate “the collective dimension of actions and their social purpose” (Puren, 2004, p. 123, our translation) regarding the use of blogs.

Considering that we perceive the blog as a collective device of communi-action (Brassac, 2000), this dimension directs us towards the collaborative work carried out by its authors-actors (and possible visitors), before and after the publication of a new entry. Each one of these entries should be, in our opinion, anchored in the objectives of teaching and learning as well as in the tasks and actions carried out, as discussed before. In this sense, publishing on the blog is not the task or action in itself, but part of a broader activity, in which, according to the paradigm of adequation (Puren, 2004), audiences, objectives, contents, types of production to be published, among other issues, should be observed. This also means that a teaching and learning sequence may include more than one posting on the blog. Additionally, it also means that the pedagogical blog should not be perceived as a finished product (for example, the publishing of a finished text, resulting from an activity), but preferably as a process (in the sense that the production is submitted to reading and reviewing and to other comments, which enrich its meaning and, simultaneously, question it). This process of “otherness” of the learners’ productions will be enhanced, as we have been arguing, if blogs are encouraged as forms of interaction with authors and actors of other blogs (regardless of covering the same language and culture or not), promoting intercultural and exolingual dialogue(s) and the construction of collective knowledge and, hence, co-action.
This dimension, therefore, implies the development of collaboration skills (when it comes to blogs, both intra and extra-communitary), as well as the commitment to work as a team in the publications and in the contributions towards the improvement of the blog and the blogosphere in general. These last two aspects can be accomplished through the option of editing entries and the administration of layouts available on the publishing interface – which are only accessible to everyone if all the authors share the status of blog administrators in the blogs in which they participate. Naturally, this feature requires a high level of electronic literacy, autonomy and responsibility on behalf of the learners, which might not always be easy to conciliate (Lee, 2011; Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008).

3.3. Dimension of the language and cultural repertoire management

We know that, in the light of the definition of IC and PC, both these repertoires are updated by the use of strategies to understand and be understood (both from a linguistic and cultural point of view), which evinces the commitment with the situation of communication, characterized by the unequal control that learners have over the foreign language and its culture.

Although the notion of a plurilingual repertoire is slightly static because it recalls a reality situated in a precise moment of time, it refers to the control the subject has over different linguistic systems (in which we can include the knowledge of the language and its culture during the phase of appropriation, Coste, 2001) and the notion of a cultural repertoire which includes the knowledge and experience not only of the culture itself (or the culture of the endo-group), but also of different cultures (cultures of the exo-groups) acquired throughout the experiencing of different situations.

The management of these repertoires is revealed, in the light of what has been said about the personal and social, collective and co-actional dimensions, through linguistic-communicative and cultural abilities and the involvement in situations of “risk”, where, immersed in a communication situation mediated by the use of a technological device in another language and culture, the learners do not hesitate to show themselves and co-construct a situation packed with potential learning opportunities and potential obstacles. In the case of pedagogical blogs, these abilities include using the knowledge of the world of languages and cultures (ways of doing things with words, stereotypes, . . .), through the induction of rules, but also through observation and reflection upon languages and cultures in contact, as realities which are part of the interaction, and about the situation in itself, as a scenario in which actors and authors move. Therefore, this dimension includes the use of different linguistic instruments (as in the case of the teaching and learning of a specific language and its culture, a great relevance is given to this dimension) and also of paralinguistic instruments, such as smiles and abbreviations. Besides the linguistic and paralinguistic features, there is also the possibility of exploring formatting options in the production, namely of texts, in order to highlight the most relevant information and, in this way, focus the attention of potential readers-interlocutors, for example through the use of different colours, types and sizes of letters, and so on.

These strategies, directly related to the dimensions previously mentioned, illustrate the role of collaborative practices in the construction of meanings. Now, these co-constructed meanings will not only be of a linguistic nature, but also (and especially, as our analysis of a case-study will demonstrate) of a cultural one. In this sense, Puren proposes the transition of the concept of “interculturality” to that of “co-culturality”, given that it defines “a common culture elaboration through and for the collective action” (2004, p. 123 – italicized by author, our translation).
4. Case study: “Falar pelos cotovelos”

As mentioned in the introduction, and sustained by the conceptual and heuristic device evoked, we intend to illustrate each of the three dimensions previously described. We now aim at conveying examples of how they embodied the project we designed and also examples of the communicative practices it allowed.

We shall start by clarifying the pedagogical fundaments of the blog “Falar pelos Cotovelos” (http://falarpeloscotovelos.blogspot.com/) – our case-study – in order to later present the characteristics of a blog which has the purpose of, at least at a theoretical level, developing the PC and IC of its authors, in the light of a co-actional framework.

4.1. Description of the blog: objectives, pedagogical fundaments and external structure

4.1.1. Launching of the blog: context, objectives and phases

The blog “Falar pelos Cotovelos”, a year-long project, was created on 27 September 2007, after negotiation with learners. It was initially thought as a blended-learning support for the Portuguese FL (PFL) class, which had a weekly periodicity (two hours per week, in a single block), in a private German context (private classes of Portuguese, at the workplace of both groups of students), with two advanced level students (level C1 of the CEFRL, whose nicknames were Clu and MB10) and a teacher-tutor (whose nickname was Boralá). Briefly, the blog was expected to be a fairly restricted “class blog”11 (Campbell, 2003), developed in collaboration with the PFL teacher and his/her students, although it was agreed on, from the first post, that there would be an open and participative dimension for those who might want to comment on it. For this reason, the blog was always public and had no access restrictions and the comment box was not submitted to any form of moderation. Our intentions and pedagogical reasons for creating a blog were diverse: first, due to the reduced number of students involved in the Portuguese lessons and to our desire of enlarging interactions; second, due to the high linguistic skills of both students and the wish to engage them in the production of more elaborated tasks; third, due to our intention of getting connected to other PFL learners and thus of creating a community of practices and interests.

4.1.1.1. Launching of the blog: context, objectives and phases

Given that it was a class blog, all those involved had editorial responsibility and were coordinators of the blog (being authorized to modify, remove and add formats, postings, messages, ...). The name of the blog was based on an idiomatic expression, without an equivalent in German, and it was chosen in a session in which all students were present.

After the first postings, we decided to develop a pro-active bloggistic behaviour which, at a second stage, included the definition of objectives for the blog. So, and revisiting the three dimensions previously discussed, the blog aimed at achieving the goals presented in Table 1.

Having defined these objectives, it became essential to find “the Other(s)” – another learner of PFL, another navigator of the blogosphere, etc. This imposition became a reality, during a third stage, as a result of the research of other blogs founded on the same interests, and so trying to develop telecollaboration between Portuguese language students, in order to increase communicative competences and cultural knowledge and with whom it was possible to develop actions and interactions – despite not explicitly revealing this fact to the other communities. This third stage was additionally encouraged by the fact that the teacher had established acquaintance with a PFL teacher in Spain, who was
also an enthusiastic user of blogs, which led to an on-line collaboration between the
tudents of both teachers (and in this way, the collaboration between Cotovelianos
and Augustos – of the “Escolaugusta” – was born).

4.1.2. Pedagogical fundaments
Before analysing the way in which the operationalization of the three dimensions pre-
sented before can be observed, it is essential to clarify the production processes of each
of the postings on the blog and their integration within classroom practices. This clarifica-
tion immediately unveils, at a first level, the way in which the personal and social, collab-
orative and actional dimensions and the dimension of language and cultural repertoire
management are foreseen in the conceptualization of the posted texts.

More specifically, the texts published, which are of a very diverse typology (contest
regulation, minutes, poetic texts, short-stories, ...), go through a phased production pro-
cess (pre- and post-production), of self- and peer-assessment and publishing, which con-
stitutes, in the case of “Falar pelos Cotovelos”, a prototypical cycle:

– **Argumentation** – initial arguments and stimulation of writing, in a context in which
  writers are physically present, based on linguistic and cultural contents of PFL
  curriculum;
– **Initial production** – carried out by students and the teacher who, in this case, also
  takes on the role of producer and shares his/her production process, as an example,
  as a form of encouragement, motivation, ...
– **Peer correction** – each learner highlights, in their peers’ work (by means of a sys-
  tem of abbreviations), the items which might be improved or corrected;
– **Confrontation with peer correction and self-correction** – the learners take into
  account the adequacy of their peers’ corrections and suggestions and proceed to
  integrate those which they consider necessary;
– **Teacher’s correction** – the writing is reviewed by the teacher and shared among
  learners before publishing, which places an emphasis on the work of self- and
  peer-revision;
– **Publishing** – teacher and/or students publish their texts on the blog;
– **Answers to posted comments** – stage of mutual responsibility, during which the
  aim is to boost the opening of the blogosphere through, for example, the answering
  of comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social dimension</td>
<td>– to increase the perspectives of interaction and contact in Portuguese;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative and co-actional dimen</td>
<td>– to create a network of PFL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension of language and cultural</td>
<td>– to create a common project, capable of developing a collaborative and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repertoire management</td>
<td>socially valued work;</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>– to work with other PFL learners on this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– to develop the bloggers’ communicative skills;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– to develop PC and IC through contact situations with other learners of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PFL;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– to develop linguistic-communicative skills in PFL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Objectives of the blog “Falar pelos Cotovelos”.

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Despite their proficiency, students revealed some linguistic insecurity and anxiety when suggested to manage the blog dynamics and interactions on their own, as a complementary learning tool to classes, so this path was collaboratively negotiated between students and teacher. That is why several phases related to “linguistic correction” were introduced. From this perspective, the teacher had allowed students to be the protagonists, while engaging them in autonomous and awareness learning paths (facilitator and co-constructor rather than “meneur de jeu”). From this point of view, task-design and the teacher’s roles were crucial to promote students’ autonomy (as reported by Le, 2011).

We can see that the entire process of publishing is a collective work, even if the teacher is almost always responsible for the thematic paths resulting from the collaboration of everyone involved. We also realize that the texts circulate between the authors before they are made public, that is, they are collaboratively produced within the “endo-group”, but directed towards the blogosphere’s “exo-groups”. Besides this prototypical cycle, and whenever school activities allow for alternative work, students and teacher visit the blogs of the “users” who commented on the texts published, leaving the link to “Falar pelos Cotovelos”, allowing, in theory, for interaction to be continued and enriched.

We can then say that our writing tasks depend upon two approaches: a socio-constructivist one, related to collaborative knowledge construction and the co-responsibility of all productions, and an expressive one, related to the creative and reflective tasks (see Murray & Hourigan, 2008; Lamy & Hampel, 2007 for further comments on these different styles).

4.1.3. “Falar pelos cotovelos”’ external structure

The structure given to our blog also conveys pedagogical meaning, related to our co-actional approach and the co-responsibility of the productions. When it comes to its structure, the blog “Falar pelos Cotovelos” includes many references to a plural “we/us”:

- **title and description** – “Falar pelos Cotovelos” – “um blogue de três pessoas, seis cotovelos e eventuais milhares de neurónios . . .” (PT) / “Falar pelos Cotovelos” – “a blog made up of three people, six elbows and possibly thousands of neurons . . .”, description that includes references to its collaborative nature;
- **image** – regularly updated;
- **blog items** – where the sub-categories and number of entries are included (for example, context (4), short-story (1), chat (1), . . .);
- **identity declaration** – “Este blogue é . . . / . . . sabemos lá! temos um problema de identidade! mas estamos em Berlin . . . e há Português como língua estrangeira dentro de nós (e fora, confessamos!) . . .” (PT) / “This blog is . . . / . . . we don’t know! we have an identity problem! but we’re in Berlin . . . and there is Portuguese as a foreign language inside us (and outside us, we must confess) . . .”;  
- **links to other blogs or areas related to PFL** – “onde vamos quando saímos daqui” (PT) / “where we go when we leave”;
- **promotion of reading projects** – “livros em cima da mesa” (PT) / “books on the table”, currently being updated, where the titles and authors of books being read by students and tutor are registered;
- **blog archive** – with links to all the entries in the blog;
– authorship – “quem somos?” (PT) / “Who are we?”, with a link to the individual profiles of the authors;
– postings – where the following data are included: date, entry title in the posting area and comment section.

4.2. Data-set and analysis device
Considering that the blog is very recent and given the periodicity of the lessons, the blog contains, up to the date on which this article is being written, 10 entries and 86 comments. The authorship of the comments belongs both to the mentors of the blog and to the learners involved in the “Escolaugusta” blog, as well as to the more or less occasional navigators from other blogs. These postings, comments and structuring elements of the blog are, as mentioned before, the corpus which we shall explore in order to illustrate the three dimensions of pedagogical blogs.

In this sense, we intend to present a qualitative study, based on the description of those three dimensions, which will function as a descriptive and analytical reference in the following sections. As these purposes are revealed, we shall frequently present blog transcriptions, for illustrative and interpretive purposes.12

In order to analyse the three dimensions, we searched for the discursive indicators listed in Table 2.

4.3. Data analysis
4.3.1. Personal and social dimension
It is worth noting (and unlike the aspects Tomé, 2007 observes in his blogs) that, in the case of “Falar pelos Cotovelos”, the number of comments is considerably higher than the number of entries/published texts, possibly due to the efforts made to open the blog to external participants and to the way in which the authors tried to interact with other blogs, leaving behind traces of their experiences through the blogosphere and, more specifically, through other PFL blogs. In fact, we believe that if one of the objectives is socialization, sharing and the co-creation of knowledge, then this is an indicator of the potentialities of the environment.

This dimension is immediately encouraged through the first posting, called “message to navigators (without a bottle!)”. Although it does not directly call for the expression of

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Discursive indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social dimension</td>
<td>– <em>ratio</em> initial post/reactive answer;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– interactional direction (the way interaction is intentionally furthered by participants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative and co-actional</td>
<td>– constitution of group work and collaborative dynamics;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dimension</td>
<td>– tasks’ public direction (the way collaboration is addressed and developed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension of language and</td>
<td>– emergence of different languages and cultures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural repertoire management</td>
<td>– linguistic and cultural awareness;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– learning awareness.</td>
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</table>
the “other” – which, as we saw, was only conceptualized in the second stage of the “assembly” of the space – the title already explicitly refers to a more or less anonymous virtual public, which will be frequently called upon in the following publications, as the examples below illustrate:


Furthermore, the way in which feelings are expressed and perceived by the blog commentators, feelings which help to cement a personal and social dimension (with the help of linguistic and cultural stereotypes which we shall account for further on) and, in this way, the feeling of belonging to an on-line community which is built around three languages and cultures: “Também queria mostrar-lhes o meu fado à maneira de cumprimento para os luso-amigos da Alemanha” (PT) / “I would also like to show you my fado as a form of greeting luso-friends from Germany” (Anita, a Spanish student, 30 November 2007).

Portuguese Version | English Version
--- | ---
Eis o meu fado espanhol nem luso, nem alemão que abre o grande coração do Mediterrâneo sol (…) | Here is my Spanish fado neither Lusitanian, nor German which opens up the great heart of the Mediterranean sun (…)
Irmãos somos do Alentejo nossa antiga Lusitânia e aos amigos da Alemanha mandamos um grande beijo | Brothers and sisters we are from the Alentejo our ancient Lusitania and to our German friends we send a big kiss

These examples allow us to agree on the fact that “despite the individuality oriented perspective often associated with blogging, their use also offers significant opportunities to cultivate interaction. Readers can respond to writers’ entries with comments that can result in de facto threaded discussions (Campbell, 2003)” (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008, p. 532). We claim, however, that this interactional function should not be only considered a surplus, but instead a central achievement, as also pointed out by Pinkman: “commenting is an important aspect of blogging. It makes the project communicative, interactive, and interesting. Furthermore, commenting encourages learners to check their blog and share ideas” (2005, p. 20).

4.3.2. Collaborative and co-actional dimension

The characteristics of this dimension appeal to group work, to the launching of inter-blog competitions, such as the poetry contests about “bacalhau and caldo verde” (codfish and a traditional Portuguese soup made from a specific type of cabbage, which also includes chouriço, a spicy pork sausage), *fado* (traditional Portuguese musical genre) and slogans about domestic violence. Based on the linguistic and the cultural contents both groups of
students co-defined, challenges are posted in each others’ blogs in order to enhance participation and further discussions.

Actually, to talk about “challenges” and “contests” (two tasks defined in two of the blog categories) only makes sense if we consider the opening and sharing of the productions. These ludic and creative dimensions ascribed to the blog, which nurture interaction between the groups, are, in fact, among those which receive more comments due to the motivation of both groups.

From the third stage of the creation of “Falar pelos Cotovelos” on, when collaboration between the two blogs is already more or less established, the demands are more intensely directed towards the Spanish PFL learners, as the following collaborative German post illustrates:

– [launching of an inter-blog poetry contest] – O que é que vão fazer com a nossa canção? / Acham que precisa de uma continuação? / Estão (bem-)dispostos para um concurso de poesia? / Os Camões de Berlim estão à espera da vossa resposta (em rima, se faz favor!!!!) / Vá lá, Camões-Castelhanos :)” (PT) / “What are you going to do with our song? / Do you think it needs a continuation to keep going along? / Are you in a (good) mood for a poetry contest? / Camões from Berlin are waiting for your answer (in rhyme please!!!!) / Come on, Castillian Camões:)” (Clu, MB & Boralá, 13 November 2007)

With the help of this simple and brief example, we can understand how much the participation of the “other” is understood to be essential for the success of the blog and for the achievement of the established objectives. The insistent appeal to the “others” demonstrates that their participation is important to accomplish a task which is public: in fact, it is the participation of the “others” that gives meaning to the task or, moreover, the accomplishment of the task depends on external participation and on interaction which makes it possible to give meaning to the work of the authors of the blog.

In terms of collaboration and in terms of the public dimension of tasks, it is worth noting that the “Cotovelianos” involved themselves in the production of prototypical texts capable of sustaining the collaborative dimension publicly assumed. They were involved in an authentic way, both in the management of the contest (writing a regulation), and in the announcement of the winners (writing of a synthesis of the discussions). Thus, as argued, the involvement in a real task (which involved reading and voting the poems sent for the contest), supplants the implications of a “simple” role-play of the activity (see Mangenot & Zourou, 2007 for similar conclusions).

4.3.3. Dimension of language and cultural repertoire management

Deeply intertwined with the personal and social dimension, the present dimension is reasonably visible in the publications in which the subjects disclose their subjectivity and in the way in which they perceive the contact between languages and cultures in the blog. We observed that a collaborative approach to tasks and the encouragement of the “other” to participate is, quite often, done by evoking linguistic and cultural stereotypes. This can be observed, in the case of “Fado Alemão” (collaboratively written by the group, tutor included) through the way in which German and Portuguese cultures are represented (German Fado, dated 13 November 2007 was written as a reply to a fado challenge launched by the Escolaugusta):
We can observe that the elements evoking feelings which are supposedly “typical” of the Portuguese and German cultures are expressed by using vocabulary conveying cultural stereotypes, where Germans are self-connoted as being “as cold as frost” and the Portuguese connoted, although indirectly, by the term “saudade”.

In the posting of 21 November 2007, in which the Cotovelianos present/launch a poetry contest on the topic “caldo verde and codfish”, alluding to the Lusitanian gastronomic culture, we can observe this ability to bring to mind stereotypes. In our opinion, this reveals a growing IC, an increasing awareness “of what unites and separates us”, therefore functioning as a lens through which cultures and ways of being and doing are observed (a lens which, in this blog, as one can see in different moments, is charged with irony and humour). In this sense, the linguistic and cultural stereotypes are mobilized as learning symbols of a language and its culture which, being foreign to the two groups, can be apprehended in familiar traces.

As a complement to what we have been saying, the management of linguistic and cultural repertoires involves the three languages and cultures focused in the blog (German – Mother Tongue of the learners; Spanish – Mother Tongue of the subjects with whom they interact more frequently; and Portuguese, language and culture in the process of being appropriated by both groups of students), besides others which the subjects acquired throughout their linguistic and cultural biography. This involvement is also evident in one of the Berliner learners’ report on the reasons for having started to learn PFL. It is worth noting, once again, the strong dependency on the previous dimensions, observable in the way the student combines the use of idiomatic expressions (for example, “não pregar olhos” – “not to sleep a wink”) – which reveals a developing linguistic and cultural repertoire – with personal images about the target-language (“But since that first moment, I enjoyed the sound of the Portuguese language”) and the other’s language (Spanish):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese Version</th>
<th>English Version</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refração:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chorus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eu não sei dizer saudade nesta língua, o alemão, mas sei senti-la, é verdade dentro do meu coração.</td>
<td>I don’t know how to say saudade in this language, German, but I know how to feel it, this is true within my heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estrofes:</strong> (…)</td>
<td><strong>Stanza:</strong> (…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizem que o amor alemão é frio como a geada mas o meu é só calor no corpo da minha amada</td>
<td>They say that German love is as cold as frost but mine is only warmth in the body of my beloved one (…)</td>
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</tbody>
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(mote) A minha história com a Língua Portuguesa começou... (3 de Janeiro de 2008)  
... depois de uma noite num comboio que foi de Madrid a Lisboa. Eu não tinha pegado olho quase toda a noite porque não havia nenhum lugar para dormir. Tinha 17 anos e não compreendia nada, nem espanhol, nem português. Mas desde esse primeiro momento, gostei do som da língua portuguesa. Fiquei surpreendido porque com o espanhol tinha sido um pouco diferente. (MB)  

(motto) My history with the Portuguese Language started... (3rd January 2008)  
... after a night on a train which went from Madrid to Lisbon. I hadn’t slept a wink almost the entire night because there was no place to sleep in. (…) I was 17 years old and did not understand a word of neither Spanish, nor Portuguese. But since that first moment, I enjoyed the sound of the Portuguese Language. I was surprised because it had been a bit different with Spanish. (…) (MB)
The call for participation (“How did your history with the Portuguese Language start?”) leads one of the students from the “Escolaugusta” to also share his first encounter with that language, which is done by exploring a list of cultural elements, which are believed to be shared:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Portuguese Version</th>
<th>English Version</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Boa tarde, cotovelianos! Ourivesaria, toalhas, Caixa Geral, padaria, pastelaria, . . . foram das primeiras palavras que vi em português, na cidade de Elvas. Chamou-me a atenção a sonoridade da língua, mas não compreendia nada: era tão fácil ler!” (PEPE, tutor espanhol, 28 de Janeiro de 2008).</td>
<td>“Good afternoon, cotovelianos! Ourivesaria, toalhas, Caixa Geral, padaria, pastelaria (jewelers, towels, Caixa Geral, bakery, pastry store), . . . were the first words that I saw in Portuguese, in the city of Elvas. The musicality of the language immediately caught my attention, but I did not understand a thing: it was so easy to read! ( . . . )”. (PEPE, Spanish Tutor, 28th January 2008).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Finally it is worth noting that the development of this dimension takes place in parallel with the dimension here labelled as “meta”, considering that the subjects verbalize, at different moments and in different spaces, their thoughts about learning methods and strategies, fostering an intercultural and plurilingual reflexive dimension. In fact, the sharing of these thoughts, if not visible in a systematic manner (because rarely called upon), assumes a significant meaning in a space which is intended to be collaborative:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Portuguese Version</th>
<th>English Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>[sobre a aprendizagem do conjuntivo] “É necessário que os alunos do português saibam o conjuntivo. É útil que façam alguns exercícios. Pois aqui temos uns exemplos: ( . . . ) É sempre surpreendente que os textos dos exercícios gramaticais soem sempre um pouco estúpidos, não é?” (MB, 30 de Novembro de 2007)</td>
<td>[about the learning of the subjunctive] “It is necessary that the students of Portuguese know the subjunctive. It is useful that they practice it. Here we have some examples: ( . . . ) It is always surprising that the texts in grammar exercises sound a little stupid, isn’t it?” (MB, 30th November 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[sobre os exercícios gramaticais na aprendizagem] “eu diria estúpidos, ridículos, artificiais e às vezes “no sense”)... mas eu gosto deles na mesma e penso que são úteis para aprender... não sei se concordam comigo...” (Isabel, estudante espanhola, 12 de Dezembro de 2008).</td>
<td>[on the grammar exercises during learning] “I would say stupid, ridiculous, artificial and sometimes “non-sense” . . . but I like them anyway and I think they are useful to learn . . . I don’t know if you agree with me . . .” (Isabel, Spanish student, 12th December 2008).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The examples in this section, as well as our discussion, confirms the idea that Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, “have the potential to encourage awareness of the use of written language and visual expression as forms of representation that are rooted in, often pluralistic, linguistic and cultural conventions” (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008, p. 530). We hypothesize that this potential is improved in communicative situations where interlocutors, with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (as in our study), do not share a common mother tongue, striving to create meaning and to accomplish different tasks in a common foreign language. In these exolingual situations (more than in endolingual ones), intentions and meanings can be biased by the knowledge interlocutors have of the so-called target language and by their linguistic and cultural previous knowledge and...
experiences: being aware of this fact increases interlocutors’ awareness of the linguistic and communicative principles ruling the on-going (written) conversation (see Marcoccia, 2004, for “written conversation”).

5. Pedagogical implications and final considerations

We have seen that pedagogical blogs, as we envisage them, include a number of possibilities as instruments of communi-action (Brassac, 2000) and socialization. We observed that those potentialities can, through a co-actional perspective, open the space and time of a lesson to other contexts, spaces and times, due to their asynchronous nature. They also allow, as we have seen, for the participation of the learners in activities which surpass the domain of “make believe”, involving them in authentic and significant social writing activities which gain visibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the “other”. They do, in our perspective, heighten the awareness of writing to a specific audience and promote the full interactive potential they have (if carefully planned from an interactional and social perspective, rather than anchored in the development of reading and writing skills only).

We will now try to address the two main points through our research questions: (1) how can a co-actional perspective and a pedagogical blog combine? and (2) how do pedagogical blog dimensions merge in order to favour intercultural and PCs?

Regarding the first question, we may state that a pedagogical blog, as depicted in this text, allows students to have communicative partners outside the classroom and to launch projects together, resorting to a common foreign language (Portuguese in our case). By doing so, the foreign language is not only the subject but the main means by which the project, based on “collaborative content building” (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008, p. 528), is accomplished. We can thus see, from a cognitive perspective, how students learn to communicate and communicate to learn (Gaonac’h, 1990), while, at the same time, these learning and communication processes serve socio-constructivist goals: attain a common target through exolingual communication (for example, launching and participating in a poetry contest). This perspective is quite innovative since many research projects resorting to blogs generally explore the development of individual competences or, in the case of telecollaboration, deal with a group of native and non-native speakers changing information. Our study, on the contrary, focuses on non-native speakers only, providing, on the one hand, an interesting interactional context to exchange ideas about the learning process or the difficulties students may deal with depending on their different linguistic background, and, on the other hand, an original research field to analyse how people who do not share a common mother language are able to work together and to achieve a common goal or task collaboratively. A co-actional perspective in the use of blogs thus provides meaningful contexts for language learning, even if blogs are far from being an emerging media (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008) and help to define pedagogical principals that pinpoint the supremacy of pedagogical aims and goals over a technological-centred view of the electronic communicative tool.

When it comes to our second question, we consider that the three pedagogical dimensions described in this text, applied to blogs and to foreign language learning, are strongly related, given the collective, situated and immanent nature of language and of intercultural and plurilingual competences. We can thus hypothesize that the improvement of foreign language skills and of those two competences is potentially best performed “in-action”, through a shared and permanent linguistic and cultural awareness. Thus, this awareness is strongly dependent on the presence of the “other” (namely the “other” that is learning the very same foreign language), which helps to create a “third space”
(Bhabha, 1994) or an “intercultural stance” (Kramsch, 1999), i.e., an hybrid discursive space, integrating contributions of the participants, instead of juxtaposing them.

Hence, using blogs as pedagogical tools for fostering IC and PC through co-action entails some pedagogical implications: first, the need to find external partners to exchange with and to react to and the need to encourage this external participation; second, the recognition that resorting to a common foreign language does not erase cultural differences between groups of learners (a foreign common language could disguise other languages and cultures from the plurilingual repertoires, but their emergence is to be expected); third, and related to the previously mentioned, the necessary linguistic and cultural mediation between the multiple voices performed by the teacher (remember, for example, how the teacher in this study mediated the linguistic correction path). This mediation occurs in order to convey and co-construct meaning, and to avoid confusion between what is to be seen as typical from the foreign language and culture and what is already sieved by the students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We believe this last aspect could have benefited from a more intervening attitude of this very same teacher, in order to better highlight blogs’ intercultural dimension (and not by expecting the blog and the interventions to be intercultural on its own).

Considering what has been previously sustained, publishing on a blog becomes:

– a means of socialization, through the way in which it draws the “other”, the audience, into the group and animates the expression of the “I” subject-learner or, if one should prefer, as a continuum between the private space of the classroom and public space of the blogosphere; blogs can thus become more than a “new medium of individualized self-expression” (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008, p. 530), providing opportunities of public debate, (re)creation and collaboration;

– an instrument at the service of exolingual interaction (especially in the case analysed here, in which Portuguese is the FL of both groups), allowing stereotypes and representations, contents and learning methods to be thematized, hence creating collaborative dynamics around the use of a language and its culture.

When combined with a more active and critically engaged presence of the tutor, blogs can also become a time-space for languages and cultures (Ferrão-Tavares, 2007), accounting for the dynamics of plurilingual and intercultural repertoires, and providing singular opportunities “to develop intercultural communicative competence, defined as openness to difference and a capacity to contingently and dynamically interact with members of other speech communities and cultures” (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008, p. 533).

However, and despite these potentialities and characteristics, the integration of a blog in the language and culture lesson, in the light of the perspective we argued in favour of (and which, we stress, is one of the multiple forms that the current use of the blog in the context of teaching and learning can take on), is affected by a multiplicity of constraints (also see Lee, 2010, 2011) such as: (a) several difficulties in the use of the FL related to individual characteristics (poor self-perception of writing competences, demotivation when confronted with the task, insecurity in terms of the “correct” use of the language, as stated by both students of our group); (b) representations about the teaching and learning of languages (negative representations about the use of the Internet in the classroom, preference for more directive methodologies, with a focus on the evaluation of the acquisitions rather than on interaction dynamics,…); (c) difficulties in the creation of synergies with other blogs; (d) learners’ and/or teachers’ limitations in terms of their electronic literacy; and (e) difficulties in connecting to and accessing the Internet. In order to isolate
each of these difficulties, specific projects addressing them would be necessary so that located and empirical solutions could be tested and provided. Also, further studies with a socioconstructivist approach to blogs in the classroom (for less taught languages or not, in working places or in formal instruction scenarios, . . .) could be pursued in order to question and to evaluate the transferability, the validity and the usefulness of our pedagogical path, as well as the significance of the conclusions we presented.

These problems, which are of distinct nature, relate to different actors (both teachers and pupils/students) and imply fighting battles on different fronts (representations about “norm”, “correctness”, Internet use for pedagogical purposes, “communicative task”, teacher’s and student’s “roles” . . .). We believe, however, that using the blog, as a hyphen for different and distant linguistic-communicative learning communities, places it, by reference to Vygotsky (1985), as a privileged space (and is this not also a spatial metaphor?) of proximal development of IC and PC.

Acknowledgements
The author would like to thank Susana Senos for her commitment to the reviewing process and Maria Helena Araujo e Sá for her constructive insights to this approach.

Notes
2. “Exolingual”, a term referring to communication between people not sharing a common mother tongue, was initially presented by Porquier (1979, p. 50). Currently, the concept of exolingual communication is even more enriched with the intercultural dimension, and it is understood as the communication that happens between individuals from different ethno-cultural backgrounds.
3. Documents or links to documents (written, oral or audiovisual).
4. Which also seems to be, from our point of view, a limitation (originated in the communicative approach), given that the Internet allows for much more than mere activities close to real life or the typical “jeux de rôles” which characterize that approach.
5. See Puren (2006) on some reserves concerning the methodological considerations of this document, their inconsistencies and limitations concerning a perspective which is truly actional.
6. Puren defines task as “what the learner does within his/her learning process” (in the original: “ce que fait l’apprenant dans son processus d’apprentissage”) and action as “what the user does in social contexts” (in the original: “ce que fait l’usager dans la société” (2004, p. 122).
8. In the original: “les phénomènes d’élaboration d’une culture commune par et pour l’action collective”.
9. Since their beginning, activities with and in the blog can be carried out in classes in which students are physically present or absent, for example, from home.
10. All the other examples in this text were produced by Spanish students from our partner blog. Nicknames were chosen by them.
11. As opposed to blogs under the exclusive responsibility of the tutor/teacher or of a student/group of students.
12. All the excerpts are presented with the learners’ syntactic and spelling choices. The only changes made are in terms of formatting (use of colours, bold, italic, size of letters, . . .) in order to condense the text.
13. “Fado” is a typical Portuguese musical genre, which includes references to sadness, melancholia, the life of the poor people and the feeling of loss. Since November 2011, Fado is inscribed in the Unesco Cultural Heritage list.
Notes on contributor

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