



2nd International Conference on Teaching and Education

26 - 28 February 2025

London, United Kingdom

Fostering Language Proficiency and Cultural Competence Through E-Tandem Exchanges: A Qualitative Analysis of Student Reflections and Pedagogical Insights

Minako Yogi-Ishikawa

University of the Ryukyus

Abstract

E-Tandem exchanges, or online intercultural language exchanges, have become a vital tool for language learning and fostering intercultural understanding in an increasingly globalized world. These exchanges provide learners with real-time communication opportunities with native speakers or peers, enabling them to improve their language proficiency while also developing cultural awareness. Through these interactions, participants gain insights into different cultural contexts, enhancing their overall understanding of global diversity. As digital technologies continue to evolve, e-tandem learning is increasingly recognized as an effective method for promoting learner engagement, autonomy, and active participation in their own educational process. This paper synthesizes findings from previous studies on the effectiveness of e-tandem exchanges, supplemented by an analysis of student reflections from Japanese university classes involved in such exchanges with international counterparts. The results highlight the advantages of e-tandem programs in improving oral fluency, listening comprehension, and self-assurance in communication. Additionally, students reported an increase in cultural sensitivity and adaptability through exposure to diverse perspectives and interaction styles. These experiences led to greater awareness of cultural differences and enhanced intercultural competence, fostering personal growth and a willingness to connect with diverse groups. However, challenges such as technological barriers, varying levels of language proficiency, and engagement disparities remain. This study provides recommendations for optimizing these exchanges, including structured pre-exchange training, guided activities, and reflective practices to enhance language acquisition and cultural learning. Future research should explore the long-term impact of e-tandem exchanges, particularly in relation to sustained language acquisition and cultural competence development.'

Keywords: Language Education, Collaborative Learning, Communication, Online Pedagogy, Global Competence