

December 2019

Learners' Perspectives on a Long-Term Tandem Chinese Language Partner Program

Jun Xu

Colorado State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cltmt>



Part of the [Chinese Studies Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Recommended Citation

Xu, Jun (2019) "Learners' Perspectives on a Long-Term Tandem Chinese Language Partner Program," *Chinese Language Teaching Methodology and Technology*. Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 5.

Available at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cltmt/vol2/iss2/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Chinese American Faculty and Staff Association at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chinese Language Teaching Methodology and Technology by an authorized editor of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.

Learners' Perspectives on a Long-Term Tandem Chinese Language Partner Program

Jun Xu
Colorado State University

Abstract

Tandem language learning is important in enhancing learners' language proficiency and fostering cultural knowledge. However, learners' perspectives on tandem learning programs have received little attention, and no research exists concerning learners' perspectives on long-term tandem language learning. Based on an anonymous online survey, this article examines how learners perceive a face-to-face tandem Chinese language partner program after participation for three years. The results indicate that, whereas the participants acknowledge the benefits of the participation of the language partner program, they identify challenges regarding logistics and task design. The implications of the findings are also discussed.

Keywords: Chinese, language partner, tandem learning, learner perspective

Introduction

The importance of meaningful interaction in the target language for learners, specifically with native speakers, has been underscored in foreign language instruction. However, it is uncommon for all learners receiving formal instruction, especially for learners of uncommonly taught languages, to have face-to-face interaction opportunities with native speakers.

Along with the development of technology, therefore, computer-mediated communication has been integrated into classroom instruction, allowing learners to engage in communicative interaction with native speakers of their target languages. Email, Skype, and other digital tools are used in the instruction of learning foreign languages, and an increasing number of empirical studies have been published in recent years. (Abrams, 2003; Appel & Mullen, 2000; Belz, 2003, 2005; Calvert, 1992, 1999; Cziko, 2004; Guillén, 2015; Hampel, 2006; Jin, 2017; Kitade, 2000; Lee, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2007; Kato, Spring & Mori, 2016; O'Dowd, 2005; Smith, 2004; Sotillo, 2000; Tadini, 2003; Wang, 2007; Wang & Chen, 2012; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

Concerning the teaching and learning of Chinese at universities in the United States, the current context is different because of the rapid increase in the number of Chinese international students (Institute of International Education, 2018). The presence of Chinese international students on campus provides Chinese learners with a precious opportunity to interact with Chinese native speakers face-to-face.

Regardless of the method of interaction between learners and native speakers, e.g., face-to-face or with the help of technology, so far, however, little research has focused on the learners' perspective (El-Hariri, 2016; Lee, 2004; Tian & Wang, 2010). Further, where most studies focus on programs that usually last for weeks or a semester, no study has evaluated the effects of a long-term tandem language learning program from the learners' perspective.

The current study, therefore, aims to analyze learners' perceptions of a long-term tandem language learning program. In particular, the study focuses on a face-to-face tandem Chinese language partner program at a public university in the western United States. The primary aim of this article is to explore how learners perceive the effectiveness of the language partner program and provide pedagogical implications for the implementation of such programs. Hopefully, these findings will advance our knowledge of learners' perceptions of face-to-face language partner programs across multiple languages.

The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows: A brief review of learners' perspectives on tandem learning, particularly eTandem learning of a foreign language, will be provided, followed by a section introducing the data and method by which this research and analysis were conducted. The research findings will be in the fourth section, and a discussion and implications of the findings for future pedagogical practice conclude this article.

Learners' perspectives on tandem and eTandem learning

Tandem learning refers to organized language exchange between two language learners through which one can improve language proficiency in the other's native language (Appel & Mullen, 2000; Clavert, 1992, 1999). A significant amount of research has demonstrated that tandem or eTandem language learning facilitates learners with language learning in terms of linguistic (Abrams, 2003; Kitade, 2000; Lee, 2007; Smith, 2004; Sotillo, 2000; Tudini, 2003) and intercultural knowledge (O'Dowd, 2005; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

However, although learner perspectives play a critical role in helping educators improve tandem or eTandem learning program and accommodating the needs and interests of learners, only limited research exists concerning learner perspectives (El-Hariri, 2016; Lee, 2004; Tian & Wang, 2010). The following section provides a summary introduction of such research regarding learners' perspectives on the benefits, task design, and challenges of tandem or eTandem language learning programs.

Learners' perspectives on the benefits of tandem and eTandem learning

Some recent studies shed light on learners' perspectives on the benefits of tandem or eTandem learning. For example, Shaver (2012) investigated introductory level German students' perspectives on a face-to-face language partner program. The students met with native speakers of German four times (fall semester) and six times (spring semester), one hour each time. Almost all students acknowledged a positive experience, noting an improvement in pronunciation, vocabulary building, and speaking. In addition to the linguistic benefits, Shaver (2012) reported that the language partner program promoted integrative motivation through students' increased enthusiasm for learning and willingness to take risks with language in the classroom. Finally, students developed an association with the broader community of German language speakers through interaction with individuals outside of class time.

Contrasting with other research which only focused on one side of learners' perspectives on eTandem learning, Tian and Wang (2010) compared the perspectives of English learners in China and Chinese learners in Australia on an eTandem learning program via Skype. Students engaged in a one-hour session each week for nine weeks, half an hour in Chinese and half an

hour in English, outside class time. Both groups of learners reported a positive experience and improvement of linguistic competence and intercultural understanding. However, the English learners responded more positively than the Chinese learners to almost every aspect of the learning. Tian and Wang (2010) attributed those differences to a mismatch in language proficiency. They argued that the amount of Chinese produced by Chinese learners was less than the English produced by English learners because the English learners were at an advanced level while the Chinese learners were at an intermediate level.

Learners' perspectives on task design of tandem and eTandem learning

Task design is one of the important issues addressed in eTandem learning. El-Hariri (2016) focused on learners' perspectives about task design for an oral-visual eTandem language learning program. Regarding the criteria of a "good task," the clarity of task formulation was the most important factor to the learners. The second important factor was tasks reflecting personal interests. Moreover, learners expected tasks to be prepared by their instructors while having the option to choose tasks by themselves. The least favorite feature was "directly related to the course." In terms of topics interesting to students, the participants prefer those related to students' everyday lives, such as education, work, personal interests, or leisure activities.

Lee (2004) addressed the question of task appropriateness and noted that it is vital to provide students with a list of open-ended questions related to the topics in activities so learners can work on the questions beforehand to facilitate the online collaboration. She also pointed out that having students work in a small group to discuss topics and generalize ideas before chatting with their native speaker partners helps improve the quality of the learning program.

Yang (2018) examined learners' perceptions of having both pair work and group discussion in an eTandem learning program. Some learners considered that both pair work and group discussion were helpful because pair work enabled them to develop L2 skill, while the group discussion helped develop ideas. The two contexts, thus, were complementary. Other learners viewed them as non-complementary in that pair work was preferred over group discussion. Also, some participants viewed the pair work and group discussion as repetitive and unnecessary because the topics of the two activities were the same.

Learners' perspectives on the challenges of tandem learning

Few studies have addressed learners' perspectives on the challenges of face-to-face tandem learning. Wang (2018) examined a voluntary face-to-face tandem Chinese-German language exchange program. Most participants met their partners only once (27.78%) or did not meet their partners at all after joining the program (44.44%). The challenges reported were heavy workload (58.82%), difficulties in scheduling meeting time (41.48%), and no suitable partners (29.41%). Despite a considerable amount of people (149 people) registered with the program, only a limited number of people eventually completed the program. Wang (2018) noted that non-credit bearing learning could be one reason, de-motivating participants. Difficulty finding a suitable time to meet could also reduce the participants' commitment to the program.

Together these studies provide valuable insight into learners' perspectives of tandem or eTandem language learning, although several other aspects remain unknown. First, all the

research concerned the learners' perceptions of short-term programs, which were for a few weeks or a semester. No research has investigated how learners perceive face-to-face long-term tandem programs. Given that interaction with native speakers is essential in second language learning, it is important to provide foreign language learners with opportunities to practice their target language for a longer time, and their perspectives should be taken into consideration. Second, most research was about eTandem language learning, while less research was about face-to-face tandem learning, especially programs integrated into the curriculum rather than voluntary.

Thus, drawing on previous work, the present study aims to explore the perspectives of Chinese learners on a long-term face-to-face language partner program. Specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

- a. What do the students do during the face-to-face language partner program?
- b. Do or to what extent do students think the language partner program beneficial for learning Chinese?
- c. What aspects of the language partner program do students think need improvement?

Research Methodology

Context of the study The Chinese learners and Chinese international students who participated in the face-to-face language partner program examined here were from a public university in the western United States. The language partner program was established in 2014 in the context of a rapidly growing Chinese international student population on campus. Every year, the Chinese program of the international office on campus recruits Chinese international students to voluntarily participate in the program to help them accommodate to campus life, understand American culture, and build friendships with domestic students.

In contrast, Chinese learners, enrolled in Chinese classes from the first-year level to fourth-year level, are required to participate in the language partner program as a compulsory part of their language courses. The program is expected to provide the students with opportunities to engage in language use in an authentic context. Students are expected to experience the successes and challenges of comprehensible communication in Chinese, improve their linguistic and cultural knowledge of China and Chinese through face-to-face interaction with native speakers of Chinese in a non-classroom setting.

At the beginning of each semester, the student lists of Chinese language classes are provided to the Chinese program office, and the students are matched with Chinese international students. In general, one learner is matched with one Chinese international student. There are cases where one learner is matched with more than one international student and vice versa.

Once a week for ten weeks, during a scheduled one-hour class period, the Chinese learners and the Chinese international students assembled in a room to complete two question sheets provided by the Chinese instructors and the Chinese program. The question sheets for Chinese learners are provided by the Chinese instructors of the respective courses based on class content. The one-hour session is expected to allocate thirty minutes for practicing Chinese and the other thirty minutes for English practice. When learners are unable to participate at the designated time, the question sheet is provided in advance to each student so they can schedule another time and location mutually convenient to their language partners. Although the instructors of Chinese classes appear during the meeting sessions, the instructors do not get involved in students' conversations but only provide logistic help.

The Chinese learners are required to write down the answers in Chinese, and the answer sheets are graded by the instructors, which accounts for five percent of their final grade. Given that the purposes of the language partner program for Chinese learners are to practice class learnings, to broaden and deepen cultural knowledge of China, and to provide students a less stressful and less anxious environment in which to practice Chinese, linguistic mistakes are not the focus of grading. As long as their answers reflect the requirements on question sheets, the students receive full points each time.

The first-year and second-year students are mainly expected to practice language skills by asking their language partners questions in Chinese and writing down the answers in Chinese. For third-year and fourth-year students, the provided questions are usually closely related to class reading topics. In general, students are required in each meeting to answer two or three questions. For example, one textbook mentions that more and more Chinese high school graduates have chosen to leave China and go to an overseas university to continue education without explaining the reasons behind such a decision. Thus, one of the questions of the week developed to discuss is “what do you think are the reasons that more and more Chinese high school graduates go to overseas universities?”. Also, the students ask Chinese international students about why they chose the United States over the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as well as reasons for selecting the host university. Another example concerns high school life. The students and their language partners share their own high school experiences in order to compare those experiences with descriptions of high school student life in the textbook as well as cultural differences between China and the United States.

Participants The participants of this study were fifteen (n=15) Chinese learners enrolled in the fourth-year Chinese class. All participants were native English speakers participating in the language partner program since enrolling in the Chinese program at the host university. Seven students and six students participated in the program for two and three years, respectively, while two students participated in the program for one year. The history of participation varied because some students who studied Chinese in high school were directly placed into second- or third-year classes when they started to take Chinese at the university.

Instrument and Procedure An anonymous online questionnaire (See Appendix) was distributed in September 2018. The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions, 19 of which were multiple-choice questions, along with four open-ended questions. Question one through seven collected the general information of students who participated in the language partner program. The purpose of questions eight through 18 assessed student perceptions of the linguistic and intercultural benefits from the language partner program. The Likert scale was used with five indicating strong agreement with the statements in the questions while one indicated strong disagreement. Open-ended questions 20 through 23 concerned program benefits and challenges and student suggestions for improvement. The answers to the open-ended questions were coded by using frequently occurring words such as “time,” “location,” “friends,” “culture,” and “worksheet.” Further, those answers were classified under categories such as “time,” “friendship,” “topics,” and “logistics.” Examination of different categories occurred and observations recorded.

Results

Research Question 1: What do the students do during the face-to-face language partner program?

This section reports how students participated in the language partner program. During the academic year before the time of the present study, six students (40%) and five students (33%) participated in the ten-week program per semester more than 15 times and ten times, respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. *Times of participation during last academic year*

Times	Student numbers	Percentage
0-5	3	20%
5-10	1	7%
10-15	5	33%
15-20	6	40%
Total	15	100%

The answers varied regarding the time to complete the question sheet for each meeting. Four students reported that they usually spend 10 to 20 minutes for the activity. The other eight students responded that they take 20 to 30 minutes or 30 to 40 minutes to complete the answer sheet. It is noticeable that 20 percent (n=3) of the students spent more than 40 minutes to answer the question sheet (Table 2).

Table 2. *Average time to complete the question sheet*

Time (minutes)	Student numbers	Percentage
0-10	0	0%
10-20	4	27%
20-30	4	27%
30-40	4	27%
More than 40	3	20%

Students were also asked whether they practiced Chinese and English with Chinese international student partners after completing the answer sheets. The result shows that more than half of the students (53%) continued to practice Chinese with their language partners even after completing the required question sheet. As expected, almost all students (93%) helped their international student partners practice English. The participants were also asked to describe a typical meeting with their language partners, such as what they usually do; whether they follow a standard agenda, if there is a one; how often/easily they deviate from an agenda; and how long the meetings typically last. The typical meeting appears to be, in the words of one participant, “we showed up, did the sheet, chatted for a while in Chinese and English, then left.” Other students’ responses revealed more details, especially when the students and their language partners met at a different time and location. When students had time conflicts, they met their language partners at their apartments or the library coffee shops. They had lunch or dinner together while finished the answer sheet in Chinese and English. Sometimes, if time permitted, they “hung out” together afterward.

The students also described the content of their conversations with their language partners. In addition to the questions on the sheet in Chinese and English, they also talked about

the cultural aspects of everyday life, current events, things related to the topic given on the sheet, and other “fun” stuff, such as slang and current events. Thus, it is not surprising to know that sometimes, as some students noted, the meeting lasted for two hours. Besides, the meetings were not always about completing the sheets. One student responded that sometimes they helped each other with other class assignments either before or after finishing the sheets.

Research Question 2: Do or to what extent do students think the language partner program beneficial for learning Chinese?

This section reports the findings of students' perceptions of the language partner program based on the results of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions.

Eight students (53%) said they would participate in the program even if it were not required. Another seven students (47%) indicated they would not participate in the program if it were not required. However, when asked whether they are glad about their participation in the program, 13 students (87%) responded positively, while only two students (13%) noted that they did not enjoy the program. As Table 3 shows, the majority of the participants valued the program regarding various aspects of learning Chinese. If the number of “agree” and “strongly agree” are combined, students believed that they benefited most by obtaining new cultural information (87%, n=13), improving listening skills (87%, n=13), and improving grammar (87%, n=13). Other benefits cited included an improvement of pronunciation and writing skills (80%, n=12) and helping to understand current issues in China (73%, n=11). Ten students also said they improved in vocabulary, speaking skills, and confidence. In contrast, the program appeared to have limited benefits in improving the understanding of class readings materials and general reading skills in Chinese. Only six students noted that they believe that the program helped their readings in general and four students believed the program help their readings in class.

Table 3. *Perception of the program*

	Agreement (N=15)					M
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Listening	6	7	2	0	0	4.27
New cultural information	6	7	1	0	1	4.13
Grammar	4	9	0	1	1	3.93
Pronunciation	4	8	1	2	0	3.93
Writing	4	8	1	2	0	3.93
Current issues in China	3	8	4	0	0	3.93
Vocabulary	4	6	4	1	0	3.87
Speaking	4	6	4	1	0	3.87
Confidence	3	7	3	2	0	3.73
Reading (in general)	2	4	5	4	0	3.27
Readings in class	1	3	7	4	0	3.07

Note: (5)=Strongly agree; (4)=agree; (3)=Neither agree nor disagree; (2)=Disagree; (1)=Strongly disagree; M=Mean Agreement (1-5).

Regarding the scheduling time and location for the language partner program, the results showed that more students (67%, n=10) favored a scheduled time and location over self-scheduled time and location (33%, n=5).

Students also responded to an open-end question regarding positive outcomes or learnings from the language partner program. The findings not only echoed student responses to the questionnaire mentioned previously but also revealed new insights into the benefits of the language partner program.

First, students provided more details about learning Chinese through the language partner program. By communicating in Chinese with their language partners, the Chinese learners practiced grammar and writing characters. They also talked about various topics not covered in class or which they are uncomfortable to talk about with professors. Also, they valued the one-on-one opportunity to practice Chinese with their language partners. One student responded that “it is also nice to hear other people’s perspectives and practice Chinese one on one so I can get feedback.”

Second, the language program offered them an opportunity to build up friendships with international students. One student noted that “I met some really great exchange students through the language partner program that I normally would not have met otherwise.”

Finally, the students noted that they could practice Chinese in an encouraging environment through the language partner program. Students became more confident and comfortable in interacting with their language partners in Chinese. As a student mentioned, the language partner program helped them “feel more confident speaking Chinese while also getting to meet amazing international students.”

Research Question 3: What aspects of the language partner program do students think need improvement?

This section reports student opinions on how to improve the tandem language partner program based on responses to one open-ended question, “what can/should your instructors do to make the language partner program more meaning and appealing?” Students’ responses concerned time, topics covered in the worksheet, the format, and the logistics of the language partner program.

The primary concern students had was with the time they spent on the program. As mentioned previously, each session usually took an hour to complete. Students believed that one hour each week out of class for ten weeks should account for one credit.

Also, students preferred more diverse topics in the worksheet. One student responded that the topics should add to what is covered in the textbook and class rather than be repetitive. Another student noted that the questions should “provoke personal opinions and actual thinking of how you feel and would say in Chinese.”

Moreover, students expressed their opinions on the format of the language partner program. They preferred different and various activities for each session instead of the worksheet with questions every week. They suggested that the questions could be less structured and that activities such as watching a movie with language partners or game day be included.

The last issue concerned program logistics. First, students suggested that the meeting session schedule be more flexible. Students preferred more available meeting sessions and other days during the week, such as Monday and Tuesday instead of Wednesday and Thursday. They also mentioned the timing of announcing the language program each semester. One student suggested “announcing the meeting time at the very start of the semester so those of us who

work can arrange our schedules more easily.” Second, pairing the students with Chinese international students also concerned the students. Sometimes there were not enough international students participating in the meeting sessions. Students preferred more specific or individualized methods of choosing a partner based on such things as common hobbies or interests, rather than by random choice. Also, students thought having a long-term language partner would be more beneficial than changing partners each semester.

Discussion

Consistent with the literature, the current study found that Chinese learners in this study perceived as benefits the linguistic and intercultural knowledge they gained from participation in a long-term tandem language partner program. In particular, learners responded that their listening competency benefited most from the program, followed by acquiring new cultural knowledge. Further, they also felt that they understood more about Chinese dialects by interacting with people from various parts of China. However, they did not consider that the program helped their reading or reading comprehension, even though the topics were also covered in class.

The most exciting finding was how learners perceived and took advantage of the opportunities to interact with native Chinese speakers. First, according to learners' responses to the open questions regarding positive program outcomes, the results agree with the findings of other studies (Shaver, 2012) in that students perceived the program as an exciting, positive, valuable, and motivating experience. The learners reported that the program helped them feel more confident in speaking Chinese. Also, they had opportunities to talk with their partners about topics not covered in class or which they might be uncomfortable to talk about with the professor. Second, learners especially appreciated the opportunity of interacting with Chinese-speaking people to practice their language skills in a relaxing and encouraging setting outside of formal language classes. Finally, unlike eTandem or short-term tandem learning programs, some participants had the same language partner for a long time. Thus, the long-term language partner program provided the students with not only an opportunity to practice Chinese but also an opportunity to communicate with native Chinese speakers and build friendships. As students' responses revealed, student interactions with their partners extended past the meeting session. Some of them “hung out” or studied together, which is an unexpected positive outcome from the program. These benefits occurred because of the quality of the interaction. Ultimately, such interaction with native speakers will enhance their language proficiency.

The findings also revealed several students' concerns about organizational issues. The most critical issue that students had was about the time spent on the program. Students considered that the required meeting time, i.e., one hour per week for ten weeks, should be credited rather than five percent of the final grade. They believed that the program demanded too much time. Probably, it is the reason that some students responded that they would not participate in the program if not required while they were glad about the participation. Further, they prefer more options regarding meeting time and location to fit their busy schedules. They also prefer the announcement of the language partner program to be as early as possible. Another issue was task design. El-Hariri (2016) found that students prefer the instructors to prepare the openly formulated questions in order to have more space for spontaneous interaction enabling natural conversation. The participants in the current study also prefer fewer structured questions. They valued questions that can “provoke personal and actual thinking of how you feel and would

say in Chinese.” The last concern was about how to pair with Chinese international students. They prefer that more Chinese international students be involved in the program. Also, a long-term language partner based on mutual interests was preferred.

The findings of this study have several important implications for future practice. First, in order to successfully implement a long-term tandem language learning program, diverse task design seems vital. If any format such as an interview or free chat with assigned topics continues for a long time, a different format, such as a game day or watching a movie with the partner as one participant suggested, should be taken into consideration. Second, the task design process should include students. The current study, as well as El-Hariri’s (2016), found that students prefer topics prepared by instructors while they favor topics which are not closely related to the course so that they can learn something new. Asking students to create a pool of topics, for example, can be a possible way to incorporate students’ thoughts into the decision-making process. Third, schedule flexibility should be considered. Although students welcome meeting sessions scheduled at a designated time and location, they should also have opportunities to complete the task at a time and a location convenient to them. Finally, the findings of this research also point out the need for incentives. If students are required to devote at least one hour each week to participate in a required program outside class time, whether one credit should be awarded needs further consideration. Indeed, whether such programs should be integrated into the regular curriculum or remain as a volunteer program must be carefully examined by educators and students.

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the effects of a long-term face-to-face tandem language learning program from the learners’ point of view. The study has shown that students benefited from the participation of the long-term language partner program in various ways. Further, the study has also revealed that more changes are required to improve the language partner program. This study provides the first assessment of a long-term face-to-face tandem language learning program. These findings could serve as an exploration of the potential usefulness of the tandem language learning program and could be used to help both practitioners and policy-makers better implement a long-term tandem or eTandem language learning program.

Several limitations need to be addressed. First, the current study should be considered as a case study because of the small number of participants and because participants were only from one institution and thus might share a homogenous background. Second, the current study was subject to several potential methodological weaknesses in that only an anonymous online survey was conducted. An interview of participants would help deepen the understanding of tandem language learning programs. Last, an analysis of video or audio records of each session might be able to reveal a clear picture of how learning takes place through a tandem learning program.

Regarding the direction for future research, more research with various methods is required to examine the long-term efficacy of tandem or eTandem language learning programs. More information on long-term tandem language learning would help us establish a higher degree of effectiveness in the practice of teaching and learning a language in the future.

References

- Abrams, Z. I. (2003). The effect of synchronous and asynchronous CMC on oral performance in German. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(2), 157-167.
- Appel, C., & Mullen, T. (2000). Pedagogical considerations for a web-based tandem language learning environment. *Computers & Education*, 34(3-4), 291-308.
- Belz, J. A. (2003). Linguistic perspectives on the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(2), 68-117.
- Belz, J. A. (2005). Intercultural questioning, discovery, and tension in Internet-mediated language learning partnerships. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 5(1), 3-39.
- Calvert, M. (1992). Working in tandem: Peddling an old idea. *Language Learning Journal*, 6(1), 17-19.
- Calvert, M. (1999). Tandem: A vehicle for language and intercultural learning. *Language Learning Journal*, 19(1), 56-60.
- Cziko, G. A. (2004). Electronic tandem language learning (eTandem): A third approach to second language learning for the 21st century. *Calico Journal*, 22(1), 25-39.
- El-Hariri, Y. (2016). Learner perspectives on task design for oral-visual eTandem Language Learning. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 49-72.
- Guillén, G. (2015). Awareness and corrective feedback in social CALL, Tandems, and E-Tandems. *IALLT Journal of Language Learning Technologies*, 44(2), 1-42.
- Hampel, R. (2006). Rethinking task design for the digital age: A framework for language teaching and learning in a synchronous online environment. *ReCALL*, 18(1), 105-121.
- Institute of International Education. (2018). *Open Doors 2018*. Retrieved February 03, 2019, from <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students>
- Jin, L. (2017). Digital affordances on WeChat: Learning Chinese as a second language. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 31(1-2), 27-52.
- Kitade, K. (2000). L2 learners' discourse and SLA theories in CMC: Collaborative interaction in Internet chat. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 13(2), 143-166.
- Lee, L. (2002a). Enhancing learners' communication skills through synchronous electronic interaction and task-based instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(1), 16-24.
- Lee, L. (2002b). Synchronous online exchanges: A study of modification devices on non-native discourse. *System*, 30(3), 275-288.
- Lee, L. (2004). Learners' perspectives on networked collaborative interaction with native speakers of Spanish in the US. *Language Learning & Technology*, 8(1), 83-100.
- Lee, L. (2007). Fostering second language oral communication through constructivist interaction in desktop videoconferencing. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(4), 635-649.
- Kato, F., Spring, R., & Mori, C. (2016). Mutually beneficial foreign language learning: Creating meaningful interactions through video-synchronous computer-mediated communication. *Foreign Language Annals*, 49(2), 355-366.
- O'Dowd, R. (2005). Negotiating sociocultural and institutional contexts: The case of Spanish-American telecollaboration. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 5(1), 40-56.
- Shaver, A. N. (2012). Fostering integrative motivation among introductory-level German students through a language partners program. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 45(1), 67-73.
- Smith, B. (2004). Computer-mediated negotiated interaction and lexical acquisition. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 26(3), 365-398.

- Sotillo, S. M. (2000). Discourse functions and syntactic complexity in synchronous and asynchronous communication. *Language Learning & Technology*, 4(1), 77-110.
- Tian, J., & Wang, Y. (2010). Taking language learning outside the classroom: Learners' perspectives of eTandem learning via Skype. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(3), 181-197.
- Tudini, V. (2003). Using native speakers in chat. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(3), 141-159.
- Wang, L. (2018). 'It's a shame that we haven't met earlier!': Facilitating a tandem language exchange programme at Queen's University Belfast. In F. Rosell-Aguilar, T. Beaven, & M. Fuertes Gutiérrez (Eds.), *Innovative language teaching and learning at University: Integrating informal learning into formal language education* (37-46). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.22.774>
- Wang, Y. (2007). Task design in videoconferencing-supported distance language learning. *Calico Journal*, 24(3), 591-630.
- Ware, P. D., & Kramsch, C. (2005). Toward an intercultural stance: Teaching German and English through telecollaboration. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(2), 190-205.
- Yang, S. J. (2018). Language learners' perceptions of having two interactional contexts in eTandem. *Language Learning & Technology*, 22(1), 42-51.

Appendix: Survey on Language Partner Program

1. Since you started learning Chinese at X university, how many years have you participated in the Language Program?
a. 1 year b. 2 years c. 3 years d. 4 years
2. During this academic year, how many times did you attend the Language Partner Program activities, including meeting your language partner at different times and locations?
a. 0-5 b. 5-10 c. 10-15 d. 15-20
3. On average, for each time you attended an activity, how long did it take you to complete the question sheet?
a. 0-10 minutes b. 10-20 minutes c. 20-30 minutes
d. 30-40 minutes e. more than 40 minutes
4. Did you practice Chinese speaking with your language partner after completing the question sheet?
a. Yes b. No
5. Did you practice English speaking with your language partner after completing the question sheet?
a. Yes b. No
6. I would participate in this program even if it is NOT required.
a. Yes b. No
7. I am glad that I participated in the Language Partner Program.
a. Yes b. No
8. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me understand the readings in class.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
9. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me acquire *new* cultural information related to the readings in class.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
10. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me know more about current issues in China.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
11. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me improve my pronunciation.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree

12. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me improve my vocabulary.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
13. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me improve my grammar.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
14. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me improve my speaking in Chinese.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
15. Participation of the Language Partner Program helps me improve my writing in Chinese.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
16. Participation of the Language Partner Program helps me improve my listening in Chinese.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
17. Participation of the Language Partner Program helps me improve my reading in Chinese.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
18. Participation in the Language Partner Program helps me improve my confidence in using Chinese.
a. Strongly disagree b. disagree c. Neither disagree nor agree.
d. Agree e. Strongly agree
19. I prefer meeting my language partner
a. always at a scheduled time and location
b. at a time/location we adjust as we go along
c. with some other arrangements
20. Please describe a typical meeting with your language partner. What do you do? Is there a standard agenda? How often/easily to you deviate from an agenda? How long did your meetings typically last?
21. Please describe some positive outcomes or learnings from the Language Partner Program.
22. Please describe some opportunities for improvement in the Language Partner Program.
23. What can/should your instructors do to make the Language Partner Program more meaning and appealing?