

# Innovating a Telecollaboration Programme to Prepare Learners with 21st Century Skills: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses how a telecollaboration programme can be innovated as a learning model that integrates technology into language learning to enrich the learners' 21st-century skills. These skills include competencies to communicate and collaborate with multilingual and multicultural speakers and criticality in global citizen education. Pedagogical lingua franca and task-based language teaching provided principles for innovating the telecollaboration programme. The study was carried out in a general English class for adolescent learners in Indonesia in partnership with a foreign language school in Russia. The findings indicated the importance of enabling multimodality on digital platforms alongside well-defined and well-structured task design when creating a telecollaboration programme. The teacher's roles as a programme designer, learning facilitator, and mentor, and finally as a researcher who utilised stages in action research and an insider perspective to reflect on the creation and implementation process of the telecollaboration programme were also elaborated.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Telecollaboration, one of the main applications of technology in foreign language classroom communication and language learning, has attracted the attention of both academics and practitioners in the last 20 years (O'Dowd & O'Rourke, 2019). O'Dowd (2007, p. 144) defined telecollaboration as “the use of online communication tools to connect language learners in different countries to develop collaborative project work and intercultural exchange” and an “umbrella term for different formats and structures of online intercultural exchange”. Research in the area has shown the affordances of telecollaboration in (1) engaging learners in authentic communication (Thorne, 2013), (2) developing learners' autonomy and agency (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2015), (3) empowering and innovating the foreign language classroom (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2015), and (4) increasing multimodal communicative competence (Helm, 2013). Nevertheless, telecollaboration holds another potential that is relevant to developing the learners' global competencies and 21st-century skills.

The 21st-century skills are defined into four pillars: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (British Council, 2015). These competencies, particularly critical thinking, communication, and collaboration are in response to the phenomenon of globalisation, where English speakers worldwide come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With the reality of the global use of English, where the number of L2 speakers of English outnumbers the L1 speakers, global communication is very likely to occur in a lingua franca setting, i.e., between speakers with different L1 who choose English as the means of communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). Being a competent communicator in an interconnected and globalised world is also one of the main objectives of foreign language learning elaborated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for Foreign Language Learning (OECD). Furthermore, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 21st-century competent communicators are interculturally competent speakers who can contribute to efforts for world peace through understanding and coexistence (UNESCO, 2013). These visions are in line with the target of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Emancipated Curriculum) as the current curriculum in Indonesia for English language lessons, namely encouraging students' understanding of socio-cultural and intercultural knowledge to encourage critical thinking skills (*Kurikulum Merdeka*, 2022). To this

extent, telecollaboration can be used as a learning model to integrate these competencies and attitudes into English language learning.

Current research in the area suggests that telecollaboration also holds some potential in (5) developing aspects of sociocultural development through the personalised experience (Kohn, 2015, 2021) and (6) promoting critical thinking as a part of global citizenship education (O'Dowd & O'Rourke, 2019). It derives from Byram's (2008) notions of intercultural citizenship, particularly on the pre-political and political approaches to acting interculturally as learners engage in a telecollaboration programme. Pre-political approaches, on the other hand, require students to engage in cross-cultural contact before critically analysing their experiences (O'Dowd, 2020); political approaches are characterised by further engagement in intercultural interaction where learners critically examine common issues in their own contexts, which may be global issues, and work collaboratively towards the solutions. In this manner, telecollaboration can fulfil the notion of peace and coexistence through language learning, as suggested by UNESCO (2013), as a part of global collaboration and communication skills for the 21st century (British Council, 2015), and critical thinking (O'Dowd, 2020).

This small-scale study carried out in a general English class for adolescent learners in Indonesia investigated the way a telecollaboration programme can be adapted and modified to promote 21st-century skills. It was done by integrating action research as a way to empower teachers as classroom stakeholders to critically reflect on their teaching practises in a structured investigation to enable classroom innovation (Burns, 2015). It also adapted principles in Pedagogical Lingua Franca (PLF) (Kohn, 2021, 2022), including (a) teacher pedagogical support to incorporate the intercultural virtual exchange experience into learning and (b) the use of pre, during, and post-tasks throughout the programme; (c) the application is through a balanced combination between live intercultural telecollaboration with in-class activities; and (d) the multimodality of learning tools (Kohn, 2021, 2022). This notion is aligned with task-based language teaching, which provided the basis for the telecollaboration programme design in this study. The task construction of pre-, during, and post-tasks, in particular, aligns with the sequential principle in task-based learning (Ellis, 2018) and enables learning through learners' agency and context influence in real-world tasks (Moore, 2018). Additionally, regarding the multimodality principle of the learning tool, the study emphasised the use of multimodal digital platforms to support tasks. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the programme should involve their daily usage of technology (O'Dowd, 2007) and that the learners are familiar with the digital tools to raise confidence and ensure communication runs smoothly (Gutiérrez et al., 2021).

Despite the growing research in this field, exploring the affordances of various open-access digital platforms to promote the learners' 21st-century skills in collaboration, communication, and critical thinking is not abundant. This gap is particularly obvious as most research was applied at the tertiary level of education for young adult learners, while this study targeted adolescent learners. Therefore, it is hoped that the study will fill the gap. The research aims to investigate the best way to develop a telecollaboration programme that would benefit the learners' global collaboration and communication skills as well as develop critical thinking and intercultural awareness. However, as classroom-based research, the research has a pedagogical goal: to develop the mentioned skills and attitudes to prepare them for 21st-century skills. To achieve the research objectives and at the same time fulfil the pedagogical goal, this study posits the following research question: How can a telecollaboration programme be innovated to promote global communication and collaboration skills for secondary school learners in Indonesia? The question will be answered by exploring the telecollaboration programme design and the teacher's and learners' reflective journals through an action research framework and perspective.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study employs Action Research (AR) as the research design and framework. Burns (2015, p. 188) defines AR as a "self-reflective, systematic, and critical approach" done by the classroom members, who are also the subjects of the research, in order to inform "changes in practise." It is different from daily classroom observation and reflection in that data is collected and documented systematically (Burns, 2010). Within this framework, a teacher, as a stakeholder in the classroom, also plays a dual role as a researcher, allowing an emic perspective to the research. This insider characteristic is particularly relevant for this study because the teacher-researcher can opt for and experiment with the digital tools and task design suitable for the classroom contexts and align with the research objective to generate a telecollaboration model that is beneficial to prepare learners as global communicators and collaborators.

Apart from employing AR as a research framework, it is also used to provide a scheme for designing the telecollaboration programme. The stages in AR, namely (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection, were used as steps to be taken in designing the intercultural telecollaboration programme as well as the research framework. The main tasks in the planning stage were locating the partner school and starting an initial dialogue with the partner teacher, especially regarding the timetable, the language course, and the learners' contexts, for

example, their proficiency level and general interest in language learning. The programme design was also prepared at this stage, with the teacher-researcher creating a draft syllabus to be consulted with the partner teacher. Preparing documents and consulting with the University of Southampton ethics committee was also one of the main tasks at this stage, mainly because the teacher-researcher as a master's student was tied to academic ethics in working with minors.

The communication and collaboration with the partner teacher continued to the action stage as the telecollaboration programme was implemented in the classrooms. As AR acknowledges the research subjects as co-participants actively involved in the study, the learners were also informed that the programme was a part of the research. Therefore, they played an essential role in its success by participating in the programme. It is worth noting that the teacher-researcher started to write entries in the reflective journal in the planning stage and continued throughout the stages. Observation and reflection towards technical and pedagogical issues had also started at this stage. However, it would overlap with the following stages, where the observation stage is characterised by interim data interpretation towards the existing data up to this point to avoid an overwhelming pile of data (Burns, 2015). The stages are wrapped up with the reflection stage, with final data analysis and the composition of the final report, which, in the case of a master's research, is the master's dissertation.

## **2.2. Research Setting and Participants**

The Indonesian learners who are co-participants in this research are learners in a general English class for adolescents in an English language course based in Balikpapan, Indonesia. They were 14–16 years old and enrolled in junior high and senior high schools in Jakarta and Balikpapan. The class was conducted in the afternoon after school time. The online format with Zoom Meeting as the opted synchronous platform made it possible for learners from any city in Indonesia to join the class. Their level of proficiency was between A2-B1 CEFR (Common European Framework for Language Reference), which was assessed through an open-access test provided by the British Council website for adolescent learners. The learners were new to the class since it had just started during the COVID-19 pandemic, which made the English language school initiate an online general English class for adolescents. All classes were held in person before the pandemic, followed by the lockdown policy in Indonesia. The English course adopted a communicative approach, realised through various meaningful activities integrated into each lesson. The intercultural telecollaboration programme was a learning model to comply with this mission. The teacher-researcher was the teacher but also a curriculum developer in the English course, hence having some flexibility to experiment with the learning methods.

On the other hand, the Russian learners were learners in a foreign language course that provided other languages besides English, located in Izhevsk. The learners attended an in-person class before the lockdown policy was applied in the country and led the foreign language course to conduct an online class. Likewise, Zoom Meeting was the chosen platform. Regarding the age group, the Russian learners were 14–16 years old and attended secondary schools in Russia. The Russian learners' proficiency level was A2-B1 CEFR according to the Cambridge Assessment English testing tools, as the foreign language school used the Cambridge English curriculum. Regarding the partner teacher, the Russian teacher was the school's principal but did not necessarily teach the class.

## **2.3. Task Design and Associated Platforms**

The task design in the intercultural telecollaboration programme was based on the Pedagogical Lingua Franca (PLF) principles suggested by Kohn (2021, 2022), namely combining live intercultural telecollaboration with in-class activities, constructing the tasks as pre-during-post tasks, and ensuring teacher pedagogical support. Multimodality is also prominent according to this approach, hence the use of the five main digital platforms:

- Zoom Meeting for facilitating a telecollaboration live session
- Google Document for writing up the student's reflective journal
- Google Drive for document storage and safekeeping
- Canva for creating online slideshow presentations
- Edublogs for blogging activity as the final product of the programme

The tasks were constructed as mini-tasks with a final target for each Indonesian learner to produce blog content published in Edublogs. The blog content was expected to be the reflection of the learner's intercultural experience during the telecollaboration programme. Due to time constraints, the final task was not assigned to the Russian learners. Instead, they were required to write blog posts and respond to at least three posts in the 'comment' section.

**Table 1**  
*The Task Design and Associated Platforms*

Topic	Pre-task	During	Post-task	Platform
<b>Get to Know You</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief the Indonesian learners about the programme (including topics to cover and the tasks) and inform them that it is a part of academic research. A similar briefing is given by the Russian teacher in their own time</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners from Indonesia and Russia take turns to give a brief introduction about themselves</li> <li>Games to get to know to each other and to 'break the ice'</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 2 (Live)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian teacher introduces the learner's reflective journal, how to access the Google Document platform, and what to post</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZOOM Meeting for synchronous meetings</li> <li>Google Document for writing their reflective journals (each learner has their own document)</li> </ul>
<b>Self-expression (Hobby and Interest, Name)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian learners make a short presentation using a Canva platform with their interests and hobbies as the content</li> <li>In relations with names, learners interview their parents and share the history of their names with the class</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 3&amp;4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Question and answer session following each presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A class discussion to reflect on what they has encountered in the live session with the Russian students. Among the prompt questions are: Which hobby from your peer whether Indonesian or Russian you find interesting? Why?</li> <li>The Indonesian learners write in the reflective journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZOOM Meeting for synchronous meetings</li> <li>Google Document for writing their reflective journals (each learner has their own document)</li> <li>CANVA for crafting presentation</li> </ul>
		<b>TIMELINE : Meeting 5 (Live)</b>	<b>TIMELINE : Meeting 5</b>	
Topic	Pre-task	During	Post-task	Platform
<b>Folktales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading comprehension with an Indonesian folktale</li> <li>A class activity to make a short presentation on their chosen Indonesian folktale using Canva</li> <li>A class activity on dialogue completion (taken from an Indonesian folktale video)</li> <li>A class discussion to pick a tale from Indonesia to share with the Russian learners during the next live session</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian teacher share a video from a chosen Indonesian folktale "Malin Kundang" to be shared in the class</li> <li>A read aloud, and puppet performance from the Russian learners performing "Masha and the Bear"</li> <li>The learners are infomed that they will be paired to discuss stereotypes in their own time. Details are given on the Whatsapp group</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 7 (Live)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A follow-up discussion on morals in respective tales and how similar they might be in other tales in Indonesia, Russia, and other places in the world</li> <li>The Indonesian learners write in the reflective journal</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 7</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZOOM Meeting for synchronous meetings</li> <li>Google Document for writing their reflective journals (each learner has their own document)</li> <li>Google Drive for saving portfolios (each learner is given their own account)</li> <li>CANVA for crafting presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Stereotype I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian teacher gives background knowledge on stereotype by showing examples on stereotypes of Indonesian</li> <li>They are given two weeks to reach out to each other and interact in their own time</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 8&amp;9</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each pair (Indonesian and Russian learners) share some interesting findings from their personal chat</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 10 (Live)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian learners write in the reflective journal</li> <li>A follow-up discussion as a class, particularly on most striking stereotypes and about what has they learnt by confirming a stereotype</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 10</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZOOM Meeting for synchronous meeting</li> <li>CANVA for crafting presentation</li> <li>WHATSAPP for asynchronous communication outside of the live telecollaboration</li> </ul>
<b>Stereotype II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indonesian learners are introduced to the education blog platform (Edublogs) and set up an account as preparation for writing</li> <li>The Indonesian learners make an initial draft for a blog post in a Google Docs document based on their reflective journal. They are given one week to complete the post before the next and final live session.</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 11</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At this final intercultural telecollaboration session and of the blog content is created by the Indonesian learners are shared with the Russian learners</li> <li>All learners (Indonesian and Russian) will be given some time to read the other's blog posts and are encouraged to leave comments.</li> <li>All learners (Indonesian and Russian) are asked about their opinion of the intercultural telecollaboration programme</li> <li>Wrap-up and goodbyes. The teacher congratulate and thank to the learners and the partner teacher for their participation in the research</li> </ul> <p><b>TIMELINE : Meeting 12 (Live)</b></p>	<b>TIMELINE : Meeting 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Google Document for writing their blog post draft (each learner has their own document)</li> <li>ZOOM Meeting for synchronous meeting</li> <li>Edublogs for blogging for educational purposes</li> </ul>

## **2.4. Data Source**

The intercultural telecollaboration programme is a classroom artefact that informs the teacher-researcher's pedagogical decisions in task design and associated digital platforms. Additionally, the data resources in this study are the teacher-researcher and the learners' reflective journals as self-reported data. The teacher-researcher wrote in the journal at various times between September and December 2021, which is the time when the programme was designed and commenced. There was no specified word limit to permit immediate recording of thoughts, ideas, or concerns. As a result, the entries are between 2 and 100 words. There are 74 entries in total on topics around reflection on task type, ethic issues, the use of digital platforms, and others, which are coded and categorised into 17 categories for the entries. On the other hand, the learners' reflective journal was written regularly following a live telecollaboration and class discussion. The journal entries were compiled and clustered for research purposes based on topics. There are 107 entries from learners' reflective journals, submitted between October and December 2021, as the programme was employed.

## **2.5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis in the study is carried out through content analysis with an inductive approach through coding and categorising procedures. Content analysis, as with any traditional inquiry-based analysis in qualitative research, pays "meticulous attention to the nuances and embedded meanings of literally every single word in a data corpus as part of their analytic processes" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, p. 114, 2014).

A content analysis of the use of a digital platform in a particular task and on a specific topic demonstrates the affordance and appropriateness of a digital platform as a medium for a task in the intercultural telecollaboration programme. The employment of a digital platform in a task and a topic is examined, and a content analysis of the associated words is applied to suggest how the teacher-researcher uses a digital platform as a medium for a class activity. The discussion following the analysis involves entries from the teacher-researcher and the learners' journals, particularly concerning digital platforms, material production, topics, and programme organisation. The authenticity of the journal entries is maintained, including grammar and punctuation errors.

## **2.6. Ethical Consideration**

As the study involved minors, there were some documents the teacher-researcher had to prepare in accordance with ethics in research. The documents are the General Data Protection Regulation Participant Information Sheet (GDPR PIS) form, the Parent's Consent form, and the Student's Consent form. These documents were written in Indonesian and English for Indonesian parents and learners. These documents were less relevant for the Russian counterparts because the study used data from Indonesian teachers and learners. Even so, the ethics documents were also provided for them. Additionally, as the Russian teacher explained, the parents of the Russian students had provided an informed consent document when enrolling their children in the language course. The document included parental permission to include their children in the course's activities and to use their personal information for educational purposes. including the telecollaboration programme.

## **2.7. Limitation**

The study was carried out in a single context (a general English class in an English course) and involved a small number of co-participants (one teacher-researcher and eight Indonesian learners). The data used in this study is also limited to the intercultural telecollaboration programme design as a classroom artefact and the teacher-researcher and learners' reflective journals. A more varied classroom context is necessary to provide a wider perspective on how digital platforms can be utilised to enrich the learners' telecollaboration experience and develop their collaborative and communicative skills. Nonetheless, more data resources, which involve recordings and transcriptions of classroom interactions, are also crucial to enabling deeper discussion and triangulation.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher presents the findings of the study and discusses the results in the context of the research question or problem. They should also compare and contrast the findings with the existing literature and provide interpretations and explanations for the results.

### 3.1. Results

**Table 2**

*The Number of Appearances of Task Types and Topics in the Digital Platforms*

Platform	Task Type	Topic
Zoom Meeting	Pre and during tasks	Get to know you
		Self-expression (Hobby, Interest, Names)
		Folktale
		Stereotypes I
		Stereotypes II
Google Docs	Post task	Get to know you
		Self-expression (Hobby, Interest, Names)
		Folktale
		Stereotypes I
		Stereotypes II
Canva	Pre and post task	Stereotypes I
	Pre and during task	Stereotypes II
		Self-expression (Hobby, Interest, Names)
		Folktale
Google Drive	Pre task	Folktale
WhatsApp	Pre and during	Stereotypes I
		Stereotypes II

**Table 3**

*The Use of a Digital Platform and the Associated Words*

Platform	Associated words	Number of appearance
Zoom Meeting	Brief, briefing	2
	Introduction, introduce	3
	Discussion, to discuss	5
	Share	5
Google Docs	Reflect, reflective, reflection journal	6
	Write	4
Canva	Presentation	3
Google Drive	Class activity	1
WhatsApp	Interact	1
	Personal chat	1
	Blog post	3
Edublogs	Blog content	1
	Blog platform	1

### 3.2. Discussion

Content analysis of the telecollaboration programme design has suggested that some digital platforms can be applied to all topics. In contrast, others are more suitable for some, depending on the type of task designed for a topic. The appropriateness of a digital platform for a type of task is demonstrated through descriptive words referring to features of the platform.

#### 3.2.1. Exploring the Synchronous Features of Zoom Meeting

The synchronous platform was used for all topics in the telecollaboration programme design. It was particularly important because Zoom Meeting was the chosen platform for live telecollaboration. Similarly, it was also used in the pre-tasks, where the teacher-researcher prepared the learners before the live encounters with their Russian peers. The online format of the class was the reason for this circumstance. The decision to use Zoom Meeting as the synchronous communication platform for the live telecollaboration is deemed strategic because both Indonesian and Russian learners are familiar with the platform. While being familiar with the digital platform to use can make learners feel more secure and enhance synchronous communication (Gutiérrez et al., 2021), employing familiar platforms means the teachers can save time for briefing.

Concerning the platform's affordances, the teacher-researcher seemed to use Zoom Meeting for various pre- and post-tasks within the synchronous mode. As suggested by the result of the content analysis, the words 'brief,' 'briefing,' 'introduction,' 'introduce,' 'discussion,' 'to discuss,' and 'share,' occurred during the employment of this platform, therefore indicating the way it is used in the programme. 'Share,' 'discussion,' and 'to discuss' were the most frequently appearing words (5 times), followed by 'introduction' and 'to introduce' (3 times), and 'brief' and 'briefing' (2 times). It pinpoints that the teacher-researcher explored Zoom Meetings mainly to share the teaching materials and deliver discussions. She also used the platform to allow an introductory phase between learners and give a briefing about the programme.

The decision to use Zoom has been made since the planning stage of the programme. As demonstrated in the teacher-researcher's entry below, Breakout Room as a feature in Zoom Meeting was considered an option for the learners' discussion.

Teacher entry 1 (September 10, 2021)

*What kinds of preconceived notions do you have about your partner? Verify with them. You can also explore the Internet to discover what digital stereotypes exist regarding your partner's country and culture. Students are encouraged to work on their own stereotypes by asking each other questions (in Zoom's Breakout Rooms, on their own time using WhatsApp/Telegram/Facebook/Instagram or otherwise according to the agreement between pairs).*

Some features in Zoom Meeting were observed to be supportive of a variety of learning styles, as suggested by the entry below.

Teacher entry 2 (November 26, 2021)

*A discovery today: even synchronous platforms such as Zoom allow students to participate in class discussion through live interaction and the chat box, which is what makes it so interesting. It enables even shy and reluctant students to participate through a live chat.*

To this extent, the potentiality of features in Zoom was explored by finding the alignment between the affordances and the tasks' targets.

### **3.2.2. Viewing and Suggesting with Google Docs**

The content analysis of the use of the online document-creation platform resulted in the words, namely write (4) and reflect, reflection, and reflective journal (6). Google Docs were used during post tasks in all topics, with one exception in the final topic (Stereotypes II), where the platform was also applied to write the draft for the blog content. It is a synchronous platform in the sense that the learners, as the document creators, and the teacher-researcher could view and provide suggestions in the document. One of the benefits of this feature is that the learners' reflections recorded in the document can be immediately viewed by the teacher-researcher, allowing her to understand how the learners' intercultural awareness has developed.

Learner's entry 1 (following a live telecollaboration in the Folktale topic)

*I think many tales around the world have good morals. No matter what our religions or cultures, there is always good teaching. For example, do not disobey your parents and humanity (T).*

In a different entry, T, the learner wrote in her reflective journal:

Learner's entry 2 (following a live telecollaboration in the Stereotype II topic)

*Now, I know that I was completely wrong, I shouldn't have made such a conclusion before even knowing her that well. Turns out she is a very friendly individual! We even shared the same interests. We both are very curious people. I asked her a lot of questions, and so did she. (T)*

The synchronous and collaborative characteristics provided by the platform allowed the teacher-researcher to notice such posts and therefore make her own reflection in her journal, as below:

Teacher entry 3 (October 30, 2021)

*The follow-up discussion and writing up the journal after each live session were very helpful for the learners to reflect and understand many aspects of their intercultural exchange experience.*

Additionally, the 'comment' feature, which enabled editing and suggesting, was highly compatible with the purpose and design of the programme. This feature enabled the teacher-researcher to provide individual feedback, especially with regards to the blog content.

Teacher entry 4 (December 26, 2021)

*As a facilitator, a teacher must remember the purpose of the programme. Since accuracy is not prioritised, the learners' reflective journal and their blog post should not be grammatically corrected unless they get into understanding. Rather, it gives feedback to the content (individual feedback using the 'Comment' feature in Google Docs).*

This procedure transformed the task into learning, as the learners develop their writing skills as well as another relatable skill. The learner's entry below suggests how a learner was made aware of issues around plagiarism following the teacher's feedback on her blog content.

Learner's entry 3 (following the teacher's feedback on her blog content)

*Thank you for reminding me too miss, it will be important in the future if I use someone's article, I should always give them credit. (T)*

Lastly, with regards to research purposes, the synchronous affordance of Google Documents was beneficial for the teacher-researcher to observe the existing data from the learners' journals and start the early coding and categorizing procedure. It is deemed important to avoid overwhelming amounts of data and allows the teacher-researcher to observe the pattern and regularity of the learners' reflective journals as one of the data resources from the original study.

### **3.2.3. Digitizing the Tasks with Canva and Google Drive**

The content analysis of the telecollaboration programme design suggested that Canva was utilised in two topics, namely, Self-Expression and Folktales. In the Folktales topic, the platform was used alongside Google Drive. The words in the task design associated with Canva are presentation (3), while class activity (1) is correlated with Google Drive. Additionally, while Canva was used in pre- and during tasks where the learners made and presented a presentation on their hobbies and interests (Self-expression) and their chosen Indonesian folktales (Folktales), Google Drive was employed exclusively as a pre-task in Folktales. Assigning the tasks through digital platforms provided some benefits for the learners as well as for the teacher-researcher. Learners could easily access the tasks anytime and from any device and have access to rich resources as they created the presentation. This flexibility also applies to the teachers because it is an open-access platform without age restriction and only requires registration. The 'comment' feature in Canva, as with Google Docs, allowed the teacher to give feedback to learners' presentations. In one of her early journal entries, the teacher-researcher recorded her observation and reflection on this flexibility.

Teacher entry 5 (October 5, 2021)

*It's actually great to have everything online. The learners can work anytime, anywhere and so do I! Also, to my surprise, Canva actually also allows me to comment on the learners' presentation!*

On the other hand, Google Drive as a synchronous file storage played an important role when the teacher-researcher assigned a mini task to the learners. The task of completing a dialogue based on an Indonesian folktale discussed previously was assigned by placing the task file in each learner's individual Google Drive account for the learners to complete at any time before the due date. This level of accessibility and autonomy was deemed crucial to allow learners to manage their school tasks and maintain their commitment to the English class and the telecollaboration programme. The synchronous feature also enabled the teacher-researcher to check the learners' work progress.

The final observation in relation to digitising the tasks is that having the tasks delivered digitally and varied platforms enhanced the learners' digital literacy.

Teacher entry 6 (December 20, 2021)

*The Indonesian learner's digital literacy grows as they engage in the program and use it to navigate between different platforms (Google Drive, Google Documents, Canva, Edublog).*

However, the teacher-researcher realised that the digital platforms used had to be familiar for the learners to avoid too much time spent for briefing.

Teacher entry 7 (October 10, 2021)

*Most Indonesian learners are familiar with the platforms used in this programme because they use them at school. It is kind of 'cut-off' the briefing time.*

### 3.2.4. From Interaction to Production with WhatsApp and Edublogs

WhatsApp and Edublogs were used in the final topics in the telecollaboration programme, namely Stereotype I and Stereotype II. As suggested in the content analysis, the words associated with the platforms are interact (1) and personal chat (1) for WhatsApp, and blog post (3), blog content (1), and blog platform (1). The limited number of words resulted from the restricted use of the platforms during the programme. Nevertheless, WhatsApp and Edublogs became very important because the programme aimed to produce blog content that recorded the learners' reflections on their intercultural experiences.

The interaction between the Indonesian and Russian learners started as a class during the live telecollaboration. After three live sessions, each learner was assigned to reach out to their predetermined pair through WhatsApp to discuss stereotypes. As shown in the telecollaboration programme design, the learners were given some insight and discussed stereotypes as a class before the task was given. The learners' entries below suggest the learners' reflection following the task's completion.

Learner's entry 4 (following a live telecollaboration in the Stereotype II topic)

*During our personal chat, I realised some of them like punk rocks and rap too, wow, I wonder how to rap in Russian language, I can only speak hello in Russians. (Ky)*

Although discussing stereotypes, including whether the pair have ever heard or even owned stereotypes towards each other, is the main task to complete, the asynchronous chat conducted through WhatsApp seemed to build rapport as they exchanged personal information. On the other hand, the learner also achieved the task target of breaking a stereotype he had in mind, as the interaction with his partner resulted in the reflection below:

Learner's entry 5 (following a live telecollaboration in the Stereotype II topic)

*I always see Russian meme on my Instagram and YouTube, I always intrigued by their accents. It sounds a lot like German accent, they always seems angry and cold you know, but until I socialize with them in this telecollaboration, they're not angry. (Ky)*

Lastly, the learners' interactions at this stage had helped some of them build an understanding of stereotypes from a larger perspective, as suggested in the below entry:

Learner's entry 6 (following a live telecollaboration in the Stereotype II topic)

*I thought because my partner is a boy he is an inactive person and also quiet. Now, I know that he is a very active & friendly person and he really like to talk about stereotype with me. (Kl)*

These reflections provided some crucial writing materials when the learners wrote their blogs in Edublogs.

As opposed to the familiar WhatsApp platform, Edublogs was foreign to the learners. However, the decision to choose Edublogs as the platform for blogging stems from internet safety considerations, mainly because the learners are minors. The platform's security features include the teacher's control through approval over posts and comments.

Teacher entry 8 (7 December 2021)

*Edublogs enables teacher control over the post and comment (all posts and comments should be approved by the teacher first).*

This feature ensures greater security for student data and easier monitoring for teachers. However, as the platform is new for all learners, the teacher-researcher had to dedicate a class meeting to brief the learners on the initial set-up.

Teacher entry 8 (15 December 2021)

*Setting up a password and username for Edublogs: send a link to access the class blog to the learners so they can set up theirs.*

Eventually, blogging contributed to the learners' various skills rather than merely creative writing and digital literacy.

Teacher entry 10 (30 December 2021)

*Blog writing tasks helped the learners acquire knowledge and skills in different areas.*

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study investigates ways to innovate a telecollaboration programme to promote global communication and collaboration skills for secondary school learners in Indonesia. The content analysis results of the telecollaboration programme design and the entries from the teacher-researcher and Indonesian learners' reflective journals demonstrated several main conclusions. First, the digital platform(s) must be fully explored and combined to support learning. It is also suggested that varying the tasks as well as the digital platforms allows for flexibility, learners' autonomy, and ultimately, a response to the different learning styles. Next, this also means that a careful task design that integrates stages of pre-, during, and post-tasks with suitable digital platforms at each stage is essential. Finally, it leads to the conclusion that the teacher's role and skills are central to designing the tasks and selecting the platforms.

As the study suggested, understanding and maximising a digital platform's available features and affordances can help the teacher-researcher choose suitable platforms to support a task. For example, the main task of writing reflections on the intercultural experience through the telecollaboration programme was done through (1) Zoom Meeting, which enables live interaction, and (2) Google Docs to create a file of the reflective journal. Another example was the blogging task, which was done through the collaboration of (1) WhatsApp, which enabled peer interaction and a personalised experience, (2) Google Docs for writing the draft and (3) Edublogs as the blogging platform. However, as Gutiérrez et al. (2021) argued, familiarisation with digital tools is necessary to make learners confident and ensure communication runs smoothly. Therefore, as a part of selecting and curating the digital platform, the teacher-researcher paid close attention to the learners' skills to navigate between platforms. This was made possible because the teacher-researcher taught in the researched classroom and thus had some knowledge of the platforms the learners used at school and in the English class.

Employing clear task objectives and frameworks from the beginning of the programme design was another critical point in developing a telecollaboration programme with the affordance of exposing and preparing learners as global communicators. Setting up the pedagogic objective to develop the learners' communication and collaboration skills, along with critical thinking and intercultural awareness as 21st-century skills, is an unmistakable start. The goals were defined by the stages to achieve them, which were done by applying suitable principles and frameworks such as the Pedagogical Lingua Franca (PLF) by Kohn (2021, 2022). The construction of pre-, during-, and post-tasks in a telecollaboration programme, completed with suitable digital platforms, transforms the pedagogical objectives into classroom practise.

As an implication of construing clear task objectives and design along with maximising the relatable digital platforms, the teacher must embrace the roles of a designer, facilitator, and mentor who creates, implements, and scaffolds the learners' intercultural experiences into learning. These roles require not only teaching skills and knowledge but also some skills in digital technology for language learning. Additionally, integrating action research into the design and implementation process primarily benefits the teacher-researcher as an applicable framework for creating sustainable learning designs in telecollaboration.

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