

June 8-10, 2026

IV IMFLIT

International Meeting on Foreign Language Learning in Tandem



## **Beyond the Monolingual Legacy in multilingual contexts: Teletandem and Pedagogical Innovation for plurilingual education**

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The Intercomprehension (IC) approach, which gained prominence in Europe starting in the early 1990s, represents a significant shift in language education toward plurilingualism. IC is formally defined as a form of communication where individuals use their own language and understand that of the other, without specific competence or formal study of the interlocutor's language. This practice relies heavily on receptive skills and the transfer of knowledge between linguistically related languages.

Today, IC is implemented in contexts like higher education and international alliances (such as UNITA; <https://univ-unita.eu/>) to foster plurilingualism, language awareness, and critical thinking. Intercomprehension practice and competence development is viewed as a concrete action and systemic transformation in Linguistic Education. This approach challenges the enduring legacy of coloniality, which perpetuates hierarchical power dynamics governing languages and global academic knowledge production. IC is fundamentally a challenge to the marginalization of non-standard language varieties and Indigenous knowledge, valorising shared communicative practices. In regions such as Latin America, where various Romance languages are spoken, IC implementation helps mitigate the pressure to adopt monolingual English in multilingual settings and the requirement to present solely in academic English, thus promoting more persistent and structurally innovative practices (Castañeda-Peña et al., 2025).

To support these principles, IC has been integrated into telecollaborative frameworks. Specifically, since the academic year 2018-2019, the Teletandem learning scenario has incorporated IC, leading to the development of the IOTT (Intercomprehension Oral TeleTandem) project (Garbarino, Leone 2020). IOTT emphasizes interactive plurilingualism, where learners express themselves in their native language (Garbarino, Leone 2020) or a language in their repertoire while making a dedicated effort to understand the partner.

The presentation will discuss IOTT scenarios, maintaining a double focus: scientific and pedagogical. Scientifically, the analysis of Teletandem sessions adopts an analytical framework which emphasizes the critical role of cooperation in interaction between interlocutors (Linell, 2009; De Leo, Savy 2007) for social sharing and clarifying meaning. This research explores mediation strategies (Garbarino, Leone, 2022; Leone, Paone, 2023), including essential practices for meaning-making such as code-switching and translanguaging (or *plurilinguaging*; Leone, Ramos, forthcoming). Pedagogically, the research results are used to inform classroom activities, highlighting practical ways to implement these findings and reinforce the usage-based nature of the approach.

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