


DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE INTERNATIONALIZATION CONTEXT: TOWARDS ENGLISH LEARNING

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How to cite this paper: SCHAEFER, R. Digital storytelling in the internationalization context: towards English learning. *Todas as Letras – Revista de Língua e Literatura*, São Paulo, v. 24, n. 2, p. 1-19, maio/ago. 2022. DOI 10.5935/1980-6914/eLETL14857

Submitted: September 2021. **Accepted:** February 2022.

Abstract: Telecollaboration refers to online encounters between students from different geographical locations (O'DOWD, 2021), which can foster Internationalization at Home (IaH) (LUNA, 2018a). This study sought to investigate narratives about a digital storytelling activity in the IaH context. For the analysis, data from experience reports, semi-structured interviews, and reflective diaries were conducted. The results indicated that the activity allowed: 1. opportunities for transformation and overcoming challenges, and 2. socialization in the remote context.

Keywords: Digital storytelling. Telecollaboration. Internationalization at Home. Internationalization of the curriculum. English learning.

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INTRODUCTION

According to The Digital Education Action Plan (21-27) (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020), initiatives that integrate digital technologies into education have been undertaken over the last few decades. Interestingly, the document suggests that until the beginning of 2020 these initiatives had not appropriated the full potential of such technologies to favor teaching and learning. However, “The Covid-19 crisis put us in a situation, for the first time, where there was little choice but to use digital technologies to provide education” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020, p. 3). In this regard, Hildeblando Júnior and Finardi (2020) claim that the suspension of face-to-face classes in 2020 to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) caused many activities to migrate to remote spaces, as in the case of this study. For these authors, “The pandemic has shown more than ever that we live in an increasingly interconnected world where the boundary between the global-social/local-individual is porous and interdependent” (HILDEBLANDO JÚNIOR; FINARDI, 2020, p. 255).^{1,2}

Two possible ways to provide the practice of foreign languages using digital technologies are: 1. through the use of digital storytelling (DST) (ROBIN, 2008, 2016; TUMOLO, 2015; TREVISOL, 2019), and 2. by telecollaboration (O'DOWD, 2013a; GUTIÉRREZ; O'DOWD, 2021). According to Robin (2016, p. 18), DST is related to combining “the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital media, including text, pictures, recorded audio narration, music, and video.”

As will be better explained further along, in this study, the process of creating DST is considered to be socially co-constructed (VYGOTSKY, 1978, 1986), given that both the researcher and the students are socially involved in this creation, and, telecollaboration is “the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations” (O'DOWD, 2013a, p. 123).

Telecollaboration significantly promotes Internationalization at Home (IaH) (O'DOWD, 2019; HEEMANN; SCHAEFER; SEQUEIRA, 2020). According to Stallivieri (2017), students, teachers, and researchers have increasingly sought different forms of participation in internationalization initiatives, for instance, short or long-term specialization courses, foreign language studies, graduate courses, and academic events such as seminars and congresses. Stallivieri (2017, p. 19) adds that this pursuit “occurs as a way of responding to the market’s demands that calls for a new professional, prepared to transit through pluri and multicultural environments.”³

However, Luna (2018a) states that the number of students – including South American and European in general – who can participate in exchange programs, is considered low. Offering exchange programs is one of the strategies for the internationalization of an institution (BARANZELI; MOROSINI; WOICOLESKO, 2020), and as a way of covering more students, Luna (2018a, p. 7) argues that

1 All the translations provided for citations were done by the author.

2 “A pandemia evidenciou mais do que nunca o fato de que vivemos em um mundo cada vez mais interconectado onde o limite entre o global-social/local-individual é poroso e interdependente”.

3 “Ocorre como forma de responder às exigências do mercado que clama por um novo profissional, preparado para transitar em ambientes pluri e multiculturais”.

IaH implies “the internationalization for all, not only for the students who left or would leave their school campus for a foreign institution.”⁴

Bearing that the researcher conducts, at Instituto Federal Catarinense (IFC), a research proposal⁵ that investigates DST and telecollaboration, this study sought to examine narratives about a DST activity in the IaH context. More specifically, this study aimed to understand how the investigated DST activity, whose final product, the video produced by each student, was presented to the participants of a telecollaborative meeting, played a part in the students’ English learning. The following question was used to achieve this objective: How did the investigated DST activity contribute to the student’s English learning?

Expectations of this study in contributing to DST rely on the fact that in Brazil there is not yet a significant body of research that explores the creation of DST in such modality related to teaching and learning English, which could be due to the short time since the suspension of face-to-face classes as Covid-19 containment measures took place and that the DST activities were developed through the remote modality exclusively. Moreover, we found no studies focused on developing DST in Brazilian institutions in regard to teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the IaH context. Lastly, in line with Junior (2020, p. 117), it is possible to notice “a lack of publications”⁶ concerning research on internationalization. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge a gap by focusing on DST in the IaH context.

This paper is divided into five parts. The first part focus on the objective, and it contains a brief presentation of the background of this research. We will present the relevant literature used to ground this study in the second part. The methodology is addressed in the third part, and the data analysis is presented in the following one. Lastly, final considerations are made.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

DST and Sociocultural Theory

This research, like Robin’s (2008, 2016), Castañeda’s (2013), and Trevisol’s (2019) studies, was conducted in the context of Educational Digital Storytelling, a specific type of DST, “a guided practice that requires cooperation between both students and teacher” (GREGORI-SIGNES, 2014, p. 241), where “the teacher becomes the guide who monitors and assists in the distribution and proper use of both the story content and the relevant organization” (GREGORI-SIGNES, 2014, p. 241). The term “teacher-mediator”⁷ (SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2020) will be used to refer to the guidance provided by the teacher for the purposes of this research.

4 “A internacionalização para todos, não apenas para os estudantes que saíram ou que sairiam da sua escola, do seu campus para uma instituição estrangeira”.

5 This research will be presented further along.

6 “Carência de publicações”.

7 This term is used in the context of teletandem, a specific model of telecollaboration which is ran at Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho” (Unesp), in Brazil. For Leone and Telles (2016, p. 244), mediation sessions are related to “moments that follow interactions in teletandem. During these sessions, students have the opportunity of dialogue and to exchange experiences with a mediator—a teacher of foreign languages.” Visit <http://www.teletandembrasil.org/> for further information about teletandem.

Tumolo (2015, p. 101) emphasizes that DST can be understood as the evolution of humanity's ancient tradition of telling stories, having in mind that "digital resources have been incorporated"⁸ into such a tradition. From this perspective, using such resources in the creative process of telling stories paves the way for personal narratives linked to memorable moments, sharing of memories, experience reports regarding various events, and so forth. As Trevisol (2019, p. 32) stated, DST "may also serve educational purposes since they seem to have the power to allow information to be better integrated into our memory, which may facilitate learning."

In line with Robin's (2016) work, the sentence *everyone has a story to tell* is recurrent in the specialized literature. For the author, this statement represents people's uniqueness by narrating different life experiences, telling stories about places, their cultural aspects and school education, among others. Robin (2016, p. 19) says that this practice of storytelling enables students' full engagement, and often takes on an emotional tone, which is "an essential element of digital storytelling."

In turn, Castañeda's (2013) study aimed at introducing DST in foreign language classes based on the participants' narratives to analyze the effects concerning their participation in this activity. For means of data collection, the author used questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, and reflective journals by the researcher. The outcome of this study was in line with Robin's (2016) understanding that DST provides the full engagement of students and showed that the students were able to practice "language in an expressive manner and engaged in real-world communication" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 56).

According to Robin (2016), digital stories are usually 2 to 10 minutes long and have been integrated into the area of language teaching and learning worldwide. Teachers and practitioners use them to "support language learning, facilitate discussion, increase social presence, and more" (ROBIN, 2016, p. 18), therefore allowing students to be "empowered with the ability to communicate using various multimedia techniques" (ROBIN, 2016, p. 19). Such techniques are blended through computer software or applications, enabling different topics and content to be addressed.

For Robin (2016), there are three main types of DST. The first one concerns personal narratives, that is, stories related to events that occurred in a person's life; the second type, which involves a historical approach, favors a better understanding of humanity's past; and the third type refers to stories that have an instructional scope, such as to "inform or instruct the viewer on a particular concept or practice" (ROBIN, 2016, p. 18). In general, DST leads students to develop their creativity and critical thinking as they "begin to research and tell stories of their own [as well as] to research rich, deep content while analyzing and synthesizing a wide range of information and opinions" (ROBIN, 2016, p. 19).

Robin's study (2016) seems to also corroborate with Boase's (2013) definition of *critical thinking* in the DST context. For Boase (2013, p. 5), "critical thinking is the mental processes of discernment, analysis, and evaluation, which should reconcile scientific evidence with common sense". Still, creating DST, as it "requires numerous cognitive strategies" (BOASE, 2013, p. 4), including reviewing

8 "Recursos digitais foram incorporados".

information, creativity, comparison, organization, and selection criteria, presupposes the development of *critical awareness*. These creative-reflective processes have an impact on the student not only concerning the construction of the story itself but also on the final product, that is, the final version of the digitized story, since it must subsequently be presented to an audience, an occasion in which students usually “seek to project a certain image of himself or herself to the audience or potential audience” (BOASE, 2013, p. 4).

According to Lambert (2006, 2007), the process of DST creation involves several steps. The first one is *planning*, which entails establishing all the procedures integrating the creation of a DST, and *presenting samples*; the second step stands for the need to provide students with examples of digital stories previously created by others. While *scripting* refers to writing the events that make up the story itself, *receiving feedback* involves the linguistic correction of the script, which the teacher or peers can facilitate. *Designing a storyboard* is related to the illustrations representing the story’s script, followed by the *digitalization of the story*, that is, the inclusion of digital elements in the stories. The last step, the *presentation to an audience*, enables students to share their accounts with others.

For Gregori-Signes (2014, p. 242), “both teacher and student become socially involved in the production of stories.” This study’s DST process is deemed socially co-constructed (VYGOTSKY, 1978, 1986). As Vygotsky (1978) states, learning first happens on the social level, and higher mental functions are subsequently developed. Moreover, the author explains that historical and cultural aspects contribute to this development. According to this perspective, individuals are part of a particular cultural context in which they learn by co-constructing and negotiating social meanings.

One of the central aspects of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is *mediation*, also known as “symbolic mediation.” For Vygotsky (1978, 1986), the relationship between human beings with the world is not direct but mediated through the following elements: instrument and Sign. The first one increases the possibilities of the transformation of nature and regulates the actions of the objects when human beings interact with the world around them. The second one can bring about internal changes because it regulates actions in people’s psyches.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is another central aspect of SCT. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) defines ZPD as

[...] the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.

In this “zone,” therefore, people who are more experienced help others, who are less experienced, to learn and become more autonomous within their potential. Closely related to ZPD, the concept of *scaffolding*, introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), refers to the support mechanism that helps the less experienced to learn in their ZPD where necessary. For these authors, such support “enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (WOOD; BRUNER; ROSS, 1976, p. 90).

Vygotsky (1981) claims that the development and the transformations of individuals occur based on four genetic domains: *phylogenetic*, *sociocultural*, *microgenetic*, and *ontogenetic*. Phylogenetics refers to the evolution of living

organisms by gradually adapting them to the environment. The sociocultural domain has to do with the idea that social interactions are the basis of higher cognitive processes. Microgenetic, in turn, concerns specific situations that are experienced by individuals, which can modify their higher mental functions. Finally, ontogenetic involves each individual's history and the different transformations that, through dialectical interactions, occur throughout their life, from birth to adulthood.

Telecollaboration and IaH

For O'Dowd (2013a, 2019, 2021) and Helm (2016), in addition to enabling the practice of the four language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening –, telecollaboration puts people from different countries and cultures in communication. Schaefer, Heemann, and Belli (2017) proposes that telecollaboration is “an instrument of connection with the world, capable of fostering intercultural encounters,”⁹ and it can contribute to language learning. From this perspective, such contact can encourage students “to understand the complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own” (PHIPPS; GONZALES, 2004, p. 3) as well as pave the way for the “transformational engagement of the learner” (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013, p. 42).

The term telecollaboration was coined by Mark Warschauer (1996) in his publication “Telecollaboration and the Foreign Language Learner.” In 2003, a special edition of the journal *Language Learning & Technology* was dedicated to this then-emerging area. Telecollaboration was seen by Warschauer (1996), other scholars, and students as a facilitator of language learning since its various methodological procedures could be used in several ways and proved to be adaptable to different pedagogical objectives and learning contexts.

In line with Gutiérrez and O'Dowd (2021), most of the telecollaborative practices documented in the literature are of a bilingual-bicultural nature, *e.g.*, the models of *e-tandem* and *telecollaborative exchange*. In the *e-tandem* model, two students who are learning each other's language swap their roles: at times as learners of a foreign language and at other times as tutors of their mother tongue or other languages. The telecollaborative exchange model, which is generally integrated into the classroom and under the supervision of a teacher-mediator, is centered around linguistic and intercultural development. This model also includes presenting and comparing cultural aspects or discussions of shared texts or different topics. Gutiérrez and O'Dowd (2021, p. 18) add that, in addition to these two models, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in teaching and learning a foreign language as a *lingua franca*, “which gives learners the opportunity to engage in online collaboration with partner classes who are not necessarily native speakers of the target language”.

O'Dowd (2021) clarifies that in over 25 years, telecollaborative activities, facilitated by digital technologies, have been implemented around teaching and learning languages by a small, albeit enthusiastic, number of professionals. The author adds that 2020 was a very representative year, given that the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic

9 “um instrumento de conexão com o mundo, capaz de promover encontros interculturais”.

[...] drew the attention of university faculty and management to VE¹⁰ on a much larger scale. The lack of possibilities for studying abroad during the pandemic led many to seriously consider how telecollaborative learning initiatives could be effectively integrated into the curricula and internationalization strategies to give students an international learning experience without physical mobility (O'DOWD, 2021, p. 6).

For Morosini (2019), there are two possible ways to make educational institutions more international: *integral internationalization* and *internationalization of the curriculum*. The first one involves a commitment to using practical actions to integrate international dimensions in teaching activities, research, and functions. According to this perspective, such a conception of internationalization “delineates the institutional *ethos* and values, and affects the higher education institution as a whole”¹¹ (MOROSINI, 2019, p. 21). Internationalization of the curriculum is understood as “the process of incorporating international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes” (LEASK, 2015, p. 9), and it encompasses *cross-border internationalization*¹² and IaH. “Cross-border internationalization is the one that occurs through mobility”¹³ (MOROSINI, 2019, p. 18), whereas IaH is defined as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (BEELEN; JONES, 2015, p. 69).

The term Internationalization at Home was coined by Crowther et al. (2001). These authors also stressed the need to work towards a more inclusive internationalization for everyone, not only for international students, and stated that after graduating, students must live and exert their profession in a globalized and intercultural world. Converging with Luna (2018a), Crowther et al. (2001) assert that internationalization can be achieved through activities in a domestic context, and not only through international academic mobility. On that matter, Beelen and Jones (2015) argue that the process of educational institutions must be initiated in a domestic environment.

Leask (2015) proposes a five-stage model for the process of curriculum internationalization: 1. *review and reflect*, which discuss the extension of an institution's curriculum internationalization; 2. *imagine*, implying the search for other ways of thinking and acting, that is, imagining to allow new possibilities; 3. *revise and plan* with a focus on the necessary changes to an internationalized curriculum; 4. *act*, which is the implementation of the plan to make the curriculum internationalized and; 5. *evaluate*, which is the discussion about the outcomes obtained from the implementation process.

As previously stated, telecollaboration is an essential key to facilitate IaH (O'DOWD, 2019; HEEMANN; SCHAEFER; SEQUEIRA, 2020). This way, by using the theoretical contributions to internationalization, in this study, we were able to include an international dimension in a discipline, as described in the following section.

10 Virtual exchange (VE): a term used to refer to *telecollaboration*.

11 “delineia o ethos e os valores institucionais e afeta a instituição da educação superior em sua totalidade.”

12 Author's translation for “internacionalização fronteira.”

13 “A internacionalização transfronteira é a que ocorre por mobilidade.”

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Searching for opportunities to foster IaH

For Morosini (2019), the expansion of higher education implies diversification and flexibility. Different methodology proposals enable an active learning experience, such as DST activities, as they lead students to be protagonists of their education (ROBIN, 2016), which supports diversifying and flexibility.

The main objective of the project Perceptions of IFC Language Learners about Telecollaborative Activities and Digital Stories¹⁴, under the researcher's coordination of IFC is to promote contact between its students) and other English speakers. More specifically, this project aims, through the application of questionnaires and interviews, to analyze the students' perceptions about their participation in telecollaborative meetings and the creation of DST. In both the classroom and on Google Meet, students were engaged in discussions, called *mediation sessions* by Leone and Telles (2016) and Schaefer (2019b, 2020), to talk about their experience in the proposed activities. Such sessions encourage reflections on the development of the activities as well as on (inter)cultural issues. Two of the actions derived from the research project in question refer to: 1. an extension project involving telecollaborative meetings, and 2. a DST activity.

For the purposes of this study, we used data from the discipline *English for Specific Purposes*¹⁵ for the program Computer Network Technology,¹⁶ which has approximately ten students each semester. according to the program's 2018 Political-pedagogical Project, this course aims to prepare professionals who have "a qualified practical and theoretical vision and the capacity to work on the development, implantation, management, and maintenance of logical and physical projects of local or long-distance networks"¹⁷ (POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT, 2018, p. 12). The topics of the discipline in question are as follows: fundamental strategies for reading and textual comprehension in English, technical vocabulary in the area of Computer Network Technology, semantics and syntactic of English, reading scientific and didactic texts in the area of Computer Network Technology.

Assuming that the curriculum is the basis for internationalization (LUNA, 2018a) and drawing on the stages proposed by Leask (2015) previously presented, which are necessary for the process of curriculum internationalization, a reflection exercise, initially on the degree of IoC concerning the topics of the discipline English for Specific Purposes, enabled the researcher to realize that the latter does not cover indicatives of IoC in the light of the theoretical contributions on internationalization addressed in this study. As stated by Luna (2018b), the IoC process must occur through the intercultural dimension, which entails contact between people from different cultures. Afterward, the researcher imagined possibilities to make the curriculum internationalized. He ended up choosing two actions: 1. the creation of an extra-curricular project involving an one-hour weekly telecollaborative meeting, named IFC English Conversation Meetings:

14 Percepções de Aprendizes de línguas do IFC sobre atividades telecolaborativas e Contação de Histórias Digitais.

15 Inglês Instrumental.

16 Tecnologia de Redes de Computadores (REDES).

17 "uma visão prática e teórica qualificada e com capacidade de atuarem na elaboração, implantação, gerenciamento e manutenção de projetos lógicos e físicos de redes locais ou de longas distâncias".

Intercultural Dialogue through Telecollaboration,¹⁸ whose goal was to bring students together – not only the students of the discipline English for Specific Purposes but also participants from other universities and programs, including other states in Brazil and other countries (*e.g.*, Canada, Spain, the United States, Poland, Mexico, and England) –, while practicing their speaking and listening skills, to talk about different topics, such as cultural products, practices and values, environmental issues, and study abroad experiences; 2. a DST activity, whose final product, a video produced by each student, was presented to the participants of the extra-curricular project in question.

The DST activity

Between January 19 and March 16, 2021, we conducted a DST activity in the remote modality called “DST: a little bit about myself.” This activity was developed for the discipline English for Specific Purposes, which had eight students in total and aimed at enabling the practice of writing and speaking in English by creating digital stories. “DST: a little bit about myself” was developed mainly based on the first type of digital stories, personal narratives (ROBIN, 2016), and using the steps for the creation of DST proposed by Lambert (2006, 2007).

The students were asked to create a digital video narrated by themselves in English and containing their self-introduction (name, age, where they live, profession, hobbies, etc.) and a narration of a special event that marked their life, for instance, the birth of a child in their family, marriage, travel, graduation, birthday party, a promotion at work, among other possibilities. The students studied the following contents in class and mobilized while creating their DST: pronouns, verbs (simple present and simple past), definite and indefinite articles, vocabulary, and textual production (writing and oral).

After completing the digitalization process of their stories, the students presented their videos to the participants of the project IFC English Conversation Meetings: Intercultural Dialogue through Telecollaboration. The presentation was attended by 32 people (eight students of the discipline English for Specific Purposes, 23 participants of the extra-curricular project, and the researcher), and it happened a week before the end of the classes on Google Meet. In addition to the participants enrolled in the project, six other English speakers accepted the researcher’s invitation to watch the presentations: two from Spain, three from Brazil, and one from Canada.

Procedures for data collection and data analysis

This qualitative research¹⁹ (PATTON, 2002) sought to investigate narratives about a DST activity in the IaH context, and it is considered a case study (DUFF, 2014) since it concentrates on a contemporary phenomenon in its actual context. For Duff (2014, p. 233), case studies “are normally studied in depth to understand individuals’ experiences, issues, insights, developmental pathways, or performance within a particular linguistic, social, or educational context.”

¹⁸ Encontros de Conversação em Inglês do IFC: Diálogo Intercultural pela Telecolaboração..

¹⁹ The data used in this qualitative study are from a research project approved by Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos – CEPESH) with the Approval Number 4.291.275. CAAE: 32229720.5.0000.5636.

Since it is a case study, this research included three students²⁰ from the discipline English for Specific Purposes (Felipe, Mariana, and Ronaldo) and a participant from the extension project who watched the students' DST presentations (Nilma). Felipe was 50 years old, Mariana was 19 years old, and they both work as computer technicians, while Ronaldo was a 26-year-old system support analyst. Finally, Nilma was a 16-year-old High School student. They were all Brazilians

The narratives analyzed were generated from the experience reports and semi-structured interviews. The experience report was written on Google Forms²¹ just a few days following the students' final DST presentation, which allowed Felipe, Mariana, and Ronaldo to individually submit their personal impressions about the DST activities. Felipe also participated in a semi-structured interview²² the week after the final presentation, through which the researcher could better understand what was addressed in his experience report. Nilma, just like Felipe, was invited to participate in an interview and to write an experience report in which she could type in her observations. The researcher also wrote entries into the reflective diaries on his computer to register his perceptions about the data-collection process, the students' opinions, unforeseen situations, and so forth. Another objective of this instrument was to sidestep researcher bias, as the researcher could resort to this material later to validate his interpretations of the data.

After the conclusion of the discipline English for Specific Purposes, the data collected underwent a long process of interpretation and reflection (DÖRNYEI, 2007). In this endeavor, we paid attention to narratives, the "descriptions of what people experience" (PATTON, 2002, p. 107). Table 1 presents the phases of the data analysis period.

Table 1 – Phases of the data analysis period

Phase of the data analysis period	Actions carried out
First phase (March 2021)	Reading of the participants' answers about the experience reports. Transcription of all the semi-structured interviews, followed by reading this material. Reading of the researcher's reflective diaries.
Second phase (April 2021)	Identification of themes and categories as patterns arose. Inclusion of comments regarding each theme and category previously identified. Beginning of the data analysis process, drawing on the theoretical contributions by different researchers of the area under investigation.

(continua)

20 For ethical issues, a consent form (Free and Informed Consent Term) was signed by all the participants of this study, and fictitious names were used to protect the participants' identity.

21 On Google Forms, it is possible to create virtual forms, e.g., open-ended, multiple choice, and evaluation questions.

22 The interviews were audio-recorded.

Table 1 – Phases of the data analysis period (*conclusão*)

Phase of the data analysis period	Actions carried out
Third phase (May 2021)	The data analysis was refined and deepened as the researcher read different texts to better understand the data and support his interpretations. Completion of the data analysis process.

Source: Elaborated by the author.

As discussed by Fritzen (2012), the researcher should pursue a process involving reflection and comparison between the data collected, their own experience in the field, and the theoretical background. Therefore, to understand how the investigated DST activity played a part in the students' English learning, the data from the experience reports were triangulated with the data from the semi-structured interviews and the researcher's reflective diary comments. According to Maxwell (1996), triangulation decreases the risk that the outcomes of a study reproduce biases or limitations of a single procedure.

To facilitate and optimize the transcription process, we used a software called Transana.²³ Most of the data in this study were originally in Portuguese, and the researcher translated the nine excerpts from Portuguese to English, upon which he took full responsibility. The information between two parentheses, that is, (()), as transcription conventions, refers to the researcher's commentary.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is intended to answer the research question: "How did the investigated DST activity contribute to the student's English learning?". According to the student's perception, the study showed that such an activity allowed: 1. opportunities for transformation and overcoming challenges, and 2. socialization in a remote context. Hence, these two aspects will be discussed in the following session.

Opportunities for transformation and overcoming challenges

Excerpt 1, taken from the experience report, addresses the challenges faced by Felipe when it came to the digitalization process of his story:

The first one ((the challenges)) was the total lack of experience and insecurity regarding the ideal video format. The second moment was to synthesize the choices in the face of an infinite number of possibilities. Then, I highlighted the difficulty in inserting the audio with the narratives in English. The forth challenge was due to the inclusion of the soundtrack with its respective synchronism. Lastly, it was the process of improving pronunciation to make it intelligible (Excerpt 1, Felipe's experience report, March 2021).

²³ Transana refers to a software package that can be used to analyze audio data as well as digital video. See <http://www.transana.org/> for further information on the Transana program.

Excerpt 1 shows that Felipe struggled to insert digital resources into his story, including selection criteria, the soundtrack, and the script's narration. Furthermore, the student commented that to overcome the difficulties that arose in the digitalization process, the assistance provided by the teacher-mediator relationship "played a very important role." Despite the challenges, Felipe's discourse highlights how he was able to use digital resources in the act of the learning experience, which Robin (2008) names "technological literacy", and Boase's (2013) "critical awareness." As stated by Robin (2016, p. 19), the creation of DST allows students to be "empowered with the ability to communicate using various multimedia techniques". Excerpts 2 and 3 below stress the relevance of pedagogical mediation to overcome the challenges that emerged in the creation process of digital stories.

((The teacher-mediator)) signaled our level of English, as well as awakened a desire to continue and increase more and more the intimacy and the learning of the language (Excerpt 2, Mariana's experience report, March 2021).

Overall, the most important thing about the activity was the teacher's ceaseless feedback which helped us to put the activity on track and to shape it (Excerpt 3, Ronaldo's experience report, March 2021).

As previously explained, one of the characteristics of collaborative learning for Vygotsky (1978) is the role of someone more experienced to find ways to help the less experienced to learn, which he names Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this study, "learning" is linked to the teacher-mediator's help with digitalizing the student's story and the support to learn English. The teacher-mediator had the chance to offer his students feedback, what Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976, p. 90) called "scaffolding", not only feedback on the use of digital resources but also regarding the linguistics aspects, such as appropriate vocabulary, syntactic choices, and pronunciation of words in English.

During several moments of the interview, Felipe stressed that his experience with the activity was both challenging and transforming. The following two excerpts, taken from the interview and Felipe's experience report, presents the student's explanations as to why he considered the DST activity to be a transformative experience:

It transformed me because it made me really... like... want... that the activity really looked nice... It was made with love it was made with zeal.. and it transformed me because it rescued me... I was on the margins of English learning, and like consuming what was part of the everyday life such as reading... a song [...] And suddenly this time it was something that created a stronger bond with myself... "How about talking about yourself? Say something very special about your life but in English" with the teacher support [...] you commented on the whole process of making the cake [...] (Excerpt 4, interview with Felipe, March 2021).

My experience regarding participation in the activity was rewarding and very transformative. This work allowed me to look inside myself and my history. [...] The experience [of the day of the final presentation] was extremely challenging, exciting, and important to me. [...] Even though I was excited about the emotional side, the highlight was the crying that completely blocked my voice from

beginning to end of the presentation. Lastly, the commitment made to myself in relation to my progress in language studies (Excerpt 5, Felipe's experience report, March 2021).

Excerpt 4 shows that the creation of the DST enabled Felipe to “rescue” the English language studies since, before the development of the activity, the student was “on the margins” of the language learning process, possibly implying that he had not been devoting himself to studying English as much as he would have intended. Such perception indicates that the DST activity, through teacher-mediation in the ZPD (VYGOTSKY, 1978), made it possible for the student to take up the study of English again in a meaningful way, which Boase (2013, p. 6) calls “deep learning.” Additionally, Felipe stated in this interview that the activity opened up further opportunities for transformation because it allowed him to create a commitment to himself, meaning that he was able to continue studying English after the end of the activity.

In Excerpt 5, it is possible to notice how the presentation of the DST to people from different cultures and countries in the telecollaborative meeting was significant for Felipe. According to Helm (2016, p. 153), intercultural encounters encompass “personal experience and emotions,” whereas Kramsch (2011, p. 364) underlines that such encounters should “engage the students’ emotions, not just their cognition.”

The Review of Literature pointed out that two of the four genetic domains for studying higher mental functions are microgenetic and ontogenetic (VYGOTSKY, 1981). These domains can be linked to the DST activity in this study in the following way: 1. microgenetic because learning took place in particular instances, *e.g.*, in the writing process of the script, the creation of the storyboard, the digitalization process, the narration of the script, and so forth; and 2. ontogenetic because learning occurred over time, considering that the activity lasted nearly two months. Therefore, Felipe’s speech in excerpts 4 and 5 could be a sign of a possible transformation (VYGOTSKY, 1981) or, according to Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 42), a potential “transformational engagement” of this student was taking place to the effect that the DST activity motivated him to start studying English again, in addition to having made it possible for him, as seen in Excerpt 5, “the progress in the language studies.”

Socialization in the remote context

The Excerpt 6 below, taken from the experience report, shows Mariana’s favorable opinions toward the activity:

I found the teacher’s approach in the context of the pandemic in higher education very interesting because even though we are classmates, we don’t know each other. The proposal of the integration of the foreign language being spoken and written for the brief knowledge of the other, is really important in a moment of total isolation. I believe that, more than a linguistics project, we had a moment of socialization with people who, in a different context, we would be extremely close to. In regard to Linguistics, I really liked the different method of working with the content, involving technology in a playful way, dealing not only with writing and speech rules but also with conversation (Excerpt 6, Mariana’s experience report, March 2021).

It should be noted that the suspension of face-to-face school activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic occurred ten months before the DST activity, in January 2021. Based on what Mariana explained in Excerpt 6, we can affirm that the activity offered not only an opportunity for the written and oral practice of English but also for socialization in a remote context with other classmates, which suggests that, before the DST activity, the students had not had the chance to get to know better each other. According to Gregori-Signes (2014), from a sociocultural perspective (VYGOTSKY, 1978, 1986), DST activities enable both students and the teacher to engage in socialization processes. The following excerpt, taken from Ronaldo's experience report, describes his opinion about his experience with the DST activity, as well as the presentation of his DST to the participants of the project IFC English Conversation Meetings: Intercultural Dialogue through Telecollaboration:

Presenting the digital story to an audience was very interesting, getting feedback immediately after the presentation and being able to see the reaction of those involved was very interesting. Being able to express myself in English, seeing that I could be understood and heard by those present from different parts of the world [...] was very rewarding. I believe that their acceptance of our activity [...] was a relief for us because our intention was perceived, and we got feedback from both the chat, and the voice and video channels. I believe that for all the participants, it was an experience that helped them to practice English and improve their skills with a tool they were not used to using (Excerpt 7, Ronaldo's experience report, March 2021).

Excerpt 7 also demonstrates that the DST activity provided socialization. In addition to the presentation of the digital stories, the students had the opportunity to engage interculturally (PHIPPS; GONZALES, 2004) through the telecollaborative meeting, in which both the students and the audience discussed aspects related, for example, to the aesthetics of the productions, the digitalization process, (inter)cultural factors, and feelings that were awakened in this process. Crowther et al. (2001) discuss how the curriculum internationalization can also be present in a domestic context. In our DST activity, the integration of the intercultural dimension (LUNA, 2018b) and the international dimension (BEELEN; JONES, 2015) into the curriculum were noticed.

One day following the presentation of the students' digital stories to the participants of the extension project IFC English Conversation Meetings: Intercultural Dialogue through Telecollaboration, Nilma, one of those participants, shared her opinion on the latter project as well as on the students' video productions. The following three excerpts, two of them taken from the interview and one from the experience report, elaborates on Nilma's impressions.

Ah, enriching! [. . .] This thing of having different points of view on the same object, and I only have ONE... so, there are SEVERAL others. (Excerpt 8, Nilma's interview, March).

The participants are from all around the country or even from different parts of the globe. My favorite thing about these meetings are the variety of people and the mutual respect, which provides a comfortable place to express my opinions. Honestly, I admire how English is presented: as a valuable tool to connect with different minds, and not just the grammatical aspect (Excerpt 9, Nilma's experience report, March 2021).

The conversations used in... language courses at language schools, or the ones you can find on the internet are a lot more artificial and you don't see it as something real and tangible, you know? But these stories in... which they narrated a part of their lives were really cool, you know? We were curious to know and we could see that it was something... relevant, you know? It is really cool when you know how to explain something that happened in your life. [...]The stories were relevant both for those who were listening and for those who had already recorded them [the stories] [...] (Excerpt 10, Nilma's interview, March 2021).

Excerpts 8 and 9 illustrate that Nilma's participation in the project allowed her to come across different perspectives, in which various cultural topics were discussed, such as countries differences, stereotypes, and environmental issues. Her discourse may also indicate that such an experience enabled her to develop a growing awareness of cultural differences (KRAMSCH, 1993, 2011; LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013; SCHAEFER, 2020, 2021). When she claims that such experience proved to be enriching, her speech converges with Phipps and Gonzales (2004, p. 3) thoughts that through dialogue with "the other," it is possible to lead students "to understand the complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own". In the same line of thought, Luna (2018b, p. 39) argues that the internationalization process should involve the "recognition and harnessing of the Other."²⁴ Excerpt 10, in turn, elucidates how the DST activity was "real" and how it proved to be a relevant experience in the life of the students. Nilma's perception corroborates with Castañeda (2013, p. 56), in which, in the author's research, the students communicated "in an expressive manner and engaged in real-world communication."

FINAL REMARKS

The objective of this study was to investigate narratives about a DST activity in the context of IaH. The data analysis revealed that the DST activity enabled two aspects that played a part in the students' English learning: 1. opportunities for transformation and overcoming challenges, and 2. socialization in the remote context.

Opportunities for transformation and overcoming challenges, the first aspect, showed that the students, despite the challenges that emerged, were able, through the help provided by the teacher-mediator, to include multiple technological tools to digitalize their stories. The second aspect, *socialization in the remote context*, sheds a light on the fact that socialization and integration were, in the remote modality, promoted between the students and the participants who attended the DST presentation in the telecollaborative meeting. Moreover, through intercultural contact, the students and the audience could address different issues relating to digital stories. Based on the results, it is possible to state that the development of DST activities and projects involving telecollaboration appear to be a suitable means for students willing not only to practice the target language but also to engage themselves in interactions with people from other languages and cultures.

24 "reconhecimento e aproveitamento do Outro".

Belli, Heemann, and Sehnem (2016, p. 2) explain that the internationalization of educational institutions has been traditionally materialized through student-teacher mobility, providing “transformations in the design and execution of curriculum components.”²⁵ Baranzeli, Morosini, and Woicolesco (2020), in a similar line of thought, stressed that mobility programs are deemed to be one of the strategies for internationalization. Nonetheless, as the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented physical and academic mobility from happening, telecollaborative meetings in the IaH can be an alternative, which O’Dowd (2013b) calls *virtual mobility*.

The Digital Education Action Plan (21-27) (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020) highlights that education is essential to innovation, personal advancement, economic development, and social cohesion, on which changes arising from the evolution of digital technologies have had a considerable impact. In the face of such a scenario, DST activities, and telecollaboration, besides having the potential to contribute to the quality of teaching-learning in general, can provide students with intercultural encounters, which could eventually prepare them to interact respectfully and successfully with people from other languages and cultural horizons.

To conclude, O’Dowd (2021, p. 14) underlines that telecollaboration, whose importance is evidenced by a broad body of research in the area (*e.g.*, O’DOWD, 2013a, 2019, 2021; HELM, 2016; LEONE; TELLES, 2016; SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2020), should be regarded as “an integral part of foreign language education programs and Internationalisation at Home strategies”. In that regard, not only telecollaborative meetings but also DST activities are at the service of teachers and researchers, who can mediate the encounter between students, languages, and cultures in the context of curriculum internationalization, incorporating their pedagogical action with actual practices and contacts.

CONTAÇÃO DE HISTÓRIAS DIGITAIS NO CONTEXTO DA INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO: PELA APRENDIZAGEM DE INGLÊS

Resumo: A telecolaboração está relacionada a encontros *on-line* entre estudantes de diferentes localizações geográficas (O’DOWD, 2021), o que pode promover a Internacionalização em Casa (IeC) (LUNA, 2018a). O presente estudo teve como objetivo investigar narrativas sobre uma atividade de contação de histórias digitais no contexto da IeC. Para a análise, foram incluídos dados de relatos de experiência, entrevistas semiestruturadas e diários reflexivos. Os resultados indicaram que a atividade possibilitou: 1. oportunidades de transformação e superação de desafios e 2. socialização no contexto remoto.

Palavras-chave: Contação de histórias digitais. Telecolaboração. Internacionalização em Casa. Internacionalização do currículo. Aprendizagem de inglês.

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