A theoretical-methodological proposal for the use of ICTs in English classes in Brazilian educational institutions /

Uma proposta teórico-metodológica para o uso das TICs nas aulas de inglês em instituições de ensino brasileiras

Rodrigo Schaefer *

Rodrigo Schaefer has a doctorate in Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários from Universidade Federal de Santa Cantarina (UFSC). He teaches English and Portuguese at Instituto Federal Catarinense (IFC) campus Brusque.

iD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2349-0175

Christiane Heemann **

Christiane Heemann has a Post doc in Intercultural Studies from Universidade Aberta de Portugal (UAb) and a Doctorate in Languages from Universidade Católica de Pelotas (UCPel). She teaches Languages and Methodology at Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI).

iD https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6828-2962

ABSTRACT

A possible way to provide oral and written English practice by using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is through telecollaborative activities (SCHAEFER; HEEMANN, 2019). O'Dowd (2013) defines telecollaboration as the use of online technologies in the context of language teaching and learning with students who are geographically dispersed. Another possibility to favor the practice of English using ICTs is through digital stories, understood as the inclusion of multiple digital resources in storytelling (CASTAÑEDA, 2013). Drawing on scholars such as Brammerts (1996, 2003), Lambert (2006, 2007), Almeida (2014), O'Dowd (2012, 2013), Tumolo (2015) and Schaefer (2019a), this study aims at presenting a theoretical-methodological proposal, which involves the use of ICTs, for English classes in

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✉ rodrigo.schaefer@ifc.edu.br

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✉ chrisheemann@gmail.com

Brazilian educational institutions. On the basis of the presentation of our theoretical-methodological proposal, we suggest that activities that utilize ICTs have the potential to produce challenges that may lead to language learning, student motivation, collaborative work and reflection.

KEYWORDS: Information and Communication Technologies; Telecollaboration; Digital storytelling; Online teaching and learning of foreign languages; Interculturality.

RESUMO

Uma possível maneira de propiciar a prática escrita e oral do inglês utilizando as Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação (TICs) é por meio de atividades telecolaborativas (SCHAEFER; HEEMANN, 2019). O'Dowd (2013) define telecolaboração como o uso de tecnologias online no contexto de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas com estudantes que estão geograficamente dispersos. Outra possibilidade para favorecer a prática da língua inglesa utilizando as TICs é através de histórias digitais, entendidas como a inclusão de múltiplos recursos digitais na contação de histórias (CASTAÑEDA, 2013). Com fundamentos em estudiosos como Brammerts (1996, 2003), Lambert (2006, 2007), Almeida (2014), O'Dowd (2012, 2013), Tumolo (2015) e Schaefer (2019a), o objetivo do presente estudo é apresentar uma proposta teórico-metodológica, que envolve a utilização das TICs, para as aulas de inglês em instituições de ensino brasileiras. Com base na apresentação da nossa proposta teórico-metodológica, sugerimos que atividades que incluem as TICs têm o potencial de gerar desafios que conduzam eventualmente ao aprendizado de línguas, à motivação dos estudantes, ao trabalho colaborativo e à reflexão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação; Telecolaboração; Contação de história digital; Ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras online; Interculturalidade.

1 Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (henceforth ICTs), such as wikis, online platforms and videoconferencing applications, have had an influence on the teaching and learning process in general. As Alcici (2014) puts it, the use of ICTs

> contributes to expand the access to updated information, allows to establish new relationships with knowledge that go beyond the limits of previously prepared instructional materials and under the educators' control, favors interactivity, enabling communication with the world"[1],[2]. (p. 14).

Indeed, the potential impact of ICTs is deemed to be revolutionary, taking into account the large number of educators and students who have been using them. Almeida (2014) explains that the implementation of ICTs in the educational context facilitates the following aspects:

> Access to varied contexts; possibility of research in the area of interest; discussion of content through the availability of information network; motivation; approximation between the content and the student's reality; collaborative

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[1] All translations are ours.

[2] Original quote: "contribui para expandir o acesso à informação atualizada, permite estabelecer novas relações com o saber que ultrapassam os limites dos materiais instrucionais previamente preparados e sob o controle dos educadores, favorece a interatividade, permitindo a comunicação com o mundo".

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participation; relationship between practice and theory; sharing of experiences; development of potentials; perception of languages other than the conventional language taught at school[3]. (p. 39-40).

A scientific problem of concern to many researchers, teachers and specialists in the context of foreign language teaching is related to the fact that very often students do not develop necessary skills to communicate well enough in other languages (SEHNEM; LUNA, 2013). In this regard, Sehnem and Luna (2013) emphasize that the expected communicative competence, which refers to the union of linguistic knowledge and the discursive capacity (CANALE, 1995; RAMIRO, 2007), allowing students to intelligibly express themselves both orally and in writing, is regarded as a significant differential in the job market as well as an objective to be attained by many language teachers. However, Brazil has been the subject of much criticism due to the frequent inability of public and private educational institutions to achieve communicative goals (SEHNEM; LUNA, 2013).

A possible way to provide the practice of the four language skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening -, as well as the contact between people from different countries and cultures, is through telecollaborative activities (O'DOWD, 2006, 2013, 2018; SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2019b, 2020; SCHAEFER; HEEMANN, 2019; SCHAEFER; SALBEGO; LORENSET, 2019). O'Dowd (2013, p. 123) defines telecollaboration as "the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their foreign language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work".

Thorne (2006, p. 3) already highlighted that telecollaborative practices allowed for "actual interaction with expert speakers of the language", whereas O'Dowd (2013, p. 123) claims that they provide students with "virtual contact with members of other cultures and speakers of other languages". Byram et al. (2016), in turn, add that online resources have been promoting opportunities for the development of students' oral and written skills.

Another avenue to facilitate the practice of languages is through the creation of digital storytelling, which, according to Castañeda (2013, p. 45), is defined as "the practice of combining multiple modes of technology, such as photographs, text, music, audio narration, and video clips, to produce a compelling, emotional, and in-depth story". Tumolo (2015), for his part, explains that

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[3] Original quote: "Acesso a contextos variados; possibilidade de pesquisas na área de interesse; discussão de conteúdos mediante a disponibilidade de informação na rede; motivação; aproximação entre o conteúdo e a realidade do aluno; participação colaborativa; relação entre prática e teoria; compartilhamento de experiências; desenvolvimento de potencialidades; percepção de outras linguagens que não a linguagem convencional ensinada na escola".

digital stories can be understood as the evolution of humanity's ancient tradition of telling stories, bearing in mind that in recent years "digital resources have been incorporated"[4] (p. 101) into such a tradition. From this perspective, the use of digital resources in the process of creating stories contributes to personal narratives linked to special moments, the sharing of memories, experience report regarding various events, and so forth. As stated by Trevisol (2019, p. 32), digital stories "may also serve educational purposes, since they seem to have the power to allow information to be better integrated in our memory, what may facilitate learning".

Our study brings with it the idea of facilitating, through the use of ICTs, the practice of English in Brazilian institutions, such as in Higher Education, in the various campuses of Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology[5] and in public, private and language schools. That said, this study is aimed to present a theoretical-methodological proposal, which involves the use of ICTs, for English classes in Brazilian educational institutions. To achieve this objective, the following research question was outlined: how is it possible to use ICTs to promote oral and written English practice in Brazilian educational institutions?

This text is divided into four sections. The first focused on the objective as well as on a brief contextualization as regards this study. The second section, in turn, will address theoretical contributions on ICTs, telecollaboration and digital stories. Next, the spotlight will fall on the presentation of the theoretical-methodological proposal for English classes in Brazilian institutions, and, lastly, we will make some final remarks.

2 Review of Literature

For Almeida (2014), the need to promote changes in the educational context in general over the past few years has sparked many debates. In this sense, educational institutions have looked into possible ways to implement ICTs in their classes, since the use of digital resources allows, among other aspects, interactivity and creativity. The author stresses that:

> New technologies are now synonymous with evolution and progress and are present in all areas of activity, just as it is a fact that we live in a time where

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[4] Original quote: "recursos digitais foram incorporados".
[5] Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia (IF).

making new ICTs available is to promote, in line with a process of democratization of knowledge, digital inclusion[6]. (ALMEIDA, 2014, p. 35).

Almeida (2014) goes on to say that because of the interactive nature of ICTs, it is possible to create fertile ground for production, autonomy and different teaching strategies in the school context. In order for this to happen, the presence of the teacher is very relevant, in the sense that "it is up to her/him to seek an approximation, a significant involvement of the student with knowledge, in order to make [the student] a critical and autonomous citizen"[7] (p. 39).

Thorne (2006) makes clear that telecollaboration, facilitated by the use of ICTs, such as e-mail, videoconferencing and online platforms, offers a variety of opportunities for interaction and dialogue, including small-group work, whole class exchanges and pair work. For him, activities "around shared information and media (literature, films, scholarly texts) and collaborative, interpretative and investigative activities" (p. 7) can be part of telecollaborative projects.

It can be said that the intercultural dialogue is at the heart of telecollaborative exchanges. For instance, Helm (2016, p. 153) underscores that dialogue "entails critical thinking and aims to reveal assumptions and biases, so they can be re-evaluated". O'Dowd (2003, p. 133), in turn, asserts that discussions through the intercultural dialogue "allow learners to express their ideas and then to clarify and redefine them through feedback and through the other perspectives to which they are exposed". Finally, Veloso and Almeida (2009) argue that dialogue gives language learners more control over the learning process, which prevents them from being consumers of teaching syllabi.

Given the interactive and dialogical nature of collaborative activities, Belz (2007) states that telecollaboration can be characterized as ethnographic, dialogic and critical. Ethnographic because learners can observe, analyze and interpret the behavior of their online partners. Dialogic in the sense that learners' utterances arise out of interaction with others. Finally, critical since "learners are not passive receptacles of received knowledge (i.e. a facts-and-figures approach to culture learning), but rather active participants in a dynamic process of knowledge construction" (p. 138).

Tandem, which is related to an autonomous virtual mode of foreign language learning, where two students learn each other's language (BRAMMERTS, 1996, 2003), can be regarded,

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[6] Original quote: "as novas tecnologias são hoje sinônimo de evolução e progresso e estão presentes em todas as áreas de atuação, assim como é fato que vivemos um momento em que disponibilizar novas TICs é promover, segundo um processo de democratização do conhecimento, a inclusão digital".

[7] Original quote: "a ele cabe buscar uma aproximação, um envolvimento significativo do aluno com o conhecimento, a fim de torná-lo um cidadão crítico e autônomo".

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according to Telles (2015) and Schaefer (2019a, 2019b, 2020), as a specific example of telecollaboration. Brammerts (1996) makes clear that learning foreign languages in tandem involves two people of different languages working in partnership "to learn more about one another's character and culture, to help one another improve their language skills, and often also to exchange additional knowledge for example, about their professional life" (p. 10). O'Dowd (2012, p. 343), in turn, explains that "tandem learning is essentially a language learning activity that involves language exchange and collaboration between two partners who are native speakers of their partners' target language".

This online language learning context has three guiding principles: autonomy, reciprocity and separate use of languages (BRAMMERTS, 2003; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006; TELLES, 2009, 2015). Autonomy has to do with the responsibility that participants have for both their own learning and the learning of her/his partner. Reciprocity concerns the mutual support and interdependence between two learners who are engaged in equivalent commitment, and they both seek to achieve intended results in this partnership. Lastly, separate use of languages refers to the same amount of time used to practice the two languages.

Consistent with a sociocultural perspective[8], autonomy and interdependence are important aspects in tandem learning (ROCHA; LIMA, 2009; VELOSO; ALMEIDA, 2009). According to Rocha and Lima (2009), apart from the need to be autonomous in order to develop their language skills, language learners must be aware that their online partners' learning will be contingent upon mutual efforts. Veloso and Almeida (2009), on their part, emphasize that the development of autonomy occurs socially, despite the generalized idea of autonomy as an individual and isolated process. Moreover, the latter authors claim that as "language learning is socially situated"[9] (p. 150), tandem interactions can be seen as more associated with collaboration than other contexts of foreign language teaching and learning.

In tandem, language learners have the opportunity to discuss topics that emerge spontaneously along the online exchanges, which also converges with the conceptualization of autonomy. This is what Vassallo and Telles (2006, p. 98) call "natural process of interaction", meaning that "such interaction is content- and information-oriented, that arises from learners' own communicative needs, and that it is triggered by their attempt to communicate with the other" (p. 98).

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[8] For the sociocultural perspective, knowledge is socially co-constructed through language (VYGOTSKY, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning happens first socially and, subsequently, higher mental functions are developed.
[9] Original quote: "a aprendizagem de línguas é socialmente situada".

The virtual tandem exchanges in works by scholars such as Brammerts (1996) and Appel and Mullen (2000) were carried out through written interactions. Later, in 2006, Telles and Vassallo proposed a different type of tandem, named teletandem[10], which includes the use of video, voice and written interaction. The authors state that teletandem has similar features to face-to-face tandem[11], due to the fact that interactants can, for example, see their partners as well as watch their gesticulations.

In what follows, we present three studies that concentrated on tandem interactions. The first, which is entitled *Understanding the 'other side': intercultural learning in a Spanish-English e-mail exchange* (O'DOWD, 2003), had the purpose of analyzing email exchanges between five pairs of university learners of English and Spanish. The second study, *Negotiation of cultural issues equated to nation in e-mail exchanges* (SCHAEFER; LUNA, 2016), aimed at understanding the way in which cultural issues linked to a national perspective were dialogically constructed between a Brazilian learner of Italian and an Italian learner of English. Finally, the objective of the study *Email telecollaborative experience between IFC and UNEB students[12]* (SCHAEFER et al., 2020) was to report on a telecollaborative activity carried out between learners of English and pre-service teachers of English. The three studies concerned pointed out the potential for tandem interactions regarding foreign language learning, as well as the discussion of different subjects in intercultural meetings.

As stated previously, in addition to telecollaboration, the creation of digital storytelling also makes the practice of languages possible. Castañeda (2013, p. 46) underlines that "digital storytelling lends itself to narration of meaningful stories" and it also enables students "to better express their opinions and create an emotional context for an audience" (p. 47). This way, it can be said that the use of digital resources in storytelling allows for personal narratives linked to moments considered special by the student, the sharing of memories, reports on personal achievements, and so on.

According to Robin (2008), digital storytelling, in view of its creative potential, was construed on the basis of the following terms: *21st Century Literacy, Digital Age Literacies* and *21st Century Skills.* The author adds that there are five types of literacy connected with these terms, namely: (1) digital literacy: the ability to interact with people at a distance in order to collect

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[10] According to Garcia (2015), teletandem emerged based on Telles's (2006) personal experiences through the project Teletandem Brasil: foreign languages for all (TTB). See http://www.teletandembrasil.org/ for further information on TTB.
[11] In face-to-face tandem, participants share the same physical space (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006).
[12] Original title: "Experiência telecolaborativa por e-mail entre alunos do IFC e da UNEB".

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information and debate different subjects; (2) global literacy: the ability to "read, interpret, respond, and contextualize messages from a global perspective" (p. 224); (3) technology literacy: the ability to use digital technological resources to increase learning opportunities; (4) visual literacy: the ability to understand and convey information that contain images, photos, figures, etc...; (5) information literacy: the ability "to find, evaluate, and synthesize information" (p. 224).

The author claims that these five abilities can be promoted through the production of digital stories because they reflect what 21st century society considers to be essential in the teaching and learning process. Seen from this angle, Robin (2008) underscores that the creation of digital storytelling can open pathways for the development of "enhanced communication skills as they [the students] learn to conduct research on a topic, ask questions, organize their ideas, express opinions, and construct meaningful narratives" (p. 224).

For Lambert (2006, 2007), digital storytelling has seven elements, namely: 1) point of view, 2) dramatic question, 3) emotional content, 4) the gift of voice, 5) the power of the soundtrack, 6) economy of language and 7) pacing. The first element, *point of view*, refers to the central topic of a story, since stories, in general, contribute to the presentation of a variety of ideas. *Dramatic question*, in turn, concerns a question posed by the student that has the potential to attract the audience's attention. *Emotional content*, the third element, evokes emotional connections with, among other possibilities, love, illness, graduation, death, sense of loneliness, acceptance and rejection. While *the gift of voice* has to do with the use of the narrator's voice, which helps to highlight the emotional content, *the power of the soundtrack*, the fifth element, adds an emotional tone to the story, as soundtracks "change the way we perceive the visual information streaming into our eyes, and establish a rhythm" (LAMBERT, 2006, p. 55). *Economy of language* means that the narration should only provide the content that is crucial for the understanding of the story. Lastly, *pacing* is related to the fact that the story should not be narrated either too fast or too slowly, so that the audience can clearly understand its content.

Lambert (2006, 2007) understands that the process of creating digital stories involves several steps. *Planning* has to do with the establishment of all the procedures integrating the creation of a digital story; *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 the writing of the events that make up the story itself, *receiving feedback* entails the linguistic correction of the script, which can be facilitated by the teacher or the peers. *Designing storyboard* is related to the illustrations that represent the script of the story as a whole, followed by the *digitalization of*

the story, that is, the inclusion of digital elements in the stories. The last step, *presentation to an audience*, enables students to share their stories with others. Similar to Lambert's (2006, 2007) steps, albeit more briefly, Tumolo (2015, p. 112) explains that the production of digital stories implies:

> a) the choice of an interesting topic, with research on it; b) the writing of a script and a storyboard; and c) the combination of different media to support the ideas and emotions, including narration (usually oral), music, images, animations, graphics and texts[13].

Castañeda's (2013) study was aimed to examine the possibility of introducing digital storytelling in foreign language classes and, on the basis of the participants' narratives, to analyze the effects regarding their participation in this activity. As data collection instruments, the author included questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and reflection journals by the researcher. Castañeda (2013) adopted the task-based learning approach (RICHARDS, PLATT; WEBER, 1985; ELLIS, 2003; TREVISOL, 2019), whose focus is on meaning and, besides that, it "has a specific purpose or objective" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 47). The outcomes showed that through digital storytelling the students "practiced language in an expressive manner and engaged in real-world communication" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 56). In the same way, the study revealed that the students were more concentrated on the stories themselves than on grammatical and technological issues.

In view of what was previously exposed with regard to ICTs, telecollaboration and digital storytelling, in what follows we present our theoretical-methodological proposal for the use of ICTs in English classes in Brazilian educational institutions.

3 A Theoretical-methodological Proposal for the Use of ICTs in English Classes in Brazilian Educational Institutions

Our theoretical-methodological proposal was planned for a scenario where the Brazilian Institution (henceforth BI) curriculum offers two 45-minute English classes per week. Moreover, it was designed on the basis of the research question already presented: how is it possible to use ICTs to promote oral and written English practice in Brazilian educational institutions?

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13 Original quote: "a) a escolha de um tema interessante, com pesquisa sobre ele; b) a escrita de um *script* e de um *storyboard*; e c) a junção de diversas mídias para sustentar as ideias e as emoções, incluindo uma narração (normalmente oral), músicas, imagens, animações, gráficos e textos."

This theoretical-methodological proposal has two stages, which covers a total period of eleven weeks. In summary, the First Stage involves telecollaborative interactions in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages[14], which aims to provide language learning between speakers of different languages. The Second Stage, on the other hand, consists of the production of digital stories, through which students will share their experience in the application in question.

3.1 First Stage: activities related to interactions in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages

The development of the First Stage, which integrates both classroom and out-of-class activities, comprises a period of five-consecutive weeks.

3.1.1 Week 1: initial presentation to students regarding the activities to be carried out in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages

The BI teacher will let the students know that they will interact, over the following weeks, with English speakers from other countries through the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages. She/he can make it clear that the general idea underlying the interactions in that application is as follows: *I teach you my language and, in return, you teach yours to me or one you are proficient in*.

Then, the teacher could briefly present some theoretical concepts that underpin tandem language learning. For example, first she/he can take the opportunity to point out that "tandem is the name given to the bicycle operated by more than one person and this metaphor is brought to a context of learning foreign languages where students exercise autonomy in a collaborative and reciprocal way"[15] (GARCIA, 2015, p. 1541). Furthermore, linking back to the section Review of Literature, the teacher can highlight that tandem is a specific mode of telecollaboration (O'DOWD, 2013; SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2019b, 2020), address definitions of this mode (BRAMMERTS, 1996, 2003; O'DOWD, 2012) and discuss its three guiding principles, that is to say, autonomy, reciprocity

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[14] This application is available at https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.tandem&hl=en_US&gl=US

[15] Original quote: "tandem é o nome que se dá à bicicleta operada por mais de uma pessoa e esta metáfora é trazida para um contexto de aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras onde os alunos exercitam a autonomia de forma colaborativa e recíproca".

and separate use of languages (BRAMMERTS, 1996, 2003; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006; TELLES, 2009, 2015).

After that, the teacher asks students to download the application. She/he can also show its functionalities and resources, such as chat, corrective feedback as regards written production, audio and photo sharing, voice and video calling, and so forth. The teacher should also address the following considerations:

- Each BI student will individually interact with a speaker of English from another country.

- The BI student will help the speaker from the other country to communicate in Portuguese, while the latter will help the former to communicate in English.

- We suggest that the BI students talk to their respective partners at least one hour a week, totaling four hours. Among them, two must be in English, two in Portuguese, converging, as we saw earlier, with one of the guiding principles of tandem: separate use of languages (BRAMMERTS, 2003; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006; TELLES, 2009, 2015).

In class, the BI students must do the following:

- Fill in completely their profile information and personal preferences. For instance, it is possible to provide in this application a brief description about themselves (name, age, where they live in and hobbies). In addition, they can highlight their learning goals.

- Inform: (1) their mother tongue as well as proficiency in other languages; (2) the language they want to learn (in this case, English); (3) their level of proficiency in English (beginner, intermediate or advanced) and; (4) what types of people, and from specific countries, they are interested in talking to.

As seen earlier, *autonomy* is one of the guiding principles of tandem (BRAMMERTS, 2003; TELLES; VASSALLO, 2006; VASSALLO; TELLES, 2006; TELLES, 2009, 2015). In this sense, the teacher will make it clear that the BI students can use the resources of their choice in the application, for example, as mentioned above, chat, voice and video calling, audio and photo sharing, among other possibilities. In the same way, it is necessary to stress to students that they must agree with their online partner the topics they will discuss, the way in which they intend to correct each other's linguistic production, and so on. Where correction of linguistic aspects is concerned, Benedetti (2010, p. 51) claims that "a specific instant to focus on the language and on

the correction of the production"[16] is needed, while Schaefer (2019a, p. 504) states that it is worth bringing students to consider "the importance of linguistic correction".

Given that students will communicate with people from other countries and cultures, we recommend that the teacher reinforces the need for respect when it comes to cultural differences, given that interaction in telecollaborative spaces, as O'Dowd (2006, p. 86) reminds us, "involves an awareness that one's own way of seeing the world is not *natural* or *normal*, but culturally determined". Furthermore, Byram (1997) and Byram et al. (2016) point out that the encounter with people from other cultures implies respect for their cultural horizons, gaining knowledge of values and behaviors and openness to other viewpoints.

Finally, the teacher will ask students to choose, during the week, an online partner of their preference.

3.1.2 Weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5: out-of-class interactions in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages and pedagogical mediation

Over the next four weeks, students will interact, as out-of-class activities, with their online partner in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages.

Even though the interactions in the application do not occur in class, we recommend that the teacher keeps track of the students' general experience as much as possible. Salomão (2012), Almeida (2014), Funo (2015), Telles (2015) and Schaefer (2019a, 2019b, 2020) argue for the salutary effect of pedagogical mediation in telecollaborative exchanges, since the teacher can help students in the development of the activities as a whole. Most importantly, she/he can bring language learners to reflect upon different cultural representations (KRAMSCH, 1993, 2005; BYRAM, 1997; LOPES; FRESCHI, 2016; SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2019b, 2020), as these representations could raise negative views (BYRAM, 1997) in relation to people from other countries and cultures. In fact, it was shown in Schaefer's pieces of research (2019a, 2020) that the presence of the teacher-mediator was of paramount importance for the overcoming of fixed cultural representations, because they could be discussed, problematized and deconstructed through questioning. In that vein, the teacher can ask questions such as (1) *in general, how has your experience with your online partner been so far on Tandem application*?; (2) *are you enjoying*

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[16] Original quote: "un instante específico para el enfoque en la lengua y en la corrección de la producción".

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this telecollaborative experience?; (3) *what are you learning?*; (4) *are you having any difficulty in using Tandem application resources to interact with your online partner?*.

During the pedagogical mediation moments over these weeks, in addition to possible reflections on cultural issues, the teacher can focus on linguistic aspects (LEONE; TELLES, 2016), including vocabulary, grammar and idiomatic expressions. By way of illustration, it is possible to reconcile linguistic-grammatical content within the BI English curriculum with discursive needs that may emerge during the interactions in the application.

The teacher can also ask students whether they have experienced any difficulty in using the application resources or to any technical problems. This is because limitations of this nature may lead students to "devote all their attention to the technology itself" (MALINOWSKI; KRAMSCH, 2014, p. 175) instead of a major focus on their learning progress or on the discussion of different topics.

In the last class of the fifth week, the teacher should explain to the students that the interactions in the application are finalized and that, in the coming week, activities concerning digital storytelling will begin.

3.2 Second Stage: activities related to the creation of digital stories

The Second Stage, which, just like the First Stage, comprises both classroom and out-of-class activities, will take place over a period of six consecutive weeks.

It must be underlined that these activities were designed on the basis of Lambert's (2006, 2007) and Tumolo's (2015) steps for the creation of digital storytelling, as previously presented in the section Review of Literature.

3.2.1 Week 6: initial presentation to students regarding the activities on digital stories

First and foremost, we recommend that the BI teacher should accompany their students (ALMEIDA, 2014; TELLES, 2015; SCHAEFER, 2019a, 2019b, 2020) throughout the development of the activities, as was the case with the activities related to the First Stage.

In class, the BI teacher will inform students that over the next few weeks they will produce digital stories in English, through which their experience in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages will be shared.

Besides that, the teacher will give a brief exposition of general theoretical concepts on the practice involving digital storytelling. For example, consistent with what was seen in the section Review of Literature, she/he can address definitions of digital stories according to Castañeda (2013) and Tumolo (2015) and present Lambert's (2006, 2007) and Tumolo's (2015) steps for the production of digital storytelling.

Then, the teacher will show students the website *educational uses of digital storytelling*[17], which, in addition to having numerous examples of digital stories previously produced, offers resources suggestions that can be used for the creation of these stories, e.g. softwares, materials and websites. We also suggest the presentation of two videos available on Youtube: *what is digital storytelling*?[18] and *create a digital story*[19].

The next step will be the process of writing the story script, which can be facilitated by the following questions: (1) *how was your experience on Tandem application?*; (2) *did you enjoy this experience?*; (3) *can you describe your online partner?*; (4) *what is your online partner's name? how old is she / he? where is she / he from*?; (5) *what did you learn as regards linguistic and cultural aspects?*; (6) *do you think that having interacted with a speaker of English on Tandem application helped you to communicate better in English?*.

At the end of this class, the students should forward the scripts to the teacher's email address. This way, the latter can, throughout the week, provide the former with linguistic correction.

3.2.2 Week 7: creating storyboards and digital stories

At the beginning of the class, students will receive feedback from the teacher regarding the linguistic correction of their scripts. After students rewrite their script based on the teacher's comments and suggestions, they will design their storyboards. Otherwise said, they will represent, in a summarized manner, their stories through illustrations, images, photos, captions, among other possibilities. For this purpose, we suggest the online storyboard creator *makeStoryboard*[20].

Next, the production of the digital storytelling itself will begin, where students will add "multiple modes of technology, such as photographs, text, music, audio narration, and video clips" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 45) to their stories. To carry out this work, the teacher can suggest the

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[17] Link to access this website: https://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/index.cfm
[18] Link to access this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlix-yVzheM&feature=youtu.be
[19] Link to access this website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVKeO5IIR_A&t=9s
[20] Link to access this online storyboard creator: https://makestoryboard.com/

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animation software *Animaker*[21] or the website *Powtoon*[22]. The teacher should also reinforce to students, drawing on Lambert (2006, 2007), the importance of adding, in order to attract the audience's attention, a question to their digital storytelling as well as an appropriate soundtrack. Furthermore, they must narrate their stories neither too quickly nor too slowly. In line with Castañeda (2013, p. 45), we suggest that these digital videos "range from three to five minutes long".

The students will continue the process of digitizing the story as an out-of-class activity and will finish it in the next week's class.

3.2.3 Week 8: end of the creation of the digital stories and search for a foreign institution

In this week's classes, the BI students, with the teacher's help, will finish the production of the digital stories. Moreover, she/he will let them know that in the next few classes there will be, yet again, a telecollaborative activity (THORNE, 2006; O'DOWD, 2013; SCHAEFER; HEEMANN, 2019), but this time via videoconferencing and with students from a foreign institution (henceforth FI), to whom the BI students will present their productions.

Our methodological procedure meets Castañeda's (2013) study, in the sense that, as the author explains, "all students in the class successfully completed a digital story in the target language and presented the finished product to an audience" (p. 55). Additionally, the author underlines that "a digital story sets the stage for a meaningful, real-world task that can be presented to an audience" (p. 56).

As Thorne (2006) reminded us previously, telecollaboration favors different opportunities for interaction and dialogue, including pair work and class-to-class interaction. Schaefer and Heemann (2019, p. 87), on their turn, emphasize that telecollaborative activities can be conducted "1) through the use of Skype[23] [...] and/or; 2) through the use of *websites*"[24]. In order to accomplish this enterprise, the teacher should seek, throughout the week, a teacher from a FI who is willing to provide the opportunity for her/his students to watch, in real time, the presentations of the BI students' digital stories. We suggest three telecollaborative projects as a means of finding possible

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[21] Link to access this software: https://www.animaker.com/
[22] Link to access this website: https://www.powtoon.com/index/
[23] A software that allows for communication over the Internet through voice and video calling.
[24] Original quote: "1) através da utilização do Skype [...] e/ou; 2) através da utilização de *websites*".

FI and teachers: *Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition*[25] (TILA), *Pedagogical Differentiation Through Telecollaboration and Gamification for Intercultural and Content Integrated Language Teaching*[26] (TeCoLa) and *Cross-Disciplinary Organisation for Telecollaboration and Virtual Exchange in Higher Education*[27] (UNICollaboration).

Throughout the week, the BI teacher must explain to the FI teacher specific details of the activities that were carried out in relation to the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages and to the production of the digital stories, as well as the methodological procedures that were adopted. By the same token, she/he can discuss some aspects related to the classes time, taking into account time differences between the two countries, the duration of each presentation (ranging from 3 to 5 minutes) and the fact that the presentations will occur on Skype.

3.2.4 Weeks 9, 10 and 11: presentation of the digital stories to the FI students through telecollaborative exchanges

Over the next three weeks, the presentations to the FI students regarding the digital storytelling that the BI students produced to narrate their experience in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages will take place. At this point, we suggest that the videos be displayed successively, that is, without interruption for discussion between the students and teachers from both the BI and the FI.

After the presentations of the digital stories, there will be an activity in English involving dialogue (O'DOWD, 2003, 2013, 2018; THORNE, 2006; BELZ, 2007; VELOSO; ALMEIDA, 2009; HELM, 2016; SCHAEFER; HEEMANN, 2019) between the BI and the FI students. To conduct this dialogue, the FI students could ask the following questions to the BI students: (1) *did you enjoy participating in the creation of your digital story*; (2) *in your opinion, did the process of creating your digital storytelling help you to learn English*?; (3) *which of the two activities did you like best: the interactions on Tandem application or the creation of digital storytelling? Why*?; (4) *would you recommend Tandem application and the activity regarding the creation of digital storytelling? Why*?. The BI students, on their part, can ask the FI students these questions: (1) *how did you like our digital stories?*; (2) *are there any digital story that caught your attention the most?*; (3) *after watching*

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[25] Link to access this program: http://www.tilaproject.eu/
[26] Link to access this project: https://sites.google.com/site/tecolaproject/
[27] Link to access this project: https://www.unicollaboration.org/

our presentations, would you also like to participate in activities like these?; (4) *is there any cultural aspect addressed in our presentations that you would like to talk about?*.

Naturally, it is expected that the aforementioned questions will encourage dialogue in English drawing on the BI students' participation in the creation of digital storytelling and in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages. About this, O'Dowd (2013) states that telecollaboration enables the practice of the target language and dialogue, whereas Byram (1997) argues that it is essential to discuss topics, in intercultural contacts, under the perspective of *the other*.

Final Remarks

The objective of this study was to present a theoretical-methodological proposal, which involves the use of ICTs, for English classes in Brazilian educational institutions. The following research question was outlined in order to achieve this goal: how is it possible to use ICTs to promote oral and written English practice in Brazilian educational institutions?

In response to this question, we presented our theoretical-methodological proposal, which can be developed in two stages and over eleven weeks. The presentation of this proposal demonstrated that both interactions in the application Tandem Language Exchange: Speak & learn languages and the production of digital stories can facilitate not only the practice of writing and speaking in English, but also the meeting between people from different countries and cultures. This is in line with Schaefer and Luna (2018), in the sense that telecollaborative exchanges make room for a significant practice of foreign languages. Moreover, O'Dowd's (2003) study, Schaefer and Luna's (2016) study and Schaefer et al.'s study (2020), which were previously revised, revealed that tandem interactions made the intercultural encounter possible. Our theoretical-methodological proposal also seems to be in line with Castañeda's (2013, p. 56) study results, since through the creation of digital storytelling students were able to practice the foreign language "in an expressive manner and engaged in real-world communication".

With regard specifically to the production of digital storytelling, we recommend that in future activities and investigations particular attention should be paid to the teaching and learning of the target language as well as to the appropriate occasion to share significant events in the students' lives. From this angle, the process of language learning acquires greater relevance, since technology alone, according to Banaszewski (2002), is "always secondary to the storytelling" (p.

1). This also corroborates Almeida's (2014, p. 36) perspective that the use of ICTs is not characterized as "a guarantee of teaching quality"[28], but rather a way to promote student autonomy, diverse teaching strategies and the production of knowledge.

Concerning not only digital stories but also telecollaborative activities, we consider that culture cannot be separated from language. As the use of a language depends on the knowledge of cultural issues linked to linguistic phenomena, understanding the interactive and dialogical relationship between language and culture (SCHAEFER, 2019a) is vital for the construction of intercultural competence, defined by O'Dowd (2018, p. 2) as "the ability to navigate interactions comfortably with others from different cultural backgrounds".

Kenski (2011, p. 217) states that the development of pedagogical activities through ICTs implies "the possibility of transcending the physical and temporal limits of classrooms and reaching the people who want, are interested and are connected in the same desire to learn"[29]. In this regard, building on the presentation of our theoretical-methodological proposal, it can be argued that telecollaboration and the creation of digital storytelling promote linguistic exchanges between students who are geographically distant and who aim at learning other languages and cultures far beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

We agree with Kenski's (2013) view that today's students have a very peculiar profile. For the author, "a new type of student, fully incorporated in the digital environment and in a global world, arrives at schools and wants to find something that challenges her/him and makes her/him reflect and expand her/his knowledge and skills"[30](p. 96). In this respect, we suggest that methodological proposals that include ICTs, such as the proposal we presented in this study, have the potential to produce challenges that eventually lead to language learning, student motivation, collaborative work and reflection.

Last but not least, the idea of bringing ICTs closer to the context of language teaching in Brazilian educational institutions reconciles with the necessary agenda that has already been much discussed, namely, to ensure excellence regarding the existing technological resources. In this way, digital technologies are at the service of teachers, who can mediate the encounter between

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[28] Original quote: "uma garantia da qualidade de ensino".

[29] Original quote: "a possibilidade de transpor os limites físicos e temporais das salas de aula e alcançar as pessoas que querem, têm interesse e estão conectadas no mesmo desejo de aprender".

[30] Original quote: "um novo tipo de estudante, totalmente incorporado no entorno digital e em um mundo global, chega às escolas e deseja encontrar algo que os desafie e os faça refletir e ampliar seus conhecimentos e habilidades".

students, languages and cultures, incorporating her/his pedagogical action with real practices and contacts.

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