Digital technologies in didactic sequences for teacher professional development and for English language learning with children

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Abstract: In this paper, we investigate the context of Remote Emergency Teaching (RET), focusing on initial education of teachers in the supervised practicum context (FERREIRA; TONELLI, 2021; SANTOS; TONELLI, 2021) and teaching and learning in an English language classroom with children (EYL). Hence, based on the theoretical-methodological perspective of the Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI) (BRONCKART, 2007; MACHADO; BRONCKART, 2009), we proposed the collaborative planning and implementation of two didactic sequences (DS) for the teaching of textual genres with children during RET. We discuss in which aspects the activities mediated by digital technologies in the DS contributed to the initial education of teachers and for EYL. To that end, we conducted textual analyses of transcription excerpts of events of elaboration and teaching of the DS. We comprehend that the elaboration and implementation of the DS may be considered propelling forces for teacher development and learning of EYL for and in the classroom.

Keywords: Digital technologies; Didactic sequence; Teacher education; English with children.

Título: Tecnologias digitais em sequências didáticas para o desenvolvimento profissional docente e para a aprendizagem de inglês com crianças

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Resumo: Neste artigo, investigamos o contexto de Ensino Remoto Emergencial (ERE), enfocando a formação inicial de professoras na prática supervisionada de estágio (FERREIRA; TONELLI, 2021; SANTOS; TONELLI, 2021) e ensino e aprendizagem em uma sala de aula de língua inglesa com crianças (LIC). Assim, embasando-nos na perspectiva teórico-metodológica do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo (ISD) (BRONCKART, 2007; MACHADO; BRONCKART, 2009), propusemos a planificação colaborativa e a implementação de duas sequências didáticas (SD) para o ensino de gêneros textuais com crianças no período de ERE. Discutimos em quais aspectos as atividades mediadas por tecnologias digitais no dispositivo SD contribuíram para a formação inicial docente e para o ensino de LIC. Com esse intuito, conduzimos análises textuais de excertos de transcrições de momentos de planejamento e aplicação das SD. Como resultados, depreendemos que a elaboração e a implementação das SD podem ser consideradas fontes propulsoras para desenvolvimento docente e aprendizagem de LIC para e na sala de aula.

Palavras-chave: Tecnologias digitais; Sequência didática; Formação docente; Inglês com crianças.

Introduction

This article presents activities aimed at teaching English with young learners (TEYL) mediated by digital technologies integrated into two didactic sequences (DS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), some of this century's global health, social and educational challenges have emerged. One of them was the need to adapt face-to-face lessons to the remote environment. In the case of TEYL, some published experiences show us that not only the teaching of the language itself became a challenge but also the understanding of why and how to deal with teaching (ALBUQUERQUE; DALLAGNOL; SANTOS, 2021).

Approaching TEYL in the pandemic context meant reassessing and rethinking practices, examining the instruments which had been used for teaching thus far, and adapting them to cater to the needs of students, including those which surfaced in the emergency remote teaching (ERT) context (RABELLO, 2021; SANTOS, 2022), such as the demand to develop digital literacies (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2008; MARTIN, 2008). We found that these issues did not apply only to the field of TEYL but also to teacher educators and pre-service teachers who had to face the same transition to remote lessons and revisit their own practices (TONELLI; KAWACHI-FURLAN, 2021).

In this article, we intend to examine how the teaching instrument didactic sequence (DS) (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004) can contribute to TEYL and teacher education in remote teaching contexts. The concept of DS (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004; DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004; SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 1999) has been largely studied as a theoretical and methodological procedure for first and additional language teaching and learning, and it has also been used as an instrument in the TEYL (MAGIOLO, 2021; QUEROZ, 2016; RAO; TONELLI, 2022; REIS, 2018; SANTOS, 2022). According to the researchers from the group of Didacticism of Languages at UNIGE-Geneva/Switzerland (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004; DOLZ; NOVERRAZ;

SCHNEUWLY, 2004), who follow the methodological-theoretical perspective of the Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI) (BRONCKART, 2003), a DS refers to a set of planned classroom activities that aims to construct oral and written knowledge and focuses on a specific genre. Dolz and Schneuwly (2004, p. 50) define a DS as:

> [...] a sequence of teaching modules conjointly organized to improve a given language practice. Didactic sequences establish the first relationship between a project of *appropriation* of language practice and the *instruments* that facilitate this appropriation. From this perspective, they intend to confront learners with the historically constructed language practices, namely, textual genres, so that learners are given an opportunity to reconstruct these practices and, consequently, appropriate them (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004, p. 50, authors' emphasis, our translation[4]).

Thus, since a DS consists of the planning of units and activities on genre-based teaching, first and additional language teachers may take it as an important theoretical-methodological instrument for language teaching and learning.

This article is organized into six sections. In the next one, we approach the theoretical framework that orientates our discussion. In the third part, we present the methodology, including data generation, the research context, and its participants. In the subsequent section, we bring data analysis, and in the last part, we offer the final considerations.

Didactic sequence mediated by digital technologies as an instrument for TEYL

Considering the flexibility of the DS, it is possible to include activities that use digital technologies to enhance learners' experiences with the language and genre. More than creating an engaging atmosphere for learners to act in, digital technologies in the classroom, if used appropriately, may provide meaningful opportunities for communication and interaction among students in the classroom and in the world outside school (CHUN; SMITH; KERN, 2016). Consequently, educating new teachers to elaborate activities to promote learning associated with the meaningful use of digital technologies is essential. Aligned with the SDI theoretical-methodological framework, we believe that the DS is an instrument that can be used in the mediation of the process of learning and teaching both with young learners and pre-service teachers in this same context.

In this article, we present three activities as part of two DS in order to discuss their role as a mediating instrument – understood here in Vygotskian terms – both in TEYL and teacher education. We agree with Denardi (2017) when she proposes that the DS consists of a dialectic mechanism for language teaching and learning and also that

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[4] In the original: "[...] uma sequência de módulos de ensino, organizados conjuntamente para melhorar uma determinada prática de linguagem. As sequências didáticas instauram uma primeira relação entre um projeto de apropriação de uma prática de linguagem e os instrumentos que facilitam esta apropriação. Desse ponto de vista, elas buscam confrontar os alunos com práticas de linguagem historicamente construídas, os gêneros textuais, para dar-lhes a possibilidade de reconstruí-las e delas se apropriarem".

> [...] the procedure of a DS as a dialectic methodology of knowledge construction in the classroom can challenge, motivate, and guide the teacher's and students' oral and written language knowledge. From a teacher's perspective, developing and applying a DS plan could be understood as a theoretical-methodological and reflexive mechanism for teacher education, since it guides teachers' actions and makes them reflect about different aspects that constitute their linguistic and pedagogical practice, such as context, social aspects, ethics, linguistics etc. On the other hand, from a student's perspective, students can build language practices (reading, writing, listening and speaking practices) and produce intelligible English language, thus communicating and acting in society appropriately and, consequently, successfully (DENARDI, 2017, p. 180).

Taking into account the aforementioned research contexts in which the activities were carried out and the fact that both DS presented here were elaborated to be applied in the TEYL during the pandemic times, it is important to consider that, despite the fact that digital resources are part of daily activities for both teachers and students, the events we experienced showed that promoting learning in these contexts implied new challenges and new possibilities. In this sense, Tonelli and Kawachi-Furlan (2021, our translation[5]) point out that, from this conflicting situation, educators were abruptly displaced to a new teaching reality and "in many cases, in an unplanned way," having to conduct their teaching practice in haste. Due to its unprecedented nature, the ERE has caused several doubts, difficulties, and anxieties for teachers looking for ways to continue mediating the construction of new learning with their students. In addition to this new challenging scenario, the EYL teacher had to deal, still, with the multiple conflicts that permeate TEYL "which can hinder its planning and implementation, especially due to the lack of public policies" (TONELLI; KAWACHI-FURLAN, 2021, p. 84, our translation[6]).

As Marzari and Leffa (2013) state, language teachers' education has always been a complex activity and, in modern society, such complexity has been reinforced due to frequent changes and the diversity of didactic-pedagogical mediating instruments available, including those which are mobilized through digital technologies.

In other words, educating new teachers means they need to consider the dynamic nature of instruments and tools they will find and use in their future practices. We argue that we must consider not only how to help them prepare for that but also how to use these instruments critically in their contexts.

Pre-service teachers' education for language teaching work with children

According to Machado (2009), the teaching activity is a triadic system composed of: 1) the teacher (agent of transformation), 2) the student (agent to be transformed), and 3)

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[5] In the original: "em muitos casos, de modo não planejado".
[6] In the original: "os quais podem dificultar seu planejamento e sua implementação, sobretudo por conta da falta de políticas públicas".

transformation/mediation tools. In short, the teaching work consists of actions teachers undertake in different situations to provide students with the means to learn about the subject being approached and to develop specific skills. In order to do so, these professionals make use of instruments that mediate this interaction and are guided by prescriptions that regulate their actions in the teaching scenario (MACHADO, 2007).

In the context of TEYL, we observe that the initial and continuing education of teachers able to work in the teaching of EYL has been widely discussed, given the exponential growth of language teaching in the initial years of elementary school and early childhood education in both private and public contexts (SANTOS; TONELLI, 2021; TONELLI; AVILA, 2020).

As stated by Cirino and Denardi (2019, p. 220, our translation[7]), "the moment of internships is when the academic has contact with a real classroom and has the possibility of knowing at least the minimum of how a class works". Through this statement, we assert that one of the essential characteristics of the supervised teaching practicum is to allow pre-service teachers to experience and understand how their future work environment (the classroom) can be organized. Thus, Cirino and Denardi (2019) attest that the insertion of undergraduates in EYL teaching contexts during the supervised internship can prepare them for their future teaching practice or, in some cases, may even make student-teachers realize that they have no affinity with this public.

However, as well as Brito and Ribas (2018), we understand that the teaching practicum should not be conceived dichotomously as a moment in which theories are merely applied to practice but, rather, as "a space for training and possible discursive shifts, by promoting the revisiting of theories studied by the undergraduate and the re-signification of the teaching-learning processes of another language" (BRITO; RIBAS, 2018, p. 245, our translation[8]). From this perspective, we understand that, throughout the supervised teaching practice, the language teacher in initial training can attribute new meanings to the theoretical knowledge transposed to the context of the pedagogical practice of his/her work.

In the scenario of initial teacher education of children, the supervised internship is even more essential since it may be one of the only moments during the undergraduate course in which student-teachers will have contact with the activity of teaching languages to children. As Tonelli, Brossi and Furio (2018, p. 255, our translation[9]) state, "some objects that constitute the activity of the EYL teacher only become part of the action of the teacher in initial training after the practical and reflective experience of the internship".

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[7] In the original: "o momento dos estágios é aquele em que o acadêmico tem contato com uma sala de aula real e tem a possibilidade de conhecer pelo menos o mínimo do funcionamento de uma aula".

[8] In the original: "um espaço de formação e de possíveis deslocamentos discursivos, por promover a revisitação de teorias estudadas pelo licenciando e a ressignificação dos processos de ensino-aprendizagem de uma outra língua".

[9] In the original: "alguns objetos que constituem a atividade do professor de LIC apenas tornam-se parte do agir do professor em formação inicial após a experiência prática e reflexiva do estágio".

Digital technologies in language teaching with young learners

The intersection of language teaching and digital technologies is not a recent phenomenon. However, the role of technology in the language classroom continues to be studied in more recent research (ALTUN, 2015; BAPTISTA, 2014; BLAKE, 2013). Far from being only a means to entertain or reward students with access to digital games and interactive platforms, technological tools can contribute to fulfilling specific goals and develop skills which language learners must develop to be efficient communicators in the current society. As Chun, Smith, and Kern (2016, p. 66) explain,

> In addition to developing their grammar, vocabulary, and knowledge of pragmatics and genres, they also need to develop a disposition for paying critical attention to the culturally encoded connections among forms, contexts, meanings, and ideologies in a variety of material mediums (CHUN; SMITH; KERN, 2016, p. 66).

In other words, it is necessary that students have room for reflection and (de)construction of meanings in the English language classroom, expanding their possibilities of contact with and production of language to mediums beyond verbal texts. Thus, it is crucial for pre-service teachers to understand how to integrate theory and practice to foster opportunities for meaningful use of digital technologies (LEFFA *et al.*, 2020; FREITAS, 2010; MARZARI; LEFFA, 2013; SALES; FICHMANN, 2013; TELES *et al.*, 2020).

Chun, Smith, and Kern (2016) recommend that teachers identify a pedagogical purpose for the use of digital technologies in the classroom by i) defining clear teaching and learning aims; ii) recognizing resources available for students in linguistic, cultural, and instructional terms; and iii) consolidating strategies to articulate such resources with the aims defined. Lastly, the teacher needs to establish ways to verify whether students achieved the teaching and learning aims.

We argue that teaching through DS can be well aligned with these recommendations, as it embraces clear teaching and learning goals and offers resources to identify students' progress and needs (QUEROZ; STUTZ, 2016). Recent work published (SANTOS JUNIOR, 2020) regarding DS and digital technologies was devised even before the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, demonstrating that it is possible to plan a DS that incorporates meaningful pedagogical goals using digital technologies for YL. The author provides examples of DSs to be used with YL and goes on to recommend that future research investigate the potentialities and consequences of the use of digital technologies in the educational contexts transformed by the pandemic scenario:

> Now, during the pandemic of the novel coronavirus and its consequences for the world, education has awakened to the digital technologies and school is repositioned as a place of importance to society, with the evidence of society's inequalities and necessities, and its forced pedagogical and technological transformation, which still progresses slowly but with no way to turn back (SANTOS JUNIOR, 2020, p. 61, our translation[10]).

In addition to the needs that have surfaced due to the impact of the pandemic, we need to consider that incorporating technology in teaching[11] with children must not be ignored because of children's identities in society. If we understand that children are active social actors (JAMES; PROUT, 2003), we must bear in mind that:

> For the child, the digital is not a neutral or benign space, created by adults, where the child enters into it as a preformed environment. Instead, the digital is a space where young people have been and continue to be productively engaged in forming and shaping the contours of their experiences (COULTER, 2021, p. 26).

In other words, children are not only learning through digital technologies but also acting in the world through them. Hence, contact and interaction with them are part of their experiences and identities, and school must not be extraneous to this reality.

Methodology

In this article, we analyze two DS elaborated and applied in the same macro context, which was the language laboratory of a public university in the north of the state of Paraná, Brazil. The two DS were taught in English lessons with YL, in 2020 and 2021, in remote learning environments mediated by a platform for online meetings, Google Meet. Despite these similarities, each DS was applied to different groups of learners in two different contextual moments defined by their specific characteristics. In order to distinguish such particularities, we refer to these contexts as "micro contexts" and name them FRC (first research context), namely the DS designed and applied in 2020, and SRC (second research context), which corresponds to the DS designed and applied in 2021.

The data generated was recorded in video and included the meetings for collaborative planning of the DS (in the FRC) and the EYL lessons when the DS was designed and applied (in the SRC). All recordings were made under the formal consent of the participants involved in both contexts: two pre-service teachers from an English Teacher Education undergraduate course and eight young learners from an EYL course. The pre-service teachers and the young

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[10] In the original: "Agora, durante a pandemia do novo Coronavírus e suas consequências para o mundo, a Educação despertou para as tecnologias digitais e a escola se recolocou em seu lugar de importância para a sociedade, com a evidência de suas desigualdades e necessidades, e com a sua forçada transformação pedagógica e tecnológica, a qual ainda caminha a passos lentos, mas em um caminho sem retorno".

[11] In this article we choose to use "teaching with children" rather than "teaching to children" since from our perspective learners are a central part of such a process (MALTA, 2019; MALTA; KAWACHI-FURLAN, 2020; TONELLI; KAWACHI-FURLAN, 2021).

learners' parents signed an official document stating that they were aware of and allowed the researchers to keep a record of the meetings and lessons for future use of those in scientific research[12].

Regarding the FRC, two undergraduate students of the English Teacher Education undergraduate course of the previously mentioned university took part in this research. Due to our ethical commitments, we preserved the identity of the two teachers in initial training, thus ensuring the privacy of the participants. In this way, we identify them in this research by the fictitious names Ana and Carolina. Ana, a fourth-year student, had already worked as an English teacher with public kindergarten students (during her previous supervised internship experience) and with children in private schools. Similarly, Carolina, a third-year undergraduate student, also had previous professional experience since she had already worked as an English instructor at the university language center. However, her background was only with adult students.

In the FRC, our focus of attention was these students' pre-service education; hence our interest was directed at their process of planning a DS of the textual genre comic books. For this, weekly meetings were held with the student-teachers to collectively plan a DS around the comic book genre. In all, we had 23 meetings recorded and later transcribed, which took place from August 03 to December 07, 2020. Due to the socio-historical moment of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, as explained before, the meetings were held remotely through the Google Meet platform. Of this total number of planning meeting transcripts, we chose to analyze, in this paper, data from only two sessions of the collective elaboration of the DS.

In this sense, in the first part of the discussion of this paper, we focus on analyzing two excerpts from the transcript of the collaborative planning meetings 13 and 15, in which the group of teachers was engaged in planning the activities for the Initial Production (IP) of DS. For this purpose, initially, we describe the proposal of the selected activity and, subsequently, we perform a textual analysis of excerpts, according to SDI (MACHADO; BRONCKART, 2009) analytical procedures, in which the collective work (AMIGUES, 2004) discusses planning possibilities for this task. At this point, we seek to understand Ana and Carolina's efforts throughout the TEYL planning process through DS involving digital technologies and how this may have influenced their teacher education experience.

It is crucial to bear in mind that despite its increasing offering, TEYL demands specific teacher education, as demonstrated by Tutida (2016) and Tonelli, Brossi and Furio (2018). However, some undergraduate English language teaching courses have already incorporated disciplines to prepare language educators for the TEYL, which is also the case in the university where this investigation was carried out. It consists of a challenging activity that requires specific knowledge development (SANTOS; TONELLI, 2021; SANTOS, 2022). From this point of view, in this research, we see the experience of developing teaching devices, such as the DS,

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[12] Research approved by the Ethics Committee on Research Involving Humans from the State University of Londrina, approval number: 33755020.3.0000.5231. This article is part of what has been developed by the research group FELICE (CAPES/ CNPq) whose members we thank for their invaluable contributions.

within the supervised teaching practicum in TEYL as a significant experience for the initial education of teachers since this experience can contribute to student-teachers to have the opportunity to develop specific knowledge of their profession throughout this experience, especially in relation to the new demands of TEYL, such as the use of digital technologies.

As for the SRC, the eight YL participants were between the ages of eight and twelve. They had reasonable control of the Portuguese language, both written and spoken and were enrolled in regular schools. Their lessons at the language laboratory were online and synchronous through Google Meet and took place for fifteen weeks, with classes once a week, each lasting one hour and forty minutes. In the SRC, our research interest was directed at the children's learning, even though pre-service teachers also taught the lessons during initial training. The DS applied in this group of YL focused on the textual genre of poetry. The activities were planned according to the teachable dimensions identified and organized by Rao and Tonelli (2022) upon analyses of the poems published in the book *Poetry for Kids: Emily Dickinson*. The DS was divided into four modules and included the presentation of the genre, a simplified production of two poems, the initial production (IP) of original poems, and the students' final production of original poems.

Our material selection was carried out upon transcribing the classes organizing of activities linked to the DS. We examined the objectives of each activity and the tools used to perform them. Considering that this paper aims to demonstrate how digital technologies can be allied to the teaching of English with YL using DS, our criteria for the selection of activities to be analyzed were: i) activities that relied solely on the use of technological tools to be performed, that is, they would not keep their main features if they were to be adapted and used in a face-to-face environment; ii) activities that employed digital technologies in such a way that interfered in the didactic transposition of knowledge, for instance, considering the features of the genre which were modified by the remote context in which they were approached.

By applying these criteria, we narrowed down our material of analyses to two activities: the first is from the third module of the DS, which included work on figurative language and figures of speech; and the second is the students' final project, which comprises all of their poems compiled in e-book format. In order to preserve the participants' identities, we also use fictitious names to refer to them. The two pre-service teachers who conducted the activities analyzed were Fernanda and Mariana, and the students who participated with them were codenamed André, Danilo, Eduardo, and Felipe.

We approached and interpreted the data from the SRC through a multimodal analysis (LIBERALI; TOQUETÃO, 2022). This methodological framework comprehends the multimodal productions of individuals as a way to signify and materialize activities – understood here in the terms of Engestrom (1987). Therefore, in the next section of this paper, we analyze the respective micro contexts of our research by bringing together both verbal, written text, and visual digital productions.

Analysis

For the purposes of this article, we first describe the activities that demanded the use of digital platforms for both DS. Following the criteria previously presented, we bring one activity from the FRC; and two activities from the SRC with their respective visual results. We aim to discuss and reflect upon their role in teacher's development and student's learning guided by textual genres within the TEYL scope. In order to identify textual marks present in the interactions established during the moments when the DS were elaborated – in the case of FRC – and during the English classes – in the case of SRC – we bring excerpts of the transcriptions to allow us a more accurate analysis.

Didactic Sequence and digital technologies in pre-service English teacher's education

The first activity we focus on in this article is the IP of the DS planned in the FRC. In this stage of the DS, students are asked to produce a first version of the text, considering the proposal suggested by the teacher in the situation presented. In line with Dolz, Noverraz, and Schneuwly (2004), we emphasize that the IP has a valuable role since this first text allows students to reveal to teachers their representations about the genre being taught, thus acting as a regulatory instrument. Taking the IP role into consideration, the group of teachers concentrated their efforts on planning the implementation stage of the IP of the comics genre with the children. However, given the adherence to ER teaching, it became necessary to think about alternatives to produce the learners' texts using technological resources that mediate the learning environment.

From this perspective and given the pandemic scenario that surrounded this moment of the DS elaboration, the teachers' group chose to propose the following class project: to produce a comic book about a character who is looking for means to cheer up a family member or a friend who is feeling sad/discouraged due to the social isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. So, based on the principle of collaborative lesson planning, during the meetings, the teachers concluded that in order to be able to make the learning process meaningful, especially in the remote context, one of the main challenges would be to find a digital platform that would suit the students' needs and realities. To this end, thinking about a digital platform on which children could write their initial versions of the comic during the remote lessons of the DS implementation became essential. However, bearing in mind that few undergraduate courses focus on educating English teachers about TEYL, it is possible to identify that this decision of which digital platform to use to produce the comics textual genre was an important conflict that emerged during the DS conception. Thus, after several moments of collective reflection on this topic, the Pixton[13] website was selected as the most appropriate resource for contextual teaching and learning needs.

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[13] Pixton is a virtual platform that allows the free creation of comics by students, teachers and the community at large.

In this sense, the first excerpt analyzed is part of the planning meeting 13, which occurred on October 26, 2020, precisely when the group of teachers was reflecting on the conflicts of the lessons of implementation of the IP, in which students had tried to produce their comics book. In view of this topic, excerpt 1 illustrates the technological difficulties perceived by the teachers by using the digital resource previously mentioned (Pixton website).

Table 1 – Excerpt 1: Technological difficulties

	Original excerpt in Portuguese	English translated version
1 2 3	**PP:** Porque a gente sabe que o problema maior não é produzir uma HQ... qual que é o problema maior deles, que vocês viram?	**RT:** Because we know that the biggest problem is not producing a comic book... What is their biggest problem that you have noticed?
4 5 6	**Ana:** De fazer login, de... essas coisas. Mas de fazer mesmo não, eles são espertos pra isso. Só de fazer login dá mais problema.	**Ana:** Ana: To login, to... that kind of thing. But not actually doing it, they are smart for this. Just to login gives more problems.
7 8	**PP:** (...) parece que o problema nosso tá sendo o site, a...	**RT:** (...) apparently our problem is the website, the...
9	**Ana:** É...	**Ana:** Yeah...
10	**PP**: Não é nem o gênero, olha só!	**RT:** It's not the genre, look at that!
11	**Ana:** Aham...	**Ana**: Yeah...
12 13 14	**PP:** É um problema que a gente tá tendo porque a gente tá nesse contexto de ensino remoto, né, então...	**RT:** It's a problem we're facing because we're in this remote teaching context, right, so...
15 16	**Ana:** Exato. A gente não tá lá pra fazer o login pra eles, essas coisas...	**Ana:** Exactly. We're not there to log them in, that kind of thing...
17	[[...]]	[[...]]
18 19	**PP:** É... se a gente estivesse no ensino presencial tudo ia ser diferente, né?	**RT:** Yeah... If we were in classroom teaching, everything would be different, right?

Source: the authors.

At the beginning of excerpt 1, through the person mark 'we' (line 1), we can verify that the researcher-teacher (RT) starts the moment of reflexivity about the difficulties experienced during the SD classes, including herself in the enunciation and demonstrating to integrate the collective work. Later, we also notice that she refers to what she considers to be the 'biggest problem' (line 3) of the classes and, suddenly, she asks the student-teachers again (what is their biggest problem that you have noticed?), encouraging their participation in the reflective process and giving space for Ana and Carolina to evaluate the discussed theme.

On this issue, Ana states that the conflict – the 'problem' (line 7) – is centralized in the action of 'login' (line 7), reporting one of the difficulties that emerged with the use of digital tools that became necessary in the context of ERT: the management of these resources for

teaching and learning. However, as Ferraz and Ferreira (2020, p. 03, our translation[14]) point out, "teachers and students are not familiar with technological equipment and digital platforms, which require a minimum preparation for their basic domain", what can be a factor that generates such conflicting situations in contexts of planning and implementation of didactic activities in the remote environment. In this sense, through the verbalization of the teacher in initial training, we verify the mobilization of the conflicting dimension of a technological nature (SANTOS, 2022) that encompasses the planning of the DS in a social-historical context demarcated by adherence to ERT.

According to Ana, the students 'are smart for this' (lines 6 and 7), attributing positive characteristics to the children and mentioning, through the demonstrative pronoun 'this', that there are no difficulties related to the production of the comics textual genre itself, only in handling the website selected for the elaboration of the texts. In this same perspective, RT restates the student-teacher's statement ' It's not the genre' (line 11), ratifying the fact that the chosen textual genre – comics – is not a 'problem' for them, but rather the students' skills of using the tools available in the selected platform for its elaboration. Moreover, we notice that the teacher educator refers to the difficulty experienced through the noun 'problem', characterizing this situation as 'difficult'. Thus, it is possible to infer that she considers that the reported conflict has been conditioned entirely from the adherence to ERT (because we're in this remote teaching context), reiterating the statement of Machado and Bronckart (2009) that the context of action is crucial for the teaching work.

Next, we present the second excerpt, extracted from planning meeting 15, which occurred on November 6, 2020, when the group of teachers was engaged in reflexivity about the implementation lessons of DS, more specifically, the IP of the comic book genre. At this point, it is important to emphasize that the moments of reflexivity about the teaching performance were crucial points for the planning moments of new steps of the DS since such reflections allowed the group of teachers to find ways of acting more adequately to the conditions required by the context. From this perspective, we understand that excerpt 2 represents a new moment of reflexivity about the difficulties that permeated the planning of teaching in a scenario of adherence to the ERT.

Table 2 – Excerpt 2: Reflexivity about difficulties

	Original excerpt in Portuguese	**English translated version**
1 2 3 4 5	**PP:** Então eu queria ver com vocês o que vocês sentiram em relação à aula? Como que vocês… quais foram as dificuldades que vocês acham que surgiram no meio do caminho? Queria ouvir um pouquinho de vocês, podem	**RT:** So I would like to see with you how you felt about the class? How did you… what were the difficulties that you consider that arose along the way? I would like to hear a little bit from you, can you tell me what you felt,

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[14] In the original: "professores e alunos não estão familiarizados com os equipamentos tecnológicos e com as plataformas digitais, que exigem uma preparação mínima para seu domínio básico".

6	falar o que vocês acharam, por favor…	please… <participants stay in silence> Is there
7	<participantes ficam em silêncio> Teve algo	anything that you felt was very hard to do?
8	que vocês acharam que foi muito difícil de	**Ana:** I don't think it was that difficult to do the
9	fazer?	modules, I think it was just their difficulty that
10	**Ana:** Não… é… Acho que não foi assim difícil	got in the way a little, which is normal to
11	de fazer os módulos, acho que é só a	happen…
12	dificuldade deles que atrapalhou um pouco,	**Carolina:** Yes. For example, B1 hadn't
13	né, que é normal acontecer…	watched any tutorials on how to log into
14	**Carolina:** É. Por exemplo, o B1 não tinha	Pixton yet, so I had to explain everything to
15	assistido ainda nenhum tutorial de como	him and he took his time because he couldn't
16	entrar no Pixton, então eu tava tendo que	login. Then I think it took him almost half an
17	explicar pra ele tudo e ele demorou porque	hour to get the login and to create the
18	não conseguia fazer o login. Daí acho que ele	character so he could start making his comic.
19	demorou quase meia hora pra conseguir fazer	So I guess the problem is actually a technical
20	o login e o personagem pra daí começar a	problem. G1 and B2 are doing very well,
21	fazer o quadrinho dele. Então acho que o	because they had already made a whole
22	problema mesmo é o problema técnico. A G1	comic book before the class last week… So I
23	e o B2 estão indo super bem, porque eles já	think the problem is that they have to learn
24	tinham até feito um gibi inteiro antes da aula,	how to use the Pixton. Only.
25	semana passada… Então eu acho que o	**RT:** It is more regarding the tool, it seems… as
26	problema mesmo é eles conseguirem	we have been saying, right… It seems that
27	aprender certinho como mexe no Pixton. Só.	they have more difficulty in learning how to
28	**PP:** É mais em relação à ferramenta, parece…	use the site than in making the comic itself,
29	do que a gente vem falando, né… parece que	right?
30	eles têm mais dificuldade em aprender a	**Carolina:** Yes, I think that this is the biggest
31	mexer no site do que fazer o quadrinho	difficulty.
32	mesmo, né?	
33	**Carolina:** Sim, eu acho que a dificuldade maior	
34	é essa.	

Source: the authors.

Initially, we notice that RT addresses questions about the perception of the student-teachers about the implementation of the DS: 'how you felt about the class?' (lines 1 and 2), 'what were the difficulties that you consider that arose along the way?' (lines 2 to 4) and 'Is there anything that you felt was very hard to do?' (lines 6 to 8). Through the highlighted passages, we can see that the teacher trainer seeks to promote Ana's and Carolina's verbalization in the process of reflexivity about TEYL practice with DS. For this purpose, we observe that RT situates her enunciation in an individual instance, demarcated by the person index 'I' and by the inflection of the modal auxiliary verb 'would' plus the main verb 'like' to express her desire of listening to teachers' opinion about the classes that have already taken place. Moreover, RT also refers to the teachers in initial training through the pronoun 'you', directing her speech explicitly to the student-teachers.

In answering the reflective questions proposed by RT, Ana states that she does not believe that the task of planning the activities that make up the DS was demanding (I don't think it was that difficult to do the modules – lines 10 and 11), using logical (I don't think) and appreciative (it was that difficult) modalizations, respectively, to express her judgment about the questioning. However, through the repetition of the logical modalization 'I don't think' and 'I think', we observe that the teacher in initial training introduces the only factor considered by her as conflicting: 'just their difficulty that got in the way a little' (line 11 and 12). At this point, we emphasize that Ana verbalizes her dissatisfaction with the children's performance as a complicating factor for her classes. However, it is not possible to have access to the specifics of this context since she does not stick to this report in her enunciation.

In sequence, in a complementary way to Ana's speech, we observe that Carolina agrees with the student-teacher, reporting in more detail the conflicting situation they experienced in the DS implementation classes. According to the pre-service teacher, student B1 'hadn't watched any tutorials[15] on how to log into Pixton yet,' (lines 13 to 15), which hindered his performance at the moment reserved for handling the selected platform for the work. As a consequence of this behavior, Ana portrays a subsequent difficulty of the student, using a pragmatic modalization for that: 'he took his time because he couldn't log in' (lines 16 to 17). Carolina underlines her point of view explicitly: 'So I guess the problem is actually a technical problem' (lines 20 to 21) and 'So I think the problem is that they have to learn how to use the Pixton. Only' (lines 23 to 25).

Thus, in the face of the analyzed enunciations, we can see that the student-teacher repeats, several times, the noun 'problem' to refer to the conflict that is affecting the conduct of EYL classes in the Language Lab: the difficulty on the part of children, to handle digital platforms. Given the above, we consider that the enunciation of the teacher in initial training puts in evidence the students' lack of preparation to deal with and handle digital devices and platforms, in agreement with the findings of Ferraz and Ferreira (2020) and Albuquerque, Dallagnol, and Santos (2020).

In light of the considerations made so far, we visualize that the collective work conceives the children's difficulties in handling digital platforms as one of the main factors that generate conflicts for their actions. As it is possible to notice, the adversities experienced by the teachers in initial training are relevant to the point of being mentioned throughout the DS planning process. In this way, we state that excerpt 2 evidently portrays the mobilization of the conflict dimension of technological nature (SANTOS, 2022), which we categorized from the process of planning didactic instruments in the context of ERT, in which new conflicts of the teaching work have emerged.

Given the above analysis, the two excerpts presented here help us to demonstrate how the collective planning of a didactic instrument, such as DS, in a scenario of ERT and the

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[15] Given the students' difficulty in handling the Pixton website, on which the comic was being made, the student-teachers provided access to videos with tutorials on how to access the platform, which should have been watched before the classes, as an asynchronous activity.

use of technological resources can be a springboard for teacher development. As we are trying to portray in this article, the planning practice of the DS was centered on reflexivity about the acceptability and appropriateness of teaching throughout the implementation of the planned activities. From this perspective, we noticed that such moments of interaction among the group, in which conflicts emerged and were shared, have allowed student-teachers to think of suitable solutions in order to provide a better TEYL experience through the use of digital resources. In this way, we believe that the experience of the supervised practicum in ERT may have prepared, as much as possible, the EYL teachers in initial training to act in their later work environments, in which technological resources have been progressively more present and useful for teaching.

Didactic Sequence and digital technologies in the TEYL

In the SRC, the first activity analyzed integrates part of the third module of the DS (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004). By teaching this module, we focused on deepening students' understanding of figurative language and figures of speech without worrying about teaching the terms or differentiating each figure. The guiding objective during this module was to help students understand the function of figurative language in poetry, articulated with expressions from the poems read in class. We present a consolidation activity through which we encouraged using digital technology instruments to mediate the building of students' own interpretations of meaning regarding expressions we explored in the English language.

We used a JamBoard file to add small boxes with idiomatic expressions we chose to discuss. We explained to students that they would choose one expression each and add their names to their half of the JamBoard slide so that everyone would illustrate a different expression. We sent the link to the file to students, and they chose the expression they preferred, adding their names to the respective slides. We explained to them that they had to read the expression and work on the way to convey what they thought it meant or how they would interpret it in a literal way. They were allowed to use tools for free drawing, painting, and retrieving pictures from the internet. It is important to highlight that students were familiar with JamBoard and its resources because we had previously used it in several activities. Finally, when they finished the activity, the teachers opened the file and asked individual students to comment on their productions, focusing on the meanings of the expressions.

By analyzing the results of the activity, we identify that all students used resources from the internet to illustrate their chosen expressions. All productions contain images retrieved from online sources, which students could access through Google Images. Such evidence may indicate that the activity provided students with the opportunity to not only look for images in the digital format but also to assess and choose the images that would work most effectively to convey the meanings they wanted and that they succeeded in doing so.

In André and Danilo's production (reproduced in Picture 2 in this paper), we can observe that besides choosing images, the students combined different samples of them to compose a new picture, and in Felipe's and Eduardo's productions (reproduced in Picture 1 and Picture 3 in this paper), students articulated digital images with free hand drawing or writing, using these resources as complements of each other in their building of meanings.

More specifically, in Picture 1, we verify that Felipe adds written text to comment on his chosen expression: "the 'he is a shining star' mean that the thing is really good or very famous, a type of adjective! but for being a funny image, I made this". Despite the non-standard grammar used, the student can communicate how he understood the function of the expression to describe people ("a type of adjective"). Besides, the decisions he made to compose the illustration, combining the representation of a star with the drawing of a body, made it a "funny image". We believe that the ludic aspect of teaching and learning includes fostering opportunities for students to have fun while producing language, even if it is not verbal, written or spoken. The potential of producing visual language with semiotic elements must be explored to promote meaningful learning with children. When it comes to the verbal output of students, we can verify, transcribed in Table 3, that Felipe was able to explain, also in verbal spoken language, the meaning of the expression he illustrated and how he combined drawing and image (line 6). Even though he did not mention it and the teachers did not ask further about it, Felipe's production included information about the image he chose to include, showing that his selection was not random but justified by the fact that the star he chose was the biggest star known by then. We also argue that providing opportunities for students to work with meaningful elements of the real world contributes to a deeper appropriation of different aspects of language, as we understand was the case in Felipe's production.

Picture 1 – Felipe's production
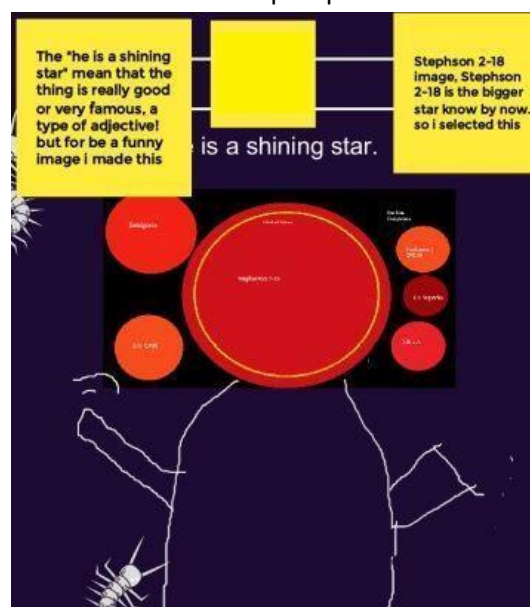
Source: the authors.

Table 3 – Commentary on Felipe's production

	Original excerpt in Portuguese	English translated version
1	**Fernanda:** E agora Felipe explica o seu	**Fernanda:** And now Felipe, explain yours
2	**Felipe:** My one is he is a shining star, that I	**Felipe:** My one is he is a shining star, that I think
3	think mean [pronouncing "men"] like "oh	mean [pronouncing "men"] like "oh you're
4	you're good, you're famous" and so how I did	good, you're famous" and so how I
5	this, I get a star image, put it in and drawing a	did this, I get a star image, put it in and drawing
6	body and it is working, so, whatever	a body and it is working, so, whatever
7	**Fernanda:** Yes!	**Fernanda:** Yes!
8	**Mariana:** Yes, it's very nice	**Mariana:** Yes, it's very nice
9	**Fernanda:** It's a very important person, he is a	**Fernanda:** It's a very important person, he is a
10	shining star, a very important person, e	shining star, a very important person, and the
11	o próximo, ai eu amei o próximo	next, oh I loved the next

Source: the authors.

Analyzing André and Danilo's production (Picture 2), we notice the absence of free hand drawing and the prevalence of digital images organized to make a picture of a park or garden. The students added the image of grass to the bottom of the slide, and the image of a tree right above it, together with multiple pictures of drops in the upper and middle parts of the space. It is important to point out how digital resources were used to represent the idea of "rain". Students slightly altered the size of the drops of rainwater they decided to include and added the images of cats and dogs, also in different sizes, turning them upside down as it was meant to represent "raining cats and dogs". Their knowledge of the digital resource chosen was sufficient to convey this representation, assembling the images chosen in a meaningful picture. Although André and Danilo's representation of the idiom was literal, André explained to the teacher that he understood it was a metaphor (see Table 4, line 3) and reflected on its meaning (see Table 5, lines 5 and 6). We can infer that his understanding of "raining cats and dogs" as "soft rain" is a result of his concept of cats and dogs as "soft" animals, relying on the physical sensation one experiences when touching these animals. Fernanda, the teacher, clarifies the idea and explains that the idiom refers to "a lot of water" (line 9). Mariana exemplifies the idea with a real-life event: "like this weekend" (line 11).

Picture 2 – André and Danilo's production

Sources: the authors.

Table 4 – Commentary on André and Danilo's production

	Original excerpt in Portuguese	English translated version
1	**Mariana:** E vocês, André e Danilo, explica pra	**Mariana:** And you, André and Danilo, explain
2	gente	to us
3	**André:** Eu nunca ouvi essa metáfora, mas é,	**André:** I've never seen this metaphor,
4	tá chovendo cachorro e gato, eu acho que é	but yes, it's raining cats and dogs, I
5	quando não é uma chuva grossa, é uma	think it's when it's not
6	chuva macia, não sei	heavy rain, it's soft rain, I don't know
7	**Fernanda:** Na verdade é o oposto disso, it's	**Fernanda:** In fact, it's the opposite of this, it's
8	raining cats and dogs, it's raining a lot! A lot	raining cats and dogs, it's raining a lot! A lot of
9	of water	water
10	**Mariana:** Like this weekend, esse final de	**Mariana:** Like this weekend, this weekend
11	semana	**André:** Ah, I got it!
12	**André:** Ah, entendi!	

Source: the authors.

The third and last production we analyze from this activity is Eduardo's "the classroom was a zoo". Eduardo overlapped the image of the entrance of a zoo with the photo of a boy sitting at a table and looking ahead. The student used free hand drawing tools to write "que legal prof" (how cool, teacher) over the picture of the zoo. He also doodled lines around the face of the boy in the picture and used the text box tool to add a word in vertical position: "o cleitin", ("Hey, Cleitin). In the interaction that Eduardo had with Fernanda, it is not possible to identify if he had comprehended the idea of "zoo" to talk about a mess, as Felipe was able to explain (Table 5, line 13). When the teacher asks him what the expression means, Eduardo points out that he added the picture of the boy over the zoo picture, which might indicate

that, even though he said it was "a class in the zoo" (line 2), he understood it was not literally there. Eduardo also incorporated elements of the ER teaching setting into his production, in which the vertical letters in his image represent a chat box interaction (lines 2 and 3). Fernanda agrees that random interactions in the chat box happen sometimes. We may infer that this new representation of students misbehaving in class was directly affected by the online scenario of teaching and learning that students were experiencing. Hence, Eduardo chose to represent a chat box spam message rather than other face-to-face classroom representations of misbehavior. Once again, we argue that the activity allowed students to use and express their real-life experiences to complete the given activity, using digital tools to consolidate their learning more meaningfully.

Picture 3 – Eduardo's production
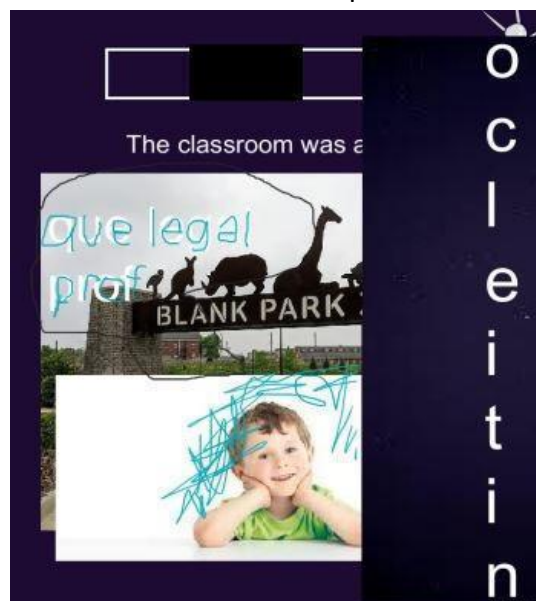
Source: the authors.

Table 5 – Commentary on Eduardo's production

	Original excerpt in Portuguese	English translated version
1	**Eduardo:** The classroom was a zoo, uma aula	**Eduardo:** The classroom was a zoo, a
2	no zoológico, e aí no chat da aula tá "ô	class in the zoo, and then in the chat of the
3	cleitin", "ô cleitin, beleza?"	class "hey, Cleitin", "hey, Cleitin, what's up?"
4	**Fernanda:** Ele fez o chat, é isso que acontece	**Fernanda:** He made the chatbox, that's what
5	no chat de vez em quando mesmo [laughing]	happens in the chatbox sometimes indeed
6	**Mariana:** E o que quer dizer, the classroom	[laughing]
7	was a zoo?	**Mariana:** And what does that mean, the
8	**Eduardo:** É que eu coloquei embaixo, é	classroom was a zoo?
9	primeiro eu coloquei a foto de um zoo e aí o	**Eduardo:** I put it below, first I put a photo of
10	menininho por cima	the zoo and then

11	**Fernanda:** O Felipe colocou ali no chat "I	the little boy over it
12	think the classroom was a zoo means the	**Fernanda:** Felipe wrote on the chatbox that "I
13	classroom was very loud", yes, very loud, is a	think the classroom was a zoo means the
14	mess, confusion	classroom was very loud", yes, very loud, a
15		mess, confusion

Source: the authors.

The second activity we analyzed was the students' final project, which was to be put together as a class project in the format of an e-book of poetry. This activity is the outcome of the DS as a whole, but the e-book format itself was a defining factor when choosing instruments for students' final productions of poems and its sharing. The class project e-book consisted of i) a cover made collectively on a platform for online design named Canva; ii) a text of introduction to the book, written by the second author of this article, who was responsible for that micro context research; iii) a table of contents of the book; iv) the illustrated poems produced by students in the final production of the DS; v) a section named "About the authors", containing short autobiographies and self-portraits written and drawn by students themselves in one of the phases of application of the DS. As stated, the cover, the mini autobiographies, and the illustrations that composed the book were all made digitally with the participation of the students. The introduction and table of contents were designed by the second author of this article and organized on Issuu, an online platform for publishing digital materials such as books, magazines, and brochures.

According to the SDI theoretical framework, teaching by DS includes choosing appropriate examples of the genre and exploring how students will, at the end of the DS application, spread their productions in and outside the classroom. For that reason, we argue that the work with digital tools was a decisive factor in the work with the DS, as we agreed with students from the beginning that we would produce an e-book. For this reason, not only did we teach poetry and English, but we also taught students about e-books, how to navigate them, how to read them, and the ways in which they were different from printed books. This work was not concentrated on a single lesson or phase of DS; rather, it permeated its elaboration and application. Finally, by the end of the DS lessons, the e-book was shared online with students, and they were encouraged to share it with their friends and family. This conclusion of the work with the DS is crucial because it fulfills the ultimate purpose of teaching the genre, which is to foster students' appropriation of it to the extent that they can produce it and spread it outside the classroom, consolidating the experience meaningfully.

Considering that the global pandemic scenario is/was still a striking reality in our country and city, the most effective way to share students' productions and experiences with the genre was to publish the e-book online. Still, we believe there is more to the work with digital technologies than only fostering opportunities for students to act in the world in social-distance ER contexts. It is part of our society to produce, consume and share digitally, and our students must be prepared to know how to be part of that in a critical, informed way.

Final considerations

In this article, we aimed to discuss the role of activities designed to be inserted in two DS with the purpose of TEYL. Regarding the first DS (FRC), we aimed to identify the place of activities mediated by digital technologies in order to promote teacher development within the context of TEYL using a DS. As for the second DS (SRC), the objective was to look at the examples of activities presented to reflect upon the ones which, besides the knowledge of the genre itself, also demanded knowing how to use digital technologies to foster the learning of the language by YL.

Following the theoretical-methodological framework that guided this investigation, the SDI, it is possible to state that the activities inserted in the DS promoted a broader understanding of the possibilities to TEYL using textual genre and given the pandemic context, showed the place and the role of digital technologies in the referred teaching context. In this sense, the didactic device accomplished its purpose as a meditation tool both in the teacher's development and in the English learning process involving the children.

As a theoretical framework, the SDI has its roots in the Vygotskian principles, mainly regarding the place and importance of mediator instruments. In this sense, it is also plausible to consider that the activities inserted in both DS promoted the teacher's development and the English language learning by the YL. Considering that the activities analyzed in this article involved not only the knowledge of the textual genres explored – comics and poetry – but also the usage of digital technologies, the data presented give us evidence that these kinds of activities may assume a central role in both the teaching and learning process.

As we intended to demonstrate in this article, although the usage of DS in English language teaching has been widely used in Brazil, we still lack investigations that show how this didactic device can be used in the TEYL, including activities that privilege digital resources since they are part of people's lives and should be brought to the educational field with clear didactic purposes. In terms of teaching, data showed in the FRC that the participants experienced moments of conflicts and uncertainties, which, from a sociointeractionist perspective, provide human development. As for the SRC, it seems reasonable to state that the students acted upon the digital activities inserted in the DS, which provided them with opportunities to expand their knowledge of the genre itself and allowed them to express their views and understandings instigated by the genre and the usage of digital technologies.

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