

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE- RELATED DIGITAL STORYTELLING

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The educational use of digital storytelling can put students at the centre of teaching, effectively engaging them to dynamically express their ideas, in technology integration and project-based learning. Digital storytelling can be the basis for meaningful learning and authentic creations, for personal deepening in cognitive objects and concepts, for the transmission of messages and practices. It is the didactic digital tool for active engagement and connection of experiences and emotions with knowledge. The present case study determines the perception and attitude of undergraduate students about digital storytelling in the foreign language. We were interested in seeing if digital storytelling enhances communication skills in a foreign language if the learners consider it an effective educational tool and to what extent our students can create their own stories. The findings confirm that digital storytelling enhances the authenticity of communication and activities, engages in a variety of skills and types of literacy, improves teaching practices, the interest in foreign language learning, communication skills, pronunciation, creativity, and expressiveness reading.*

## **KEYWORDS**

*Digital storytelling, foreign language education, academic environment.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Our era is characterized by the use of technology in the field of education to develop the digital literacies of learners, through innovative applications in the educational process and through personal expression and communication. The practice of storytelling with sounds and images, with imagination and creativity, with emotions and information, with speech and writing, can offer an essential environment of authentic, experiential learning and engagement, deepen and critical thinking or research, even obtain feedback from peers, design storyboards, digitize the story elements, and present the product to an audience [1]. Digital Storytelling (DS) projects are categorized as project-based instruction that utilizes interdisciplinary technology by incorporating writing, reading, drama, technology [2]. A digital story can act as a bridge between existing and new knowledge, can make content abstract or demanding, conceptually more comprehensible [3]. Authenticity in DS develops students' ability to create and perform authentic tasks; ICT provides authenticity and enhance their willingness to learn the target language [4]. Recent academic articles, also, focuses on DS as an emerging research methodology increasingly used to gather qualitative data [5].

DS has been increasingly used as a language learning tool [6], and research studies have shown it to be effective in enhancing the development of language skills as well as related language learning skills, such as autonomy, collaboration, problem-solving skills, and research [7], combining different types of literacy [8]. DS is a good way to engage students in both traditional

and innovative ways of telling a story, combining some basic multimedia tools with skills (like research, writing, presentation, technology, interview, interpersonal, problem-solving, and assessment skills) or develop interpersonal qualities (teamwork, critical thought, self-evaluation) [9], [10]. We should also see how students can use digital technology to produce and share comprehension content, whether in the student's native language or a second language [11].

Project based learning is described as an important learning experience which engage the participants in active learning, strengthen their digital literacy, focusing on applying and reflecting knowledge [12], while the teachers take on the role of facilitator rather than lecturer to assist the understanding and the connection of the concepts through scaffolding information, and to encourage reflection on the teaching process [13]. It can be “an added value for teaching and learning and that pupils acquire the competence to use digital technologies appropriately in their working lives” [14].

Personal digital stories help the students to utilize the multitude of their cognitive processes that underpin learning [15]. The learner's social identity is strongly implicated in the process of developing literacy [16]. Learners of different learning styles can be engaged in their own learning process, develop both multimedia and communication skills [17], increase their understanding of content, and cater for their multiple intelligence [18], [19]. The DS emphasizes on as much about the process as on the product [20].

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Most of the literature dealing with DS for educational purposes considers it as a main tool integrated in technology, while it should be also considered a tool or method/ activity to enhance second language learning. Innovative activities in foreign language can provide a purposeful context, so the language to be practiced [21]. In some surveys was found that digital stories can advance self-authoring, cognitive development, identity construction or teach valuable technical skills and sharpen critical thinking skills [22], [23], [24], students' motivation to read, connection with the content of the stories and better understanding due to its multimodal elements [25], holistic learning, through communication, autonomy, creative thinking, and original ideas [26].

Research also shows that students were motivated to improve their overall language skills, as well as their creativity and technical skills [27]. Written production, foreign language reading skills, and the correlation of concepts and emotions were enhanced [28], as well as effective motivation for oral speech production [29], [30], and a fruitful communication [31]. A positive attitude towards the whole process of language learning is gained and the repetition involves acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, higher participation in the storytelling, realization of how the foreign language sounds, so, they tend to imitate what they hear. Obviously, they become aware of the intonation, rhyme, and pronunciation [32].

Using DS in education can provide more variation than traditional methods in current practice [33]; can personalize learning experience; can make explanation or the practicing of certain topics more compelling; can create real life situations in an easy and cheaper way; and can improve the involvement of students in the process of learning. Many studies, also, claim that DS tools can improve L2 writing [24], [31], [34], [35], [36], [37], [38]. There was a comparison in Balaman's project [31] on the effects of DS on L2 writing with the conventional way of L2 writing with 43 university-level students (control -experimental group). He concludes that although both types are influential in improving L2 writing, L2 writing instruction with digital tools is more effective. Hafner [16] with his analysis shows that the students faced the challenge of writing for an authentic audience. They used several ways and appropriate speech identity in their efforts to attract their audience. Moreover, for the purposes of composition in a second or

foreign language, it seems essential to consider new forms of representation (e.g., hypertext, multimedia), emerging collaborative practices and finally access to authentic online audiences [39].

The positive power of online settings to enhance learners' reading and writing skills of 42 EFL students is also affirmed [37]. Moreover, it is found the authorial voice in multimedia writing, the improvement and the interactions among written and oral language, visual imagery, and other semiotic systems within multimodal texts [40]. In another study it was observed students' perspectives if DS can communicate emotion and present information to an audience and it resulted that the participants are able, and willing to share personal stories in a foreign language [2].

In a recent survey, it was examined the value of introducing DS into the narrative practice of the second language and what are the characteristics of L2 students' storytelling when multimodality is added [41]. Undergraduate students (N=50) produced personal narrative scripts in digital form and in traditional (exclusively linguistic) ways. Students' narratives become better stories when practiced in DS, especially in the expression of emotions, in the awareness of the audience, in adding more details to the story, in the multiple ways of expression. Furthermore, as learners create fantastic images in their mind or make associations between the story and events from their everyday life, they develop their imagination skills, because imagination helps essentially in the understanding of the meaning and the learning of the foreign language [32].

It was also analysed thirty digital stories taken from several specialized websites [42]. It was notably found that images play a significant role as evaluative mechanisms by which local, culturally specific elements in digital narratives interact with a global perspective for a universal audience. Digital stories are most efficacious for language learning when they are embedded in a language-rich curriculum that provides varied and abundant opportunities for learners to acquire new vocabulary and structures, it is a deep language acquisition and meaningful practice [43].

Learners and teachers must be engaged into language learning and teaching respectively through the authentic, meaningful, and interactive process of DS. In a recent survey [4] was determined the effectiveness of using DS as a communicative strategy and that authentic DS significantly improved students' speaking skills. The constructivist approach has been indicated as appropriate for meaningful technology integration because it encourages students to learn in a social context, develop the ability to create new knowledge, and employ creativity and critical thinking [44]. The communities of learning are also emphasized in a multiliteracy approach [45]. If designed to include components such as a personal narrative stemming from out-of-class experiences, DS taps into the learners' existing communities of learning and promotes autonomy in language learning [46] and social and emotional development [32].

The necessity of collaborative learning, creativity, innovation, and acquisition of technical skills is also emphasized [47]. Moreover, in a collaborative DS activity, students with different abilities can be happily involved and create according to their abilities [48]. Furthermore, as advantages of the educational use of DS the enthusiasm and personalization of learning, the experiential situations of everyday life, the essential involvement, and the active learning [49]. Through the creation of personal digital narratives in L2 education, learners are "transformed" into active creators of multimedia texts, developing various types of literacy and language skills [3], [50], [51]. The free expression of personal views, the culture of cooperation, the opportunity provided for problem solving and taking responsibility, but also the creative expression and initiative are some of the most crucial benefits that arise for a L2 class [52].

This study contributes to the existing literature and learning practice by examining an authentic task-based and meaningful technology-interaction learning tool, digital storytelling, and the attitudes of L2 students in the university settings towards language learning.

The research questions for this case study were as follows:

- Can digital storytelling improve and enhance communication skills in a foreign language?
- Is digital storytelling a key and effective educational tool for speech production?
- To what extent can foreign language students create stories with digital tools?

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Background of the study**

The purpose of our case study was to investigate the attitude and the first effects of the involvement of undergraduate students of Italian Language and Literature in the University of Athens with DS in a university course related to a foreign language. Students' knowledge and experience about DS and the potential use of this digital tool in foreign language teaching was explored, but also their encouragement to evaluate their own personal storytelling.

In this case study methodology 48 undergraduate students participated in an Italian course as a foreign language, formed a delimited and integrated community [2], [53], [54], [55]. Understanding local practices and tacit knowledge may provide insights into complex realities at many levels [5]. In the context of an undergraduate elective course, a theoretical and practical documentation for engaging in DS was offered to our students. In a theoretical context, the aims, and methods of DS in a foreign language was presented, its basic elements, the advantages of a DS in the production and understanding of written/ oral speech were studied, proposed tools etc. Then, the students, on a practical level, carried out pilot individual work. For their first contact with DS, Photo Story 3 for Windows was proposed, but it is certainly not binding. This tool was suggested because it is available for free, it is very popular for creating digital stories, it gives many possibilities of presentations and saving [49], [56]. The facilitated involvement with this tool and the participants' activation in their own learning process is also mentioned [24], [43]. In our digital storytelling methodology, the learners could write and narrate their story, based on their research and their "own voice". Their products needed to transfer a clear and credible message, and to be presented in the foreign language. Finally, the choice of the subject of their narration was their personal choice.

The perceptions and attitudes of our undergraduate L2 students were selected (N= 48, M= 8, F= 40), as we wanted to explore their experience towards this innovative language learning tool. It should be mentioned that 87.2% of the students had no previous experience with the construction of digital narration in a L2, by capturing their narrative ideas in digital media, while those involved came from all the years of the department (77% of the students came from the first year of their studies). Upon completion of the process, we received a very positive evaluation. Also, the answers to a post-questionnaire [see Appendix] provided immediately after the completion of the process for the detection of knowledge and experience about digital narration, as well as for the evaluation of their personal narratives, highlighted with great clarity not only the effectiveness of this educational approach as a potentially valid approach in the field of foreign language teaching, but also the positive effects of personal engagement with DS.

The post-questionnaire helped to identify the knowledge and experience gained by students in the course process as well as the realization of the crucial importance of introducing innovative

methods and teaching aids in L2 course. 97% of the undergraduate students believe that the use of DS can completely or greatly improve their teaching practices or enhance communication skills, but also help the ability to speak the target language. It is also understood from the analysis of the other questions of the questionnaire that the manifestation of creativity through DS practices, the understanding of the lesson or the story, the improvement of the written word, the enhancement of the interest for the lesson and the usefulness are statistically important.

The evaluation of the students themselves for their digital narratives is remarkable, as they did in a specific rubric of the questionnaire. 92.3% positively assessed the improvement of their pronunciation and expressive reading. Also, it is extremely positive to strengthen the narration for the understanding of the didactic goal, as well as the familiarity they gained with the technology that they were asked to use, to make their personal digital narration. The students were also satisfied with the product they produced.

### 3.2. Results and Discussion

After the completion of the courses and the individual digital stories, we offered a questionnaire to be answered, and we proceeded to a descriptive analysis of the answers. Qualitative data analysis is often seen as a demanding and repetitive task, requiring the researcher's ability to be dynamic, intuitive, and creative [57], so to decompose data blocks through fragmentation and then combine them into collections of categories that are conceptually and theoretically related and that make assumptions about the phenomenon under study [58].

Table 1. Knowledge and experience discussion questionnaire about digital narrative

	<i>Absolutely</i>	<i>A lot</i>	<i>Enough</i>	<i>Quite</i>
<i>I know what digital storytelling is...</i>	38,5%	43,6%	10,3%	7,7%
<i>I know what elements make a narrative more interesting</i>	17,9%	64,1%	15,4%	2,6%
<i>I consider that I can use these elements appropriately to create a digital narrative</i>	20,5%	61,5%	15,4%	2,6%
<i>I think I can use the right kind of storytelling to achieve my teaching goals</i>	25,6%	56,4%	17,9%	
<i>I think I can use some basic design strategies to create a digital storytelling</i>	33,3%	51,3%	12,8%	2,6%
<i>I consider digital storytelling to be a useful tool for the teacher</i>	76,9%	23,1%		
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can improve my teaching practices</i>	66,7%	30,8%	2,6%	
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can enhance students' interest in the lesson</i>	74,4%	23,1%	2,6%	
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students understand the lesson or a story</i>	69,2%	28,2%	2,6%	
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the production of written speech and in the quality of the texts they write</i>	25,6%	69,2%	5,1%	
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students to enhance their communication skills</i>	61,5%	35,9%	2,6%	
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the manifestation of their creativity (individual and collective creative expression)</i>	71,8%	28,2%		
<i>I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students to be able to speak the target language</i>	64,1%	28,2%	7,7%	
<i>The development and introduction of innovative teaching methods and tools is crucial</i>	76,9	23,1%		

To the question "I believe that the use of digital storytelling can improve my teaching practices", the answers of our students were very positive. It is a fact that DS education can prepare young people to communicate successfully in environments that require the presentation of information in a dynamic way, to develop media comprehension skills, to lead to critical selection and utilization in learning [2], [4], [6], [33], [59], [60]. Also, to the question "The development and introduction of innovative teaching methods and tools is crucial" the answers we received were clearly positive. It is revealed that our students need to get in touch with new methodologies and approaches to L2 teaching. Introducing innovations in the field of education through DS will offer better learning of the subject, enhancing the understanding of content, promoting creativity and innovation, personalized learning experiences and brainstorming [49], [61].

In education, the narration for educational purposes can be used in teaching to introduce or explain an educational subject [62]. Therefore, to the question "I believe that the use of DS can help students to enhance their communication skills", the students, and future foreign language teachers, realize that the educational use of technology acts decisively in capturing and expressing information. One way for students to improve their narrative writing and critical thinking skills is to create writing tasks that require them to move between observation and conclusions, facts, and assumptions [63]. This can be done through the integration of technology in learning-teaching and through DS. Thus, students cannot remain passive. They become able to make important and critical choices while writing or speaking, resulting in developing communication skills [64]. Moreover, students' involvement in learning, their reading ability, written/oral expression, and oral comprehension is increased. It is an exciting language activity in the classroom to motivate students to use language in and out of it. Through DS, students learn to ask questions, express their point of view, create narratives, and write for an audience, improve their language and technical skills.

Those who are actively involved in the construction of a DS, gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject matter they are negotiating, bridging abstract concepts. Thus, in the question "I believe that the use of DS can help students to understand the lesson or a story" students realize how crucial is to use DS and their multimodal elements to improve learning, perception and active involvement, authenticity of expression, language skills. "The process is often more important than the product, and at the end of a workshop stories are often left to 'polish-up; at a later stage" [5].

It is undeniable that DS proves to be interesting, useful, and attractive for both students and teachers. In the question "I think I can use some basic design strategies to create a digital storytelling" students express the need to apply what they have learned, to be personally involved and to participate appropriately in the creation of digital material for educational use. Familiarity and engagement with digitally enriched stories are recognized by teachers as effective tools for mobilizing students and teaching a variety of subjects and topics [65]. The pedagogical and learning benefits are even greater for students when given the opportunity to create their own DS, incorporating into them photographs, drawings, recordings that they have chosen or created themselves. Furthermore, the use of multimedia has a positive effect on motivating weak students to create a narrative, raising the possibility that these students will be more familiar with the use of new technologies to use them creatively, contributing to their literacy self-improvement. These innovative activities in L2 can engage creatively the participants, can enhance the authenticity of their communication, and can accouter a purposeful context in their product [21], [66].

Another question asked of the students was: "I think I can use the right kind of storytelling to achieve my teaching goals". It is important that they can distinguish which type of narrative fits and is appropriate each time for the goal they have set. Whether they are building a digital story themselves or finding a suitable one (from another teacher or the internet), it is useful for them to

be able to make the right story choice to satisfy the subject they want to teach. The importance of DS in education is a reflective learning activity, allowing deepening in thoughts and experiences, various interpretations, and correlations. [67]. As reported, the potentiality of DS is "to encourage a deeper level of reflection and engagement on a specific topic" [68].

An important question was "I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students to be able to speak the target language". Students seem very confident in being able to learn a L2 when making use of digital stories, as it is presented as an important mean of transmitting knowledge and an important contribution to the cultivation of skills, such as the organization of thought, the improvement of oral and written expression or the creative use of technology [69], [70]. Students can present what they have learned in an original way, stimulate their interest and skills in the use of technology, storytelling, and written production [59], [60]. Their motivation [25], their creative thinking and their original ideas [26] are also increased.

The answer to the question: "I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the manifestation of their creativity (individual and collective creative expression)" was also remarkably positive. It is evident from the positive attitude of our students and from the surveys that both the creativity of those involved and their language skills are improved [27], [47]. Innovative, authentic digital prints can allow to express themselves dynamically and effectively. Their "transformation" into active creators, enables them to develop language skills and many types of literacy [3], [50], [51]. From the choice of theme or tool, from images and sounds, from personalized engagement to collective work, contact with new technologies and DS can grant a variety of creative expression in L2.

The attitude and the answer to the question "I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the production of written speech and in the quality of the texts they write" was also positive. The opportunities that can be given for the development of written production in the target language, in a creative, alternative, and playful way, are vital in education. Written speech is considered a primary skill to convey the desired message satisfactorily. Thus, digital media is an important multidimensional communication tool that enhances and completes learning. DS offers the opportunity to creatively utilize digital media for complex messages [62]. As already mentioned by many researchers, written speech production, L2 reading skills, motivation for oral speech production and fruitful communication, correlation of concepts, emotions, positive attitude towards the whole process of language learning and willingness to learn are also amplified [28], [29], [30], [31], [32].

Obviously, interest in the learning process is central and decisive. Therefore, were the answers to the question: "I believe that the use of digital storytelling can enhance students' interest in the lesson". The educational utility of DS is becoming a necessity in teachers' teaching and educational policy and practice [7], [67], [71]. Their goal is the effective teaching and mobilizing interest. It is mentioned that DS is used as a learning building tool, promoting digital literacy, and writing skills, reflection, critical thinking, strengthening relations between participants and evoking audience's emotional response [68], [72]. With the help of technology, DS supports the user to cultivate and apply the skills of modern literacy and critical skills to express one's concerns [73]. That is why the answers of the involved people to the question "I consider digital storytelling to be a useful tool for the teacher" were so positive.

Table 2. Rubrics for the evaluation of digital stories

	<i>A lot</i>	<i>Enough</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
<i>Is the title of the narrative interesting and relevant to the content?</i>	89,7%	10,3%		
<i>Is there emotional content that "speaks" to the viewer?</i>	30,8%	61,5%	5,1%	2,6%
<i>Do the sounds enhance the text of the narrative?</i>	76,9%	23,1%		
<i>Is the narrative evolving at a satisfactory pace?</i>	64,1%	35,9%		
<i>Did I improve my pronunciation / expressive reading?</i>	64,1%	28,2%	7,7%	
<i>Do the images reinforce the text?</i>	94,9%	5,1%		
<i>Does the message of the narrative become clear?</i>	87,2%	12,8%		
<i>Can the narrative be used pedagogically in the classroom?</i>	82,1%	17,9%		
<i>Does narration support the understanding of the didactic goal?</i>	79,5%	20,5%		
<i>Did I get acquainted with the technology requested of me?</i>	76,9%	23,1%		

Regarding the evaluation of individual narratives, our students answered satisfactorily the questions: "Did I improve my pronunciation/ expressive reading?", "Does narration support the understanding of the didactic goal?", "Did I get acquainted with the technology requested of me?", "Can the narrative be used pedagogically in the classroom?". DS is the art of creating a work based on a personal storytelling with substantive content, but also that it is an educational tool that can be aligned with standards that related to language and technology [77]. It is a way to delineate the process of creating and developing a portfolio and evaluating learning. Creating short digital stories helps students to improve their information gathering and problem-solving skills, and to facilitate collaborative work. The importance of writing for an authentic audience and find the suitable speech identity is a vital benefit in L2 classroom [16], [39].

DS can be used as an effective method for determining students' perception of writing, improving academic writing and student participation in the writing process [75]. Moreover, DS is an effective method that improves students' problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and the use of learning strategies and learning motivations [76], [77]. Another research [78] reveals that DS helps those involved to write better and specifically argues that it has a positive impact on the ability of narrative writing. It is also claimed that in a case study students showed high motivation and dedication to their work [79].

Also, the questions "Does the message of the narrative become clear?", "Is the narrative evolving at a satisfactory pace?", "Is the title of the narrative interesting and relevant to the content?", "Do the images reinforce the text?", "Do the sounds (music) enhance the text of the narrative?", "Is there emotional content that "speaks" to the viewer?", the participants had positive responses. Any medium used in educational DS can influence in its own way how the individual can capture information [80]. Ideas from sounds/ music, images, etc. that are born in a communication can also form impressions. Therefore, it is needed to be a good planning, an appropriate choice of the elements and the way they are transmitted, to successfully convey the intended message. This will increase both the degree of understanding and the impact of the message on the audience. The primary concern of the creator of a digital story is the meaning, the message of the narrative. Only in this way will it succeed in mobilizing the interest and attracting the attention of the reader/ viewer, and consequently in effectively conveying the intended message [73]. Moreover, this paper states that all digital media (digital images, visual effects, sounds, videos, written text, etc.) should be properly integrated to be consistent in the narrative. If the participants incorporate personal narrations and out-of-class experiences, the autonomy in language learning could be achieved [46]. As already stated, when students L2 express emotions in their digital narrations and add details to their story, they develop imagination skills and a better understanding of the



meaning and the learning of the foreign language [32], [41]. Furthermore, the quality of the learning is improved by interactions of written and oral language with other semiotic systems [40], by images and other multimodal elements [42] and multiple ways of expression [41]. DS can accordingly become an alternative communicative strategy that builds on student's baseline knowledge [4].

According to this case study, the innovation of DS in foreign language teaching guarantees that it favors creative expression, better learning of the subject that each student deals with, his / her written and oral expression, the attractiveness of the approach, the motivation to be used either in the course or outside and the positive attitude towards digital technology and the language learning process. Our students, future L2 teachers, understand the importance of digital writing, authentic learning tools and alternative teaching methodologies of a foreign language.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The findings from the analysis of the post-questionnaire (about the perception of students-produced stories) underline that this innovative language learning tool managed to enhance the authenticity of communication, to develop multiple skills and to combine different types of literacy. Moreover, real life situations and engagement in authentic tasks were created, concepts and emotions were correlated and meaningful technology-interaction and attitude towards language learning were developed. So, the use of DS can enhance and improve teaching practices, the interest for the lesson, communication skills, pronunciation, creativity, and expressive reading.

This study offered a methodology and an effective post-questionnaire to detect perceptions and attitudes towards DS and we contributed to the recent literacy. In this pilot research for undergraduate students and through a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire, our first conclusions about the first research question were drawn, that is, if DS can improve and enhance communication skills in a L2. Through DS, the students express their need to approach new methodologies for foreign language teaching, to enhance the understanding of the content, to utilize the multimodal elements of digital story, to have active engagement, authenticity in expression, to promote creativity.

Answers were also given to the second research question we asked whether DS is a key and effective educational tool for speech production. Dynamic and effective expression through digital media, organization of thought, improvement of expression, written and oral, proper cultivation of skills, creative and playful way of approaching knowledge, significantly improves speech production, utilizing its complex messages of DS.

Finally, the third research question, to what extent can L2 students create stories with digital tools, was answered not only by the variety of individual digital works delivered, but also by the appropriate choice of the elements that will successfully convey the message of the story. Proper design leads to a satisfactory understanding and impact of what is projected. The preparation process is as important as the final product.

In DS, literacy such as linguistic, digital, and intermediate are actively and experientially developed, while skills and abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, interpersonal and intercultural communication and collaborative interaction are of particular importance. Interactivity and participation, non-linearity, flexibility of results [66] but also the circulation of meanings and emotions with the immediacy and multimodality offered by modern multimedia [7] make this multifaceted and complex teaching process necessary for the contact of foreign language teachers - and not only - with necessary knowledge, skills, and increased

competence in their subject for the successful transmission of knowledge. By creatively integrating new technologies into foreign language teaching and learning, participants can participate and engage actively and satisfactorily. From this pilot research we understood the students' interest in cultivating digital skills and utilizing their individual products, in connecting knowledge or cognitive objects, in enhancing creative expression, in communication and written/oral skills, and in finding key learning strategies could be used in foreign language education.

The creators of digital narratives convey and highlight events and reflections with a specific identity to process a subject and with their personal interpretation to form an individual and collective identity [52]. It is an approach that especially in foreign language teaching - learning can highlight the special importance of their spiritual, emotional, value and cultural background but also to enrich the mental, social, and psycho-emotional aspects of students' personality. By involving students in personal, differentiated, and creative multimodal expression through the process of creating DS, teachers provide the opportunity to express linguistically and creatively perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and skills in an authentic environment.

## **5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Quantitative research using statistical tools could also provide information on how our students perceive the didactic use of DS. Naturally, DS in L2 engage actively the students, connect their experiences, and enhance their skills.

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### **APPENDIX**

#### *Post-Questionnaire: Digital Narration in Italian*

##### **A) PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Age:
4. Year of Study:
5. Level of Education:
6. Mother Tongue:
7. Foreign Languages:
8. Have you rebuilt digital storytelling in a foreign language?
9. Have you been trained in the use of New Technologies and digital technology?
10. Do you think you have the necessary skills to use and produce supervisory tools?

##### **B) KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT DIGITAL NARRATIVE**

1. I know what digital storytelling is
2. I know what elements make a narrative more interesting
3. I consider that I can use these elements appropriately to create a digital narrative
4. I think I can use the right kind of storytelling to achieve my teaching goals
5. I think I can use some basic design strategies to create a digital storytelling

6. I consider digital storytelling to be a useful tool for the teacher
7. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can improve my teaching practices
8. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can enhance students' interest in the lesson
9. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students understand the lesson or a story
10. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the production of written speech and in the quality of the texts they write.
11. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students to enhance their communication skills
12. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students in the manifestation of their creativity (individual and collective creative expression)
13. I believe that the use of digital storytelling can help students to be able to speak the target language
14. The development and introduction of innovative teaching methods and tools is crucial

### ***C) RUBRICS FOR THE EVALUATION OF DIGITAL STORIES***

1. Is the title of the narrative interesting and relevant to the content?
2. Is there a key question at the end of the story?
3. Is there emotional content that "speaks" to the viewer?
4. Do the sounds enhance the text of the narrative?
5. Is the narrative evolving at a satisfactory pace?
6. Did I improve my pronunciation / expressive reading?
7. Do the images reinforce the text?
8. Does the message of the narrative become clear?
9. Can the narrative be used pedagogically in the classroom?
10. Does narration support the understanding of the didactic goal?
11. Did I get acquainted with the technology requested of me?

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