

JAPANESE FOLK NARRATIVES AND BRAZILIAN AMAZON REGION STORIES IN THE EAL CLASSROOM: A STORYTELLING APPROACH

*Narrativas populares japonesas e histórias da Amazônia brasileira na sala de aula de inglês
como língua adicional: uma abordagem narrativa*

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ABSTRACT: This work refers to Storytelling as a teaching approach, using folk narratives as the main didactic and intercultural element. The main objective is to analyze the narrative productions of EAL (English as an Additional Language) students (A1 level). The theoretical perspectives are divided into four sections referring to: the elements of the narrative, adapted from the proposals of Meyer and Miller (2019) and Gill (1985); interculturality as an approach to language teaching; anime used as authentic material and the concepts of myths, legends and folklore, also used as educational resources in the teaching approach of this work. The methodology used followed a qualitative approach of an exploratory nature and participant observation, conducted through the application of this teaching approach in the classroom, in which anime were used as authentic materials portraying Japanese folklore, folk narratives from the Amazon region and narrative elements used as an object of study for students' Storytelling, in textual format written in English. Finally, it was understood that the use of Storytelling as a teaching approach together with the use of anime and folkloric narratives from the Amazon were positively effective.

Keywords: Storytelling, Interculturality, Folklore Narratives, Teaching approach.

RESUMO: Este trabalho trata *Storytelling* como abordagem de ensino, utilizando narrativas folclóricas como principal elemento didático e intercultural. O principal objetivo é analisar as produções das narrativas de alunos de Inglês como língua adicional (nível A1). O referencial teórico está dividido em quatro seções referentes: elementos da narrativa, adaptados das propostas de Meyer and Miller (2019) e Gill (1985); interculturalidade como uma abordagem para o ensino de línguas; animes utilizados como materiais autênticos e os conceitos de mitos, lendas

e folclore, também utilizados como recursos educacionais na abordagem deste trabalho. A metodologia utilizada seguiu uma abordagem qualitativa de natureza exploratória e observação participante, a partir da aplicação da abordagem de ensino em sala de aula, na qual foram utilizados animes como materiais autênticos retratando o folclore japonês, narrativas folclóricas da região amazônica e os elementos da narrativa como objeto de estudo para os *Storytelling* dos alunos, em formato textual e em língua inglesa. Por fim, compreendeu-se que o uso do *Storytelling* como abordagem de ensino juntamente com o uso de animes e narrativas folclóricas da Amazônia foram positivamente efetivos.

Palavras-chave: *Storytelling*, Interculturalidade, Narrativas Folclóricas, Abordagem de ensino.

INTRODUCTION

This study was developed with the aim to analyze the textual productions of students in English through a Storytelling teaching approach. In this teaching proposal, folklore narratives are used as the main teaching element. It was carried out through three stages, the first referred to the use of Japanese folklore narratives portrayed in anime to work on intercultural aspects and as authentic materials aiming to engage students with the Storytelling theme; the second referred to the use of Amazonian folklore narratives to work on regional culture aspects; and the third stage referred to the focus on narrative elements to be used in students' textual productions for Storytelling of Amazonian folklore in English.

Storytelling is an art that has been part of the tradition of many people since ancient times, passed down from generation to generation in a continuous movement. According to Xavier's (2015) poetic definition, Storytelling is the art of constructing narratives, like imaginary monuments full with meaning. In other words, it refers to the ability of a person to narrate a story, appreciating the narratives with their details and characteristics, and this is closely linked to the culture of peoples.

By addressing such a theme, the act of telling stories goes back to times before writing, when all knowledge was transmitted orally by the elderly. This is still present in the daily lives of most people from childhood to adulthood, whether in domestic activities and games or in the school environment (Carrilho and Markus, 2014; Santos, 2010).

With an emphasis on Amazonian folk narratives, the English language teaching using an approach that emphasizes Storytelling can positively highlight cultural appreciation and regional traditions, since the pedagogical approach of the Storytelling seeks to harness the power of narratives to engage students, stimulate their imagination, and awaken interest and motivation for learning.

Storytelling's use in educational contexts, according to Thou & Wenli (2012), can promote benefits in teaching and developing a second language, as well as promote the development of the four skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) and enhance linguistic comprehension in classroom interactions. Therefore, we understand that this justifies the use of this resource as a teaching approach for English language classes.

With this, we can raise a question: How can a Storytelling teaching approach based on the use of Amazonian legends be significant in an English language course for adults? To

answer this question, it is believed that an approach that emphasizes the cultural and regional aspects of the students in English language teaching can stimulate them toward more contextualized and communicative learning. Additionally, the use of authentic materials from Japanese folklore narratives present in anime can serve as a positive and stimulating resource for the students.

The application environment for this proposal was an English language course offered at a university in the Northern region of Brazil. The class was made up of twenty-one A1 level students, coming from undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

This article is structured in the current introduction, the theoretical perspective section, methodology, results, analysis of the produced narratives, discussions about the findings, and the final considerations.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Concepts and definitions of Storytelling

Initially, Storytelling can be defined as the act of narrating a story with the aim of transmitting or acquiring knowledge and information. This process can facilitate the development of creative thinking in both listeners and narrators (Allen and Acheson, 2000); (Carvalho, Salles, and Guimarães, 2002). Thus, it is important to emphasize that when a story is told, it is not merely about conveying information or events, but about evoking images, emotions, and meanings that can resonate with the audience profoundly and memorably.

Thus, we understand that Storytelling is an ancient practice that has transcended cultures and eras. It has not only facilitated communication and the perpetuation of beliefs and values but has also played a crucial role in the development of the imagination of civilizations.

Storytelling in the educational context refers to the practice of using narratives to convey content and concepts in a more engaging and effective manner, according to Zilio et al. (2023) and Lisboa et al. (2023). Through narratives, teachers can contextualize learning, making it more accessible and appealing to students. Furthermore, the act of Storytelling allows for the integration of different language skills, such as listening comprehension, oral production, and writing, in meaningful and contextualized ways.

According to Lisboa et al. (2023), the use of Storytelling begins with determining the

theme, defining the process, and objectives, and aiming to promote interaction and engagement in a guided yet flexible manner. In an additional language class, it is crucial that the narrative developed by the teacher allows for adjustments and changes according to the behaviors and reactions of the audience. With this in mind, an adaptive interaction enables students to ask questions, express their opinions, and participate in discussions, thereby fostering a more collaborative learning environment.

When it comes to Storytelling, we understand firstly that before telling a story, it is necessary to structure it well. For this, we highlight the elements of the narrative as the basis for creating stories with well-developed characters, engaging plots, and detailed settings so that the audience can emotionally connect or identify with the experiences narrated. According to the proposals of Meyer and Miller (2019) and Gill (1985), the following Storytelling elements have been adopted for structuring narratives.

A **character** in a literary work is someone who possesses some kind of identity that is composed of appearance, speech, action, name, and thoughts that pass through their head. Gill (1985) mentions that there is no rationale for us to label literary creations as "characters", but since this has become a common practice, it is advisable to continue with this adoption.

The **setting** is the context in which the action where a story takes place. There are some cases in which the setting is clearly intended to be the central element of the narrative Meyer and Miller (2019). The main elements of the setting are time, place, social environment, geographic location or a historical period that frames the story and characters, thus creating an atmosphere and tone for the narrative, aiming to promote a feeling of immersion in the narrative world. for the reader, listener or viewer.

Every narrative must contain or begin with the **introduction** and it should contain the basic information that the reader needs to understand the situation in which the characters are placed Gill (1985). This is the narrative element that serves to provide the initial context of the story, presenting the main characters and the conflicts to be experienced by them. The introduction is crucial, as the author tries to capture the audience's attention and offers the information needed to understand the plot. A set of goals and desires of the characters usually emerges. With such things to be achieved, the characters end up encountering certain problems that must be solved.

After the introduction, the **rising action** begins as an essential element of the narrative structure. Once there has been an introductory contextualization related to the main characters,

events occur where the narrative becomes more complex and the characters' conflicts are revealed for the plot to unfold in increasing action (Gill, 1985). During this phase, the characters' motivations and resilience to overcome their challenges are exposed, taking the narrative towards the climax.

The **climax** is one of the most important elements of a narrative. Meyer and Miller (2019) emphasize that many short stories can be defined as a plot that reaches its climax with a revelation, which reorients the development of the characters and, sometimes, the perspectives of the reader. The climax is the highest point of a story's plot, where tensions reach their peak, being the moment of greatest emotional or dramatic intensity in the narrative. At this moment, events reach their highest turning point so that the main conflicts can reach their resolutions. It usually occurs near the end of the story to decide the fate of the characters.

Denouement is a French word that means “to untie the knot”. This element is crucial for a narrative. It explores the consequences of the characters' actions and the events that culminated in the climax and aims to clarify or resolve all the mysteries and conflicts experienced by the characters. It also shows how they were affected and transformed by the experiences they lived (Meyer and Miller 2019; Gill, 1985).

Conflicts are central elements of any narrative, acting as plot drivers to maintain the public's interest. According to Frey (2000, p. 104), “Conflict means a struggle toward some resolution with something at risk”. The author seeks to create tensions and dramas, essential for the development of the characters and the story, and the presence of conflicts allows the story to unfold in a dynamic and meaningful way. The types of conflicts adopted can be:

a) Internal conflicts refer to the internal struggles a character faces, such as doubts, fears, or moral dilemmas. As the name suggests, these conflicts occur within the character himself and are crucial to his development. Based on James N. Frey (2000), internal conflicts allow for a deeper exploration of the character and their motivations.

b) External conflicts involve an external force that opposes the main character's goals, such as other characters, society, nature, or adverse circumstances. This type of conflict is what often drives actions or physical confrontations and is fundamental to the structure of a narrative.

Point of view determines the perspective from which the story is told, affecting the events that are presented to the reader, how characters and how situations are perceived. The choice of point of view can profoundly influence the way the narrative will be understood. For this work, it was adopted only three points of view:

a) First Person: when the narrative is told from a character's point of view, using pronouns such as "I" and "my". This perspective offers an intimate and personal view, allowing readers to directly access the narrator's thoughts and feelings. When a story is told at first, the narrator may be a character or invite the reader to imagine themselves as the "I" of the narrative (Meyer and Miller, 2019);

b) Limited Third Person: when the narrative is told from the point of view of one or more characters, but without knowledge of the feelings, beliefs and some details of the other characters. This allows for a more restricted view, similar to first person, but with the flexibility of third person. Gill (1985) defines limited third person as a narrator with a unique perspective of a main or secondary character, being able to see more than one character, especially in a longer work;

c) Third Person Omniscient: when the narrator knows all the thoughts, feelings and events of a plot. This point of view allows for a more comprehensive view of the narrative, offering detailed information about multiple characters and events. The omniscient point of view is when the storyteller is present throughout the plot. According to Gill (1985), this point of view can move from one place to another, move through time, and access the characters' feelings in a way that none of the previous points of view can do.

The **storytone** is related to how the reader will perceive the narrative, given the characteristics employed by the author. For Gill (1985), in a literary work, we must trust the context surrounding a statement to interpret it correctly. Therefore, we understand this element has a lot to do with the reader's perspective and the choices of writing style, words and language and with the narrative voice that the author uses in the story to convey the desired feeling. In order not to address the different tones of possible narratives, we chose to adopt only the following tones: humorous, dark, hopeful, or dramatic.

These are the elements used in the project analyzed in this research. Considering that the elements that constitute the narrative structure are widely discussed by different authors, it is understandable that they can be approached by different nomenclatures. However, the objective is not to explore the conceptual differences of each author, but rather to emphasize the elements of narrative in the production of Storytelling and intercultural nuances.

Interculturality as an approach to additional language teaching

For Hall (2006), cultural identity is an identification process that associates the individual with the social and cultural structure, however, this process has become increasingly provisional and variable. Still from the point of view of this same author, these variations occur due to the process where modern societies are defined by a dynamic of rapid and permanent changes, composing an individual not only of a single but also of several identities.

In contrast to modern societies, traditional societies venerate their past and value traditions as forms of continuity. Despite the pressures of modernity and globalization, many communities still keep their traditional practices and knowledge alive (Krenak, 2019). These traditions have not only survived but have also adapted and reinvented themselves, thus denoting the resilience of local identities.

Additionally, interculturality can be understood as the recognition of the "other" in their individuality and difference, and in this context, individual self-determination emerges, as the majority understands that the minority can grow from its own difference (Villoro, 1998). This can also be highlighted as a process of interaction between different cultures on a horizontal level, where none is considered superior to the other, thereby fostering cultural inclusion and individual coexistence.

The term "interculturality," when analyzed, reflects the idea of cultures flowing voluntarily and merging or interacting with other cultures. Candau (2013) explains that this is a permanent, never-ending process marked by the intention of promoting a dialogic and democratic relationship between the cultures and groups involved, going beyond mere peaceful coexistence within the same territory.

We can highlight an intercultural approach in education as beneficial. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes that an intercultural approach in teaching is radically different from the mere transfer of information between cultures. Thus, we understand that it is not about teaching culture to students but rather preparing individuals to live in a multicultural society, promoting respect, cultural diversity, and the appreciation of different traditions and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, when we relate interculturality to the teaching and learning of an additional language, Kramsch (1993) points out that culture is constantly present, ready to challenge students, even those who already possess a considerable communicative competence.

Conceptually, interculturality is divided into two branches: functional interculturality and critical interculturality, as discussed by Walsh (2009). According to her, functional interculturality is associated with neoliberal discourses constructed by institutions with

economic interests, aiming to assimilate minority groups into the dominant culture without making structural changes that would alter the mechanisms of domination.

On the other hand, Candau (2019) highlights critical interculturality as the pursuit of dialogue and exchange among diverse groups, recognizing culture as a dynamic and living process characterized by constant modification and reconstruction. This concept challenges the rigid view of cultural identity, acknowledging the existence of issues and inequalities within each cultural configuration, as these relationships are complex and can change according to the reality.

In this way, an intercultural approach can promote the development of intercultural skills and appreciation of cultural diversity, in addition to the educational enrichment that this can bring about by incorporating such elements into the classroom, making it more diverse by exploring the richness and complexity of global cultures.

Anime as authentic material

Authentic materials can be understood as resources created for non-educational purposes, that emanate from the language itself in use, in real use situations (Silva and Timmermann, 2023; Gilmore 2019). Although they were not intended for teaching purposes, the use of authentic materials as a resource in additional language teaching and learning proves to be extraordinarily positive, as practice in real language contexts can enhance the understanding and production of the four communicative skills in the target language.

Nunan (1989) emphasize that the selection of authentic materials for teaching should be relevant and meaningful for students, reflecting their needs and interests, and aiming to engage them in the most communicative behaviors required in the real world. In the case of this work, the authentic materials are based on Anime.

Anime consists of oriental animations, mainly made in Japan, from which the word “anime” was developed, derived from the abbreviation of “animation”. They can be independent or based on some existing work, such as successful *manga* (Soares, 2020). For Barros (2021), anime can bring different themes and are classified according to their target audience, in addition to the different genres characterized as comedy, romance, adventure, and several others. This way, anime can reach a diversity of consumers.

According to Soares (2020), anime originated at the beginning of the 20th century at the

same time that animation techniques emerged in Europe and the United States, around 1906 and 1907. Based on Santana (2023), Animes stand out for transmitting the cultural, historical, traditional and educational aspects of Japan, with the recurring presence of traditional symbols, Japanese mythology and historical themes in the narratives being notable.

Still according to the same author, Asian countries are known for promoting coexistence between the modern and the ancient, the futuristic and the traditional. In this sense, Japan stands out as an example for referencing ancient culture and Japanese technological advances.

When we approach anime and their diffusion in Brazil, Ueda and Morales (2006) claim that it has been occurring since the seventies and has made them very popular among contemporary Brazilians, especially among young people and adults. Consequently, as several advantages of using anime in an educational context became evident, Japanese language teachers and scholars started incorporating them into their teaching practices, aiming to harness the vast potential of this resource in terms of student engagement and educators' pursuit of more captivating teaching and learning approaches. However, when considering the relationship between anime and the teaching and learning of the English language, this topic remains relatively unexplored, with limited scholarly research available.

To use anime as authentic material, Barros (2021) highlights its role as a facilitator for developing educational content sought by teachers and notably as a significant stimulator of student curiosity. Therefore, using anime as an educational tool can be considered highly beneficial. In the same way, Assis et al. (2021) contemplate the anime's potential as an educational resource that facilitates interdisciplinary approaches and engages students in social issues of education in Brazil.

Various Japanese animations portray elements of their folklore in their plots. The presence of these elements is so widespread in Japanese pop culture that we can highlight their appreciation for their own folklore, with works made with such high quality that they transcended the borders of Japan and became popular throughout the world. A notable example of this is the anime *Naruto*, which makes extensive use of myths, legends and entities from Japanese folklore adapted for its plot.

Myths, legends and folklore

When approaching myths and legends, it may initially be common to assume that these

terms are intertwined and confused. However, when analyzing both concepts in detail, it is clear that, although they may have similarities, they are distinct. In relation to myths, Eliade (1986) defines them as tales about a reality that came into existence thanks to the deeds of supernatural beings, always being a narrative of the creation of something, describing how a thing was produced or how it began to exist and its characters. They are always supernatural beings. It is understood that myths can be created with the intention of explaining some mysteries. In line with Cascudo's (2012b) statement, a myth can be a system of legends that can become tales.

Focusing on the definition of legends, based on Cascudo (2006) and Moisés (2004), the word “legend” originates from the Latin word “*legenda*”, which means “what should be read”. The term was popularized, in the Middle Ages, with reports that contained the lives of saints. These narratives can be characterized as a heroic environment, where the supernatural is essential. It should also be noted that every legend is a narrative in which a historical fact is amplified and transformed under the influence of popular imagination, with veracity dissipating over time and being replaced by the folkloric mysticism of the events (Moisés, 2004).

The word *folclore* is associated with the English language as a neologism of folklore, a term created by Willien John Thoms in 1846 (Lima, 2003). With this, it is understood that legends can transmit a culture of a certain people, being able to relate to folklore. Carneiro (2008), cited by Schwarcz (2008), says that the folklore field extends to all manifestations of popular life: clothing, food, housing, arts, beliefs, language, games, dances and representations. Going further, as part of folklore, legends play a very important role in preserving cultural identity and transmitting values and traditions across generations.

The Amazon region, with all its cultural richness, is full of legends and myths that make up the imagination of a large part of the Brazilian population, especially those who inhabit the region and its surroundings (Cascudo, 2012a). Due to the wide territorial extension of the Amazon, many supernatural narrative variations are widespread, containing a variety of folkloric beings and legends. These narratives not only reflect the cultural richness of the region, but can also play a crucial role in preserving local identity and traditions.

This can be linked to Amazonian folkloric narratives and their supernatural beings, such as the *Encantado Ataíde*. Detailing this folkloric creature, he is described as a being of great stature that inhabits mangrove forests, acting as a protector of these environments, especially mangroves, where *uçá* crabs are constantly threatened (Silva and Silveira, 2021). Its peculiar characteristics include a cyclops-like appearance, a large mouth located on the belly and a very

large sexual organ, which needs to be hung on the entity's shoulders or wrapped around the waist. Another unique characteristic of the *Encantado Ataíde* is that he rapes people who invade and threaten his territory.

According to Brazilian folklore, the *Encantados* are spirits of ancient indigenous people who died long ago and now reside in nature. They live as entities present in the sea, rivers and forests, dedicating themselves to defending the natural environment, since nature is their home. (Nascimento, 2007; Silva and Silveira, 2021).

The reinterpretation of the *Carta do Folclore Brasileiro* (1995) brings recommendations regarding the insertion of folklore in the educational context, also highlighting the need for teacher training for the topic.

Thus, the relevance of folklore in teaching, through myths and legends, suggests a potential expansion and dissemination of cultural knowledge, perpetuating and creating teaching and learning contexts focused on students' cultural and regional aspects. As Visgueira and Gonçalves (2019) argue, the use of folklore as a teaching tool can also facilitate interdisciplinarity, enabling its application in conjunction with different themes and disciplines.

In this research, it was expected to achieve positive outcomes by establishing a connection between Brazilian and Japanese folklore and cultures through Japanese animations as a means of engagement and providing contextualized teaching based on authentic materials.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological principle for this work is based on a qualitative approach of an exploratory nature and participant observation. For Pereira et al. (2018), qualitative methods are those that depend on the researcher's interpretation, incorporating their perceptions and opinions about the phenomenon under analysis. Also, according to Lakatos and Marconi (2003), exploratory research involves empirical investigations whose objective is to develop hypotheses, increase the researcher's familiarity with the researched topic or modify/clarify concepts.

By inserting the researcher into the group studied, allowing him/her to interact with the subjects for a specific period, Lakatos and Marconi (2003) define this methodology as participant observation, being the immersion of the researcher in the community or group under study, where he/she becomes part of the group and interacts directly with its members.

The target public for the research were students of one of the English language courses offered at a Public University in the Northern region of Brazil. The class was made up of twenty-two A1-level students from undergraduate and postgraduate courses on the university campus.

The project took place from April to May 2024, totaling six classes taught in the class over six weeks. Classes lasted three hours in the afternoon. During classes, students were divided into five teams for textual productions, but three textual productions of the teams were selected to compose the *corpus* of this text.

Methodological procedures

The general objective of this work is to analyze the textual productions of narratives by students in English through the Storytelling teaching approach. This will be accomplished through the following steps: using Japanese folk narratives portrayed in anime to encourage students to learn about folklore; elucidation of narrative elements contained in Japanese and Amazonian folk stories; the approach a folkloric to teaching English.

First, it was necessary for students to be introduced to the linguistic content related to the past tense. For this, the first two classes were focused on this topic, specifically with the use of regular and irregular verbs, the verb BE conjugated in the past and DID as an auxiliary verb. These two classes are detailed in the results section - class reports.

The third class was used to introduce students to the elements of Storytelling, contained in an excerpt from the movie SPIRITED AWAY¹. Thereafter, students were divided into teams. Each team was assigned by the teacher to search about a Japanese folklore entity depicted in specific anime episodes and in textual formats, available on the website “youkai.com” (a Japanese folklore database). Finally, they were asked to present the identification of the narrative elements present in anime episodes.

The fourth class was designed for students to conduct presentations on the activity described in the third class. After the presentations, the concepts of myths and legends began, illustrated through Japanese folklore narratives. In the fifth class, we continued with the approach to myths and legends, however, using Amazonian folklore narratives. One entity

¹ SPIRITED Away. Directed by: Hayao Miyazaki. Produced by: Toshio Suzuki. Studio Ghibli: Distributed by Toho, 2001.

(*Encantado Ataíde*) was chosen to be covered in class due to its origins rooted in the coastal areas of the *Bragantina* region.

The guidelines for the final activity involved the production of a folktale narrative from the Amazon region, meeting the following requirements: a text written in English, ranging from 1 to 3 pages; narrative elements according to the framework proposed by Meyer and Miller (2019) and Gill (1985): Characters, Setting, Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Denouement, Conflicts, Point of view, and Storytone; and an oral presentation in either English or Portuguese. These requirements, apart from the oral presentation, served as the criteria for evaluating the students' written productions. In the sixth class, presentations and evaluation of the narratives took place, in which it was possible to verify whether the teams met the requirements to produce texts, and whether the Storytelling-based approach was effective for the students. The results will be presented through class reports and the analysis of the narratives (Table 1), as well as the discussion about them.

RESULTS

Class reports

Aiming to prepare and introduce students to the theme of narratives and the verb tense that would be used in their productions, it was necessary to first work on linguistic content relating to the past tense.

Classes 1 and 2

The first class started with the use of the first episode of the Demon Slayer² anime as a warm-up. Only the first ten minutes of the episode were shown with dubbing and subtitles in English. This warm-up aimed to collect prior knowledge about the linguistic structures relating to past tense. Some students were able to identify terms referring to the past, such as some verbs ending in ED, in addition to the structures in the Present Perfect tense. After the warm-up, the linguistic content related to the simple past tense was carried out by presenting regular verbs, auxiliary verbs and pronunciation. Finally, students had the opportunity to do a reading activity to answer questions of comprehension. There were conversation practices based on the theme of the subject and the class ended with a quiz made using Kahoot as a technological resource.

² CRUELTY (Season 1, Episode 5). Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba. Directed by: Haruo Sotozaki. Produced by: Hikaru Kondo. Crunchyroll: Distribution and Licensing 2019.

Class 3

The third class was dedicated to introducing students to the elements of narrative Meyer and Miller (2019) and Gill (1985). To present the theme and exemplify each of the elements, an excerpt from the film *SPIRITED AWAY* (2001)³ was used, subtitled in English. The selected segment was from minute 0:58:00 to 1:07:00, focusing on the figure of Kawa no Kami, a Japanese folkloric entity that represents an ancient river god. The purpose of showing the animation in the classroom was based on the concepts of interculturality, aiming to relate the representations of Japanese folk narratives with those of Brazilian folklore. Furthermore, the use of anime was based on the concepts of authentic materials in additional language teaching, capturing students' attention effectively.

After addressing the narrative elements, the 21 students were divided into five teams for subsequent activities. For this class, each team received an entity from Japanese folklore, accompanied by a base text adapted from the website yokai.com and an episode from an animated series that portrayed the same entity, as illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - Content for the third-class presentations containing the entities and anime designated by team.

	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Entity	Jorogumo: Are female <i>yōkai</i> spiders that live a solitary life. They have magical powers and feed on human prey.	Kitsune: are extremely intelligent and powerful fox <i>yokai</i> that frequently transform into humans or fearsome monsters.	Daija / Uwabami: They are <i>yōkai</i> snakes seen as tenacious and intelligent creatures that can be considered as gods.	Urashima Taro: The legend dates back to the mid-8th century and is one of Japan's most famous stories.	Yuki Onna: The snow <i>yōkai</i> woman that prey on travelers lost in the heavy snowstorms that blanket the Japanese Alps in winter.

³ Synopsis: Chihiro is a 10-year-old girl who discovers a secret world of strange spirits, creatures and sorcery. When her parents are mysteriously turned into pigs, she must call on the courage she never knew she had to free herself and return her family to the outside world.

Designated anime	Dororo - ep 7. English sub. ⁴	Naruto Shippuden – ep. 249 English sub. ⁵	Inuyasha – ep. 27 English sub. ⁶	Urashima Taro: Animation of Japanese Traditional Stories ⁷	Inuyasha – ep. 101 English sub. ⁸
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Source: Authors (2024)

Class 4

The class began with presentations as instructed in the previous class. The presentations lasted approximately 15 minutes each and the teams achieved the objective of the activity (except one), which were: to present an oral narrative about Japanese folklore entities; to identify events related to narrative elements in anime; and to carry out a comparison between the characteristics of Japanese entities, as portrayed in the research, and the way they were represented in the episodes designated for each team. Once the presentations were concluded, the approach to the definitions of legends and myths began, establishing a relationship between Japanese folklore and the narratives of Brazilian Amazonian folklore, alluding to three entities, *A Yara*, *Curupira* and *Matinta Perera*.

A video projector was used to show illustrations and texts about the definitions, written in English. During discussions about the terms, there were interactions with students focused on communicative skills, especially speaking, reading and textual understanding in the target language. One entity could not be approached due to class time, which had already been exceeded.

Class 5

This class started where the previous class ended, pending the approach to the

⁴ THE STORY OF THE JOROGUMO SILK SPIDER (Season 1, Episode 7). Dororo. Directed by: Kazuhiro Furuhashi. Produced and distributed by: MAPPA Tezuka Productions, 2019.

⁵ THANK YOU (Season 12, Episode 249). Naruto Shippuden. Directed by: Hayato Date. Produced by: Tomoko Gushima; Fukashi Azuma. Studio Pierrot. Licensed by: Crunchyroll, 2012.

⁶ THE LAKE OF THE EVIL WATER GOD (Season 1, Episode 27 - 2003). Inuyasha. Directed by: Masashi Ikeda. Produced by: Hideyuki Tomioka; Michihiko Suwa. Studio Sunrise. Licensed and distributed by: Viz Media, 2001.

⁷ JAPANESE FOLK TALES - 6 DVD set (Disc 5 - Urashima Tarô). Directed by: ES ENTERTAINMENT CO. LTD. Produced by: MOOK CO. LTD. Publisher: Keep Co., LTDA. Distributed by: First Music Co., LTDA. 2001.

⁸ THE SNOW FROM SEVEN YEARS PAST (Season 1, Episode 101 - 2005). Inuyasha. Directed by: Kiyoshi Fukumoto. Produced by: Hideyuki Tomioka; Michihiko Suwa. Studio Sunrise. Licensed and distributed by: Viz Media, 2001.

Encantado Ataíde, with illustrations and narrative text in English. One point, regarding the choice of this mystical being, was related to its presence in a folkloric memory narrative experienced by this article's first author's paternal grandmother. This narrative was recorded by the author in textual format in English to be used as authentic base material for identifying the narrative elements present in the text and for producing the teams' Storytelling.

The presentation about the *Encantado Ataíde* was marked by several interactions with the students, in addition to being the most comical part of the class, since some of them did not know the entity or its characteristics. There were reactions of astonishment followed by laughter from the students.

Given the moment for reading the text, each paragraph was read by a student chosen at random. This measure was taken in order to practice pronunciation, reading and textual understanding. At the end of the readings, each student was asked, randomly, about some aspects of the narrative.

As the class approached the end, guidance was given for the teams' final production activity. For this activity, the same teams were brought together to choose a narrative referring to the Amazonian myths of the region, which would be written and presented in the subsequent class. It was required that all narrative elements, proposed by Meyer and Miller (2019) and Gill (1985): Characters, Setting, Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Denouement, Conflicts, Point of view, and Storytone, to be incorporated into the Storytelling production. The narrative text should be between 1 and 3 pages long, and the oral presentation of the narrative should not exceed 20 minutes.

Class 6

This last class consisted of consecutive presentations from the five teams. After each presentation, there were feedbacks aimed at suggestions for improvements in the texts of some teams and the evaluation of the presentations.

At the end of the presentations, there was a moment of discussion about the project regarding Storytelling as an approach to teaching English as an additional language, when the students expressed their opinions and perceptions about the themes of each class and the proposed activities.

ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCED NARRATIVES

The five texts relating to the teams' productions were analyzed, however, three were chosen to integrate the analyzes of this study due to organizational matters.

TABLE 2 – The productions of the three teams about elements of the narrative.

	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
Title	The legend of the Curupira	The story of the billy goat	Don't challenge Matinta Perera
Characters	Curupira as the central character; The narrator and his three coworkers.	Mr. Raimundo, a stubborn hunter as the protagonist of the narrative, Billy goat as the folkloric antagonist and the Mr. Raimundo's wife as a secondary character.	Narrator as the person who told the narrative; Grandmother Diana as a character who tells the story about Matinta Perera; Jorge as the character who doubts the existence of Matinta Perera and faces the consequences of his disbelief. He was also a neighbor and childhood friend of grandmother Diana; Matinta Perera as the mythical entity that haunts Jorge after he disrespects her.
Setting	Mangrove, a natural and common environment in the coastal region of the northern Amazon.	There were two settings: The Mr. Raimundo's house, where the story begins and ends, and along the Bacuri road, described as deserted during and where Billy Goat usually appears.	Two different scenarios were described: Grandma Diana's house and the surrounding area, where the story begins, and the dense forest in another city where Jorge was found unconscious.
Introduction	The introduction provided an overview of the Curupira, its characteristics and its role as protector of the forest.	The narrative was introduced with Mr. Raimundo planning to hunt during the night of the full moon, going against his wife's warnings about the danger of Billy Goat's appearance on the way.	The story was introduced with the narrator talking about his childhood in the countryside with his parents and grandparents, and then grandmother Diana begins to tell a story about Matinta Perera.
Rising action	The tension increased when the narrator and his colleagues began to hear whistles and see stones being thrown at them, until they realized they were lost.	The rising action occurred as Mr. Raimundo came across a series of animals on the way to hunt, later discovering that the animals were transformations of Billy Goat, culminating in a	The rising action was characterized by three events: Jorge's disbelief when he ridicules Matinta Perera and boasts that he is not afraid, provoking the entity;

		direct confrontation between the two characters.	Jorge's disappearance after leaving his grandmother Diana's house, after which only his bicycle was found. The mobilization of the community in the search for Jorge, until he was finally found unconscious in a forest in another city.
Climax	It occurred when the narrator recognized the presence of Curupira and when he braided a vine and threw it back to end the Curupira's enchantment.	The point of greatest tension was the detailed description of the chase and fight between Billy Goat and Mr. Raimundo.	It occurred when Jorge reported that he was directly confronted by Matinta Perera, causing him to faint and disappear for a few days.
Denouement	After the challenge, the way back reappeared, and the narrator, together with the other characters, managed to escape the mangrove. This event resolved the main conflict and restored order.	Denouement: It occurred when Mr. Raimundo finally managed to escape the apparition and arrive home extremely tired from running so much. The trauma changed his perspective on hunting and treating animals.	It occurred when Jorge was found after his disappearance and when he sought help from a faith healer to cure his paranoia caused by the entity. He had to apologize and offer gifts to the entity so that the haunting would stop persecuting him.
Conflicts	The main conflict was characterized as an external conflict, between the crab collectors (men) and the supernatural (Curupira). There was also an internal conflict in the narrator when he dealt with fear and uncertainty when facing Curupira.	The main conflict is between Mr. Raimundo and Billy Goat, characterized as a man vs. man conflict. Supernatural, where Billy Goat represented a supernatural force.	There were two types, man vs. supernatural as the main conflict and an internal conflict when Jorge faces fear and regret after defying Matinta Perera and suffering the consequences.
Point of view	The Storytelling was told in the first person, offering an intimate and personal perspective on the narrator's experiences. This point of view allows the reader to feel the tension and fears experienced by the crab pickers as characters.	The point of view of the narrative was in limited third person, allowing a view of events from the main character's perspective and allowing a detailed understanding of his emotions and reactions.	The story was narrated in the first person by grandmother Diana, providing a personal and intimate perspective on the events narrated from her perspective.
Storytone	Suspense and warning, emphasizing the importance of respecting nature and its rules, in addition to conveying a sense of reverence for Curupira and environmental preservation.	The storytone was full of suspense and elements of morality, especially in the description of Billy Goat's transformations and Mr. Raimundo's changes after his experience.	There were two storytones, the suspense tone, when the narrative described the appearances of Matinta Perera and the disappearance of Jorge, and the tone of morality, highlighting the importance of respecting

			cultural beliefs and mystical entities.
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Source: Author (2024)

Team 1's text effectively used narrative elements to structure the narrative about *Curupira* and his interaction with crab collectors. The characterization of *Curupira*, the natural setting, the clear introduction, the construction of tension through the increasing action, the climax reflecting the empirical knowledge transmitted through generations along with the outcome, gave a unique characteristic to the narratives. The well-delineated conflicts, the personal point of view and the tone of suspense and warning combined to create a narrative that could entertain and teach about the importance of environmental preservation and respect for folkloric beings.

For Team 2, the text effectively used narrative elements to create an engaging and moralizing story about a hunter who learns a painful lesson about respect for nature. The characters are well-defined, especially Mr. Raimundo, whose stubbornness and subsequent emotional transformation are central to the story. The forest setting adds to the suspenseful atmosphere, and the rising action keeps the reader engaged with Billy Goat's every transformation. The intense climax followed by a reflective ending, where Mr. Raimundo reconsiders his actions and promises to never mistreat animals again was well developed. The conflict between man and the supernatural, along with the suspenseful tone, were essential elements for the narrative's meaning.

Team 3 was able to organize well their production of the narrative, in relation to grammatical structures, verbal tenses and textual construction. Narrative elements were effectively used to create a story with suspense and morality about the consequences of disrespecting the supernatural. The characters were well delineated, especially Jorge, whose disbelief led him to a radical transformation after his meeting with *Matinta Perera*. The rural setting and grandmother Diana's house contribute to the atmosphere of mystery and suspense. The growing action kept the reader entertained, from the beginning until Jorge's confrontation with the entity. The climax was followed by a reflective denouement of the main character's search for redemption with *Matinta Perera*.

It is important to emphasize the teams chose to use the same characteristics in the conflicts and storyline elements. This may reflect the image people have about folklore entities, that would be more related to the dark but still, with due respect to folklore, since they

emphasized moral and protection issues with nature and its supernatural beings.

The use of Storytelling of Amazonian folklore narratives allowed Amazonian cultural elements to be worked on, which had not yet been explored in English language classes. This approach was considered innovative and interesting by the students, where, until then, the cultural elements covered in classes were restricted to the content of the textbook used. Thus, the Storytelling proposal, by emphasizing the cultural aspects of the Amazon region and the people who live there, proved to be significantly contextualized for the students.

Other positive points about this approach were characterized by the stimulation of creativity and personal expression through the creation and narration of stories inspired by Amazonian myths and legends. This happened in a way to encourage students' creativity, by using the target language in their context of actual use.

One negative aspect identified was the difficulty experienced by beginner students in keeping up with certain moments of the lessons, particularly when the use of the English language was required, both for the production of narratives and for activities that demanded a more advanced proficiency in the target language from the students.

Regarding the use of anime, these resources were essential to illustrate the portrayal of Japanese folklore entities along with the narrative structure that the anime used to narrate the stories. In addition, it effectively promoted student engagement in classes, added to its increase in cultural understanding, correlating Japanese folk culture with Brazilian folk culture.

The use of Amazonian narratives in the classroom proved to be positive, as they constitute authentic cultural resources present in the lives of most students. Integrating these narratives into English classes and using them as a central element of the approach was an interesting strategy. Furthermore, it promoted teamwork and allowed the interconnection of narratives with transversal themes, such as the environment, appreciation and respect for Amazonian folklore and its supernatural elements.

A difficulty in approaching Amazonian folkloric narratives was related to their productions, specifically the adaptation of the meanings of Amazonian regionalisms widely present in each of the narratives. This could lead to translation issues, which was not the focus of this work. A possible problem arising from this approach could be the relationship with students' religious beliefs, since folkloric narratives portray supernatural elements and beings, which may antagonize their beliefs. However, with adult students, this did not occur in a way that would harm the approach.

When discussing the intercultural aspects of this work, it was possible to identify that, both in the folklore narratives portrayed in anime and in Amazonian narratives, the importance of nature and supernatural elements is widely emphasized and valued. Regarding the use of Japanese folk culture and anime in classes, it was interesting to reflect on the way the Japanese portray their culture, both to themselves and to people of other nationalities. This reflection can be related to the way Brazilians portray their own folk culture, often valuing foreign cultural narratives to the detriment of their own culture.

Another issue addressed, especially related to Amazonian folk narratives, was the exploration of regional identity and belonging. The students brought their own narratives or narratives from residents of their communities, which provided an additional challenge for practicing output in the target language, however with great results.

This approach was also characterized by emphasizing the practice of different language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) during classes. With the focus on Storytelling, students used grammatical norms only as support to produce narratives. The true focus being the communicative intention itself, in addition to the students' autonomy that was promoted through their decisions about the choice of narratives and the way they were approached.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this work, we sought to analyze the textual productions of students in English through the teaching approach based on Storytelling. Dealing with the main findings, it was concluded that the use of Japanese folklore narratives portrayed in anime to work on intercultural aspects and as authentic materials was considerably effective, taking into account the students' engagement in classes and the cultural reflections that occurred in a positive way.

Regarding the use of Amazonian folklore narratives, the approach of such narratives aimed at teaching the English language along with regional culture aspects had a positive impact on the teaching approach. It can be considered innovative and capable of promoting the cultural appreciation of students together with the contextualized teaching of an additional language.

The focus on narrative elements to be used in students' Storytelling textual productions was essential for understanding the narrative structure and its construction when dealing with the Storytelling teaching approach.

Returning to the research question initially set: How can a Storytelling teaching

approach based on the use of Amazonian narratives be significant in an English language course for adults? We understand that such an approach can emphasize the cultural and regional aspects of students in English teaching and stimulate them to learn in a more contextualized and communicative way. Furthermore, the use of authentic materials of Japanese folklore narratives present in anime can serve as a positive and stimulating resource for students, providing intercultural contexts within the class, as well as engagement to local folklore. Finally, we can state that the objectives of this work were achieved.

For the possible developments of this research, we reinforce topics that delve into the use of Japanese folklore narratives depicted in anime, and the ones addressing Amazonian narratives, as well as deeper exploration of the narrative elements intrinsic to the folklore narratives aspects to be worked on in the classroom.

Therefore, by reflecting on the relevance of this study and its implications, it is expected to contribute positively to the field of applied linguistics and English teaching, offering new perspectives, especially to the use of Amazonian folklore in additional language teaching.

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