From local to global: Visual strategies of glocalisation in digital storytelling

M. Dolores Porto a,*, Isabel Alonso Belmonteb,1

a Universidad de Alcalá, Spain
b Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

Abstract

This paper’s main goal is to explore the function of images in the structuring of digital stories and their role in the construction of global meanings from personal experiences. Findings presented here come from the analysis of thirty digital stories taken from several specialised websites on the Internet. The methodology we used is a mixture of the traditional Labovian narrative schema (Labov, 1972) and a multimodal – mainly visual – analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Among the most interesting results, 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.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the structural and multimodal characterisation of a new genre of narratives, that of digital stories.2 In digital stories, people from different geographical locations, social backgrounds, and cultural traditions can tell personal experiences to different audiences around the world via the Internet. In line with the recent phenomenon of glocalisation, this practice allows the interaction of local cultural aspects with universal matters and so raises a number of questions as for the way in which such stories can be interpreted by an audience with different cultural values and interests. This is the main motivation behind this article.

The meaning of the term glocalisation is apparently quite straightforward, i.e. it is a combination of globalisation and localisation. However, the term is so widely used that it is difficult to find a comprehensive definition for it. Most of all, the term, as much as that of globalisation, has been primarily used in the fields of economics and marketing as “the process whereby global corporations tailor products and marketing to particular local circumstances to meet variations in consumer demand” (Maynard, 2003: 6), but it has become a very popular concept and transcended boundaries in order to become commonplace in sociological, cultural matters, including education, language, media, art, literature, translation, politics, etc.

Even if the concept itself is not completely new, i.e. adapting foreign, global tendencies to local needs and habits, the popularity of the blend has much to do with recent concerns on globalisation and with the widespread fear that globalisation...
actually involves a threat to local, cultural specificities, especially as it seems to be always Western habits and values which are extended and imposed on the rest of the world. However, since its very beginnings (Robertson, 1992, 1995; Swyngedouw, 1997; Bauman, 1998), the term was coined in order to convey the idea that globalisation does not only involve homogenisation and that global and local must not be regarded as opposite concepts. On the contrary, glocalisation is conceived as the interaction between global and local forces and so, the concept emerges as a solution: “Glocalisation means that local cultures can be valorised and revitalised through the means and opportunities offered by globalisation in order to make them a source of enrichment for all the individuals involved”.  

Considering all the above, digital stories reveal the perfect paradigm of glocalisation, as there is a constant interaction between local and global elements both in their original motivation and in their final appearance and structure. Thus, the goal of this paper is to explore the visual mechanisms by which i) local and global perspectives interact in digital narratives and ii) a global, multicultural audience can understand and get identified with the personal, culturally specific events narrated in them. To achieve our purposes, thirty digital narratives were selected from different nongovernmental and nonprofit organisation websites on the Internet and analysed applying the traditional Labovian schema of oral narratives of personal accounts (Labov, 1972; Labov and Waletzky, 1967/1997), combined with a multimodal approach which takes into account the integration of textual, visual and, to a lesser extent, acoustic elements in the stories (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

2. Digital storytelling and glocalisation

Digital stories are short multimodal narratives by which people who are not professional in literature nor computer technologies attend to a workshop and learn to create a short narrative, usually on very personal experiences and worries, that combines digital images and photos with their own recorded voice and then publish them on the Internet. The genre was first developed at the Centre for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in California in the early 1990s and has since expanded all around the world.

Undoubtedly, digital stories can be claimed to be “glocal” from their very beginning. Usually told in the first person or a false third person, most digital narratives report on a difficult personal experience that the author eventually overcomes, and encourages others to fight against adversity. Indeed, these narratives tend to have an exemplary purpose and so contain some kind of moral or advice which is available via the Internet for anybody at any other time (years or decades later) and at any other place (maybe thousands of kilometres away). This mixture between traditional everyday communicative practices – telling personal stories, collecting, and sharing personal images – and new production and distribution formats is characteristic of glocalisation (Burgess, 2006).

In the combination of text, images and voice that integrate digital stories, glocalisation also comes into play. Even if the textual part of the story may be neutral and culturally unspecific, the images and the music, which tend to be text supporting, contextualise the story in a distinct culture and locate the story in a particular place and time. It must be noted, though, that much of this is the result of the process of creation of these stories in workshops, as they are often carried out in a community with specific interests or problems. In other words, although the narratives analysed are created individually and deal with personal topics, there is a collective goal in their construction and an exemplifying purpose in their publication by the organisations which host them. As a matter of fact, many of the stories which integrate our sample were uploaded onto the Internet by nongovernmental organisations with specific aims, such as fighting social rejection to HIV, promoting education in poor areas, improving the quality of health care in Africa or India, etc. As these workshops are held in communities sharing interests in a small town or neighbourhood, they help establish links in those communities, encouraging local social cohesion. So, for instance, Bristol stories claim as its main aim “to gain deeper insight into Bristol’s history and know more about the cultural tapestry conformated by the people living in the city”. To this effect, much has been said about the alleged democratizing potential of digital stories as they allow “ordinary people” to be heard and take part in the cultural life of their area (Burgess, 2006: 6). Also, the adoption of the Internet, a global network, for local communication within a neighbourhood is considered by Hampton (2010) as an effect of glocalisation itself.

In sum, it becomes evident that digital stories are, from their original conception, a good example of glocal activity, in which local and global elements are in a constant interplay. They embody the slogan “think globally, act locally”, since they are created at a completely local basis, but are thought to transcend those limits and reach a global audience. Also, they narrate culturally specific events, but intend to deal with more general, universal worries and fears. Finally, they are traditionally conceived as storytelling, but technologically implemented and distributed.

Taking into account the issues raised by glocalisation in this new emerging genre, we aim at examining how local and global aspects interact in digital stories and the role of images in this interaction. Also, we intend to explore which pictorial evaluative devices allow a global audience to be identified with individual, personal experiences in different parts of the world.

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3. Sample and methodology

Our sample includes thirty digital stories which were selected from very popular digital storytelling websites such as The Center for Digital Storytelling and Creative Narrations. Other stories were taken from webpages hosted by well known nongovernmental organisations which normally use them to lobby and advocate on particular issues such as the abolition of racial and sexual discrimination, the promotion of gender equity, etc. (see the Appendix for the complete list of stories). As for their selection, no attention was given to particular topics and no variables of sex or age were considered either. Consequently, our sample does not constitute a formal corpus, but a first multimodal approach to the analysis of the genre. Special attention was only paid to the fact that the digital storytelling websites were hosted in different continents to guarantee that several cultural approaches to the narratives are considered. In relation to this, even if from different cultural environments – India, Africa, United Kingdom, USA, Philippines... –, all stories are narrated in English. The rationale behind this language bias has to do with both assuring an accurate analysis of the texts by the researchers and the obvious globalising intention of reaching a wider audience on the side of the authors that chose this language for their stories.5

As for the methodology, once the sample of stories was compiled, they were coded by a number and the acronym of the organisation that promoted its elaboration, e.g. Engender Health: EH (see Appendix) and the audio was transcribed. Later, the traditional Labovian schema was applied to our stories in order to determine how the different modes, especially textual and visual, contributed to their construction. Next, we analysed if the different sections were more locally or globally oriented, that is, whether they were focused on the description of individual, personal circumstances, or whether they addressed more universal topics (i.e. love, illness, revenge, etc.). We also explored whether they had a glocal orientation, that is, whether they exhibited an integration of both global and local elements, for example, the framing of a personal experience in a more global context. Finally, we analysed the role of images in these three different orientations.

3.1. Labovian schema of personal narratives

According to Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997), oral narratives are most often structured in the schema of abstract, orientation, complication, resolution and coda. Each of these categories serves to address a hypothetical question about the narrative structure and fulfills a different function in a story, as Table 1 shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>What was this about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Who or what are involved in the story and when and where did it take place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>Then what happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>What finally happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>How does it all end?</td>
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According to Labov (1972), evaluation is the most important narrative category as it reveals the real purpose of telling the story to a given audience. Indeed, we believe that evaluation is the key for the globalisation of such personal, local stories, what makes them worthy to be told to such a wide audience. It has been displayed vertically in Table 1 (following Romano et al., 2013) because, differently from all the other structural components considered to this point – abstract, orientation, complication, resolution and coda –, evaluation is not confined to a specific part of the narration, but can be present all through it, at every level of language structure and use (Polanyi, 1981), often overlapping other functions (Labov...).

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5 This is particularly significant in a group of stories that can be seen published both in English and Spanish, as is the case of Sacrifice (SC2) and Privilege (SC3) or for those that are originally in a different language – Afrikaans in The Balcony (SC6) – and then subtitled.
and Waletzky, 1967; Hoey, 2001; Bednarek, 2008). Moreover, in multimodal texts like digital stories, we will see that evaluation can be conveyed by a number of different modes, especially the visual one, or by the combination of images and text.6

In order to analyse the main textual and visual devices by which evaluation is displayed in our stories, we propose here a multimodal adaptation of Labov’s classification of syntactic devices (1972: 378–392) used by the narrator to make evaluative comments. This researcher divides them into four different headings: (1) intensifiers, which select certain events and strengthen, or intensify, the actions in some way, (2) comparators, which compare the events which did occur to those which did not occur, (3) correlatives, which bring together two events which actually occurred so that they are conjoined in a single independent clause and finally (4) explicatives, which occur as separate clauses “appended to the main narrative clause or to an explicit evaluative clause”.

3.2. Multimodal analysis

In order to classify any textual or visual element in the stories under Labov’s intensifiers, comparators, correlatives and explicatives, we expanded on previous work on the multimodal characterisation of digital storytelling (Alonso Belmonte et al., 2013). We first studied the textual story itself, as well as the meaning of any possible written text on screen (titles, introductory slides and credits) describing its position on the image, its font (e.g. white fonts on black) and its size. We also paid attention to edited images, for example, bubbles on photographs, cartoons, etc.

Regarding the visual mode, we first identified the type of image which accompanies the verbal mode in our stories (photos, cartoons, drawings, collages, etc.) and its main features (edited or not, public, private, etc.). Also, we analysed the structure of the story (i.e. repetitions, linearity, etc.) in the combination of text and images, specifically their size, sharpness of focus, or amount of detail or texture shown, tonal contrast, colour contrast, placement in the visual field, perspective, and any cultural symbolism associated with the image that enhances verbal language.

4. Analysis of the sample

For presentation purposes, we follow here Labov’s (1972) narrative schema of abstract, orientation, complication, resolution, coda and evaluation.

4.1. Abstract

The abstract is an optional category in natural narratives of personal experiences and, as such, it is not always present in our sample. Indeed, in our sample, almost 25% of the narrators, that is, 8 stories out of 30, do not include an abstract.

When present, abstracts tend to be locally oriented, since the narrator tries to catch the listener’s attention towards the personal story that is going to be narrated. This localisation effect is usually verbalised, with one or two sentences at the beginning of the story, as in the following:

- I lived a life of privilege (SC3)
- My mother used to tell me, don’t go out and get in no trouble. Next thing I know, I got out and got into trouble (CN2)
- I was told to forget about it and that he’d grow out of it (DS1)

These sentences are supported by images displaying photos of the narrators themselves, often as a child, that serve to identify the person speaking.

However, there are a few examples, where pictures play a more significant role in the abstract, as in My shoes (SC8), which displays the photo of a pair of old, worn boots while a female voice says:

- These are my shoes (SC8)

The image here advances the content of the story, i.e. it is a visual abstract, as the story explains the difficulties of the narrator both as a Lesbian and an immigrant. Also, a long, purely visual abstract can be seen in International Living in Southern China (IL1) where several videos are displayed summarising the experience of Western young people living in China before the narrator starts speaking. A similar strategy is used in My Ilogan (MS1).

All these textual or visual abstracts are mostly locally oriented. There is only one story in our sample where the abstract can be said to be globally oriented. Sibongiseni’s Story (EHS) starts with a slide showing a question, Love is?, in white against a black background. Here, the written mode on screen is used as a powerful resource to focus the listener’s attention to the meaning and impact of the abstract’s words while the narrator is still silent.

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6 By “text” or “textual”, we will always refer in this paper to the narration itself, i.e. the script followed by the narrator unfolded in its written and oral form. The analysis of other verbal elements such as the narrators’ voices, their timbre, rhythm, accent, etc. are, unfortunately, out of the scope of this paper.
Finally, four of the stories (13.5%) can be said to show a glocal orientation, since they integrate both global and local elements in their abstract. This is the case of *What the water gave me* (CN1), which narrates how trichloroethylene (TCE), a chemical compound, poisoned water and caused the death of the author’s grandmother and her own disease. In the abstract, a voice starts saying:

- *I remember thinking that if we didn’t drink bottled water, then we would die* (CN1)

while the slide shows the dictionary entry for TCE (trichloroethylene). The interaction between the narrator’s voice and the written definition in the abstract of this story frames a personal experience in a more global context.

Also a symbolic or metaphorical image can play as a visual global abstract, while the narrator localises the story as in *Mixed Race Me* (SC7) (see Fig. 1):

**4.2. Orientation and complication**

It is quite straightforward that both orientation and complication are the categories where the individual, local aspects are mostly concentrated and therefore, where more personal, culturally specific pictures are shown.

It is in these sections that the narrators locate the story in a specific time and place and tell their personal stories. In the narratives taken from the channel “Living in Bristol” or “Stories from India”, the location is established from the very first moment. In other narratives, however, stories do not make it explicit verbally, either in their title or in the text, and in those cases images help the audience guess the geographical and cultural locations where these stories take place: i.e. by showing a landscape or a map (SC8), or by portraying other cues at the background of a photograph, e.g. the style of buildings (UM1), the way people dress (BS1, SC8, EH6). Pictures of celebrations, like birthday parties or weddings (SC7, UM1) also help to situate the audience in a local, socio-cultural context. When the narrator starts to tell about his/her past, old photographs are often shown of themselves and their families at different stages in his/her life, providing a temporal sequence of the events narrated that matches the linguistic cues and markers. Very frequently, black and white or sepia photographs reinforce this idea of past, gone times (SC5, SC6), alternating with colour images referring to present times. As for the main participants in the story, most pictures elaborate the unverbalised qualities of these characters for example, showing information about the people’s colour and race (SC6, SC7, CN3, WL1, WL2), about their social condition (SC8) or about some other circumstances that surround the characters’ life: poverty and rurality (CN3), sexuality (WL2, SC1) etc. The narrator usually appears at the very centre of most pictures, as the nucleus of information to which other elements (other people, objects, etc.) are ancillary. All these personal and local images reinforce the local orientation of these story components.

Some other times, however, symbolic images with a globally accepted meaning are mixed with personal ones during both the orientation and the complication section of local stories. This allows the narrator to reach a heterogeneous audience and to convert a minor, private story, often culturally specific, and only individually relevant into a universal, exemplifying story. For instance, in *Nelao’s story* (EH1), the personal account of the narrator’s experience of living with HIV includes symbolic images (the HIV lace, interrogation signs and common icons internationally accepted for “silence” or “exit”) which help international audience to understand her locally contextualised suffering and identify with the narrator’s feelings.

**4.3. Resolution**

The resolution section is accordingly local and personal, as it explains the final outcome of the specific events narrated in the story. They are mostly stories of change, so resolutions are usually verbalised in the form of a change for the narrator and here images play a vital role visualising that change. For example, in *Lillo’s story* (EH8), the narrator learned early about the...
problems of gender-based violence with an abusive alcoholic father, and decided to become a gender activist in order to stop the violence. The resolution section of this story starts when he declares with a positive tone:

- I'm a changed man (EH8)

This statement is supported by a colourful and optimistic photo of the narrator smiling together with his colleagues.

Sometimes, resolutions are not made explicit in the story, that is, the audience does not know how the local story ends. This happens in 40% of our sample stories. In the above mentioned Nelao's story (EH1), the audience is not told whether she finally finds a partner or not, and in Stop Bullying (DS1), a story about a British girl who suffered bullying at school, we know nothing about what happened to her. In these local stories, as we will see in the following section, the focus is not on the resolution of the personal difficulty the author has to overcome, but on the existence of a global issue (i.e. HIV positive, school bullying) that persists and that the narrator nor anybody cannot solve individually. That is why we can talk about the non-resolution component in digital stories.

4.4. Coda

It is usually in the coda where local stories become global. After the recount of the personal experiences, whereas images still display the narrators themselves and their friends or families, the text may address the audience as if exhorting them:

- So come on, what's stopping you? If I can do it, so can you. (BW1)
- You've got your whole life ahead you. It ain't worth the attention. (CN2)
- So, if you turn a blind eye to bullying, stop, just think how it could be affecting someone like me (DS1)
- I have a favor to ask to all men: Please help your wife for the housework everyday (UM1)

However, the shift towards the audience is not so explicit in about a third of the sample stories. In BS2, for example, a woman explains how she overcame her fears and dared to take part in a theatre performance. The last sentence says:

- It was one of the best experiences in my life, (BS2)

which, despite the personal, local orientation, implicitly encourages other people to put away their fears and dare to success in something new and different in the same way she did.

Some images function as a coda themselves. This happens in The balcony (SC6) and in Mixed race me (SC7) where the visual coda consists on the repetition of the first slide completing a sort of circular structure: abstract (global)-story (local)-coda (global). Besides, symbolic images work as codas in a small number of stories (a clenched fist in EH7, a road in SC9, the sky in SC3).

The addressing to the audience in the coda, either explicit or implicit, as much as its globalising intention, turning a personal experience into a warning or advice to others, make the coda the most evaluative section of this kind of stories, and images, again, play a leading role in this effect.

4.5. Evaluation

The limitations of the Labovian model, pointed out already by many scholars (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Herman, 2009; Hyvärinen et al., 2010), became evident also for us, especially those concerning the description of the evaluative component in narratives. Indeed, we consider that evaluation is particularly relevant in this genre, where the narration of personal experiences intends to reach a universal significance. As a matter of fact, we claim here that it is precisely the use of evaluative resources which makes local stories global, and the use of images allows narrators to convey some evaluative meanings that are not explicit in the textual component of the narratives. As pointed out in the Introduction, we adapted Labovian classification of evaluative devices for the multimodal analysis of the stories.

4.5.1. Multimodal evaluative intensifiers

According to Labov (1972), intensifiers are linguistic or paralinguistic devices that the narrator uses to reinforce one or some of the events taking place in the narrative (1972: 378). Apart from obvious textual devices to perform this intensification, such as exclamations, adverbs, emotionally laden vocabulary, etc., digital stories make use of images and music in order to intensify the meanings and so attract the audience attention to a specific point of the story.

In this sense, it is interesting to highlight the use of symbols and colours in the sample stories analysed. For example, in Nelao's story (EH1), where the account of the struggles that the author faces in living with HIV is supported all through the narrative by images in red, black and white. Apart from establishing visual coherence, this strategy adds an emotional value to the story being told, signalling the sadness, the worries (black and white) that HIV (culturally associated to red colour, also the colour of blood) has brought to her life. The contrast is particularly meaningful when, at the end of the story, bright happy
colours (green, yellow) appear in photographs with her family while the author claims that she has a happy life and still hopes to find love one day.

As for symbols, they can also be used to visualise the narrator’s evaluation on what is being told. For example, in James’ Story (EH3), where a Stop traffic sign is displayed while the narrator says:

- We treat women as objects and this is wrong (EH3)

Also edited images serve the purpose of intensification and evaluation. So, for instance in To Every Child (CN3) the image of “Little Cousin José” is framed in a heart-shape, so intensifying the narrator’s feelings towards him. The same photo is shown at a different point of the story, but this time the child is placed at school and surrounded by monsters while the text explains the narrator’s fears about his future at school (see Fig. 2).

4.5.2. Multimodal comparators

Comparators provide evaluation by contrasting events which did occur to those which did not occur (Labov, 1972: 380). One of the best examples in our corpus of how images can provide this kind of comparison for evaluation is in Stop Bullying (DS1), where the text gives account of the effects of bullying on the narrator when at school, but at the same time, bright coloured photographs of happy children are displayed. The story alternates these photographs with black slides with a text in big white fonts on the way in which she was being bullied: “Sly comments”, “a look”, “name calling”. Such a contrast provides a double scope information, on the one side, what should have been and on the other what actually was happening (see Fig. 3).

4.5.3. Correlatives

Correlatives bring together two events which actually occurred so that they are conjoined in a single independent clause. In multimodal stories, the correlation between images and text that are apparently unrelated can serve an evaluative function and they typically produce multimodal metaphors that enhance the meaning of the stories. This is the case in The Balcony (SC6), where the narrator explains the partial success of a project on gang intervention carried out in South Africa to overcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image 1</th>
<th>Image 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A boy in my Primary School was constantly picking on me. I eventually had to get used to it. (...)”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He would say little nagging things like (...) you’re a geek! (...)”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3. Slides and text from Stop Bullying (DS1).
racism. His story is metaphorically related with another project: the building of a balcony where he and his friend long to spend some time enjoying the views. The balcony is not complete, but they decide not to wait any longer and enjoy the views anyway, as much as they decide to remember the success of their project to stop violence even if peace is not complete. The interweaving of images and comments of both projects involves the audience in the story and blend towards the end of the story:

- *But we can't wait for perfection before celebrating new friendships. The balcony is always under construction* (SC6)

Evaluation, then, is not explicit and cannot be found in one or another element of the story, either linguistic or visual, but in the correlation of images representing a balcony under construction and the text referring to the peace-making project, that is, in the whole interpretation of the metaphor.

4.5.4. Explicatives

We have seen above that images in a digital story actually explain the information provided by the text. This kind of explanation can be analysed as salience (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) or as different forms of identification (Unsworth and Cléirigh, 2009). However, it is also possible to find examples where the images explain the text with an obvious evaluative purpose. For example, in *Bad Choices* (CN2), the image of the narrator as a criminal wanted by the police is the explanation to the text “the attention that I got ain't the attention that I wanted(…)” with obvious inferences of a negative evaluation on it (see Fig. 4).

5. Discussion: glocalising narratives through images

The analysis carried out in this paper allows us to claim here that images in digital stories play a multifunctional role, being far more than a mere support for the verbal text. Indeed, the pictures analysed serve different macro level functions that altogether, help to turn personal, private experiences into universal issues with a counselling, encouraging intention.

To start with, images play a structuring function in digital narrations, guiding the listeners as signposts through the different components of the story and providing textual coherence (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Although the basic components of narratives as described by Labov, i.e. abstract, orientation, complication, resolution and coda, are constituted throughout the stories either visually or acoustically as much as textually, we have seen that sometimes a single image serves as a visual abstract or coda (EH7, SC6, SC9…).

Secondly, images perform a localising function throughout the stories analysed. In all the narrative components, images enhance and intensify the local, specific aspects of the story. It is also interesting to note that besides pictures with an individual (local) experience, there are also symbolic images and universal icons in some of the stories, which are used by the narrators to facilitate understanding of their personal problems to a global audience with different cultural backgrounds. However, in the coda, which brings the audience back from the time of the narrative to the present moment, the localising function of images becomes “glocal” when combined with the textual mode. This is so mostly because, in the sample analysed, codas tend to be future-oriented, so that other people in other parts of the world do not have to suffer the same problems or can learn how to overcome them. Therefore, even when images and text show clear local effects, they are implicitly addressed to the audience as exemplary and therefore can be regarded as glocal.

The glocalising effects of images are frequently enhanced by the evaluative meaning assigned to some of them. Evaluation has proven the most significant component in our digital narratives as it turns local, personal experiences into global matters and so makes them meaningful for a wide audience. It can be found in all narrative components, although it is usually the coda which is more explicitly evaluative and addressed to the audience, what explains that most global effects are concentrated in this part of the narrative.

![Fig. 4. Slide and text form Bad Choices (CN2).](image-url)
At this point, it must be noted that one of the original contributions of this paper is the multimodal adaptation of Labov’s syntactic devices for the expression of evaluative meaning. The analysis of the sample has evidenced that images can serve as intensifiers with evaluative purposes (EH1, CN3). Also, that images may provide information that apparently contradicts the one delivered by the text and in this contrast there is an evaluative intention (DS1). In some stories, the correlation of what is told and what is shown produces compelling multimodal metaphors where the narrator’s evaluation on the events is manifest (SC6). Finally, images can explain the evaluative intention of the information provided textually (CN2). Thus, we can conclude that, far from serving as mere support for the text, images have proved to be a powerful resource that enhances the evaluative significance of the story by compressing a great deal of added meaning to that expressed by words.

6. Concluding remarks

Digital storytellers make sense of the world around them by constructing narratives that explain and interpret events both to themselves and to other people. In a synergistic combination of text and images, the narrated events provide the common framework inside which the local experience-driven contextual information is not only codified but also shared and reduced to a common denominator in the coda. In this context, images are used with a glocalising general purpose that turns the narrator’s private experiences into universal matters with a moral. Thus, local narrators can benefit from the common (global) understanding of the world, while different people around the world can benefit from individual (local) experience. Unfortunately, the picture described here is based on the analysis of a small sample of thirty narratives. A more corpus-based research will, with no doubt, enrich this preliminary work on the glocalisation strategies performed by images in digital narratives.

Appendix

(Last accessed 6 August 2013)

References


Dr. M. Dolores Porto Requejo received her Ph D from the University Autónoma de Madrid in 2004 and has been a lecturer in English Language and Linguistics at the University of Alcalá since 2005. Her research has always been related to the connections between mind and language and she has mostly worked in the processes of interpretation of discourse, whether literary, technical, academic or spontaneous, mostly in the cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics framework. Her most recent work has been published in Metaphor and Symbol, Text & Talk, Metaphor and the Social World and Review of Cognitive Linguistics.

Dr. Isabel Alonso Belmonte holds a Ph.D. in English Philology from University Complutense of Madrid and currently works as an ELT associate professor at the University Autóñoma de Madrid (Spain). Her areas of specialisation are discourse analysis and applied linguistics to language teaching (both Spanish and English as a foreign language), areas in which she has extensively published. Her most recent work can be read in prestigious journals such as English Text Construction, Text & Talk, Journal of Pragmatics, and Discourse & Communication. She has participated in national and international research projects on media discourse, foreign language teaching and linguistic analysis.

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