

Iterations and evaluations of anecdote materials in second language (L2) lessons

第二言語学習者体験談の教材化に関する推敲と評価

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Abstract

Anecdotes, a form of personal storytelling, appear to be a natural fit in oral communication classes. Some second language educators have encouraged the use of anecdotes for classroom tasks (Jones, 2001; Salli-Çopur, 2008; Wajnryb, 2003). However, there is a large gap of empirical research on anecdotes. This account provides a qualitative study about the implementation of anecdotes from the instructor's perspective through a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004). It also provides a record of over a decade of anecdote-related material development by the instructor. As a result of this reflective study, the authors found that anecdotes are a practical way to implement tasks that have positive impacts, including student engagement and increased awareness of oral production skills.

Key words : Anecdotes, Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN), Second language learners

概 要

コミュニケーションに重きを置いた英語授業において、学習者自身の個人体験談は有効な教材と言える。実際、何人かの第二言語教育研究者たちは授業内での個人体験談の使用を提唱している (Jones, 2001; Salli-Çopur, 2008; Wajnryb, 2003)。しかしながら、個人体験談の使用とそれが教師、学習者に与える影響に関する実証研究は非常に少ない。本研究は、Scholarly Personal Narrative (学術的個人談話) (SPN; Nash, 2004) を利用し、個人体験談の教材使用に関する経験の軌跡を教師の観点から追ったものである。結果、個人体験談を利用することは学習者の意欲を高めると共に、英語発言力に関する意識向上にも寄与することが分かった。

キーワード：個人体験談、学術的個人談話、第二言語学習者

Introduction

This paper will report on a qualitative study at Japanese universities in which students were trained how to tell an anecdote in English. The aim of this paper is to provide a *thick description* (Geertz, 1973) of the creation, execution, and evaluation of a storytelling task from the instructor's perspective. Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004) was chosen as the methodological approach since we wanted to detail a highly contextualized account of its material development process. Additionally, this paper hopes to establish further research into student-told anecdotes in a second language (L2) classroom.

The paper is structured as follows. Section one introduces relevant literature on storytelling and classroom materials. Section two details the methodology of the present study. Section three will then provide a reflexive section in the form of a scholarly personal narrative. Section four offers a pertinent discussion of the results. After the conclusion, copies of the materials are shared in the appendices.

Literature Review

Storytelling has been an important form of communication across time and cultures. Stories such as the Old English *Beowulf*, Homer's *The Illiad and The Oddesy*, or sacred texts of major religions can trace their roots to an oral storytelling tradition. People have been telling stories to entertain, educate, and inform from the earliest days of human civilization. Even with the advent of modern media such as social media and YouTube videos, storytelling has relevance today. Shonda Rhimes (2017), television producer for the hit TV show *Grey's Anatomy*, declared:

The need for people to gather together and exchange their stories and to talk about the things that feel universal, the idea that we all feel a compelling need to watch stories, to tell stories, to share stories – sort of the gathering around the campfire to discuss the things that tell each one of us that we are not alone in the world. Those things, to me, are never going to change.

Storytelling can be divided into two types: fictional and non-fictional. For the purposes of this paper, fictional stories, such as legends and folk tales, will not be considered. Non-fictional stories, specifically personal narratives in the form of anecdotes will be the focus of this paper.

An anecdote is defined here as a short speech act in which an individual provides a reportable event. Labov (1997) defined a *most reportable event* as the reason a speaker has to “hold the floor longer” (p. 405), and as a central requirement of a personal narrative. An anecdote is a personal narrative containing such as a reportable event, although reportability will depend on a variety of contextual factors such as culture, age, etc. In short, reciting a list of previous events does not constitute an anecdote; the speaker believes that she has something of import to share with an interlocutor.

Sharing anecdotes is a routine function of everyday language. However, in curricula that prioritize formal registers of language (i.e., English for Academic Purposes), where students are typically taught how to voice opinions or write critical essays, little attention has been focused on how to tell a basic personal story. The potential of anecdotes in L2 contexts has been promoted by educators (e.g., Jones, 2001; Şallı-Çopur, 2008; Wajnryb, 2003). However, while studies exist on storytelling, ones specifically concerning anecdotes are few: there is a large gap between pedagogical enthusiasm and empirical research.

From a broader perspective, in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) storytelling has received some attention for pedagogical purposes. Lucarevski (2016) reviewed numerous studies about storytelling and SLA. The studies cited covered a wide range of story genres and delivery mechanisms, including fables, personal stories, and digital narratives. Importantly, he identified several gaps in the research literature, such as the previous studies' emphasis on children, lack of negative reports, and a dearth of research that answers the question, "how impactful is storytelling on the L2 curriculum and those who teach it?" (p. 39). In this paper we aim to decisively answer the latter question by thickly detailing the instructor's material development and its evaluation.

Joachim is an author of this paper and he designed the classroom materials on anecdotes. With the continued development of personal computing and desktop publishing, anyone can produce classroom materials with relative ease. Educators need not rely on publishing companies anymore as electronic textbooks can be distributed to students' devices with a few clicks. However, despite this potential to create customized materials, many language educators use commercially produced textbooks (Richards, 2014).

We considered it important to evaluate instructor-produced materials. Ellis (1997) noted the value of carrying out Retrospective Evaluation. This is to determine whether a particular classroom material has worked or not and what changes could be made to achieve better learning outcomes. Moreover, he noted that not much published research has focused on course materials, instead emphasizing macro-level reports, and that there is a significant need for empirical studies on classroom materials of language educators, especially at the micro to verify "that classroom events are interpreted as accurately and systematically as possible" (Ellis, 1997, p. 41).

This paper's first aim is to provide a rich account on the classroom material development on anecdotes from the perspective of a language instructor. Since this topic lacks much empirical research, this work provides a foundational starting point for investigating L2 anecdotes. Secondly, it will report on pedagogical implications that future educators interested in implementing storytelling might be able to apply to their language teaching classrooms. Finally, it is hoped that this reflective endeavor, paraphrasing Barkhuizen (2011), a pioneer of narrative inquiry in TESOL, will result in more awareness and therefore understanding of ourselves as language educators.

Methodology

The paper reports on a qualitative study which is epistemologically oriented with a constructivist-interpretive paradigm. We believe that this approach is most appropriate because it will allow the "knower and respondent to co-construct experience" (Hiratsuka, 2014, p. 3). The research itself contains the five characteristics of qualitative research in detail through a naturalistic, descriptive, inductive, process-oriented, and meaning-focused approach (Hiratsuka, 2014). That is, this paper employs the hallmarks of qualitative research in order to provide a thick description, a *microscopic* account that not only records observations, but also context, culture, and other interpretations (Geertz, 1973). In short, we are actively co-constructing our interpretations based on Joachim's recollections of his classroom experiences employing anecdotes.

In this paper, the major unit of analysis is in the form of a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN). SPN was developed by an American professor of education, Robert Nash, as a research methodology to use written reflections about personal experiences as a data source. Ng and Carney (2017) wrote, "SPN is little known, but potentially important emerging methodology" (p. 134) even in fields beyond the social

sciences. While some have disqualified SPN as subjective accounts inappropriate for scholarly work, Brookfield (2013) defended SPNs for two reasons: the first is SPN's references to literature, and the second is its generalizability. In short, true SPNs are not simply a scholar's confessional; they are embedded with appropriate references and are positioned to inform.

In fact, SPNs have been published as empirical studies in peer-reviewed academic journals such as *Harvard Educational Review*, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* and *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* (i.e., Reddick, R. J., & Sáenz, V. B. (2012); Love, B. H., Templeton, E., Ault, S., & Johnson, O. (2021); Combs, L. D., Dellarosa, M., Kim, M.-J., Pittman, A. G.-J., Gilbert, C., Smith, S. J., Smith, T., Valley, S. N., & Pasque, P. A. (2021)). These three journals earned Q1 impact factors of 1.52, 1.06, and 0.51 by Scimago Journal & Country (SJR) in 2020, which meant that these journals were in the top quartile in their respective fields. Significantly, SPNs seem to resonate particularly with minority scholars. Reddick (2014) uses a SPN as a core unit of analysis in his research article capturing his journey as a Black male in the White academy. He described the SPN as something that can “utilize my experience as a unit of analysis for translating the personal to a larger polity, following in the scholarly tradition of scholars of color that have used their journeys to make meaning of the academic landscape” (p. 152). Therefore, this account provides Joachim's words as a voice from an ethnic minority in the SLA field.

In SLA, few empirical research has been published using SPNs. Brooke (2017) reported on insights gained by an SPN reflection in his EFL writing class in Singapore in which a cultural misunderstanding caused him to reflect on trialing a new task in his writing classroom. Similar to his piece, we are attempting a deep reflection on the anecdote as a classroom task and project.

At first glance, SPN seems synonymous with autoethnography. Indeed, there are many similarities such as an emphasis on recording first-hand experiences. Additionally, autoethnographic pieces have been published and cited widely in top-tier journals in the TESOL field such as the seminal piece by Canagarajah (2012), published in *TESOL Quarterly*, in which he reflected upon his journey from novice teacher to TESOL professional. Even more than that SPN strives to, in Nash's own words, “bridge the gap between scholars, students, and the general public” (p. 39). In other words, it aims to produce research articles written in accessible language, free of technical jargon, with rigorous academic standards. SPN is positioned as inclusive, not exclusive, designed to broaden intellectual conversations beyond the academy (Nash, 2015). Nash and Bradley (2011) explained, “SPN writing starts with me, reaches out to the you, and ends up with universalizable themes that connect with the larger we” (p. 27).

Such reflexivity has also been called forth by researchers and scholars in SLA as well. Benson (2019) noted a shift from learner-centeredness to a person-centeredness emphasis in SLA research and contended that individual case studies are emblematic of this shift. Indeed, this account is an attempt to contribute to the reflexive, person-centered shift in SLA. We position ourselves as educators and researchers front and center, with our humanity, flaws and all, for the readers to see.

Moreover, this paper hopes to add to the burgeoning field of narrative inquiry in SLA. A general definition of narrative inquiry in SLA is working with people's stories in order to make sense of language learning experiences. Narrative inquiry in SLA is by no means a monolithic methodology (Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021). However, despite increased interest in narrative inquiry and quality publications, findings that employ narrative techniques are “still massively constrained by the conventions of academic writing and report genres” (Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021, p. 3). It is hoped that the SPN shared here results in sustained narrative knowledging as suggested in Barkhuizen (2011).

Other data consist of classroom materials. These are the actual classroom printed handouts from

Joachim's classes. These were developed from 2011 to 2021. For a summary of the context in which these were used, please refer below to Table 1 and for the major iterations of the materials Table 2.

Table 1 Teaching context from 2011 - 2021

Year	Institution type	Location	Curriculum	Required Materials	Students' academic year	Students' L1
2011	4-year private university	Chiba, Japan	EAP	None	3 rd or higher	Japanese
2014	Language school	Tokyo, Japan	General English	textbooks	none	Japanese
2016	4-year public university	Nagakute, Japan	EAP	None	2nd	Japanese

Table 2 Major iterations of anecdote materials

Iteration #	environment	classes/ minutes	Main material	Lesson focus	Anecdote delivery	Change from prev. version
1	CALL classroom	3 / 90 min. each	slideshow	Using GarageBand, professional advice	paired podcast	None
2	classroom	2 / 120 min. each	slideshow, handout	Narrative structure	Individual audio file	Added narrative
3	classroom	3 / 90 min. each	Paper handout	Narrative structure, grammar, voice modulation	class presentation	Added voice modulation, wordless comics
4	online (Zoom)	3 / 90 min. each	PDF handout	Narrative structure, grammar, voice modulation	Individual audio file	Deleted wordless comics, added set phrases

Employing an SPN writing style that accentuates Joachim's reflexive, introspective, and storytelling accounts, we now present below how the instructor (i.e., Joachim) made sense of the processes and evaluation of student anecdotes used in his L2 lessons over the years. The findings are organized around several iterations, according to Joachim's different professional affiliations and modes of instruction – i.e., Iteration 1 (Kaigan), Iteration 2 (Hudson), Iteration 3 (Shiro, face-to-face), and Iteration 4 (Shiro, online).

Findings

Iteration 1 (Kaigan)

Works have stories to tell. For instance, writers have chronicled the making of seminal rock and roll albums, and directors have recorded behind-the-scenes commentary about their films. Such accounts capture a design process that is almost never linear. Creatives are familiar with this iterative process, failing fast, and developing faster. In the 2000's I was an aspiring creative, working as a media producer in New York City.

Longing for Japan, risking a career, I left the bright lights of New York to teach at a quiet university outside Tokyo (retitled Kaigan University). The curriculum emphasized immersion and instructor-created materials. Previously, I had developed materials while in a graduate school teaching practicum. I was not particularly adept at it; I remember the stinging feeling when some students transferred out of my section because they complained that my materials were too easy. I challenged myself to improve. Moreover, material development reminded me of my former work as a media producer; I saw it as a creative act.

Eventually I designed and taught an elective course Advanced Media English. Students collaborated and created media projects in a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) classroom with 25 new Apple iMac computers. I wanted to simulate the experience of working in media production studio (Castellano, 2016). It was in this setting that I devised the anecdote task.

Reflecting on the course 10 years later, I submit that it was a technology course sprinkled with a bit of language pedagogy, as evidenced by the materials I developed. I spent most of the time simply trying to stay one or two weeks ahead of the skeleton syllabus I had devised months earlier. I wish I had more time to implement a course meticulously informed by SLA research. However, I was still guided by comprehensible input, output, and all the other greatest hits played by any decent TESOL program, as I was a recent graduate.

The anecdote idea emerged as the goal for an audio project. I planned to have students create an audio podcast using GarageBand software. I needed content for this audio podcast and decided recording an anecdote might work. I had no prior experience employing anecdotes as a classroom task, but I thought it couldn't be too difficult, it's just a short story, right? To make this task more collaborative, I divided students into pairs to record their anecdotes as a radio show.

Table 2 shows the workflow for classes dedicated to anecdotes. The first class focused on a brief lecture on storytelling, where I touched on its role in American culture and daily conversations. The second class focused on the parameters of the podcast project, a brief tutorial on GarageBand, and time dedicated to anecdote practice and feedback. The third class was designated as a project day in which I did not lecture, but assisted students in project completion. After the class, I instructed everyone to listen to their classmates' podcasts and post written feedback on Moodle. I scored the project on a 100-point scale according to the following criteria: content, production value, and language performance.

I realized that I relied on a "Google it" strategy with my students. Instead of explicit instruction, I directed students online for guidance. Instead of searching for academic publications on storytelling such as *Stories: Narrative Activities for the Language Classroom* (Wajnryb, 2003), I introduced my class to Ira Glass, host of the popular radio show *This American Life*. The following email to a student from October 2011 captured my "detailed" instructions:

Please have this document ready for class. You have to think of an interesting story from your life that you want to tell (keep it under two minutes please!). If you are not sure what to do, please contact a classmate about it. On Friday, we will do some audio recording, so it is important to prepare something!

Obviously, I had superficial knowledge of anecdotes at the time; I could only instruct students to say something interesting.

I am embarrassed by Iteration 1. The materials were light in linguistics and heavy on technology. Class materials consisted of an online list of storytelling advice links and a barebones printed handout (see

Appendix A). I lectured non-stop without any interactive activities. The slideshow presentations in the first two classes provided a few storytelling tips and centered on the GarageBand tutorial. From my recollection, students asked not about narratives but instead on technology (e.g., how to add sound effects). I question whether the students' own anecdotes developed at all. However, despite these shortcomings, I sensed the potential of student-told anecdotes and packed it away in my pedagogical toolbox – to this day I still remember vividly many of the anecdotes my students shared from Iteration 1.

Iteration 2 (Hudson)

My next university (retitled Hudson University) didn't have the luxury of an iMac production lab. Nor was it considered a true university: although it was managed by a famous American university, it operated as a language school. I taught in a general English program with students from a variety of ages and levels, and almost all of them were Japanese. Also, this was my first experience teaching with assigned textbooks. Despite this, I incorporated anecdote tasks in several courses but scaled down the scheduling requirements and technological aspects from Iteration 1. Since anecdotes worked well at my previous university, I thought it had an appropriate place in a speaking and listening course.

The biggest change in Iteration 2 (see Appendix B) involved technological simplification and pedagogical expansion. It was my intent to create an independent handout with clear directions, scaffolded tasks, and more linguistic support. Because I noticed that in Iteration 1 some students had struggled with thinking of an interesting anecdote, I added three sentence prompts in the first task. I thought these prompts could spark an interesting memory. I also included more content on a basic structure of a narrative, including suggested content for the beginning, middle, and end of a story. I changed my approach with respect to my slideshows as well: I inserted interactive tasks such as practicing specific storytelling skills. I realized that one glaring weakness from Iteration 1 is that students hardly had any opportunities to practice constructing narratives. I wanted students to learn by doing. In a sense, I was growing as a language educator, as I was looking for more ways to transition from teacher-led to student-led tasks.

Upon reflection, I started to notice how clear explanations, scaffolding, and pedagogical goals embedded within handouts could produce more dynamic lessons. State-of-the-art technology or dazzling slideshows are not required. Most importantly, I continued to observe that the students enjoyed sharing and listening to each other's anecdotes. Based on what I perceived as additional success, sharing anecdotes no longer felt experimental or risky. I could employ it whenever a course called for a speaking task or project.

Then, a big change happened in my life: I accepted a dream opportunity at a prestigious university in the U.S. I was tasked with innovating language education through CALL, without having to worry about teaching classes. However, it turned out to be a wrong turn. I realized that my ideal job was tied to a classroom, and not a particular university. I sorely missed teaching.

Still, my teaching philosophy continued to evolve. Volunteering was an influence as well. I had been involved with Balsamo Outreach for Learning and Teaching (BOLT), an NGO with teacher training programs in Southeast Asia. I realized that a tech-heavy approach could not work in all classrooms around the world. I also felt that courses that I designed such as Advanced Media English would further widen the gap between developed and developing countries since it required well-equipped classrooms. It seemed ridiculous to train teachers in GarageBand when even Wi-Fi was seen as a luxury. These experiences with motivated teachers in schools with no iMacs slated in a future budget, haunted me. I did not want to be a cog in the system, further exacerbating a divide between the haves and have nots.

I thought, “if I return to a classroom, I will simplify everything.” I will create simple and fair materials, ones that could be used in any classroom. I will provide useful content in paper handouts where students could use them at home, at their own pace, without worrying about a Wi-Fi connection. I will not impose a list of apps to install or websites to employ. I will distill lessons to the absolute essentials. I wondered how a Marie Kondo approach could apply to teaching: could I use one pencil, one paper, and one story from each student to change the world?

Iteration 3 (Shiro, face-to-face)

I did, in fact, return to the classroom. At this public university (retitled Shiro University) in Japan I taught in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program with very motivated students. It is here that my anecdote materials developed further and saw the most significant changes.

I was thinking of ways to make Iteration 3 more interactive (see Appendices C and D). I added a new picture telling activity in which students practiced telling a story using wordless comics. I found these online by the illustrator Josh Childress. I chose them because I felt interesting stories could be made from his unusual scenes. I created two sets of this handout with different comic strips so that each pair told a different story to each other. Also, each comic had a particular focus: comic one on narrative structure, comic two on details, and comic three on including dialogue of other characters.

My thinking at the time was that I had to scaffold the art of storytelling. Simply instructing students to “tell an interesting story” was insufficient. I was hoping that there would be some spillover into the telling of their own anecdotes.

A noteworthy addition is the inclusion of a lesson on vocal prosody. It was here that students were taught ways to manipulate their voices to impact an audience. In Iteration 1 I made a slide that read “Use Your Voice.” I realized that this was not helpful; I needed to provide examples and exercises. I created a simple table showing various prosodic effects (e.g., volume, speed) with relatable examples (see Appendix D). Again, learning by doing.

In the final class on storytelling students delivered their anecdotes as a presentation, another big change compared with previous iterations. Students memorized their anecdotes and told them from a sitting position at the front of the classroom, with a microphone recording their performances. After the class, I compiled the recordings into a radio show titled “A Story from My Life.” Based on my previous career, I treated my students as artists, as collaborators; it was important to produce a polished work. I noticed that students were often surprised and delighted when they received it. Perhaps they had expected the typical set of scores and feedback.

I also decided to start evaluating these materials through post project surveys. I enjoyed teaching these lessons and wanted to know areas of improvement. In particular, I saw that the lesson on vocal modulation had students engaged and laughing, as some of the examples were humorous. I noted that my decision for a live presentation of anecdotes had noticeably positive effects: the students were challenged and energized by telling their own anecdotes. The whole class enjoyed listening to their classmates’ stories as evidenced by their facial expressions as they exited the room.

I hypothesized that anecdotes have relevance to language students’ everyday lives. If my students were to study abroad, for instance, they would have more opportunities to share anecdotes in everyday situations compared to delivering academic presentations. Moreover, in 2019 I worked part-time as an IELTS examiner. I noticed that the second speaking task often requires students to share a short anecdote. I realized that anecdote training is relevant also to high stakes examinations. Student-told anecdotes are

important, I declared to myself, and I am on the right track by including them in my classes.

Iteration 4 (Shiro, online)

As I prepared for the new Japanese academic year in April 2020, I felt my anecdote materials could be improved. I was driven by a desire to teach this topic better so students could tell better stories. I thought if students could tell better stories about themselves, they could better establish themselves in various real-life situations outside of the classroom. After searching the terms “anecdotes and IELTS”, I included ideas from a BBC worksheet I found online. Specifically, I liked how it divided narrative structure into four parts with example phrases students could use.

Before the start of the new semester, in November 2019, I presented on anecdotes for the first time at the NELTA TESOL conference in Nepal. I provided this updated version in a step-by-step workshop for educators (Castellano, 2020). During the session a Nepalese elementary school teacher asked me if this lesson, in particular the parts on vocal prosody, could work in her classroom. I fumbled a response because I hadn't fully considered it. But now I realize that my materials were designed for anecdote delivery to an American audience. Student told anecdotes can be applied at classrooms globally, if adapted locally.

Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Like all educators around the world, 2020 was about figuring out how to convert paper materials into digital ones. First, I eliminated the wordless comics because I thought it would be too complicated to distribute two separate PDF files for one task. I used a simplified version of my handout, and this became Iteration 4 (see Appendix E). I thought that my lesson on vocal prosody did not have to be adjusted as much, so it was unchanged. I estimated that Zoom would be well-suited in this lesson since students repeat my sentences with emphasized prosody. I planned on having different groups of students toggle their microphones on and off for a fun call and response activity. Finally, instead of a live class presentation, I opted to have my students recorded audio files by themselves, which would again be shared as a radio show audio file.

Iteration 4 on Zoom went better than I had expected. Zoom's Share Screen and Breakout Rooms features allowed me to teach in a roughly similar way. First, I could quickly refer to examples, instructions, and tasks on the PDF handouts. Small group or pair tasks were now handled by Breakout Rooms. A big drawback, however, was that I could only monitor students' tasks one Breakout Room at a time. I missed the bird's eye view in face-to-face classes where I can direct my attention to students who needed help simply via my own observations. Students had to be more proactive to get my attention by using the Raise Hand feature in a Breakout Room, or by asking a question in the main Zoom screen, which rarely happened.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, and the apparent success of the online version of anecdote materials, I wanted to know for sure. What did my students think? How did they feel? What specific parts of the lesson were effective? What remained weak? Did my students apply lessons they learned after taking my course?

I felt that I was onto something; I felt that the potential of anecdotes needed to be further explored. Although I had been collecting data through surveys since Iteration 3, I decided that it was necessary to research anecdotes more thoroughly and professionally. I decided to pursue my doctoral research on anecdotes in an L2.

What I write now marks my first steps, my embarkation on a research journey. Here, I sought to capture my process for future educators. I hope that this material design director's cut can help uncrack the code of teaching anecdotes.

Discussion

The preceding SPN captured the material design process in which students delivered anecdotes after several lessons. It attempted to provide a micro-evaluation, paying particular attention to the anecdote task's successes, weaknesses, and areas of improvement (Ellis, 1997) via the approachable and generalizable SPN form (Nash, 2015). The four iterations reveal material development snapshots, which reflect Joachim's pedagogical decision making influenced by observations, classroom artifacts, and student feedback. Iteration 1 focused on manipulating audio editing software, with the anecdote supplying recordable content. Iteration 2 pivoted toward the anecdote itself, with scaffolded tasks designed to produce better stories. Iteration 3 added a lesson on vocal prosody and student use of technology was minimized. Iteration 4 was adapted for an online teaching environment, and more explicit instruction on vocabulary, grammatical, and narrative choices was provided.

Based on Joachim's reflection, student-told anecdotes is a highly adaptable task. As can be seen from the iterations of the materials, even in the first version with little linguistic guidance to the most recent online version, anecdotes can be implemented into a variety of English classes. For instructors who would like to focus on forms, anecdotes can be used. For others who are teaching general English classes, other aspects could be emphasized such as sequencing information in an easy-to-follow narrative structure. And yet others could exploit the affordances of CALL through recording, online feedback, audio editing, and network distribution. More importantly, anecdote tasks do not require expensive resources, they do not worsen wealth gaps.

However, from Joachim's experience, it is extrapolated that teaching anecdotes effectively requires explicit instruction and ample opportunities for students to practice delivering them. The overall quality of anecdotes improved when scaffolded tasks raised students' consciousness on particular storytelling devices such as including appropriate narrative detail, quoting other characters, and manipulating vocal intonation (Jones, 2001). Jones (2001) suggested that both teachers and learners pay particular attention to these evaluative devices for anecdotes to rise above a simple list of events. Furthermore, providing feedback to students in several stages before the final recording/performance resulted in better anecdotes. In short, it was simply not enough to instruct students to "tell an interesting story"; instructors have a central role to play in order to elicit the best ones from students.

Moreover, materials on anecdotes should be adapted locally. Joachim crafted the materials for the effective telling of anecdotes to an American audience. Naturally, this will not be the same target for other language instructors. For instance, although a simple narrative structure was taught based on a Western storytelling tradition, teachers should target narrative structures typical of a local audience. Additionally, students could benefit from guidance on what constitutes a most reportable event since this too depends on culture and context (Labov, 1997). Finally, effective vocal modulation should be taught according to what constitutes effective vocal delivery according to the target language.

Thinking more broadly, including students' stories as a classroom material levels the power dynamics of the classroom. From Joachim's observations, in classes where students presented their anecdotes, he as the instructor created a social space for students "to hold the floor longer" and share memorable life events (Labov, 1997). Therefore, students could learn about each other's lives outside of the classroom, possibly building better bonds with each other, and humanizing them (Salli-Çopur, 2008; Wajnryb, 2003). It made a great impact on building a classroom community based on positivity and respect.

Conclusion

Student-told anecdotes were developed from an experimental task to a standard project in Joachim's oral communication classes. It is a highly adaptable and quick to implement material that can be used in a variety of classroom contexts. Anecdotes do not require expensive resources, although recording anecdotes allow for other opportunities in CALL-equipped classrooms. Therefore, the requirements of the tasks depend on the instructor, however, an instructor cannot expect students to spontaneously tell an interesting story. Instructors should adapt the materials locally.

This paper was an attempt to deeply reflect on previous classroom task through a SPN. Indeed, through such narrative knowledging via this reflexive form, we gained a deeper appreciation of material design, both pedagogically and empirically. It appears that successful material development, especially ones of a do-it-yourself (DIY) nature requires an iterative process informed by careful observation and constant feedback. As a result of this paper, as educators we realize how much further there is to grow as material designers and how important empirical reflection is to this process. Reflecting through a SPN could be another useful pathway to narrative knowledging – meaning making experience in its own right (Barkhuizen, 2011; Nash, 2004).

Furthermore, anecdotes seem to have much potential in foreign language classrooms. From an SLA standpoint, language skills such as grammar and vocabulary choice, narrative structure, vocal modulation and overall speaking fluency might be improved. It also provides an outlet for comprehensible output and allows for different registers of English besides formal or academic English. The potential impact of student-told anecdotes appears to be a rich area for research and investigation, and we highly encourage future researchers and educators to pursue more empirical studies on student-told anecdotes. Future research can consider how student-told anecdotes affect linguistic development, student identity, and/or classroom dynamics so that they can be of utmost value to all stakeholders.

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Appendix A: Iteration 1 Kaigan University 2011

Advanced Media English Week 5: Storytelling A. Tell A Story 1. Think of a story from your own life. It can be: funny, scary, triumphant, happy, sad, romantic, exciting, surprising 2. Sequence of actions: jot down the events of the story. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1. First this happened...</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">5.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2. And then...</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">6.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">3.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">7.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">8.</td> </tr> </table> 3. The Point: Moment of reflection Think: What problem was solved? What did you learn? What surprising thing happened? What's the "point" of the story? C. After hearing my partner's feedback, this is how I will improve my story:	1. First this happened...	5.	2. And then...	6.	3.	7.	4.	8.	B. Listen to your partner's story. 1. While you were listening how did it make you feel? 2. What did you think about the action of events? - Which parts would you cut? - Which parts would you tell more about? 3. Was the point of the story clear? 4. How do you think the story can be improved? Remember to be tough but gentle. - Be respectful in giving advice - Criticize the work, but not the person - Be balanced – try to find good and bad areas Useful Critical Language: "I think it can be even better by..." "It's okay, but how about doing this..." "I think you can make it stronger by..." "To improve it, maybe you can do this..." "I'm not sure that (problem area) is clear or effective, so I think it might be better to..."
1. First this happened...	5.								
2. And then...	6.								
3.	7.								
4.	8.								

Appendix B: Iteration 2 Hudson University 2014

Fall Term 2014
 CE Communication Skills
 11/5/2014

Class 11

Communication Skill: Storytelling

A. I remember when...

1. Think of your life experiences. If you experienced any of these feelings, circle it!

<i>funny</i>	<i>scared</i>	<i>triumphant</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>sad</i>
<i>romantic</i>	<i>excited</i>	<i>surprised</i>	<i>unusual</i>	<i>dangerous</i>
<i>painful</i>	<i>moved</i>	<i>embarrassed</i>	<i>crazy</i>	<i>annoyed</i>

2. Choose 2 or 3 feelings and write about when you felt that way.
 ex. I felt most triumphant in my life when.... I won first prize in an English speech contest in high school.

a. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

b. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

c. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

Storytelling: Three Basic Steps

- Set the scene (where? when? who?)
- Build the action (what happened?)
- Explain the ending (why?)

3. Choose a short story (one you can tell in 2-3 minutes). Write down the major steps of the story. You don't have to use all 6 boxes.

1. (Set the scene)	5.

2. And then...	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

9. The Turning Point/The Climax

Think: What problem was solved? What did you learn? What surprising thing happened? What's the "point" of the story?

CSkills Personal Story Project

Directions: Present a 2-3 minute story from your life. This story should be exciting, interesting, surprising....etc. Have fun and *delight* the class!

Deadline Due Friday Nov 6, 2014 **Points:** 100

Grading Criteria:

- 40% Content - Was it a good story? Were the three parts of a story clear?
- 30% Delivery - Did you use your voice to add drama to your story?
- 30% Language - How accurate was your grammar and vocabulary?

Hints:

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Use your voice to create drama! Don't speak in a monotone voice! Use colorful language!
- CUT the weak/boring parts of the story.

Appendix C: Iteration 3 Shiro University 2019

Spring 2019 Communicative English II Class 7

Communication Skill: Storytelling

I remember when...

1. Think of your life experiences. If you experienced any of these feelings, circle it!

<i>funny</i>	<i>scared</i>	<i>triumphant</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>sad</i>
<i>romantic</i>	<i>excited</i>	<i>surprised</i>	<i>awkward</i>	<i>dangerous</i>
<i>painful</i>	<i>moved</i>	<i>embarrassed</i>	<i>crazy</i>	<i>annoyed</i>

2. Choose 2 or 3 feelings and write about when you felt that way.
 ex. I felt most triumphant in my life when.... I won first prize in a speech contest in high school.

a. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

b. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

c. I felt most _____ in my life when.....

- Now read your sentence to a partner, and give more details about it. Talk for 2 minutes!

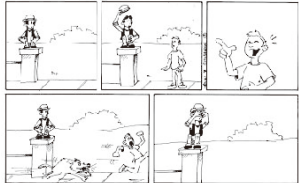
Storytelling: Three Basic Steps

- Set the scene (where and when did it happen? who was involved?)
 - "I remember when I was 5-year-old I moved into a house in the forest..."
 - "In a galaxy far, far away twin warriors were born, one boy and girl..."
 - "Two sister princesses live in a kingdom called Arendelle..."
- Build the action (what happened?)
 - "I climbed into a big tree, and fell asleep inside..."
 - "Their father became evil and joined the dark forces..."
 - "The kingdom becomes trapped in winter because the older Princess E. cannot stop her power to make snow and ice."
- Explain the ending (what was the result? what did you learn?)
 - "A cat bus took me home. Was it a dream?"
 - "Many friends joined their battle and defeated the evil emperor and their father."
 - "Her younger sister A. saves her sister kingdom by showing the power of love."

Spring 2019 Communicative English II Class 7

Student A>> You are the man in the hat: Explain the scene to your friend as if it happened yesterday.





Appendix D: Iteration 3 Shiro University 2019

Spring 2019 Communicative English II Class 8

Voice Control in Presentations

Voice Vocabulary

>> Match the vocabulary word with the definition

Speed	A. The loudness or quietness of your voice
Volume	B. How many words you say in one minute, the rate
Pitch	C. The rising or falling tone at the end of a word or sentence
Inflection	D. The frequency of the voice, sometimes high or deep

>> True or False?

1. Rising inflection at the end of a sentence usually means a question.
2. You should keep the same pitch level during your presentation.
3. You should change your volume to emphasize certain words.
4. In English, stress and intonation are minor for comprehension compared with grammar.

Your Presentation Voice

The way you say something is as important as what you say. Your voice is like a musical instrument. Don't use a monotone voice! If so, your audience will be bored. You should change your voice to keep your audience listening.

How to Use Your Voice

Avoid monotone voice by changing the following four areas:

Volume - level of sound intensity loud - excitement, attention soft - closeness, secret	Examples: - I just won the lottery! - I'll give you a good price.
Pitch - overall tone high - stress, anger low - sadness, serious	Examples: - How could you forget my birthday? - This is the saddest day of my life.
Inflection - ending tone movement upward - question, disbelief downward - command, power	Examples: - Would you like something to drink? - Buy this car.
Speed - rate of words fast - high tension slow - emphasis, clarity pause - focus/emphasis	Examples: - Don't forget the milk, eggs, and butter! - Don't ever LIE to ME again. - Review your notes from this week because there will be a...quiz.

Read the sentences below:

1. Donald Trump became president? (A. disbelief B. sadness)
2. Give me more money. (A. power B. clarity)
3. I think you are cheating on me! (A. anger B. high tension)
4. I crashed your car. (A. emphasis B. sadness)
5. Let's have a big party! (A. excitement B. secret)
6. I will give you a discount. (A. secret + focus B. attention + clarity)

Spring 2019 Communicative English II Class 8

>> Write your own examples!

Volume - level of sound intensity loud - excitement, attention soft - closeness, secret	Examples: 1. 2.
Pitch - overall tone high - stress, anger low - sadness, serious	Examples: 3. 4.
Inflection - ending tone movement upward - question, disbelief downward - command, power	Examples: 5. 6.
Speed - rate of words fast - high tension slow - emphasis, clarity pause - focus/emphasis	Examples: 7. 8. 9.

Speech Practice

>> Add feeling and emotion to the speech below by using different voice controls.

In 2009, I flew to Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, my first time in South America. One day I was walking along Ipanema beach, the best beach in Rio. Suddenly four teenagers surrounded me. The leader said, "Give me your money!" I was scared, I didn't know if they'd hurt me, or shoot me...and quickly they took my money, camera, bag, even my Pepsi! They ran away, and I was in shock.

An hour later, I found a police station. The policeman said, "What happened?" I explained the details of my story, and he said, "Come into this room." We were in a room with a one way mirror, and guess what, I saw the four criminals! I identified them, and they were sent to jail. Apparently, a witness on the beach saw the crime, and called the police. That witness was my guardian angel.

>> **Homework:** Apply Voice Control to your "A Story from My Life"

Appendix E: Iteration 4 Shiro University 2020

Spring 2020 CE2 Class 07

Tip 2: Use Language to your Advantage!

- Use adjectives and adverbs to make the story interesting. Notice the **adjectives**: It was a **dark** and **quiet** night... Notice the **adverbs**: **Suddenly**, I heard a scream! **Amazingly**, I won!
- Use sequencing words: *first of all, then, after that, later on, finally, in the end...*
- Use words like *so, because, although* to connect the actions until you reach the end of the story.
- Add characters and make them say something. The robber said, "Give me your money!"
- Finish your anecdote by saying why you remember it, why it was important, or what you learned.
- Use narrative tenses – past simple? (I won first prize!), past continuous? (My cat was acting strange one day) and past perfect? (I thought I had locked the door)
- 1. Past Simple is the most common verb tense in an anecdote
- 2. Past Continuous is common: at the beginning of a story: Yesterday I was walking to school...
- 3. Past Perfect can refer back to an action that happened before another event in a story: When I returned to my hotel, the thief had already escaped with my money!

Check your vocabulary: grouping – useful phrases

Write the phrases for each part of the anecdote in the correct group.

This is a story about ...	D. I was living in the city at that time.	This made me realise something important ...	Suddenly, ...
I'm going to tell you about something unforgettable that happened to me.	E. What happened next was ...	When I look back on that story now, I feel ...	This took place a few years ago.
At that time, I was ...	Later on, ...	I'd like to talk about the time when I ...	After all this, I learnt that ...

Introduction	Background
Action	Wrapping up

(Materials adapted from: <https://learnenglishteens.britishecouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/tell-story-or-personal-anecdote>)

2 of 3

Spring 2020 CE2 Class 07

Task 4: Put the following story in the correct order, and put the letters in the correct area. (BEGINNING) (MIDDLE) (END)

- A. Suddenly, four teenagers surrounded me.
- B. And then we walked into a room where the police had captured some suspects.
- C. One day I was walking along Ipanema beach, the best beach in Rio De Janeiro.
- D. Then the leader said, "Give me your money!" and quickly took my money, camera, bag, even my Pepsi!
- E. When I look back on that story now, I feel incredibly lucky because I wasn't harmed and the criminals were caught.
- F. Later on after I had been robbed, I found a police station. The chief Mr. Gonzalez said, "What happened?"
- G. Because I had never been a victim of a crime before I was scared! I didn't know if they'd hurt me, or shoot me. But anyhow, next they ran away from me after they stole my items.
- H. So I explained the details of the crime, and Mr. Gonzalez said, "Come into this room."
- I. Unbelievably, I saw the four criminals! I identified them, and they were sent to jail.
- J. Finally Mr. Gonzalez told me that a witness on the beach saw the crime, and had called the police.
- K. This took place in 2009. I flew to Brazil, and it was my first time in South America.
- L. I'm going to tell you about an unbelievable travel story.

Task 5: Check all that apply from the story above.

- ☐ In the first part of the story details such as time and place were provided.
- ☐ Words such as *first, second, next, last* and *in conclusion* are used in the story.
- ☐ Words including *so, and then, because, next* are used to build the action.
- ☐ A thesis statement is provided in the introduction.
- ☐ The Past Perfect verb tense is used to show a prior event to one already in the past.
- ☐ There are direct quotes from different people in the story.
- ☐ The story uses clear details such as the names of people, places, products and the numbers of things and objects.
- ☐ The ending sentence included a moment of reflection or lesson learned.
- ☐ The storyteller says, "The end!" to indicate the ending of the story.

3 of 3