

Summary of Thesis in English

Title	The Linguistic Expression of Affect in L2 Oral Emotion Narratives of Japanese Learners of English
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Sharing personal experiences and expressing emotions are essential components of everyday communication and key aspects of communicative competence. Labov and Waletzky (1967) identified two functions of personal narratives: referential and evaluative. The referential function refers to the plot of the narrative, while the evaluative function is the expression of the speaker's emotions, perspectives, and interpretations of the recounted events. Evaluation is central to narratives, as it establishes personal involvement and communicates the significance of the narrative. Without clear evaluation, a narrative may be perceived as incomplete or irrelevant. Constructing a coherent, engaging narrative in a second language (L2) is a challenging task, as it involves a combination of linguistic, conceptual, and communicative skills. Furthermore, it requires an awareness of cultural differences and expectations. L2 narratives that do not conform to the conventionalised style may be negatively evaluated, potentially leading to misunderstandings. Despite the importance of narratives in everyday communication and their close relationship with emotional expression, these skills are not typically prioritised in language classrooms. Extensive research has been conducted on children's narrative development in their first language, but research on adult L2 emotion narratives remains scarce, particularly in the context of Japanese English learners (JLEs). To address the lack of empirical data, this study examined L2 emotion narratives in JLEs by adopting a predominantly quantitative approach to identify group characteristics, supplemented with qualitative analysis of individual narratives. First, the study compared	

the oral emotion narratives of 28 JLEs with those of 8 native speakers of English (NSEs). It then analysed smaller subsets of participants to investigate the influence of proficiency, experience abroad, and emotion prompts. Finally, it analysed the case studies of two JLEs to explore individual variations.

The study was guided by the following research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: What are the characteristics of oral emotion narratives told by JLEs in comparison with NSEs?
- RQ2: How does L2 proficiency influence the oral emotion narratives told by JLEs?
- RQ3: How does experience abroad influence the oral emotion narratives told by JLEs?
- RQ4: How do emotion prompts influence the oral emotion narratives told by JLEs?
- RQ5: How do JLEs with similar L2 proficiencies and experience abroad tell oral emotion narratives differently?

Participants recounted personal experiences in response to five emotion prompts: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, and surprise. The narratives were compared in terms of four aspects:

1. narrative types (story: complete and unresolved; account: chronological, reaction, and general)
2. narrative length (number of clauses)
3. clause types (action, orientation, and evaluation)

4. and affective devices (emotion expressions, evaluative words, intensifiers, reported speech, interjections, stress, repetition, discourse markers, and direct address)

Statistical analyses were conducted for RQ1 (speaker group) and RQ2 (proficiency) but not for RQ3 (experience abroad), RQ4 (emotion prompt), and RQ5 (case studies) due to sample size limitations.

The comparison of JLE and NSE narratives (RQ1) showed that NSEs produced story narratives more frequently, with greater elaboration, evaluative content, and a wider repertoire of affective language than JLEs. While JLEs tended to rely on the use of emotion expressions, NSEs employed a wider range of affective devices, including reported speech, interjections, stress, discourse markers, and direct address. This finding aligns with previous research, which indicated that learners tend to favour direct affective devices. Another key observation was that although both groups produced various narrative types, unresolved narratives were the most common. This finding suggests that unresolved narratives may be more characteristic of emotion narratives than the traditional complete narrative form.

Within the JLE group (RQ2), as proficiency levels increased, JLEs produced more story narrative forms with greater detail and evaluative content. High JLEs also used a wider range of affective devices, including reported speech, interjections, stress, discourse markers, and direct address. However, despite these developments, even the most proficient JLEs demonstrated a limited range of emotional expressions compared with NSEs and tended to rely on the repetition of basic emotion words. The results indicate that learners might benefit from more targeted support in the classroom to develop these skills.

A two-phase pedagogical plan is proposed for integrating personal narrative and emotional expression into L2 instruction.

The analysis of the effect of experience abroad (RQ3) compared JLEs with and without experience abroad within the same proficiency group. The results showed that JLEs with experience abroad tended to produce longer narratives than those without; however, no other major differences were observed. An additional analysis was conducted with JLEs at different proficiency levels excluding JLEs with experience abroad, and the results were largely similar to those observed in RQ2, suggesting that experience abroad had little influence. However, due to the small sample size, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of experience abroad.

The emotion prompt analysis (RQ4) found that both JLEs and NSEs showed some degree of similarity in narratives for fear, anger, and happiness. Fear narratives tended to be action-oriented, following a complete narrative structure, while anger narratives were often lengthy, containing large amounts of evaluation and a high frequency of affective language. In contrast, happiness narratives were frequently descriptive accounts focused on the experience itself rather than on actions. Sadness and surprise narratives demonstrated no clear patterns. These findings indicate that certain emotion narratives may have predictable patterns across speaker groups and have implications for narrative research task design in terms of topic selection.

Finally, the two JLEs from the case studies (RQ5) exhibited considerably different narrative and affective styles despite similar backgrounds. Furthermore, their Japanese and English narratives on the same prompt were largely similar in content and structure but showed subtle differences in tone and emotional expressions. These observations suggest

that factors beyond proficiency and experience abroad contribute to narrative and affective styles.

One main limitation of the study was the small sample size and participant representativeness. In particular, as the groups in RQ3-RQ5 were small, certain observed patterns may not be generalisable. Furthermore, the interaction between different factors is complex and requires further exploration. Future studies should use larger, more controlled samples to examine the impact of cultural background, proficiency, experience abroad, emotion prompts, and individual differences on L2 narratives.

This study contributes to the understanding of L2 narrative characteristics and the linguistic expression of emotions. It highlights the importance of these skills in communicative competence and provides educational insights into teaching emotional expression and improving narrative skills in the L2.