Developing Communicative Capability in Foreign Languages through Digital Storytelling

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Abstract
In the instructed second language teaching context, it is important to engage students in the meaning-making process to provide them with opportunities to develop communicative capability through the creative use of language. Second language acquisition research shows that while learners go through similar developmental stages in grammatical development, the rate of development differs from one individual to the next. Therefore, a language learning task needs to foster the development of communicative capacity while considering the current linguistic resources available to learners. This paper discusses Digital Storytelling (DS) as a method to create an opportunity to encourage students to develop more holistic communicative capability. Digital stories are short multimedia productions created by students that combine a first-person narrative with image and background music. This paper draws on some DS productions by intermediate Japanese language students from the Australian National University and discusses various communicative devices employed to make their story more engaging. DS allows students to transfer language they learned in the classroom to more authentic communication situations. It is a student-centred learning experience focusing, not only on using the language but also engaging in creative thinking and effective communication, with the added advantage of developing effective technical literacy.

Keywords
Instructed language teaching, communicative capability, Digital Storytelling, Japanese as a second language, technology-enhanced language teaching

Introduction
Language is a creative tool for communication. Communication is a mutual meaning-making process between speaker and listener, expressing each person's emotions, experiences, thinking, perspectives, and identity, primarily through

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language. Globalisation, technology, and air travel have increased people's communication across borders, increasing the speed and breadth of communications. Seidlhofer and Widdowson note that these extended networks of interaction caused by globalisation have "resulted in the communicative use of language that transcends the borders of different languages conventionally associated with separate lingua-cultural communities" (23). Scarino notes an increased importance of the role of language learning in this time of globalisation and draws connections among language learning, improved communication, and global understanding.

In the instructed second language (L2) teaching context,[2] it is vital to engage students in the meaning-making process to provide opportunities to develop communicative capability. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research shows that, even though learners go through similar developmental stages in grammatical development, the rate of development differs from one individual to another. Consequently, language learning tasks (Long) need to foster communicative capability and, at the same time, consider the current linguistic resources available to the learner. Furthermore, tasks need to promote learner autonomy through which they develop opportunities to express emotions, experiences, and identities, rather than being confined to scenarios or materials like textbooks given to them. In the foreign language learning context, it is important to provide such communication opportunities to learners who are less likely to have opportunities for authentic communication using the language. There are different communication modes to be considered. Communication does not necessarily take place as a two-way, real-time interaction between listener and speaker. Literature and movies are examples of one-way asynchronous communication. Authors and movie directors need to communicate their messages to their readers and audiences successfully. They use non-verbal devices such as visuals and music as well as language to communicate. They need to consider how to organise discourse to make the story more engaging. Language learners can also use similar techniques for successful communication.

This paper discusses Digital Storytelling (DS) as a method to provide such communication opportunities for language learners. DS signifies short video productions containing a first-person narrative and images. They are "immersive and participatory" ways of "relating personal, real-life stories—a form of first-person journalism, illustrated by various types of visual material" (Miller xi). A DS project is incorporated as an assessment piece in the intermediate Japanese language course at the Australian National University (ANU), Australia. This

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[2] Saville-Troike and Barto define second language (L2) to be any additional languages learned subsequent to the first languages people learn as a child (2). The term L2 learning includes different learning contexts such as formal, informal, and foreign language learning. This paper follows Saville-Troike's and Barto's definition of L2. However, where distinction between the different learning contexts is needed, specific terms are used.

paper presents how this project was designed and implemented in the course and various communicative devices employed in student DS productions to make their story more captivating. It also shows that DS requires interdisciplinary teaching, drawing from, namely, language education, technology and creative writing. DS allows students to make use of the language they learn in the classroom in authentic communication situations. It is a student-centred learning experience focusing, not only on using the language but also engaging students in creative thinking and achieving effective communication, with the added advantage of developing effective technical literacy.

Japanese language education in Australia

Japanese is a commonly studied language internationally. The number of countries, regions, and institutions where Japanese language education is implemented, the number of teachers who teach Japanese as a foreign language and the number of Japanese language learners have all continually increased over the past 30 years. The survey of the state of Japanese language education outside Japan, conducted in 2018 by the Japan Foundation,[3] reported that the Japanese language is now taught in 142 countries (Japan Foundation, "Survey"). This is twice as many as in 1990, when Japanese was taught in 78 countries. The number of Japanese language learners has increased fourfold from 981,408 in 1990 to 3,851,774 in 2018. Learners of Japanese are reported to be concentrated in the Asia-Pacific region. Of all the learners, 78.4% were found in Asia, and 11.5% in the Pacific region with Australia and New Zealand as its main countries.[4] Among the countries in these regions, Australia has the highest Japanese language learner population density of 1,708.3 learners per 100,000 people.

As shown in these survey results, studying Japanese language is widespread in Australian society but it is not without issues. The problem is that very few learners pursue their studies to achieve advanced proficiency in the language (Thomson 12). The majority of Japanese language learners in Australia are primary or secondary school students, and less than three percent of learners study Japanese at tertiary-level.[5] Thomson estimates only 0.1% of university

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[3] The Japan Foundation is an independent administrative institution supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. It is dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international Japanese cultural and language exchange programs throughout the world (Japan Foundation, "About us"). The Japan Foundation conducts surveys of the state of Japanese language education abroad regularly. The first survey was conducted in 1974, with the report published in 1975. Since 1990, they conducted the survey every three years. The 2018 survey is the latest, with its report published in 2020.

[4] In contrast to this, the combined number of learners of Japanese in North, Central and South America and Europe amounted to 9.7% of the total number of learners.

[5] In 2008, 96% of Japanese language learners were primary and secondary students, 2.5% were tertiary students and the remaining 1.5% were studying Japanese through non-school education (Thomson 7). This trend remained the same ten years later in 2018: 96% were primary and secondary

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students of Japanese pursue their study in the subject to the level of advanced proficiency. This imbalance between the high number of Japanese language learners and the low number of learners achieving advanced proficiency had already been raised as a concern back in 2002 (Asian Studies Association of Australia xvi). Australia regards its Asia knowledge as a national asset, thus the lack of it is a national concern.

There is a need to promote better language outcomes for Japanese language learners. Language educators play an important role in this, firstly by motivating learners to persevere with their study to further their knowledge of Japan and its language. Secondly, fostering effective language learning to allow them to develop their skills to advanced proficiency. Fukui and Kawaguchi note that a well-designed learning environment allows students to continue to experience the joy of learning, which matches the excitement they experienced when they first started to learn the language through, for instance, technology-enhanced language learning tasks.

Pedagogical framework for Digital Storytelling project

Project-based Language Learning (PBLL) forms the main pedagogical framework for our DS projects. The benefits of PBLL are discussed by various researchers (Dooly and Sadler; Gibbes and Carson; Greenier; Stoller and Myers; Seidlhofer and Widdowson; Thomas). PBLL is based on the philosophy of "learning by doing" and using the language in the process of working towards the end product. It promotes content learning and facilitates authentic language use. It allows learners to negotiate the content and develop skills such as designing, researching, collaborating, and reporting. In other words, it takes learners beyond the idea of learning purely as knowledge transmission from teachers or books. Instead, it views learning more holistically and promotes learner-centredness. Learners are given responsibility for their own learning, such as choosing their own goal and process to reach it and hence, promoting learner autonomy (Holec). In the instructed L2 teaching, language use is limited to the classroom environment and learning content such as topics and grammar structures may be prescribed by the syllabus. In this context, allowing learners to take responsibility for their own learning by having control over the content they learn for real communicative purposes is especially important.

SLA research is also a necessary framework for this pedagogical project. According to Swain's output hypothesis, input alone is not enough for language learning. What leads to overall acquisition is also output as well as learner awareness of the importance of structuring their L2 correctly to make them comprehensible to others. This is because only L2 production (i.e., output) forces

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students, 2.8% tertiary-level students and the remainder were from non-school education (Japan Foundation "Survey" 41).

learners to undertake complete grammatical processing, thus driving the development of L2 grammar (Swain). Thus, it is important for foreign language educators to create meaningful output opportunities through which learners strive to make their linguistic output comprehensible.

Another crucial consideration in SLA is Pienemann's Processability Theory (PT), which explains that there is a universal developmental path for grammatical development governed by cognitive constraints, which all learners traverse over a number of stages. These stages cannot be skipped or altered, not even through instruction. However, the rate of development varies from person to person. PT has been tested and validated for both second and foreign language acquisition for typologically different languages (Baten; Di Biase et al.; Di Biase and Bettoni; Håkansson; Kawaguchi; Zhang). In his teachability hypothesis (Pienemann; Keßler et al.), Pienemann promotes the idea that effective teaching occurs when the current linguistic resources available to the learner are taken into consideration and incorporated into the syllabus. The university context requires students to be grouped into beginning, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels. It is important to recognise, however, that each student in any given grouping may be at a different stage in their linguistic development. Other SLA research also identified further factors, such as motivation and learning styles, that may influence individual achievement in language learning. It is important that language educators also address these when designing learning projects.

There are various examples of technology-mediated PBLL that incorporate SLA theories. For instance, Fukui and Kawaguchi reported a Japanese language learning project which utilised Social Networking Service (SNS) to create an effective learning environment to extend student learning outside the classroom and found that their project strengthened collaborative learning and learner motivation. Through a similar use of SNS, Pasfield-Neofitou et al. found that their technology-mediated project facilitated vocabulary learning that was immediately relevant to students, increased the amount of reading, and promoted authentic use of Japanese outside the classroom. Chong and Reinders reviewed 16 such technology-mediated language learning studies and identified different task types, including online texting/chatting, open-ended forums, oral presentation, blog writing, and interviews. These tasks were reported to have facilitated meaningful communication, cultivated positive attitudes towards language learning, promoted student-centred learning and fostered skill development for both language and non-language communication.

Digital storytelling (DS) has the potential to enhance language learning. DS is a three- to four-minute multimedia production that combines a first-person narrative with images and background music. DS was first developed in the United States in the 1990s to help young people create personal narratives in a contemporary, accessible mode. Its value as an educational tool is recognised to

encourage students to create "authentic work that has meaning, virtue, and purpose to a wider audience" (Levin 7).

Using DS for language learning, learners are asked to tell a personal story that they chose to communicate to their audience. It allows learners to set the content and goal of their learning. It encourages them to learn vocabulary and its use to suit their context, building on their acquired language resources. Learners are invited to think about not only maximising their linguistic resources, such as their range of grammar structures and accuracy, but also ways to capture the audience's attention. This encourages them to reflect on how to communicate effectively and challenge themselves to use their L2 to the best of their abilities. Teachers' feedback can then target each student's individual needs.

Effective communication of a story needs to consider storytelling skills. Storytelling should not stop at describing and explaining events (*what*) but extend to the learner's thinking and emotions (*how* and *why*), in short, to develop and express narrative identity. It is not easy for language learners to express their own narrative identity using a language they may not yet be proficient in.[6] However, drawing on the field of creative writing, there are various tools that can be considered when telling stories other than linguistic proficiency. Boulter, for instance, identified the following as criteria relevant to the assessment of creative writing:

> vividness; discernment; control of language; avoidance of cliché; particularised detail; selectivity; originality; economy and coherence of structure; voices that are convincingly and powerfully imitated; persuasiveness; eloquence; writing that is moving; integrity of voice; authenticity; subtle use of language. (Boulter 135).

Language learners can be encouraged to incorporate such elements when telling their stories to make them more engaging. Attention to discourse is another tool learners can use for effective communication. Gee explains discourse as how sentences are formed (or what picture to put in each frame in the case of movie makers) and how they are sequenced to tell a story. He also notes that when people are engaged in discourse, they do not just rely on language but use anything at their disposal, including clothes, props, environment,

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[6] For example, Hayes and Itani-Adams found that more than 65% of the intermediate Japanese language course cohort at an Australian university indicated that they found expressing their inner thoughts and emotions in Japanese difficult (120).

technology, tools, and objects (24). Language learners can also be encouraged to use other devices along with language for successful communication.

This study presents a DS project implemented in an intermediate Japanese language course at a university in Australia. The study asks the following three research questions:

   a) Does DS project facilitate the development of communicative capabilities for L2 learners?
   b) What are the communication devices used by intermediate-level students in their DS productions to engage their audience?
   c) Do students evaluate DS project as an effective language learning opportunity?

Methodology

A DS project was implemented in an intermediate Japanese language course at the Australian National University. Students' DS productions and their responses to the class survey about the project form the data for this study. This section describes how the DS project was implemented in the course.

The duration of the Japanese language course in this study was 13 weeks. Students were required to study ten hours weekly: five hours using class material provided in the course and five hours of self-study. A set of commercially available textbooks was used as core texts, with supplemental materials developed by the teachers. The course normally attracts approximately 90 students. The student cohort is a mixture of first- and second-year university students. Those who studied Japanese in secondary school in Year 12 (the final year of secondary school) can take this intermediate course in their first year of university and those who began studying Japanese after entering university take the intermediate course in their second year.

The DS project was introduced early in the semester. Students were asked to create a short three- to four-minute multimedia production about a topic of their choice. They were instructed to choose a topic that *matters* to them and tell the story with an *impact* to the audience. In this project, the word *impact* was used to mean successful communication of their own message by engaging the audience with their story. After introducing the project, the process of creating DS was broken down into three steps over the semester to create a clear framework for the process and timely feedback from the teacher, as below.

   1. DS storyboard draft
   2. DS narration recording
   3. DS final movie and revised storyboard

Each step focused on specific aspects of creating a DS, and relevant preparatory guidance was provided to support students achieve each milestone. Following what Gee explained about discourse and communication, students were

encouraged to explore non-language cues, voice quality, and the sequencing of events in their DS at different milestones.

Another advantage of setting step-by-step milestones is the provision of targeted feedback by teachers. According to Lyster and Ranta, "the feedback-uptake sequence engages students more actively when there is negotiation of form, that is, when the correct form is not provided to the students" (58). To encourage more active learning, the method of corrective feedback used in this project is to highlight problem areas. This method requires the students to engage with their mistakes and try to work out what they should say instead of teachers simply giving a correct version to their students.

The first step of the *DS storyboard draft* encouraged students to focus on the content, i.e., what they want to talk about, and the language they should use for their story. A student brainstorming session was conducted as a preparatory activity for the first step. Within groups, students were asked to discuss their own chosen topic and content with group members. The group members were encouraged to ask questions and provide some feedback or reactions. This was to give opportunity for each student to gauge what interests others and think about how to tell the story. In drafting the storyboard, students were asked to explore language and visual aids to tell their story.

The second step of the *DS narration recording* focused on the verbal delivery of the story. This includes pronunciation, intonation, and overall verbal expressiveness. In preparation for this step, a number of activities called *voiceboard* were conducted. The voiceboard used the voice chat tool within the Learning Management System used at the ANU. The purpose of voiceboard activities was to help students become familiar with their own voice and to practice its expressive use. Each voiceboard activity focused on different aspects ranging from intonation, pronunciation, and pausing to different usage of voice quality. One of the voiceboard activities required students to record a response to an audio question posted by their teacher. Other short narration activities included students listening to and repeating narrations recorded by their teacher. These narration activities exposed students to a selection of different speech genres, including colloquial conversations, story narrations, some examples of the onomatopoeic richness of Japanese, interjections, and even expletives so as to explore different styles of oral expression. When repeating their teachers' narrations, students were asked to pay attention to the way each material was recorded expressively. Students were also asked to compare their recordings with the audio frequency visualisations of their teacher, to become more aware of the pronunciation, intonation, and tone of their audio recordings. These activities were developed to address some of the criteria mentioned by Boulter on creative writing, such as vividness and voices that are convincingly and powerfully imitated. The voiceboard activities began as early as just after the semester started,

prior to the introduction of the DS project, and were conducted regularly throughout the semester.

The final step let students focus on the overall composition of their DS and audience impact. In preparation for this final step, an activity using the *Hare and Tortoise* story was conducted during class as a Japanese language exercise. The aim of this activity was to assist students to practice the language but also to think about the discourse of their story and making it more engaging. A set of drawings of different stages of the *Hare and Tortoise* story was prepared, such as, the hare and tortoise at the start line of the race, the hare taking a nap, and the tortoise reaching the flagpole at the goal. First, students were asked to tell the *Hare and Tortoise* story from the start to the end. After changing the order of the picture cards, students were asked to tell the same story in different orders according to the order of the cards. For example, starting from the end and narrating back to the beginning of the race, or starting from the middle of the story, looking back to the start of the race and then to the end of the race. They also practiced telling the same story from different perspectives: hare, tortoise or the flagpole at the goal. This was done in Japanese as a language exercise.

Assessment of the final product emphasises how students have improved on their earlier draft and successfully engaged their audience with their story. DS productions was assessed based on four criteria: language (linguistic structure and accuracy), delivery (pronunciation, timing and speed of narration), contents (theme, discourse organisation), and impact (effective communication, level of engagement, originality, use of DS features such as visual aids, voice, and sounds). In the impact criteria, what features and devices students used to communicate their message was noted. The assessment of impact is subjective; however, it was found that the individual teachers agreed with each other's assessments. The submission of their DS was followed by a movie night at the end of the semester, when students watched each other's DS, creating a real sense of community. Students voted on the most popular, impactful stories. Their votes were found to reflect the teacher's assessment of the interesting and captivating stories. The student perspective on the DS project was also gathered through a survey. It was administered after the semester finished.

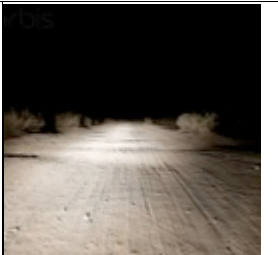## Results and analysis
1. Student DS productions[7]

The students in the course completed their DS project as part of their course assessment. They used different devices to express their emotions, beliefs, and thoughts through their DS. The narration part of the DS used many verbal creativities. Some students made their story more interesting by varying discourse

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[7] Each student has given us permission to reproduce images and text from their digital storytelling productions. Copyright remains with the original copyright holder(s).

patterns, such as humour, irony or suspense. Posing a question to the audience was another pattern used by many students. The inclusion of dialogues, variation in sentence lengths, and speech styles added vividness as opposed to monotonous monologue. Varying voice quality resulted in effective delivery. One student created their own metaphor using their story. Non-verbal creativity was achieved by the use of background sounds, music and the images to create the mood students wanted to convey. Hand-drawn images added to DS originality. The following section presents two productions which used voice and creative metaphor. They were chosen as the best examples to illustrate students' originality and creativity.

Using voice quality

This example demonstrates how the use of voice and sound can create effective DS. The story is about the student's participation in the ANU Inward Bound 74 km endurance competition. The event takes place over a 24-hour period, which means teams have to navigate in the dark. Early in the run, this student somehow became separated from his team and lost his way. He uses short sentences and dark images to create a sense of panic (Fig 1.1). He then adds a picture of mist in the dark with a faint and wavery voice calling his name from a distance (Fig. 1.2). This use of faint and wavery voice to create a sense of distance also successfully creates a sense of hopelessness of being lost. This student changes his voice in the later section of the DS in dialogues to characterise different speakers. Although the script contains many grammatical errors, his overall story has an impact due to his success with these devices.

1.1		キャンベラからひがしかにしかどうか、わかりませんでし た。どこに行くか、わかりませんでした。きたにはしって いることをだけわかりました。 *Was I to the east or west of Canberra? I didn't know. All I knew was that I was running north.*

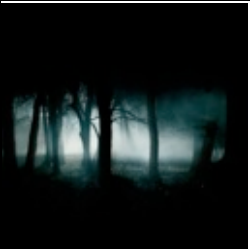|		
1.2		きりにつつまれ、かぜがつよくなりました。わたしのかい ちゅうでんとうがてんめつしはじめて、でんちがしにはじ めました。(student's name) さ〜ん、(student's name) さ〜ん, わたしのなまえがよばれているのがきこま した。…"どこにいったの"。 *Mist rose around me and the wind whistled around me. My torch started to flicker on and off. The battery was starting to die…. From the distance … (calling the student's own name) someone was calling my name. 'where are you?'.*

Figure 1. Sample DS – Using voice

Creating metaphors

In this example, the student not only used humour, voice, and handwritten images for her DS but also created a personal metaphor to express her own relationship with Japan. Her DS production titled "Ten Cups of Green Tea and Me" (Fig. 2.1) tells her evolving relationship with Japan through her developing love of Japanese green tea. She begins her story by telling her audience about her "first cup of green tea," offered to her by her host mother on her first night of a homestay in Japan (Fig. 2.2). She associates different stages of her life with cups of green tea. A mug of green tea sits on her desk as she studies for her final high school exams, and it is over a cup of green tea that she falls in love with her first boyfriend. One day she finds herself sitting in her room at university, feeling lonely, and missing home. A parcel arrives from her father with a box of green tea bags. Not only does this cheer her up, but the green of the tea also reminds her of her home in

Tasmania (Fig. 2.3). She brings her story to an end by telling her audience that she is now drinking her tenth cup of tea as she creates this digital story (Fig. 2.4).

2.1		十杯のお茶と私 *Ten Cups of Green Tea and Me*
2.2		にがいと思ったが とてもおいしいと言った。 *I thought it was bitter but I said, "It's delicious.*
2.3		さびしい時に七はい目のお茶を飲んだ。お茶もタスマニ アもみどり色だ。 *When I was homesick, I drank my "seventh" cup of tea. Tea and my home of Tasmania are both green.*
2.4		今、ものがたりを話しながら十はい目のお茶を飲む。う れしい時やむずかしい時にお茶が私をいつも手伝った。お いしくて熱いお茶が一番好きだよ! *Now as I tell you this story, I am drinking my "tenth" cup of tea. When I'm happy and even when things are difficult—tea is always there for me. I really LOVE delicious hot green tea!*

Figure 2. Sample DS – Creative metaphors

The two sample DSs above show only a few of the devices employed by students; however, they show the way the students harnessed multiple devices such as linguistic, discourse, and visuals. As mentioned above, there were other devices other students employed. Their stories carried emotions and feelings more successfully when various devices were used together.

2. Student evaluation of the DS project – student survey

The above section presented teachers' evaluations of student DS productions, showing two samples. This section presents students' evaluation of the project. As mentioned above, an anonymous survey was conducted at the end of the semester to seek student feedback. Unfortunately, the response rate was very low, capturing only nine respondents out of the cohort of 78. This was possibly related to the timing of the survey, which was conducted during the exam period at the end of the term. True enough, the survey results do not capture the majority of the cohort. However, the results presented here may be treated as illustrative of students' evaluation of the project. The survey sought to gain students' perception of the usefulness of DS as a language learning tool and what skills they felt were improved through the DS project. The survey listed the following seven statements related to the DS project and asked students to respond on a five-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, and strongly agree. One open-ended question was also added to invite students to make comments and suggestions on the project.

a. The DS project was beneficial for my Japanese language study.
b. The DS project helped me improve my Japanese pronunciation skills.
c. The DS project helped me improve my Japanese intonation.
d. The DS project helped me develop useful Japanese storytelling skills.
e. The DS project was a good way of improving my Japanese writing and grammatical skills.
f. The DS project was a good way of working on expressing emotions and things that are important to me.
g. The DS project was a good way of encouraging me to move away from textbook-style Japanese and work on more natural expressions.

To the statement *the DS project was beneficial for my Japanese language study*, all nine students responded positively (seven students agreed and two students strongly agreed). So all the students who responded evaluated the DS to be a good way to improve their Japanese. As for the skills they felt improved through the project, the results are presented in the chart in Figure 3 below. At a glance, one can see that grammatical skills were the most strongly considered to have improved, followed by pronunciation and intonation. Storytelling skills were also considered to have improved, although somewhat lesser than the other linguistic skills.

To the statement *the DS was a good way of working on expressing emotions and things that are important to me*, eight students responded positively (five agreed and three strongly agreed), with one student responded neither agree or disagree. Eight students agreed, and one disagreed with the statement *DS was a good way of encouraging me to move away from textbook-style Japanese and work on more natural expressions*. Among the eight students who agreed, five of them strongly agreed and three agreed.

This indicates that among those who participated in the survey, the DS project was evaluated as a useful project for improving Japanese language, predominantly in the areas of grammar and pronunciation. Compared with linguistic skill development, students felt their storytelling skills improved to a somewhat lesser extent. DS was also evaluated to have offered opportunities for learning more natural language usage outside of a textbook. To a lesser extent, students also recognised the opportunities to express emotions and things that matter to them.
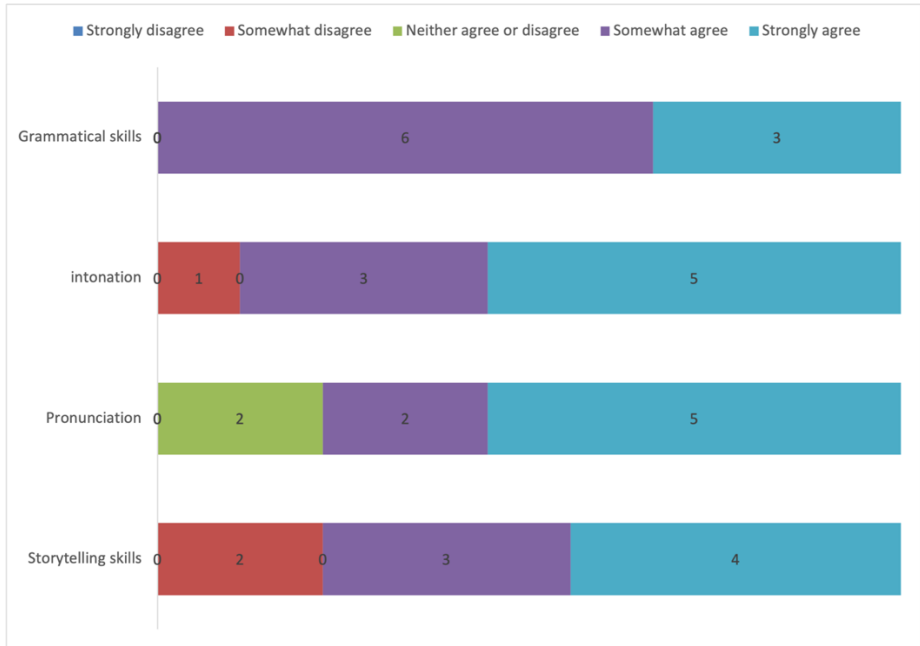

Figure 3. Language skills improved through the DS project (N=9)[8]

Discussion

The analysis of student DS productions presented above showed examples of various devices students used to tell their stories. They conveyed their stories not just through the Japanese language but also used other devices to engage the audience. This indicates the DS project facilitated the development of communicative capabilities in second language learners, informing, in the positive, a response to the first research question: *does DS project facilitate development of communicative capabilities for second language learners?*

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[8] The number zero shows where no student selected the particular response. For example, for all the statements no student chose 'strongly disagree', therefore the number zero shows at the start of each bar.

The second research question was *what are the communication devices used by intermediate level students in their DS productions to engage their audience?* Students used various devices to engage their audience showing verbal and non-verbal creativity. The devices used in the two sample DS productions introduced above were: varying voice quality, inclusion of speeches and dialogues, use of creative metaphor, and use of photos to convey desired mood and hand-drawn images. Apart from these, there were other devices used in other students' DS, such as: posing questions to their audience, using humour and irony in their narration, and adding music and other sound effects.

The student survey results show, on the other hand, that they evaluated the DS project as providing a language learning opportunity, answering the third research question: *do students evaluate the DS project as an effective language learning opportunity?* Students indicated that DS was an opportunity to improve their grammar, pronunciation, and intonation, with storytelling skills being improved to a lesser extent. Students saw the DS project to be an opportunity to learn the language in a more authentic manner away from the textbook context. Some students indicated that it provided opportunities to develop skills to express emotions and things that mattered to them.

Overall, the DS project was evaluated to be successful at providing authentic language learning opportunities, enabling students to talk about what is important to them, rather than topics and learning content chosen for them. It provided the opportunity to use the current language resources they have and harness other non-language resources at their disposal, just as people do when they are communicating.

Conclusion

This paper presented DS as a language learning project that facilitates student's development of communicative capabilities. A DS project is designed not only to promote students' language acquisition, but also to encourage them to discover other paths to make their communication successful.

There are other technology-mediated language learning projects using tasks such as Social Network System that are found to be successful in motivating students, facilitating authentic language use outside the classroom, and providing joy for learning. The DS project was also found to promote authentic language use away from the textbook and to provide effective language learning opportunities.

The implementation of the DS project in the intermediate Japanese language course at the ANU showed that learners do not need to possess advanced language skills to captivate an audience with their story. In real life, speakers need skills to communicate successfully, disregarding their language proficiency levels. The DS project provided students with opportunities to engage

with creative communication and develop strategies to communicate in a foreign language.

Acknowledgements

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