

Chapter 4

Analysis of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings, draws inferences and makes comments on data collected during the study. The data was used to investigate the generic features in conversational storytelling, the overall narrative patterns and the listeners' responses in oral narratives.

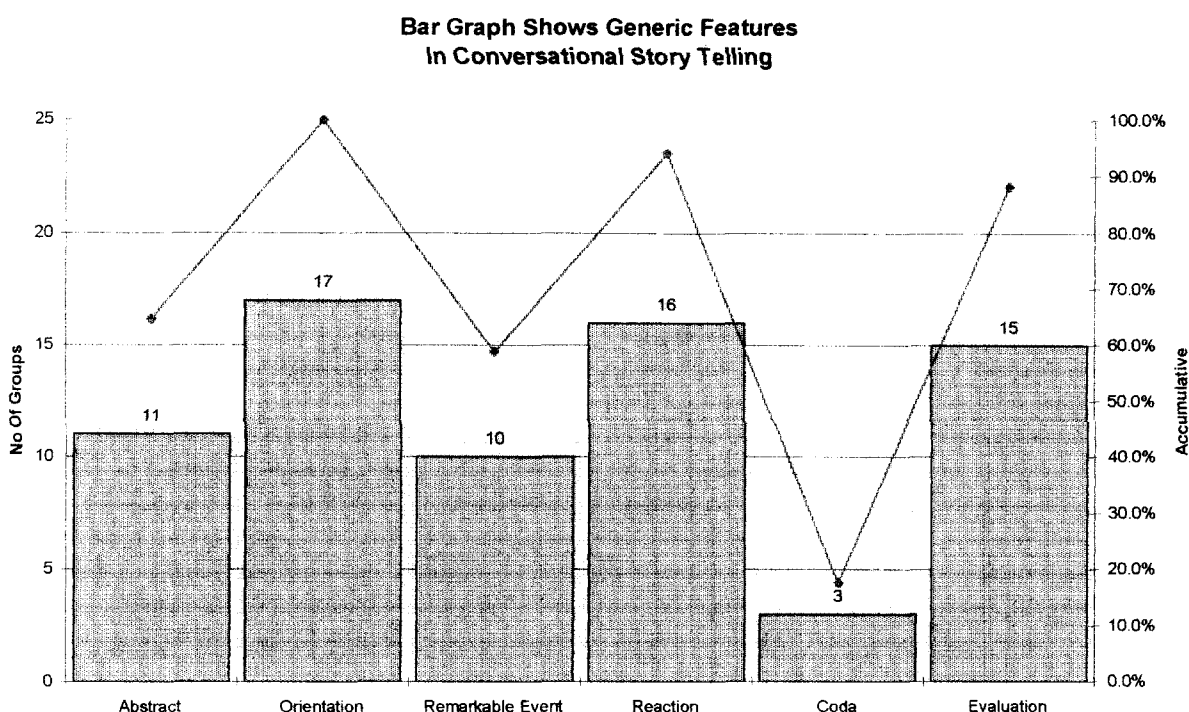
Generic features in conversational storytelling

Labov and Waletzky were among the first to show systematically that stories told in conversation could be subjected to formal analysis (cited by Gregori-Signes, 2004). Over time researchers have modified Labov's basic storytelling structure which consists of six elements: Abstract (optional), Orientation, Complication, Evaluation, Resolution and Coda (optional), which must occur in this sequence for a text to be a successive narrative but "Evaluation" might occur throughout the storytelling. Thus the position of Evaluation in the sequence is irrelevant but important.

In this study, Labov's modified version by Eggins and Slade have been used since these generic features: Abstract, Orientation, Remarkable events, Reaction and Coda occur more frequently in conversational storytelling involving anecdotes, small crisis, embarrassing situations, humiliations and frustrations (Jones, 2001). In these situations tellers would narrate in order to elicit some sort of reaction from the audience. Moreover, in this study students take the role of teller and the listener(s), thus Eggins and Slade's generic features would be more appropriate than Labov's conversation storytelling structure which was the product of elicitation involving "life-threatening experiences".

The different generic elements present in the interactional patterns of conversational storytelling in the samples narratives are represented in a bar graph (Refer to Appendix 5 for the Frequency Table).

Graph 1: Bar Graph shows Generic Features in Conversational Storytelling in Experimental group.



Abstract

The 17 narratives were classified according to Eggins and Slade's generic features of conversational storytelling. According to Peterson and McCabe, based on Labov's narrative structure, abstracts are defined as "summaries or encapsulations of the whole narrative" (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). Attention-getting devices and prologues can also appear as abstracts at the beginning of a narrative. This is an optional feature found at the beginning of a narrative. It is rarely more than one sentence long and has a

summarizing function, giving listeners some indication of the type of story they are about to hear (Jones, 2001).

In the samples' narratives 64.7% of the conversational storytellings featured an abstract at the beginning of the story even though this is an optional feature in conversational storytelling. Examples of abstracts used in the narratives are:

- a. "Did I tell you about my new puppy?"
- b. "No, Rina just told me a funny story to me."
- c. "Did you read the newspaper yesterday?"

Among the 17 narratives 35% of the abstracts were initiated with questions by the narrators. The abstracts also function as attention-getters to get the listeners interested in the narrators' stories. The types of question abstracts, for example "Dila, did I tell you about man marries grandmother?" announces the intention of the teller to tell about the "news", thus the teller checks the recipients' knowledge whether the listener has heard the story so that the teller can begin his/her telling.

Orientation

Orientation consists of statements that provide the setting or context of a narrative. Peterson and McCabe (1983) listed nine general types of orientation remarks: Participants, Time, Location, General conditions, Ongoing events, Tangential information, General cases, Imminent events and Objects or features of the environment. These features occur near the beginning of the story, and serves to "orient the listener in respect to time, place and behavioral situation" (Labov and Waletzky, 1967).

In this study, it can be inferred that the students showed awareness of the importance of telling the listeners the: who, what, where and when of the story. In the narratives, all or 100% of the narratives consist the Orientation element. Examples of expressions used in the narratives are:

- a. "...I found it in a drain. I...it is raining there. I...I heard a sound from the drain. The puppy fell into the drain."
- b. "Yesterday I found a cat in my house."
- c. "Last week, I ... I...go back to my house after tuition. On the way we're very hungry, so we decide to go to a ... stall."

In the samples' narratives, importance was given to: who, when and what of the story than other information like: why and how. To get information regarding: why and how, were elicited by the listener(s) to enable them to get a better idea of the story.

Remarkable Event(s)

This feature "consists of temporally ordered actions, outlining a remarkable event, which the narrator wants to share his/her reaction to" (Eggins and Slade, cited by Jones, 2001). Labov posits "Complication Action and Resolution" as the feature that would follow Orientation based on his findings on "life-threatening experiences" of his samples. Eggins and Slate (cited by Jones, 2001) posit that casual conversations would normally involve personal experiences which would involve embarrassing or humiliating situations or frustrations or jokes and not stories which would lead to climax and resolutions.

In this study the samples are young learners thus their narratives were analysed for remarkable event as appropriate to their “experience”. In the narratives 58.8% of the narratives have this generic feature in their storytelling’s. Examples of remarkable events in the narratives are:

- a. “They took the crocodile. When they saw ...when they saw it. It was a not a crocodile. It was just... a log!”
- b. “He cycle... he cycle... his bicycle on way come hold... his bicycle handle and fall into the drain and ...broke his... [~]”
- c. “Yesterday I went to the park with it. I saw my friend and talk with it ...him. After we talk...I... cannot see it again.”

Reaction

Reaction refers to how the characters in the story world, or the listener(s), react to the events related. Jones (2001) posits that typical reactions that can be considered “reaction” are expressions of anger, fear and amusement. In the transcription 94% of the narratives featured this feature. Examples of reaction expressions found in the narratives are:

- a. “Wah, A good grandson... what a good grandson - want to take care of the grandmother.”
- b. “Oh, he... he alright... better now?”
- c. “...that’s a good idea... that’s good ... eh... I can get some money from my parents.”

Some of the reactions were in the form of evaluation, this shows that the tellers were able to “interest” their listeners to their storytelling. In one of the narratives the listeners “laughed” to signal their reaction to the joke or storytelling.

Coda

This is an optional feature just like the abstract. Its function is to round off the story by building a “bridge between the story world and the moment of telling” (McCarthy, cited by Jones, 2001). This feature may focus on the progress of one of the story world characters from the time depicted in the story to the present. Codas also formalise endings of a narrative. According to Labov (1967), “Coda is a functional device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment”.

In this research only 18% of the narratives featured Coda in their storytelling. Examples of Coda found in the narratives are:

- a. “Eh...I wish them happiness forever.”
- b. “I will help you to find it. Don’t worry.”
- c. “...We want (must)...be careful when you want cooking somethings (want to cook something).”

According to Norrick (2000), Coda is usually provided by storytellers but in this research the listeners gave the Coda before the end of the storytelling.

Evaluation

The five elements outlined above give the story its structure, another element that occurs throughout the story and whose effective employment gives the story its “interest and telliability” (McCarthy, cited by Jones, 2001) is “Evaluation”. To answer the “So what?”

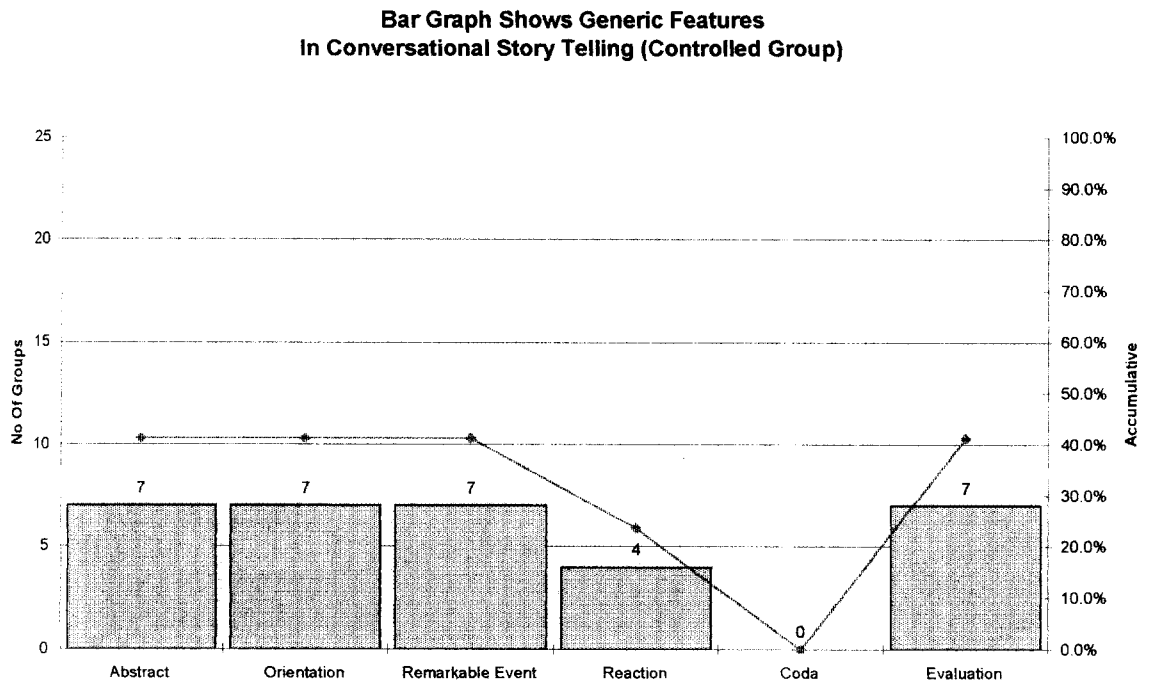
question (Labov, cited by Polanyi, 1989), and to ensure that the listeners can see the point of the story, narrators make use of evaluative devices to help their audience appreciate that something was funny, frightening, embarrassing, humiliating or unusual. This would often involve the narrator to momentarily step out of the story world and explicitly tell their listeners that something was embarrassing, wonderful or funny.

In the 17 samples' narratives, evaluation was featured in 88% of the narratives. Examples of such expressions are:

- a. "Yes... and she was very happy with her new life."
- b. "She feels very happy with her young new husband."
- c. "It is very interesting."

In a conversational storytelling usually the narrators would provide the evaluation in order to interest the listeners but in this study the listeners too gave evaluative expressions like: "Oh... Eh... that is funny.", "Oh, this case is very interesting." and "Oh, he is (a) very kind and honest man." This shows that storytellers were successful in featuring the "point" of the story, thus the listeners could make meaning out of the narration.

The 17 narratives from the control group were also analysed for the number of generic features contained in their narrative structure. The findings show that Abstract was featured in 41% of the narratives, Orientation 41%, Remarkable Events 41%, Reaction 23%, Coda 0% and Evaluation in 41% of the narratives. The findings are represented in the bar graph below:

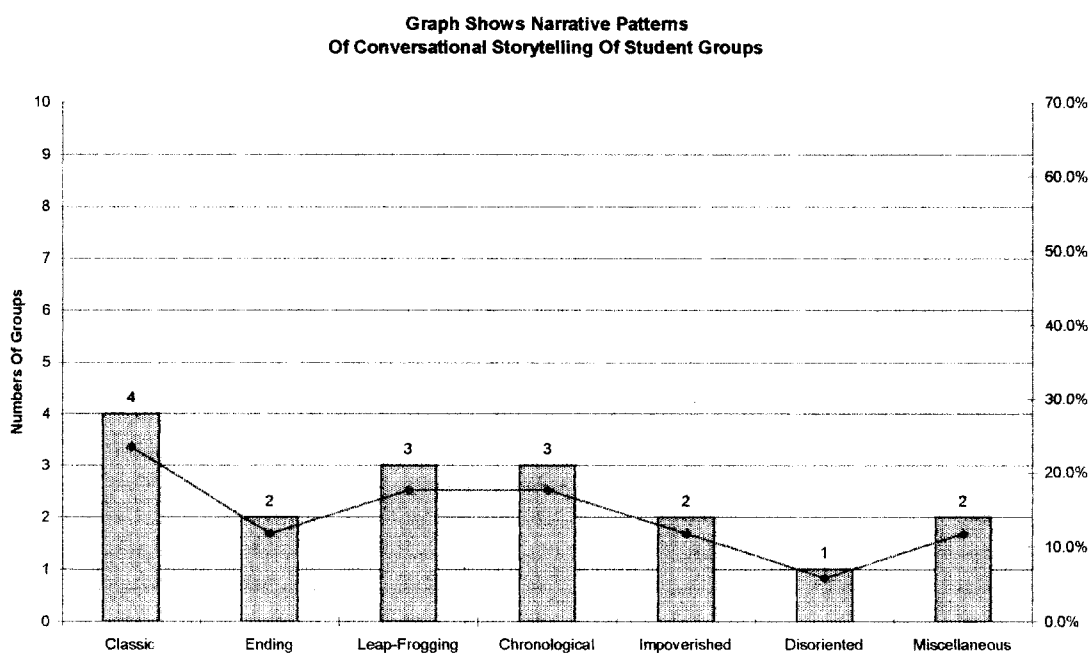
Graph 2: Generic Features in Conversational Storytelling of Controlled Group.

The mean for the total number of generic features found in the 17 narratives in the experimental and controlled group was analysed using SPSS 11.0. The result shows that the mean for the experimental group was 4.23 and for the controlled group it was 1.88. This shows that there were at least 4 generic features in the experimental group and at least 2 generic features in the controlled group. The findings show that the teaching of conversational storytelling techniques has influenced the experimental group to use generic features in their storytelling.

Narrative patterns

This study also investigates the structural patterns in the narratives of students during conversational storytelling. The analysis was carried out using Peterson and McCabe's classification of narrative patterns and the result is represented in a bar graph (Refer to Appendix D for the data).

Graph 3: Narrative Patterns of Conversational Storytelling of Experimental Group.



Classic Pattern

The classic pattern has been defined by Labov and Waletzky as a prototypical narrative structure (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). In the classic pattern, the events that lead to the climax are recapitulated in a well-ordered series. When the narration reaches the high point or climax the action is suspended and the high point is evaluatively dwelled on. Then the events which resolved the high point are successively related. The presence of Orientation at the beginning and Coda at the end will not affect this basic pattern (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). From the overall narratives only 23.5% of the narratives have the characteristics on the classic pattern. An example of such pattern is given below:

S9

A: Hi, Chong Seong and Wai Keong. How are you?

B and C: Hi, Kavin. We are fine...thank you.

A: I also fine... thank you.

B: What are you doing here?

A: I just come back... from ... hospital. I just come back from hospital to visited our best friend. *{Abstract}*

{Pause}

C: Why you go to hospital?

A: Because my best ... our friend meet with an accident. *{Orientation}*

C: How did your friend met with an accident?

A: He cycle... he cycle... his bicycle on way come hold... his bicycle handle and fall into the drain and... broke his... [~] *{Climax/Remarkable Event}*

B: Oh... oh... I see...

C: Oh... he... he alright... better now?

[Pause]

A: Yes, he better... yes, he alright now. *{Evaluation}*

[Pause]

B and C: What the doctor say?

A: Doctor say... doctor say he must rest for ... for 3 weeks. *{Resolution}*

B: Oh, I see... we will visit now. See you... *{Coda}*

A: Ok, bye...

According to Peterson and McCabe (1983) there are many versions of a classic structure and in the example given, the narrator provided an Abstract, which is also the ending of the story. Then he/she moved on to Orientation, Remarkable Event and Resolution.

Ending-at-the-high-point Pattern

In this type of narrative pattern, the storyteller would provide successive complicating actions until the climax is reached as in the classic pattern but the narration would come to an end without a resolution. Ghost stories or stories with surprise endings often have this form. In this study, only 11.8% of the samples' narratives show the characteristic of ending-at-the-high-point narrative pattern. An example of such narrative is given below:

S1

A: Oh, yeah ... funny. Vahid, do you have any funny story?

B: No, Oh, yes, I've got ... it was a windy afternoon. So my father asked to pick out the rubbish the swimming pool. So I also went to pick out the rubbish the swimming pool. When I was picking out the rubbish, I saw a crocodile near the swimming pool, so I rushed to ... rushed to tell my mum and call my father and asked to called Bomba... Bomba. My father also called the Bomba. When the... Bomba... returned to the scene, it was not... they took the crocodile. When they saw ... when they saw it... it was a not a crocodile... it was just... a log!

[Laughter]

[The school bell rings...]

B: Oh! The bell just ring... come let's go...

In this narration the narrator and his/her listener do not make any comments regarding the "story" thus the storytelling stops without resolution or coda. According to Peterson and McCabe (1983), this type of narrative is viewed "as a developmental approximation to the classic pattern." Thus the ending-at-the-high-point narratives are perceived as simply ending too soon but they are still "an approximation of classic narratives" (Peterson and McCabe, 1983).

Leap-frogging Pattern

This type of narrative according to Peterson and McCabe (1983) is a primitive pattern. In this type of narrative, the narrator would jump from one event to another and by doing so would leave out various major events. Thus the listeners would not be able to reconstruct the original events being described in the narrative (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). In this research, 17.6% of the narratives show the presence of this type of narrative structure. An example of such a narrative pattern is given below:

S 11

A: Hi, Ling. How are you?

B: I'm fine. Thank you.

A: Yesterday, I lost my pet. My pet is a dog. Its name is Puppy. Can you help me to find it? {*Orientation*}

B: Yes, I will help you to find it.

[Pause]

B: What is ...your puppy...the colour?

[Pause]

Tell me something about the puppy?

A: It was white colour. My ...my father gave it to me for my birthday present. Yesterday I went to the park with it. I saw my friend and talk with it...him. After we talk...I...cannot see it again.

[Pause]

B: I will help you to find it. Don't worry.

A: Thank you.

In this narrative, the narrator jumps from one event to another. First he/she tells about the pet which is lost and then tells about its name. Later he/she relates about the pet being a present from the father for his/her birthday (which is a different story altogether) and then he/she goes on to tell about how he/she lost the dog. The narrator does not give other information such as how long the dog has been lost and the breed of dog among other relevant information to locate his/her pet which can be considered as “deleting important events” (Peterson and McCabe, 1983).

Chronological Pattern

This narrative pattern has a simple chronological pattern and it contains a description of successive events. Though the narration is temporally integrated, it does not have a high point in the story. Only 17.6% of the narrations have the characteristics of a “Chronological Pattern”. An example of such pattern is given below:

S3

A: Did I tell you about my new puppy? *{Abstract}*

B: So, where you buy the puppy?

A: I am not buy the puppy...

B: So...when...so...when...you got the puppy?

A: I got the puppy from a drain...I...at that time...I at that time it was wet and dirty.

{Orientation and Remarkable Event}

B: So you took it home?

A: Yes...and then I fed it with milk and meat. *{Resolution}*

[Pause]

B: What his name?

A: His name was Jack.

B: What colored it?

A: It is white in colour.

B: So what happened next?

A: I took it to the park. It was running by itself...I was very happy. I had already...

{Event}

B: I want to see it. Can I go to your house...now?

A: Sure, let's go.

In this narration the narrator provides a chronological list of things that happened since he/she found the puppy. The narrative is merely a recapitulation of what had happened, a chronological list of things that took place. The narrator did not attempt to organise or integrate various bits of information that he/she has towards a climax or a remarkable event (Peterson and McCabe, 1983).

Impoverished Narratives

This is one of the common patterns found in the samples' narratives. This type of narrative is known as the primitive pattern. These types of narratives could consist of too few sentences that the structure is not recognizable or it has extensive orientation and evaluation (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). In the 17 narratives 17.6% of the conversational storytelling's had "Impoverished narrative pattern". An example of such narrative is given below:

S7

A: Did you read the newspaper yesterday? *{Abstract}*

B: I didn't.

A: Alright. Let me tell you...there was a new about a man married his grandmother...

{Orientation}

B: Can you tell me why?

A: He wants to take care of her and he felt that his mother need extra care and she is old.

{Evaluation}

[Pause]

B: Wah! A good grandson. What a good grandson want to take care of the grandmother.

A: She is happy with her young husband. *{Evaluation}*

B: Where is...where is the grandmother first husband?

A: He died more than 30 years ago.

B: So the grandmother stay alone...stay alone for a long time?

A: Eh...I wish them happiness forever. *{Evaluation}*

B: Ah...me too.

A: I want to go to my uncle's home now.

B: See you in school tomorrow. Bye.

A: Bye.

In this narrative the narrator provided an Abstract, Orientation and Evaluation in his/her storytelling thus providing minimal structure in the narration. There were very few sentences in the narrative where the events or the pattern could lead towards the remarkable event which is not recognisable.

Disoriented Pattern

Narrators in this category would appear to be confused or disoriented about the events being narrated. The narrator might even misuse the language thus making the understanding of the narration difficult (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). This pattern was

found in 5.9% of the overall narratives in this study. An example of disoriented pattern is given below:

S16

A: Hi, Cheng. Did you go to Boon Siong birthday party yesterday?

B: Yes, mother is cooking many delicious food and bring for us.

C: What are you talking about?

A: Boon Siong birthday party. Were you ... were you going yesterday?

C: No, because I have tuition yesterday.

B: Yesterday... her cousin... was... gave him a ...expensive present.

C: What is that?

D: It is a computer.

B: The bell is ringing...go back to the home.

In this narrative, too many narrators were contributing to the storytelling. Moreover in the narrative, who the mother is, was not mentioned and why she must “bring” the food is very vague. Overall the narrative makes little sense.

Miscellaneous Pattern

Narratives that are “pure fantasy”, “thematically-linked attached narratives” as a chain of narratives about the same general topic and narratives which have combinations of different patterns are classified as “miscellaneous” (Peterson and McCabe, 1983).

Narratives that have such characteristics make up 11.8% out of the overall narratives in this study. An example of this miscellaneous pattern is given below:

S8

A: Hi, Suresh!

B: Hi, Vahid!

A: How are you?

B: I am fine. How did you spend your school holiday?

A: I am fine. How about you Vahid?

B: I'm also fine. How did you spend your school holiday?

A: In school holiday, I went to Zoo Melaka.

B: How did you go there?

A: I go there with my family.

B: Ah... What did you see in Zoo Melaka?

A: I see in there wild animals and tame animals.

B: What kind of wild animal did you see?

A: It's like tiger, lion...and so on...

B: What kind of wild animal did you see?

A: Saw...saw...

B: What else did you see in Zoo Melaka?...What else did you see in Zoo Melaka?

A: I see monkey and so on...

B: Ah... did you get a chance to feed the monkey?

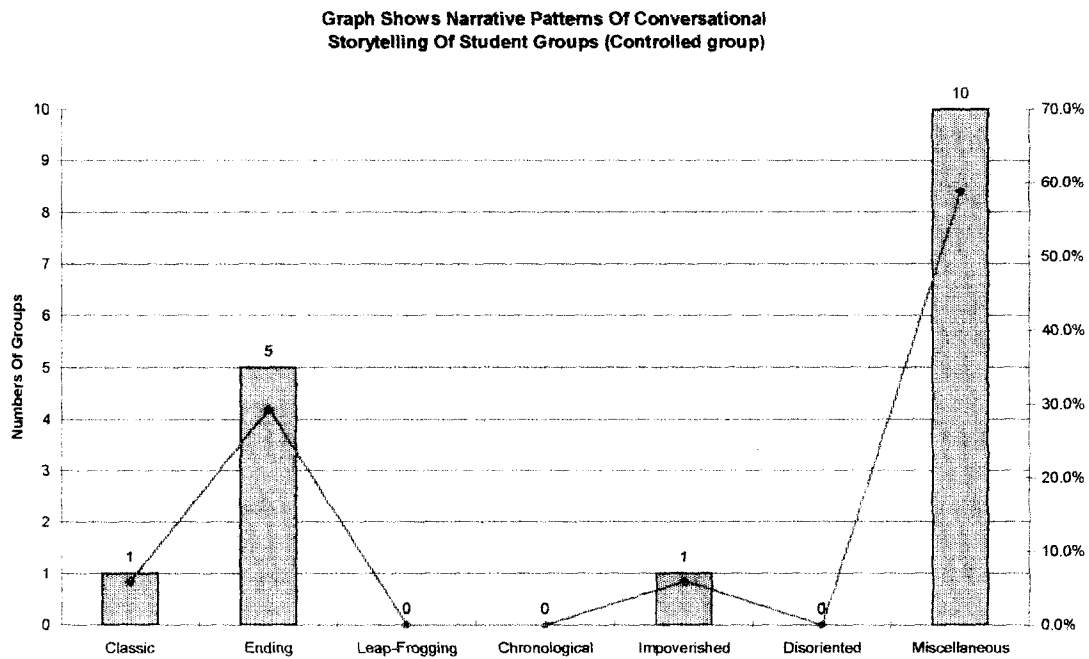
A: What interesting thing did you see there?

B: I see the people of Zoo feed...crocodile.

A: Oh! The bus just come...I'll see you tomorrow...

This narration is more like a question-answer session between the narrator and the listener. Even though the listener tries to elicit "a story" out of the narrator, the narrator shows reluctance to tell the story without any prompts. The narrative patterns of the controlled group are shown in a bar graph below:

Graph 4: Narrative Patterns of Conversational Storytelling of Controlled group.



The findings show that 6% of the narratives have classic pattern, 29% have ending-at-the-high-point pattern, 6% have impoverished pattern and 59% of the narratives have miscellaneous pattern. None of the controlled group's narratives could be classified under the leap-frogging pattern, chronological pattern and disoriented pattern. Overall there were 29.4% basic narrative pattern (ending-at-the-high-point pattern), 5.8% primitive narrative pattern (leap-frogging pattern, impoverished pattern and disoriented pattern) and 5.8% classic pattern compared to the experimental group which had 11.8% basic narrative pattern, 35% primitive narrative pattern, 11.8% chronological pattern and 23.5% classic narrative pattern. In summary the experimental group had 76.4% narrative patterns while the control group had 41% narrative patterns in their narratives, excluding the miscellaneous pattern. This shows that the experimental group had more narrative patterns in their narratives compared to the control group. Thus the experimental group showed more awareness of providing better structuring in their storytelling to enable the listeners to better comprehend their stories compared to the control group.

Story recipients' response

In storytelling in conversation the tellers introduce the story so as to secure listeners' interest, gain control of the floor and to ensure understanding. The listeners on the other hand would interrupt and give comments. Listeners may even seek to redirect the story line, to reformulate its point or even to become full-fledged co-tellers of the story. In any case, story recipients can apparently understand and evaluate the story they hear rapidly enough to respond appropriately to it, perhaps with matching stories of their own. In this study, listeners' responses in the form of back-channel noises, sentence completions, requests and response stories would be analysed.

Back-channel responses

In listening to stories, listeners would vary their enthusiasm depending on the type of stories they are listening to. According to Donlon (1995), degrees of competence can differ among listeners which might force desperate storytellers to prematurely end their story if they are faced with wooden unreceptive listeners. In the 17 narratives collected there are evidence of back-channel responses and affective reactions from the listeners. The back-channel responses present in the narratives can be classified as minimal responses, short function words, short clauses and more extended responses. The findings are shown in the table below:

Table 4.1: Back-channel responses

1. Minimal responses (including nonword vocalisations)	a. Uh huh b. Ha...ha...
2. Short function words	a. Yeah!

	b. No...
3. Single lexical tokens	a. Fine.
3. Short clauses	a. I didn't. b. I think so... c. Oh! Oh, I see...
4. More extended responses	a. Oh! This case is very interesting. b. Yes, they are. c. Oh, I cannot believe it!

The use of back-channel noises in the narratives shows that the samples know of its usage in a discourse and that the listeners made “fine judgment” as to when to give back-channel responses when the teller is prepared to relinquish the turn or when the talk is open for an intervention that will not be considered as a rude interruption (McCarthy, 2003). Back-channel responses by listeners though brief as in one word utterances, suggest that listeners have attended to the “interactional and relational aspects of the talk as to the transactional and propositional content and the need to keep the channel open” (McCarthy, 2003).

Thus the use of brief responses should not be considered as being unsocial or “minimize turn size” or economize. In fact, a brief response such as “Yeah!” has many functions which may be used to mark acknowledgement and to confirm understanding but also to express agreement. In this study, the use of the back-channel “Yeah!” in one of the narratives shows agreement (A: “Funny story?” B: “Yeah!”). The use of such responses is considered, coordinated and fine-tuned social actions on several levels simultaneously (Schegloff, cited by McCarthy, 2003). Other minimal responses such as “Uh huh” serves as a “continuer” thus encouraging the teller to go on or letting the teller know that the

listener wants to know more (A: This case is happen...was happen in ~” B: Uh huh, A: The man was 35 years old while...while the grandmother, 80 years old.”).

Types of requests

In order to get information or to better understand the story the listeners question the tellers. The question-answer sequence could lead to the sequential organisation of the storytelling. Allen and Guy (1974) posit four discrete functions for questions: questions that seek information, questions in interrogative form, questions that call for change in subject matter and questions that call for clarification. The types of questions used to elicit stories in the narratives are represented in the table below:

Table 4.2: Types of requests

1. Questions that demand an assertive response with organised information.	a. So, what happened next? b. Who is the winner of the singing competition? c. So, where you buy the puppy?
2. Questions in interrogative form which seeks agreement, consent, acceptance or confirmation.	a. A: No, Thilak, just told me a funny story. B: Funny story? b. So the grandmother stay alone...stay alone for a long time? c. So, you took it home?
3. Questions that call for change in subject matter or directs/redirects the topical flow.	A: Who is the winner of the singing competition? B: The singing competition winner is Su Hui. Her voice was very good.

	<p>A: What delicious food was Su...was Su Hui mother prepare on that day?</p> <p>B: Her mother prepare were...a...delicious food such as mee hoon, mee goreng and fried chicken.</p> <p>A: Do you take photo at there? Can you take it to school and let me see?</p>
<p>4. Questions that call for clarification, verification and more information.</p>	<p>a. What's the article about?</p> <p>b. Why he ...why he...married with his grandmother?</p> <p>c. How old they are?</p>

The first type of questions focuses on information and in trying to seek the information the listener demands an assertive answer with organised information. For example in the question: "Who is the winner of the singing competition?", the listener shows his/her impatience in wanting to know the winner thus he/she demands to know the name of the person before listening to the rest of the story. The second form of the question is an assertion in interrogative form which seeks agreement, consent, acceptance or confirmation. For example the question: "So, you took it home?" the question can be answered with a simple confirmation since in the abstract the narrator has already mentioned that he/she has a new cat. The interrogative type of questions has the important function of directing and sustaining the flow of conversation. The use of these questions would enable the introduction of new elements and improve the congruence in the conversational stream between two partners, thus contributing to the quality of the communication contact and to the bonding process.

The third form of the questions direct or redirects the topical flow and calls for a change in subject matter. In the example given the listener moves the topic of discussion from the winner of the singing competition to the delicious food to the photographs without any elaboration on each "topic". These type of question-answer sequence gives an impression that the listener is not interested in the story that the teller is telling, thus by asking questions one after the other the listener does not allow the teller to complete the story on his/her own. The use of unrelated questions to bring about "a drastic shift in the direction of the conversation" is the characteristic of the third type of questions. In this study the narrator moves from one "topic" to another by requesting too many information in a very short time so that the narrator is not given a chance to relate his/her effectively.

The fourth function of the questions in conversations calls for clarification, repeating, verification or more detailed information. In the example: "Why he...why he...married with his grandmother" the listener seeks clarification. In another example: "How old they are?", "How" is used to elicit information and the use of the question in the active voice shows that the listener has been listening to the teller and he/she shows that he/she is interested in the ongoing ons of the story and this show by using the "How" type of questions. In the examples given the question: "What's the article about?" while seeking more information, the tone expresses eagerness to know more based on the abstract given ("Because I read an interesting article in the newspaper. I think you'll be shocked!") (Polanyi, 1989). Listeners' requests for clarification and specific questions about the story world are also appropriate means to display attention although such comments may be prefaced by apologies for not quite following the storytelling (Polanyi, 1989). According to Allen and Guy (1974) these four types of questions help to carry or support the continuity of the conversational stream.

Response stories

Response story is “a special sort of audience response to a story to the first” (Norrick, 2000). Response story is namely the construction of a second story parallel to the first. This type of story would be constructed to demonstrate an understanding of its predecessor and to comment on it. In this study only 24% of the narratives show the existence of such stories. An example of such a response story which was elicited by one of the listeners is given below:

A: “Oh, yeah... funny. Vahid, do you have any funny story?”

B: “No. Oh, yes. I’ve got...it was a windy afternoon...”

In the example above, the response story was constructed to demonstrate understanding of the predecessor (earlier story) and the theme of the response story runs parallel to its predecessor. The telling of the response story demonstrates an understanding of the foregoing story.

In other narratives the response stories were provided in only one sentence without any elaboration in the storytelling. An example of such “response story” is given below:

A: “Chan, have you see the yesterday newspaper about the cabin was burnt?”

B: “Yes, I also hear some people...say have people were fight.”

C: “Oh... this new...this new was very sick. It was about ...they was boiling the water or not switch off the fire.” (*Response story*)

Appropriate responses to conversational storytelling, especially a full-blown response story like the first example, align interlocutors and enhance rapport between tellers and listeners.

Stories emerge from turn-by-turn talk, that is, are locally occasioned by it and upon their completion, stories re-engage turn-by-turn talk, that is, are sequentially implicative for it (Gail, 1978). The use of back-channel responses, requests and response stories, in this study implies that the stories emerge from turn-to-turn talk – locally occasioned. In the narratives the stories were locally occasioned whereby the stories were “triggered” in the course of turn-by-turn talk. Even the response stories were methodically introduced in sequence to the prior talk because of its appropriateness of, the stories telling. In the example above, the teller questions his/her listeners regarding “...yesterday newspaper...” the first listener answers “Yes, I also hear...” and the second listener responds with another story by referring to: “Oh, this new...this new was very sick...”

This shows that turn-by-turn emergence of a story from topical talk may be methodically constructed by locally occasioned occurrence. The response in the example demonstrates both an understanding of the point of the story and appreciation and understanding of the information received from the primary storyteller regarding the story. Thus the storytelling should be judged as a successful effort by both the storyteller and the listener (Polanyi, 1989).

Discussion

In the 17 narratives analysed the percentage of generic features found in the narratives are represented in the table below:

Table 4.3: Percentage of generic features in the narratives.

Generic features	Percentage
Abstract	65
Orientation	59
Remarkable Event	59
Reaction	94
Coda	18
*Evaluation	88

*Evaluation can occur throughout the storytelling.

The percentage of the narrative patterns used by the students is represented in the table below:

Table 4.4: Percentage of narrative patterns found in the narratives.

Narrative Patterns	Percentage
Classic Pattern	23.5
Chronological Pattern	17.6
Basic Pattern (Ending-at-the-high-point)	11.8
Primitive Pattern (Leap-frogging, Impoverished, Disoriented)	40.8
Miscellaneous	11.8

The percentage of generic features found in the narrative patterns is shown in the table below:

Table 4.5: Percentage of generic features found in the narrative patterns.

Narrative Patterns	Percentage of Generic Features
Classic Pattern	83
Ending-at-the-high-point	83
Chronological Pattern	67 to 83
Leap-frog Pattern	50 to 83
Impoverished Pattern	50 to 83
Disoriented Pattern	67
Miscellaneous Pattern	16 to 50

The classic pattern, according to Peterson and McCabe (1983), is the epitome of narrative structure. The narratives that have this classic pattern have at least 83% of the generic elements. In the leap-frog pattern narratives, there were 50% to 83% generic features. In this pattern the narrator jumps from one feature to another thus the listeners have the heavy burden of inferring or eliciting the necessary information to get the whole “picture”. In the chronological narrative a series of events that had occurred at the same time is related. These narratives have between 67 to 83% of the generic features. Thus the listeners do not have to infer any information as in the leap-frog pattern. If the narratives in the leap-frog pattern are systematically recapitulated, they could be classified as classic narratives.

Another common narrative pattern is the impoverished pattern. These types of narratives have between 50% to 83% generic features. This type of narratives focused on certain generic features like orientation and evaluation. The events in the narratives were

described in brief sentences. The narrators might not be interested in conveying his/her story thus he/she told the story because it was elicited by the listeners. Linguistic competence and lack of experience in reflecting their “story” in the second language could also contribute to this type of narrative pattern.

Ending-at-the-high-point narratives have the basic elements of a classic pattern except they do not have resolutions. In this type of narration the storyteller will stop his/her narration abruptly after the remarkable event or the climax. One of the narratives which have ending-at-the-high-point pattern ends with laughter, this type of pattern is normally evident in ghost stories and jokes telling. Miscellaneous pattern narratives in this study consist of one fantasy narrative and another narration that seem to be like a chain of events that dwelled on the same topic. Even though there are 16% to 50% generic features in this type of narration, these narratives cannot be classified under any of the other patterns thus they have been categorised as miscellaneous narrative.

Disoriented pattern type of narratives shows the narrator’s confusion about the events described and lack of language competence could contribute to the production of such narrative types. Only 6% of the narratives feature this narrative pattern. Even though 67% of the generic features were found in this type of storytelling the narrative is too disoriented for the listener to understand.

In this study after the experiment the students in pairs/groups produced different narrative structures. The findings showed that 71% of the pairs/groups used 67% of the generic features of conversational storytelling. Even though the disoriented narrative showed confusion in sequencing the generic features the students seems to know that such

features exist in conversational storytelling. The findings show that overall the students seem to have a particular narrative structure in their storytelling.

The average generic feature per group is 4.8. This shows that the students were able to use at least 67% of the generic features in their storytelling. The narratives storytelling began with abstract, followed by orientation, remarkable event, resolution and ending. The abstract is almost always at the beginning of a narration. A few narrations began with greetings followed by the abstract. About 65% of the narratives consisted of abstracts. Most of the abstracts were in the form of questions. In question type abstracts narrators seek permission to tell a story or to check with the listeners whether they have been told the story to avoid retelling of the same story to the same person and to “see” the listeners’ reaction whether they would be interested in the story. The abstracts, at the beginning of the storytelling serve to get the listeners’ attention, provide a brief summary of the narration or a prologue – state the ending of the story at the beginning of the narration. Some of the abstracts also serve as summaries or as evaluation of the content. By doing thus, the teller builds a bridge from a point being made in the general state of talk to some states of affairs in the story world which can be seen to relate in significant ways to what is being talked about. This assures the recipients that their interests are being taken into account.

The samples provided substantial amount of orientation while narrating. In this study all the groups (100%) featured orientation in their storytelling. They are clearly concerned about providing information about who is involved, what happened, where and when the incidents occurred and orientation was featured at the beginning of the storytelling so that the listeners could make sense of their narratives. In narrations where the narrators gave

information regarding who and what information only, the listeners elicited the necessary information in the form of questions to help them comprehend the events of the story.

Only one narrative which was a sequence story (response story with a parallel theme) told a story in relation to an earlier story, this response story was completed without any interruptions for details by the listeners. Maybe the listeners knew the type of story they were about to hear from the abstract that they were just waiting for the story to be unfolded by the teller. This narration has an ending-at-the-high-point pattern. It was ended without a resolution but with laughter which is characteristic of joke telling.

Another feature that occurred throughout the storytelling is evaluation. This occurred at the beginning, after the remarkable event (in the middle of the storytelling) and at the ending of a narration. In the narration 88% of the storytelling's featured evaluation. Among the narratives 18% of them were heavily evaluated. The evaluations occurred at the beginning, middle and at the ending of the storytelling. The evaluations were provided by both the narrators and the listeners. The highest incidence of evaluation occurred in the middle of the narration after the remarkable event. The evaluations at the beginning of the narration were lesser than the evaluations that occurred at the end of the story. The types of evaluation given by the narrators concerning people, things, place, events or incidents are expressions of hopes, desires, guesses and judgments and exclamations.

As the evaluations were provided by both the tellers and the listeners, it is obvious that the students can understand the "meaning" of those experiences. In conversational storytelling the teller's role is not merely providing information but they should also provide evaluation so that there is a "point" in telling the story. Thus at the end of the

storytelling the listener would not ask the “So what?” question. According to Labov (cited by Sandra, 2004), storytellers use evaluative devices to help the listeners appreciate that something is funny, embarrassing, humiliating or unusual. McCarthy (cited by Sandra, 2004) posits that language learners usually find it difficult to use evaluative devices and tell the bare facts of a story with little evaluation.

Two of the mostly evaluated narrations have the classic pattern (beginning, middle and end of narration) and the chronological pattern (middle and end of narration). These two patterns are similar except that the chronological narrative does not have a remarkable event or a climax in its narration. This shows that the narrators in this study have tried to maintain interest and make the story worth telling to the listeners. The listeners too have shown that they have been listening to the stories and they have given their feedback by providing evaluation whenever appropriate.

The least used feature was coda. Only 17.6% of the narratives featured coda in their narratives. Abstract and coda are optional features in conversational storytelling. Furthermore, as second language learners it would not be easy to connect the storyworld to the moment of telling and to focus on the progress of the characters or to talk about the lasting effect of one of the incidents in the story. To do all these, the tellers would have to be very competent in the language. In this study codas were provided by the listeners, not the narrators. The listeners connect the story world to the present situation thus showing that the stories had affected them. Even though the students have used most of the generic features successfully they were still not competent enough to supply codas. Findings from the questionnaire show that most of the students do not often speak in the target language with their siblings, parents, friends or teachers. Moreover only around 17% of the students read English books, thus it would be difficult for the students come

up with codas. According to Peterson and McCabe (1983), sophisticated codas are used by first language older children to bring the listeners up to date about the narrated events. Maybe with further teaching, competence and with experience (as they get older) the students would be able to give codas in their storytelling.

A story cannot be expected to exemplify more than a small handful of linguistic features since during storytelling teller would be paying more attention to the moment of telling and not to the whole story that is at the back of their mind. Therefore it is necessary and important that the learners are helped to notice and reflect on key features as they occur by examining transcripts of stories from real conversation. By doing this the learners will become more aware of the many devices available to conversational storytellers. Furthermore it is also important that the learners would be able to consolidate previously learnt or encountered forms as they appear in new contexts.

Based on the group interview carried out, the students said that the generic features “learnt” during the experiment were helpful in composition writing. This shows that these students “noticed” the similarities between conversational storytelling (narration) and writing narrative. Thus, this study has demonstrated that the students who are second language learners are aware of the existence of the basic narrative structure, the modified version of the Labovian model by Eggins and Slade. Even though sometimes the students do omit certain features especially coda, with further initiation the students can tell stories conversationally to their friends in the second language. The response provided by the listeners has demonstrated both understanding of the point of the story and appreciation for the story.

Conversational storytelling concentrates on the interactional achievements of a story between teller(s) and listener(s). In this study the listeners conveyed their understanding of a storytelling through the immediate input they convey in the telling by producing, back-channel noises, requests and response stories. The use of response stories shows the parallel experience between the teller and the listener(s), shared values, feelings and understanding of their predecessors.

The tellers in this study seem to navigate their stories around the listeners' questions and comments. The requests from the listeners show that they (the listeners) are interested in the stories and that they have similar background knowledge of the teller. In this study, the listeners and tellers operate as equals. This is shown by the operation of turn taking employed by both the tellers and the listeners. Though questions would normally be used by storytellers to check the listeners understanding, that the listeners are listening attentively to the teller's narrative, but in this study the only time the storytellers questioned the listeners is at the beginning of the storytelling –to ask “permission” to tell the story.

There were ample opportunities for the listeners to question the storyteller. When significant questions were asked, the storytellers can better shape the story as he /she conveys specific details connected to it, which if not elicited might have been forgotten by the teller. 2000). Thus, by requesting information or by questioning the tellers, the listeners evoked memory or details that the teller has forgotten because while telling a story in conversation the teller would be paying more attention to the present telling. Thus by eliciting information the listeners have actually helped the storytellers in structuring their narrative.

Conversational Storytelling Techniques

The 17 narratives produced by the students centred on personal experiences and tellings about articles read. By examining the structural organisation of conversational storytelling transcripts in written form, as well as the linguistic features within it, the students were able to notice and reflect on the linguistic features. Thus the students were able to take the role of a teller and/or listener in order to engage in conversational storytelling.

The samples are average ability students. From the questionnaire and the interview the students mentioned that they prefer to use their mother tongues with their family members, friends and teachers. Moreover, they prefer to read materials in other languages rather than in the English Language. In this study, by raising the students' consciousness of particular language features, the students were encouraged to think about samples of language and to draw their own conclusions about how language would work in context, thus, enabling them to produce appropriate language features of conversational storytelling in their discourse.

Summary

The findings show that the students used some or most of the generic features in conversational storytelling and the type of generic features used influences their narrative patterns. The listeners produced back-channel noises, requested information and gave response stories.