

Special Issue

## Reflections on a Failed Interview

How a researcher can better understand a life story

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### Abstract

Recently, a number of research articles using life stories have been published in the field of Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language. Doing an interview doesn't necessarily mean you can write a life story. In this paper, I introduce one of my interview, which failed to understand what the participant said and was unable to write her life story. Then I discuss what caused this failure by making three points: (1) Simply doing an interview is not enough to completely understand what the participant said; (2) the model story I used was inadequate in fully understanding what she said; (3) the participant was unable to make coherent linear life story.

### Keywords

life story, undergraduate international student, self narrative, master narrative, rapport

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