

HANNA J. BATORÉO
Open University at Lisbon

EVALUATION PROCESSES IN L2 EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE NARRATIVES*

Our present study is part of a larger research project on Language and Emotion in the domain of Cognitive Linguistics. This study focuses on evaluation strategies used in narrative discourse with special reference to non-native speakers of European Portuguese. In Linguistics evaluation has been considered one of the important cognitive processes since the focus on language as discourse in McCarthy's studies in the nineties; it is also relevant in other cognitive processes, such as problem solving, reasoning, etc. Non-native evaluation is approached in the area of studies recently labelled *the Cognitive Culture System* (Talmy, 2000) where different conceptualizations of the world occurring in speakers of different cultures are seen from the cognitive rather than strictly social perspective.

The study presents an analysis of evaluation strategies in different European Portuguese narrative corpora:

- (i) 48 elicited written L2 narratives (elicited methodology by Hickmann, 1995; see also Batoréo, 2000), produced by Timorese¹ multilingual middle-aged speakers, Portuguese language teachers and Timor-Leste residents (*Corpus A*). The results obtained in (i) are compared to the evaluation strategies observed in L1 (ii) oral and (iii) written data. All of the data presented for L1 except for the *Corpus D* (see below) were elicited by the same technique as the above mentioned *Corpus A*. They are structured as follows:
 - (ii) 120 elicited oral narratives from the developmental *Batoréo Corpus* (Batoréo 2000) of stories produced by 60 adults and 60 children of 5, 7 and 10 years of age – *Corpus B* compared with spontaneous narrative material - *Corpus D* (gathered in Morais, 2002);
 - (iii) 28 elicited written narratives of ten-year-old children – *Corpus C* (Batoréo & Costa, 1999).
- With the analysis of evaluation strategies in the European Portuguese Corpora – native speakers (*Corpora B & C*) and L2 learners (*Corpus A*) – we shall discuss the hypothesis (forwarded in Batoréo & Morais, 2002) according to which the narrative coda plays a significant role in evaluating processes as evidenced by the linguistic strategies used in evaluation situations.

* A previous version of this paper was presented on June 3rd, 2004 at the Poster Session of the *Second Lisbon Meeting on Language Acquisition (with Special Reference to Romance Languages)*, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal. Address for correspondence: Hanna J. Batoréo, Universidade Aberta, Rua da Escola Politécnica, 147, 1269-001 Lisboa, Portugal. E-mail: hanna@univ-ab.pt

¹ Portuguese is a member of the Romance branch of the Indo-European language family (as are French, Italian and Spanish) spoken in many countries all over the world by more than 130 million speakers. It is the official language of Portugal in Europe, Brazil in South America, five different countries in Africa (Mozambique, Angola and other former Portuguese colonies) and Timor-Leste (East Timor) in Asia. In

Theoretical framework

In Cognitive Linguistics, narrative discourse is seen as the result of cognition-in-action: “(...) we see **narrative** as something that by necessity is **cognitively produced or experienced**, rather than as anything that could exist autonomously in its own right. We believe that it represents the operation of a cognitive system and that its characteristics share the properties that are common across cognitive systems generally, so that it can, in turn, be used to better understand the nature of those properties. This particular cognitive perspective distinguishes the present analysis from most other treatments of narrative.” (Talmy, 2000, vol. II, p. 420).

If we assume that it is our human universal condition which guides all of our behavior, we should expect to be able – as argued by Enrique Bernárdez (2004, p. 24) – to find that part of human cognition that is responsible for culture, for language in general, as well as for particular languages. This means to try to analyze our various “cognitive systems” – such as a language cognitive system, for instance, and a cultural cognitive system – that are assumed to form our cognition: “Cognitivism indicates that cultural patterns exist primarily because of the cognitive organization in each of the individuals collectively making up a society. (...) Our general perspective is that there has evolved in the human species an innately determined brain system whose principal function is the acquisition, exercise, and imparting of culture. This system of cultural cognition encompasses a number of cognitive capacities and functions, most of which are either weak or absent in other species. (...) the content of this structured cultural complex pertains both to **conceptual-affective patterns** and to behavior patterns.” (Talmy, 2000, Vol. II, p. 373).

Portugal the European variety of the language is spoken, as opposed to the Brazilian and African varieties used in other Portuguese speaking countries. East Timor is a small country in the eastern part of the island of Timor, largest and most easterly of the Lesser Stunda Islands, situated east of Indonesia and north of Australia. Discovered by the Portuguese in 1517, it has been under very strong Portuguese linguistic and cultural influence ever since. Occupied by Indonesia from 1975 to 1999, the annexation was not recognized by the United Nations and guerrilla warfare by local people seeking independence continued. Over 500,000 Timorese were killed by Indonesian troops or have resettled in West Timor, according to Amnesty International (see Collins, 1998). In 2002, after three years of UN jurisdiction, it became an independent country and decided to keep as official two languages: (local) Tetum and (international) Portuguese. A country of approximately 800,000 inhabitants, East Timor can be considered a truly multilingual country. Its population speaks over thirty different languages belonging to two big language families: Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian family) and Papuan (Timor-Alor-Pantar languages) (see Bright, 1992). Every Timorese speaks his own native language, Tetum – another local language which is used as *lingua franca* all over the country – and at least one western language. The over-forty Timorese population is mostly fluent in Portuguese, as having once been educated in the Portuguese Catholic system, introduced then as native and obligatory. The command of Portuguese by the younger population is much weaker, being suppressed by the Bahasa Indonesian (from the Malayic family of languages) and English. The official policy of maintenance of Portuguese as one of the official languages is supported by Portugal in its educational policy, in which the Universidade Aberta made a strong contribution.

In narrative text – as well as in other types of discourse (MacCarthy & Carter, 1994) – the author of the text **evaluates** the persons he is speaking about, their actions and intentions as well as the events he refers to. The pattern of the story normally concludes with an evaluating intention. The key element that marks the completion of the pattern is a positive evaluation of at least one of the possible solutions offered. “If positive evaluation for any particular solution is withheld, the writer normally turns to consider other possible solutions. A text which ends with no positive solution offered leaves the reader with the feeling of unease; no one likes to think problems are insoluble. Leaving the reader in a state of unease is, of course, a legitimate device of some styles of writing (...). Most problem solution patterns will end with a preferred solution, but may have stages in between where solutions are rejected, or partially accepted, creating more complex patterns. (...) In complex texts, the loop back potential solutions can be repeated many times, until the final positive evaluation.” (MacCarthy & Carter, 1994, p. 55-56).

The evaluating intention does not work only as the macro-level cognitive feature mentioned above. It is instantiated by micro-level items that work as particular strategies of interpersonal intimacy, evaluating all through the text in the form of language strategies. “Language as discourse approach involves participants whose linguistic choices also reflect their relationships with one another (interpersonal functions) as well as the overriding concern of using the language to create messages in conventionalised forms that are appropriate to the participants’ communicative goals (textual functions)” (MacCarthy & Carter, 1994, p. 94).

One of the most common examples to illustrate this phenomenon is the TENSE usage in story-telling: the historical present operates as one of “internal evaluation” devices, heightening the drama of events and focusing on a particularly significant part of the story. It is a perfectly coherent choice of tense common to many languages, even though the events that it recounts occurred in the past. It brings the listener directly into the action with the teller, and is thus the signal of interpersonal intimacy created by the narrator.

It is not only verb tense that realizes the elements of discourse structure in narratives. In a language such as English, choice of ASPECT in the verb phrase has been pointed out by many authors as relevant. Speakers will often change from the simple form of historical present tense to the continuous aspect to give particular focus to selected actions and events. The authors conclude that “this sort of super-heightening of attention to stages in the narrative is again an interpersonal as well as textual device, involving the receiver even more directly” (MacCarthy & Carter, 1994, p. 95).

In the final evaluation of a narrative, idioms and other FIXED EXPRESSIONS seem to play a role in evaluating the situation. This phenomenon is said to raise some descriptive problems concerning the borderline between the fully institutionalized idioms and extended metaphors which are perhaps not yet fully fossil-

Figure 1. The Horse Story

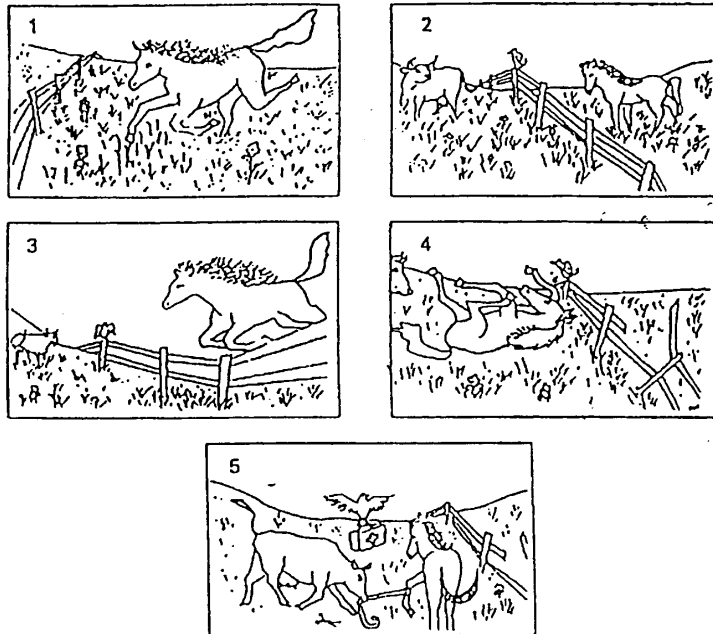
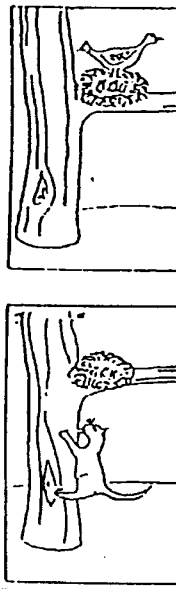


Figure 2. The Cat and Dog Story



ized on the linguistic level – though functioning perfectly as conceptual metaphors – and retain some semantic transparency (cf. Naciscione’s studies, 2001, 2003 and 2004).

The above observations point strongly (MacCarthy & Carter, 1994) in the direction of the necessity of multilevel language analysis with LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL FORMS, COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS (such as politeness and face), MODE, TEXT-TYPE and GENRE.

It has been pointed out that when idioms do occur, they do not occur randomly but, on the contrary, with a high degree of predictability, e.g. in the NARRATIVE CODA. They occur to say (i) *something* about (ii) *somebody absent* or about (iii) *an object*, rather than about the participants of the verbal interactions. This strategy has obviously some evaluative functions used in order not to risk facing interpersonal relations which can arise from the self- or other-abasement idioms.

Method

At the start of the study, *Corpus A* was constructed. 48 written L2 narratives were elicited with two picture stories: *Horse Story* and *Cat Story* produced in the absence of mutual knowledge, so that subjects would have to rely on linguistic means to organize their narrations, according to the methodology proposed in the Hickmann studies (Hickmann, 1995).

Hickmann’s narratives are elicited by a set of images (in one case five and in the other six), which follow a specific “story grammar”:

- *The Horse Story*: (1) A horse is running in the field near a fence; (2) The horse looks across the fence at a cow; (3) The horse jumps the fence with the cow in the background and a bird on the fence; (4) The horse stumbles on the fence and falls. The cow and the bird watch; (5) The cow bandages up the horse’s leg. The bird brings a first aid kit.
- *The Cat Story*: (1) A bird is sitting in a nest which is on a limb of a tree; (2) The bird flies away and the cat comes up the tree; (3) The cat sits watching the empty nest; (4) The cat climbs the tree as a dog watches; (5) The dog pulls the cat’s tail, as the bird flies back; (6) The dog chases the cat away, as the bird hovers over the nest.

The 48 narratives were produced by 24 Timorese multilingual middle-aged speakers from 39 to 57 (average age: 48,3). Every speaker produced two narratives each. All of them were Portuguese language secondary and pre-secondary school teachers, Timor-Leste residents. All of them had learnt Portuguese more than thirty years earlier (before 1975), in the traditional Portuguese colonial educational system. The sample was gender, age and story controlled. There were 14 females and 10 males, 14 of the narrators started their task with the *Horse Story* (14 HC) and 10 with the *Cat Story* (10 CH).

The *Corpus A* evaluating strategies were analyzed according to the methodology proposed in Batoréo & Morais, 2002 (see below).

The study of evaluating strategies presented in Batoréo & Morais (2002) and applied to the *Corpus A* was based on two different oral narrative corpora, which differed basically by the methodology used in order to gather the narrative data. The first one – Batoréo, 1996/2000 (*Corpus B*) – is based on Hickmann's methodology of elicited narratives presented above. The second one – Morais, 2002 (*Corpus D*) – is based on authentic spoken narratives that emerge naturally in normal everyday interaction.

The *Corpus B* data were presented and discussed in Batoréo 2000 and Batoréo & Faria 2001. The corpus of narratives is composed of 120 stories produced by 60 monolingual European Portuguese subjects: 30 adults (*Corpus B1*) and 30 children (half males and half females) of 5, 7 and 10 years of age, ten children in each age group (*Corpus B2*). The children were tested in a kindergarten and in a primary school in the centre of Lisbon (upper middle class).

The second study based on the *Corpus D* – Morais (2002) – focuses on the importance of everyday spoken language as the model for language teaching. It was carried out along the theoretical lines of sociolinguistics, cognitive analysis and, fundamentally, MacCarthy's discourse analysis. (McCarthy, 1991; McCarthy & Carter, 1994). It is argued that there are underlying recurrent features which are prototypically present in particular groups of texts, and that the underlying pattern will naturally have different linguistic surface realizations in which specific situations of use occur. They are defined as “predictable sequences of communication which acquire their coherence from shared schematic knowledge” and when studied in authentic spoken texts permit presentation of individual components of the communicative processes in real contexts and reveal how discourse markers function within contexts of discourse and cooperative strategies. The *Corpus D* (Morais 2002) research is based on a sub-corpus of 14 adult narratives occurring in natural verbal interaction selected from the Oral European Corpus *Subcorpus Oral do Corpus de Referência do Português Contemporâneo* from the Lisbon University Centre of Linguistics (CLUL). In the 14 European Portuguese narratives studied for the Morais (2002) research, grammatical, lexical and strategic speakers' choices were studied in order to explain how the narrator orients the listener to the intention of the narrative. The study of 14 authentic oral adult narratives emerging in real interaction in European Portuguese shows that – as already suggested in the studies worked out for English – in European Portuguese lexicogrammatical forms, communicative functions (such as politeness and face), mode, text-type, idioms and other fixed expressions play a role in evaluating the situation and possible responses to it. The specially privileged place for the evaluation strategies to appear is a NARRATIVE CODA.

In the next stage of our study, the *Corpus A* L2 narratives were compared with 28 elicited written European Portuguese L1 narratives (*Corpus C*) of ten-year-old children (Batoréo & Costa, 1999). Evaluating strategies in written narratives were

analyzed in comparison with the ones observed in oral elicited narratives (*Corpus B* and *D*). Evaluating strategies observed in *Corpus A* were also compared as written strategies with those of L1 children from *Corpus C*.

Thus, the *Corpus A* evaluating strategies were studied and their L2 specificity analyzed according to the (i) language variable, i.e., in comparison with those found in L1 *Corpora B, C*. They were also studied according to the (ii) register variable, i.e., compared as written strategies with those of L1 children from *Corpus C*, and (iii) according to the age variable as adult speakers' strategies with those of the adult component of *Corpus B*.

Data analysis and discussion

The evaluating strategies pointed out for European Portuguese in *Corpus D* are analyzed in the *A, B* and *C* elicited *Corpora*. First, evaluation strategies are focused in the analysis of L1 and L2 European Portuguese *Corpora* created in different methodological frames: authentic oral narratives emerging in real verbal interactions (*Corpus D*) and oral narratives elicited by a visual stimulus (*Corpora A, B & C*). Afterwards, the strategies of adult narratives (*A & B1*) are compared, and then L2 (*A*) specificities approached.

Adult's oral L1 narratives – *Corpora (B1 & D)*

In both adult L1 *Corpora (B1 & D)* the same evaluating strategies were found concerning the configurational dimension of the narrative.

However, there is a big difference to be noticed between the two corpora. It concerns much lower frequency of evaluation strategies in the elicited *Corpus B1* than in the authentic *Corpus D*. As initially expected, it seems quite natural that an adult telling *The Horse Story* or *The Cat Story* does not approach the narrative task in an authentic way and, therefore, does not show the level of involvement normally shown in authentic and motivated situations. In spite of all the controlling strategies used in the experiment, the adults facing the eliciting situation were conscious of the artificiality of the task and did not really create any relationship either with the researcher or with the blind-folded third participant who supposedly they were telling the story to. Mostly, their linguistic choices were neither marked by interpersonal functions nor were they concerned with using the language to create messages in conventionalized forms that are appropriate to the participants' communicative goals. In a few cases, some more imaginative participants tried to create their own framework, producing some idiosyncratic (and sometimes odd) strategies.

Children's oral narratives (*Corpus B2*): language acquisition mechanisms

Acquiring narrative competence means that from the very beginning of the period in which children are able to create a well structured story (i.e. from about the age of 5) they have the language material at their disposal to do so but

they need to “test” this material in a proper narrative context, ascertaining the syntactic and semantic constructions by its subjection to a certain pragmatic examination in order to achieve the adult standard of hierarchy organization and communicative strategy usage.

Previous studies (Batoréo, 2002 and Batoréo & Faria, 2001) show that the age of 6-7 years seems to be determinant for significant changes on cognitive and linguistic levels. At that age children start to reorganize their discourse and begin to use cognitive and linguistic structuring strategies in an adult way. This shows up clearly at the level of existential/ locative syntactic structure, as it takes considerable time to acquire the adult realization, i.e. preference for the *haver* (there be) constructions. Younger children of 7 and 10 still show very clear preference for other strategies, using, for instance, a partially synonymous verb *ser* ‘to be’ in non-standard constructions.

The children seem to have difficulties with establishing and maintaining spatial frames according to the rules of the standard target grammar (adult sample in the study) until late, i.e. around the age 7- 10. The interesting thing is that children at the age of 5 actually do have all the basic morphosyntactic and lexical information at their disposal. Even the introductory VS constructions – that violate the canonical syntactical order of an SVO language – and strongly marked for information introduction are in large part mastered at this age. “Master” here means that European Portuguese children at 5 are able to construct meaningful Portuguese sentences built with Portuguese lexico-morphological material, some of them perfectly acceptable in the standard language out of the discourse context. In an appropriate context only some of these syntactically correct and well-built utterances are really adequately used at the discourse level. The strategies the children use to verify the contextual adequacy of the expressions produced are constant and start at the time when they are really able to construct a successful narrative, which in our sample occurs approximately at the mean age of 5;7. With the morphosyntactic material at their disposal they “test” different uses in different contexts and “stick” to those that the input shows as contextually adequate and “successful”. All the others are dropped or retested, competing in different contexts till they prove “successful” in at least one.

The evaluation strategies used change with language development (Batoréo & Morais, 2002). As for the youngest children (five years of age), their evaluation strategies focus principally on

- the protagonist characterization with a diminutive form:
 - passarinho* ‘little bird’
 - mãe passarinho* or *pai passarinho* ‘mother + little bird’ or ‘father + little bird’
 - gatinho* ‘little cat’
 - pequenino* ‘little + diminutive (very little)’.
- At this stage intention verbs are used, as well as attributive constructions:
 - tentar* ‘try to’
 - tentar subir r árvore* ‘try to climb the tree’
 - passarinho como era esperto* ‘the bird, as it was clever’.

- Other strategies used are periphrastic (elliptic) constructions or final clauses:

í espera dele ‘waiting for him’

p(ar)a o apanhar ‘to catch him’.

- At five the children use opening constructions with (or without) the traditional pragmatic fixed construction *era uma vez* ‘was once upon a time’ but normally with the typical Portuguese restrictive relative clause that condenses the initially given information:

era uma vez + um pássaro + que vivia num ninho ‘(there) was once upon a time + a small bird + that lived in a nest’

Those of the five-year-olds who can produce well organized narratives focus their interest on protagonist intentions using:

- periphrastic syntactic (fixed) constructions,
ficou í espera que ele viesse ‘stayed waiting till he came’
ia p(ar)a lá comer os filhinhos dele ‘used to go / went’
- psychological verbs
o gato assustou-se ‘the cat got frightened’
- adversative construction
mas o passarinho como era esperto ‘but the (little bird) as it was clever’
- modal verbs, such as *querer* ‘want’:
o gato queria comer os filhos ‘the cat wanted to eat the children’
o gato quer comer o passarinho ‘the cat wants to eat the bird + (diminutive)’

At five, a good evaluation strategy shows:

- a proper spatial anchoring:
vivia num ninho um bocadinho grandinho ‘lived in a nest a (little + diminutive) (big + diminutive)’
- as well as suspense creation with a partly fixed expression with Imperfective Aspect form and an adverbial:
mas o gato andava ís vezes a passear por ali ‘but the cat used to go sometimes walking there’
- or the final focusing (e.g. onomatopoeic)
pumba!

Children’s written narratives (*Corpus C*): specificity of the written register at age ten

Some significant differences in narrative evaluating strategies can be observed between the examples of the oral child discourse (*Corpus B2*) and the written one (*Corpus C*) (cf. Batoréo & Costa, 1999).

First, reference mechanisms differ as far as reference to Person is concerned. In the case of oral production – and specially in reference to the bird(s) – a wide variety of common name designations (both masculine and feminine) are used in the first mentions such as *pinto* ‘chick’, *pintainho* ‘small chick’ *galinha* ‘hen’, a

general one *pássaro* ‘bird’ as well as relative family designations: *mãe* ‘mother’, *filhos* ‘children’, *crias* ‘little ones’. The other two animals are just called *cão* ‘dog’ and *gato* ‘cat’, no variety being observed.

The strategy used in a written discourse is completely different: the first mentions are realized as proper names of onomatopoeic origin with a formal male initial title – Mr. Thus we have *D. Piu* ‘Mr Peep’ for the bird, *D. Miau* ‘Mr Miau’ for the cat and *D. Āo-Āo* ‘Mr Bow-Wow’ for the dog, in which stereotypical animal voices, as traditionally used in European Portuguese, give origin to proper names. No variety was observed at this level.

As for the non-first mentions in the oral text (*Corpus B2*) we observe anaphoric pronominal or zero references, explicit nominal reference being rare (one mention in the whole *Corpus*). The cohesion of the text is affected as the child – still in the process of the acquisition of her mother tongue – does not as yet control all the anaphoric strategies².

In the written text (*Corpus C*) the same problem of incomplete control of the process of anaphorization can be observed, but the non-first mentions are realized in a different way. Here nearly all mentions – both first and non-first – are the proper names mentioned above. Pronominal or zero anaphors are rare and when they occur their use is ambiguity provoking³. Further, while conceiving a narrative, the child shows a different global attitude that makes her provide a descriptive title in the case of the written text only: *Dois amigos e um gato* ‘two friends and a cat’. A closer analysis shows that the title is not only a descriptive one; the ten-year-old conceives a story providing it with a moral interpretation in which the cat’s attitudes towards the birds are considered hostile and in clear contrast with the dog’s performance, which are considered friendly. The child takes the „politically correct” position to be on the right – friendly and solidary – side, in opposition to the cat’s aggression. Thirdly, as for the other linguistic means, the use of more formal tense forms can be observed (Mais-que-Perfeito – Past Perfect) as well as causal clauses, strategies practically absent from the oral discourse.

As concerns the proper name strategy and title assignment, a closer global appreciation of the 28 new narratives (*Corpus C*) indicates that giving a proper name to each of the protagonists in a written text is a common strategy (whereas it is hardly used in oral production). All the written narratives have a title assigned, the names used there being either onomatopoeic or other proper names, either Portuguese imaginary names like *Trovão* (Lightning) or non-Portuguese proper names such as *Bingle*. If we analyze the titles carefully we realize that there is quite a

² Observe, as an example, the usage of the pronoun ‘ele’ (*he*) that can refer either to the cat or to the dog: „[O gato] cada vez mais tentado para ir lá buscá-las [as crias] até que <começou> [!] que quando chegou o cão ele [o cão? o gato?] já estava a trepar & a Arvore #.” (C1004FP).

³ See the example of the tail pulling, where ambiguity arises: “*D. Āo-Āo, que era amigo de D.Piu chegou chegou na hora H e puxou pelo rabo [de quem ?] e D. Piu chega D.Miau foge e D.Āo-Āo vai atrás dele.*” (C1004FP).

strong life experience component introduced in them (e.g. “The birdy in the nest”, “An unexpected visitor” or “The family”) sometimes even self-reference (“I, the street cat”) with strong inclination to humor and moral included (e.g. “The unlucky cat”, “Oh, what a mischievous cat!”).

Comparison of the ten-year-old European Portuguese oral (part of *Corpus B2*) and written production (*Corpus C*) leads us to the following conclusions:

- COHESION OF THE DISCOURSE – In both types of narratives some ambiguities in the control over anaphoric mechanisms at the pronominal and zero reference levels can still be observed, originating some co-reference ambiguity with nominal antecedents;
- FIRST AND NON-FIRST REFERENTIAL MENTIONS – In both types of production nouns are mainly used. In the oral discourse, though, common designations of animals occur mostly in the first mentions, either generic (*bird, cat, dog*), specific (*chick, hen*) or relational in character (*mother, child*). In the non-first mentions, pronominal or zero anaphoric references are used. However, in the written discourse the situation is different: both in first and non-first mentions proper names are used. These are of Portuguese, foreign or onomatopoeic origin and strongly anchored in social and cultural views and values;
- NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION – The extension of a narrative is not a parameter that can distinguish one type of discourse from another, but the existence of a title can. The written narratives have titles assigned, showing the child’s need for a closer familiar perspective on the text in which life experience and particularly moral judgements with evaluative attitudes are shown;
- FORMAL LANGUAGE DEVICES – Though mixed Present/Past time reference is maintained in both types of narrative, in the written discourse only certain more formal linguistic devices can be observed, such as the use of the Past Perfect Tense or subordinate causal clauses.

The study of European Portuguese L1 oral and written ten-year-old narratives show the narrator’s relative focus of involvement. The results indicate very strong interaction between general cognitive principles and language specific ones. Written production seems to be much more controlled than oral, both at the level of global reference and of particular language mechanisms.

Adult’s written L2 narratives (*Corpus A*) – L2 specificity

Story construction

Hardly any markers of written register specificity can be found in the narratives produced. The only fixed element appearing in all the stories is formal mention of the title (i.e., *Horse Story* and *Cat Story*), as indicated at the very beginning of the task performed. Unlike the written characteristics of the L1

children (*Corpus C*), other titles are not given nor are the protagonists assigned proper names (with the exception of one story-teller – T14MHCP, in which case even some attempts of introducing inter-protagonist dialogues are made.) The narratives are produced in everyday language with no lexical or grammatical formal marking. It is important to stress that the Timorese are quite formal in their oral expression and this may be one of the reasons why the lack of written overt formality does not seem unfit in their written performance.

Some of the narratives follow very closely the images presented to elicit the stories, a few of them indicating the numbers of the pictures referred to deictically (e.g. T02FHCP; T12FHCP; T15MHCP). These are prenarrative strategies that we find only in very small L1 children (at about four and under this age).

Unexpectedly, even participants with good command of spoken language and good communicative performance produce written texts with morphological mistakes of verb conjugation and nominal concordance, as well as spelling mistakes, due to lack of formal training in writing (see underlined parts in the discussed examples).

As concerns story construction, the biggest problems are noticed in the introduction of new information and the opposition of first/later mention. At that level, it is common for the narrators to fail at the following constructive story markers:

- (i) the introductory first mention construction ('*there is / was* + undef. det' or 'once upon a time there was') used with undefined determiner (e.g. H-T22FCHP; H-T20FHCP);
- (ii) the 'to appear' type of verb introducing the less common VSO order and commonly used for the first mention in the case of sudden appearance of protagonists are substituted by 'to meet' and 'to be' (*estar*), as in e.g. C-T20FHCP;
- (iii) lack of contrast between background information marked by Imperfect verbal constructions and foreground information marked by Perfect verbal constructions, as in: *Derrepente aparecia um cão, e esse também tinha muita fome (...)* 'suddenly appeared (IMP) a dog, and this also was (IMP) very hungry' (C-T17MCHP);
- (iv) control of the tense/aspectual markers, especially in the Past (Perfect and Imperfect) and in the cases where indistinct Present tenses/ Past tenses are used by the adult L1 speakers, as in: *mas a ave saía e vou para outra árvore e começou a fazer um novo ninho* 'but the bird went out (IMP) and flew (PERF) to another tree and started (PERF) to make a new nest' (C-T17MCHP).

Problems of the type presented from (i) to (iv) show that proficient Timorese speakers of European Portuguese as L2 learners are not fully successful story-tellers in this tongue, as their language dependent narrative competence is not sufficiently controlled.

Story conceptualization

The first global appreciations of the Timorese written narratives show that the conceptualization of the two stories presented is quite different from the expected one. In the case of the *Cat Story*, the difference is not very salient and it can be summed up as some emotional particularities of the eternal cat-dog fighting schema. However, in the case of the *Horse Story*, nearly all the narrators (with only one exception: H – T16FCHP) miss the very point of the inter-animal-aid final scene, interpreting it as an encounter of animals, frequently leading to a fighting scenario with different degrees of confrontation and/or violence. This means that in Timorese conceptualization of the *Horse Story* the point of the narrative is missed. This story is conceptualized according to the following stages: (i) there is a horse running in the fields; (ii) it meets a cow (or a *buffalo*, according to the Timorese standards) and wants to make friends with it; (iii) the horse tries to jump the wall but does not manage to do it and falls down; (iv – a) the horse turns up to lie down tied up or (iv – b) the cow ties it up; (v – a) there is a bird assisting at the scene (v – b) or there is no bird at all; and finally, (vi – a) the cow unties the rope or (vi – b) pulls the horse by the rope. Let's observe this specificity in Example 1.

EXAMPLE 1: THE *HORSE STORY* CONCEPTUALIZATION

H – T03FHCP

Narrator – T03FHCP

utterances are numbered in brackets

story schema expected stages are marked in bold brackets

obvious structural mistakes are underlined

(1) *História do Cavalo* ‘Horse Story’(2) (i) *Esta história **conta-se** sobre **o** cavalo.*

‘this story is told about the horse’

(= *Esta história é sobre um cavalo.*)(3) (ii) ***O** Vai a correr no quintal **a** procura de uma amiga.*

‘Ø is running in the corral looking for a friend’

(= *O cavalo corre (vai a correr) no quintal e procura de uma amiga.*)(4) (ii) *A amiga do cavalo é Ø vaca*

‘the friend of the horse is Ø cow’

(= *A amiga do cavalo é uma vaca.*)(5) (iii) *ela vai encontrar Ø e saltar o mouro e procurar a vaca*

‘she is going to find and jump the wall and find the cow

para ser o amigo dele.

to be the friend’

(= *Ele vai encontrá-la e saltar um muro para ser amiga dela.*)

0

- (6) (?) *Os dois encontram Ø como um bom amigos e aí começam a conversar dentro do quintal.*
 ‘both of them meet as good friends and started to talk within the corral’
 (= *Os dois encontram-se como bons amigos e aí começam a conversar dentro do quintal.*)
- (7) (iv & vi) *E depois a vaca amarrar Ø o pé do cavalo e puxar.*
 ‘and afterwards the cow (to) tie up the foot of the horse and pull’
 (= *E depois a vaca amarra a pata do cavalo e puxa-o.*)

Narrative coda evaluation strategy

Nevertheless, all the stories narrated by the Timorese express strong **evaluation in the narrative coda** and end up with a strong morally marked conclusion in which evaluation of the confrontation among the animals is frequently stressed (Example 2). In some cases even if it is indicated as a “conclusion” of the story, there is no conclusion presented but only a final summing up sentence closing the story (e.g. H – T02FHCP). Sometimes this is stressed by the real consciousness of an individual and relative conceptualization of the story, as in the case of the narrator T12.

In some cases where a final conclusion or summary is missing, at least a closing up sentence is present: “and this is how the story ended” (e.g. *Assim foi a história do cavalo* (H – T08MCHP) or *Assim termina a história do cão e do gato* (C – T11MCHP)).

EXAMPLE 2: NARRATIVE CODA EVALUATION

- (1) H – T01FHCP “*Por fim chegou o boi que ia falar com o cavalo, que não corresse de um lado para o outro, era melhor comer as ervas tenras que fazia bem a sua saúde e ficava mais gordo.*
 ‘finally a bull came up to talk to the horse in order not to run all over the place, as it would be better to eat fine grass good for his health and that might fatten him’
- (2) H – T02FHCP
Com estas gravuras/desenhos, tiro a conclusão de que um dia um cavalo esforçou-se em entrar num cerco por causa de ter visto um búfalo lá dentro do cerco.
 ‘with these images I can conclude that one day a horse made quite an effort to get into a corral because of a buffalo that was there’
- (3) H – T05MCHP
A vaca conseguiu atar o cavalo a beira do cerco que tinha partido. de repente apareceu um pássaro muito lindo a voar aproximou-se dos dois

animais no meio para que o cavalo e a vaca não se criam mais conflitos. 'O resumo da história era vaidade castigada'.

'the cow managed to tie the horse to the fence it had broken. Suddenly a beautiful bird appeared. It came up to the animals and stood between them to eliminate any more conflicts. 'The summary of the story is that vanity should be punished'

(4) H – T06MHCP

Esta história ensina-nos uma lição muito boa. 'Devemos ajudar o próximo nas más adversidades'.

'this story teaches us a very good lesson: 'we should help the others in difficult circumstances'

(5) H – T09FCHP

Esta história ensina-nos que quem se orgulha será humilhado e que não podemos ser orgulhosos'.

'this story teaches us that who shows pride will be humiliated and that we should not boast'

(6) H – T13FHCP

Esta história ensina-nos que sempre precisamos uns dos outros'.

'this story teaches us that we always need each other'

(7) H – T15MHCP

Esta história foi maravilhosa e encantada e atrai as pessoas para dar atenção.

'this story was fantastic and enchanted and it fascinates people to pay attention to it'

(8) C – T01FHCP

A conclusão desta história é não fazer mal os outros animais.

'the conclusion of the story goes not to harm other animals'

(9) C – T05MCHP

'O resumo da história era quem ajuda é ajudado'.

'the summing up of the story is that who helps can be expected to be helped'

(10) C – T09FCHP

Esta história ensina-nos de que as aparências iludem e que nunca devemos confiar num inimigo.

'this story teaches us that appearances are illusory and we should not trust the enemy'

(11) C – T19FHCP

É por isso que até hoje em dia o cão e o gato nunca se dão bem.

'this is why the cat and the dog are not very friendly even these days'

(12) C – T20FHCP

Dá-nos a lição para sermos corajosos a construir e desenvolver a nossa vida.

'it gives us a lesson to be brave and to fight to develop our lives'

Results and discussion

As concerns the development of narrative competence, there are some difficulties to be observed in the process of language acquisition: the configurational narrative dimension does not fully develop until late, i.e. until around the age of 10. Only at that time the European Portuguese children are considered to produce adult-type narratives, with the configurational narrative dimension in which the child is able to see the story as a global intentional unity, containing: *Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Resolution, Evaluation* and *Coda*.

In the younger groups narrative competence is considered to be achieved only in part. In the 5-year-olds, only seven out of twenty narratives of *Corpus B* were considered configurationally well constructed, which is only one-third of the total 5-year-old group production. In the 7-year-old group, eleven out of twenty were considered to have achieved this goal, which is approximately half of the whole narrative production at that age. These results illustrate clearly the continuous process of what we believe to be the development of narrative competence: at age five, only one-third of the stories the children tell are configurationally well constructed; at seven, more or less half of all the narrative production at this age can be considered as such; and only at ten, this task can be considered fully achieved.

In the acquisition process, the evaluating strategies emerge very early, but are fully mastered quite late. At five, children focus mostly on protagonist characterization with diminutives, adjectives and some fixed expressions; they use opening constructions with typical adult fixed expressions with restrictive clauses, and show the need of suspense with an adversative clause and a final conclusion with Perfective strategies (e.g. onomatopoeic).

The adult evaluation shows the totality of expected usages observed in other languages: Aspect and Tense variations, lexical-grammatical forms, communicative functions (such as politeness and face), mode, text-type and genre.

If compared to the language acquisition strategies in L1 speakers, the **L2 learning strategies** observed in *Corpus A* **differ quite significantly** at both general cognitive and specific linguistic level.

At the general cognitive level – The Timorese conceptualize the stories they tell not according to what is really presented in the images used for eliciting narratives (as they fail to fulfill the “story grammar schema” mainly in one of the stories presented) but according to the life experience their culture offers them – strikingly different from the European one (full of extended dramatic conflict and war experience) – and tell the story they believe is presented in the pictures. Their narrative conceptualizing capacity seems to be story dependent, appearing surprisingly better in the case of the more semantically complex narrative (*Cat and Dog Story*) and less efficient in the case of the less complex one (*Horse Story*). These results show that the degree of facility of conceptualization of a story is not dependent on its linguistic complexity, as initially might have been expected.

At the specifically linguistic level – the Timorese adult L2 European Portuguese proficient speakers from the *Corpus A* show strong lack of narrative language dependent strategies typical of European Portuguese, such as special syntactic introductory first mention verbal constructions with indefinite nominal reference that contrast strongly with syntactic and semantic strategies used for non-first mentions. The narrators also fail at using aspect-tense markers to distinguish the foreground and the background of the narrative produced, obligatory in the L1 stories.

This means that the analyzed L2 group cannot be considered as L1 competent story-tellers, as they do not command cognitive narrative strategies L1 speakers use from age ten. Quite strikingly, communicative competence of the Timorese and their narrative competence are clearly separate.

The opposite was expected, as the Timorese are well known for their story-telling community tradition. They are very keen on story-telling, which can be observed by their strong need of marking the final conclusion in the narratives, a strategy which seems to mirror their oral tradition. **The evaluating strategies turn up mainly at the narrative coda with the closing final remarks**, either fixed expressions of “final stage” or with moral conclusions of a philosophical type, showing very good discourse control of the majority of the narrators. Idiomatic expressions, though expected, are not observed. Some **general moral values are transmitted**, such as friendship, mutual aid, trustworthiness, courage, modesty, as well as necessity of physical survival in difficult life circumstances. Even when a mutual aid pattern is expected (*Horse Story*), surprisingly it is not activated by the last image eliciting the story, replaced instead with an animal violence pattern.

Though apparently contradictory, our results seem to show that in story-telling, even without controlling language-dependent factors, the L2 Timorese narrators manage to tell stories **in Portuguese** quite efficiently, though the product of their narrative activity can hardly be considered **Portuguese** stories.

Final remarks

Relating language and culture has long interested researchers, especially linguists and anthropologists. Apart from relations at the levels of sociology of language and vocabulary, where language-culture relations are obvious, the results of attempts to relate linguistic structures and culture phenomena have not succeeded. Studies on story-telling in different languages (as well as the process of narrating by speakers from different cultures) seem to give new insight in the field.

Cognitive Linguistics studies have presented a new theoretical approach, treating language and culture as separate phenomena at the level of cognition. As Enrique Bernárdez says, “Human beings do not learn or use *language* (in an abstract, general sense) but only *individual languages* in particular cultural settings which can thus be seen as playing a central role in the cognitive development of individuals” (2004, p. 21). As proposed in the present study, applying this theory

to the specific situation of a given language experiment, i. e. looking for language specific strategies of “thinking for speaking” (Slobin, 1990) – studying how different native and non-native speakers of a given language (in our case, European Portuguese) conceptualize the world they live in in order to tell a story – can give us insight into how this cognitive development takes place. The present frame needs further development in order to obtain more linguistic and cultural evidence about the relations between language and culture in its light.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the Universidade Aberta (Lisbon, Portugal) as well as all the 24 Timorese participants in the 31st March 2004 experiment (held in Dili, within the frame offered by Universidade Aberta teacher formation course for Timorese secondary school professors) that constitute the *Corpus A* data.

References

- Athanasiadou, A. & Tabakowska, E. (Eds.) (1998). *Speaking of emotions*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Batoréo, H.J. (2000 [1996]). *Expressão do Espaço no Português Europeu. Contributo Psicolinguístico para o Estudo da Linguagem e Cognição*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Textos Universitários de Ciências Sociais e Humanas.
- Batoréo, H.J. (2001). The structure of child language and the structure of learner language in narrative discourse: first and second language acquisition in European Portuguese. In M. Almgren, A. Barreña, M.-J. Ezeizabarrena, I. Idiazabal, & B. MacWhinney (Eds.), *Research on child language acquisition. Proceedings of the 8th Conference of the Study of Child Language* (pp. 264-278). Cascadilla Press.
- Batoréo, H.J. & Costa, E.A. (1999). Reference mechanisms in children’s oral and written narratives at the age of ten. In M.G. Pinto et al. (Eds.), *Psycholinguistics on the threshold of the year 2000. Proceedings of the 5th ISAPL Congress* (pp. 265-270).
- Batoréo, H.J. & Faria, I.H. (2001). Representation of movement in European Portuguese: A study of children’s narrative. In K.E. Nelson, A. Aksu-Koç, & C. Johnson (Eds.), *Children’s Language. Vol. 10: Developing Narrative and Discourse Competence* (pp. 31-54). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Batoréo, H.J. & Morais, E.J.A.B. (2002). Acquisition aspects of evaluation process in European Portuguese oral natural and elicited narratives. Paper presented at the 9th IASCL Congress, Madison, Wisconsin, USA, July 2002.
- Bernárdez, E. (2004). Intimate enemies? On the relations between language and culture. In A. Soares da Silva, A. Torres & M. Gonçalves (Eds.), *Linguagem*,

- cultura e cognição. Estudos de linguística cognitiva. Vol. 1* (pp. 21-46). Coimbra: Almedina.
- Bright, W. (1992). *International encyclopedia of linguistics*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins Paperback Encyclopedia* (1998). Harper Collins Publishers, The Bath press, Avon.
- Geeraerts, D. & Grondelaers, S. (1998). Vagueness as a euphemistic strategy. In A. Athanasiadou & E. Tabakowska (Eds.), *Speaking of emotions* (pp. 357-374). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hickmann, M. (1995). Discourse and the development of reference to person, space and time. In P. Fletcher & B. MacWhinney (Eds.), *The Handbook of child language* (pp. 194-218). Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, M. (1998). *Spoken language and applied linguistics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, M. & Carter, R. (1994). *Language as discourse: Perspectives for language teaching*. Harlow: Longman.
- Morais, A.J.B. de (2002). *O género narrativo em interações orais autênticas: Contributo para o ensino/aprendizagem do Português Europeu como língua não-materna* (Narrative 'genre' in oral European Portuguese corpus as a contribution to Portuguese as L2 teaching process), M.A Dissertation, Aberta University, Lisbon.
- Naciscione, A. (2001). *Phraseological units in discourse: Towards applied linguistics*. Riga: Latvian Academy of Culture.
- Naciscione, A. (2003). Translation of terminology: why kill the metaphor? In A. Veisbergs (Ed.), *The Third Riga Symposium on Pragmatic Aspects of Translation. Proceedings* (pp. 102-115). Riga: University of Latvia, Aarhus School of Business.
- Naciscione, A. (2004). The pattern of instantial stylistic use of phraseological units as a mental technique. In S. Mejri (Ed), *Espace Euro-Méditerranéen: une idiomaticité partagée*. Actes du Colloque International, Hammamet, 19-21 Sept. 2003 (pp. 177-189). Rencontres Linguistiques Méditerranéennes & Europhrases, Publication de l'ENS.
- Slobin, D.I. (1990). Learning to think for speaking: native language, cognition and rhetorical style. In A. Bocaz (Ed.), *Actas Primer Simposio sobre Cognición, Lenguaje y Cultura: Diálogo Transdisciplinario en ciencias Cognitivas* (pp. 129-152). Santiago: Universidad de Chile.
- Talmy, L. (2000). *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. Vol. I & II. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.