

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The present number comprises five articles and two short communications. The opening text is prepared by Ida Kurcz (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw School of Social Psychology) – dean of general psycholinguistics in Poland. Her article, entitled *Communicative competence and theory of mind*, makes some comparisons between the two notions of great interest in contemporary psychology. The question is: are they really so closely related that we can find and study their common biological endowment? (p. 6). The author answers this question showing special connections between verbal communicative competence (VCC) and the theory of mind (ToM). Her main argument comes from a study of Christopher (Smiths & Tsimpli, 1999) – an autistic person whose extraordinary abilities for learning new languages do not go in pair with his communicative abilities in those languages. For the purpose of a broader comparison to the main thesis, the author has chosen the article by Hauser, Chomsky, and Fitch, entitled *The faculty of language. What is it? Who has it? How did it evolve?* (Science, 2002).

The second article, by Nicoletta Caramelli, Annalisa Setti, and Donatella D. Maurizzi (University of Bologna) deals with both stable and variable aspects of child conceptual knowledge. Entitled *Concrete and abstract concepts in school age children*, it is based on children's association production tasks. The assumption is: concepts are not isolated units but they are deeply inter-related by different kinds of information that can be assessed through the types of relations linking children's associations to the given concept nouns (p.22). In line with some recent studies on adults, abstract and concrete concepts displayed the activation of specific patterns of relations also in school age children. These different relations can be framed – in the authors' opinion – within the distinction between *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* features. Furthermore, abstract concepts, less defined, can be embedded in a greater variety of contexts than concrete abstracts. The authors suggest that further research is needed in order to check differences in the thematic relations elicited by abstract/concrete concepts.

The next three articles are based on analyses of narrative discourse. This triad opens with the text entitled *Expressions of epistemic modality and the construction of narrative stance in Venezuelan children's stories*, by Martha Shiro (Central University of Venezuela, Caracas). The main aims of Shiro's study are (a) to de-

scribe linguistic strategies children use to express degrees of certainty regarding the contents of narrations, and (b) to determine how these expressions contribute to the construction of narrative perspective. The sample consists of personal and fictional narratives by children between 6 and 11 years of age. The data show that Venezuelan children use different modal expressions in the two narrative types examined in the study. The frequency of modal uses increases with age. Narrative examples presented by the author illustrate how modal expressions are used to combine voices in the construction of narrative stance. The next article on narration is written by Maria Kielar-Turska and Marta Białecka-Pikul (Jagiellonian University, Cracow). The authors verify the thesis that there is a close relation between (a) cognitive development measured by understanding the principle of conversation, and (b) the ability to modify one's own stories. The research projects on Polish speaking children show the mastery of storytelling skills expressed in learning the formal structure of a story as well as the introduction of story modifications. The observed story modifications concern the plot or refer more often to descriptive elements depending on higher or lower level of subjects' mental development. The concluding article on narrative competence in this issue is a text entitled *Evaluation processes in L2 European Portuguese narratives*, by Hanna J. Batoréo (Open University at Lisbon). The author presents some results from a larger research project on evaluation strategies by native and non-native (Timorese) speakers of European Portuguese in narrative discourse. Evaluation processes are focused on L1 and L2 Portuguese corpora created in different methodological frames: natural (oral) narratives emerging in real verbal interactions and narratives elicited by pictorial material. If compared to the L1 speakers, Timorese adults express a strong need to mark the final conclusion in the narratives (a strategy well-known in their oral tradition). The evaluating strategies turn up mainly at the narrative coda with the closing remarks, either fixed expressions of the final stage or with a moral conclusion of a philosophical type (some general moral values are transmitted). Comparison of L1 and L2 European Portuguese narratives in Batoréo's study is an attempt to look for language specific strategies of *thinking for speaking* (Slobin, 1990) in order to show how native and non-native narrators conceptualize the world for telling a story.

Two short communications follow. Both communications are book reviews. The first one is prepared by Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi (University of Warsaw). The reviewer presents a book entitled *Dynamical grammar. Minimalism, acquisition, and change*, by Peter W. Culicover and Andrzej Nowak (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003). The authors of this book formulated their goal as building a computational simulation of language acquisition and language change. According to their view, the architecture of a language faculty is a dynamical system. The second review, by Encho Gerganov (New Bulgarian University, Sofia), deals with two books on Romani language in Bulgaria. They are: 1) *Kratko opisanie na romskija ezik v Bulgaria* (A short description of Romani language

in Bulgaria) by Hristo Kyuchukov (Sofia: Delphi 2003), 2) *Kratka gramatika na kalderashkija romski dialekt v Bulgaria* (A short grammar of Kalderash dialect of Romani in Bulgaria) by Hristo Kyuchukov and Zlatko Mladenov (Sofia: Delphi 2004). These two books present real studies on the Romani language neglected in linguistic analyses so far.

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