

**Resumen**

Este artículo trata de las narraciones autorreferenciales en entrevistas sociolingüísticas sobre concepciones y usos de las lenguas en familias lingüísticamente mixtas. Analiza los relatos que aparecen en diez entrevistas a padres y madres que forman parejas lingüísticamente heterogéneas. Aplica el modelo de análisis lingüístico del dramatismo (Bruner & Weisser 1991). Identifica e interpreta los marcadores discursivos de la narración autobiográfica. Con este propósito considera los constituyentes que se refieren a los agentes y sus acciones, a las secuencias de sucesos, al canon o norma y a la perspectiva del narrador. Y propone la ampliación del estudio a los guiones de vida de los actores.

**Palabras Clave**

Entrevista, relato, narración, pareja, política lingüística de la familia, multilingüismo, marcador discursivo.

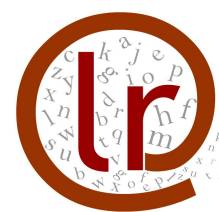
**Abstract**

This article deals with self-referential storytelling in sociolinguistic interviews. It analyzes the personal stories in ten interviews to linguistically heterogeneous couples. For this purpose, it is applied the model of linguistic analysis of drama (Bruner & Weisser 1991) and it identifies and interprets discursive markers of autobiographical storytelling. Therefore it takes into consideration the elements referred to agents and to their actions, to the sequences of events, to the canon or rule, and to the narrator's perspective. At the same time, it proposes to extend our approach to the existence itself of the participants.

**Key words**

Interview, story, storytelling, couples, family language policy, multilingualism, discourse marker.

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## 1. Introduction: objectives and study framework<sup>1</sup>

The autobiography is a self-referential storytelling that provides multiple ideological contents. The autobiography or writing about the self is a narrative text that transforms a personal life into an exemplary story in the sense of modeling experience, transforming reality and bringing awareness.

The corpus of this article is a set of stories collected in form of interviews about linguistic skills and habits in multilingual families. It deals with self-referential storytelling in sociolinguistic interviews to parents of school-aged children in the context of linguistically mixed families, and it concentrates on conceptions and uses of languages. It analyzes the stories, in ten interviews, to parents forming a couple from different linguistic background. We apply the model of linguistic analysis of drama, according to Bruner & Weisser (1991), and Bruner (1990, 2002). Our study identifies and interprets discourse markers of autobiographical storytelling. For that purpose, it takes into consideration the elements referred to agents and to their actions, to the sequences of events, to the canon or rule, and to the perspective of the storyteller. It also keeps in mind aspects related to the autobiographical genre, such as the models offered by Lejeune (1975, 2005) and Weintraub (1978, 1991). Additionally, this research on life stories includes some formal discursive nuances and patterns of identification and exclusion, which is a fundamental part of the general purpose of the interviews, that is, to know the conditions and effects of language policies in the private sphere.

This study on narrative discourse is part of the research project “Globalization and social and family multilingualism in medium-size language communities (MSLC) in Europe (GLOBLINMED)”. We call medium-sized language communities those societies with a population between half a million and twenty million inhabitants. In this category we find the community of Catalonia and, in a European context, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Denmark and Estonia. In particular, this line of study pays attention to globalization as a factor that adds increasing complexity in the parental transmission and acquisition of languages in the context of families where the parents have a different linguistic background.

This research is conducted in the functional context of family language policy in bilingual couples, which in English it is called FLP, “family language policy”<sup>2</sup>. It is supported by a critical apparatus at three levels: the immediate one, the primary one and, on a purely theoretical basis, the foundational one. First, the immediate sources of this theory are to be found in King, Fogle & Logan-Terry (2008), and also in King & Fogle (2013). An

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<sup>2</sup> The studies focusing on “family language policy” have been developed, among other institutional areas, by two organizations: Cusc and ARSER. Cusc is the Centre Universitari de Sociolingüística i Comunicació, from the University of Barcelona, that promotes research on globalization and social plurilingualism. Cusc (<http://www.ub.edu/cusc/>) is an international center, for research, training and services belonging to the University of Barcelona. It was founded in 1998 and it welcomes research on psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, language pedagogy, language law, and verbal and non-verbal communication. Since 2004 it publishes the journal LSC, *Llengua, societat i comunicació* (<http://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/lsc>), on an annual basis. In November 2012 the *Jornada sobre comunitats lingüístiques medianes* (<http://www.ub.edu/cusc/llenguesmitjanes/>) took place. The annual report (2013) can be consulted on the website: <http://cuscub.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/memc3b2ria-2013.pdf>.

On the other hand, ARSER is the Atelier de Recherche en Sociolinguistique et d'Étude des Représentations, from the French University Paul Valéry (Montpellier III). In January 2013, they organized the congress *Gestion des minorités linguistiques dans l'Europe du XXIe siècle*.



empirical development of this model appears in Boix & Torrens (2011) and in Bernat & Boix (2013). Moreover, in regard to the fundamental critical apparatus, it has as background the research developed in medium-size language communities, mostly quantitative studies, which have focused on three areas: a) primary and secondary education and university, b) media. c) legal regulation (Bastardas 2012, Milian 2012, Vila 2012, Boix & Farràs 2013, Mollà 2006, Sintes 2011, Sorolla 2010, Torres 2009, 2011). Finally, at the base of the pyramid of such a critical apparatus, we could mention some works of linguistic anthropology concerning ideologies, a tradition introduced by M. Silverstein (1981) and later developed by Schieffelin *et al.* (1998), Woolard (1994, 1998), Blommaert (1999), Verschueren & Blommaert (1998) and Kroskrity (2000).

The project, to which this study on micro-stories belongs, researches on ideologies and linguistic behaviors in mixed medium-size ethno-linguistic families from European linguistic communities. It also approaches to homogeneous families as a source to compare results. For that reason we have chosen five areas: 4 Spanish different regions (Catalonia, Mallorca, Valencia and Galicia) and 4 countries from the rest of Europe: The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Denmark and Estonia. The comparative analysis of these areas, thanks to their own sociolinguistic history and subjective ethno-linguistic vitality, can provide an explanatory theory on decision processes of language use and intergenerational language transmission in MSLC. This project aims to show the interrelationship between globalization and the combined use of linguistic skills, practices and ideologies. In the context of the family languages are learned and negotiated: the acquisition means also a conception of a specific language. Project researchers aim to deepen, on one hand, into the relationship between the most and the less formal registers and, on the other, into the links between ideologies and practices according to what storytellers state.

## 2. Methodology and corpus of the interviews

The main research instrument is a series of open-ended and semi-structured interviews to an adult member of these families (female, preferably), with one school-aged child, and therefore more sensitive to sociolinguistic issues<sup>3</sup>. The interviews follow an outline of one hundred questions on general information, opinions, and occasionally life stories related to three areas of socialization: each member of the couple, separately, and the children. Contents are described below.

First of all, in the interview we take into consideration the socialization of the interviewed person, his/her childhood, his/her parental environment and the circumstances until his/her arrival to his/her current place of residence. This first part has 40 questions, 15 of them related to the use of languages. We give some example here:

Origin: Where are you born?

<sup>3</sup> The project intends to collect (recording, transcribing and analyzing) 80 interviews with members of linguistically mixed couples (10 from every selected country), and 40 more interviews to members of linguistically homogeneous couples (five in every territory) in different contexts and linguistic and social networks. By analyzing these interviews we intend to contribute to understand sociolinguistic evolution in general and to create a measuring instrument for comparing different degrees of pressure in terms of intergenerational language transmission in the selected European regions.

Migration: What was your impression of your neighbourhood when you came to live in Catalonia?

Family: What language did you speak at home?

Social Network: What kind of friends do you remember from your childhood or youth?

Neighbourhood: How would you describe the people who live in your neighbourhood?

The second part, with 28 questions (half of them on language), concentrates on information about the couple. Closed questions, for example numeric ones -how many people live at home - or related to elicitation of preferences -in which language (from the total of languages spoken at home) do you feel more comfortable?- are combined with other open questions, inviting the interviewee to tell something -how did you meet your partner?- or to argue -why do you alternate sometimes with words in another language in your conversations?

The third and last part deals with the socialization of children. From a total of 34 questions, two-thirds are about languages and their academic and social implications. Questions on first languages, how easy or difficult were their acquisition, shared reading as cultural habit, family leisure and influence of grandparents. Interviews end with questions about the future and expectations of language use and identity. Questions have to do with very important issues, like what language do they prefer and which one will be most useful for the children, the difficulties of being a couple with different languages, language ability and sense of cultural identity.

The questionnaire comprises a very large outline, ideal for a semi-structured interview. Some of the hundred questions are sometimes double or triple questions, for example: Have there been changes in the use of language when you talk to your partner? Why? Would you like to bring your children to a different school? Which one? Why? The nature of semi-structured script reflects the intention of giving freedom to both interviewers and interviewees, in order to suit the course of the conversation. Hence, if we consider their duration, some interviews are brief and not very illustrative -9 minutes - while many others exceed 40 minutes. The collected material ranges from impersonal interviews, where there is an accumulation of information, to the opposite type of interview, the most common, during which the interviewee dominates the conversation and influences on the atmosphere. In some cases the partner is also present and participates to add details or refine the answers of his/her partner.

A hurdle we had to overcome was not only to meet, but even to deserve the trust of linguistically heterogeneous couples. The collaboration of a team of students and researchers in the field of linguistics, between October and December 2012, has allowed overcoming that difficulty of contact and involvement in the work<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the interviewees have generously opened their home to expose habits, values and feelings about the language and its effects. Interviews have been recorded and a part of their contents transcribed, according to their relevance for the study.

<sup>4</sup> The following students and researchers have participated in conducting interviews: Immaculada Canudas, Roser Casamajor, Anna Maria Currubí, Cinta Díez, Roger Ferran, Diego Lopes, Lidia Marqués, Annika Mestre, Lorena Muñoz, José Navarro, Andrés Pérez, Anna Pérez Sánchez, Joël Planella, Andrea Romero Álvarez, Núria Selga and Carmen Thorburn.



The selection meets the criteria of information quantity, with enough data, and the criteria of variety, since its storytellers have different backgrounds in terms of language (and language proficiency) in which the interview was conducted. Most interviewees live in the Barcelona metropolitan area and only some of them in other villages from the same province. There are some couples from no Catalan or Spanish origin, whose native languages are the following: Dutch (two people), English (two people), and German (one person), French (one person), Italian (one person), Norwegian (one person), Portuguese (one person) and Russian (one person). The table below shows the member of the couple who uses some of these languages, his/her nationality, his/her age, his/her profession, the age of his/her children and the duration of the interview.

- i 1 (interview number 1). Dutch, male (39 years old, clerk). 2 sons, 14 and 15 years old. (Interview: 22 minutes).
- i 2. French, female (37 years old, teacher). One daughter, 6 years old. (Interview: 30 minutes).
- i 3. German, female (45 years old, pharmacist). One daughter, 16 years old. (Interview: 40 minutes).
- i 4. Russian, male (43 years old, manager). One son, 4 years old. (Interview: 20 minutes).
- i 5. British, male (44 years old, engineer). Two daughters, 3 and 5 years old. (Interview: 35 minutes).
- i 6. Norwegian, female (32 years old, social mediator). One son, 7 years old. (Interview: 31 minutes).
- i 7. British, male (36 years old, manager). One daughter, 7 years old. (Interview: 41 minutes).
- i 8. Brazilian, female (37 years old, artist). Two daughters, 2 and 4 years old. (Interview: 34 minutes).
- i 9. Italian, female (46 years old, housewife). One daughter, 8 years old. (Interview: 39 minutes).
- i 10. Dutch, female (30 years old, psychologist) and Brazilian, male (26 years old, cook). One son, 4 years old. (Interview: 25 minutes).

With regard to the gender of the participants, the respondents are 6 women and 5 men. The reason of having a total of 10 instead of 11 interviews, it is because in the case number 10 the members of the couple are a Dutch woman and a Brazilian man; their condition of linguistically mixed couple follows a pattern different from "Spanish partner/foreigner partner". With regard to the language used in the interview, Spanish is used in most cases because it is the working language. The change of language takes places in three interviews: case 4, the interviewer in Catalan and the interviewee, a Russian man, in Spanish; case 5, in English; case 7, in Catalan. Among the respondents, there are some differences in their oral competence, depending on how long they stay in the country -at least 7 years- and their dedication to formal education, and also in their style, but they do not affect the understanding or the fluidity required.

From a material point of view, the study reveals a low or moderate birth rate per family, since seven couples have one child and the rest of them, just two. The age range of the children varies from 2 to 16, but most of

them are school-aged. These conditions favour the intense involvement of parents in the care and education of their children and therefore in inclusive practices of the couple.

Interviews are anonymous, for that reason some names have been changed in oral extracts of the article. The selection of these fragments and the form of transcription simply responds not only to the explicit purpose of these interviews -the link between the sociolinguistic context of the storytellers and their linguistic ideologies- but rather to the compilation of concepts for a formal analysis of narrative episodes. In this sense the model of deictic identity on exclusion and inclusion is absolutely pertinent (Schlieben-Lange 1987); also drama's theories that identify the canon and its conflicts, and thematic focal points like "inside-outside" and "commitment-independence" (Bruner 1990, Bruner & Weisser 1991).

### 3. Theoretical Model: the Bruner-Weisser constituents

There is a big interest in the storytelling. The narration, together with the description, the exposition and the argumentation, is a discursive pattern. The patterns are prototypical molds or forms of organization of discourses, that constitute the most important and complex communication resources. Storytelling is the discursive pattern that reflects what happens in the world, but not only the externality of the facts, like what the people do, but the intimacy of conscience, that is, for what and in the name of which values. A relevant method for our purpose is the self-referential story or autobiography.

If, on one hand, we have explicit autobiographies (autobiography, memoirs, diaries or epistolary), social uses impose other heterogeneous manifestations, such as dialogued autobiographies (interviews and conversations with authors), biographical essays, travel books or reports (Lejeune 1975, 2005). Besides the literary world, in personal environments, people produce life stories. They explain memories, stories, incidents or meetings. All of them are about personal evocations that form fragments of the autobiography of the storyteller. This is the narrative contribution of the interviewees to our socio-linguistic interviews.

For the GLOBLINMED project the stories of the interviewees are a valuable contribution. Therefore interviewers were advised to facilitate these narrative evocations. In the questionnaire there are some questions particularly suited to elicit personal stories. The technical reason is that these personal stories allow to ask about sociolinguistic aspects of the participants and their environment, and to make visible all these elements. As mentioned above, the purpose of the project is to understand aspects such as the selected language by a couple, the language of communication with the children, the most valued languages in the educational context or in the hypothetical world of work, and the kind of network influencing interviewee's decisions.

However, when applying the long questionnaire it occurs that the stories scarcely appear in interviews. The project is attractive, but the results don't fit the expectations on the expressive storytelling. In such a way, to an apparently attractive question as how the members of a couple met, answers use to be schematic and

nominal. Sometimes they mention a social scenario, like a discotheque or a beach, or an ideal time or period, like summer or holiday.

In his approach to the storytelling pattern, Jerome Bruner emphasizes the cognitive source as something formal. The reason is that the story provides simple and ductile tools to reach a fundamental goal and it has to do with oral expression or “dealing with uncertain outcomes of our projects and our anticipations” (Bruner 2002: 28).

Now then, what does transform those anticipations or expectations into nourishment for stories? The combination of uncertainty, problem and failure of expectations is required. Hence it is a dramatic plan, that is, with narrative interest, because it reveals the conflict. The five elements of story grammar are agent, action, goal, situation and instruments; the conflictive combination of such elements gives as result a problem. There is a story in a speech or discourse in which an Agent is involved in an Action for a Purpose, in a specific situation, using some instruments (Bruner 2002: 33). However, the real interest of a story consists in disorder among elements, a kind of mismatch; in short, a conflict.

Stories are resources to explore those turbulent realities. Drama theories focus on the dramatic deviations from the predictable or the canonical. These disorders have moral consequences. They are “deviations that have to do with legitimacy, commitment or moral values” (Bruner 1990: 61). Consequently, the stories deal with what is morally right or true, and discursively they objectify the existential complexity for the storyteller and his/her listeners.

The narrative model of Bruner applied to practical cases appears in a chapter published in collaboration with Weisser (1991), “The invention of the self: autobiography and its forms”. Bruner and Weisser deal with a form of oral and unplanned autobiography in family environments, like the various events of our interviews. They establish four factors or “grammatical constituents”: agentivity, sequentiality, canonicity and perspective. The agentivity regards the actors or characters and their actions. Sequentiality refers to time sequence of movements or events. Canonicity is linked to the stability and adequacy of events or, on the contrary, to their ravages. The perspective is the personal position of the storyteller in relation to the story. Each of these narrative functions uses specific linguistic resources or discourse markers.

*Agentivity* -. Its elements have to do with actors and actions. An action whose main goals are controlled by agents just highlights the leading role of the actors. The most prominent discourse markers are:

- a) locative values: deictic of place, as “there”, “inside”, “close”, and names of places, such as countries, towns, neighborhoods, buildings or rooms;
- b) movements: move actions, entry or exit, zooming;
- c) modality verbs like “to want” or “to wish” and deontic verbs, such as “to must” or “to have to”.

*Sequentiality* -. It is constituent of temporality. The events and states are arranged in a typical way, i.e. in a linguistically sequential order. Discourse markers could be:

- a) linear or cumulative: “and”, “and then”;
- b) precise: “before”, “yesterday”, “very soon”;
- c) causal: “because”, “therefore”, “hence”.

*Canonicity* -. Order and infraction alternates in this constituent. The storytelling allows expressing the nuances of what is canonical in human interaction, i.e. the preferred or the expected. Similarly, it is also a sensitive pattern to express what such an order defies or overthrows. Some simple markers, fundamental in their legitimacy, criterion and norm, are those related to temporality, variability and obligation.

- a) Frequency or temporal recurrence: “always”, “sometimes”, “once”, “never”.
- b) Variability of states by means of conjunction “or” in the sense of disjunction or distinction between possibilities, and “but” for the opposition between terms or to repeal what it is said in the main sentence.

*Perspective* -. Perspective means the affective and rational position of the storyteller. The presence of the voice, as it is called according to the model of Bruner and Weisser (1991), reveals the following aspects:

- a) epistemic element, i.e. certainty or doubt, as “maybe” or “I don’ know”.
- b) affective element, with expressions of preference, such as “I like”, and their temporal circumstances, “on vacation”, “in the morning”. It also encompasses the opposite values, like rejection or annoyance.
- c) Expletives or emphatic elements, as in “well, well. What do you say?” together with the adverb “well” with enhancer function and the rhetorical question “what do you say?”

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Conclusions in the application of the Bruner-Weisser’s model

In the selected interviews only a few stories appear, in the sense of complete stories. The circumspection of storytellers, perhaps impressed by the purpose of the interview, tends to limit their narrative expression. However, numerous narrative elements do appear in descriptions or ratings, according to Bruner-Weisser’s model. We have collected conversations (literally in this case –first in Spanish and afterwards translated into English– and in the rest of the transcriptions) between the interviewer and M., the participant of the first interview, a Dutch man married with a Spanish woman, father of two sons.

- (1) **Interviewer:** Al llegar e instalarte en Cataluña, ¿qué impresión te dio este barrio? [Ocata, barrio marítimo de Masnou, población cercana a Barcelona.]  
**M.:** Pues este barrio, ¿qué impresión? Buff, no lo sé.... Bonito, sí. El sol y los..., ¿cómo se llama esto?, ¿palmas? En Holanda no hay.  
**Interviewer:** ¿Cómo describirías a tu familia?, a tus padres y hermanos.  
**M.:** Súper normal. Demasiado normal, sí. [Risas.]



**Interviewer:** ¿Cómo son tus padres?, de carácter.

**M.:** Bien, muy familiar, muy...

**Interviewer:** ¿Son simpáticos?, ¿abiertos?

**M.:** Sí... No, bueno, en Holanda las gente no están tan abiertos como aquí. Pero... sí, sin nada extraño, nada..., no.

**Interviewer:** When you arrived to stay in Catalonia, what impression did you have of your neighborhood? [Ocata, waterfront district of Masnou, near Barcelona.]

**M.:** Well...this neighborhood...what impression? Ugh, I don't know .... Nice, yes. The sun and ... what is this called? Palms? In Holland we have not this.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe your family, your parents and siblings?.

**M.:** Quite normal. Too normal, yes. [Laughter.]

**Interviewer:** How was the character of your parents?.

**M.:** Well, very familiar, very ...

**Interviewer:** Are they friendly, open?

**M.:** Yes ... No, well, the people in the Netherlands are not as open as here. But ... yeah, nothing strange, nothing ..., no.

That fragment reproduces the conversation of the first questions of the interview. The three questions that could be the starting point of a story, are answered in a succinct but meaningful way. Regarding the agentivity, this part of the survey introduces the actors: the storyteller, his parents and, by extension, the original family. The interviewee added an allusion to his national group thanks to expressions like "the people in Holland". The most prominent discursive markers are locative or of identification: "this neighborhood", "Netherlands", "here".

We have only descriptions, not movement or displacement, but judgments about the identity of the family. This fact explains the absence of verbs to express wish or obligation. As expected, the family normally causes no action. Therefore, the lack of action in this part excludes the use of sequential markers. However, the canonicity appears on the evaluation of the family and country of origin. Stability and orientation are canonical according to some standard rules. The "quite normal" family is typically Dutch, not as "open" as the people here, but "nothing strange".

Finally, the fourth constituent (interviewee's perspective) is reflected in diverse evidences. The oral modality of interviews and the diversity of interviewers, with familiarity as a main factor, facilitate the spontaneous expressivity. The expletive "ugh" as paralinguistic expression, the elongation of a word to gain time, the pauses or laughter -with ironic sense or as enhancer- are emphatic resources that show the voice and perspective of the interviewee.

These are factual aspects, related to contact and oral production that gives an idea of the personal voice. Other semantic aspects have to do with the affective and epistemic position. Regarding the episteme or knowledge, the interviewed participant expresses his certainty in the following way:

- a) "I don't know", when he answers: "this neighborhood, what impression? Ugh, I do not know".
- b) "Yes ... No". The apparent contradiction arises in the statement "Yes ... No, well, the people in the Netherlands are not as open ...". Actually it is an affirmation that combines politeness and acceptance of the topic about the friendliness and openness, comparing Spanish and Dutch people.

Finally, with regard to perspective and emotion we have collected some samples. They don't show explicit preferences in performative mode, as in the case of "I like", but rather indirectly:

- a) The adjectives qualifying the neighborhood ("Nice, yes") or family ("quite normal").
- b) The oxymoron or pun that describes the paternal family as "quite normal", i.e. very normal, as if normality had different degrees, and the irony with which he makes a value judgment alluding to a "too normal" family.

The example of an analysis of a short fragment, taken from the interview number 1, shows the interest of certain discourse markers. They reveal details of the action, order, legitimacy and vision of the storyteller. A larger study, with the full contents of the interview corpus, brings a picture of the events and it allows a comparison amongst them.

#### 4.2. Analysis of stories

The design of the questionnaire takes into consideration the adaptation of the interviewer to the circumstances. For example, we remind him/her that he/she can remain silent in order to allow the interviewee speaking freely. In interview 1 the interviewer has taken some initiatives, such as a commentary on the sympathy of the parents or the nuance about the family, not referred to the current one, but to his primary family, formed by parents and siblings. He avoided in such a way the confusion that has occurred during other interviews. This confusion occurs in the interview 3 with the participant S., a German woman, who lives with her Spanish husband and daughter in a village on the coast of Barcelona, where she is a pharmacist. When asked about "how would you describe your family" -implicitly, the primary family of her childhood-, she understands she had to talk about her current family and she answers in a very informative way.

- (2) S.: Aj, eh..., ¿estas tres, mi familia? Buaff... una familia normal; él trabajo en su empresa y yo trabajando en la farmacia, pero más tiempo que el normal que a trabajando en Alemania. A trabajando en Alemania, medio día sólo y aquí necesitas trabajar 34 horas en invierno y más de 45 horas a la sem..., al mes..., a la semana in verano. Oh, es mucho más. Yo..., Ana [la hija] va más sola o dejado en Casal de colegio [servicio de actividades extras]. No teníamos vacaciones juntos en verano como hacíamos antes. Ha cambiado mucho, pero... normal, como todos. Pero un poco diferente que las otras familias que tienen sus trabajo in el temporal de todo el año. No como yo, trabajando temporalmente o trabajando todo el año, pero más intensivo in verano, cuando otras familias tienen vacaciones. Yo, trabajando; ellos hacen las vacaciones, pues. Un poco diferente.

S.: Well, yes...those three, my family? Bah...A normal family. He work [sic] in his business and I am working at the pharmacy, but more than usually to working [sic] in Germany. To working in Germany only half a day and here you need to work 34 hours in the winter and more than 45 hours in the wee...in the month...in the week during the summer. Oh, that's much more...I...Ana (her daughter) goes alone or stays in the Casal of the school (place for extra activities). We have no longer holidays together as before. It changed a lot, but...it's normal, like for everybody. But a little bit different from other families working in temporary [sic] the whole year. Not like me, working temporarily or the whole year, but more intensive during the summer, when other families have vacation. I, working. They in vacation. Then a little bit different.

In the narration where this answer appears we have to emphasize the constituents of agentivity and canonicity. First, the three family members, couple and daughter, are the agents, but in essence the actions are performances of the storyteller, related to her work, her holidays and her family. In addition, actions are developed in two stages: in Germany -where the members of the couple met and had a daughter- and the move to Barcelona. The locative elements related to Germany compared to "here" reveal two mental scenarios.

Secondly, from the point of view of canonicity, we would say that this episode is a good example of it. The label of "normality" referred to her family has to do with the norm, with the rule. Detailed comments are given in relation to her work as pharmacist – with experiences of normality, in Germany, and abnormal situations once in Spain, due to the seasonal population of the place where she lives. Markers of canonicity are the following:

- a) Frequency or recurrence: "noon", "winter", "summer", "the whole year", "more intensive in summer".
- b) Variability: the opposition of her life in Germany and her current life ("working in the pharmacy, but longer", "but more intensive in summer") and her work compared to the rest of people ("but a little different from other families").

Participant M. (number 4) is a Russian man who lives with his Spanish partner and their son in Sant Pol de Mar, the northern coast of Barcelona. When asked about the profession of their parents he explains:

- (3) M.: Buena pregunta. El padre no sé a qué se dedicaba porque trabajaba en una fábrica de estos..., de armamento. Por lo tanto yo no sé exactamente lo que hacía. Y el... la madre era un instituto dedicado a las investigaciones..., ¿cómo se decía?, de agricultura.

M.: Good question. The father [sic] I don't know what he did because he worked in a factory of these ... weapons [sic]. So I don't know exactly what he did. And... the mother was an institute [sic] dedicated to research ...how do you say that?... On agriculture.

We can see here the constituents of canonicity and perspective. It would be enough, for the participant, to give the name of a profession, but instead he emphasizes the naturalness of the situation and the abnormality of his approximate knowledge about it. Epistemic markers of perspective are clear: "I don't know the work of my father... therefore *I don't know* exactly what he did".

The frankness of M. in his answers contrasts with his moderation to answer the question about how they met. In each of the 10 interviews some references to "where" or "when" are given, but not a complete story. In the interview number 5 to T., a British man married to a Spanish woman and with two daughters, living in Sant Cugat del Vallès (Barcelona), we asked him about how he met his wife.

(4) T.: Ah... [sonrisas] nadando...

(La mujer, que está presente en la entrevista, matiza: "En un festival *mod*".)

T.: En un festival de música en España.

(La mujer añade que fue en 2004.)

T.: Ah..., no recuerdo nunca las fechas.

T: Oh... [smile] Just swimming ...

(His wife, present during the interview, clarifies: "In a *mod* festival".)

T.: In a music festival in Spain.

(She adds that it was in 2004.)

T.: Oh ... I never remember dates.

This improvised conversation creates a narrative scenario involving the couple. Everyone says what he/she believes it is significant, the playful bath place or the general framework of a pop concert, and a specific date or an uncertain year. A similar conversation takes place during the interview number 3 with the German pharmacologist. The interviewer must insist on nuances related to "how" and then her husband adds information about other episodes.

(5) S.: En Alemania.

**Interviewer:** ¿Cómo fue?

S.: Conocíamos en una discoteca y ya está. El a trabajando en Alemania muchos años y yo conocíamos en Alemania. Normal.

J. [**S. husband**]: Yo la conocía, como dijéramos, de paso porque a veces yo entraba en su farmacia porque iba a comprar. Pero jamás me..., me imaginé, ¿no?, que íbamos a llegar a alguna cosa. Estuve en una Universidad e hice filosofía, filología alemana, ¿no? Y entonces era la ruta que siempre utilizábamos para la Universidad, ¿no? Entonces, pues, compraba medicamentos siempre allá y era la que me servía, más o menos. Pues con el tiempo coincidimos en una sala de baile y quedamos en "bueno, luego nos vemos". La invité a ella, como diríamos, de vacaciones y, como en Alemania todo el mundo se conoce en vacaciones, entonces en el tiempo libre que tuvimos pues nos enamoramos y tuvimos algo. Y en el tiempo ese, pues, nació Ana.

S.: In Germany.

**Interviewer:** How it happened?

S.: We met in a nightclub and that's it. Him working [*sic*] in Germany for many years and I met [*sic*] in Germany. It's normal.

J. [**S. husband**], I met her, let's say, by accident because sometimes I went to her pharmacy to buy. But ... I...I never expected something to happen. I was at a university to study philosophy, German philology, right? So it was the path we took to the university, right? So I bought drugs there and she was always there, more or less. Well, eventually we met in a dance hall and we said "good, see you later". I invited her, as we say, on vacation and, as in Germany everybody meets on vacation, we had free time to fall in love and we had something. And in that time Ana was born.

The extremely short and discrete answer of S., who initially was referred to Germany, contrasts with the vivid story made by her husband. In his story we have a reference to his studies, a summer meeting, a love relationship, and finally the birth of his daughter.

Compared with the answers to this question in other interviews, the story of S., the husband of the German pharmacologist, is extraordinary, for two reasons. The first one is the quality of the story, which covers the different episodes and provides significant details about the agents/participants and the cultural features of the country. The second reason comes from the comparison with the rest of the interviews and the fact of defining them as a whole, taking into consideration the stories that the participants give as answers to any kind of question. Indeed, the corpus reveals a very small account of complete stories.

#### 4.3 Life script: here and there, inside and outside

There are few explicit narrations in the interviews. From them, there is one story that calls our attention because it is intimately related to the main topic of our study, concerning the use of language and its effects. The participants in the interview number 9 is a couple composed by A., an Italian woman, and M., a Spanish man born in Barcelona; they have an 8 year old daughter. We asked to them about the usefulness of her daughter's language learning at school.

The model of linguistic immersion in Catalonia means that Catalan is the main language of communication, while Spanish and English are just disciplines. The opinion of the two members of the couple, who speaks Spanish as main language, is contrary to this model. They believe it would be better to use in an equal way Catalan and Spanish at school. M., the husband, explains vehemently a story that gives strength to his position.

- (6) **M.:** Yo..., nosotros vivimos un caso hace años viniendo de Tenerife. ¡Unos niños...! Veníamos de Tenerife en Iberia. Las azafatas no sabían catalán. Los niños querían galletas. ¡Se quedaron sin galletas porque no sabían pedir galletas en castellano! Niños con 6 años. Entonces, claro, os(e)á ... yo amo a mi tierra como el que más, pero ¡la normalidad de las cosas...! Tú estás más a gusto haciendo las cosas de una manera o haciéndolas de otra. No sé.

**M.:** I ... we had an experience years ago coming back from Tenerife. Some kids ... We came from Tenerife with Iberia. The hostess didn't speak Catalan. The kids wanted cookies. They didn't receive any cookie because they weren't able to ask for cookies in Spanish! Children 6 years old. Then, of course, that is ... I love my country as anybody else, but the normal things ...! You are more comfortable doing things in a specific way. I don't know.

The story describes a case of miscommunication due to the ignorance of the language code. Some children didn't have cookies because of a double incompetence: neither they talked Spanish nor the hostesses understood Catalan. Interestingly, the word 'cookie' shares the same etymology of French roots (*galette*), so that the Spanish form 'galleta' and Catalan one 'galeta' have scarcely variations in their pronunciation. It is remarkable that the word 'galeta' results not only opaque, but even incomprehensible for some crew members. In the communication between the children and the flight assistants there is no parity and, therefore, both are agents with a different degree of responsibility in the miscommunication. The latter were not only adults with international experience, but also able to identify the context of such a language exchange.

The story seems implausible to the point that it fits into the pattern of a kind of storytelling which is the urban legend. If it weren't for the fact that he claims to have witnessed the incident, some other factor of inexplicable coincidence should be taken into consideration: 1) the inability to use or understand the gestural communication, for example to indicate "eat" or to point at some food; 2) interaction between children and hostesses, with no intervention of their families or the help of other passengers, including the storyteller himself. We have to add those factors to the situation of misunderstanding.

In the succinct story he didn't mention details like if verbal interaction occurred or even if children inhibited their act of communication after having experienced that they didn't speak the same language. The ambiguity of the story increases because the storyteller doesn't make explicit the source of his story: if he was a real witness or a hearsay witness.

In any case -truthful or not- the story of the cookies is a well thought-out argument to express interviewee's point of view about language policy in education. It is a good example because of its consequences, on which the argument is raised. We see that the story consists of several sections : a) announcement of the story, b) framework or circumstances, c) the complication of the event, d) the resolution of the event, e) evaluation), f) argumentative epilogue or moral.

- a) Announcement: "I ... we had an experience years ago coming back from Tenerife".
- b) Framework: "Some kids ... We came from Tenerife with Iberia".
- c) Complication: "The hostesses didn't speak Catalan. The kids wanted cookies".
- d) Resolution: "They didn't receive cookies".
- e) Evaluation: "They weren't able to ask for cookies in Spanish! Children 6 years old".
- f) Epilogue or moral: "Then, of course, that is ... I love my country as anybody else, but the normal things ...! You are more comfortable doing things in a specific way. I don't know".

According to the content, it is observed that the episode has three sections -b, c, d-, surrounded by the pragmatic sections, and argumentatively developed in the final section –epilogue-, where the intention of the story lies. It is significant for our analysis of storytelling to identify, in the interviews, different situations of the participants where two types of opposition are articulated:

- 1) *there* versus *here*;
- 2) *inside* versus *outside*.

The opposition between “there” and “here” refers to the forms of identification concerning the place of origin compared with place of residence. Actually, this is not a local or geographical matter, but rather a personal interaction or transaction. That kind of interaction concerns affectivity and rationality emerging from comments on life stories, in the primary family and in the family formed by the couple and its children. It is noteworthy that the opposition does not necessarily imply preference but contrasts, for linguistic or cultural reasons, and also because of the existential change in the context of the couple and the experience of parenthood.

Many of the interview questions give rise to answers that show local and experiential polarity. One of the questions concerns the differences that the participant perceived in her/his current place of residence. In the interview 1, the Dutch woman M says: “Yes, a lot, because I started with anything here; just clothes and some personal things; nothing more”. The description of a life starting from zero is rather an exception in our interviews, but it is quite common the experience described by T. in the interview 5. He arrives to Barcelona from a smaller English town, Portsmouth.

- (7) **T.:** Cuando vine a Cataluña, fue en pleno centro de Barcelona, en el Ensanche. Es raro porque cuando llegué a Cataluña iba a vivir en una gran ciudad y nunca había vivido en una así. Ahora vivo en Sant Cugat, clase media, ciudad de profesión liberal, a todas partes vas con los niños.

**T:** When I came to Catalonia, I stayed in the center of Barcelona, in the Eixample. It's strange because when I arrived in Catalonia I was going to live in a big city and I had never lived in a city like this one. Now I live in Sant Cugat, middle class, city for liberal professions, everywhere you go you do it with your children.

T. mentions the presence of children in the city (“you go everywhere with your children”) referring only to the accessibility of urban space, but also to a cultural characteristic trait that it is absent in Portsmouth. He offers spontaneously an explanation:

- (8) **T.:** Los niños reflejan cómo es España en comparación con Inglaterra. En España se ve como una cosa buena tener familia, ser padre y salir con tus hijos. Pero allí es lo contrario. Si paseas con niños en Inglaterra, ya sabes, la gente, su primera reacción será: “Pstt, oh [con desaprobación], niños por la calle...”

T.: Children reflect the differences between Spain and England. In Spain it's positive to have a family, to be father and go out with your children. But there is the opposite. If you walk with children in England, you know...people...their first reaction will be, "PSTT, oh [disapprovingly], children in the way..."

The distinction between "there" and "here" is not only the contrast between two opposite poles, the foreigner versus the local people, and the own culture versus the adopted culture. It offers some variants, using the adverb "here", which means both "immediate" and "near", between a "here-here" and "here-there". This is at least the opinion of a Norwegian woman living in Barcelona and who participates in interview 6, with respect to language.

(9) T.: Bueno, el caso de Barcelona es un poco diferente de Cataluña. Como Barcelona es muy internacional, hay gente de todo el mundo, entonces aquí con castellano vas muy bien. Obviamente fuera de Barcelona es otro asunto. Aquí, por el ambiente internacional, Barcelona es un lugar para hablar castellano.

T.: Well, Barcelona is a bit different from the rest of Catalonia. As Barcelona is very international, there are people from all over the world, therefore you can use Spanish and it works very well. Obviously outside Barcelona it is different. Here, due to its international environment, Barcelona is a place to speak Spanish.

This distinction between the metropolis and Catalonia, between "here" and "there", takes into consideration the idea of affinity in a general sense of life when the interviewee compares Barcelona with Norway.

(10) T.: Yo he estado viviendo en muchos sitios diferentes, pero obviamente Noruega es un país bastante diferente de un español o Cataluña. Y entonces hay unas diferencias de estilo de vida. Pero Barcelona es bastante como ser en el Norte, bastante igual como vivir en Noruega. Excepto el clima.

T.: I have been living in many different places, but Norway is obviously quite a different country from Spain or Catalonia. And then there are differences in lifestyle. But Barcelona is quite like being in the North [sic], just like living in Norway. Except for the weather.

After the illustration of dualism "there" and "here", we go to the opposition "inside-outside". It has to do with the identification with our family and the social model we follow. "Inside" means a greater degree of identification than "outside", more loyalty and commitment with concrete values and goals. The opposite of "inside" is not lack of commitment or disloyalty, but the ability of distancing oneself from that canon. The main feature of "outside" are the expressions of wish or will to make something different. The fact of being "outsider" is reflected in the interview (text 6) when the interviewed participant criticizes the language policy: "I love my country as anybody else, but the normal things ...! You are more comfortable doing things in a specific way. I don't know". Volitional expressions –"I love"-, optional ones –"You are more comfortable"- and



constructive obligation –“(It should be) the normality of things”- suggest that the participant is out of the general and shared model.

The analysis of the stories reveals a larger and more promising study of life scripts. We need a further exploration, with details and an expanded corpus, about how that storytelling shapes existential patterns. Patterns of “here” and “there”, that reveal the involvement of each participant in her/his family, community, culture and language.

## 5. Conclusions

The study of storytelling processes in the interviews provides references on linguistics skills and habits in multilingual families. The sociolinguistic interviews are part of a research project on conceptions and uses of languages among parents of school-aged children who are members of linguistically mixed families. The title of the research project is “Globalization and social and family multilingualism in medium-sized language communities in Europe(GLOBLINMED)”. Medium-sized language communities have between half a million and twenty million people, a category to which Catalonia, the Netherlands and Estonia belong.

The immediate model of our research is the studies on language uses in the context of bilingual couples or “family language policy”. This line of work is concerned with parental stories about their family relationships and the use of languages of the family members (King & Fogle 2013). From these observations we can reach some conclusions on children’s degree of language knowledge, their social identity and their cultural attitudes. In order to elucidate factors of socio-cultural influence we have highlighted the parts of the interviews with more narrative content because they involve significant formal complexity and because they communicate emotional and ideological nuances in a way that goes beyond personal identity and has to do with a communitarian background.

We have presented briefly, and then applied, the model of Bruner-Weisser (1991) to analyze 10 micro-stories from parents. They are part of a total of 20 interviews, from which we have selected 10 due to their intentionality and extension. The Bruner-Weisser model intends to identify and interpret the discourse markers that relate the four constituents of the drama: (1) agent - action, (2) sequences and temporal order, (3) moral order of events, and (4) the narrator’s perspective. The constituent of agentivity or agent-action encompasses names, locations and verbs of motion. The constituent of sequentiality emphasizes linear elements as the conjunction “and”; elements of process, such as the adverbs of time “before” or “after”, and elements of causality such as “because”. The constituent of canonicity or moral order has to do with recurrence or variability, on one hand, and legitimacy or moral obligation, on the other one. Finally, the constituent of perspective concerns the presence of the storyteller through modalizers like personal preferences, cognitive certainty and expository emphasis.

The analysis of the stories following that conceptual framework allows stipulating grammatical and formal resources for self-referential storytelling. A further development of this kind of analysis can be extended to the

study of life scripts, highlighting the ambivalent identity of the persons, since they oscillate between the past with their family of origin and the creation of a couple. These locations imply diverse degrees of involvement in linguistic and cultural identities, ranging from identification to the opposite. Thanks to it we could contribute to extend the study of storytelling to sociolinguistic interviews.

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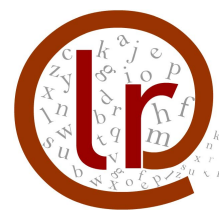


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