Abstract

The study aims to describe the linguistic forms of personal reference and the narrative functions (orientation, episodes, etc.) developed after childhood. 160 oral and written narratives were analyzed, from 80 native peninsular Spanish speakers (40 men and 40 women) belonging to four age/schooling groups: 9, 12, and 16 years old, plus a graduate adult group (25-30 years old). All participants produced a written and an oral text on a subject elicited by a video on interpersonal conflict in a school. The results show that the effect of age is significant in the structural configuration of the narratives, particularly in the eventive and evaluative components. It is also observed that children in the 9 and 12 year olds groups introduce plenty of information that they do not elaborate effectively. In addition, they use episodes and complications both to introduce and maintain referents. In contrast, older subjects tend to introduce a few referents, which are efficiently maintained throughout the discourse. Moreover, they use different structural components to introduce and to maintain referents. Findings suggest that after 10 years old, there are significant changes in discourse production, linked to different processing modes, supporting the idea of linguistic development as a protracted process that extends into adulthood.

Keywords

Later language development, narrative, personal reference.