

THE STRATEGY OF RETEXTUALIZATION IN THE WRITING SAMPLES OF DEAF SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION This study is based on a conception that recognizes language as constitutive, social, historical and it implies in the constitution of subjects and language itself, which is organized through text genres.

PURPOSE The aim of this study is to analyze retextualization actions used in writing samples by deaf subjects.

METHOD The research consists of 16 texts written by four deaf subjects between 11 and 15 years old, who use Brazilian Sign Language (Libras). The texts were produced in individual sessions, with the presence of a speech language therapist, involved with the research. Initially the subjects produced oral texts through sign language, which, after being commented on and discussed, were retextualized through writing. After this retextualization, the deaf subjects were asked to re-read the text and, if judged necessary, modify it.

RESULTS As a result, they re-read texts together with professionals and retextualized them in a written final version. In the texts analyzed, restructuring actions of syntactic structures, textual reconstructions depending on the standard of the language and the stylistic treatment with selection of new syntactic structures and lexical choices are the most used processes of retextualization.

CONCLUSIONS The analysis states that, retextualization acts allowed these subjects to reflect about written Portuguese language and its social function, and to incorporate this language modality with more willingness and confidence.

INTRODUCTION

Language is here recognized as constitutive, social, historical and it implies in the constitution of subjects, one fine way to recognize language it's through literacy, understood here as the effective exercise and competent technology of writing, involving the act of reading and writing to fulfill various social objectives, namely the role of informing, storytelling, drawing up a

request, fun, orienting, and disseminating knowledge, to name a few (Soares 2004).

We understand it is essential to promote literacy as a discursive practice among the population so that people can exercise their full and effective citizenship through actions in written language. Regarding the deaf subjects focused on in this research, the use of written language is also the key to improving their quality of life and their critical position towards the society in which they live.

For the deaf, the social practice of written language becomes possible through contact with adult and competent users of this language modality and immersion in meaningful activities. But Svartholm (1999), Guarinello, Massi and Berberian (2007), report that in the specific case of writing, the deaf should build upon experiences with already acquired language, usually sign language, to develop writing skills.

From these considerations, we can state that texts produced by deaf people, in this work, will take into account the resources of retextualization activities, understood here as a key resource for the deaf to understand the differences and similarities between sign language and the Portuguese language, and so that their text approximates the standard pattern of written language.

Guarinello (2007) states that the use of the Portuguese language outside the standard norm often compromises the coherence of the text, thereby retextualization is crucial so that texts can produce a sense of purpose. For this, we based our study on the retextualization model proposed by Marcuschi (2001), for whom retextualization is "a process that involves complex actions that affect both the code and the meaning, and reveal a number of aspects not always well-understood in the spoken-written relationship" (Marcuschi 2001, 46). Although the author in his work prioritizes the spoken-written relationship, he also states that the model proposed can be used not only for this purpose, but also for other types of retextualization as in writing to writing. The author postulates that this does not mean there is a transition from chaos to order, but the transition from one order to another.

Marcuschi (2001, 2003) and Dell'Isola (2007) state that in retextualization, we interfere both in form and substance of expression and content. They warn that this process involves actions that show the social workings of language and that the transfer that occurs in moving from one text to another should not be followed as a recipe.

The act of writing and rewriting becomes essential for the subject to participate actively in the society in which he lives. In view of this, the objective of this study is to analyze the process of retextualization in writing samples of deaf subjects.

METHOD

The subject body of the present study consisted of 16 writing samples made by four deaf subjects ranging in age from 11 to 15. Data was collected during individual speech-language therapy meetings. All of the participants had congenital profound bilateral hearing loss. All of them used Libras (Brazilian Sign Language) and speech reading.

During the individual meetings a speech therapist was present with the deaf subject. It is noteworthy that all possess proficiency in sign language.

The 16 writing samples collected were based on two strategies: 1) The researcher used written materials (stories, newspapers, books, videos with text) in the therapy sessions and encouraged the study participants to read. She read along with the subjects and would provide assistance whenever asked. If subjects did not understand the meaning of a word or sentence, it was explained to them through sign language. After reading and explaining the texts, the researcher would ask the subjects to write something about what they had read. 2) The researcher and the study participants talked about topics of interest to the participants, and afterward they were asked to write about the topics that had been discussed. In all of the sessions, the writing was emphasized in significant contexts, in which the deaf internalized the Portuguese language, noting its functionality.

To clarify, even though our analysis was restricted to 16 samples written by the study participants, it would be impossible to present analysis of all of them, so we chose to explain only 2 writing samples.

It is worth noting that each writing sample went through a process of joint construction of the text, which sometimes lasted more than a therapy session. Thus, for example, before a subject wrote his sample, first there was a time for commenting and discussion on the subject. After each writing sample was completed, the subject reread his text and modify what he thought necessary. Finally, researcher and subject together read the sample and retextualized it for a final version, trying to change as little as possible of the original text. During this process of rereading, the researcher asked the subject by means of sign language about parts that had not been understood; the subject then explained his idea and then together they filled in the gaps that were missing, modified truncated structures, checked punctuation, and, finally, approximated the text in standard Portuguese, rebuilding meanings agreed upon by the reader and the author. The work consisted of (re)construction of a joint text in Portuguese, using the ideas of the subject and the language knowledge of the researcher.

All meetings were videotaped and transcribed, moreover, daily records of each meeting were made in a notebook, containing objectives and strategies used and the observations made by the researcher.

Note that this study was approved by the research ethics committee of the Evangelical Beneficent Society of Curitiba under number 8910/11 and had the power to aid research: Scholarship in Research Productivity CNPq 302721/2010-0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first analyzed sample was produced during a session of individual speech therapy. On that day, the therapist and patient were discussing dengue, the subject then explained that he had seen dengue public awareness ads on television and that his school teacher had also discussed the matter. As he was developing a journal, it was suggested that he write about this subject.

Sample 1

ORIGINAL SAMPLE IN PORTUGUESE (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Due to the difficult (and sometimes impossible) nature of translation of texts coupled with the subject matter of correction and alteration of said texts, this document will not include translations of all the writing samples as it would be only a representation of the samples and neither faithful nor correct to the process being described here)

- 1 - *Se pessoas coloca copo, refrigerante, pneus e vaso fazer bacunça na fora,*
- 2 - *depois chuva fazer de água muito de chego depois mosquitos vei olha água pare*
- 3 - *gosta de água depois pessoas vei olho muitos mosquitos da dengue.*
- 4 - *As pessoas vai telefone os homens vei olha muitos mosquitos vai limpa*
- 5 - *depois mosquitos vai morreu!*
- 6 - *Depois as pessoas vai pega o copo e refrigerante fechar jogar de lixo: as pessoas vai pegar pneus e vaso jogar de água sair de limpa.*

RETEXTUALIZATION

- 1 - *As pessoas colocam copos, garrafas de refrigerante, pneus e vasos para fora de casa, fazem uma bagunça.*
- 2 - *Depois chove e a água entra nesses objetos, depois os mosquitos vêm e olham a água parada.*
- 3 - *Eles gostam de água parada. Depois as pessoas olham muitos mosquitos da dengue na água.*
- 4 - *As pessoas telefonam para os homens, eles vêm e olham os mosquitos, limpam as casas*
- 5 - *e depois os mosquitos morrem.*
- 6 - *Depois as pessoas começam a jogar no lixo os copos, as garrafas de refrigerante, os pneus e os vasos, jogam a água fora e esta fica limpa.*

In the retextualization for Sample 1, we withdrawal of repetitions, in line 6, rebuilt structures truncated concordances, syntactic reordering and threads was used on lines 1, 2 and on line 6. In lines 3 and 4, we performed a stylistic treatment with the selection of new syntactic structures and new lexical options. In lines 3 and 4, we added new information.

During retextualization some deletions were made, especially with respect to verbs, some substitutions of tenses and some sentences were changed to the plural, as well as several additions were made mainly with regard to prepositions, articles and pronouns.

Sample 2 was written by a subject in speech therapy. On this day, the subject reported a burglary at the home of his sister and then suggested he write the story.

Sample 2

ORIGINAL SAMPLE

- 1 - *Um Acontecer, minha irmã apartamento, o ladrão pega um ferro forçar, a porta quebrou abril,*
- 2 - *ele pulo na dentro casa andou viu todos cosia,*
- 3 - *ele robrou TV. Radio, cd 70.*
- 4 - *Karina e Terezinha chegou para apartamento,*
- 5 - *elas viu subiu Tv, rádio, cd 70,*

- 6 - *ela ficou chora, chora, a Terezinha ficou nervosa.*
7 - *Ela falou para namorada também eu*

RETEXTUALIZATION

- 1 - *Aconteceu uma noite no apartamento da minha irmã, um ladrão pegou um ferro, forçou a porta, quebrou e abriu.*
2 - *ele pulou para dentro da casa, andou e viu todas as coisas,*
3 - *ele roubou a tv, o rádio e 70 CDs.*
4 - *A minha irmã Karina e minha mãe Terezinha chegaram no apartamento,*
5 - *elas viram que a tv, o rádio e os Cds haviam sumido.*
6 - *A Karina chorou, chorou e a Terezinha ficou nervosa.*
7 - *A minha Irmã contou para o namorado e também para mim.*

For retextualization in this sample, we used the the reconstruction of truncated structures, agreement, syntactic reordering and threads. In line 1 the syntactically correct part was reordered and the agreement of verbs rebuilt. In line 2, it was necessary to fix the verbal agreement, changing the preposition “na” to “para”, add a preposition. In line 4 the verb agreement was changed and the we also selected new lexical phrasing that are clearer to the reader. In line 5 the syntactic structure of the sentence had to be changed and the agreement improved. And finally, in line 7 the truncated structures had to be restructured.

It is worth noting that it was necessary to make some additions, mainly regarding the articles, several substitutions with respect to the verbal aspects, and very few deletions.

Using actions that involves changing in syntactic structures in most samples, is also consistent with the literature (Guarinello 2007, Guarinello et al. 2012) which shows that the samples for deaf subjects are more consistent when there is a syntactic reordering from one language to another, adding information, lexical substitution, stylistic reordering, and redistribution of discourse threads.

Another relevant factor in the writing of these subjects refers to the importance of interaction with adults users of this language, because they are adults who respond to the clues of the learners according to their level of literacy. Thus, it was through interaction with others that these subjects were able to construct hypotheses about written language and negotiate meanings.

CONCLUSION

With this work you can see that the activity of retextualization is a process through which deaf people can understand and reconstruct the meaning of texts. Furthermore, this process provides an exercise in text comprehension and mastery of textual genres, enabling the rescue of meaning and coherence of texts. Through this process we realized the uniqueness of each individual, who began to reflect on their own language and how writing is different from speech or sign language. More than looking at the writing of the "deaf", we got a glimpse into the written statements from people who, in their uniqueness, build their own representations about the function of the Portuguese language as a result of their own social interactions with that language.

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