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Co-constructing devices in narrative sequences of multilingual preschool children

Abstract: The following paper aims at analysing co-constructing devices used in adult-child narrative interaction both in the first and in the second language. In order to build a "common ground" for communication and comprehension, adult speakers often need to rely on supporting strategies that provide the child with narrative, grammatical and lexical help. When investigating speakers in multilingual settings, these devices become even more crucial. The present study is based on a corpus which contains data from six multilingual children at preschool age from the Ladin valleys in South Tyrol. The analysis outlines both the adults' devices used to support the child as well as the children's self-adopted strategies to enable the interaction to be performed. As far as the adult part is concerned, the focus is put on initiating, replying and expanding devices. Children's devices, instead, are mainly influenced by the multilingual setting they are involved in. In this sense code-mixing and code-switching phenomena emerge as main strategies.

Keywords: narrative interaction, co-construction, conversational devices, multilingual language acquisition

Zusammenfassung: Der folgende Beitrag zielt darauf ab, die Mechanismen der Ko-Konstruktion zu analysieren, die in der narrativen Interaktion zwischen Erwachsenen und Kindern sowohl in der Erst- als auch in der Zweitsprache verwendet werden. Um eine „gemeinsame Basis" für Kommunikation und Verstehen zu schaffen, müssen sich erwachsene Sprecher und Sprecherinnen oft auf unterstützende Strategien ver-

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lassen, die dem Kind erzählerische, grammatikalische und lexikalische Hilfe bieten. Bei der Untersuchung von Sprechern und Sprecherinnen in einer mehrsprachigen Umgebung werden diese Hilfsmittel sogar noch wichtiger. Die vorliegende Studie stützt sich auf ein Korpus, das Daten von sechs mehrsprachigen Kindern im Vorschulalter aus den ladinischen Tälern in Südtirol enthält. Die Analyse zeigt sowohl die Hilfsmittel der Erwachsenen, die zur Unterstützung des Kindes eingesetzt werden, als auch die von den Kindern zum Zweck der Interaktion selbst gewählten Strategien. Was die Erwachsenen betrifft, so liegt der Schwerpunkt auf initiierenden, antwortenden und erweiternden Mechanismen. Das Verhalten der Kinder hingegen wird hauptsächlich durch das mehrsprachige Umfeld, in dem sie sich befinden, beeinflusst. In diesem Sinne erweisen sich Code-Mixing- und Code-Switching-Phänomene als Hauptstrategien.

Schlüsselwörter: narrative Interaktion, Ko-Konstruktion, Konversationsmechanismen, mehrsprachiger Spracherwerb

Riassunto: Il seguente contributo si propone di analizzare i meccanismi di co-costruzione utilizzati nell'interazione narrativa tra adulto e bambino, sia nella L1 sia nella L2. Al fine di costruire un "terreno comune" per la comunicazione e la comprensione, i parlanti adulti ricorrono spesso a strategie di supporto che forniscono al bambino un aiuto narrativo, grammaticale e lessicale. In contesti plurilingui tali strategie diventano cruciali. Il presente studio si basa su un corpus contenente conversazioni con sei bambini plurilingui in età prescolare provenienti dalle valli ladine dell'Alto Adige. L'analisi illustra sia i meccanismi utilizzati dagli adulti per sostenere il bambino, sia le strategie auto-adottate dai bambini per consentire l'interazione. Per quanto riguarda la parte adulta, ci si concentrerà maggiormente sui meccanismi di avvio, di risposta e di espansione. I meccanismi dei bambini, invece, sono influenzati principalmente dal contesto plurilingue in cui sono coinvolti. In questo senso, i fenomeni di code-mixing e code-switching emergono come strategie principali.

Parole chiave: interazione narrativa, co-costruzione, meccanismi conversazionali, acquisizione plurilingue

1 Introduction

In observing children's development during language acquisition, it is particularly interesting to investigate how children interact with adult speakers, considering that they do not possess the same linguistic "tools" as adults, but need to reach the same communicative goals. Since at preschool-age (three to six years old), in the

extended definition of Ehlich's *Basisqualifikationen*[1] (Ehlich et al. 2008), the language acquisition process is still in progress, interacting with adults as the more proficient speakers is a necessary prerequisite to also acquiring grammatical-syntactic and lexical elements for the development of language and verbal performance. Guckelsberger and Reich (2008: 83) assert that narrative competence as well as linguistic cooperation in dialogic contexts are part of the basic discursive qualification and can only be acquired through interaction with other speakers. One crucial aspect of interaction in this sense is the turn-taking mechanism, which incorporates the ability to react to the adult speaker's demands. Beyond this, the quality and quantity of adult speech has an important influence on the language development of young children.

In interaction, both interlocutors use their language knowledge to contribute to organising the discourse so that communicative comprehension is reached (Quasthoff 2015: 287). Adults who are talking to children need to do more than is required in common conversations with other adults, whereas the young speakers adopt their own communicative strategies to signalise hesitations, doubts or simply to be understood. Co-construction as a mechanism in adult-child interaction is consequently a fundamental aspect, upon which the following paper intends to cast some light. In particular, the aim of this paper is to investigate how adult-child narrative interaction is structured in a multilingual context, in the sense of adopting co-constructing devices that are necessary to fulfil the communication needs of both speakers, and, secondly, in what way the acquisitional process (first or second language acquisition) affects the choice of certain devices.[2] In doing so, the paper relies on an approach which examines language competence from the perspective of talk-in-interaction (Hausendorf and Quasthoff 2005; Quasthoff 2015), combining the fields of language acquisition research and conversation analysis. The study is based on a multilingual corpus which was collected in the minority context of the Ladin valleys in South Tyrol (Italy) and thus allows to analyse data in the three official languages German, Italian and Ladin and to compare interactions both in L1 and L2.

The paper is structured as follows: after drafting the most important theoretical aspects concerning narrative competence in the context of dialogical storytelling with children (Chapter 2), a classification of some supporting devices in adult-child

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1 The Basic Linguistic Qualifications as according to Ehlich can be classified into seven major categories: i) receptive and productive phonic qualification; ii) pragmatic qualification I; iii) semantic qualification; iv) morphologic-syntactic qualification; v) discursive qualification; vi) pragmatic qualification II; vii) literacy qualification I and II. All these qualifications are interrelated and interdependent.

2 For a detailed analysis of co-constructing devices in L2 data s. Salzmann/Videsott (2023).

interaction in terms of co-construction is proposed (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 gives a general overview of the investigated area as well as a brief description of the corpus. The empirical analysis and discussion are outlined in Chapter 5, followed by some concluding remarks (Chapter 6).

2 Storytelling in adult-child interaction

Based on the distinction between storytelling in a broad and in a narrow sense, the first part of this chapter (2.1) is dedicated to the characteristics of oral storytelling and the development of narrative competence in young children. The second part (2.2) focuses on the adult's role in co-constructed narratives.

2.1 Storytelling and narrative competence

Following Ehlich (1980), it is possible to distinguish between the narrowly defined technical term of storytelling and a broad, colloquial concept of storytelling. In the narrow sense, narration is limited to the reproduction of past or fictitious events, taking into account a specific structure which includes a central aspect that is worth being told.[3] In the broad sense, storytelling includes linguistic actions such as reporting, explaining, describing etc. Becker (2017: 335–336) thus argues that there is a continuum between a prototypical narrative which is monological, coherent, literal and worth being told on the one hand, and a narrative which is rooted in orality, co-constructed by more than one speaker, lacking a causal or temporal organisation, an event worth being told or a clear evaluation on the other hand.

    In everyday conversation it is difficult to find a prototypical narration, even more so in the data regarding young children. Typical oral narratives are characterised by the following factors (Quasthoff and Ohlhus 2017: 78): i. processuality (the narrative process is an ephemeral event which develops over time); ii. interactivity (narratives are co-constructed by the narrator and the listener who participates in the narration process through different types of questions and back channels); iii. multimodality (rhythmic and prosodic properties play an important role in the interaction process); iv. contextuality (oral narratives are part of a concrete face-to-face situation).

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3 The structure of a prototypical narrative is made up of the following components: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda (Quasthoff and Ohlhus 2017: 79).

The continuum between an ideal, written narrative and a narrative in the broad sense reflects, at least to a certain extent, the development of narrative competence in children. Narrative competence can be seen as part of general language competence and general conversational competence, in the sense that there is a close relation between competences at the lexical, morpho-syntactic, textual and pragmatic level on the one hand and narrative competences on the other hand. With Becker (2017: 336), narrative competence can be defined as the degree to which the relevant linguistic requirements and actions within an oral or written discourse are fulfilled in an adequate way. Different studies have shown that there are important developmental steps between the ages of five and seven in the first language acquisition process with regard to the structure and complexity of the narrated event and the related use of linguistic means such as tenses, adverbs, and connectors (Guckelsberger and Reich 2008; Hausendorf and Quasthoff 2005; D'Amico and Devescovi 2012). Irrespective of their L1, children until about the age of six need the adult listener's active help in terms of content questions and the expansion of fragmentary utterances, as they at least partially lack the ability to verbalise all essential aspects, to connect propositions, use means of cohesion and to judge the listener's pre-knowledge (Grießhaber 2010: 113). Storytelling in the L2 is especially challenging because of possible lexical gaps and due to the fact that learners have to translate or activate knowledge and experiences carried out in their L1 (Grießhaber 2010: 198). Both in L1 and L2, the development of narrative competence, which is closely linked to the child's cognitive development, can be characterised as a progression from the ability to deal with local tasks at the lexical-grammatical level to the ability to deal with global tasks regarding the story's structure as a whole (Becker 2017: 341).

2.2 Narrative interaction

As the comprehensive research carried out by Hausendorf and Quasthoff (2005) on German speaking children has shown, narrative development is not just a matter of cognition but also of interaction (for Italian see D'Amico and Devescovi 2012). By integrating questions of development and interaction, this approach makes it possible to reconstruct narrative interaction as a mutual accomplishment of narrator and listener (Kern and Quasthoff 2005: 16). In the so-called GLOBE model developed by Hausendorf and Quasthoff (2005) the adult's conversational support has shown to be the foundation of the child's development of narrative competence (*Discourse Acquisition Support System* = DASS), proving that possible explanations for the phenomenon of acquisition have to start from the locally produced interactive mechanisms and their supportive potential (Quasthoff 2015: 307–308). Narrative compe-

tence is thus seen not only as a personal ability, but as observable in interaction (Quasthoff 2015: 289).

The elementary functioning principle of the interactive *Discourse Acquisition Support System* (DASS) is based on the fact that the common conversational work of the interaction partners leads to added jobs on the part of the adult compared to the child. If communication and comprehension shall succeed under conditions of a "weaker" interaction partner's participation, the adult has to counterbalance the child's lower competences and his or her limited collaboration in the communication process.[4] The imbalance is supposed to decline in the course of the development of the child's narrative competence. This process can be metaphorically described as a seesaw, which shows that the extra work of the "heavier", i.e. more competent, adult decreases the more the child gains in weight (Quasthoff 2015: 304). In fact, children must rely on what Sacks (1995: 144f.) calls, for instance, *collaboratively built sentence,* namely on a procedure which incorporates both speakers in accomplishing a conversational task together (cf. also Günthner 2015: 57)[5].

Added conversational work on the part of the adult results in co-constructed narratives. The concept of co-construction[6] implies that the conversational task and the solution's adequacy manifest themselves in the adult-child interaction (Quasthoff 2015: 293). Quasthoff (2015: 298) distinguishes three patterns of adult-child interaction: demanding and supporting (*Fordern und Unterstützen*), taking over and repairing (*Übernehmen und Reparieren*), bypassing and self-solving (*Übergehen und Selber-Lösen*). Interactive patterns in adult-child conversation are functional in a twofold way: they serve locally to ensure comprehension under conditions of limited competences (*Verständigungsressourcen* 'communication resources') and as a "side effect" support the acquisition of narrative as well as general language competence (*externe Erwerbsressourcen* 'external acquisition resources'). The internal resources include the child's linguistic and cognitive abilities both in ensuring comprehension and in enhancing the personal competences (*interne Erwerbsressourcen*; Quasthoff and Stude 2018: 256).

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4 The fact that the adult intuitively balances the child's limited communicative resources through extra conversational work can be seen as a form of *recipient design*, i.e. the way the speaker adapts his or her speech to the interlocutor's pre-knowledge (Hausendorf and Quasthoff 2005: 31).
5 What Günthner (2015) discusses is mainly referred to co-construction on a grammatical-syntactic level. However, the idea of collaborating on an interactional level to complete an utterance can also be expanded to semantic and pragmatic aspects.
6 Co-construction of meaning is particularly evident in asymmetrical types of communication, such as conversations between native and non-native speakers and in the case of the adult-child interaction (Quasthoff 2015: 287), where there is an imbalance between the interlocutors' competences.

The support mechanisms and interactive patterns have been analysed with regard to different narrative genres, such as narratives of personal experience, fantasy stories, picture stories and retelling of a fairy tale (Kern and Quasthoff 2005). The results have shown a strong dependency between the quantity of listener activities and the specific narrative genre, with external resources (i.e. co-constructing devices provided by the adult such as different types of questions, repair, expansions) playing a crucial role, especially for narratives of personal experience embedded in conversation (Quasthoff and Stude 2018: 272–273). The described patterns are associated with the use of different conversational devices on the part of the interaction partners, which will be outlined in the following chapter.

3 Conversational devices in adult-child interaction

The added conversational work of the adult speaker in adult-child interaction basically fills the gaps concerning both the linguistic and narrative competences (Quasthoff and Stude 2018: 256).[7] In order to examine the processes of co-construction in adult-child interaction, two different levels of analysis are significant: i) adults' devices, that is to say the co-construction contribution required from the adult speaker (i.e. external resources); ii) children's devices, which means the personal effort and contribution of the child him/herself in order to create a linguistic and communicative "common ground" for both interlocutors (i.e. internal resources).

3.1 Adults' devices

Adults' devices can basically be divided into three main categories: initiating devices, replying devices and expanding devices.

In initiating devices, the adult essentially takes the first turn followed by the child's utterance as the second turn. Unlike replying devices which are determined by the context, initiating devices determine the context (Graf and Spranz-Fogasy 2018: 21). In this sense, the adult speaker can manage and control the conversation

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7 This means that on the one hand the adult tries to support the child in developing the story so as to fulfil the communicative needs required. On the other hand, from an ontogenetic point of view, these devices also help to acquire the typical narrative structure which is necessary to organise the story on its macro-level (Quasthoff and Stude 2018: 256).

through purposeful strategies in order to elicit output from the child. Among these methods, questions are the most common speech acts (Graf and Spranz-Fogasy 2018: 24), as the speaker elicits "specific pieces of information from hearers" (Salomo et al. 2013: 469). Different means of demanding and supporting interaction through questions can be observed: i) follow-up questions, which help the child to take over and to continue with the story (Kern and Quasthoff 2005: 19), structuring the narrative on the macro-level; ii) elaborative questions, which operate as mechanisms to add more information to the story and to elaborate it. Through these questions (very often *wh*-questions) more information about the referent of the story is asked and, in addition, an elaboration on the action performed by the referent is required (Salomo et al. 2013: 470).[8] Other types of questions put their focus largely on the lexical and grammatical level of language acquisition. So do prompts, namely designedly incomplete utterances (cf. Koshik 2002),[9] in demanding more cognitive engagement from the child and supporting him/her in the search for a word and in producing grammatically complete utterances.

Replying devices are meant here as immediate feedback to the child's utterance to confirm that it is correct, or not, and to consequently provide the right solution. In contrast to initiating devices, in replying ones the first turn is taken by the child. The child's utterance can be repeated by the adult to inform consent and to support the child in elaborating the story. This sort of device is often reinforced in a particular prosodic manner. However, repetitions as replying devices can also appear as a means of repair on a grammatical-syntactic and lexical level. As Egbert (2009: 65ff.) argues, repair of grammatical deviations is usually expressed by the speaker himself in adult-adult interaction ("self-initiated self-completed repair"). In adult-child interaction, instead, cases of "self-initiated other-completed repair" increase, since they support the child in his/her language acquisition process (cf. also Szagun 2016: 241–250). However, repair can frequently be "other-initiated" by the adult, who assumes a double function: signalising the need for repair and providing the solution. Very often, adults also recast and emphasise (with prosodic prominence) non-grammatical forms with the intention of motivating the child to self-repair. In this sense these devices can also be seen as a prompt or as clarification questions, as they demand a sort of cognitive effort from the child and help him/her to realise that the utterance contained a non-standard form.

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8 Questions that contain the target referent are for example: „Where is X?", where the speaker uses a noun phrase to refer directly to the referent, so that the referent is already mentioned (Salomo et al. 2013: 470).
9 As Koshik (2002: 279) claims, these utterances are "designed to be incomplete" to elicit self-correction or completion of a word or sentence.

Expansions (also called increments, cf. Auer 2006) of an utterance can be produced either by the speaker who expressed the utterance, or by the other interlocutor, as is usually the case in adult-child interaction. Following Auer's (2006: 288) definition, expansions appear after a possible completion point and are influenced by the preceding structure. In adult-child interaction they are particularly relevant for language development, since they offer grammatically and lexically correct utterances or possibilities to elaborate the story (Szagun 2016: 251). Acknowledging that it is not always possible to draw a clear-cut distinction between replying and expanding devices as different authors use different terminology, it can be said that expansions, similar to replying devices, tend to appear in the second turn, following the child's turn. Unlike repairing mechanisms though, expanding is not primarily about replacing and repairing, but about adding material and proceeding with the utterance. In this paper, the focus of expanding devices is mainly put on the grammatical-syntactic level. Following Günthner (2015: 58–61) the interlocutor can either complete the utterance syntactically initiated by the first speaker (collaborative completions) or expand an already completed utterance with a syntactical construction that continues the preceding utterance (collaborative expansions). Moreover, on the narrative interactional level topic shift strategies can also be considered expanding devices, when the adult speaker provides the child with another possible topic to talk about (Kern and Quasthoff 2005: 36–37).

3.2 Children's devices

Within the process of language acquisition, children establish their own strategies in interacting with the adult to gain comprehension and to enable successful communication. In multilingual settings these strategies are particularly marked on the lexical and grammatical level.

Bi- or multilingual children have to deal with two important aspects of language knowledge during conversation: what Köppe (1996) refers to as "language separation" and "language differentiation". In the first case, the focus is put on the sociolinguistic aspect of the language and on the ability of the child to select one code rather than another according to the context or with the interlocutor. On the performance level the child will produce self-repair, meta-linguistic comments and reflections or hesitations in the interaction. Language differentiation, instead, is mainly based on the grammatical-syntactic aspect of the language. In this sense, attention is paid to the child's ability to separate two or more codes on the structural level and to use them in the syntactic-grammatical context (Cantone 2007: 15–16). However, language competence in bi- or plurilingual children is not mainly about performing grammatically correct utterances in both codes, instead it concerns the use of language means in

order to fulfil narrative tasks and to produce action patterns (Özdil 2010; cf. also Rehbein 1977).[10] In doing so, it is the use of both or multiple languages that makes up language competence.

Lexical strategies adopted by children are mostly represented by the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing. We understand code-switching as the mixing of two codes on the inter-sentential level (CH: *ieio battone*[ITA] 'ieio (=Aurelio) button'; A: *was möchtest du haben*[GER]*?* 'what do you want?'; CH: *battone ieio (o) voio*[ITA] 'button ieio it want', Cantone and Müller 2005: 210), whereas code-mixing happens on the intra-sentential level, that is to say through the insertion of a single syntagma or word from the other language into the base language (CH: *carlota hat nicht gelati carlota* 'Carlota has not ice-creams Carlota', Cantone 2009: 152[11]), therefore also called insertional code-mixing (cf. for example Ciccolone and Dal Negro 2021: 32–35). Analysing the phenomenon from an interactional point of view (Auer 1999), code-switching has a clear functional-pragmatic purpose and can be rather "discourse-related", in the sense that it is related to the conversation and conveys its meaning, or "participant-related", in that it represents the linguistic competences and preferences of the speaker. On the other hand, in code-mixing, the pragmatic function, as well as the speaker's intention to mix two codes, is reduced. Within speech act sequences[12] in the frame of interaction, switching from one code to the other can be defined as "turn-external change" (*turn-externer Sprachwechsel*) on the one hand, when the turn-change is regulated by a language switch and takes place in speech action sequences (Özdil 2010: 78–81). This happens for instance when the speaker uses one code and the hearer responds in another one. On the other hand, the change can be turn-internal (*turn-interner Sprachwechsel*), when the switch takes place within the turn and by one of the two interlocutors (Özdil 2010: 77–78).

It can be argued that in code-switching the speaker shows a tendency towards one language rather than the other. Switching from one code to the other is much more sophisticated than code-mixing, where the speaker does not need to be a proficient bilingual (Auer 1999: 318). In children who acquire two or more L1s simultaneously, one L1 is very often more strongly developed and assumes an important supporting function for the acquisition of the other L1. The dominance of one code over the other is also crucial from a cognitive point of view: the development of mental processes within the narrative competence takes place in the more dominant lan-

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10 Özdil's (2010) study on Turkish children living in Germany is based on Rehbein's (1977) theoretical concept of the action plan and its mental and verbal processing: the plan of action within an utterance serves to implement an overall plan of linguistic patterns on the turn-level (cf. also Özdil 2010: 152–153).
11 Cf. also Müller and Cantone (2009: 199–200).
12 Speech act sequences can be understood as the realisation of linguistic patterns of action based on the interaction between a speaker and a hearer (Özdil 2010: 81).

guage and becomes a predeterminant for a corresponding development in the second language(s) (Rehbein 2007: 450).[13] Mixing the two codes can be regarded as a real supporting device adopted by children themselves, which Gawlitzek-Maiwald and Tracy (1996) call "bilingual bootstrapping strategy". In this sense both the syntactic and the lexical level are involved in code-mixing phenomena (Müller 2017: 27).

4 Corpus and methodology

The data presented in this paper are drawn from the research project *AcuiLad* – "First and multilingual acquisition processes at kindergarten age: the example of the Ladin valleys in South Tyrol", which was financed by the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and coordinated by the authors of this paper. The Ladin valleys Val Badia (VB) and Val Gardena (VG), located in South Tyrol in Northern Italy, are characterised by the use of three official languages, namely German, Italian and Ladin. From a sociolinguistic point of view, it can be stated that the Ladin varieties[14] are characterised by major contact with Italian and German and are rich in language contact phenomena and code-mixing (Fiorentini 2020). It is usually said that there are no monolingual adults, and also among the children plurilingual competence tends to be well developed. There are children who grow up with Ladin as a first language in the family and learn Italian and German[15] as second languages. Moreover, there are children who grow up in a bi- or multilingual family environment, the most frequent language combinations being German-Ladin, Italian-Ladin or German-Italian(-Ladin). Due to several factors, in particular the omnipresent tourism in the Ladin valleys and institutional multilingualism with integrated language didactics from kindergarten onwards, where guided activities (e.g. songs, nursery rhymes, storytelling with picture books) take place alternately in all three languages, competences in at least one of the second languages tend to

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13 According to Rehbein's research on German-Turkish bilingual children, it can be stated that the realisation of linguistic patterns of action in one language, which are fundamental for social communication, is also extended to the other language (Rehbein 2007: 447–450). In fact, Ehlich and Rehbein (1986) follow an action-theoretical approach (*handlungstheoretischer Ansatz*) in observing narrative interaction in plurilingual settings, according to which language acting also includes social acting, in the sense that not only the speaker but also the hearer is attributed a central role in narrative interaction (cf. also Özdil 2010: 65).

14 In South Tyrol there are two Ladin varieties, Gardenese Ladin (grd.) in Val Gardena and Val Badia Ladin (vbl.) in the valley of Val Badia.

15 While standard German is mainly used at school and in other official situations, German dialectal varieties are spoken in the family context.

be well developed (for a detailed discussion on second language acquisition in the Ladin valleys see Salzmann/Videsott 2023). From a sociolinguistic perspective, it should therefore be emphasised that language contact with Italian and German regularly takes place both at the institutional level and in most families. Evidence for the children's plurilingual competence can be found in their ability to switch to the language proposed by the adult interlocutor and in the fact that all children have at least receptive competences in their second language(s) (Videsott 2021). Against this background, the overall aim of the project is to examine and determine the fundamental steps of language acquisition and development in multilingual pre-school children living in the Ladin valleys of South Tyrol, focusing in particular on the children's lexical, grammatical and pragmatic competences both in the first and the second language(s).

The corpus *AcuiLad*, which was collected during the two-year-project period between autumn 2019 and summer 2021, contains spontaneous (i.e. free dialogue) and semi-guided conversations with 41 children aged three to six and is made up of approximately 37 hours of recordings in the private context, which corresponds to about one hour per child. The subcorpus which was created for this study is composed of narrative sequences produced by six children, four from Val Gardena and two from Val Badia at the age of about five years. The total duration of the subcorpus is about 125 minutes, that is on average 20 minutes per child. The children, four girls and two boys, were asked to produce narrative sequences in two or even all three languages, according to their individual competences. The conversations were conducted by the two project collaborators, one for each valley, who were selected because of their experience with young children and their language competences. The two women, who were about thirty years old, are native speakers of Gardenese Ladin and Val Badia Ladin, respectively. Following the principle of integrated language didactics that is implemented in the Ladin kindergartens, the adult interlocutors systematically used all three official languages (German, Italian, Ladin) for the semi-guided conversations, i.e. the narrative interactions based on picture books. This means that the adult interlocutor started each conversation in the child's strongest language; after about ten minutes she was expected to change the picture book and switch to another language and after a few more minutes to possibly elicit utterances even in the third language. The subcorpus thus contains both L1 data, i.e. data from the children in their respective first language(s) acquired from birth onwards, as well as L2 data, i.e. data in a language that has been acquired subsequently after the age of three (Grimm and Cristante 2022: 4), mainly outside the home. Since the distinction between L1 and L2 is relevant both at the institutional level and from a cognitive-acquisitional point of view, in this paper we maintain the traditional terminology, although it must be admitted that in the case of children growing up multilingually the differentiation of language ability according to L1

and L2 is not always easy and might somehow be artificial (cf. e.g. Tracy and Thoma 2009; Salzmann/Videsott 2023).

For data elicitation we used picture books which the children were to describe in a dialogic interaction with the adult interlocutor. Most children talked about one of the following books: *Peppa Pig*, a picture book series about an anthropomorphic female piglet and her family; *Pimpa*, an Italian series which tells the adventures of a white dog with red dots; *Vorher und nachher*, a book which uses two pictures (before and afterwards) to tell different stories; *Die Torte ist weg!*, a textless picture book of the author Thé Tjong-King. In some cases, the child talked about one of his/her own books. The stories were not read out loud beforehand, but the children were asked to describe what was happening in the pictures or recall the episodes they had watched on TV. The adult interlocutor and the child met twice in a period of about eight months, but most children were already familiar with this multilingual reading practice from both their kindergarten and family experiences, since due to the limited media resources in Ladin even Ladin-speaking families often read stories in German or Italian to their children.

Based on these premises, the aim of the paper is to analyse patterns of adult-child interaction in the narrative sequences of the six children chosen for this analysis. By doing so, the paper tries to answer the following questions: By means of which conversational devices are narrative sequences co-constructed by the child and the adult interlocutor? Which role do narrative and general language competence play for the use of these devices? In which way does the acquisitional process on the part of the child (first or second language acquisition) influence the quantity and quality of certain devices?

5 Empirical analysis

In this chapter we are going to analyse the narrative sequences of the six children, distinguishing between the adults' devices to support the children and the children's devices to reach narrative competence in a multilingual setting.

5.1 Adults' devices

In our subcorpus three categories of adults' devices have been identified, that is initiating, repairing and expanding devices. The two adult interlocutors use a large number of initiating devices (first category), in particular different types of questions, in the interaction with all the children of the subcorpus. Questions as initiating elements open up an informational gap, which sequentially projects a subse-

quent utterance (Graf and Spranz-Fogasy 2018: 26). Very common in our data are elaborative questions with *wh*-words,[16] such as "how are…", "who/where is X?" or "what is X doing?". This type of question aims at eliciting more information about a referent, thus supporting the child in elaborating the story's content.

In example (1) in German L1 based on an episode of *Peppa Pig*, CH1 (5;2) states that Peppa and her brother George are going to bed. At first the adult seems to confirm the child's utterance, but after a pause they turn pages and the adult interlocutor realises that in reality they are not sleeping. The adult hence brings the girl's attention to this aspect (*oh schaug*) producing an elaborative *wh*-question (*was machen sie da*) and immediately afterwards a *yes/no* question (*tun sie schlafen*) which is formulated in a way such as to express doubt and elicit a negative answer. The girl then comes up with the conditionally relevant answer[17] saying that they are not sleeping because they are not tired.

(1)

```
01¹⁸   CH1:   und dånn gehen sie SCHLAfen.
              'then they go to bed'
02     A:     (.) gehen sie beide SCHLAfen;
              'they are both going to bed'
03     CH1:   do isch glaubi die PEPpa.
              'here is, I think, Peppa'
04     A:     ((pause)) oh (.) schaug was MAchen sie da.=
              'oh look, what are they doing here?'
05            tun sie SCHLAfen,
              'are they sleeping?'
06     CH1:   mhm na:::-
              'mmh no'
07            wEIl (.) sie sein net MÜde.
              'because they are not tired'
```

In (2) the adult and the child are talking about an episode of the picture book *Peppa Pig* in which the pig family falls into the mud and is dirty all over. CH2 (5;11) produces a mixed utterance starting in Ladin L1 (*y pona*) and then switching over to Italian L2 in which he says that Papa Pig has fallen into a puddle. In the next turn,

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16 On different types of questions from a formal-linguistic point of view see Graf and Spranz-Fogasy (2018: 25).

17 The fact that in adjacency pairs the A-part (first turn) makes the B-part (second turn) expectable is called conditional relevance (Imo and Lanwer 2019: 177).

18 The transcripts have been prepared according to the GAT2 conventions on the basic level (Selting et al. 2009).

the adult adds a comment in which she deliberately uses an antonym to elicit the correct answer in the second language, stating that they were all clean. This comment can definitely be regarded as an initiating device, in the sense that it demands a reaction, even though it does not present the rising intonation typical of *yes/no* questions. Since the child does not reply with the adjective *dirty* but only with a simple *no* (which is actually a possible reaction to the comment), the adult formulates an elaborative question (*com'erano*), which makes an answer with an adjective[19] conditionally relevant.

(2)

```
01    CH2:    y pona (.) è caDUto hehe;
              'and thenGRD20 he fell'
02            in una pozZANghera.
              'into a puddle'
03    A:      mamma mIa e poi erano tutti puLIti;
              'oh my goodness and then they were clean'
04    CH2:    no.
              'no'
05    A:      com'Erano.
              'how were they?'
06    CH2:    tutti sporchi di FANgo.
              'all dirty with mud'
```

Example (3), in which the adult and the boy are talking about a sequence in the picture book *Vorher und nachher,* contains a prompt produced by the adult aimed at eliciting the word *spazieren*. Prompts, which are typical for L2 data, leave a gap in the utterance (*und jetzt gehen sie*), thus demanding a completion of the syntactic structure, in this case a declarative sentence, on the part of the child. The prompt is characterised by a (middle) rising intonation, which signalises incompletion. In general, a final rising intonation signalises that the intonational phrase is to be interpreted with regard to something that follows (Peters 2016: 115). The adult thus projects a continuation of the turn or the sequence on the part of the interlocutor. At the end of the adult's turn there would be a transition relevance place (TRP),[21] where turn-taking is expected, but since the boy does not respond, probably due to a lexical gap in the L2, the adult also provides the solution (*spazieren*), which too is

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19 On the particular challenges linked to the acquisition of adjectives cf. Salzmann (2021).

20 GER = German; ITA = Italian; VBL = Val Badia Ladin; GRD = Gardenese Ladin.

21 For a short explanation of the turn-taking-mechanism and the notion of TRP see Imo and Lanwer (2019: 172–174).

characterised by a slightly rising intonation, thus encouraging him to repeat the word.[22]

(3)

```
01   A:      und jetzt GEhen sie,
             'and now they are going?'
02   CH2:    ((pause))
03   A:      spaZIEren,
             'for a walk?'
04   CH2:    spaZIEren.
             'for a walk'
```

As far as the second category is concerned, the corpus shows a large use of feedback devices from the two adult speakers, among them repair being the most frequent one. In contrast to the initiating devices analysed, which – apart from lexical prompts – often operate on the content level, the main function of the investigated replying devices is to provide correct solutions for the child's utterances that are incorrect either on the lexical or on the grammatical level. The supporting devices repairing code-mixing and code-switching phenomena are, in most cases, other-initiated and other-completed (Egbert 2009: 98–107); the adult intervenes in order to provide qualitative lexical input.

On the lexical level, repair mainly appears in code-mixing phenomena (also see 5.2), in particular when the child is talking in Ladin as L1 and borrows elements from the other L1 or from the L2 to fill a lexical gap. For instance, CH3 (5;5) inserts the German lexeme *matsch* 'mud' into the Ladin utterance in (4), which is repaired by the adult in the second turn, without repeating the child's whole sequence about some children who landed in the mud in the picture book *Vorher und nachher*, but focusing on the result of the action described and providing the Ladin equivalent (grd. *mauta*) for the borrowed element. At the same time, it is interesting to notice that the mixed element ger. *gelåndet* 'landed' is not repeated and repaired by the adult.

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22 In other L2-examples in our corpus the adult uses prompts providing only the first syllable of the word, e.g. *la lu-* in order to elicit the word *lumaca* ('snail'). For a detailed analysis of prompts also see Salzmann/Videsott (2023).

(4)

```
01    CH3:    chësc ie genau geLÅNdet.=
              'he landed_GER exactly_GER'
02            PUNF tla matsch.
              'punf in the_GRD mud_GER'
03    A:      ma::,
              'oh no'
04            cëla ma duc plëns (.) de MAUta.
              'look everybody is full of mud_GRD'
```

Apart from code-mixing and code-switching contexts, other-completed repairing devices also appear on the grammatical-syntactic level, particularly when the child is talking in his/her L2. In (5), for instance, CH4 (5;9) is talking about the story *Pimpa and the snail* in Italian (L2), hesitating on the reply and then omitting the definite article for the possessive *sua* in the nominal syntagma. The adult first gives positive feedback[23] through the back-channel *giusto* and then repeats the whole utterance, adding the missing grammatical information (*la sua casa*).

(5)

```
01    A:      cosa MOstra la lumaca a PIMpa,
              'what does the snail show to Pimpa?'
02    CH4:    eh:: che:: sua casa è ROTta,
              'that her house is broken'
03    A:      GIUsto,=
              'correct'
04            che la sua casa è ROTta;
              'that her house is broken'
```

As regards the third category, expanding devices, in the narrative sequences analysed there are several examples of collaborative expansions, i.e. utterances produced by the child which after a possible completion point are continued and extended by the adult who adds more linguistic material to an often fragmentary preceding structure.

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23 Feedback devices such as it. *giusto, sì* and ger. *genau, hm_hm* are very frequent in our data, both in sequences with repair, as a means of informing the child that the utterance has been understood, and in sequences without repair. In German linguistics they are usually referred to as *hörerseitige Gesprächspartikel*, i.e. discourse particles on the part of the hearer (Fiehler 2016: 1232–1233).

In (6) the adult and the girl (CH1) are talking about an episode in the picture book *Peppa Pig* where the protagonists are going on a trip to the woods. The adult starts off with an elaborative question (*und wo sind sie da*), after some hesitation the child replies with the noun phrase *ausflug*, which is then repeated and expanded on by the adult who adds the prepositional phrase *im wald* with a rising intonation, so as to evoke a reaction from the child, at least at a cognitive level.[24] The expansion can be explained in the following way: The adult expands the girl's utterance with the locative *im wald*, because her reply is not a structurally preferred[25] answer to the question of *where* they are. In this sense the adult repairs the girl's answer, but by providing additional linguistic material, she does more than give feedback, she also continues the utterance. The extension of the child's turn regards not only the grammatical level, but also the interactional level. In fact, after the exclamation *oh wie schön* the adult adds an expansion on the narrative level (topic shift) by asking if the girl also likes to walk in the woods.

(6)

```
01    A:      und wo SIND sie da.
              'and where are they here?'
02    CH1:    ((pause)) AUSflug.
              'excursion'
03    A:      AUSflug;
              'excursion'
04            im WALD?
              'in the woods?'
05            oh wie SCHÖN.
              'oh how beautiful'
06            gehst du AUCH gerne im wald spazieren.
              'do you also like going for a walk in the woods?'
```

There are also a few examples of collaborative completions (Günthner 2015) in which the adult continues the child's utterance which is interrupted due to a lexical gap in the L2 or in any case due to hesitation on the part of the child. Differently from collaborative expansions where there are no open projections at the end of the preceding structure, in collaborative completions the adult fulfils the projection that remains open at the end of the child's turn, in this case the preposition *su*

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24 Examples such as (6) in which the expansion is attached directly to the end of the preceding structure are called prospective syntagmatic expansion (Auer 2006: 285).
25 In question-answer sequences the first part of the adjacency pair not only demands but also pre-structures the second part, selecting certain possible answers as preferred and others as dispreferred (Graf and Spranz-Fogasy 2018: 26–27).

projects a noun which is then added by the adult.[26] In example (7), based on the picture book *Pimpa and the snowman Max*, the adult asks where the snowman puts the hat, the boy (CH3) first produces a hesitation marker (*hm*) and then initiates the PP *sulla* which is finally interrupted as the child starts to snort with laughter. The adult completes the utterance by suggesting the correct answer, i.e. that he puts it on the tree (*sull'albero*). The boy's interrupted reply as well as the adult's expansion can be considered an answer ellipsis (*Antwortellipse*, Imo and Lanwer 2019: 183), in the sense that the elliptic second part of the sequence in which the finite verb is omitted refers back to the first part (*[mette il cappello] sull'albero*). In this example too the adult's expansion presents a rising intonation, which seems to aim at ensuring the acquisitional effect on the part of the child, in this case helping him to memorise the word.

(7)

```
01    CH3:    Ocio.
              'look'
02            śën se fejl GONZ grant;
              'he makes himself very big'
03            y to ju l ciaPEL.
              'and take off the hat'
04    A:      dove METte il cappEllo.
              'where does he put the hat?GRD'
05    CH3:    hm <<ridendo> sulla prrr>
              'hm on the' ((laughs))
06    A:      sull'ALbero? he he
              'on the tree? he he'
```

5.2 Children's devices

Based on our subcorpus, strategies adopted by children in narrative interaction can be classified into three major categories: i) use of inter-sentential code-switching when talking in the L2; ii) use of intra-sentential code-mixing to fill lexical gaps; iii) self-repair on the lexical and grammatical level.

In the specific case of adult-child interaction where the child is asked to speak one or both L2s, children often use inter-sentential code-switching in order to guarantee that the interaction can take place and carry on, because the active competence of the L2 requested does not allow for the fulfilment of all communicative needs. The most apparent phenomenon in this sense is the tendency of the child to stick to his or her

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26 On the concept of projections in the online syntax see Auer (2000) and Imo and Lanwer (2019: 146–150).

own L1, that is to say, the adult speaking the child's L2 and the child subsequently replying in his/her L1 or in the L2 which he/she seems to be more familiar with (cf. Özdil 2010; cf. also Videsott 2021).[27] These are passages of code-switching without intervention or repair of the adult, where both speakers choose one language and consequently stick to it. For instance, in (8) the two interlocutors are looking together at the book *Vorher und nachher*: the adult supports CH5 (5;9) with elaborative questions in German first, then repeats the question in Italian after a short break and gains a reaction from the child in Italian. Whereas the adult continues in German and sticks to it, the child switches to Ladin, her L1. The adult speaker does not comment or provide any sort of repair or feedback on the code-switching but carries on with her interaction in German. In terms of language separation and language differentiation (Köppe 1996: 931–932) the child signalises a clear strategy: the lack of grammatical and lexical knowledge in the L2 requested (language differentiation) does not allow her to implement her pragmatic competence in the requested language and consequently she chooses to use her L1 instead, so as to accomplish the narrative task.

(8)

```
01   A:     was pasSIERT hier; ((indicates the scene))
            'what is happening here_GER?'
02          cosa succede QUA.
            'what is happening here _ITA?'
03   CH5:   h° sta facendo dei BUchi;
            'he is making some holes_ITA'
04   A:     hm_hm und das KIND was MACHT es?((indicates the child))
            'and the child, what is he/she doing_GER?'
06   CH5:   aveva troppo ruMOre.
            'he had too much noise_ITA'
07   A:     h° geNAU,
            'exactly_GER'
08   CH5:   (.) spo ál mtü SÖ (.) i düc i so gioCATtoli;
            'then he put all his toys up there_VBL'
09   A:     io::, =
            'yes'
10          und was macht der VAter? ((indicates the father))
            'and what's the father doing_GER?'
11   CH5:   chësc á construí (.) chësc aposta pur ËL;
            'he made this specifically for him_VBL'
12   A:     hm_hm geNAU.
            'exactly_GER'
```

---

27 See also Müller and Cantone (2009: 199–200): this kind of code-switching is especially typical before reaching the age of three.

However, this phenomenon can also appear in contexts where the bi- or trilingual child is asked to recount in a language which is not the dominant one in his/her linguistic repertoire. In (9), in describing a picture in the book *Vorher und nachher*, CH6 (4;11) switches to Italian, whereas the adult started the conversation in German. In this case a clear repair strategy from the adult speaker can be observed: she reformulates and translates the child's utterance from German to Italian through a question with a specific prosodic intonation (*hat er angst?*), so as if it were a prompt (cf. also Özdil 2010: 89). In doing so, a determined cognitive effort from the child is demanded to realise her switching and to collect confirmation of comprehension.

(9)

```
01    A:      oh im SCHWIMMbad sind sie.
              'oh in the swimming pool they are'
02    CH6:    allora (.) lui aveva paUra.
              'then he was afraid'
02    A:      hat er ANGST?
              'was he afraid?'
```

As for the second category of children's devices, code-mixing utterances were mainly found in Ladin or German as L1 of the young speakers, but not in Italian as L1. It is important to bear in mind that the use of insertional code-mixing in a minority language such as Ladin cannot only be seen as a lexical device adopted by children in order to satisfy their lexical needs, but it is a common strategy of linguistic communities which are in regular contact with more dominant languages and where mixing the codes has partly led to lexicalization and grammaticalization processes (cf. for instance Auer 1999: 309–310 and Videsott/Ghilardi 2021). Typical core borrowings, for instance, particularly in Ladin utterances, are lexical elements that the recipient language actually possesses but borrows from the more dominant language because of "cultural pressure" (Myers-Scotton 2006: 215). Other borrowings, for instance "nonce borrowings" differ from those mentioned before in that they are considered *ad-hoc* borrowings and are not commonly used in the language community (Poplack 1980). Furthermore, Myers-Scotton calls "cultural borrowings" those items that are borrowed from the other language and expand the lexicon of the matrix language. Myers-Scotton (1993: 172) goes as far as to claim that core borrowing phenomena take place "because certain types of contact situation promote desires to identify with the EL culture [Embedded Language; RV.], or at least with aspects of it". In this sense, younger speakers too transfer these language characteristics to their own language acquisition process and adopt these strategies. In (10) CH5 speaking Ladin as L1 inserts two Italian nouns into the Ladin utterance while commenting a specific scene in the book *Vorher und nachher*. These loans are typi-

cal core borrowings, that are consequently not repaired by the adult, who rather reacts with positive feedback.

(10)

```
01    CH5:    y spo ti ál dé n toch d gelato al fratelLIno;
              'and then he gave a piece of_{VBL} icecream_{ITA} to the_{VBL} little brother_{ITA}'
02    A:      h° geNAU,
              'exactly'
```

Children with two or more L1s, instead, very often profit from the L1 with the bigger lexicon and as a consequence insert lexical elements from it to fill lexical gaps (cf. Cantone 2007: 34–35); typical strategies of bilingual children during language acquisition.[28] The adult speaker in (11) is asking CH4 (bilingual German, Ladin) in Ladin about some animals shown in the picture book *Die Torte ist weg!*. The child seems to have some difficulty in naming the requested animal in Ladin (a rhino), so after a few hesitations and prompts from the adult, she selects the German lexeme ger. *Nashorn,* as the Ladin equivalent is not coming to mind.

(11)

```
01    A:      cunësct inc CHËSC tier,
              'do you also know this animal?'
02    CH4:    ((pause))
03    A:      sas TÖ (name)?
              'do you know (name)?'
04            n ci PA?
              'a what?'
05            N?
              'a?'
06    CH4:    n NAShorn.
              'a_{VBL} rhino_{GER}'
```

In interacting in the L2(s), however, code-mixing is mostly used to cover lexical gaps. Very often the adult intervenes in these contexts, especially when it is not only about the lexical level but when the grammatical level is involved as well, as (12) shows. In this case, CH2 is describing a scene in the book *Vorher und nachher* and demonstrates some difficulty in naming specific objects in German L2. He inserts

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28 Cantone (2007: 34) outlines very clearly that this kind of mixing is not due to lack of what Köppe (1996) calls language separation, so the ability to choose the correct language in the right context.

Italian words in the German utterance, adding the German morpheme *–en* to the Italian lexeme (*fogli-en*, *gatt-en*). The adult repairs all the lexical elements with simple translations into German (*eine katze*) or reformulates the utterance adding more information and providing at the same time the equivalent German word (*viele bunte blätter*). In doing so, the child also receives the necessary morphological information about the items. In both cases, though, the adult does not comment on the code-mixing, but rather informs the child through the repair that the mixed utterance has been understood.

(12)

```
01    CH2:    ein FOglien,
              'a_GER leaf_ITA,'
02    A:      viele bunte BLÄTter,
              'many colourful leaves'
03            ein was ist denn DAS?
              'a what's this?'
04    CH2:    EIN::
              'a'
05    A:      was ist denn DAS.
              'what's this?'
06    CH2:    ein (.) GATten,
              'a_GER cat_ITA,'
07    A:      eine KATze,
              'a cat'
```

Concerning the last group of children's devices, contexts of language mixing are the only situations of self-repair we could find in our corpus. It is mainly a self-initiated and other-completed repair, expressed by hesitations or pauses on the part of the child, as shown in example (13). While looking at a specific scene in *Vorher und nachher*, CH6 starts with German as a reaction to the German question *und da? was machen sie?,* then switches to Italian and hesitates on the verb *cantare* 'to sing' followed by a short break which leads her to self-repair (*cantare*). It is interesting to notice that the adult herself repairs the switch providing the German word *singen*, which is then repeated by the child. In this sense, the repetition can be considered as a child's device to enhance her language competence.

(13)

```
01    A:      und DA?
              'and here?'
02            was MAchen sie da,
              'what are they doing here?'
03    CH6:    alle CAN ((pause));
              'everybody_GER sing'
04            canTAre;
              'to sing_ITA'
05    A:      SINgen sie,=
              'do they sing?_ITA'
06            canTAre SINgen.
              'to sing_ITA to sing_GER'
07    CH6:    ja SINgen (.) SINgen.
              'yes to sing to sing'
```

In other passages, the child repairs him/herself in self-initiated code-mixing contexts, in particular Ladin speaking children, when they borrow lexical items from Italian or German. In (14) for instance, CH6 hesitates after expressing the first part of the Italian word *palla* (*pal*) in the Ladin utterance and corrects herself in grd. *codla*.

(14)

```
01    A:      y ci FEJ pa chisc?
              'and what are these doing?'
02    CH6:    ah::m cula pal (.) CUN::. ((pause))
              'ehm with the_GRD ba_ITA (.) with'
03            cun la CODla spilné.
              'with the ball playing_GRD'
```

6 Conclusions

The subcorpus used for this survey showed above all that co-constructing devices are fundamental in adult-child interaction, even more so if the task is about story-telling in the L2. It could be clearly observed that the interactive patterns are made up of external resources on the one hand, that is to say adults' devices to support both the interaction and the acquisitional process on the part of the child, and of internal ones on the other hand, i.e. the specific strategies used by children in order to achieve the communicative goals narrative interaction requires.

From a methodological point of view, it is useful to separate these two categories, since a distinct analysis permits to work out the specificities of each interlocution party. However, both levels are closely interrelated and emerge through processes of co-construction. Adults' devices operate both on the lexical-grammatical and the narrative level. In general, it could be observed that the better the child's language competence the more these devices tend to refer to the narrative level and not to general language competence. In our analysis we distinguished between initiating devices (questions, prompts), replying devices (repetitions, repair) and expanding devices (collaborative expansions and completions). Whereas initiating and expanding devices are used on both levels, replying strategies are very often oriented towards the signalling of code-mixing phenomena or grammar mistakes, providing at the same time the solution for the child. The three categories of devices can be observed both in L1 and L2 data, with the difference that prompts and collaborative completions are typically linked to lexical gaps and thus appear especially in the early stages of L2 acquisition. Moreover, it has been observed that prosody, especially a rising intonation, aims at ensuring the acquisitional effect on the part of the child and is a fundamental part of different conversational devices.

Children's devices, instead, mostly operate on the lexical level and are mainly influenced by the multilingual setting they are involved in. In this sense children support themselves or profit from the other languages that are part of the linguistic repertoire of the family or of the linguistic community itself. The analysis revealed that three main strategies are adopted, namely inter-sentential code-switching, intra-sentential code-mixing and self-repair on the lexical-grammatical level. While inter-sentential code-switching is typical of narrative sequences in the L2, intra-sentential code-mixing and self-repair often appear in L1 data. More than this, it can be claimed that children's strategies are closely intertwined with the adults' turns: the interactive narration with the adult speaker enables the child to fully draw on his/her cognitive and linguistic abilities. Additionally, within the methodological frame of the analysis it has been shown that socio-linguistic parameters are a fundamental criterion for understanding language contact phenomena (e.g. code-mixing) in a minority language such as Ladin. Lexical "pressure" from the major languages is indeed evident in Ladin from the language acquisition process onwards and cannot only be considered a typical children's strategy.

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