

AFFORDING MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS OF TRANSLATED NARRATIVES: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN COGNITIVE NARRATOLOGY AND RELEVANCE THEORY

*Promovendo múltiplas interpretações de narrativas traduzidas:
Um diálogo entre a Narratologia Cognitiva e a Teoria da Relevância*

DOI: 10.14393/LL63-v40-2024-61

Isabela Braga Lee*
Igor A. Lourenço da Silva**
Fabio Alves***

ABSTRACT: The interpretations conveyed by narratives are not unanimous. In challenging common assumptions that pragmatic theories do not contribute to the study of literature, the present article proposes a dialogue between Cognitive Narratology, an interdisciplinary area which emerged in literary studies, and Relevance Theory, a cognitive-pragmatic theory. The affordances of such a dialogue are discussed according to the representation of fictional minds, the impact of such representation on the narrative participants, and its impact on the meanings and interpretations. An analysis of *Skellig*, a young adult narrative by David Almond translated into Brazilian Portuguese by Waldéa Barcellos, shows that the approximation of cognitive narratological and relevance-theoretic assumptions allows for a more cognitively-grounded, all-encompassing view of linguistics into literature. Distinguishing the communicative acts in the translated text accommodates the translator's role as a producer of discourse, one whose attitude (as an implied translator) may or not be regarded as relevant by readers.

KEYWORDS: Relevance Theory. Cognitive Narratology. Translated literature. Young adult narratives. Epistemic pluralism.

RESUMO: As narrativas não evocam interpretações únicas. Questionando posições de que teorias pragmáticas não contribuem para o estudo da literatura, o presente artigo propõe um diálogo entre a Narratologia Cognitiva, uma área interdisciplinar que emerge nos estudos literários, e a Teoria da Relevância, uma teoria cognitivo-pragmática. As potencialidades desse diálogo são discutidas de acordo com os eixos de representação de mentes fictícias, do impacto dessa representação nos participantes da comunicação narrativa e de seu impacto no significado e nas interpretações. Uma análise de *Skellig*, uma narrativa juvenil de autoria de David Almond traduzida ao português brasileiro por Waldéa Barcellos, mostra que uma aproximação entre pressupostos narratológicos e relevantistas permite uma abordagem linguística da literatura mais bem ancorada cognitivamente e de amplo escopo. A distinção entre os atos comunicativos do texto traduzido localiza o papel da tradutora como produtora do discurso, podendo sua atitude (como tradutora implicada) ser ou não considerada relevante pelos leitores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Teoria da Relevância. Narratologia Cognitiva. Literatura traduzida. Narrativas juvenis. Pluralismo epistêmico.

* M.A. in Linguistics from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (2024). Ph.D. student at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. ORCID: 0000-0002-8548-7625. E-mail: iblee(AT)ufmg.br.

** Ph.D. in Linguistics from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (2012). Associate professor at Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. ORCID: 0000-0003-0738-3262. E-mail: ialsigor(AT)ufu.br.

*** Ph.D. in Sprachlehrforschung (Applied Linguistics) from Ruhr Universität Bochum (1995). Full professor at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. ORCID: 0000-0003-1089-4864. E-mail: fabio-alves(AT)ufmg.br.

1 Introduction

In her argument in favour of linguistic analyses of literary works, Candria (2019) refers to two debates in the subject: one between linguists who contend that literary language is extraordinary and linguists who argue that literary language can be explained by the same frameworks that explain ordinary language; and the other between linguistics and literature scholars, with the latter questioning the former's authority to discuss literature and claiming that linguistic analyses simplify "the works of literature into compilations of language units" (Candria, 2019, p. 29). In the present article, a dialogue between a literary and a linguistic approach is proposed to the study of narratives. The aim is to integrate assumptions from Relevance Theory (henceforth RT), a cognitive-pragmatic approach to communication, with those from Cognitive Narratology (henceforth CN). Such a dialogue would show that RT can account for the multiple points of view, voices, and interpretations of literary texts – including those in relationships of translation –, serving as an example of a pragmatist's competence to describe literary language through the same resources which describe ordinary communication.

Both research traditions (Laudan, 1977) of CN and RT are interested in how people produce and process communicative acts, affording in such a process a notion of situatedness and embodiment – trends in cognitive science which run counter the distinction between body and mind and consider the role of the body and context in cognitive processes (Clark, 1998). Their accounts of narratives and communication are concerned with how interpretations are triggered in the addressee's minds (Trites, 2017; Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995). In addition, both literary and pragmatic theories rely on the notion of inferences as central for literary interpretation (Chapman; Clark, 2019; Bueno; de Saussure, 2022).

In recognising that understanding narratives can be problematic (i.e., interpretations are not unanimous, and the narratives' impacts on readers are highly subjective), van Peer and Chatman (2001, p. 3-4) state that "the comparison or even contestation of theories and methods [...] may help us to overcome our present limitations" regarding monodisciplinary research on narratives. Wilson (2018) contends that mutual contributions of literature scholars and relevance theorists may provide researchers in both areas with useful insights. For instance, RT has been employed to explain literary interpretations (e.g., MacMahon, 1996; Chapman; Clark, 2019; Cave; Wilson, 2018), including interpretations of translations (e.g., Boase-Beier,

2003; Bolens, 2018; Hermans, 2014). A dialogue seems desirable from the point of view of both linguistics and literature scholars. Such a dialogue, especially in the field of Translation Studies, would endorse epistemic pluralism (Marín García, 2017, 2019; Chang, 2012), which promotes scientific progress through the coexistence of more than one research tradition.

Bueno and de Saussure (2022) pointed out that the relevance-theoretic research program (Allott, 2013) has heeded two major challenges over the last years: the challenge of non-propositional effects, and the challenge of the limits of RT's contributions to the study of literature. Focusing on the latter, the authors, based on Green (1997) and Cave and Wilson (2018), posit that literary and linguistic theories can be reconciled at the level of description, with RT working as a metaframe for literary theory. While Cave and Wilson (2018) defend a pragmatics of close reading, approaching literary criticism, Bueno and de Saussure (2022) see RT as a tool for literary theorisation, providing a theory for inferences.

The present paper proposes to reconcile the two research traditions, as suggested by Bueno and de Saussure (2022), considering that both RT and CN share an interest into how (narrative) communication works, rather than providing specific readings of narratives/texts. Relevance-theoretic assumptions may be used, then, as a cognitive metaframe for the assumptions and categories from CN. By way of demonstration, the proposal is empirically grounded on the analysis of a specific young adult (YA) narrative, namely the magical realistic (Latham, 2006; Vielma, 2015) narrative *Skellig*.

In this narrative, the protagonist, Michael, finds Skellig, a mysterious creature living in the garage of his new home, and sets out to help this creature while dealing with “real word” problems, such as adjusting to a new environment, making new friends, and feeling uncertainty towards the health and wellbeing of a newborn sister, with whom he has to share his parents’ attention. Michael must overcome his anxiety towards his sister’s health and find ways to understand other characters’ feelings and thoughts in order to communicate. The narrative was translated into Brazilian Portuguese in 2001 by Waldéa Pereira Barcellos, and the translation was republished in digital format by Martins Fontes in 2016.

Skellig is regarded as of literary value for speaking “to the human condition” (Daniels, 2006, p. 79) and, as such, is productive for theorization. The narrative has been studied from different literary perspectives as to its classification as a magical realistic novel (e.g., Latham,

2006; Vielma, 2015), its depiction of gender (e.g., Sawers, 2008), its discussion of spirituality and death (e.g., Salonen, 2008; Korpinen, 2010), risk, resilience, knowledge and imagination (Bullen; Parsons, 2007), and its portrayal of emotional growth (Trites, 2014; Lower, 2016). As it is a YA audience-oriented narrative, it features a power and age imbalance (O’Sullivan, 2003) and a cognitive gap (Nikolajeva, 2019) between communicators and readers, posing additional metarepresentational challenges (Gutt, 2004) to translators.

The present paper aims to explore how a dialogue between CN and RT stands to benefit each research tradition in particular and Translation Studies in general, especially in the study of literary translation. To this end, the discussion has three foci: the representation of fictional minds (section 2), the impact of said representation on the narrative participants (section 3), and its impact on the interpretations derived from a narrative (section 4). Then, an analysis of *Skellig* is presented in section 5 to illustrate the proposed CN–RT dialogue. Finally, section 6 assesses such a dialogue and points to its benefits for each research tradition.

2 The representation of fictional minds

In narratology, Cohn’s (1978) categories for speech representation (quoted monologue, psychonarration, and narrated monologue) were the basis for her account of how narrative texts afford the representation of consciousness. However, the creation of models for the characters’ minds does not rely solely on inner speech:

Narrative understanding in fact hinges on a wide variety of inferences about the states, dispositions, and processes of fictional minds—including inferences about the felt, subjective nature of their experience [...] as well as their folk psychology, or method for framing inferences about what is going on in their own and other’s minds (Herman, 2009, p. 38).

The use of folk psychology to understand one’s and others’ motivations and intentions can be described as the use of Theory of Mind (Herman, 2009). First proposed by Premack and Woodruff (1978), Theory of Mind (ToM) is the system of inferences for the attribution of mental states to oneself and others. ToM is used to infer mental states that are not directly observable and thus require inference, such as intentions, desires, and thoughts. Such an ability is not taught, being natural in humans and developed with age (Premack; Woodruff, 1978). Kidd and Castano (2013, p. 377) showed that, by prompting readers to make inferences on characters’ mental states, literary fiction temporarily enhances ToM, both in its affective (“the ability to

detect and understand others' emotions") and cognitive ("the inference and representation of others' beliefs and intentions") domains.

In extending to children's literature Zunshine's (2006) argument that the simulation of minds is what makes fiction interesting, Nikolajeva (2014) correlates memory and identity with tense and narrative perspective to claim that fiction instructs young readers to employ ToM in order to represent the character's mental states and their own representation of the character's thoughts and emotions. Silva (2013) shows how fantasy YA fiction triggers interpretations on the characters' mental states, enabling the readers to process their own reality through reflective processes. To the author, the construction of mental models is "an inductive process that deeply involves the reader", which requires the reader's subjectivity to fill in the blank spaces (Silva, 2013, p. 163). CN, thus, has the potential to describe how adolescent readers make inferences about the minds of fictional characters.

In the modelling of minds, readers may be aware of strategies of focalisation and narration. Narratives contain a narrator – the constructed position of the teller of a story – and combine narration with forms of point of view (Stephens, 2010). There are, according to Stephens (2010, p. 55), two aspects to point of view: the perceptual ("the narrator's physical relation in time and space to the story") and the conceptual (the communication of "ideas about and attitudes towards" the story elements of time and space). When the point of view is that of a character in the story, the character is a "focaliser": this entity usually has a developing subjectivity, and young readers are more apt to "engage intersubjectively and align attitudinally and emotionally" with it (Stephens, 2010, p. 58). Stephens (2010, p. 56-58) points out that adult readers may reject that point of view, but children, who are still developing reading strategies, generally do not, which is why young readers need to cultivate an understanding of the principles of narration and focalisation.

In relevance-theoretic terms, the first-person narrator's voice may be explained as this entity's interpretive use of language. In RT (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995), language may be used descriptively (to entertain a thought in relation to a state of affairs in the world) or interpretively (to entertain a thought as an interpretation of someone else's thoughts or one's own thoughts at another moment). Readers, thus, may represent the narrator as retelling events and depicting characters based on their interpretation of them. The interpretation of the narrator's

voice, then, would be done through a process of metarepresentation, which, according to Wilson (2000/2012, p. 230), “involves a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it”. In other words, readers who find the narrator’s voice relevant must form a representation about the narrator’s own representation of the events and characters. In a dialogue with CN, metarepresentation may also be seen as having a role in mind-modelling, since in creating models of the minds of characters, readers represent characters as having a cognitive environment. Cognitive environments contain all the assumptions about the world that can be perceived or inferred by someone (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995), and readers may metarepresent what they assume to be the content of the cognitive environments of characters.

3 Participants of narrative communication

In literary studies, the fundamental distinctions between the narrator of a literary text, its implied author and its real author are associated with the works of Booth (1961/1983) and Chatman (1978). In narratological translation studies, Chatman’s (1978) model of narrative communication was expanded by Schiavi (1996) and O’Sullivan (2003) to accommodate the entities of the implied translator and implied reader of a translation. Although the model of narrative communication is code-like, assuming that one message can be successfully conveyed by a communicator and interpreted by a reader, cognitive literary studies see those entities as having a cognitive nature, being a coupling of linguistic traces in the text and their construction in the reader’s minds (Stockwell, 2019). Therefore, the implied author, in addition to being a principle of invention and intent in the text (Chatman, 1978), is also the idea of the author created by the real reader (Wall, 1991). The implied translator is also said to have an intent, by obeying given norms in the production of a text and mediating “the presuppositions regarding the fictional world” activated by the implied author (Schiavi, 1996, p. 15).

Schiavi (1996), Hermans (1996) and O’Sullivan (2003) contend that the translator has a voice, or discursive presence, which usually counterfeits the narrator’s words but can sometimes be audible when it “becomes dissociated from the one it mimics” (Hermans, 1996, p. 43). A related, yet different concept is that of positioning, which “concerns the way in which, and the degree to which, translators make not just their presence but their views felt even as

they report someone else's words" (Hermans, 2020, p. 424). The translator's positioning, then, relates to the translator's attitude towards her¹ readership and the previous authorial discourse she is quoting, which corresponds to Sperber and Wilson's (1986/1995) notion of echoic utterances. As argued by Hermans (2014), in a dialogue with the relevance-theoretic notions of interpretive use of language and echoic effects, such an attitude may or not be regarded as relevant by readers.

The different entities of narrative communication may fit into a relevance-theoretic account of the levels of literary communication. Sperber and Wilson (1987) claim that in literature communication may take place at two levels, with the second-level act of communication between author and reader having the first-level act of communication in the fictional world as its stimulus. In a dialogue of the relevance-theoretic framework with narratological concepts, the intentions of narrators and characters may acquire internal relevance (Kenny, 2018) to readers at the first-level act of communication, while the intentions of implied authors and translators may acquire external relevance (Kenny, 2018) at the second level.

RT is cognitively grounded on the notion of relevance, which is a property of inputs to cognitive processes (such as stimuli for perceptual processes, and assumptions) that follows two principles (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995): the cognitive principle of relevance determines that human cognition is geared to maximum relevance, and the communicative principle of relevance determines that an ostensive stimulus gives rise to an expectation of optimal relevance. The expectation of relevance leads the addressee to search for an interpretation that will yield adequate cognitive effects at minimal processing cost. The notion of processing cost is related to the "effort needed to access a context and process an assumption in that context" and "the effort needed to construct that assumption" (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995, p. 152).

The communicative principle of relevance is the basis for the "relevance-guided inferential comprehension of ostensive stimuli", which, as Sperber and Wilson (2002/2012, p. 278) suggest, "is a human adaptation, an evolved sub-module of the human mindreading

¹ Where necessary, the communicator is referred to with feminine pronouns and the addressee with masculine pronouns, following relevance-theoretic conventions (Cave; Wilson, 2018).

ability". Such a procedure can be thus summarized: "Follow a path of least effort in looking for implications; test interpretations in order of accessibility, and stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied" (Wilson, 2011, p. 72). It is by following the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic that addressees identify the communicator-intended interpretations.

According to Blakemore (1992, p. 51), while literary critics generally agree that the intention of an author is irretrievable² (Wimsatt; Beardsley, 1946), relevance theorists argue that, to some degree, the reader reconstructs the author's intentions. Since ostensive-inferential communication is not logic, but probabilistic, the reader makes the most probably right assumptions based on his own cognitive environment. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), communicators provide clues that point to their intention. There are two kinds of intention: the informative intention (to make a set of assumptions manifest to the audience) and the communicative intention (to make the informative intention mutually manifest). While manifestness means that an assumption can be explicitly represented and accepted as probably true or false, mutual manifestness means that the same process occurs in the mutually shared cognitive environment (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995). Therefore, from evidence given in the narrative, readers infer, at a risk, that an assumption or set of assumptions entertained is the one intended by the implied author to become mutually manifest. That is so only because people's metacommunicative abilities, which allow inferences on the communicator's cognitive environment, lead to assumptions on the communicator's intentions.

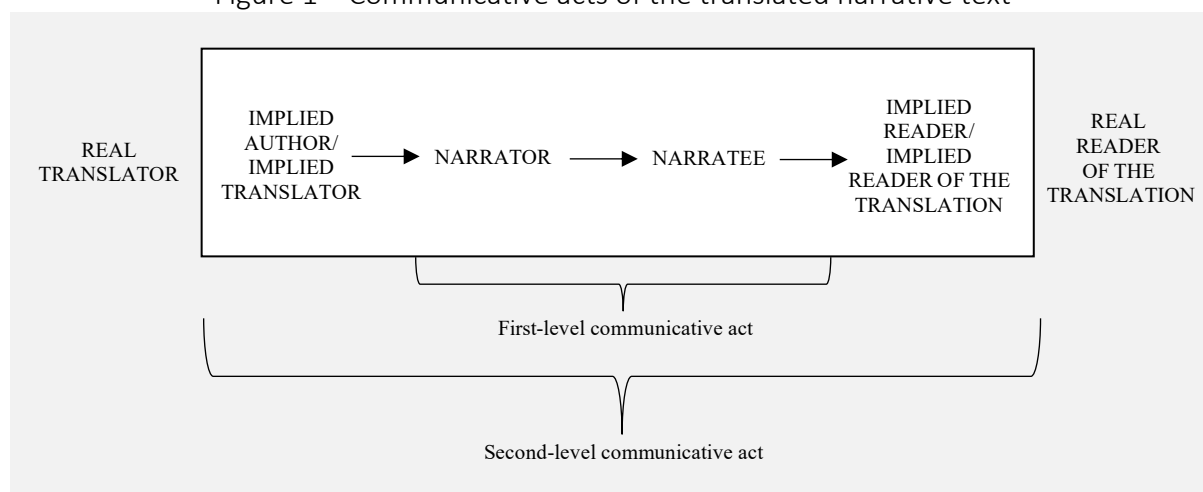
In Narratology, the notion of intention is accommodated in the figure of the implied author, who is the locus of the intent of the work and guides any reading thereof (Chatman, 1978). It is, moreover, the idea that a reader creates of the author of that specific narrative (Wall, 1991; Stockwell, 2019). As previously suggested by Boase-Beier (2003), the assumed communicator's intention that the addressee creates at a risk in the relevance-theoretic account can be parallel to Narratology's implied author. Such a notion of implied author conforms to RT's definition of intention, which is inferred by the addressee on the basis of communicative cues (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995). Arguably, it follows that in a CN-RT

² While the intentional fallacy is taken here as an opposing position to RT's, other literary theories adopt a more pragmatic position, starting with Aristotle's *Poetics* (2013). The philosopher's understanding that poets are image-makers and readers take pleasure in representations has influenced other theorists, such as those in the Chicago School and Wayne Booth (1983), who has distinguished between the real and the implied author.

dialogue, real readers metarepresent the intention of implied authors, while the communicative cues in the narrative are intended for implied readers to find relevance.

Such an idea of intention may also contribute to explaining the implied translator's intention. Based on Wilson (2000/2012), Gutt (2004) argues that metarepresentation is an essential competence for translators: a translator must metarepresent the mutual cognitive environment shared between original communicator and addressees as well as the cognitive environment of the addressees of the translation. As translations are cases of interlingual interpretive use of language (Gutt, 2000/2010), the translator communicates her interpretation of the original author's thoughts based on metarepresentation. Gutt's (2000/2010) account of translation as an interlingual interpretive use of language may be associated with Hermans's (2014) view of translation as reported speech, as in both accounts translators are the producers of the communicative act. Since Hermans's (2014) model of translation as echoic speech is grounded on relevance-theoretic notions, the concept of the translator's positioning fits well into a dialogue between CN and RT. In such a dialogue, the implied translator's positioning, which is related to her intentions, may or not be regarded as relevant by readers of the translation. Thus, it is up to the reader to metarepresent the intentions of the implied translator. Figure 1 illustrates the entities of narrative communication and the level to which they correspond in a dialogue between CN and RT.

Figure 1 – Communicative acts of the translated narrative text



Source: the authors.

A theoretical dialogue of this kind would accommodate the different entities of narrative communication within the relevance-theoretic account of two levels of communication in fiction (Sperber; Wilson, 1987). As the fictional world is described in the lower-level communicative act, the communicative intentions embedded in it would be those of the narrator and the characters. Importantly, the interactions between characters would amount to communicative acts embedded within the first-level communicative act between the narrator and narratee. The higher-level would feature the communicative intentions of the implied author and implied translator, with the communication established at the lower level as its ostensive stimulus. Since it is up to the reader to treat the translation as echoic, i.e., to find relevance in the translator's attitude to the discourse she is quoting, the implied translator is an entity that may be regarded by the reader as relevant or not in the communicative process, as well as the reader implied by the translation. The dialogue established fits into the CN and RT research traditions, by assuming that it is the intentions of implied authors and implied readers that are metarepresented by readers, rather than those of the real authors and translators, and by addressing the indeterminacy and inferential nature of literary meaning, i.e., running counter the assumption that one single meaning can be conveyed by an author and decoded by all competent readers.

4 Meaning and interpretation

In CN different interpretations are accounted for by considering the particularities of the reader: "All reading is always a physical act that involves the ongoing interaction of an embodied brain with a text that is also, in one form or another, a material artefact" (Trites, 2017, p. 103). Different mental models of characters, for example, lead to different interpretations of narratives (Silva, 2013). Therefore, classic categories such as narration and focalisation, despite being coded, can only convey the meanings described by narratologists if readers recognise the narrative strategies. The awareness of narrative strategies such as focalisation is related to a reader's sophistication³ (Nikolajeva, 2010) and can lead to considerations on a narrative's significance (Stephens, 2010), which is tacit and relates to "what

³ (Un)sophistication does not have an evaluative or pejorative connotation; rather, it relates to a reader's literary competence (Nikolajeva, 2010).

the text ‘means’ in a thematic, ethical or moral sense, or what it implies about the meaning of human life, or, sometimes, what it has to say about literature itself” (Stephens, 2010, p. 53).

In RT Sperber and Wilson (2015) define import as the overtly intended cognitive effect of an ostensive stimulus, whereby a cognitive effect is a “change of mind” (Sperber; Wilson, 2015, p. 132). That import may be more or less determinate and rely more or less on evidence. All communication takes place at a risk (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995), as the communicator’s intentions are not decoded, but metarepresented by the addressee in an inferential process. Interpretations are a product of the addressee’s expectations of relevance, which determines what assumptions will be used in the interpretation process: “The aim of communication in general is to increase the mutuality of cognitive environments rather than guarantee an impossible duplication of thoughts” (Sperber; Wilson, 1995, p. 200).

The indeterminacy of meaning is an aspect of weak communication (i.e., those in which the assumptions the communicator intends to convey are weakly manifest), and Wilson (2018) associates the second-level act of fictional communication to such cases of weak communication. The intended import of fiction, then, might be associated with weak implicatures and phenomena such as poetic effects – which emerge from “a wide array of weak implicatures” (Sperber; Wilson, 1995, p. 222) – and impressions – “a noticeable change in one’s cognitive environment [...] resulting from relatively small alterations in the manifestness of many assumptions” (Sperber; Wilson, 1995, p. 59).

Both research traditions converge in their consideration that literary meaning is not literal, it rather depends on inferences which in turn hinge on the reader’s cognitive abilities. In the CN approach, Theory of Mind processes explain significance only in part, since sophisticated readers may use mind-modelling to grasp the significance of events for characters, but not to associate the narrative with its theme, human life or literature itself. In the RT approach, on the other hand, the metarepresentation construct explains such associations between the narrative and its theme as the readers’ search for the implied author’s intention at the second-level communicative act. The levels of interpretation reached by a reader – in CN described as associated with his sophistication (Nikolajeva, 2010) – can be described in RT terms as a product of the assumptions of his cognitive environment, which is a sum not only of an individual’s physical environment, but also of his cognitive abilities, including his perceptual

abilities, mastery of concepts, and memories (Sperber; Wilson, 1986/1995). The different cognitive environments lead to different mental representations constructed and different inferences made.

Sophistication, then, can be cognitively explained by elevated perceptual and inferential abilities and the mastery of different concepts and theories. Such a cognitive environment would allow for the metarepresentation of different intentions and consequently the derivation of further assumptions, including poetic effects and impressions. The ability to read the narrative for its significance, in CN terms, would then be related to a reader's pragmatic ability of reaching the second-order communicative act's intended import. As Stephens (2010) holds, a narrative's significance is reached after considering the text as a whole (Stephens, 2010). This process can be compared to deriving a second-order communicative act's import from the import of the utterances at the lower level (Sperber; Wilson, 1987); in this case, the higher-level import is indeterminate and relies on "showing" the lower level to point to the relevance of a work (Sperber; Wilson, 1987).

The proposed CN-RT dialogue, thus, relies on the construct of metarepresentation. Importantly, ToM and metarepresentation do not correspond to the same construct, nor were they developed in their respective source research traditions to solve the same kinds of problems. The two constructs could be amalgamated, an attempt which was pursued and tested experimentally by Szpak (2017) and Szpak, Alves and Buchweitz (2021). The authors adopted the concept of perspective-taking to argue that metarepresentation, ToM and mindreading seem to overlap when attributive representations are required.

In the dialogue proposed in the present work, the construct of metarepresentation explains the search for the intended import through the metarepresentation of the cognitive environment of communicators at the lower-level (the mind-modelling of characters and narrators) and the higher-level (the narrative's significance as intended by the implied author and the translator's positioning). Representations are intuitively created based on the reader's expectations of relevance: relevance, then, explains why some assumptions may be entertained by some readers while others may not. Therefore, considering narrative communication as utterance interpretation, the metarepresentation construct, an aspect of the relevance-guided inferential comprehension, might turn cognitive narratological analyses

more robust. Such a dialogue is demonstrated in the next section, through an analysis of *Skellig* in its original version and its translation into Brazilian Portuguese.

5 A demonstration of the proposed CN–RT dialogue

A passage from the 20th chapter of *Skellig* was selected to demonstrate the potential of the proposed CN–RT dialogue. In this passage, Michael, the protagonist, will introduce Mina, his neighbour and new friend, to the being that lives in Michael's garage (who at this point in the narrative still has not introduced himself as Skellig). Before this passage, Michael had met Skellig a few times, and the being had been ill-tempered in all the encounters ("Go away. Go away", Almond, 2007, ch. 7). Michael does not know much about Skellig yet, except that he has arthritis ("Arthur Itis", Almond, 2007, ch. 10), enjoys Chinese takeout and brown ale, and lives in the crumbling garage. Michael convinces Skellig to allow Mina to see him ("‘She's nice,’ I told him. ‘She'll tell nobody else. She's clever. She'll know how to help you.’" Almond, 2007, ch. 16). So, Michael takes Mina to the garage, carrying brown ale and cod liver capsules for Skellig's arthritis. The passage reproduced in Example 1 starts at the beginning of chapter 20 and ends before Skellig participates in the interaction.

Example 1 – Passage from the original narrative (Almond, 2007, ch. 20)⁴

I led her quickly along the front street, then I turned into the back lane. I led her past the high back garden walls.
'Where we going?' she said.
'Not far.'
I looked at her yellow top and blue jeans.
'The place is filthy,' I said. 'And it's dangerous.'
She buttoned the blouse to her throat. She clenched her fists.
'Good!' she said. 'Keep going, Michael!'
I opened our back garden gate.
'Here?' she said.
She stared at me.
'Yes. Yes!'
I stood at the garage door with her. She peered into the gloom. I picked up the beer and the torch.
'We'll need these,' I said. I took the capsules from my pocket. 'And these as well.'
Her eyes narrowed and she looked right into me.
'Trust me,' I said.
I hesitated.
'It's not just that it's dangerous,' I said. 'I'm worried that you won't see what I think I see.'
She took my hand and squeezed it.
'I'll see whatever's there,' she whispered. 'Take me in.'

⁴ Chapter locations are provided instead of page locations, as the corpus consists of e-book texts.

I switched on the torch and stepped inside. Things scratched and scuttled across the floor. I felt Mina tremble. Her palms began to sweat.
I held her hand tight.
'It's all right,' I said. Just keep close to me.'
We squeezed between the rubbish and the broken furniture. Cobwebs snapped on our clothes and skin. Dead bluebottles attached themselves to us. The ceiling creaked and dust fell from the rotten timbers. As we approached the tea chests I started to shake. Maybe Mina would see nothing. Maybe I'd been wrong all along. Maybe dreams and truth were just a useless muddle in my mind.
I leaned forward, shone the light into the gap behind the tea chests.

As Michael is the focaliser in *Skellig*, his narration can be understood as interpretively resembling the events that took place in the narrative world. Since the reader has no access to the point of view of the other characters, he is not able to assess Michael's interpretation as faithful or not to the plot (the actual events in the narrative) and must rely on Michael's interpretation to create models of the character's minds. Such models rely, for instance, on the metarepresentation of Michael and Mina's intentions when communicating. Mina's act of narrowing her eyes and looking right into Michael might be metarepresented as her intentions of weakly implicating that she does not identify Michael's intention, that she does not understand why Michael is taking beer and capsules to the garage, or that she reproves Michael's handling of alcohol and medicine. Any of those weak implicatures and others from the range of implicatures conveyed by her act might be metarepresented by the reader as the one intended by Mina, and thus contribute to their modelling of Mina's mind.

The narrative's emphasis on non-verbal communication, through gestures and looks, instigates the implied readers to consider non-verbal stimuli as important cues for intentions. Michael's response ("Trust me") may be metarepresented by readers as Michael's own recognition of Mina's intention of questioning him, communicated nonverbally. As the narrator focalises external actions and speech, rather than the character's thoughts and feelings, the reader is expected to, at a risk, metarepresent the character's internal states. Mina's acts of holding Michael's hand and reassuring him verbally ("I'll see whatever's there"), for example, contributes to the reader's identification of Mina's intention of tranquilizing Michael and showing support, which may lead to a modelling of Mina as an attentive, sympathetic friend.

Sophisticated readers would probably notice that such a representation of Mina is embedded in Michael's narration and focalisation. Thus, the implied readers are prompted to metarepresent the narrator as intending to recognize Mina's qualities as a friend, which promotes the interpretation that Michael has changed his mind since his first encounter with

Mina in chapter 7, when he was not able to identify her intentions despite all his efforts (“I stared at her”, Almond, 2007, ch. 7). Finally, sophisticated readers may associate the fictional events communicated at the lower level with the implied author’s intention of communicating assumptions on the importance of non-verbal communication, on the possibilities of changing first impressions about people, on the intersections between fact and imagination, or all of those. As such assumptions are communicated weakly, not all implied readers are intended to entertain them, and those assumptions will be strengthened or dismissed as the narrative unfolds and the reader reaches the end of the narrative, when he is able to form a complete understanding of the narrative’s significance, or import. On the other hand, readers, especially those who are still developing reading strategies, may not regard weak implicatures as relevant, focusing only on what is explicitly communicated; they may, still, not find relevance in what is communicated at the second-level communicative act, not associating what happens in the fictional world with their own assumptions about the real world.

Comparing translation and original allows for considerations on the translator’s positioning (Hermans, 2014):

Example 2 – Passage from the translated narrative⁵ (Almond, 2016, t. Barcellos, ch. 20)

Levei-a rapidamente pela rua principal e depois entrei pelo beco dos fundos. Passamos pelos muros altos dos jardins dos fundos.
– Aonde é que estamos indo?
– Não muito longe.
Olhei para sua blusa amarela e seus jeans.
– O lugar está imundo – disse eu. – E é perigoso.
Ela abotoou a blusa até o pescoço. Cerrou os punhos.
– Ótimo! Vá em frente, Michael.
Abri o portão dos fundos do nosso jardim.
– Aqui? – disse ela.
E olhou séria para mim.
– É. Aqui mesmo!
Parei diante da porta da garagem com ela. Ela espiou a escuridão lá dentro. Apanhei a cerveja e a lanterna.
– Vamos precisar disto – disse eu. Tirei as cápsulas do bolso. – E disto aqui também.
Ela contraiu os olhos e me lançou um olhar penetrante.
– Pode confiar em mim – disse eu.
Hesitei um pouco.
– Não é só que é perigoso. O que me preocupa é que você não veja o que eu acho que vejo.
Ela tomou minha mão e a apertou.

⁵ Glosses are provided in the Appendix for readers who are unfamiliar with Portuguese.

– Vou ver o que estiver lá – murmurou ela. – Vamos entrar.
Acendi a lanterna e entrei. Bichinhos arranhavam e corriam pelo chão de um lado para o outro.
Senti que Mina tremeu. Começou a suar nas palmas das mãos.
Segurei firme sua mão.
– Tudo bem – disse eu. – É só você ficar perto de mim.
Fomos nos espremendo entre o lixo e os móveis quebrados. Teias de aranha arrebatavam nas
nossas roupas e na nossa pele. Moscas-varejeiras mortas ficavam presas a nós. O teto estalou, e
caiu pó do madeiramento podre. Quando nos aproximamos das caixas de chá, comecei a tremer.
Talvez Mina não visse nada. Podia ser que eu estivesse enganado o tempo todo. Talvez os sonhos e
a realidade só fossem uma confusão inútil na minha cabeça.
Inclinei-me para a frente e iluminei o espaço por trás das caixas de chá.

A comparison of Examples 1 and 2 points to some translation choices that convey interpretations different from those afforded by the original. For the sake of economy, the analysis below focuses on one translation choice that allows for different interpretations and one translation choice that prompts similar interpretations.

The rendering “*bichinhos*” for the original “things” conveys different interpretations. “Things”, in the original, implicates that what makes the scuttling and scratching in the garage is unknown to Michael. By utterance proximity, the reader may metarepresent the narrator as associating the unknown atmosphere with Mina’s behaviour of sweating and trembling. Thus, readers may interpret that Mina is afraid of what might be in the garage, whatever it may be. In the translation, “*bichinhos*” makes available the implicatures that insects, spiders, or small mammals, such as mice, might be making the sounds of scuttling and scratching. From the translation readers’ cognitive environment, assumptions related to an association between filth and a place filled with little animals can be selected as context for interpreting the utterance. Additionally, the diminutive *-inhos* suggests that those small creatures are harmless, since the diminutive form is usually associated with positive affect in the cognitive environment of Brazilian readers. By utterance proximity, readers may metarepresent Michael as associating the little animals with Mina’s trembling and sweating. Thus, readers may model Mina as scared of animals, which would lead to inconsistencies with her characterization so far in the narrative, as the character has expressed interest in birds and in the cycle of life. In the original, those implicatures are not made available by the utterance, while one of a different nature is: the implicature that Skellig (himself, parts of him, or something related to him) could be making the sounds, since his nature is not clear and could fit into the concept encoded by “thing”.

Readers who regard the implied translator's positioning as relevant and have access to both original and translation (such as the researchers) might metarepresent the translator as intending to diminish the strangeness of the garage and thus make it a more friendly space for the characters or turn the reading experience less eerie for young readers. On the other hand, readers may metarepresent the implied translator as not having metarepresented the openness of interpretations conveyed by "things" as relevant for the implied readers, instead opting to specify the nature of what was making the sounds, considering that animals such as bluebottles and spiders have previously been described as present in the garage. Thus, since readers may metarepresent the implied translator's intention differently, that translation choice can hardly be associated with one specific positioning of the implied translator.

The original-translation comparison also reveals choices that do not prompt different interpretations, such as "*cerveja*" and "*cápsulas*", which encode similar concepts as those encoded by "beer" and "capsules". Michael's handling of medications and alcoholic beverages can be interpreted by the reader as echoing the implied translator's positioning of endorsing the implied author's intention of representing young characters as apt to handle "adult" objects for a higher motive: help Skellig, an adult-like figure. Besides, the consummation of such beverage is not restricted to adult figures, as in chapter 46 Michael's father allows Michael to have swigs of his beer ("*Papai deixou que eu tomasse uns golinhos de sua cerveja*", Almond, 2016, t. Barcellos, ch. 46; "Dad let me have swigs of his beer", Almond, 2007, ch. 46). The translation of those sensitive subjects may be regarded by readers as relevant and indicative of the implied translator's positioning, since the adaptation or censoring of sensitive subjects is not uncommon in the translation for young people (O'Sullivan, 2003; Alvstad, 2018).

Finally, the translator's positioning may be associated more generally with narration and focalisation strategies similar to those employed in the original: the first-person narration and the external focalisation prompts readers of the translation to metarepresent the mental states of characters, inferring their intentions at a risk. Such translation choices may be metarepresented as conveying the translator's attitude of regarding her implied readers as able to make the necessary inferences to reach the narratives import, both at the first- and second-level acts of communication.

The previous sections 2–4 showed that CN and RT have made similar considerations on the role of translators, who must bear in mind the communicative act established by the original and their target addressees (O’Sullivan, 2003; Gutt, 2000/2010, 2004), and on the multiplicity of interpretations characteristic of literature (Stephens, 2010; Silva, 2013; Wilson, 2018). As the present section attempted to showcase, approaching YA literature through a dialogue between the two research traditions offers the possibility for an analysis and conceptualisation of narratives and narrative translation that is more robust by means of adopting the metarepresentation construct.

6 Final remarks

The analysis showed that a CN–RT dialogue accounts for the representation of minds, the impact of said representation on the participants of narrative communication, and its impact on the interpretation of literature. For the analysis, the construct of metarepresentation was tentatively used in place of the construct of ToM, as the former could provide explanations for the processes of mind-modelling, identification of intentions, and interpretation. In a comparative assessment, following Marín García’s (2017, 2019) criteria, the metarepresentation construct has more simplicity⁶ than the ToM construct has in CN: that is, for the purpose of tapping into the inferential processes involved in the interpretation of translated YA narratives, the metarepresentation construct solves more problems without incurring in inconsistencies within the research traditions of CN and RT.

For the CN research tradition, this dialogue can promote a means to understand “mind-relevant aspects of storytelling practices” (Herman, 2009, p. 30). It contributes to a nuanced understanding of how readers make sense of narratives (i.e., not assuming there is a unified interpretation for all readers) that is not entirely code-dependent: metarepresentations vary according to the addressee’s cognitive environment. This dialogue can be employed to analyse concrete empirical objects, such as the translation of *Skellig* in Brazilian Portuguese, but it also can be used to describe, generally, narrative as a type (Meister, 2009). By reconciling with RT,

⁶ Marín García (2017, p. 90) explains simplicity as follows: “The more problems, either conceptual or empirical a single construct can solve, the better it is. I use simplicity instead of parsimony or economy of means given that the solution to a problem does not depend on the construct per se, but on the complex set of assumptions established in the research tradition as well”.

CN safeguards itself from the problem of “selective (and sometimes ill-informed) borrowing of ideas and methods tailored to problem domains in other fields” (Herman, 2009, p. 35). As a construct consists of a framework of concepts, a CN–RT dialogue does not simply integrate metarepresentation to the study of narratives: in fact, it promotes a dialogue between a) narratological considerations on narrative and interpreting strategies, and b) the relevance-theoretic framework associated with relevance – the “hard core” of RT (Allott, 2013), i.e., considerations on human cognition and communication, and auxiliary assumptions such as the interpretive/descriptive distinction.

While RT contributes to CN with descriptive tools, the benefits of reconciling with CN are of a different nature for RT. As the present analysis has demonstrated, the relevance-guided comprehension procedure underlies the interpretation of focalisation and narration strategies described by narratologists. Moreover, the concepts entities of narrative communication and narrative’s significance can be understood, respectively, as the communicators and the import of the different levels of fictional communication. Such a theoretical dialogue, then, shows that the relevance-theoretic concepts of ostensive-inferential communication and relevance can, as intended, describe any kind of communicative act, underlying even “formal categories” (Sperber; Wilson, 1995, p. 215) such as the classic narratological concepts (focalisation, narration, and entities of narrative communication) for which RT can provide explanations. Such a dialogue, then, helps to address the challenge of accounting for literary communication posed to RT (Bueno; de Saussure, 2022).

For Translation Studies, said dialogue promotes epistemic pluralism (Marín García, 2017, 2019; Chang, 2012) by contrasting and approximating literary and linguistic approaches to the translation of narratives. It helps to pinpoint the translator’s role as an interpreter and communicator. The translator’s positioning (Hermans, 2014), then, can be understood as a product of her interpretation of the original narrative, which in turn can be the target of translation readers’ interpretation. Additionally, the translator’s positioning may or not be regarded as relevant by readers making sense of a narrative. Such a dialogue, thus, explores Hermans’s (2014) argument in favour of all translations being echoic and accommodates it better in the RT research tradition. Concerning the translation of YA literature, this dialogue, through its cognitive focus, avoids problems such as the difficulty of fitting multiple

communicators and addressees in a code-like model (see Kruger, 2011). This dialogue reflects the potential of a conjoined application of both research traditions, in which neither loses its coherence within the source field. Such a dialogue should be reinforced and applied to the study of both other YA literature translation and translations of other kinds of media, relying on RT's aim of explaining any act of communication and Hermans's (2020) assumption that the translator's positioning can be identified not only in literary translation, but in translated texts in general.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that ToM and metarepresentation do not correspond to the same construct, nor were they developed in their respective source research traditions to solve the same kinds of problems. The account proposed in this article opted for the adoption of metarepresentation as a more encompassing construct, able to explain different motives in the translation of YA narratives. The two constructs could be amalgamated, an attempt which was pursued and tested experimentally by Szpak (2017) and Szpak, Alves and Buchweitz (2021).

Future research may apply the interface proposed in the study of other translated narratives. Additionally, future research can address one of the limitations of this research, by describing in depth narrative representation as a type (Meister, 2009) through this interface, something which the present article suggests as a possibility.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by CAPES (Coordination of Superior Level Staff Improvement), FAPEMIG (grant APQ-02483-18) and CNPq (grants 316193/2023-2, and 307370/2023-2).

The authors are thankful to Julia Kowalski, teaching degree in Portuguese from UFMG, for the glosses of *Skellig*.

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Submitted on: 31.01.2024

Approved on: 24.07.2024

Appendix 1 – Gloss (Almond, 2016, t. Barcellos, ch. 20)

Glosses and abbreviations were based on the Leipzig glossing rules (Comrie; Haspelmath; Bickel, 2015). Aiming for economy, glosses did not describe the grammatical gender of Portuguese words, explicating gender only for those referring to animated entities. Number markings were only described in plural forms; otherwise, they are singular. Grammatical classes, such as ADV and ADJ, were described only for polysemic forms. In Portuguese, the pronoun “você” refers to the second person in discourse, but the verbs that agree with it are inflected for person in the third grammatical form; this was signaled by 2SG(3SG).

Levei-a	rapidamente	pela	rua	principal		
take.PST.PERF.1SG-3SG.F.OBJ	quickly	through.DEF	street	main		
e	depois	entrei	pelo	beco	dos	fundos.
and	after	enter.PST.PERF.1SG	through.DEF	alley	of.DEF.PL	back.PL

I quickly took her through the main street and then entered the back alley.

Passamos	pelos	muros	altos	dos	jardins	dos	fundos.
pass.PST.PERF.1PL	through.DEF.PL	wall.PL	high.PL	of.DEF.PL	garden.PL	of.DEF.PL	back.PL

We went through the back gardens' high walls.

Aonde	é	que	estamos	indo?
to.where	be.PRS.3SG	REL.EMPH	be.AUX.PRS.1PL	go.PROG?

Where are we going to?

Não	muito	longe.
NEG	very.ADV	far.ADJ

Not much farther.

Olhei	para	sua	blusa	amarela	e	seus	jeans.
look.PST.PERF.1SG	to	3SG.POSS	blouse	yellow.ADJ	and	3SG.POSS.PL	jeans.PL

I looked at her yellow blouse and her jeans.

O	lugar	está	imundo	– disse	eu.
DEF	place	be.PRS.3SG	filthy.ADJ	say.PST.PERF.1SG	1SG.SBJ

The place is filthy – said I.

– E	é	perigoso.
and	be.PRS.3SG	dangerous

– And it's dangerous.

Ela	abotoou	a	blusa	até	o	pescoço.
3SG.F.SBJ	button.up.PST.PERF.3SG	DEF	blouse	until	DEF	neck

She buttoned her blouse up to her neck.

Cerrou	os	punhos.
clench.PST.PERF.3SG	DEF.PL	fist.PL

She clenched her fists.

– Ótimo! Vá em frente, Michael.
 great.INTERJ! go.IMP.2SG ahead.ADV Michael.VOC

– Great! Go ahead, Michael.

Abri o portão dos fundos do nosso jardim.
 open.PST.PERF.1SG DEF gate of.DEF.PL back.PL of.DEF 1PL.POSS.SG garden.SG

I opened our garden back gate.

– Aqui? – disse ela.
 here? say.PST.PERF.3SG 3SG.F.SBJ

– Here? – said she.

E olhou séria para mim.
 and look.PST.PERF.3SG serious.F to 1SG.OBL

And she looked seriously at me.

– É. Aqui mesmo!
 be.PRS.3SG.AFFIRM here right.EMPH

– Yes. Right here!

Parei diante da porta da garagem com ela.
 stop.PST.PERF.1SG in.front.of.DEF door of.DEF garage with 3SG.F.OBL

I stopped in front of the garage door with her.

Ela espiou a escuridão lá dentro.
 3SG.F.SBJ peek.PST.PERF.3SG DEF darkness there inside

She peeked at the darkness inside there.

Apanhei a cerveja e a lanterna.
 grab.PST.PERF.1SG DEF beer and DEF torch

I grabbed the beer and the torch.

– Vamos precisar disto – disse eu.
 go.AUX.PRS.1PL need.INF of.DEM.PROX say.PST.PERF.1SG 1SG.SBJ

– We are going to need this – said I.

Tirei as cápsulas do bolso.
 take.PST.PERF.1SG DEF.PL capsules.PL from.DEF pocket.DEF

I took the capsules from my pocket.

– E disto aqui também.
 and of.DEM.PROX here too

– And this right here, too.

Ela contraiu os olhos
 3SG.F.SBJ contract.PST.PERF.3SG DEF.PL eye.PL
 e me lançou um olhar penetrante.
 and 1SG.OBJ throw.PST.PERF.3SG INDF look penetrating.ADJ

She narrowed her eyes and threw me a penetrating look.

– Pode confiar em mim – disse eu.
 can.AUX.IMP.2SG trust.INF in 1SG.OBL say.PST.PERF.1SG 1SG.SBJ

– You can trust me – said I.

Hesitei um pouco.
 hesitate.PST.PERF.1SG a.little.ADV

I hesitated a little.

– Não é só que é perigoso.
 NEG be.PRS.3SG only CONJ.EMPH be.PRS.3SG dangerous

It's not only that it's dangerous.

O que me preocupa é que você não veja
 whatever.REL 1SG.OBL worry.PRS.3SG be.PRS.3SG CONJ 2SG(3SG) NEG see.3SG.PRS.SBJV
 o que eu acho que vejo.
 whatever.REL 1SG.SBJ think.PRS.1SG CONJ see.PRS.1SG

What worries me is that you might not see what I think I see.

Ela tomou minha mão e a apertou.
 3SG.F.SBJ take.PST.PERF.3SG 1SG.POSS hand and 3SG.OBJ squeeze.PST.PERF.3SG

She took my hand and squeezed it.

– Vou ver o que estiver lá – murmurou ela.
 go.AUX.PRS.1SG see.INF whatever be.3SG.FUT.SBJV there murmur.PST.PERF.3SG 3SG.F.SBJ
 – Vamos entrar.
 go.IMP.1PL enter.INF

– I will see whatever is in there – she murmured. – Let's get in.

Acendi a lanterna e entrei.
 light.up.PST.PERF.1SG DEF torch and enter.PST.PERF.1SG

I turned the torch on and got in.

Bichinhos arranhavam e corriam pelo chão
 animal.DIMIN.PL scratch.PST.IPFV.3PL and run.PST.IPFV.3PL through.DEF floor
 de um lado para o outro.
 from INDF side to DEF other

Little animals scratched and ran through the floor from one side to the other.

Senti que Mina tremeu.
 feel.PST.PERF.1SG CONJ Mina tremble.PST.PERF.3SG.

I felt that Mina trembled.

Começou a suar nas palmas das mãos.
 begin.PST.PERF.3SG to.sweat.INF in.DEF.PL palm.PL of.DEF.PL hand.PL

The palms of her hands began to sweat.

Segurei firme sua mão.
 hold.PST.PERF.1SG firm.ADV 3SG.POSS.SG hand.SG

I held her hand tight.

– Tudo bem – disse eu.
 everything well.ADV say.PST.PERF.1SG 1SG.SBJ

– It's all right – I said.

– É só você ficar perto de mim.
 be.PRS.3SG just 2SG.SBJ(3SG) stay.INF close.ADV to 1SG.OBL

– Just stay close to me.

Fomos nos espremendo entre o lixo
 go.PST.PERF.1PL 1PL.REFL squeeze.PROG between DEF garbage
 e os móveis quebrados.
 and DEF.PL furniture.PL broken.PL

We squeezed in between the garbage and the broken furniture.

Teias de aranha arrebentavam nas nossas roupas e na nossa pele.
 web.PL of spider rip.PST.IPFV.3PL in.DEF.PL 1PL.POSS.PL clothes.PL and in.DEF 1PL.POSS skin

Spider webs ripped on our clothes and skin.

Moscas-varejeiras mortas ficavam presas a nós.
 bluebottle.PL dead.PL stay.PST.IPFV.3PL stuck.PL to 1PL.OBL

Dead bluebottles got stuck on us.

O teto estalou, e caiu pó do madeiramento podre.
 DEF ceiling.SBJ_i crack.PST.PERF.3SG_i and fall.PST.PERF.3SG_j dust.SBJ_j from.DEF timber rotten

The ceiling cracked and dust fell from the rotten timbers.

Quando nos aproximamos das caixas de chá,
 when 1PL.REFL approach.PST.PERF.1PL to.DEF.F.PL box.F.PL of tea
 comecei a tremer.
 start.PST.PERF.1SG to.tremble.INF

When we approached the tea boxes, I started trembling.

Talvez Mina não visse nada.
 maybe Mina NEG see.FUT.SBJV.3SG nothing

Maybe Mina wouldn't see a thing.

Podia ser que eu estivesse enganado o tempo todo.
 can.PST.SBJV.3SG be.INF CONJ 1SG.SBJ be.AUX.PRS.1SG.SBJV mistaken.PTCP DEF time whole

It could be that I was mistaken the whole time.

Talvez os sonhos e a realidade
 maybe DEF.PL dream.PL and DEF reality
 só fossem uma confusão inútil na minha cabeça.
 only be.PST.SBJV.3PL INDF confusion useless in.DEF 1SG.POSS.SG head.SG

Maybe dreams and reality were just some useless confusion in my head.

Inclinei-me	para a frente	e	iluminei		
lean.in.PST.PERF.1SG-1SG.REFL	forward	and	illuminate.PST.PERF.1SG		
o	espaço	por trás	das	caixas	de chá.
DEF	space	behind	of.DEF.PL	box.F.PL	of tea

I leaned forward and lightened up the space behind the tea boxes.