

Analysing French Narratives Generated by ChatGPT

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Abstract

This study analyzes a corpus of 200 French narrative texts generated by ChatGPT-5 in response to prompts specifying the characters, context, and story ending. Research on AI-generated texts in French remains limited. The methodology combines natural language processing with discourse analysis, enabling comparison with studies of human-authored narratives. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses focus on discursive organization—narrative structure, key event types, character attributes, and use of direct speech—as well as syntactic, grammatical, and lexical features, with particular attention to adverbs, adjectives, and intensifiers. This paper presents selected findings from a comparative perspective on ChatGPT- and human-generated narratives. The study contributes to a growing yet still limited body of research on AI-generated texts in French and provides empirical insights into similarities and differences between human- and AI-generated narratives.

Keywords: artificial intelligence storytelling in French; artificial intelligence narratives construction; natural language process; artificial intelligence narratives linguistic analysis.

1 Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence has made significant progress in generating various types of texts and has sparked growing interest among researchers in detecting AI-produced texts and analyzing the differences between texts generated by AI and those produced by humans (Bellini et al., 2024; Fiedler and Döpke, 2025; Kehkashan et al., 2025; Prova, 2024). Bellini et al. (2024) mention that “AI writing styles become increasingly indistinguishable from human-generated content, ensuring their transparency and originality will become more challenging, especially in critical fields like scientific research” (Bellini, 2024: 357).

The rapid development of AI has transformed the field of literary creation, and there, AI appears less performant. Numerous studies are dedicated to analyzing AI-produced literary output and to comparing narrative texts produced by AI versus those produced by humans. (Raffloer and Green, 2025; Munir et al., 2025; Begum, 2025; Sofiya et al., 2025; Beguš. 2024). Although AI manages to imitate humans' narrative style, its stories still lack depth, emotional nuances, cultural and psychological realities, authenticity, originality, and literary techniques (imaginative scenarios, characters' nuances, suspense or twists, complexity, and narrative coherence). IA is also criticized for drawing simplistic and moralizing conclusions.

2 Data and method

ChatGPT produced 200 narratives based on the following prompt: "Invent a story on the following theme: a cat and a dog living in neighboring houses hate each other, but by the end of the story they become friends." The text length was limited to a maximum of 500 words, but ChatGPT did not always adhere to the imposed length limit. ChatGPT was asked to explain its approach to constructing a narrative text. It defined the steps as follows:

1. Understand the prompt, defining the relationships between characters, the tone of the story, and the key events.
2. Define the characters whose conflict stems from their differences. The cat is solitary, somewhat disdainful, but possesses a certain wisdom. It is a calm and thoughtful character. The dog is very energetic, slightly naïve and clumsy, but kind-hearted.
3. Choose a triggering event.
4. Develop the evolution of the relationship.

5. Find a satisfying conclusion: the story should end on a positive and resolved note, showing that the characters have grown.
6. Maintain an appropriate tone: for a short and light story like this, the tone is rather humorous and friendly.
7. Adhere to the length and structure.

This approach is relatively conventional and closely follows the given prompt. ChatGPT chooses to frame the characters' differences as the source of their conflict, without exploring alternative motivations (e.g., a past event or competition). It adopts a positive, humorous, and friendly tone, thereby avoiding other narrative possibilities.

The corpus contains 101010 words. The median length of the stories is 513.5 words, and the average length is 505.05 words.

The methodology combines natural language processing with discourse analysis, enabling comparison with studies of human-authored narratives. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses focus on discursive organization—narrative structure, key event types, character attributes, and use of direct speech—as well as syntactic, grammatical, and lexical features, with particular attention to adverbs, adjectives, and intensifiers. In the present article, I limit myself to the analysis of discursive organization, temporal adverbials, adjectives, and intensifiers.

2.1 Temporal adverbials

Time is one of the most fundamental conceptual categories in human cognition, and natural languages have different morphological and lexical devices to express it: such as tense, aspect, adverbials, particles, and principles of discourse organisation as well. Each language combines them in a specific way.

Most languages have temporal adverbials¹. For analytical purposes, the classification proposed by Klein (1994) has been adopted. The author distinguishes six categories based on function rather than form: positional adverbials (*today, three weeks ago*), adverbials of sequentiality (*then, finally*), adverbials of duration (*for a long time, in a few days*), adverbials of frequency (*often, twice*),

adverbials such as *suddenly* and *little by little*, which express the nature of the transition from one event to another; and a heterogeneous group of adverbials used to express contrast between events (*almost, still, already*). Dankova (2002, 2009, 2017) demonstrated that the use of different types of temporal adverbials varies across languages (and even across varieties of the same language), as well as according to the nature of narrative texts.

2.2 Adjectives and intensifiers

Adjectives play an important role in narrative texts. Descriptive or literary texts are known to contain a higher number of adjectives. For French, there is no consensus regarding the classification of adjectives and other noun determiners that function as adjectives, such as possessives, demonstratives, numerals, and interrogatives (Elalouf, 2009; Wilmet, 1997). When discussing adjectives, I focus primarily on their functions rather than their forms, since only a subset of adjectives constitutes a class (or part of speech) known as adjectives such as *beau* 'beautiful', *vert* 'green', *nouveau* 'new'. There are also adjectives derived from past participles (e.g., *assiette cassée* 'broken plate', *objet perdu* 'lost object') or present participles (*voyage fatigant* 'tiring trip', *histoire amusante* 'amusing story'), as well as nouns used adjectivally (*industrie automobile* 'automotive industry', *bouteille en verre* 'glass bottle'). For analytical purposes, adjectives were counted in their base form (masculine singular).

Qualifying adjectives can be accompanied by intensifiers that are words (or expressions) used to strengthen or weaken the degree of an adjective: *very interesting* or *rarely used*. They can also nuance the meaning of an adjective by adding an evaluation or a clarification: *unnecessarily expensive* or *dangerously close*.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the linguistic features employed by ChatGPT in its narratives, such as temporal adverbials, adjectives, and intensifiers, will help reveal patterns of textual organization and the distribution of the linguistic resources deployed by the AI, while allowing for an empirical comparison with narrative texts produced by humans.

¹ The terms adverb and adverbial are used here without distinction.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Discursive organization

The discursive organization of the narratives remains the same: all the texts share the same structure, as if they were using the same template. ChatGPT uses the *passé simple* (simple past), a verb tense reserved for literary texts. Few people are able to use the literary past tense correctly in writing without having to check verb forms; they tend to use the *passé composé* (perfect past tense) instead, since it is used both orally and in writing. ChatGPT-generated narratives follow a linear chronological structure, without flashbacks or foreshadowing. The first paragraph describes a peaceful neighborhood, two houses facing each other, and two main characters: a cat and a dog. The second paragraph is devoted to the animals' daily routine. This is followed by the key event of the story, which leads to a change in the relationship between the two animals. ChatGPT invariably concludes on a positive and moralizing note, centered on the possibility of living together despite differences and on understanding others. An example of a story is shown in Appendix A.

The key event of the story is stated explicitly and without suspense: one day, an unexpected event occurred (see Appendix B). It involves a storm and/or an accident affecting one of the main characters or a third protagonist (a bird, a kitten). ChatGPT mentions a loud or unusual noise accompanying the key event.

ChatGPT-generated narratives tend to follow canonical story structures, with an introduction, a development, and a resolution, while making temporal and causal relations more explicit. They display regular referential cohesion, clear structural coherence, and frequent use of evaluative expressions and mental state descriptions. One might have expected the narrative not to follow a chronological order or to begin with a salient event from which the rest of the story unfolds (as, for example, in detective novels). One could also have expected one of the characters to assume the role of narrator and recount the story from a first-person perspective. The story of the cat and the dog could be embedded within a first-person personal narrative (using the author's voice), for example: "When I moved to a new city, I decided to adopt a cat, but I was unaware that my neighbors had a fierce dog".

Eighty percent of the narratives contain direct speech consisting of short exchanges between characters. Direct speech most often occurs after a key event in the narrative and consists of expressions of recognition of the other character's efforts, gratitude, and/or compliments. Negative utterances in direct speech, such as *tu n'es qu'un chien stupide!* 'you are a stupid dog', are extremely rare. No swear words appear in the narratives. ChatGPT consistently avoids offensive language.

ChatGPT tends to use complete and often complex sentence structures. From a syntactic perspective, incomplete sentences could have been used to create a particular rhythm and literary effect. ChatGPT behaves, so to speak, like a diligent student who produces well-structured work but lacks imagination and narrative creativity, while avoiding any risk of being perceived as unconventional.

3.2 Temporal adverbials

All the narratives contain temporal adverbials. On average, a narrative contains 15.2 temporal adverbials; that is, on average, one adverb every 33.23 words. An overuse of temporal adverbials is noted in certain passages; this is the case in the following excerpt: there are 7 occurrences in a 55-word paragraph (the temporal adverbials are shown in italics):

- (1) *Au bout de quelques minutes, après de nombreux efforts*, Félix réussit à sortir de la neige grâce à l'aide de Max. Ils restèrent là, pantelants, dans le froid glacial, *pendant quelques secondes*, avant de se regarder *longuement*. Aucun mot n'était nécessaire. Les deux animaux, bien qu'*encore* un peu méfiants, se comprenaient *désormais* d'une manière différente.

After a few minutes, and after much effort, Félix managed to get out of the snow with Max's help. They stayed there, panting in the freezing cold *for a few seconds*, before looking at each other *for a long moment*. No words were necessary. The two animals, though *still* a little wary, *now* understood each other in a different way.

For the entire corpus, the distribution across the six types of temporal adverbials is as follows (in percentages):

Position	29.6
Sequentiality	11.8
Duration	6.9
Frequency	31.3
Nature of transition	11.8
Contrast	8.6
Total	100%

Table 1: Distribution of temporal adverbials (in percentages)

Adverbs of position and frequency were used in all the narratives, and these are the most frequently used in the corpus, respectively 29.6% and 31.3%.

The adverbs of frequency that express a high frequency (e.g., *toujours* ‘always’, *chaque matin* ‘every morning’) are twice as numerous as those expressing a low frequency (*parfois* ‘sometimes’, *jamais* ‘never’). Among the most frequently used adverbs are *toujours* ‘always’, for the first category, and *parfois* ‘sometimes’ as well as expressions composed of *chaque* ‘each’ plus a noun such as *fois* ‘time’, *jour* ‘day’, *matin* ‘morning’, or *soir* ‘evening’, for the second.

The discursive organization and the distribution of temporal adverbs depend on both the language and the type of text (Lambert, 1997; Dankova, 1997, 2002, 2009, and 2017). It has been shown that positional adverbials and adverbials of sequentiality that place events on the temporal axis are the most frequent in narrative texts. Adverbs indicating transitions from one event to another (*suddenly*, *little by little*) and contrastive adverbs (*already*, *still*, *yet*) contribute to the expression of internal temporality and the dynamism between different events and protagonists.

For the moment, it is not possible to compare the narratives produced by ChatGPT with narratives produced by humans from the same prompt (this will probably be an avenue to explore for future research). Nevertheless, there are data obtained from analyses of two corpora of spoken French narrative texts (cf. Dankova 2002, 2009, 2017, 2022). As part of my previous research, I created two French corpora: one consisting of narratives elicited using the *Cat Story* picture sequence and

the other consisting of narratives based on the film *Quest* (1996). The *Cat Story* picture sequence was developed by Hickmann (1982) and has been widely used in second language acquisition research (see Appendix D). Thus, ChatGPT used fewer position and sequential adverbs than humans and fewer transition and contrast adverbs than humans, but it is the rates of frequency adverbs that most separate AI from humans: 31.3% for ChatGPT versus 10.4% and 4.1% for humans (Table 2). For human participants, the first column contains data from film narratives, while the second contains data from narratives produced based on *Cat Story*.

Temporal adverbials:	ChatGPT	Humans
Position + Sequentiality	41.4	56.2
Duration	6.9	3.8
Frequency	31.3	10.4
Transition + Contrast ²	20.4	29.6
Total	100%	100%

Table 2: Temporal adverbials: ChatGPT vs Humans (in percentages)

Without drawing conclusions from these comparisons, I could formulate a hypothesis that it is the distribution of features used (adverbs, adjectives, intensifiers, etc.) that would allow differentiating narrative texts produced by AI from those produced by humans.

3.3 Adjectives

The corpus contains 7220 adjectives in total, the ratio being 0.0715³. A narrative contains on average 36.1 adjectives, with a median of 36. The mean (36.1) and the median (36) are almost identical, so the distribution is overall symmetric. The number of distinct adjectives per narrative is 31.75 on average (the median is 31.5); this distribution is also almost symmetric. Adjectives are consistently used in each paragraph. Here is an excerpt from a narrative illustrating the use of adjectives (the adjectives are italicized):

- (2) Un silence s’installa entre eux, mais il n’était plus aussi *lourd* qu’avant. Le chat, toujours *fier* mais plus *calme*, s’étira.

² Transition and contrast adverbials, which serve relatively similar functions, are presented together.

³ The ratio is the number of adjectives divided by the total number of tokens.

Rocky, avec un *petit* sourire, se remit à grignoter ses friandises, cette fois un peu plus lentement, et, à sa *grande* surprise, Tigris s'approcha pour en goûter une. Après tout, elles étaient bien *meilleures* que ce qu'il avait imaginé.

A silence settled between them, but it was no longer as *heavy* as before. The cat, still *proud* but *calmer*, stretched. Rocky, with a *faint* smile, resumed nibbling on his treats, this time a little more slowly, and, to his *great* surprise, Tigris came closer to taste one. After all, they were much *better* than he had imagined.

The most frequently used adjectives, in descending order, are: *petit* 'small/little', *premier* 'first', *tranquille* 'quiet', *grand* 'big', *étrange* 'strange', *bruyant* 'noisy' (cf. Appendix C). Among the 25 most frequent adjectives, *tranquille* 'quiet' and *calme* 'calm', both denoting calmness, occur almost twice as often as *bruyant* 'noisy'. The adjective *petit* 'small/little' is 1.6 times as frequent as *grand* 'big'. The adjectives *vieux* 'old' and *nouveau* 'new' are equally frequent. Also among these 25 most frequent adjectives, several others describe the cat's and the dog's character or attitude. In descending order of frequency, these are: (1) *curieux* 'curious'; (2) *joyeux* 'cheerful' and *fier* 'proud'; (3) *méfiant* 'wary' and *enthousiaste* 'enthusiastic'; (4) *maladroit* 'clumsy' and *distant* 'distant'.

Among the color adjectives most frequently used are *noir* 'black', *blanc* 'white', and *jaune* 'yellow'.

3.4 Intensifiers

The corpus contains, on average, 6.9 intensifiers per narrative and 4.9 different intensifiers per narrative. All narratives contain intensifiers. Among the most frequently used intensifiers by ChatGPT are (in descending order): *plus* 'more', *un peu* 'a little bit', *si* 'so', *trop* 'too', *bien* 'much/far'. The intensifier *plus* 'more' represents 21.74% of all intensifiers. The intensifier *bien* 'much/far' is often paired with another one, as in the following examples:

- (3) un chien au tempérament *bien plus* joyeux 'a dog with a much more cheerful temperament'

- (4) une situation *bien plus* grave 'a much more serious situation'

The intensifier *très* 'very' deserves a remark. In the corpus, the intensifier *très* 'very' ranks only 15th in terms of frequency of intensifiers usage, whereas analyses of large corpora show that *très* 'very' belongs to the core set of high-frequency words in written French. Its use is particularly widespread in narrative and descriptive texts to intensify adjectives (New et al., 2004; ATILF–CNRS, *Frantext*). The frequency of use of *très* 'very' is attested by other researchers (Hendrikx et al., 2017; Hendrikx et al., 2024; Kunkel, 2024).

4 Conclusion

The narrative techniques of ChatGPT remain very limited. If a single narrative appears acceptable, 200 narratives that share the same discursive organization reveal its weaknesses. The consistent and regular use of linguistic devices such as adjectives, intensifiers, and temporal adverbials throughout the narrative characterizes ChatGPT's narrative style.

Analyzing the linguistic features employed by ChatGPT in narrative texts (such as temporal adverbials, adjectives, and intensifiers), along with a statistical analysis of the linguistic resources deployed, offers a promising avenue for a deeper exploration of the similarities and differences between AI-generated and human-produced texts.

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Appendix A Example of narrative generated by ChatGPT and its translation into English

Dans une rue tranquille bordée de jardins bien taillés, vivaient deux voisins qui ne s'étaient jamais parlé : un chat nommé Mistral et un chien nommé Rex. Mistral habitait une petite maison bleue avec un balcon ensoleillé, parfait pour les siestes. Rex, lui, vivait juste à côté, dans une maison jaune avec une grande cour où il aimait courir et aboyer après les oiseaux.

Dès le premier jour, la guerre fut déclarée. Chaque matin, Mistral s'installait sur la clôture pour observer le quartier avec un air supérieur. Rex, en le voyant, se mettait à aboyer de toutes ses forces. Mistral répondait en hérissant le poil et en crachant d'un air menaçant. Aucun des deux ne se souvenait vraiment pourquoi il détestait l'autre, mais cela faisait partie de leurs habitudes.

Un jour d'automne, un événement inattendu bouleversa leur routine. Une violente tempête s'abattit sur la rue. Le vent hurlait, la pluie tombait sans répit, et un grand arbre, affaibli par l'orage, se mit à craquer dangereusement entre les deux maisons. Mistral, curieux comme toujours, s'était aventuré dehors malgré la pluie. Soudain, une branche se brisa et tomba devant lui, l'empêchant de rentrer chez lui.

Rex, qui observait la scène depuis sa niche, vit le chat coincé et tremblant. Pendant quelques secondes, il hésita. Puis, oubliant leur haine, il courut vers Mistral et se mit à aboyer pour attirer l'attention des humains. Grâce à lui, les propriétaires sortirent et dégagèrent le passage.

Mistral, encore sous le choc, regarda Rex d'un air différent. Le chien, gêné, détourna la tête. Le silence s'installa, étrange mais paisible. Les jours suivants, ils continuèrent à se croiser, mais sans aboiements ni feulements. Peu à peu, la méfiance laissa place à la curiosité.

Un matin, Mistral sauta de la clôture et s'approcha prudemment de Rex. À la surprise générale, Rex remua la queue au lieu d'aboyer. Ils

passèrent la journée à explorer les jardins ensemble, à se reposer au soleil et à observer les passants.

Depuis ce jour, le chat et le chien, autrefois ennemis jurés, devinrent les meilleurs amis du quartier, prouvant que même les plus vieilles querelles peuvent se transformer en une belle amitié.

English translation

On a quiet street lined with neatly trimmed gardens lived two neighbors who had never spoken to each other: a cat named Mistral and a dog named Rex. Mistral lived in a small blue house with a sunny balcony, perfect for naps. Rex, meanwhile, lived right next door in a yellow house with a large yard where he loved to run and bark at birds.

From the very first day, war was declared. Every morning, Mistral would settle on the fence to observe the neighborhood with an air of superiority. When Rex saw him, he would start barking at the top of his lungs. Mistral would respond by bristling his fur and hissing threateningly. Neither of them really remembered why they disliked each other, but it had become part of their routine.

One autumn day, an unexpected event disrupted their routine. A violent storm swept through the street. The wind howled, the rain fell relentlessly, and a large tree, weakened by the storm, began to crack dangerously between the two houses. Mistral, as curious as ever, had ventured outside despite the rain. Suddenly, a branch broke and fell in front of him, preventing him from getting back home.

Rex, who had been watching the scene from his doghouse, saw the cat trapped and trembling. For a few seconds, he hesitated. Then, forgetting their hatred, he ran toward Mistral and began barking to attract the humans' attention. Thanks to him, the owners came outside and cleared the way.

Mistral, still in shock, looked at Rex differently. The dog, embarrassed, turned his head away. A silence settled in—strange, yet peaceful. In the days that followed, they continued to cross paths, but without barking or hissing. Little by little, mistrust gave way to curiosity.

One morning, Mistral jumped down from the fence and cautiously approached Rex. To everyone's surprise, Rex wagged his tail instead of barking. They spent the day exploring the gardens

together, resting in the sun, and watching passersby.

From that day on, the cat and the dog—once sworn enemies—became the best friends in the neighborhood, proving that even the oldest quarrels can turn into a beautiful friendship.

Translated by ChatGPT

Appendix B Examples of introducing the key event in narratives and its translation into English

Un jour, alors que le soleil brillait et que le vent soufflait doucement, une étrange chose arriva. Une violente tempête s'abattit sur le village.

One day, while the sun was shining and the wind was blowing gently, something strange happened. A violent storm swept through the village.

Un jour, une surprise attendait Gracie. Alors qu'elle se prélassait tranquillement sur le sol chaud de sa maison, elle entendit un bruit étrange venant de l'extérieur.

One day, a surprise awaited Gracie. As she was peacefully lounging on the warm floor of her home, she heard a strange noise coming from outside.

Un jour, une tempête éclata. Le vent soufflait fort, les éclairs frappaient la terre, et une pluie battante trempait tout sur son passage. Grisou, qui avait l'habitude de se cacher sous son canapé lors des orages, sentit quelque chose d'étrange : il n'était pas seul. Le bruit des aboiements de Rex, qui se faisait entendre à travers les murs de la maison, était particulièrement désespéré.

One day, a storm broke out. The wind blew fiercely, lightning struck the ground, and the heavy rain soaked everything in its path. Grisou, who was used to hiding under his couch during storms, felt something strange: he was not alone. The sound of Rex's barking, heard through the walls of the house, was especially desperate.

Un jour, un étrange événement secoua le village. Une tempête approchait, et les nuages noirs s'amoncelaient dans le ciel.

One day, a strange event shook the village. A storm was approaching, and dark clouds were gathering in the sky.

Un jour, une tempête éclata. Le vent soufflait si fort qu'une branche d'arbre se cassa et se retrouva coincée dans le toit de la maison de Moka.

One day, a storm broke out. The wind blew so hard that a tree branch broke off and got stuck on the roof of Moka's house.

Un jour d'hiver, le vent soufflait fort et la neige recouvrait tout. Grizou, comme à son habitude, se prélassait au chaud près de la fenêtre. Mais soudain, un bruit étrange attira son attention.

One winter day, the wind was blowing hard and the snow covered everything. Grizou, as usual, was lounging warmly by the window. But suddenly, a strange noise caught his attention.

Un après-midi d'automne, tout changea. Il y eut un bruit étrange venant du jardin de Rocky. Curieux, Moustache se leva et se dirigea silencieusement vers la clôture pour observer ce qui se passait.

One autumn afternoon, everything changed. There was a strange noise coming from Rocky's garden. Curious, Moustache got up and quietly made his way to the fence to see what was happening.

Un jour, un événement inattendu survint. Une tempête éclata. Le vent soufflait fort, faisant tanguer les arbres et soulevant des objets du jardin.

One day, an unexpected event occurred. A storm broke out. The wind blew fiercely, making the trees sway and lifting objects from the garden.

Un matin de printemps, un événement inattendu bouleversa leur routine. Une petite boîte en carton apparut au bord du trottoir, juste devant leurs maisons. À l'intérieur, un minuscule chaton noir tremblait, affamé et apeuré.

One spring morning, an unexpected event disrupted their routine. A small cardboard box appeared at the edge of the sidewalk, right in front of their houses. Inside, a tiny black kitten was trembling, hungry and scared.

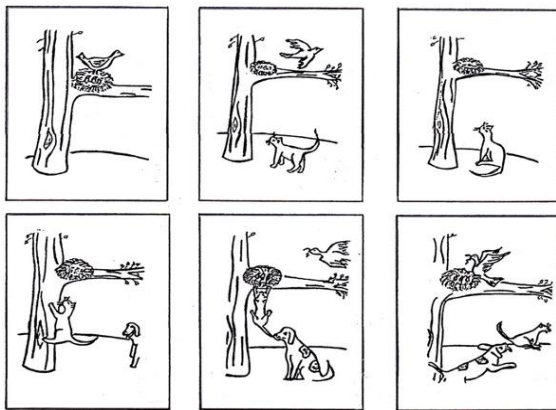
Un soir d'hiver, alors que la neige commençait à tomber, Félix sortit vérifier que son bol d'eau ne gelait pas. Le vent soufflait fort, soulevant de petits tourbillons blancs. C'est alors qu'un cri paniqué retentit depuis le jardin voisin.

One winter evening, as the snow began to fall, Félix went out to check that his water bowl hadn't frozen. The wind blew strongly, lifting small white swirls into the air. That's when a panicked cry rang out from the neighboring garden.

Appendix C 25 most frequently used adjectives



Appendix D Cat Story



Maya Hickmann.1982. *The Development of Narrative Skills: Pragmatic and Metapragmatic Aspects of Discourse Cohesion*. Doctoral Thesis. Université de Chicago.