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**The
linguistic
input in
textbooks of
Italian as
Second
Language**

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the linguistic input in textbooks of Italian as Second Language. Standard Italian is undergoing several changes, as observed by recent researches (Berruto 2003, 2012; D’Achille 2010; Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Sabatini 1990, 2103; Tosi 2001). In particular, these changes are considered as expanding and stabilizing in a new form of standard, referred to as *neo-standard* (Berruto), or *italiano dell’uso medio* (Sabatini), or *italiano tendenziale* (Mioni). Have these changes become part of the linguistic input presented to learners? To which extent? This thesis tries to answer these questions. As textbooks focus on *norm* and *use* at the same time, it is believed here that the analysis of the linguistic input in textbooks of Italian as Second Language may help to shed some light on the linguistic features of *neo-standard*. In particular, the presence (or absence) of these features is proportional to the degree of acceptance and establishment that they have in contemporary Italian. In order to determine to which extent the features analysed are established in contemporary Italian, this thesis adopts the model of language change proposed by Cardinaletti (2004).

In order to accomplish the purpose of this thesis, a corpus of 8 textbooks (3 textbooks for A1-A2 level, 3 textbooks for B1-B2 level, 2 textbooks for C1-C2 level) was collected. The textbooks, which are published in Italy, were chosen because they appeared to be the most used among teachers of Italian as Second Language. In order to discover which were the most used textbooks a survey was conducted among teachers via questionnaire. Publishing houses were contacted as well for a feedback. The data collection was carried out manually. Quantitative and qualitative analysis are used to determine to which extent each feature is established in *neo-standard*.

This study is structured in the following way: chapter 1 focuses on the role of texts in language teaching and the notion of input, in order to provide background information for the analyses of the corpus. First, a brief history of language teaching approaches and methods is provided. Second, the notion of text in the Common European Framework of Reference is analysed. Third, an outline of teaching Italian as Second language is provided. Last, elements about the discussion on which Italian to teach to foreigners are provided.

Chapter 2 focuses on contemporary Italian. First, a brief history of Italian is provided in order to understand present day Italian. Second, the “architecture” of Italian language varieties is explained, in order to introduce the standard variety. Third, the concept of standard in Italian

is analysed in detail. At the end of this section, an outline of the main recent trends of language change concerning Italian is provided.

Chapter 3 focuses in detail on the main morpho-syntactic features analysed in this thesis. The features concern syntax, as well as the verbal and the pronominal system. In particular, they are: left and right dislocation, cleft sentence, presentational cleft, changes in the use of pronouns (i.e. *lui, lei, loro*, as subject pronouns), multipurpose *che*, changes in the use of verbs (i.e. use of present tense instead of the future, modal uses of the future and other changes in the use of the future; expansion of the use of *imperfetto*; uses of *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*; the use of the indicative instead of the subjunctive; the development of verbal periphrases); in addition, also other phenomena are considered, such as agreement *ad sensum*, changes in interrogative and exclamatory sentences, conjunctions in subordinate sentences.

Chapter 4 is a brief section that provides information on materials and methods used to collect the corpus and to carry out the analysis of data. Chapter 5 provides the results as well as the analysis of data concerning each feature considered, following the outline presented in Chapter 3. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis are used in order to place each feature analysed in one of the three phases of the model of language change provided by Cardinaletti (2004).

1. Texts and language teaching

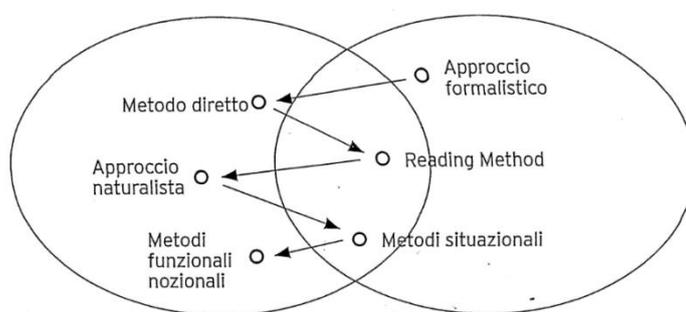
This chapter is aimed to provide background information on some issues relevant to the purpose of this paper, which is to analyse the linguistic input in textbooks of Italian as second language. After a brief introduction to teaching materials in language teaching approaches and methods from an historical point of view, the concept of text in the Common European Framework of Reference is analysed. The following section provides background information on teaching Italian as second language. The last section focuses on textbooks of Italian as Second Language, providing some elements about the discussion on which variety of Italian to teach to foreigners.

1.1. Brief history of texts in teaching approaches and methods

Textbooks – linguistic input, techniques, teaching units – are always related to the approach chosen as point of reference by the author (Semplici 2011). In this section an overview of language teaching approaches and methods¹ is provided in order to understand the role of teaching materials in this field.

Trends in the history of language teaching have been recently described as a swinging pendulum (Diadori 2011), symbolizing the periodic shifts from the idea of language as language *competence* (*norm*) and the idea of language as language *use*, as shown in the following diagram.

Figure 1. The pendulum diagram. Diadori (2011:35)



In the classical world, until Middle Ages and Renaissance, language teaching was mainly focused on language *use* rather than on *form*, where oral interaction was taught thanks to

¹ For a more detailed history of language teaching see Renzo Titone (1982), *Glottodidattica: un profilo storico*, Minerva Italica, Bergamo

native speakers (i.e. Greek slaves) and classical texts were taken as model of the language (Balboni 2012).

In between late Renaissance and the seventeenth century, the first grammars and dictionaries appeared and Latin was no longer a native language to anyone. The *formalist approach* and the *Grammar-Translation method*² developed. This approach focuses on form: language is conceived of as a system of rules (grammar), the method applied is deductive and centred on written language, and the most important technique is translation. The texts used are printed textbooks focused on grammar rules (Ibid.). As Diadori (2011:38) observes,

I libri di testo ispirati a questo metodo si articolano in “capitoli” o “lezioni” incentrate su aspetti morfologici o sintattici come “Il plurale”, “Il passato remoto”. Ciascuna lezione inizia con la presentazioni di “regole” ed “eccezioni”, non sempre accompagnate da un numero sufficiente di esempi.

As a reaction to this approach other methods and approaches developed. The *natural approach* and the *direct method* (mainly performed by the *Berlitz method*), focused on language use, developed between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. In particular, language is considered as a communicative tool, and the stress is on spoken language and inductive teaching. Linguistic input comes from conversation with the teacher and from authentic materials. Also the *Reading Method*, developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is an inductive approach, whose aim is the ability to understand written texts. Teaching was performed mainly through reading authentic materials (Balboni 2012).

The diffusion of neo-behaviourism, which lead to the development of the ASTP method (1943) by Skinner, and the development of taxonomic linguistics by Bloomfield (1942), lead to the *structuralist approach*, and the related methods *audio-lingual* and *audiovisual approach*. According to this approach, language is seen as a series of linguistic units, which are taught through pattern drills. Textbooks presented short grammar explanations and long series of pattern drills. New technologies, such as recording devices, played a crucial role (Ibid.).

In the 1960s, as a reaction to the structuralist approach, a significant change in language teaching occurred, due to the development of sociolinguistics and pragmatics. In particular, researches by Austin and Searle on pragmatics and speech acts, and the notion of communicative competence developed by Hymes, as well as studies by Chomsky, were fundamental to the development of the *Communicative Approach*, mainly realized by the

² For a distinction between approach and method see Balboni (2012).

situational method, and the *notional-functional method*. According to this approach, language is conceived of as language use, and, in particular, as social action. Role-plays and oral interaction are the most important techniques. Grammar is learnt inductively (Balboni 2012). As reported by Richards and Rodgers (1999), a wide variety of materials have been used to support communicative approaches. In general, the materials used are textbooks, as well as tapes, CDs, and videos, that present authentic communicative interactions: “la lingua oggetto di insegnamento è il più possibile autentica [...]. Vengono quindi impiegate registrazioni di conversazioni o brani da trasmissioni radiofoniche o televisive, annunci, brevi testi letterari o giornalistici” (Diadori 2011:45). As observed by Richards and Rodgers, “materials thus have the primary role of promoting communicative language use” (Richards, Rodgers 1999:79). As already mentioned, in these years, the *Situational method* developed, based on sociolinguistics. According to this method, language is related to context. In other words, language is presented in situations of use. Language is not conceived as a steady and monolithic system, but as a set of varieties. The linguistic input is presented according to the series presentation – practice – production, and textbooks are organized in teaching units, focusing on oral interaction (Balboni 2012). As observed by Richards and Rodgers (1999:39),

Situational Language Teaching is dependent upon both a textbook and visual aids. [...]The Visual element together with a carefully graded grammatical syllabus is a crucial aspect of Situational Language Teaching, hence the importance of the textbook. In principle, however, the textbook should be used only as a guide to the learning process. The teacher is expected to be the master of his textbook.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the *humanistic approach* developed, due to particularly influencing researches in the field of humanistic psychology³ and linguistics⁴. Some of the numerous methods spread from the humanistic approach are: Total Physical Response (TPR); Natural Approach; Suggestopedia; Silent Way. The role of emotions and of the learner’s personality are key issues in this approach, as well as cognitive aspects involved in the learning process. Some of the methods do not use texts as materials, but only linguistic input provided by the teachers (i.e. TPR). In general, they are centred on authentic materials (Balboni 2012). Furthermore, towards the end of the twentieth century, the European linguistic policy led to the creation of the Common European Framework of Reference – CEF (2001). The role of texts in the CEF is analysed in the following section.

³ The most important researches are by Bruner and Rogers on the role of emotions in learning; by Gardner on multiple intelligences; by Goleman on emotional intelligence; by Schumann in neurolinguistics (Balboni 2012).

⁴ In particular, studies by Chomsky; the Second Language Acquisition theory by Krashen (Balboni 2012).

To sum up, in the second half of the twentieth century, the advent of new technologies and the inclusion of researches by other fields (i.e. psychology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, neuroscience, technology, etc.) resulted in a great variety of experimentation in language teaching (Diadori 2011). The great variety of methods had an impact also on textbooks. According to Balboni (2012), at the beginning of the twentyfirst century, one of the emerging trends is the so-called “Harlequin language teaching” (“glottodidattica d’Arlecchino”) (Balboni 2012:54). Many teachers didn’t experience as students the new trends of language teaching, and they subconsciously tend to repeat what they experienced as students. As observed by Balboni (2012:54):

Gli editori sono ben consapevoli di questo atteggiamento psicologico [...] producono quindi manuali che sembrano vestiti di Arlecchino, che affiancano elementi derivati da tutta la tradizione [...] mirato a non scontentare nessuno, né l’insegnante diffidente verso il nuovo né quello che entusiasticamente abbraccia ogni novità, anche se è chiaramente una “moda temporanea”. (Balboni 2012:54)

1.2.The Common European Framework and the concept of text

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) – here after CEF – was realized by the Council of Europe. The CEF promotes plurilingualism, interpreted as a feature of European identity and as an asset to the Union. The aim is to aid European mobility and enhance democratic citizenship. For this reason, Vedovelli (2010:28) defines the CEF as “un sistema di riferimento teorico-concettuale e politico-attuativo per la gestione del contatto linguistico”. The CEF is addressed to both language learners and members of the professions concerned with language teaching and assessment. It does not have a normative nature, but a taxonomic nature, whose aim is to provide a common basis through explicit description of objectives, content, and methods related to language teaching and learning. As stated at the beginning of its on-line version,

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)

In other words, the CEF has an “action-oriented” approach, centred on the learner. The aim of language learning is not only to use language for communicative purposes in order to achieve an outcome, but also to achieve intercultural competence. Briefly, the CEF:

- supports the *centrality of the learner*, as in the communicative approach;
- marks the *centrality of text*, as necessary component of the instructional process;
- describes *levels of proficiency*, in order to make the outcomes of the learning process more transparent;
- puts *linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences* at the same level;
- considers the *intercultural dimension* as complementary to the communicative dimension;
- reminds the role played by personality and emotions in the learning process (Diadori, Vignozzi 2011).

Analysing the level descriptors of the CEF, Palermo, Troncarelli and Diadori (2009:164) infer that

la didattica di una lingua straniera, fino al raggiungimento del livello soglia, dev'essere incardinata su input testuali che rappresentino una varietà di lingua il più possibile neutrale, non marcata, centrale nello spazio di variazione della lingua. Si può dedicare attenzione alle varietà marcate, sia in senso alto-formale [...] sia in senso basso-colloquiale [...] a partire dai livelli di competenze medio-alti, privilegiando la competenza passiva su quella attiva (Palermo, Troncarelli, Diadori 2009:164)

This reflection is particularly important to the purpose of this thesis. If neo-standard traits are presented at A1, A2 and B1 level, it means that neo-standard is identified with the unmarked, common language recommended by the CEF for these levels.

Section 4.6 of the CEF is dedicated to the role of text. The CEF recalls text linguistics, not only in its definition of text, which is reported below, but also in the classification of texts in text types and genres.

Text is any sequence or discourse (spoken and/or written) related to a specific domain and which in the course of carrying out a task becomes the occasion of a language activity, whether as a support or as a goal, as product or process. (ibid:9)

According to the CEF, every communicative event is considered as text:

'text' is used to cover any piece of language, whether a spoken utterance or a piece of writing, which users/learners receive, produce or exchange. There can thus be no act of communication through language without a text (Ibid:93).

At the same time, the CEF considers as input any instructions, materials, etc. selected or produced by teachers and/or learners. For this reason, the CEF affirms the centrality of text: "The text is central to any act of linguistic communication, the external, objective link

between producer and receiver, whether they are communicating face to face or at a distance.” (CEF:98). In other words, any kind of text input is the central unit of educational communicative interaction (Vedovelli 2010).

More interestingly, the CEF goes beyond the distinction between authentic and non authentic materials (Vedovelli 2010), debated in language didactics, stating that “ ‘authentic texts’ or texts specially designed for teaching purposes, texts in textbooks or texts produced by learners are but texts among others” (CEF:16).

To sum up, as observed by Diadori (2011:369), “l’analisi del *Quadro Comune* ha messo in luce la centralità del testo in ogni proposta di sviluppo formativo della competenza linguistico-comunicativa”. However, it must be remembered that, according to the CEF, textbooks are considered as texts as any other kind of linguistic material involved in the instructional process.

1.3. Teaching and learning Italian as Second Language

In this thesis, Italian as Second Language refers to Italian learnt in the context in which it is currently used, namely Italy.

Despite lacking language unification (as shown in chapter 2, §1 and §3), Italian as Second Language has a long tradition, due to historical, geographical and cultural reasons. In the past, and partially also today, learners traditionally belonged to the following groups: university students, artists, intellectuals, travellers, traders, ecclesiastics and pilgrims, soldiers (Diadori, Palermo, Troncarelli 2009). The first courses of Italian language and culture were held in Siena (1917) and Perugia (1921) and they were addressed to European students and artists, who already had knowledge of Italian and were basically attending study tours in Italy. In 1925, the king Victor Emmanuel III founded the “Regia Università Italiana per Stranieri di Perugia”. Siena and Perugia were the leading centres in teaching and promoting Italian language until the 1960s, when the so-called Italian economic boom made Italy an attractive country to foreigners and many private schools of Italian to foreigners opened, especially in Florence and Rome. During the 1970s and 1980s, the years of innovation in the field of language education (cfr. Chapter 1, §1), the new approaches spread also in Italy, and the first textbooks inspired by audio-oral, situational, or notional-functional method and the communicative approach were published. In those years, workers from other European or non-European countries established themselves in Italy and the first courses specifically addressed to them were held. Since the 1990s, some publishers specialized in Italian to

foreigners, such as Guerra Edizioni (Perugia), Alma Edizioni (Firenze), Bonacci (Roma). In 1992 the University for foreigners of Siena and The University for foreigners of Perugia were officially founded. Since then, other universities offer courses not only in Italian for foreigners but also on teaching Italian to foreigners; currently there are different European and international exchange programs (i.e. Marco Polo; Erasmus +; Italian Study Abroad) that are increasing the number of foreign students of Italian in universities.

Therefore, learners of Italian as Second Language, due to historical, cultural and geographical reasons, mainly are:

- children and teen-agers attending study tours or international and bilingual schools;
- university students, mainly from Europe, USA, and China;
- priests and seminarists;
- young adults and adults willing to stay in Italy for short and long-term periods for cultural or personal reasons;
- adults and elderly in “buen retiro” in Italy;
- temporary or permanent professionals;
- adults and young adults temporary working in Italy (Diadori, Palermo, Troncarelli 2009).

For what concerns their motivation in learning Italian, intrinsic motivation plays a leading role, followed by integrative and extrinsic motivation, resulting in different communicative needs. As they all stay in Italy for a period, they all experience, in theory, spontaneous as well as guided learning. In general, the teacher is a native teacher, who represents a bridge between class and external context. Therefore, the input they receive is – potentially – rich and complex: not only a wide range of textbooks realized by Italian publishers specialized in Italian for foreigners, but also a wide variety of texts (audio, video, written, oral texts) from the external context. It is important here to remember that learners are exposed to different regional accents and intonations: “tutto questo favorirà lo sviluppo della comprensione orale e la necessità di selezionare un modello “medio” di pronuncia e di gestualità su cui orientarsi” (Diadori, Palermo, Troncarelli 2009: 53). For what concerns the output, “gli studenti in Italia non saranno solo portati ad utilizzare la L2 per determinati compiti o abilità ma potranno spaziare su tutto il repertorio (abilità orali e scritte, di produzione, ricezione, interazione e perfino mediazione)” (Diadori, Palermo, Troncarelli 2009:53), as they have the chance to perform output in a wide variety of informal as well as formal contexts.

In general, to foreign learners, learning Italian as Second language presents the following problems:

- neo-standard may be identified as the standard variety of contemporary Italian; however, it has not yet achieved unity at the spoken level (prosodic and phonetic elements differ from region to region);
- the pronominal system shows a high level of complexity;
- for many objects of everyday use there are different regional variants, which do not create misunderstanding among natives, but may be confusing for learners (Diadori 2011).

Therefore, learning Italian in Italy has several advantages, such as the richness of input. However, as just mentioned, regional differences affect the learning process. Many publishers claim to pay attention to real uses of language and to present natural, spontaneous dialogues⁵. In the next section we will focus on textbooks of Italian as second language, paying attention to the kind of language they represent.

1.4. Textbooks of Italian as Second Language

As observed by Balboni (2012:54),

il manuale governa molto la didattica, nella tradizione italiana; ogni insegnante ci mette del suo, ma spesso sulla base delle sue “passioni” metodologiche (dalle metodologie a mediazione sociale a quelle iperludiche, dall’utilizzo di ogni nuovo aggeggio tecnologico alla ripresa della traduzione e del dettato, e così via): il manuale Arlecchino prodotto dall’editoria diviene un Arlecchino che aggiunge al suo vestito le pezze multicolori costituite dalle convinzioni metodologiche personali dell’insegnante.

As mentioned in the previous section, since the 1990s some publishers have specialized in Italian for foreigners. The most renowned are: Guerra Edizioni (Perugia), Bonacci Editore (Rome), Alma Edizioni (Florence), Edilingua Edizioni (Florence, Athene). More recently, other publishers have created sections devoted to Italian for foreigners. For example, Mondadori (Milano) – who owns Le Monnier (Florence) since 1999 – , Giunti (Florence) and Eli (Recanati). These publishers print a wide variety of textbooks, teaching materials, grammars and they generally provide also free on-line materials available on their websites.

⁵ For example, in the website of the publisher Edilingua, it can be found: “i dialoghi sono diventati più naturali, spontanei e meno lunghi”

As observed by Balboni (2002:12), nowadays textbooks have radically changed: “non esiste più il libro di testo, ma una costellazione di materiali legati tra di loro in maniera flessibile”. Spagnesi (2011) refers to teaching materials as “*framework* testuale” or “rete di testi” (textual framework).

The notion of “teaching materials”, nowadays, thus includes:

- a handbook, that can be printed on paper, CD-Rom, or on-line, and that helps the learner to reach one of the levels described by the CEF;
- audio-materials, containing instructional or authentic monologues as well as dialogues,
- on-line materials;
- video-materials, especially in order to provide cultural contextualisation;
- a teacher guidebook;
- examination tests (or quiz) for each unit and level;
- a web-site of reference, with additional materials (Balboni 2012).

As teaching materials represent one of the main sources of linguistic input for learners, it is important that teachers are able to evaluate them. There are several tools for the evaluation of textbooks. In this thesis we refer to Semplici (2011) and Bigliuzzi and Quartesan (2011).

Italian does not have a long history as a commonly spoken language, as shown in chapter (2). At least until the 1970s, it has been noticed that the gulf between language used by natives and language presented in teaching materials is particularly wide (Vedovelli 2010:82): “il risultato [...] è un senso di non naturalezza, con la lingua offerta come modello nei materiali di didattici che il più delle volte è distante dalla lingua effettivamente usata e diffusa [...] tra i parlanti”. Later, thanks to the diffusion of the concept of authentic materials, many text types which were not included before, appeared also in textbooks of Italian for foreigners: “nei manuali didattici cominciano, allora, ad entrare articoli di giornale e biglietti dell’autobus, moduli postali e istruzioni per l’uso, schedine del totocalcio e lettere di protesta” (Vedovelli 2010:86). However, the complexity of the Italian linguistic repertoire caused by historical reasons and the process of re-standardisation started in the 1970s (Chapter 2, §1) – create some problems to both teachers and authors of textbooks (Ibid.). As stated by Vedovelli (2010:86), “l’italiano, per le sue dinamiche e tensioni in un processo di rinnovamento, manifesta ancora oggi gravi carenze funzionali proprio nella struttura della comunicazione sociale”. The result is an intense debate on which Italian to teach to foreigners.

As reported by Tronconi (2011:188), “dato l’ampio e variegato panorama linguistico italiano, il problema che sorge in ambito didattico concerne la scelta di una o più varietà di lingua da presentare in una classe di discenti stranieri”. In general, there is agreement on the fact that language varieties should be chosen depending on the learner’s communicative needs and personality (Tronconi 2011; Palermo, Diadori, Troncarelli 2009), as recommended by the CEF. Furthermore, in the description of levels, from A1 to B1, the CEF mainly refers to language currently used every day for routine and familiar tasks. In the case of Italian, scholars suggest that this language should be identified with the neo-standard variety (Palermo, Diadori, Troncarelli 2009; Tronconi 2011; Diadori 2011), with attention to diatopic variation (Troconi 2011). As observed by Tronconi,

in termini sociolinguistici questa lingua corrisponde all’italiano *neo-standard*, con una maggiore predilezione verso la lingua parlata piuttosto che verso quella scritta e con qualche differenziazione fra registro formale e registro informale. [...] In particolare, [...] dovranno avere una particolare attenzione quelle strutture e quel lessico marcati in diatopia [...] che fanno parte del repertorio usato nella regione o nella città dove lo studente soggiorna e che rientrano pur sempre nella neo-standardità (Tronconi 2011:189)

For what concerns advanced learners, it is possible to introduce other varieties in addition to neo-standard, from literary to low varieties, and also to achieve a passive competence of other diatopic varieties (Ibid.).

For all these reasons, we expect to find many of the features identified in Chapter 3 in the textbooks analysed.

2. Contemporary Italian, an overview

In the first section of this chapter, a brief introduction to the history of Italian language is provided. The second section focuses on the “architecture” of Italian language varieties, conceived as a *continuum*. The third section analyses in detail the concept of standard in Italian. The last section provides an outline of the main recent trends of language change concerning Italian.

2.1.A brief history of Italian

In this section, in order to understand present day Italian, a brief outline of the history of Italian language will be provided. This paragraph does not aim to be an in-depth description⁶. Only the main features that are helpful to shed some light on the present day situation will be discussed.

As just mentioned, to understand present day Italian it is necessary to go back to its origin. Latin, as any other language, was subjected to variation. The varieties of spoken Latin, referred as Vulgar Latin (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010), lead to the rise of Romance languages, included Italian. In particular, within the Italian territory, “tra la tarda latinità (IV-V secolo) e l’età carolingia (VIII-IX secolo) [...] da una eterogeneità di latini volgari si passerà a una eterogeneità di “volgari” (Ibid.:13). The presence of different dialects, or more precisely, *volgari*⁷ was attested some centuries later by Dante, in its *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303-1305). Italy was politically fragmented, and, as Maiden observes (Maiden 1995:6), “the political and cultural fragmentation of Italy favoured linguistic fragmentation”. Moreover, during the Middle Ages, the rise of municipal centres “tended to confer prestige on the speech of the relevant towns” (Ibid:6), as in the case of Sicilian and Bolognese, which developed a literary tradition, whose influence spread widely beyond their place of origin. Therefore, at that time, the dialect at the basis of Italian, namely the Florentine dialect, “still did not stand tall in the crowd of Romance dialects” (Maiden 1995:7). What primarily determined the pre-eminence of Florentine was the flowering of Florentine culture, and particularly the literary prestige of writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (thirteenth century) (Ibid.; Sabatini

⁶ For a complete account on the history of Italian language, see, for example, Bruno Migliorini, *Storia della lingua italiana*, Sansoni, Firenze, 1960; Francesco Bruni, *Storia della lingua italiana*, Il Mulino, Bologna (1989-2003); Claudio Marazzini, *La lingua italiana. Profilo storico*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 3rd edition, 2002.

⁷ For what concerns the term *volgare/i*, it should be remembered that “si può parlare di “dialetto” solo una volta che si è affermata la lingua [...] tanto è vero che gli studiosi, per questi secoli, parlano [...] di “volgari italiani” (Marazzini 2002: 76).

2013). However, the Florentine achieved the supremacy only later, in the Fifteenth century, thanks to cultural, economical, and political reasons (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010), in addition to its literary prestige. The role of the Medici family, in particular of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was fundamental (Ibid; D’Achille 2011). The peace of Lodi (1454) strengthened the political influence of Florence, both at national and international level; under the guide of the Medici family, the economy of the city flourished, and Florence became the heart of Humanism and Renaissance (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010). By the early Sixteenth century emerged the *Questione della lingua*, the debate about which form of *lingua volgare* should be used as the medium of written cultural discourse (Maiden 1995; Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010). The view which prevailed was the one by the Venetian Pietro Bembo, who proposed the Florentine, not the spoken Florentine of his time, but “the prestigious literary language of two centuries earlier” (Maiden 1995:7). In other words, “Bembo (and his followers), helped fix as the literary language a variety which, already in the sixteenth century, was structurally divergent from all contemporary Italian dialects, even from Florentine” (Ibid.:7). In the following centuries, until the Unification (1861), the gulf between the literary written language and the spoken language widened. While Italian was mainly used for written purposes, the local dialects were used for everyday communication. Therefore, Italian was structurally and functionally remote from every day speech of most Italians, “in that it had remained elevated above the needs of everyday life, and was ill-equipped for use in everyday discourse” (Maiden 1995:8). In the nineteenth century, the Milanese Alessandro Manzoni, intentioned to reach the Italian people at large as target of his novel, decided to break with tradition. He abandoned the archaic literary Florentine for the contemporary spoken Florentine to write his masterpiece *I promessi sposi* (last edition, 1840). In the years after the Unification (1861) emerged the consciousness of the widespread problem of illiteracy and the need to create a linguistic unification as well (Sabatini 2013). The success of Manzoni’s proposal, namely to use the Florentine spoken by educated people to codify the standard, led, in practice, to a new form of purism (D’Achille 2011). As observed by D’Achille (2011:22), “resta inalterata la convinzione che la diffusione della lingua unitaria debba essere frutto di un’imposizione normativa”. In fact, political unification helped promote the expansion of Italian: migration, urbanization, military service, bureaucracy, civil administration, the educational system, the mass media played a crucial role (Maiden 1995; Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010). In other words, Italian expanded along two dimensions: the social dimension, as it was gradually acquired by the Italian population at large; and the functional dimension, as it was put to use in a widening range of domains (Maiden 1995). “The once remote and

relatively homogeneous literary language has begun to show systematic variation according to region, social group, topic, and context of discourse, and so forth” (Maiden 1995:10).

Although there is no agreement on a periodization of Italian (Dardano 2015; D’Achille 2011), it is possible to recognize different phases:

La prima fase è quella dei volgari medievali ed è caratterizzata da un plurilinguismo in cui nessun volgare spicca davvero sugli altri; la seconda è quella umanistico-rinascimentale in cui si afferma un volgare particolare (il toscano, anzi il fiorentino letterario dei grandi autori del Trecento) che catalizzerà il processo di uniformazione della lingua scritta. Per l’età moderna si distinguono due fasi [...] generali [...]: la formazione della lingua moderna e, per la lingua contemporanea, una fase ancora aperta. (Dardano 2015:18)

It is important here to remember that the history of a language can be studied from two different perspectives, the “internal” and the “external” one (Maiden 1995; Dardano 2015). The first concerns the evolution of the grammatical and phonological structure of a language; the second is related to cultural and social factors influencing the language (Maiden 1995). As shown by the brief outline just provided, the “external” history of Italian language had a strong impact on its structural development (Ibid.). The peculiar features of the history of Italian language can be thus summarized:

- Italian language developed without the support of a centralizing government, as in the case of the other main European languages, such as Spanish, English, or French, where the monarchy promoted the development of a standard (Sabatini 2013);
- Due to the fifteenth century codification by Bembo and the lack of a centralizing government (and educational policies), Italian developed mainly as a literary standard (D’Achille 2011) used (and known) by the minority of Italians;
- the affirmation of the Standard was relatively late, compared with other European languages; as a consequence, its stabilisation is still in process (Cortellazzo 2007).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, considering the linguistic situation of the Italian territory as a whole, until the nineteenth century, Italy was characterized by multilingualism; after unification multilingualism was consolidated, “while Italian became the national language and the regional languages, officially demoted to the status of “dialects”, survived in compartmentalised situations” (Tosi 2001:23); as unification increased contacts between communities and individuals, “bilingualism became the norm”. As reported by Tosi (Ibid.) “in the space of 150 years the Italian situation changed from widespread monolingualism in dialects to widespread bilingualism in Italian and the regional languages”.

2.2. The “architecture” of contemporary Italian: a *continuum* of varieties

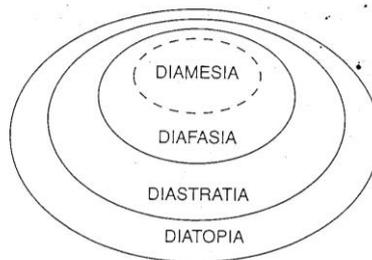
The linguistic repertoire of Italian includes: varieties of Italian and varieties of dialects within the Italian territory. The notion of varieties of Italian includes standard Italian and other varieties (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010).

From a synchronic perspective, the parameters of language variation in Italian, are traditionally the following ones (Berruto 2003; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010):

- diatopic variation (geographical variation);
- diastratic variation (variation according to social class or social group the speakers belong to);
- diamesic variation (variation according to the medium of communication);
- diaphasic variation (stylistic variation according to the communicative situation).

The relationship between the different parameters is well represented by the following diagram (Figure 2) by Berruto (2003):

Figure 2. Relationship between axes of variation in Italian language.



As can be inferred from the diagram, diatopic variation affects all the other types of variation. For example, in Italian it is not possible to separate diatopic variation from diastratic variation, and diastratic variation always implies diatopic variation. In other words, “le varietà native degli italiani, cioè le varietà di lingua che ciascun parlante acquisisce nella socializzazione primaria, sono sempre varietà socio-geografiche determinate [...]” (Ibid.:10).

As proved by the *De vulgari eloquentia*, the presence of different varieties has long been attested. As for Italian linguistics, the first attempt to provide a model of variation is generally attributed to Pellegrini (Berruto 2003). Since then, other scholars proposed a classification of

the different varieties (Ibid.). The following Table (Table 1) from Berruto (Ibid.), summarizes the various models by different scholars. Varieties that appear on the same line roughly correspond (Ibid.).

Table 1. Models of Italian varieties

Pellegrini 1960	Mioni 1975	Mioni 1983b	Sobrero - Romanello 1981	De Mauro 1980	Sanga 1981	Trumper - Maddalon 1982	Sabatini 1985	Berruto 1987a
it. st.	it. aul. it. parl. form.	st. form. st. coll. inf.	it. com. ₁ it. com. ₂	it. scient. it. stand.	it. anglic. it. lett. stand.	/it. st.	it. st. it. dell'uso medio	it. tecn. scient. it. form. aul. it. standard it. neo-st. it. buocr.
it. reg.	it. coll. inform.	it. reg. it. pop. region.	it. reg. ₁ it. reg. ₂	it. reg. coll. it. pop. unit.	it. bur. it. reg. it. coll. it. pop. unit. it. dial. it./ dial. dial. it.	it. reg. form./ it. sub-st. it. reg. inform./ /it. sub. interf. it. reg. trasc./	it. reg. delle cl. istruite it. reg. delle cl. popol.	it. parl. coll. it. inf. trasc. it. pop. (reg.) it. gerg.
koinè dial.	dial. koinè	dial. form.	dial. ₁	dial. region.	koinè d. dial. urb. dial. loc. civile dial. loc. rust.	dial. koinè/ dial. dial. urb./ lett. patois locale/	dial. region. dial. locale	[dial. lett. dial. urb. dial. loc. rust. dial. gerg.]

In spite of some differences, it can be noticed that there is agreement on some important features: the acknowledgement of geographical variation; the acknowledgement of a sort of tension between standard Italian and a new form of standard; the acknowledgement of the existence of a sub-standard variety (Ibid.).

It is important to understand that these varieties are conceived by scholars as *continua* (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2003). In other words, to represent the relationship between the different varieties of Italian, scholars use the concept of *continuum*. As explained by Sobrero and Miglietta (2006),

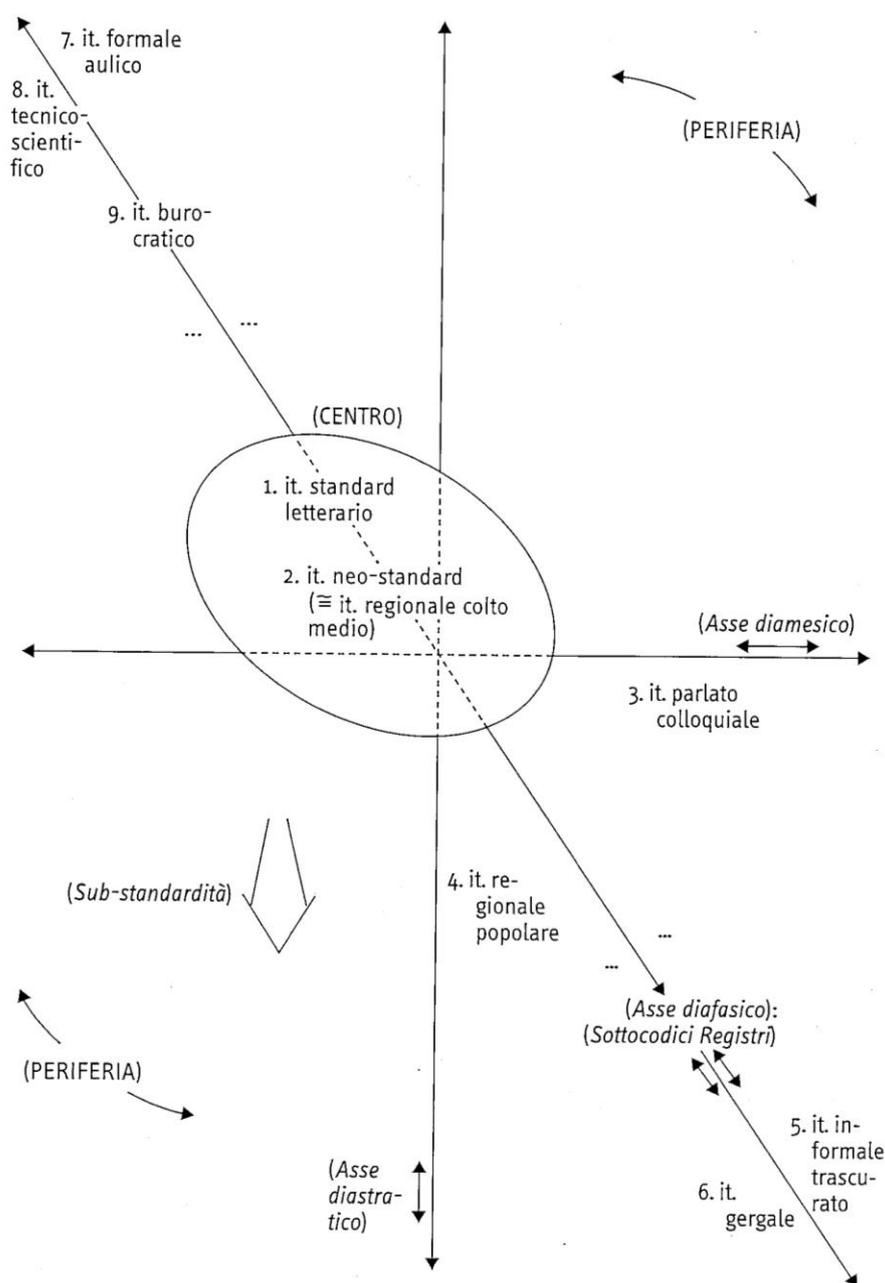
le varietà si dispongono su un asse che ha ai suoi estremi due varietà ben distinte, e per certi versi contrapposte; fra le due estremità c'è poi una serie di varietà che sfumano impercettibilmente l'una nell'altra, avendo sempre alcuni – o molti – tratti in comune. (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006:59).

Also Berruto (2003:16) states that “ogni varietà sarà dunque costituita da: 1) i tratti comuni a tutte le varietà; 2) i tratti comuni ad alcune varietà; 3) i tratti peculiari a quella determinata varietà”.

Due to the complexity of variation in Italian language, many scholars use the metaphor of “architecture” when describing the components of Italian (Tosi 2001; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2003; Berruto 2012). One of the most representative models of the “architecture” of Italian is the one proposed by Berruto (2003; 2012), represented at the end of this section (Figure 3).

Literary standard (1) is the Italian of the written literary tradition; the neo-standard (2) Italian is the variety used by most people in formal situations and it includes some features of spoken language; colloquial Italian (3) is the spoken variety of everyday conversation; popular regional Italian (4) is the variety spoken by the less educated social group; “sloppy” Italian (Tosi 2001) is the spoken variety of very informal situations; slang (6) is related to membership to a special group; solemn, very formal Italian (7) is a variety for the most formal events, both spoken and written; techno-scientific Italian (8) is used in professional circles, in spoken and written communication; bureaucratic Italian (9) is used by public officials and is mainly written (Tosi 2001).

Figure 3. Architecture of Italian varieties according to Berruto (2003; 2012).



2.3. Standard and neo-standard Italian

When referring to language varieties, the notion of standard language is fundamental. It has been defined in different ways. For example, D'Achille (2011:30) describes standard language as "l'uso linguistico che l'intera comunità dei parlanti riconosce come corretto: dunque il modello di lingua proposto nelle grammatiche, quello usato dalle persone istruite, sia nello scritto [...], sia nel parlato". According to Cardona (1988:292), standard language

detto di lingua, indica un tipo livellatosi più o meno artificialmente a motivo di scambi e contatti o per un'azione normalizzatrice imposta dall'alto. [...] Non ogni varietà d'uso generalizzato può essere detta standard: deve esistere un'esplicita norma di riferimento scritta e parlata che impedisca le oscillazioni. (Cardona 1988:292)

For Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:61) standard language is a language variety “assunta come modello dai parlanti e in genere proposta come modello di insegnamento”. According to Berruto (2003), the notion of standard is characterized by: a “neutral” or unmarked value; a “normative” value, as standard is codified by the educational system; and “normal” value, as it is the most frequently used variety among speakers. Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:62) state that a language, or a variety of a language, can be defined as standard if: it is codified; it has prestige; it has a unifying function; it has a distinctive function (opposed to other national standards, it is related to national identity); it can be used to write abstract texts (“testi astratti”); it has a long literary tradition; it is unmarked. For what concerns Italian, there is general agreement on the fact that the traditional literary standard was at the basis of the normative standard codified in the years after unification. For example, Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:64) describe *italiano normativo* (normative Italian) as “l’italiano di base toscana – in particolare fiorentina -, codificato come lingua-modello nel Cinquecento e diventato in seguito lingua nazionale”. Grassi, Sobrero and Telmon (2010:144) assert that “l’italiano standard coincide con l’italiano descritto – e prescritto - dai manuali di grammatica: perciò, per le note ragioni storiche, la sua struttura conserva un’impronta toscana, o meglio, fiorentina”.

However, it has been noticed by scholars that the notion of standard is complicated when describing Italian language. It has been noticed that standard – or normative – Italian is mainly written, and seldom appears in spoken language (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010; D’Achille 2011). Moreover, when spoken, it is diatopically and diastatically marked (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010; Berruto 2012). As observed by Grassi, Sobrero, and Telmon (2010),

chi parla rende riconoscibile l’area di provenienza, o la classe sociale a cui appartiene [...]. Una varietà non marcata né socialmente né geograficamente è usata solo dai parlanti professionali: gli attori, alcuni annunciatori radiofonici, alcuni insegnanti particolarmente scrupolosi (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010:144).

Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:62) recognize that standard Italian is marked: “manca [...] la non-marcatezza. Quasi tutte le nostre produzioni linguistiche [...] sono marcate”. Beccaria (1988) asserts that Italian has no standard, if by standard is meant an unmarked variety. Furthermore, Sobrero and Miglietta (2006), and D’Achille (2011:30) state that Italian lacks a spoken standard (“un problema particolare dell’italiano è [...] costituito dalla sostanziale assenza di

uno standard parlato”). Berruto (2003:85) asserts that ““italiano non marcato”, “italiano normativo”, e “italiano comune” [...] non sono sinonimi”. According to Tosi (2001:40), “one can set aside the school models and the norms of the literary tradition as this never constituted “standard” Italian in a modern sense, in that it hardly had any native speakers”. To sum up, due to historical reasons (cfr. Chapter 2, §1), the literary standard cannot be fully recognized as standard because

- it is mainly written and not spoken;
- it is diastratically and socially marked;
- it is not the most used variety among Italian speakers.

The normative standard is currently undergoing several changes. Among the first scholars that identified a readjustment in the Italian language system there are Sabatini, Berruto, Mioni (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). They identified the emergence of a new intermediate variety – *italiano neo-standard* (Berruto), *italiano dell’uso medio* (Sabatini), *italiano tendenziale* (Mioni) – standing between the rigid norms of traditional standard Italian and the more slipshod forms of sub-standard, and characterized by a new form of prestige. To refer to this variety, in this study the label *neo-standard* is preferred. Neo-standard

is an extension of the standard and involves an ongoing emancipation of low-variety [...] forms and expressions, upgraded either through use by well educate people seeking colourful effects, or by the medium of their use (for example TV programmes and telephone interviews on the radio (Tosi 2001:43).

Sobrero and Miglietta (2006) refer to this variety as *italiano comune*⁸, which includes:

a) tutti i tratti dello standard normativo che sono entrati nell’uso quotidiano effettivo, scritto e parlato degli italiani; b) un insieme di forme e di tratti linguistici che provengono dalle varietà sub-standard e che di fatto sono usati e sono quasi generalmente accettati – o in procinto di essere accettati – come forme standard. (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006:64).

As can be inferred, the notion of neo-standard defines a variety that is both spoken and written, although not in very formal texts (Tosi 2001). As observed by Tosi (Ibid.58),

the concept of re- or neo-standardisation thus involves not only the acceptance of colloquial forms into the norms consolidated by the written tradition, but also the recognition that the normative tradition had neglected parallel

⁸ For what concerns the standard variety of Italian, Sobrero and Miglietta (2006) identify two varieties: *italiano normativo*, and *italiano comune*, corresponding with *italiano dell’uso medio*, *italiano neo-standard*, *italiano tendenziale*.

forms, which were present also in writing. They had survived by virtue of the spoken language despite prescription by scholars and schools (Tosi 2011:59)

The reasons of this neo-standardisation are connected with the cultural and social changes in Italian society (Tosi 2001; Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010). As observed by Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon (2010:144):

questa varietà di italiano (italiano normativo) attraversa oggi una grande trasformazione. Di fatto, nelle classi medio-alte e nella parte più scolarizzata della popolazione si sta estendendo l'uso di uno standard [...] frutto della accresciuta mobilità della popolazione, della moltiplicazione e della vivacità degli scambi, tipici di una società dinamica e moderna. (Grassi, Sobrero, Telmon 2010:144).

Also Tosi (2001), who considers the last fifty years as crucial in this process of neo-standardisation, states that the recent cultural and social trends in Italian society have produced a massive impact on Italian language. In particular, the increase of mobility and exchanges, and the growing of globalisation are highlighted as the main factors (Ibid.). As a consequence, “the national language [...] is now increasingly based on the linguistic habits of modern life, rather than on the older models of literary tradition” (Tosi 2001:10).

As mentioned in this chapter, §1, on the one hand, migration, urbanization, military service, bureaucracy, civil administration, the educational system, the mass media, in particular TV programmes, triggered the spread of the national language; on the other, they triggered a readjustment of the standard. In particular, after De Mauro (1970), several scholars recognize that television played a central role in the process of neo-standardisation:

con la televisione, [...] la lingua nazionale è entrata nelle case di tutti; a poco a poco è stata sempre più compresa, è diventata più familiare e si è essa stessa per molti aspetti modificata. La televisione ha quindi agito in modo duplice. Da una parte sui singoli parlanti, innalzandone notevolmente la competenza passiva, ossia la capacità di comprendere la lingua nazionale, dall'altra sull'intera Italia linguistica e sull'italiano stesso, proponendo nuovi modelli normativi e contribuendo negli ultimi decenni all'affermazione di quell'italiano neostandard o dell'uso medio che occupa una posizione centrale nell'architettura linguistica del nostro Paese. (Maraschio 2011:166)

In other words, the variety called *italiano trasmesso* (Italian via media) is strictly related to the neo-standard.

Sabatini identified 35 features of neo-standard, and later on, he reconfirmed 14 features at least (Sabatini 1990). These are:

- the use of *lui, lei, loro* as subject pronoun;
- the syncretic dative *gli*;

- the use of a preposition together with a partitive (i.e. *con degli amici*);
- left and right dislocations;
- multipurpose *che*;
- *per cui* as conjunction;
- *cosa?* as interrogative pronoun instead of *che cosa?*;
- *E, o, ma, allora, comunque* in clause initial position;
- The use of the *indicativo* instead of the subjunctive in subordinates and hypothetical clauses;
- agreement *ad sensum*;
- Subject in post-verbal position;
- Use of pronominal verbs ...;
- Cleft sentence;
- The so-called *Ci attualizzante*.

A detailed description of the main morpho-syntactic features of neo-standard will be provided in chapter (3). In the next section a further investigation of language change in Italian will be provided.

2.4. Language change in Italian, recent trends

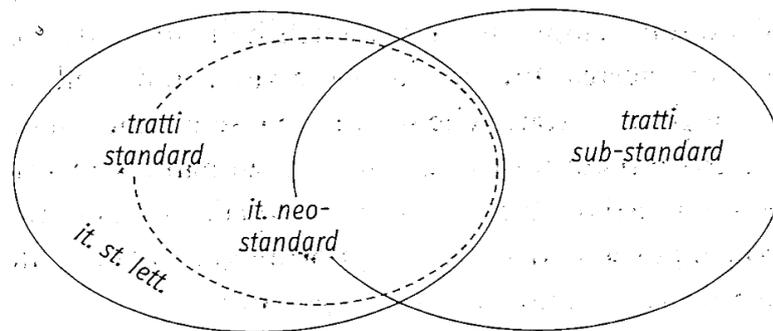
Several studies highlight the correlation between language use and language norm. As stated by Tullio de Mauro (1994), if differences between spoken and written emerge at the level of language use, they will also appear at the normative level. In other words, language use triggers language change.

Language change is a long process, in which a form (A) is replaced with a new form (B) after a long co-occurrence of both (Cardinaletti 2004). There are three phases in this process:

- 1) the new form B (originally used in another context) starts to be used in A context;
- 2) A and B coexist while rivalling; generally, they are used in different registers: A is used in the “high” register, while B in the “low” register;
- 3) A weakens, and after a short unstable period of use (especially in highly formal literary texts), it disappears (Cardinaletti 2004).

This description can apply to Italian, where, as mentioned in the previous section, typical features of “low” varieties are increasingly accepted in “higher” registers. Berruto (2012:54) refers to this phenomenon as “risalita di tratti “dal basso” all’ “alto””. The following diagram (Figure 4) by Berruto (Ibid.:109) represents very well the current relationship between standard, neo-standard and sub-standard varieties, by which “tratti chiaramente sub-standard ancora a metà Novecento sono stati promossi, o sono in via di promozione, a tratti standard”.

Figure 4. Relationship between normative standard, neo-standard and sub-standard Italian (Berruto 2012).



It is important to stress here that the majority of these features cannot be considered as innovations, as they originated long before present days and they were already present in spoken sub-standard varieties (Ibid.). Therefore, *italiano popolare* can be considered as the main source of language change in present day Italian (Ibid.:107): “esso può essere visto, almeno in parte, come un “italiano avanzato”, che rappresenta cioè l’evoluzione naturale di forze insite nella lingua, bloccate dalla normatività letteraria”.

According to Berruto (Ibid.:107), “rientra nell’ovvio [...] prevedere che continuerà la tendenza all’avvicinamento tra parlato e scritto, e che i fenomeni di ristandardizzazione diventeranno sempre più manifesti”. Many scholars discuss the process of re-standardisation as a simplifying process. Recently, not only some scholars, but also intellectuals, professors, etc. criticize the new trends of Italian, considering the neo-standard as an impoverishment of the language (Ibid.). Terms like “lingua selvaggia”, “lingua meticcica”, “lingua coloniale”, well represent their bias. However, the new trends of present day Italian “appaiono ampiamente fisiologici nella storia sociale di una lingua” (Ibid.:107).

3. Analysed features

In this section are presented in detail the features of contemporary Italian analysed in this study. In particular, the following features are here considered: phenomena concerning word order (i.e. right and left dislocations; cleft sentences; presentational clefts); phenomena concerning pronouns (subject pronouns; dative pronouns; the pronouns *lo*, *ci* and *ne*; demonstrative and relative pronouns; the interrogative pronouns *che cosa*, *che*, *cosa*; pronominal use of verbs); multipurpose *che*; phenomena concerning verbs (expansion of the *imperfetto*; present tense for future events; modal uses of the future; changes in the use of *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*; replacement of the subjunctive with the indicative mood; development of verbal periphrases); other phenomena (agreement *ad sensum*; interrogative and exclamatory sentences; subordinate sentences and conjunctions).

3.1. Unmarked and Marked word order

In Italian, as well as in other Romance languages, the unmarked word order is SVO. For example,

1. Paolo (S) ama (V) Giulia (O)⁹

In neo-standard Italian, especially in spoken language, also other constructions – namely, marked constructions – are possible. These are left and right dislocation, cleft sentence, and the so-called *c'è presentativo*.

3.1.1. Left dislocation

For what concerns left dislocation, a constituent of the nuclear clause appears in the left periphery and it can be resumed, in the same sentence, by a co-referential pronoun (the resumption is obligatory if the left dislocated constituent is the direct object), for example,

2. **Giulia** (O), Paolo (S) **la** (O co-referential) ama (V);

⁹ Example 1,2,3 6,7,8,10, 16, 17, 19,20, 26, 27,42,43,46 from Sobrero and Miglietta (2006); example 4 from Trifone and Palermo (2007); example 5,8, 18, 21,22,23,25,29, 49, 50,53,55 from Berruto (2012); example 9,15,30,31,45,48, 51,56,57 from D'Achille (2011); example 14,47 from Bazzanella (1994); example 24,25,35 from Tavoni (2002); example 32,33,34,54 from (Sabatini 1990)

3. **questa scelta** (O), devi **farla** (O *co-referential*) adesso;
4. **i commenti** (O), **li** (O *co-referential*) faremo (V) dopo.

As it can be observed, in the case of left dislocation, an element that normally does not appear in clause initial position, appears instead in theme position (Sobrero and Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012). According to Sorbreo and Miglietta (2006:66), “a seconda delle prospettive si parla di un fenomeno di *tematizzazione* [...], di *topicalizzazione* [...], e di *focalizzazione*”. Berruto (2012) and Sobrero and Miglietta (2006) include in the phenomenon of left dislocation also the *nominativus pendens*, or *tema sospeso*, or *anacoluto*, for example:

5. **Gianni** non **gli** ho detto niente

in which the dislocated element does not bring any mark that signals its syntactic role. According to Tavoni (2002), it has to be considered as a sub-standard feature.

It can be inferred that left dislocation is an alternative to passive constructions, which are rarely found in spoken Italian language (Berruto 2012; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006), as shown in (6) and (7), where the passive sentence (7) has the same meaning of (6).

6. **Teresina**, l'ha investita un'auto pirata
7. Teresina è **stata investita** da un'auto privata

Left dislocations are well attested not only in spoken language, but also in written texts (Berruto 2012; D'Achille 2011). Furthermore, as shown by the well-known *Placiti cassinesi* (960 AC),¹⁰ the phenomenon of left dislocation is well attested throughout the history of Italian language and it can be considered an ancient Italian construction, even though it has been ignored by traditional grammars (D'Achille 2011). Recently, this phenomenon is included in descriptive grammars, for example, in Trifone and Palermo (2007).

3.1.2. Right dislocation

Right dislocation is a marked construction that optionally applies to one or more discourse-given constituents. The dislocated constituent appears at the right periphery of the clause and

¹⁰ “Sao ke **kelle terre** (*dislocated element*), per kelle fini que ki contene, tren'tanni **le** (*coreferential pronoun*) possette parte Sancti Benedicti (*Subject*)” (D'Achille 2011:178)

is optionally preceded by a clitic pronoun that agrees in person, number, gender, and case with the dislocated constituent, as shown in the following example:

8. **(Le)** mangio domani, **le mele**

Thus, while normally the information order is theme-rheme, in the case of right dislocation the information order is rheme-theme. In other words,

la dislocazione a destra [...] pare infatti avere la funzione di costruire l'elemento dislocato come tema motivato per il parlante; costituisce quindi un modo particolare di porre un tema discorsivo, che crea un retroterra comunicativo assunto come condiviso (Berruto 2012:77).

Therefore, right dislocation is strictly related to communicative functions. In addition to mark the theme, right dislocation is also used by speakers in order to reformulate or avoid ambiguity (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). As it is mainly detected as a typical feature of spoken language, right dislocation is highly common in spoken language, while it is far less attested in written language, (Ibid.).

As left dislocation, right dislocation has a long history. However, it is attested in Italian literature only starting from the 18th century, thanks to a general interest in spoken language by the main literary authors (Ibid.).

3.1.3. Cleft sentence (*frase scissa*)

Cleft sentences, as well as left and right dislocations, allow to put in evidence one constituent of the sentence by splitting the information into two clauses. From a syntactic point of view, cleft sentences consist of a main clause containing the copula and the “clefted” constituent (*elemento scisso*), followed by a subordinate clause, considered, in Italian, as a pseudo-relative or a restrictive relative clause (D'Achille 2011; Berruto 2012; Bazzanella 1994). For example:

9. È Luigi che studia il russo
10. Sei tu che non vuoi!

If the “clefted” constituent is a subject noun phrase or a pronoun, as in (9) and (10), the copula systematically agrees in person and number with it. In addition to subject nouns and

pronouns, “l’elemento [...] messo in rilievo può però essere [...] qualunque altro complemento” (D’Achille 2011:181). Thus, the element highlighted with a cleft sentence can be either a verb phrase (11), or an adverb (12), a negation element (13) (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

11. È leggere che mi annoia
12. È così che ti piace?
13. Non è che mi piaccia tanto

Furthermore, Bazzanella (1994:130) highlights that some type of cleft sentences, “interrogative con “chi”, esplicative con “è che”; negative con “non è che (14)” [...]” appear to be more frequent than others. According to D’Achille (2011), cleft sentences are particularly frequent in the case of interrogative sentences (15).

14. Non è che non pago le tasse, le pagherò senz’altro!
15. Dov’è che vai?

In particular, cleft sentences in the negative interrogative form are used to express polite requests, as in (16), or to add emphasis, as in (14) and (17) (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

16. Non è che mi presti la bici?
17. Non è che io l’abbia, come si suol dire, sgraffignato (Manzoni, *Promessi sposi*, cap. XVI).

From the point of view of information structure, the first sentence with the clefted element corresponds with the rheme of the sentence, while the second part, introduced by the pseudo-relative *che*, corresponds with the theme (D’Achille 2011, Berruto 2012).

Cleft sentences have traditionally been detected as Gallicisms. Therefore, they were rejected by traditional normative grammars. However, in many grammars cleft sentence is an accepted construction, provided that it is only used to highlight the subject (Sobrero and Miglietta 2006). According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:68), the cleft sentence “è uno dei tratti del neo-standard più vicini alla piena integrazione nello standard”, and according to Berruto (2012) it is already a standard feature ¹¹.

¹¹ “ampiamente attestata nell’italiano passato [...], la frase scissa va considerata del tutto integrata nello standard” (Berruto 2012:78)

3.1.4. Presentational cleft - “Frased presentativa” or “c’è presentativo”

Some scholars detect another type of marked construction, namely “frased presentativa” (D’achille 2011), or “c’è presentativo” (Berruto 2012; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

È la struttura cosiddetta *presentativa* (Berretta 1995: 164 segg.; Berruto 1986b), presente già in Manzoni [...], che ha perduto l’originario valore focalizzante e ora è semplice marca di introduzione (o connettivo testuale: Berretta 2002). (Simone 2011 [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sintassi_\(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sintassi_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)))

As in cleft sentences, the information is split into two sentences. The existential form *c’è/ci sono* introduces a noun phrase, which is then specified by a pseudo-relative (Berruto 2012) introduced by the relative pronoun *che*, as shown in (18). As observed by Berruto (2012), “Il *c’è [...]* *che* pare funzionare da segnale rematico che serve a spezzare una frase [...] in due blocchi monorematici semplici” (Berruto 2012:77). For this reason, the presentational cleft differs from the ordinary cleft sentence. In other words, as for the information structure, the subject is rheme as well as the predicate (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; D’achille 2012).

18. C’è un gatto **che** gioca nel giardino.

Despite being very common, this structure has always been ignored by grammars (Berruto 2012). However, it can be found in recent descriptive grammars (i.e. Trifone and Palermo 2007).

3.2. Pronouns

3.2.1. *Lui, lei, loro* as subject pronouns

The system of personal pronouns in Standard Italian is very complex and counts at least 28 elements differentiated by number (singular/plural), gender (feminine/masculine), case (subject/object/indirect object/adverbial), animacy (animate/inanimate) (Berruto 2012). The series *egli, ella / esso, essa, essi, esse / lui, lei, loro* is normally simplified in *neostandard* with the series *lui, lei, loro* (Tavoni 2002; Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). Therefore, *lui, lei, loro* are used both as subjects and as objects, when referring to people, but also to things and animals (D’Achille 2011).

Lui, lei, loro sono usati, sia come soggetti sia come complementi, non solo con riferimento a persone, ma anche ad animali e a cose, laddove la norma tradizionale prescriverebbe al singolare le forme *esso* ed *essa*, che sono in realtà quasi in disuso (e comunque come i plurali *essi* ed *esse*, inutilizzabili come complementi oggetti). (D'Achille 2011:127).

However, according to Tavoni (2002), the use of *lui, lei, loro* referred to things (*l'automobile anche lei fa quello che può nelle salite*) is a feature in between neo-standard and sub-standard. In addition, as Italian is a *PRO-drop* language (Ibid.), “l'opposizione [...] è stata ridotta, almeno nel caso di soggetti animati, all'opposizione fra zero e *lui* con neutralizzazione fra rimando anaforico e rimando deittico” (Berruto 2012). However, it must be noted that *ella* has completely disappeared, while *egli* is extremely rare in spoken Italian, but still present in formal written or spoken Italian (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). As Vanelli (2003) observes, in the LIP corpus, “si sono rilevate 39 occorrenze di *egli* a fronte delle 764 di *lui*, nessuna occorrenza di *ella* (ce ne sono 10 di *essa*) a fronte di 777 di *lei*, 14 occorrenze di *essi*, 2 soltanto di *esse*, a fronte di 375 di *loro*” (Vanelli 2003: 61)¹². According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:76), “*egli* è dunque connotato, oggi, tanto in diafasia (è riservato a testi altamente formali) quanto in diamesia (riservato ai testi scritti)”. Due to its low number of occurrences, Renzi (1994) states instead that “*Egli* ha una lunga e gloriosa storia, ma oggi è morto” (Renzi 1994:249).

As left dislocations, *lui, lei, loro* as subject pronouns were banned by traditional grammars, but they are well attested throughout the history of Italian language. As D'Achille (2011:127) observes, “si tratta, del resto, di forme assolutamente normali nel parlato e obbligatorie anche nello scritto in determinati contesti (*è stato lui* e non **è stato egli*)”.

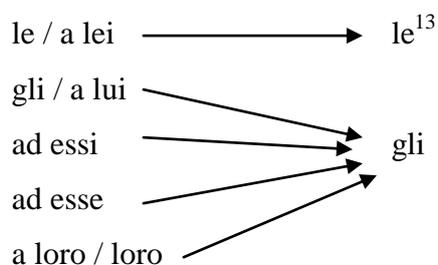
Recently, the series *lui, lei, loro* has appeared in grammars, together with *egli, ella, esso, essa, essi, esse*. In Trifone and Palermo (2007), it is even presented as the first option.

As for subject pronouns in contemporary Italian, Tavoni (2002) highlights the use of *te* (direct object) as subject personal pronoun (*Questo lo dici te*) as sub-standard feature.

3.2.2.Dative pronouns

In standard Italian the system of dative pronouns has five forms, namely *le, gli, ad essi, ad esse, a loro / loro*, that has reduced to two forms in neo-standard, namely *le, gli*, as represented below.

¹² Vanelli, L. 2003. “Egli”, “ella”... vs. “lui”, “lei” ...Una concorrenza che viene da lontano”. In G. Marcato (a cura di). Italiano. Strana lingua. Padova: Unipress, 59-71



The use of the clitic dative pronoun *gli* instead of the dative pronoun *loro* has been noticed in several studies on contemporary Italian since the 80s. According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006), this feature was attested since the 1950s in literary essays, newspapers, and in fiction, especially when the author meant to reproduce spoken language. Cardinaletti (2004) observes that the use of *loro* is no longer attested in theatre plays, fiction, fiction for television, and it is attested only in political speeches and art criticism. Thus, it appears only in highly formal texts. The expansion of *gli* instead of *loro* can be explained as a tendency to level out the dative pronominal system. *Loro* interrupts the paradigm of the clitic pronouns. As observed by D’Achille (2011), “si tende a estendere la forma *gli* [...] soprattutto al plurale, dove del resto *loro*, bisillabo e posto quasi sempre dopo il verbo, interromperebbe il paradigma e determinerebbe un mutamento di focus (*ti ho dato, gli ho dato, ma ho dato loro*” (D’Achille 2011:130). Also in the descriptive grammar by Trifone and Palermo (2007), the intrinsic difference of *loro* from the other clitic pronouns is considered as the main cause for its replacement.

La forma di terza persona plurale *loro*, pure essendo tradizionalmente collocate fra i pronomi atoni, dal punto di vista strutturale condivide le proprietà dei pronomi tonici, come la lunghezza (è l’unico pronome bisillabo della serie atona) e la collocazione (è l’unico pronome atono che segue il verbo anziché precederlo (Trifone, Palermo 2007:99)

Also according to Cardinaletti (2004:73), *gli* instead of *loro* has to be interpreted as a grammar change (“si perde infatti un elemento debole, con una grammatica diversa da quella dei pronomi clitici”). In addition, for what concerns the speakers, the replacement of *loro* only affects their production and not their competence (Ibid.). In other words, although speakers are no longer using it, they are still able to recognize if sentences with *loro* are well formed or not.

As reported by Cardinaletti (2004), several scholars assert that *gli* to replace *loro* should not be stigmatized or considered as a proper mistake. It has to be noticed that in several recent

¹³ Adapted by Sobrero and Miglietta (2006)

grammars *gli* instead of *loro* is an accepted feature (Sobrero and Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012; Trifone, Palermo 2007). However, according to Carinaletti (2004), it would be a mistake to eliminate it from descriptive grammars of contemporary Italian, in the light of the fact that speakers of Italian still have competence of *loro*.

Eliminando *loro* dative dalle descrizioni dell'italiano contemporaneo si vuole come accelerare un cambiamento linguistico che [...] non è ancora avvenuto completamente, dal momento che i parlanti, anche i più giovani, mostrano ancora di avere competenza di questo elemento (Cardinaletti 2004:70).

For what concerns the dative pronouns, during the last thirty years, it has also been observed the tendency to use the unique form *gli* to replace both *le* and *loro*. Despite recognizing the expansion of the use of *gli* to replace *le*, D'Achille (2011:130), states that “nello scritto e anche nel parlato sorvegliato il *le* resiste ancora benissimo”. Also Cardinaletti (2004), on the basis of corpora analysis, asserts that the form *le* is extremely frequent and attested in different text typologies, such as narrative, theatre texts, political speeches, art criticism, literary criticism. According to Tavoni (2002), it has to be considered as a sub-standard feature.

The use of *gli* to replace *le* is strongly censored in normative grammars, while it is attested in descriptive grammars (Cardinaletti 2004). However, it is considered as a feature of spoken language that has to be avoided in formal or written language. For example, in Trifone and Palermo (2007:110), it is stated that “*gli* al posto di *loro* è accettabile anche in alcuni tipi di scritto, *gli* al posto di *le* è ancora relegato al parlato colloquiale”.

According to Carinaletti (2004:73), the use of *gli* to replace *le* and the use of *gli* to replace *loro* represent two separate changes in contemporary Italian, “il primo si configura come un cambiamento lessicale, il secondo porta invece con sé un cambiamento grammaticale”. In the first case (*le* > *gli*), *gli* has lost its association to the masculine gender and it is used also for the feminine. As the syntax of the sentence does not change, it can be considered a lexical change (Cardinaletti 2004). On the contrary, in the second case (*gli* > *loro*), in addition to a lexical change, there is also a change in the syntax of the sentence. Because of this reason, it can be considered as a grammar change (Ibid.).

3.2.3. The pronouns *ne*, *lo*, *ci*

In contemporary Italian, it has been observed that the expansion of the pronoun *ne* is a consequence of the increase of left and right dislocations (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012), especially with verbs like *parlare* (to talk) (Berruto 2012). For example,

19. di questo argomento **ne** abbiamo già discusso
20. di questo cantante se **ne** sta parlando molto in questi giorni
21. è un problema di cui **ne** sappiamo molto poco

This use of *ne* was traditionally considered as pleonastic (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012). According to Tavoni (2002) it has fully entered the neo-standard.

As for *lo*, it has been observed that it is used as co-referent in the case of anaphora and cataphora (Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2010), as shown in (22), and (23).

22. **Lo** credo bene che hai fame
23. Gianni si crede intelligente, ma non **lo** è

For what concerns the clitic pronoun *ci*, it has replaced the pronoun *vi* when referring to places. Nowadays, *vi* is extremely rare in spoken language (D’Achille 2011), and it is only used “solo nello scritto sostenuto” (Berruto 2012:85).

In addition, concerning the pronoun *ci*, there is the so-called “*ci* attualizzante” (D’Achille 2011, Berruto 2012).

Il caso più lampante è costituito dal fissarsi, almeno nel parlato (anche colto e piuttosto formale), di *ci* come morfema casuale legato, valenza fissa del verbo, con valore rafforzativo e attualizzante (in via di indebolimento, diventando l’uso sempre meno marcato), in tutta una serie di verbi che tendono addirittura a configurarsi, talora, come entrate lessicali autonome rispetto al corrispondente verbo non pronominale” (Berruto 2012:85).

Especially in spoken language, *ci* is frequently added to the verb *avere* (to have), thus forming the verb *averci* (Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011), “di uso costante [...] quando si tratti del verbo pieno (non, ovviamente dell’ausiliare) [...], e, in certi contesti (come nelle risposte a domande: *hai il biglietto?* – *Sì, ce l’ho*) anche nello scritto” (Berruto 2012:85). Despite being extremely common in spoken language, the use of *ci* with the verb *avere* is hardly accepted in the written language (D’Achille 2011). It is also frequently used with the verb *sentire* (to hear), *vedere* (to see), and other verbs (Ibid.). In some cases, it creates a new series of verbs

with a different semantic value comparing with the basic form, such as *starci* (to accept, to agree), *volerci* (to need, to be necessary), *entrarci* (to be related to), *contarci* (to trust, to count on), etc. (Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011), *farcela* (D’Achille 2011), . However, according to D’Achille (2011:133), “solo nel caso di *entrarci* [...] si può parlare della nascita di un nuovo verbo *centrare* ‘essere pertinente’ ”. In other cases, *ci* is a simple intensifier, and the new verb does not have a different meaning with respect to the basic verb, such as in the cases of *vederci*, *tenerci* (*a qualcosa*), *capirci* (Berruto 2012).

3.2.4. Demonstrative pronouns

The most evident change concerning demonstrative pronouns is the substitution of the series *questo/codesto/quello* with the series *questo/quello*. In addition, another change concerning *questo/questo* is their use

- a) as personal pronouns (Tavoni 2002), especially with a negative connotation, as in (24) and (25);
- b) to replace *ciò*, especially in spoken language (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006), as in (26) and (27);

furthermore, *quello* is used

- c) to replace the determinative article, as in (28) and (29), especially when the noun phrase is then defined by a relative clause (Berruto 2012).

In other words, in these cases, *questo/quello* do not have a demonstrative value, on the contrary, *questo/quello* “tendono [...] a perdere il proprio valore, riducendosi quasi a svolgere la funzione di articoli, secondo una trafilata che, tra l’altro, ripete lo sviluppo che si è avuto nel passaggio dal latino alle lingue romanze” (D’Achille 2011:134). Therefore, their original demonstrative value, especially in spoken language, is frequently signalled by an additional adverb (*qui/là*): *questo/-a/-i/-e qui* (or *qua*), *quello/-a/-i/-e là* (D’Achille 2011). The apheretic forms ‘*sto*, ‘*sta* (corresponding to *questo*, *questa*) are common but still considered as sub-standard (Tavoni 2002).

24. Ora **questo** mi si presenta, e cosa gli dico?

25. **Quelli** non ne vogliono sapere
26. Tutto **questo** è profondamente ingiusto
27. **Quello** che mi dici mi stupisce
28. [...] nei confronti di **quelle** organizzazioni che fanno ricorso al terrorismo
29. **Quello** Shakespeare che ho scoperto è brutto, ma vero

3.2.5. Relative pronouns

For what concerns relative pronouns, the Standard shows a variety of forms (*che, cui, quale/quali*) that is undergoing a simplification in contemporary neo-standard. In Standard Italian, *che* functions as subject (30) and direct object (31); *cui* is used in all the other cases. *Cui* can also be replaced by *il quale*, which can also function as subject (D’Achille 2011).

30. quelle chiavi le ha dimenticate il cliente **che** è appena uscito
31. è questa la maglietta **che** hai comprato in vacanza?

In neo-standard, *il quale* cannot function as direct object (Ibid.) and is now limited to high formal written language (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; D’Achille 2011). In all the other cases, *che* (subject and direct object) or *cui* (indirect object – *a cui, di cui, per cui*, etc.) are preferred (D’Achille 2011, Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

3.2.6. Interrogative pronouns

The use of the simple *cosa* instead of the standard *che cosa* or *che* as interrogative pronoun is another well-known feature. According to D’Achille (2011:183), this feature is “ormai definitivamente accolto”. This colloquial form was already attested in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth literature, and its increase in use has started in the Nineteenth century, especially thanks to Manzoni (Berruto 2012). It can be seen as a result of a simplification, as observed by Berruto (2012): “su un elemento di un sintagma si trasferisce e concentra il significato dell’intero. In questo senso è anche un fenomeno di semplificazione” (Berruto 2012:88).

3.2.7. Pronominal use of verbs, “costruzioni pronominali affettive”

Another feature related to pronouns belonging to contemporary neo-standard Italian is the use of the so-called “costruzioni pronominali affettive” (Tavoni 2002). Sabatini (1990)¹⁴, detects this phenomenon as “diatesi media dei verbi”. For example:

32. **Ci** prendiamo un tè;
33. Stasera **mi** guardo la partita;
34. **Fatti** una bella dormita;
35. La vacanza non **me la** sono goduta per niente

D’Achille (2010) refers to this phenomenon as pronominal use of transitive verbs, meant to show commitment by the speaker (Berruto 2012). As highlighted by Berruto (2012), this feature was detected since the 80s. However, “il dativo etico come forma marcata, affettiva, è ben noto in tutta la storia dell’italiano” (Berruto 2012:85). According to Berruto (2012), it is most frequent in the case of first singular person (as in (31) and (33)), and with verbs that imply a first person commitment of the speaker.

3.3. Multipurpose *che* (*Che polivalente*)

In addition to its Standard uses, mentioned in par. (relative pronouns), in neo-standard, *che* can perform several different functions. In these cases, *che* is referred to as “che polivalente” (Sabatini 1990; Berruto 2012; Sobrero and Miglietta), “multipurpose che” (Lepschy 1988). Here are some examples:

36. è un’ora **che** ti aspetto
37. è qui **che** ci siamo incontrati l’anno scorso
38. la valigia **che** ci ho messo i libri
39. aspetta, **che** te lo spiego.
40. Il giorno **che** ci siamo conosciuti
41. Vieni, **che** te lo spiego
42. La vedo **che** sorride
43. **Che** bella che sei!

¹⁴ Sabatini, F. (1990), *Una lingua ritrovata: l’italiano parlato*, «Studi latini e italiani» 4, pp. 215-234 (rist. in Sabatini 2011, vol. 1°, pp. 89-108).

In some of the above examples, *che* can be interpreted as a conjunction rather than a relative pronoun. However, “cases of this kind are common in which it is difficult to define the exact force of *che*” (Lepschy 1988:125). According to Berruto (2012:78), they can be considered as “usi del *che* come connettore, o complementatore, generico”. In other words, *che polivalente* replaces the various conjunctions, prepositions, etc, used in Standard Italian to introduce a subordinate sentence. Therefore, *che polivalente* can be considered as a simplification of the norm (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). As shown by the above examples, *che* can be used:

- a) to replace *in cui, dal momento in cui, nel momento in cui* (temporal value), as in (36) and (40);
- b) as a connector in cleft sentences (cfr Chapter 3, §1.3) as in (37);
- c) as a relative pronoun to replace *in cui, di cui*, etc. (therefore, with the function of indirect object), as in (38); according to Tavoni (2002) this is still a sub-standard feature;
- d) as a connector with final or causative value (39) (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; D’achille 2011; Berruto 2012);
- e) *che* to introduce a pseudo-relative clause (Berruto 2012), as in (42);
- f) in an exclamatory sentence (Berruto 2012; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006), as in (43).

According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006), this expansion of *che* is especially common in sub-standard varieties of Italian, in particular, in the so-called “italiano popolare”. In addition, “è dalle varietà “basse” della lingua che attualmente sta “risalendo” verso lo standard” (Ibid.:75). Furthermore, it is attested since the Thirteenth century, with Dante (Ibid.; Berruto 2012).

Molto probabilmente questi usi erano molto diffuse nel parlato fin dalle origini della lingua, ma il loro impiego nella scrittura fu stigmatizzato, soprattutto a partire dall’affermazione dello standard fiorentino, nel quale non erano previsti. Si spiega così il fatto che tornino alla luce solo ora, che lo scritto tende ad avvicinarsi al parlato e dunque ad adottarne le strutture. (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006:75).

As observed by Tavoni (2002), *che* “con valore temporale [...], finale [...] consecutivo o causale, o di subordinazione generica” and *che* in cleft sentences are fully considered as Neo-Standard.

3.4.Verbs

The Italian verbal system is undergoing different changes for what concerns tense, aspect and mood, especially in spoken language, which are explained in the next sections.

3.4.1.Expansion of the use of *imperfetto*

For what concerns the past tense, in standard Italian, there are three forms related to aspect: *imperfetto*, *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto* (D’Achille 2011). The Italian *imperfetto* “indica eventi passati durativi [...], o abituali [...], facendo spesso da sfondo agli eventi espressi dai due passati” (Ibid.:138). One of the most frequent features observed in contemporary Italian is the expansion of the use of the *imperfetto* (Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011). In particular, it is used

- a) to replace the subjunctive and/or the conditional in conditional sentences of the third type (i.e. *se venivi, ti divertivi* instead of *se fossi venuto, ti saresti divertito*);
- b) to indicate politeness (*imperfetto di cortesia*), (i.e. *volevo un caffè* instead of *vorrei un caffè*; *ti telefonavo per chiederti una cosa*)
- c) to quote in indirect speech, (i.e. *Maria ha detto che andava a casa* (D’Achille 2011));
- d) among children, while playing (*imperfetto ludico*), as in *facciamo che eravamo su un’isola deserta* (SOBRERO example; (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012).

Bazzanella (1994:98) proposes to refer to these uses as modal uses of *imperfetto*, “è più conveniente unificare tutti questi usi sotto l’unica etichetta di usi “modali”. Bazzanella (1994) distinguishes between modal uses referred to the past (*imperfetto onirico, imperfetto fantastico, imperfetto di conato e/o imminente, imperfetto ipotetico, imperfetto potenziale*), and modal uses with no reference to the past (*imperfetto ludico, imperfetto epistemico-doxastico, imperfetto di pianificazione*). The common denominator is a “dislocazione fittizia” (Bazzanella 1994:104), a pretended dislocation in an unreal world or past.

Dallo spostamento nel passato, e quindi in un mondo non coincidente con l’attuale, sembra derivare la possibilità di mitigazione della forza illocutoria, come nell’Imperfetto “di cortesia” [...], mitigazione che permette quindi la negoziazione, come nell’Imperfetto “di pianificazione”. (Bazzanella 1994:104)

According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:71), “l’uso attenuativo è oggi forse il più diffuso, il più vicino a una piena standardizzazione”. According to Berruto (2012:79), all these uses of *imperfetto* “sono del tutto normali”. However, there is widespread agreement on the fact that this type of *imperfetto* belongs to spoken language.

Even traditional grammars have highlighted the presence of non canonical uses of *imperfetto* (Bazzanella 1994). In recent descriptive grammars, they are considered as features of informal spoken Italian, as in Trifone and Palermo (2007).

3.4.2. The present tense instead of future for future events

In contemporary Italian there is an increasing tendency to use the present tense to replace the future to talk about future events, as attested by recent studies based on corpora analyses (Bazzanella 1994). The present tense is used instead of the future especially if the sentence contains time expressions (Berruto 2012; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; D’Achille 2011), as in (44), (45), (46), or if the action can be considered as planned (Bazzanella 1994), as in (47):

- 44. torno **subito**;
- 45. **l’anno prossimo** mi trasferisco
- 46. **nel 2012** le olimpiadi si fanno a Londra
- 47. A. Vieni più tardi? B
B. Sì passo tra le 4 e le 5

In addition, it can be used in cooccurrence with *passato prossimo* to express future in the past, as in (48):

- 48. Dopo che ho finito gli esami, mi dedico alla tesi

As noted by Sobrero and Miglietta (2006), the value of future shifts from the verb to another lexical item in the sentence or, the notion of future is conveyed by the context, as in a *giugno mi sposo*, where the idea of future relies on the common knowledge of the succession of months. According to Bazzanella (1994), this feature can be interpreted as a result of a simplifying process, as in the case of *imperfetto*: “il sistema si equilibra a un livello più economico, diminuendo le opposizioni rilevanti, come in molte lingue, in cui il futuro non è morfologizzato” (Bazzanella 1994:108).

There is agreement on the fact that it is a generally accepted feature in contemporary Italian. According to Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:69), “questo uso è ormai accettato da tutti, almeno per i gradi bassi e medi di formalità”, and according to Bazzanella (1994:108), it is common “nel parlato colloquiale o in contesti semiformali”. As reported by Berruto (2012), the use of present tense to refer to future events was already possible in the traditional standard. Recently, it is also attested in written texts, as noticed by Sobrero and Miglietta (2006). In this case, “il presente indicativo [...] in riferimento ad azioni collocate in un futuro vicino [...] si riferiva a un fatto dato per certo” (Ibid.:71).

The use of the present for future events is described also in recent grammars and it is ascribed to spoken language and informal contexts (for example in Trifone and Palermo 2007).

3.4.3. Modal uses of the future

In standard Italian, the future is used to express future time reference. As mentioned before, the future is increasingly replaced by the present tense to refer to future events. However, it is increasingly used with a modal value (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011; Bazzanella 1994). Therefore, the future is used to express:

- hypothesis (referred both to present or past) or doubts (*futuro epistemico*), as in (49), (50), (51);
- an idea of duty or necessity (*futuro deontico*), as in (52).

According to Bazzanella (1994), the intrinsic nature of the future tense itself plays a crucial role, “l’incertezza che è oggettivamente legata ad ogni evento futuro diventa un fattore di modalizzazione” (Ibid:118).

49. Sarà venuto?

50. Chissà se sarà a casa

51. A quest’ora Pietro sarà arrivato

52. Il minore potrà rimanere a pieno titolo con i genitori adottivi

3.4.4. *Passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*

Passato prossimo and *passato remoto* are both perfective tenses, but the first focuses on the result of the action, which has effects at the moment of speaking, while the second refers to concluded, finished past actions happened in a distant time (D'Achille 2011). In contemporary Italian, especially in the northern varieties, *passato remoto* is extremely in decline, while *passato prossimo* is predominant (D'Achille 2011; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). In other words, *passato prossimo* is increasingly used, in addition to its standard use, not only to talk about concluded past actions but also to talk about events related to a distant time.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that there are differences between northern and southern Italy. In northern Italy, *passato remoto* is never used to talk about autobiographical events, and it is rarely attested in fairy tale story telling; on the contrary, in southern Italy, *passato remoto* is the most frequently used tense form in both cases (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). Therefore, according to Sobrero and Miglietta (Ibid.:70) “il passato prossimo è in grande espansione, ma è leggermente marcato in diatopia e diafasia”.

On the other hand, *passato remoto* seldom appears in spoken or informal written language, while it is still used in formal contexts, especially “in riferimento a eventi lontani” (Ibid.:70). As Sobrero and Miglietta (2006) foresee,

l'uso del passato prossimo, già molto ampio, sarà sempre più esteso, mentre il passato remoto, che è marcato e si usa in pochi tipi di testo, tenderà a ridurci progressivamente e inesorabilmente: in altre parole, a parità di funzioni il passato remoto tende a collocarsi tra le forme più arcaiche e connotate, mentre il passato prossimo tende a transitare dall'italiano neo-standard allo standard vero e proprio (Ibid.:70).

There are several reasons for the expansion of *passato prossimo*: its analytic form in line with the Italian system; because speakers tend to relate events to the moment of speaking; because of an influence from Northern dialects, that have only *passato prossimo* as past tense form (D'Achille 2011).

3.4.5. Mood. Indicative instead of the Subjunctive.

The so-called death of the Subjunctive is a fairly discussed *topos*. Despite being rejected by the norm, especially from the 15th to the 18th century, the use of the indicative instead of the subjunctive was already present in ancient Italian (Berruto 2012). The use of the indicative instead of the subjunctive is more frequent:

- a) among southern speakers;
- b) in informal texts;
- c) in spoken language, but sometimes it can be found also in written texts;
- d) among less-educated speakers (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012).

Therefore, the use of the indicative instead of the subjunctive “anche se è ampiamento tollerato, oggi risulta ancora marcato in diatopia, diamesia, diafasia, e spesso anche in diastratia” (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006:72).

The indicative replaces the subjunctive in the following cases:

- a) in subordinate clauses, with verbs of belief in the main clause;
- b) in indirect questions;
- c) in restrictive relative clauses (Berruto 2012; D’Achille 2011; Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

There are several reasons why the subjunctive tends to be less used in these cases:

- i. the complexity of its conjugation, namely the presence of irregular forms (i.e. *vada, desse*), which are problematic to less-educated speakers; this triggers a simplification process (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012, D’Achille 2011);
- ii. the influence of the local dialect, as Southern Italy dialects do not have the subjunctive (Berruto 2012);
- iii. a general tendency to use coordination and to avoid subordination, which implies the use of subjunctive (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006).

D’Achille (2011:141) observes another phenomenon concerning the use of the subjunctive: “Appare in espansione anche la sostituzione, di origine meridionale, del presente congiuntivo con l’imperfetto dello stesso modo in esortazioni, con particolari valori semantici (*venisse pure!; partisse una buona volta!*)”.

To sum up, this feature is received as “normal” by middle-southern speakers, especially in informal texts or in spoken language, while it is considered as non-standard by the other speakers (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006). In spite of the fact that several researchers show that the subjunctive is still in use, especially in written language (Ibid.), according to Berruto (2012), “il neo-standard sembra comunque sulla via della progressiva estensione dell’indicativo” (Berruto 2012:81).

3.4.6. Development of verbal periphrases

In contemporary Italian it has been detected a tendency to develop verbal periphrases (D'Achille 2011, Berruto 2012). The most frequent are:

- *Stare* + present gerund (progressive aspect); it is increasingly used also in the past form, probably because of an influence from English;
- *Stare per* + infinitive (imminent future);
- *Stare a* + infinitive (regional) (in alternative to *stare* + gerund) (D'Achille 2011; Sobrero and Miglietta 2006).

In addition, other verbal periphrases are used to convey the idea of duty or necessity (deontic modality):

- *Andare* + past participle (*va detto* means *bisogna dire*, it has/need to be said).
- *Avere (averci) da* + infinitive (*ci ho da fare i compiti*, I have to do my homeworks)
- Dative pronoun + *toccare* + infinitive (*mi tocca tornare a casa a riprendere la chiavi*, I have/need to go back home to take my keys) (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; D'Achille 2011).

3.5. Other phenomena

3.5.1. Agreement *ad sensum*

In neo-standard Italian, the agreement of collective nouns with verbs is frequently *ad sensum*, as in (53) and (54). As noticed by Sabatini (1990), “la concordanza a senso tra il soggetto collettivo singolare, seguito da un’espressione partitiva, e il predicato plurale”, is one of the defining features of the neo-standard. Also according to Berruto (2012), it is a broadly accepted feature. Vice versa, in particular with the existential or locative form *c’è/ci sono*, it is frequent a lack of agreement of the verb with the plural subject (Berruto 2012), as in (55).

53. Un gruppo di ragazzi si sono affacciati
54. Un milione di elettori non hanno votato
55. Ce n’è di misteri in questa storia

This feature is not an innovation. As noticed by Berruto (2012), “questo costrutto [...] è ampiamente attestato nel Trecento e Quattrocento [...]: si tratta di uno di quei caratteri epurati dalla codificazione normativa del Cinquecento e ‘riemersi’ in tempi vicini a noi” (Berruto 2012:90).

3.5.2. Interrogative and exclamatory sentences

For what concerns interrogative sentences in contemporary Italian, these are the most noticeable features differing from the Standard (D’Achille 2011):

- The use of the simple *cosa* instead of *che cosa*, already mentioned in §pronomi relativi;
- An increasing use of cleft sentences;
- The development of *come mai*, in addition to *com’è che*, as alternatives to *perché* (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006);
- The increasing use of the construction *che + verb + a fare?* (southern origin), as alternative to *perché*.

For what concerns the exclamatory sentence, it has been detected an increasing use of *che* followed by an adjective (56), traditionally rejected by the norm. Also the construction [*che + adj. + che + copula*] of northern origin appears to be in expansion (57) (Ibid.).

56. Che strano!

57. Che stupido che sei!

3.5.3. Subordinate sentences and conjunctions

As reported by Sobrero and Miglietta (2006:77), “anche il quadro delle congiunzioni subordinanti, in italiano, è molto ricco e complesso, e anch’esso subisce fenomeni rilevanti di semplificazione”.

In addition to *che polivalente*, these are the most frequently used conjunctions in contemporary Italian (Sobrero, Miglietta 2006; Berruto 2012):

- Purpose clause: *per* (followed by an infinitive verb); *perché*;

- Causal clause: *siccome* (both written and spoken), *dato che* (more frequent at spoken), *poiché* (less used)
- consecutive sentence: *così*;
- interrogative clause: *perché?*, *come mai?*.

4. Materials and methods.

This sections concerns methods and materials used to accomplish the purpose of this study. First, it briefly illustrates the criteria used to built the corpus and the corpus itself. Second, it shows how data were collected.

In order to discover which are currently the most used Italian textbooks, a survey was carried out. A questionnaire was created using Google Forms and the link to the questionnaire was posted on the main Facebook groups of Italian teachers to foreigners¹⁵. Teachers could take part in the survey from the 1st of October to the 20th of October. The total number of respondents was 59. The questionnaire was simple and specifically addressed to highlight the teaching materials used in class. Here are the questions, with their translation in English in brackets:

- 1) Dove insegni? (where do you teach?)
- 2) Usi libri di testo? (Do you use Italian textbooks?)
- 3) Se sì, quali? (If the answer is yes, which ones?)
- 4) Se no, che materiali usi a lezione? (If your answer is not, which material do you use in your lessons?)
- 5) Integri il libro di testo con altri materiali? (Do you use additional materials?)
- 6) Se sì, quali? (If your answer is yes, which materials?)
- 7) Perché? (why?)
- 8) L'input linguistico dei libri di testo ti sembra adeguato? (Do you think the linguistic input in textbooks is appropriate?)
- 9) Se no, perché? (If you answers is not, why?).

¹⁵ Details on the Facebook groups: 1) name: "Italiano per stranieri", number of group members: "17950; 2) name: "Italiano L2", number of group members: "1341"; 3) name: "Classe di concorso italiano L2 (A23), number of group members: 934). Number of group members last checked on 1st Feb. 2017.

As can be seen in Appendix 2, the majority of textbooks, 46 out of 77 books, concern level A1-A2. For what concerns level B1-B2, 25 books were indicated, and for level C1-C2 only 6 books. As for the publishing houses, the majority of textbooks are printed by Alma Edizioni (22 textbooks), Loescher (18 textbooks), and Edilingua (9 textbooks). Overall, the most used textbooks are *Espresso 1* (8 occurrences), followed by *Espresso 2* and *Espresso 3* (7 occurrences), all published by Alma Edizioni. The most used textbooks in general, including both old and new editions, were respectively *Espresso* (38 occurrences), *Contatto* – published by Loescher, and *Progetto Italiano* – published by Edilingua (26 occurrences both). The table below (Table 2) resumes occurrences of the most used textbooks (*Espresso*, *Nuovo Espresso*; *Contatto*, *Nuovo Contatto*; *Progetto Italiano*, *Nuovo Progetto italiano*), and the sum of occurrences of old and new versions for each textbook.

Table 2. Most used textbooks, occurrences per version and sum of old and new version.

<i>Textbook</i>	Occurrences per version	old + new version total number
<i>Espresso</i> 1,2,3	22	38
<i>Nuovo Espresso</i> 1,2,3	16	
<i>Contatto</i> 1,2A, 2B	11	26
<i>Nuovo Contatto</i> 1,2,3	15	
<i>Progetto Italiano</i> 1,2,3	17	26
<i>Nuovo Progetto Italiano</i> 1,2,3	9	

These textbooks range from A1-A2 to B1-B2, except for *Nuovo Progetto Italiano* which goes from B1 to C1. The most used textbooks entirely centered on C1/C2 level are *Nuovo Magari C1-C2* (6 occurrences) and *Nuovo Contatto C1* (3 occurrences). On the basis of these results, for the purpose of this study, 3 textbooks for level A1-A2, 3 textbooks for level B1-B2, and 2 textbooks for level C1/C2 were analysed. It was chosen to analyse only 2 textbooks for level C1/C2 for two main reasons. First, as shown by the results, the majority of textbooks used goes from A1 to B2 level, and only a few (just 6) concern C1-C2 level. Second, textbooks at C1-C2 level present far more linguistic input than A1-A2 textbooks. In addition, old editions are apparently still in use (at least as for *Espresso* and *Nuovo Progetto Italiano*), probably due to reasons of costs; however, for the purpose of our study, focused on language change in contemporary Italian, the new edition was preferred, when possible. All the textbooks just mentioned were published between 2002 and 2013. Therefore, they can be reasonably considered as representative of contemporary Italian. Therefore, for all these reasons, the following textbooks were analysed:

- *Nuovo Espresso 1*, Alma Edizioni (A1 level);
- *Espresso 2*, Alma Edizioni (A2 level);
- *Nuovo progetto Italiano*, Edilingua (A1-A2 level);
- *Espresso 3*, Alma Edizioni (B1 level);
- *Contatto 2B*, Loescher (B2 level);
- *Progetto Italiano 2*, Edilingua(B1-B2 level);
- *Nuovo Magari C1/C2*, Alma Edizioni(C1-C2 level);
- *Nuovo Contatto C1*, Loescher (C1 level).

For each linguistic feature an Excel worksheet was created where I reported the frequency of the occurrence, the occurrence itself (within the textual context in which it appeared), the page, and other useful information such as type of input (instructions, dialogue, interview, exercise, reading comprehension, etc), main ability involved (written or oral comprehension, written or oral production, etc.) and focus (use or grammar). In addition, it was reported whether the input comes from authentic material (cfr. Appendixes 3,4 and 5).

On the basis of what highlighted in Chapter 1, §2 , it was considered as relevant linguistic input any kind of linguistic input available to the learner, included introduction to the textbooks and appendixes, as well as answer keys, when available within the textbook. In particular, it was considered as instructions each linguistic input aimed to direct the student in his learning process, therefore not only strictly instructional passages but also grammar sections. In the case of grammar sections or exercises aimed to bring the student to reflect on the use of language and on grammar items, the label “metalinguistic ability” was used. It was considered as oral input any occurrence of linguistic input present in audio file format, as well as transcriptions of it, or written dialogues (in the form of reading comprehension or exercises). It was considered as written input the linguistic input present in written exercises (but not written exercises clearly consisting in dialogues, as just mentioned), as well as written texts (i.e. reading comprehensions).

In Chapter 2, §4, it was highlighted the strict correlation between *norm* (standard language) and *use*. As already mentioned, normative Italian has never been the most widely used variety among speakers. Textbooks have an intrinsic normative purpose, while being focused on language use. In other words, they are forced to adhere to *norm* and *use* at the same time. Italian textbooks for learners of Italian as second language are no exception, and, due to this reason, the analysis of the linguistic input they present may shed some light on the present

situation of neo-standard Italian features. The model of language change proposed by Cardinaletti (2004), described in Chapter 2, §4, was used as point of reference. The phases of the process are reported here for convenience:

- 1) the new form B (originally used in another context) starts to be used in form A context;
- 2) A and B coexist while rivalling; generally, they are used in different registers: A is used in the “high” register, while B in the “low” register;
- 3) A weakens, and after a short unstable period of use (especially in highly formal literary texts), it disappears (Cardinaletti 2004).

For each feature of *neo-standard* analysed here, data were collected in order to collocate the analysed feature in one of the phases of the scheme. For those features which are not rivaling with other standard features (i.e. marked word order constructions), the phases of the model were used as point of reference in the following way:

- 1) The feature has started to appear in neo-standard; it is not established yet in neo-standard;
- 2) The feature is established in neo-standard;
- 3) The feature is accepted in formal texts.

5.Results

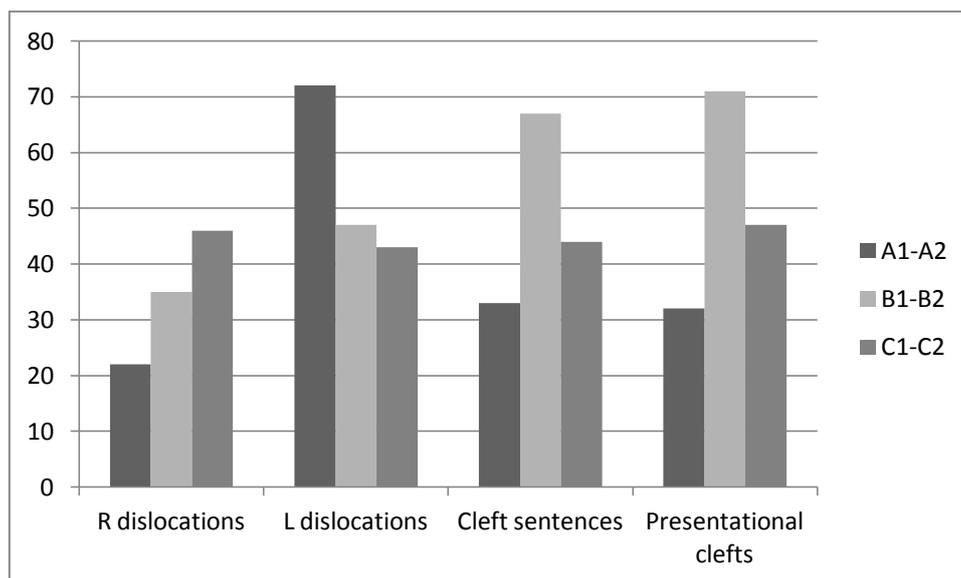
5.1.Marked constructions

For what concerns marked constructions, namely right and left dislocations, cleft sentences and presentational cleft, in the corpus there are:

- 103 occurrences of right dislocations;
- 162 occurrences of left dislocations;
- 150 occurrences of presentational clefts;
- 144 occurrences of cleft sentences.

Occurrences were found in each textbook analysed. Table 3 shows the occurrences of each construction according to the level of textbooks.

Table 3. Occurrences of marked constructions.



As represented, for what concerns right dislocations there are 22 occurrences in A1-A2 textbooks, 35 occurrences in B1-B2 textbooks and 46 occurrences in C1-C2 textbooks. As for left dislocations there are 72 occurrences in A1-A2 textbooks, 47 occurrences in B1-B2 textbooks and 43 occurrences in C1-C2 textbooks. As for cleft sentences, there are 33 occurrences in A1-A2 textbooks, 67 in B1-B2 textbooks and 44 in C1-C2 textbooks. Last, as

for presentational clefts, there are 32 occurrences in A1-A2 textbooks, 71 in B1-B2 textbooks and 47 occurrences in C1-C2 textbooks.

5.1.1. Right dislocations

As already mentioned, occurrences of right dislocations were found in each textbook; overall, 103 occurrences of right dislocations were found. For what concerns A1-A2 textbooks, 13 occurrences (59%) were found in oral input, 7 occurrences (32%) in written input and 2 occurrences (9%) in instructions. In B1-B2 textbooks, 21 occurrences (46%) were found in oral input, 21 occurrences (46%) in written input and 3 occurrences (8%) in instructions. For what concerns C1-C2 level, 14 occurrences (42%) were found in oral input, 17 occurrences (44%) in written input and 5 occurrences (14%) in instructions. Considering the corpus as a whole, 48 occurrences were found in oral input (46%), 45 occurrences in written input (44%) and 10 occurrences (10%) in instructions.

Table 5. Right dislocations. Occurrences and percentages.

Level	Oral input (%)	Written input (%)	Instructions (%)	Tot.
A1-A2 level	13 (59%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	22
B1-B2 level	21 (46%)	21 (46%)	3 (8%)	35
C1-C2 level	14 (42%)	17 (44%)	5 (14%)	46
Tot.	48 (46%)	45 (44%)	10 (10%)	103

Furthermore, 21 occurrences (6 at B1-B2 level; 15 at C1/C2 level) out of 103 appeared in authentic materials. For example:

58. “e poi me lo deve ricordare qualcosa di guardare in basso e vedere che anch'io in qualche modo ho dovuto affrontare gli stessi problemi” (Nuovo Contatto C1: 64; interview to Alex Zanardi);
59. “me lo dovevate dire subito come la pensavate!” (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:194; dialogue from movie);
60. “eppure ne ho letti molti di libri suoi... Mi sa che lo comprerò!” (Contatto 2B:88; interview).

Among these, 6 occurrences were found in oral input (3 occurrences in dialogues from movies; 3 occurrences in interviews), while 15 occurrences in written input (found in articles and novels).

Therefore, in general, right dislocations appear to be more frequent in oral input than in written input or instructions. The higher presence of right dislocations in written input in C1-

C2 level may be explained by the fact that the written input is highly predominant in C1-C2 textbooks compared with the oral input. Furthermore, it can be noticed that the presence of right dislocations in oral input decreases from A1 to C2 level. This can be explained by the fact that A1-A2 textbooks are more focused on oral interaction, as mentioned in par§, while advanced levels focus more on written language comparing with lower levels. However, as shown by percentages, it can also be noticed that there is not a sharp difference between the presence of right dislocations in oral and written input. Right dislocations appear in each textbook, at each level, and in each type of input (oral, written or instructions). In written texts, they mainly appear in literary contemporary texts and articles. Therefore, it can be inferred that right dislocations appear to be an established feature of *neo-standard* Italian, both in oral and written language; however, as they do not appear in formal written texts, they can be placed in phase 2.

For what concerns the type of dislocated constituent, as shown in Table 6, the most frequent dislocated constituent is the pronoun *lo* referring to a clause (42 occurrences), as in (61), followed by the pronoun *lo* used to anticipate a direct object (29 occurrences), as in (62); the pronoun *ne* to anticipate an indirect object (21 occurrences), as in (63) ; the pronoun *ci* to anticipate an indirect object (10 occurrences), as in (64) . The fact that the most frequent dislocated element is the pronoun *lo* used to refer to a sentence confirms the tendency of contemporary Italian to use *lo* as co-referent in the case of anaphora and cataphora, as mentioned in Chapter 3, §2.3.

- 61. E poi, dai, lo sai che io ci tengo a festeggiare in famiglia (Espresso 3: 74)
- 62. tu le mangi le mele verdi? (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1:119)
- 63. Dobbiamo esserne anche abbastanza orgogliosi di questo, no? (Contatto 2B: 63)
- 64. allora, ci siete andati poi a vedere quell'appartamento? (Espresso 2:102)

Table 6. Right dislocations. Occurrences per dislocated constituent.

Dislocated constituent	Occurrences
<i>Lo</i> (sentence)	42
<i>Lo</i> (direct object)	29
<i>Ne</i> (indirect object)	21
<i>Ci</i> (indirect object)	9
<i>Gli</i> (indirect object)	2
<i>Tot.</i>	103

Among right dislocations in which *lo* refers to a clause, in 21 occurrences *lo* occurs with the verb *sapere*, within the expression “*lo sai che...*”. For example:

65. E va be', lo sai come sono fatti gli italiani! (Espresso 2: 51)

66. lo sai com'è papà (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:62)

It was also noticed that among right dislocations with *ne*, 7 occurrences were found with the verb *pensare* in interrogative sentences like “Che (cosa) ne pensi/a...?” and 4 occurrences with the verb *dire* in interrogative sentences like “Che (cosa) ne dici/e...?”. For example:

67. Che ne pensi delle coppie che si sposano molto presto? (Espresso 3: 159)

68. Che cosa ne pensate di questa frase? (Nuovo Contatto 1: 173).

These appear to be fixed expressions, especially in the case of *ne* occurring with verbs like *parlare*, *dire*, *pensare*, as mentioned in par §.

5.1.2. Left dislocations

As already mentioned, occurrences of left dislocations were found in each textbook; overall, 162 occurrences of left dislocations were found. At A1-A2 level, 26 occurrences (36%) were found in oral input, 25 occurrences (35%) in written input and 21 occurrences (29%) in instructions. At B1-B2 level, 30 occurrences (63%) were found in oral input, 13 occurrences (29%) in written input, and 4 occurrences (8%) in instructions. At C1-C2 level, 27 occurrences (63%) were found in written input, 12 occurrences (28%) in oral input and 4 occurrences (9%) in instructions. Considering the whole corpus, 68 occurrences (42%) were found in oral input, 65 occurrences (40%) in written input and 29 occurrences (18%) in instructions.

Table 7. Left dislocations, occurrences per type of input.

Level	Oral input (%)	Written input (%)	Instructions (%)	Tot.
A1-A2 level	26 (36%)	25 (35%)	21 (29%)	72
B1-B2 level	30 (63%)	13 (29%)	4 (8%)	47
C1-C2 level	12 (28%)	27 (63%)	4 (9%)	43
Tot.	68 (42%)	65 (40%)	29 (18%)	162

Among these, 20 occurrences were found in authentic materials: 14 occurrences were found in written input, as in (69); and 6 occurrences were found in oral input, as in (70).

69. E all'estero, l'italiano, per tradizione, non lo parla quasi nessuno (Nuovo Contatto 1:11; written comprehension; article, authentic material)
70. la stessa domanda noi l'abbiamo rivolta a Daria Bignardi (Contatto 2B: 84; oral comprehension; radio programm - interview, authentic material).

Therefore, as in the case of right dislocations, from A1 to B2 level, left dislocations appear to be more frequent in oral input, while at C1-C2 level they appear to be more frequent in written input. However, considering the whole corpus, left dislocations in oral input are slightly more frequent compared with left dislocations in written input. At advanced level, occurrences of left dislocations in written authentic materials were mainly found in literary texts, as in (71), in articles, as in (69), but 1 occurrence was also found in a formal text on Italian history (72):

71. Le figlie infatti la nonna le aveva tutte lasciate morendo da giovane, e quelle ancora adesso si tenevano stretta, come dopo uno spavento uno stormo d'uccelli. (Nuovo Contatto C1: 30);
72. di certo un peso enorme nello sviluppo del fascismo lo ebbero i fatti che seguirono la prima guerra mondiale (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:144).

The fact that left dislocations appear in each textbook and that they are well represented both in oral and written input, and from elementary to advanced level, suggests that they are an established feature of *neo-standard* Italian, which can be traced in phase 2. In other words, it is likely to appear soon also in formal texts.

For what concerns the type of dislocated constituent, in 124 occurrences the dislocated element is a direct object, as in (73); in 27 occurrences the dislocated element is an indirect object, as in (74); in 7 occurrences it is a sentence, as in (75).

73. La prima tappa l'ho fatta a San Gimignano (Nuovo Espresso 1:97);
74. e di questo Beppe Severgnini cosa ne pensa? (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 2:166);
75. Ah, e tu mangiare hamburger in un fast food lo chiami essere moderni? (Nuovo Espresso 2:73).

5.1.3.Cleft sentences

Occurrences of cleft sentences were found in each textbook analysed. In the corpus there are overall 144 occurrences of cleft sentences: 33 occurrences at A1/A2 level; 67 occurrences at B1-B2 level; 44 occurrences at C1-C2 level. There are 56 occurrences (39%) in oral input; 74

occurrences (51%) in written input; 14 occurrences (10%) in instructions. The following table (Table 8) summarizes data concerning cleft sentences.

Table 8. Cleft sentences, occurrences and percentages.

Level	Oral input (%)	Written input (%)	Instructions (%)	Tot.
A1-A2 level	18 (55%)	14 (42%)	1 (3%)	33
B1-B2 level	30 (45%)	31 (46%)	6 (9%)	67
C1-C2 level	8 (18%)	29 (66%)	7 (16%)	44
Tot.	56 (39%)	74 (51%)	14 (10%)	144

Here are some examples from the corpus:

76. è quasi sempre la donna che assiste i genitori anziani o malati. (Nuovo Espresso 2:16);
77. E' da tempo che non vado a teatro (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1:33);
78. intanto è la prima conferenza internazionale che l'Italia fa sul cambiamento climatico (Contatto 2B:28);
79. E' l'arrivo dei piemontesi che peggiorò la situazione (Nuovo Contatto C1:141);
80. è tutta la piazza dei Miracoli che è stata riprodotta (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:41).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, §1.3, cleft sentences are particularly frequent in the case of interrogative sentences according to D'Achille (2011). However, in the corpus only 15 occurrences of interrogative cleft sentences were found. Only 2 occurrences were found at A1-A2 level; 9 occurrences at B1-B2 level; 4 occurrences at C1-C2 level. For example:

81. Cos'è che ti faceva soffrire di più nella scuola? (Espresso 2: 26);
82. com'è che ci hai messo così tanto? (Espresso 3: 83);
83. prova a capire cos'è che fa ridere (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:136).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, §1, according to Bazzanella (1994:130) some types of cleft sentences, “interrogative con “chi”, esplicative con “è che”; negative con “non è che” [...] appear to be more frequent than others”. However, in the corpus only 1 occurrence was found in an interrogative sentence with *chi*:

84. Chi è delle due l'amica che si sposa? (Nuovo Contatto C1:165);

while 22 occurrences of negative sentences with *non è che* were found, as in (21); and 9 occurrences of *è che* (explicative value) were found, as in (85) and (86):

85. Cioè non è che potevo sequestrare il giornale per quattro giorni e riempirlo solo con “I Barbari” (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:109)

86. No, è che il centro era chiuso, così ho dovuto fare un giro lunghissimo (Nuovo Espresso 3: 83).

The presence of cleft sentences at each level and both in oral and written input, suggests that cleft sentences are a fully integrated feature of *neo-standard* Italian. However, a distinction has to be made between types of cleft sentences, as interrogative cleft sentences, negative cleft sentences and clefts with *è che* appear to be less established. These types of cleft can be considered as in phase 1, compared with basic cleft sentences, which are in phase 2.

5.1.4.Presentational clefts

In the corpus 150 occurrences of presentational clefts were found: 32 occurrences at A1-A2 level; 71 occurrences at B1-B2 level; 47 occurrences at C1-C2 level. Occurrences of presentational clefts were found in each textbook. As shown by Table 9, overall presentational clefts appear to be more frequent in written input. However, the difference between the occurrences in oral and written input is not remarkable, as there are 67 occurrences in written input and 63 occurrences in oral input.

Among these, 23 occurrences were found in authentic materials: 15 occurrences in oral input (8 occurrences in lyrics from songs; 7 occurrences in interviews) and 8 occurrences in written input (7 occurrences in texts from novels; 1 occurrences in a text from a handbook). At C1-C2 level, 2 occurrences in written authentic material were found in formal texts about Italian history and the history of Italian language:

87. c'è chi dice che se l'Italia non avesse partecipato alla guerra, il regime fascista sarebbe durato molto più a lungo (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:144)

88. in Italia non c'è stata alcuna autorità politica o religiosa che a un certo punto abbia imposto il toscano come base della lingua nazionale (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:160).

As presentational clefts appear in each textbook, and at each level, and in each type of input, and also in formal texts, we may infer that they are an established feature of *neo-standard* Italian, which is increasingly likely to appear in formal contexts (phase 3).

Table 9. Presentational clefts, occurrences and percentages.

Level	Oral input	Written input	Instructions	Tot.
A1-A2 level	12 (38%)	12 (38%)	8 (24%)	32
B1- B2 level	36 (51%)	25 (35%)	10 (14%)	71
C1/C2 level	15 (32%)	30 (64%)	2 (4%)	47
Tot.	63 (42%)	67 (45%)	20 (13%)	150

5.2.Pronouns

5.2.1.Subject pronouns

For what concerns the system of subject pronouns, data confirm that *lui*, *lei* and *loro* are established as subject pronouns in contemporary Italian. Table 10 represents the occurrences of subject pronouns at A1-A2 level. As can be observed, there are 56 occurrences of the subject pronoun *lui*, only 1 occurrence of *esso* (to refer to inanimate subject), none of *egli*. As for the feminine, there are 63 occurrences of the subject pronoun *lei*, none of *ella* or *essa*. As for the plural, there are 40 occurrences of *loro* and only 1 of *essi* (referring to inanimate subject).

In Table 11 are represented the occurrences of subject pronouns at B1-B2 level. As can be observed, as for the masculine, there are 83 occurrences of *lui*, 2 occurrences of *egli* and 1 of *esso*; as for the feminine there are 45 occurrences of *lei*, 3 of *essa*, none of *ella*; as for the plural, there are 28 occurrences of *loro*, 2 of *essi* and none of *esse*. For what concerns *egli*, 1 occurrence was found in oral input from authentic material, specifically, in a monologue about the life of Michelangelo by the art critic Federico Zeri (1921-1998); the other occurrences was found in a text from authentic material as well, and specifically, an excerpt from *Il mantello* (1960), by Dino Buzzati, which is a piece for theatre. Therefore, *egli* was found in a highly formal text, or in a text from the 1960s, where the presence of *egli* as subject pronoun was more frequent.

For what concerns C1-C2 level (Table 12), there are 35 occurrences of *lui*, and only 2 occurrences of *egli*; 36 occurrences of *lei*, none of *ella*, 5 of *essa*; 14 of *loro*, 2 of *esse*, 1 of *essi*. The series *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* is always used to refer to inanimate subjects, except in 1 occurrence, where *esse* refers to an animate subject:

89. La giornata internazionale della donna ricorre l'__ di ogni anno per ricordare sia le conquiste sociale, politiche ed economiche delle donne, sia le discriminazioni e le violenze di cui **esse** sono ancora oggetto in molte parti del mondo (Nuovo Contatto C1:175).

Table 10. A1-A2 level. Subject pronouns.

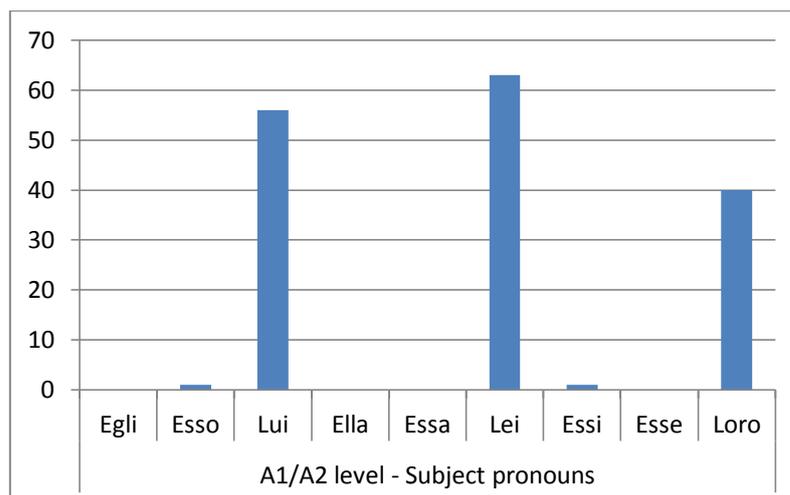
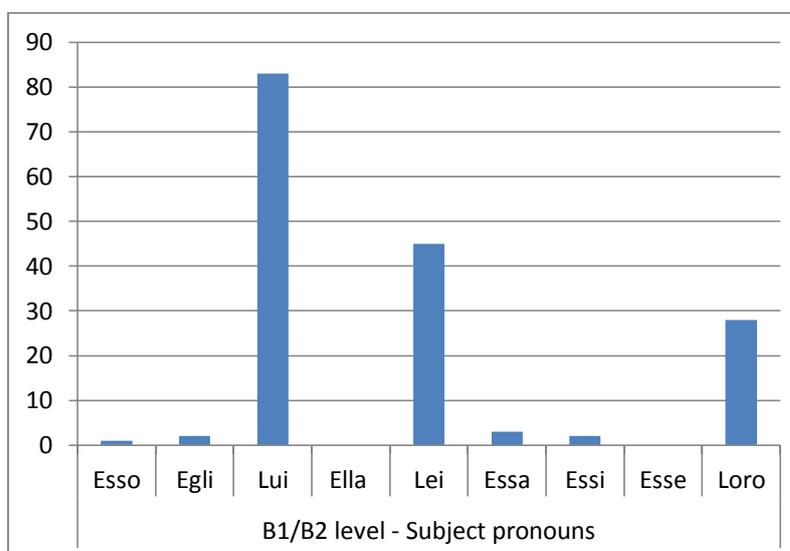


Table 11. B1-B2 level. Subject pronouns.



The occurrences of *egli* were found in written input from authentic material, an excerpt from the novel *L'Agnese va a morire* (1949), by Renata Viganò. As can be inferred, it is not representative of contemporary Italian as the novel was published in 1949.

Only 2 occurrences of *te* used as subject pronoun instead of *tu* were found at level C1-C2 in the textbook *Nuovo Magari C1/C2*:

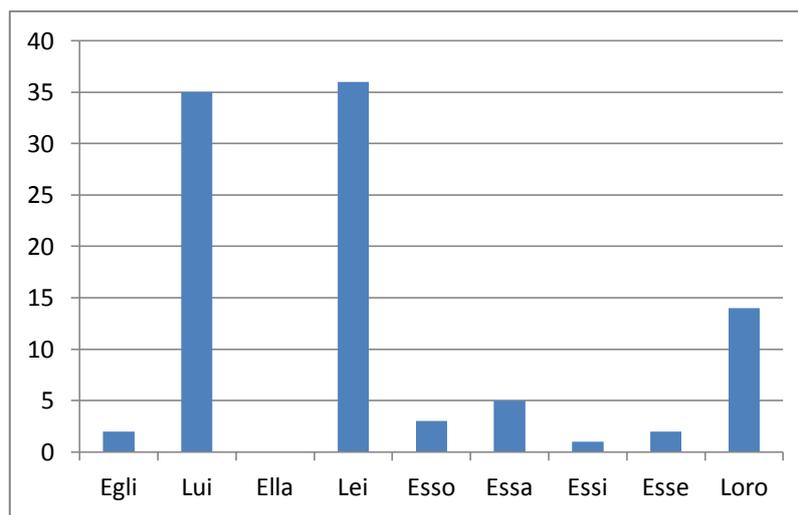
90. Mah... senti te, me lo trovi un tavolo? Uè, dico a te (Nuovo Magari C1:73);

91. Perché te nun te lo sai cerca'? (Nuovo Magari C1:73)

These occurrences were found in oral input, and as can be observed, they co-occur with other elements typical of a specific regional variety of Italian, such as the negative “nun” and the infinitive form “cerca”. Therefore, as expected on the basis of what stated by Tavoni (2002), the use of *te* for *tu* is a Sub-standard feature.

To sum up, *egli/ella* appear rarely and only in highly formal texts or texts which are not representative of contemporary Italian. This feature can be traced in phase 3 (as form A), as well as the series *esso/essa/essi/esse*, which seldom appear as well, and only in formal contexts. The use of *te* as subject pronoun (as form B), on the contrary, is still in phase 1.

Table 12. C1-C2 level. Subject pronouns.



5.2.2. Dative pronouns

As represented by Table 13, the results show that the system of dative pronouns converges on the forms *gli* (used both for the singular masculine and the plural), and *le* (for the singular feminine), as expected on the basis of what highlighted in par§ chapter §. For what concerns the use of *gli* to replace *le*, only 3 occurrences were found, thus confirming what stated by D’Achille (2011) and Cardinaletti (2004) (chapter 3, §2.2), namely that the form *le* is not likely to disappear soon. Furthermore, only in one case, *gli* was used to replace *le* when referring to an animate subject (92), while in the other cases, (93) and (94), *gli* was used to replace *le* when referring to a feminine inanimate subject:

92. ma che gli si può dire a una donna che non è che ha odio verso Dio (Contatto 2B: 120; oral comprehension);

93. difficile dargli torto (alla Corte di Cassazione) (Nuovo Magari C1/C2: 74; reading comprehension – article, authentic material);
94. La torre pendente, che è il simbolo della città toscana, non sarà più sola infatti gli farà compagnia alla periferia est della città una nuova torre, (Nuovo Magari C1/C2: 39; oral comprehension – interview, authentic material).

In addition, only 1 occurrence of *ci* to replace *gli*, which is a sub-standard features, was found. These occurrences can be considered as marginal.

For what concerns the plural, no occurrences of *a esse/a essi* were found, consistently with what emerged from data on the system of subject pronouns, where few occurrences were found of *esso/essa/essi/esse*. As for the plural forms *gli* and (a) *loro*, *gli* is prevailing. However, while the correlation between *gli* and *loro* is more or less the same from A1 to B2 level (respectively 87% to 13% at A1-A2 and 86% to 14% at B1-B2 level), the proportion changes at C1-C2 level. As reported in the table there are 9 occurrences (60%) of *gli* and 6 occurrences (40%) of *loro*. This can be explained by the fact that the advanced level focuses on complex texts, included formal texts (i.e. public notices, law articles, academic essays, etc. from authentic materials), which are more likely to present normative Italian features, such as *loro* as dative pronoun.

Table 13. Dative pronouns, occurrences.

Level	Singular				Plural		
	Gli (m.)	Gli (f.)	Le (f.)	ci	Gli	(a) loro	a essi a esse
A1-A2	37	0	33	0	14	2	0
B1-B2	130	1	83	1 (m.)	12	2	0
C1-C2	76	2	40	0	9	6	0
Tot.	243	3	156	1	35	10	0

To sum up, *gli* to replace *le* (as new form B) is still in phase 1; *gli* to replace *loro* (as form B) or *a essi/a esse* (as form A) is already in phase 3.

5.2.3. *Ne, lo, ci*

As just mentioned in this Chapter, §1.1, the high number of occurrences of left and right dislocations confirms that the presence of the pronouns *ne*, *lo* and *ci* is increasing in contemporary Italian.

For what concerns the pronoun *ci*, all the occurrences of *ci* to replace *vi* when referring to places, and all occurrences of *vi* were recorded. Data are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Occurrences of the pronouns *ci* and *vi* to refer to places per level.

Level	Ci (places)	vi
A1-A2	55 (100%)	0
B1-B2	29 (85%)	5 (15%)
C1-C2	28 (87%)	4 (12%)
Tot.	92 (93%)	7 (7%)

As can be noticed, the pronoun *ci* to refer to places is highly predominant at each level; in particular, at A1-A2 level there are no occurrences of *vi*. All the occurrences of *vi* are found in written input, in particular in written formal texts; only 1 occurrence was found in a literary text.

Therefore, as *vi* is extremely rare and found mainly in written, formal texts, we may infer that *vi* is undergoing phase 3.

For what concerns *ci attualizzante*, all occurrences were reported, except for occurrences of *esserci* (which is an established feature in neo-standard Italian). Table 15 summarizes occurrences per level for each verb with *ci attualizzante*.

Some verbs with *ci attualizzante* are far more frequent than others, namely *farcela*, *averci*, *volerci*, and *metterci*. As for *farcela*, *volerci* and *metterci*, as reported in §, they represent a new series of verbs with a different semantic value, compared with the basic form. In all the textbooks the meaning of these verbs is explicitly taught. Their high frequency and their explicit teaching means that these verbs are well established in new standard as a new series of verbs. As for *averci*, as expected it is more frequent from A1 to B2 level, where oral and informal dimensions are prevailing in linguistic input. In fact, the majority of occurrences were found in oral input – in particular, dialogues (6 occurrences at A1-A2 level; 16 occurrences at B1-B2 level; 3 occurrences at C1-C2 level), or in written informal input (such as blog discussions). Therefore, it is confirmed that *averci* is most accepted in informal, mainly spoken, language.

It can be noticed that the majority of occurrences of *ci attualizzante* are found at B1-B2 level, followed by A1-A2 level, and then by C1-C2 level. This is probably because the pronominal system is one of the most difficult grammar topics to acquire for Italian learners. Therefore, with beginners the focus is on other primary uses of pronouns (such as direct and indirect pronouns); teaching of other possible uses of pronouns – such as the *ci attualizzante* - are

better acquired at a more advanced level, when the basic functions of pronouns are already acquired.

Occurrences of *ci attualizzante* were found at each level, in each textbook, and the total number of occurrences (196) of *ci attualizzante* seems to be quite high; therefore, it may be inferred that *ci attualizzante* is actually an established feature of *neo-standard* Italian (phase 2).

Table 15. *ci attualizzante*, occurrences.

Ci attualizzante	A1-A2	B1-B2	C1-C2	Tot.
Andarci	/	1	1	2
Averci	14	25	4	42
Avercela	1	1	4	7
Capirci	1	/	/	1
Centrare	2	1	1	4
Contarci	2	/	/	2
Farcela	34	25	11	70
Metterci	1	13	4	18
Passarci (sopra)	/	/	1	1
Provarci	3	2	/	5
Rimanerci (male)		5	1	6
Riuscirci	/	1	/	1
Sentirci	/	1	/	1
Starci	/	1	1	2
Tenerci	/	2	2	4
Volerci	15	7	7	29
Tot.	73	83	41	196

5.2.4. Demonstrative pronouns

As reported in ch§, in contemporary Italian *questo/quello* are used to replace *ciò*. In order to investigate the proportion of this feature, it was chosen to register all occurrences of *quello che* which could have been replaced by *ciò che*, as in (95) and all occurrences of *ciò che*, as in (96), and all occurrences of *ciò*, as in (97):

95. scrivi tutto quello che già sai (Nuovo Espresso 1:104);

96. Per conoscere ciò che è accaduto ieri, così da capire meglio ciò che succede oggi (Nuovo Contatto C1: 130);

97. Gli italiani non leggono molto il giornale [...]. Malgrado ciò ci sono più di 60 testate, alcune a diffusione nazionale e molte a carattere regionale (Nuovo progetto italiano 1:167).

Results from the corpus, represented in Table 16, seem to confirm this tendency to use the demonstrative *questo/quello* (new form B) to replace *ciò* (form A). It can be noticed that the gap between the presence of *quello che* and *ciò che* is particularly high at the elementary level, which is more likely to represent *neo-standard* Italian. At C1-C2, although the difference in occurrences is not so sharp, *quello che* is still highly predominant. In order to find further evidence, also occurrences of *ciò* were registered. In the whole corpus, only 28 occurrences of *ciò* were found, and the highest number (17 occurrences) was found at C1-C2 level, which, as already mentioned, focuses also on formal language. Furthermore, all the occurrences of *ciò* were found in written input. This suggests that *ciò* is likely to be present in written and formal language. Therefore, if we consider the model of language change represented by Cardinaletti (2004), we may infer that *ciò* (form A) is in the second phase (i.e. it has specialized in written and/or formal texts).

As for *questo/quello* used as personal pronouns, few occurrences (4) were found in the corpus:

98. L'hai vista quella? Potrebbe fare uno sforzo per integrarsi! (Contatto 2B:55; written input, authentic material, comic strip)
99. Questo mi ha guardato e mi ha detto: "Ma sei deficiente?" (Nuovo Contatto C1; oral input, authentic material, interview);
100. "Si può sapere chi è questo Dante?" (Nuovo Contatto C1; written input, authentic material; excerpt from novel);
101. Le figlie infatti la nonna le aveva tutte lasciate morendo da giovane, e quelle ancora adesso si tenevano stretta, come dopo uno spavento uno stormo d'uccelli.

Therefore, it can be inferred that this feature (as form B) is still in phase 1, according to Cardinaletti (2004)'s scheme: the use of *questo/quello* as personal pronouns has started to appear in A context (subject pronouns).

Last, for what concerns the use of *quello* to replace the definite article, especially when the noun phrase is then defined by a relative clause, in the corpus only 2 occurrences were found at C1-C2 level:

102. segnato da subito da quella tubercolosi che in qualche modo contribuirà a farne un genio della pittura: lui vorrebbe scolpire, ma la polvere di pietra è micidiale per i suoi polmoni (Nuovo Contatto C1: 41; reading comprehension);
103. educa i figli a quei principi a cui l'organizzazione è legata (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:63; reading comprehension).

Also in this case, it can be inferred that this feature (as form B) is still in phase 1.

Table 16. Demonstrative pronouns (*ciò che, quello che, ciò*), occurrences.

level	Ciò che	Quello che	Ciò
A1-A2	4 (8%)	46 (92%)	3
B1-B2	19 (19%)	82 (81%)	8
C1-C2	23 (33%)	46 (67%)	17
Tot.	46	174	28

5.2.5. Relative pronouns

In order to investigate the simplification that the system of relative pronouns is undergoing in contemporary Italian, the original idea was to record every occurrence of the relative pronoun *che* used as subject, every occurrence of *che* as object, every occurrence of *cui*, every occurrence of *il quale* as subject, and every occurrence of *il quale* as indirect object. Due to time limits, it was possible to record all these occurrences only for level A1-A2. From level B1-B2 the occurrences of *che* as direct object were not recorded. Table 17 summarizes occurrences of these relative pronouns at each level.

Table 17. Relative pronouns, occurrences.

Level	Che - S	Che – D.O.	Cui – I.O.	Il quale – S.	Quale – I.O.
A1-A2	249	152	58	0	5
B1-B2	921	/	251	11	44
C1-C2	375	/	112	14	31

As expected, *che* as relative subject pronoun is highly predominant. It is remarkable that at A1-A2 level there are no occurrences of *il quale* as subject pronoun. However, as can be observed from the table, *il quale* is more used as indirect object than as subject. Overall, 11 occurrences (10%) were found in oral input, 61 occurrences (59%) in written input and 32 occurrences (31%) in instructions. Therefore, *il quale* is mainly present in written input. In addition, it is quite present in instructions as well. This is because, despite the lack of occurrences in oral or written input, *il quale* was found in the grammar sections on relative pronouns of textbooks from B1 to C2 level.

Table 18. *il quale*, occurrences in authentic materials.

	Written input	Oral input	Tot.
<i>il quale</i> , n. occurrences in authentic materials	18	3	21

As shown by Table 18, 21 occurrences of *il quale* (subject and direct object) were found in authentic materials; among these occurrences, only 3 were found in oral input (1 in an interview to the director and screen-writer Mario Monicelli (1915; 2010); 1 in a theatre piece; 1 in a monologue about Michelangelo by the art critic Federico Zeri). The other occurrences were mainly found in written input from novels, except for 2 occurrences, one from the Constitution and one from a law (“Legge sull’immigrazione 30 luglio 2002 n. 182”). The distribution of *il quale* in authentic materials confirms that *il quale*, in contemporary Italian, is scarcely present and only in written and/or highly formal texts.

The fact that *il quale* is avoided in A1-A2 level, which is strictly connected with *neo-standard*, and the fact that *il quale* (subject or indirect object) is mainly present in written input, suggests that *il quale* (as form A) is in phase 2.

5.2.6. Interrogative pronouns

Table 19 shows the results concerning the series *che cosa / cosa /che* as interrogative pronouns. As reported, considering the whole corpus, the pronoun *cosa?* is more frequent (47%) compared with the standard *che cosa?* (41%), while *che?* seems to be marginal (only 12%). *Cosa* is highly more frequent than *che cosa* at A1-A2, while it is far less frequent than *che cosa* at C1-C2, where, overall, the prevailing form is the standard *che cosa?*.

Table 19. Interrogative pronouns (che cosa, che, cosa?)

Level	Che cosa?	Che?	Cosa?
A1-A2	117 (30%)	68 (17%)	212 (53%)
B1-B2	132 (41%)	35 (11%)	157 (48%)
C1-C2	141 (60%)	13 (5%)	83 (35%)
Tot.	390 (41%)	116 (12%)	452 (47%)

The next Table (Table 20) shows results for each item according to the type of input. As can be observed, *cosa* outnumbers *che cosa* from A1 to B2 level, especially in oral input at A1-A2 level. On the contrary, at C1-C2 level *che cosa* is always more frequent than *cosa*, except in oral input. The occurrences of *che* are far less frequent compared with the occurrences of both *che cosa* and *che*. Furthermore, it can be noticed that *che* is always more frequent in oral input than in written input, while it is rare in instructions; in particular, no occurrences of *che* in instructions were found at C1-C2 level.

Table 20. Interrogative pronouns per linguistic input.

Level	feature	Oral input	Written input	instructions	
A1-A2	che cosa?	21	26	70	117
	che?	56	8	4	68
	cosa?	67	43	93	212
B1-B2	Che cosa?	22	34	76	132
	che?	19	13	3	35
	Cosa?	30	32	95	157
C1-C2	Che cosa?	5	61	75	141
	Che?	7	6	0	13
	Cosa?	8	24	51	83

These data suggest that *che cosa* and *cosa* are rivalling forms which are probably in phase 2 of the language change process, as *cosa* (form B) still seems to be more linked to the oral (and informal) dimension. The fact that the occurrences of *che* are far less frequent and mainly found in oral input can be explained in two ways: *che*, is still in phase 1; or Italian textbooks for learners of Italian as second language are more in line with the northern varieties, where *cosa* is preferred to *che cosa* (cfr Chapter 3, §2.6).

5.2.7. Pronominal use of verbs, “costruzioni pronominali affettive”

For what concerns this feature, in the corpus only 3 occurrences were found:

104. dove mi hai lasciato la macchina? (Nuovo Espresso 3: 117; dialogue, written production, focus: norm – pronouns);

105. Senti, Isabella, non avevi detto che volevi cambiarti la macchina? (Nuovo Espresso: 32; dialogue).

The third occurrence was found after (105), in the next page, in the transcription of the dialogue. The lack of occurrences of this feature may show that this feature is still not well accepted neither established in *neo-standard*, therefore it can be traced at phase 1.

5.3. Multipurpose *che* (*Che polivalente*)

In the following table (Table 21) are reported the number of occurrences in the whole corpus per each type of multipurpose *che*. As can be observed, the most frequent case is *che* as connector in cleft sentences and presentational clefts, followed by *che* as a connector with final or causative value, as in (106), and *che* in exclamatory sentences as in (107):

106.dai, siediti un momento che stanno parlando dei risultati delle elezioni (Contatto 2B:78);

107.Che bello! (Nuovo progetto italiano 1:170).

Occurrences of *che* in pseudo-relative sentences, as in (108), and as indirect object in relative pronouns, as in (109) are less frequent.

108.le vedo dalla finestra di questo ospedale che ondeggiano (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:85)

109.scherzate sempre sulle cose che non c'è niente da ridere (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:191)

Table 21. Multipurpose che, type and occurrences.

Multipurpose che	Occurrences
Temporal value (to replace <i>in cui, dal momento in cui, ...</i>)	33
Cleft sentences	144 (cleft sentences) 150 (presentational clefts)
Final or causative value	26
Pseudo-relative clause	10
To replace <i>cui</i> (indirect object)	9
Exclamatory sentences	24
Tot.	396

The data confirm what identified by Tavoni (2002), namely that *che* in cleft sentences, and *che* with temporal, final or causal value are considered as *neo-standard*, while the use of *che* to replace an indirect object seems to be less accepted.

5.4.Verbs

5.4.1.Expansion of the use of *imperfetto*

All the occurrences of *imperfetto* used with a modal value (*imperfetto di cortesia*), or to replace the subjunctive or the conditional in conditional sentences of the third type, or to replace the conditional in indirect speech were recorded. No occurrences of *imperfetto ludico* were found. Data are summarized in Table 22.

At A1-A2 14 occurrences of *imperfetto di cortesia* were found. At B1-B2 level 3 occurrences of *imperfetto di cortesia* were found; 5 occurrences of *imperfetto* to replace the conditional in conditional sentences; 1 occurrence of *imperfetto* to replace the conditional in indirect speech. At C1-C2 level 3 occurrences of *imperfetto* with a modal value were found; 4 occurrences to

replace a conditional in a conditional clause; 1 occurrence to replace the conditional in indirect speech.

Table 22. neo-standard uses of *imperfetto*, occurrences.

	Imperfetto (modal)	to replace conditional (conditional sentences)	to replace conditional (indirect speech)
A1-A2	14	0	0
B1-B2	3	5	1
C1-C2	3	4	1
Tot.	20	9	2

The use of *imperfetto* with a modal value presents the greatest number of occurrences, especially at A1-A2 level. Therefore it seems that the use of *imperfetto* with a modal value is more established in *neo-standard* than *imperfetto* to replace a conditional. It may be inferred that the modal use of *imperfetto* (as form B) is in phase 2, while the replacement of the conditional with the *imperfetto* is still in phase 1.

5.4.2.Future tense

All the occurrences of future tense were reported. Table 23 shows the occurrences of: future to talk about future events (110), present to replace future to talk about future events (111), future with a *deontic* value (112), future with an *epistemic* value (113).

110.Se domani farà bel tempo, andremo al mare (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1:77)

111.In agosto vado per un mese da una ____ amica in Sicilia (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1: 51, written exercise on possessives);

112.una coppia dovrà scegliere una città del Nord, un'altra del Centro e una terza del Sud Italia (Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1: 82; instructions);

113.Con Tizia evidentemente non avevamo più nulla da dirci e da darci. A ciascuno di voi sarà successo mille volte nella vita. (Nuovo Contatto C1:124; written comprehension).

For what concerns the use of the present to replace the future tense to talk about future events, it seems to be relevant only at A1-A2 level. In particular, it was noticed that the majority of occurrences of present for future were found before the explicit introduction of future as grammar topic in textbooks. After the introduction of future, far less occurrences are found. This explains the reduction of occurrences at B1-B2 and C1-C2 level.

Table 23. future tense, occurrences.

	Future	Present for future	Deontic future	Epistemic future
A1-A2	91	39	3	10
B1-B2	239	14	42	30
C1-C2	140	1	49	16
Tot.	470	54	94	62

As for the modal uses of the future, the occurrences of *futuro deontico* appear to be more frequent than the occurrences of *futuro epistemico*. Looking at the type of input (Table 24), it emerges that at A1-A2 level occurrences of *futuro deontico* are found only in instructions; at B1-B2 level there are 12 occurrences in written input, 20 occurrences in oral input, and 8 occurrences in instructions; at C1-C2 level there are 25 occurrences in instructions, 11 occurrences in written input and 2 occurrences in oral input. Overall, the majority of occurrences of *futuro deontico* are found in instructions. This can be explained by the intrinsic nature of textbooks, where instructions play a crucial role. In other words, *futuro deontico* probably seems to the authors as a good alternative to the imperative or the present tense to write instructions. It is less direct than the imperative, and less ambiguous than the present tense. Furthermore, as instructions are more overtly linked to the authors, who are in general native speakers, we may infer that *futuro deontico* is well establish in *neo-standard*.

Overall there are 156 occurrences of future with a modal value (94 occurrences of deontic future; 62 of epistemic future). The high frequency of this feature confirms what highlighted in ch. Therefore, modal uses of the future are in phase 2.

Table 24. Futuro deontico, occurrences per level.

level	Deontic future		
	Written input	Oral input	instructions
A1-A2	0	0	3
B1-B2	20	12	8
C1-C2	2	22	25
Tot.	22	34	36

5.4.3. *Passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*

It was not possible to record all occurrences of *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*. An attempt was made to record all occurrences of *passato remoto*, however the task was far too ambitious. In order to understand the uses of *passato remoto* I considered only the type of input where it appeared. Therefore, especially at C1-C2 level, I did not record the textual

context of the occurrence, but only the page and the type of input where it was found, and additional information on the content of the input. Data are summarized in table 25.

No occurrences of *passato remoto* were found at A1-A2 level. It has to be remembered here that at this level students have to be able to talk about themselves and also about their past. Only *passato prossimo* is presented in autobiographical texts, and only this tense is formally taught. Therefore, we may infer that textbooks of Italian to foreigners are in line with the northern use of these tenses.

Occurrences of *passato remoto* were found at B1-B2 level and at C1-C2 level. As for B1-B2 level, the majority of texts with occurrences of *passato remoto* were found in written input (42 written texts; 7 oral texts in total). Among written texts, the majority (13 texts) were texts concerning history or historical facts (in general facts happened in the last century and before), followed by excerpts from Italian novels (7 texts) or texts written as narrative (4 texts), fairytales (6 texts), autobiographical texts (4 occurrences), 1 newspaper article. Among oral texts, 2 were lyrics from songs (authentic material), 3 were dialogues (2 from movies – authentic material; 1 from a dialogue about Roman history), 1 from a monologue (piece for theatre).

At C1-C2 level 35 texts presenting occurrences of *passato remoto* were found in written input, 8 texts in oral input. Among written texts, 12 texts were excerpts from Italian literary texts (novels or short stories); 10 texts were texts about historical events (i.e. Roman history; Italian history; history of Italian language; history of Italian cinema, art or culture); 5 texts were articles; 6 texts were autobiographical texts; 1 text was the plot of a movie; 1 a myth. Among oral texts, 5 texts were interviews (where the speaker refers to autobiographical facts); 2 texts were monologues; 1 was an exposition about historical events (Roman history).

Data thus confirm that *passato remoto* is only used in certain type of texts (cfr. Chapter 3, §4.4). As it can be observed by data, it is mainly used to refer to historical events and in narrative texts.

Except for Nuovo Magari C1/C2, in the grammar sections of all the other textbooks there is a passage about *passato remoto*. All the textbooks report that:

- *passato remoto* is diatopically marked;
- it refers to “concluded” actions, which have no reference to the present;
- it is used to refer to actions in a distant past;
- it is used to talk about historical events;
- it is used in literary texts;

- it is more used in written than in oral language.

Only Nuovo Contatto C1 states that *passato remoto* is more likely to be used in formal texts, while in informal texts *passato prossimo* is preferred.

Furthermore, *passato remoto* is explicitly taught only at B1-B2 level. In addition, in one textbook (Contatto 2B), the aim is to acquire only a passive competence of *passato remoto*. In general the student has to use *passato remoto* to write or complete literary texts (Espresso 3, Contatto 2B), or to write about historical events (Nuovo progetto italiano 2). This seems to confirm that *passato remoto* is now used only in certain types of texts, mainly written and formal texts. In addition, it means that Italian textbooks to foreigners are more in line with the use of *passato remoto* that is typical of northern Italy.

More interestingly, in Contatto 2B it is stated that “il passato remoto ha tipicamente un aspetto perfettivo, cioè considera i fatti nel momento in cui sono conclusi; quindi ha un valore analogo al passato prossimo” (Contatto 2B:S16). This statement confirms the tendency of *passato prossimo* to overlap with the uses of *passato remoto* in contemporary Italian (cfr. Chapter 3, §4.4).

For all these reasons, it is reasonable to claim that *passato remoto* is specializing in written, formal texts, while *passato prossimo* is preferred in written, informal texts. Therefore, *passato remoto* is apparently undergoing phase 2.

Table 25. Passato remoto, occurrences per type of text.

	Type of text	B1/B2	C1/C2	Tot.
Written input	Texts about historical events	13	10	23
	Novels, short stories (Narrative texts)	11	12	23
	Autobiographical texts	4	6	10
	Articles	1	5	6
	Fairytales, myths	6	1	7
	Plot (movie)	7	1	1
	Tot.		42	35
Oral input	Lyrics	2	/	2
	dialogues (movies)	2	/	2
	Monologues (theatre)	1	2	2
	Interviews (autobiographical)	1	5	5
	Exposition (historical events)	1	1	2
	Tot.		7	8

5.4.4.Mood. Indicative instead of the Subjunctive.

In order to investigate this feature, all occurrences of the subjunctive were recorded, as well as occurrences where the subjunctive would have been required but it was not used; and occurrences where it would have been possible to use the subjunctive, but the author opted for another mood. Table 25 summarizes data; P stands for presences and A for absences. When no numbers are reported, it means that no occurrences of subjunctive in that context were found. In the column on the left are indicated all the cases - subordinate clauses or items introducing a subjunctive – where occurrences were found. Occurrences are reported per level. In each line it is possible to make a comparison between presence and absence at each level.

Table 25. Occurrences of clauses related to the subjunctive mood.

	A1-A2 level		B1-B2 level		C1-C2 level	
	P	A	P	A	P	A
Soggettive	23	1	145	5	59	4
Oggettive	44	0	337	10	130	12
Causali			1		3	
Comparative			25	1	12	1
Concessive			29		12	
Condizionali			145	1	83	
Consecutive			2		6	
Dichiarative			2		0	
Eccettuative			3		6	
Finali			19		13	
Il fatto che			17	1	3	
Indefinito			25		7	
Indipendenti			45		13	3
Interrogative indirette			43	13	22	2
Limitative			1			
Modali			17		17	
Relative	4	5	40	1	38	2
Temporali (prima che)			15		4	
Tot.	71	6	874	36	485	24

As shown by the table, subordinate clauses where the subjunctive is more frequently replaced by another mood are the following ones (in bold in the table): *soggettive*, *oggettive*, *comparative*, *condizionali*, *interrogative indirette*, *relative*, after the expression *il fatto che*. The lack of the subjunctive in restrictive relative clauses at A1-A2 level has to be explained by the fact that, at this level, the subjunctive is not taught, due to its complexity.

Even without giving percentages, it is clear that the replacement of the subjunctive with the indicative is marginal. For example, at B1-B2 level there are 145 occurrences of subjunctive in a *subject clause*, while only 5 occurrences where the subjunctive is replaced by an indicative. Only in the case of indirect questions at B1-B2 level, the occurrences where the subjunctive is absent are more numerous. However, considering the data on indirect questions overall, there are 65 occurrences (81%) with subjunctive, and 15 occurrences (19%) without subjunctive.

As for the type of input, occurrences without subjunctive were found mainly in oral input (3 occurrences A1/A2; 14 occurrences in dialogues or interviews at B1-B2 level; 6 occurrences in dialogues or interviews at C1-C2 level) or written informal texts (i.e. blog threads) at each level.

It has to be noticed that there are numerous occurrences of the subjunctive, and in different types of clauses; in addition, the subjunctive was found in each textbook, at each level, in each type of input. The lack of the subjunctive is far less frequent and as it is present mainly in spoken and informal language. Therefore, it may be inferred that the replacement of the subjunctive (as form B) is still in phase 1.

5.4.5. Development of verbal periphrasis

As shown in table 26, in the corpus were found occurrences of all the verbal periphrases identified in §: *stare* + present gerund (progressive aspect); *stare per* + infinitive (imminent future); *stare a* + infinitive; *andare* + past participle; *avere (averci) da* + infinitive; dative pronoun + *toccare* + infinitive.

Table 26. Verbal periphrasis, occurrences per level.

Verbal periphrasis	A1-A2	B1-B2	C1-C2	Tot.
<i>stare</i> + present gerund	8	50	27	85
<i>stare per</i> + infinitive	6	17	8	31
<i>stare a</i> + infinitive	0	6	0	6
<i>andare</i> + past participle	1	31	22	54
<i>avere (averci) da</i> + infinitive	0	0	1	1
dative pronoun + <i>toccare</i> + infinitive	0	16	0	16

Only 3 verbal periphrases are attested at each level and in a consistent number: *stare* + present gerund; *stare per* + infinitive; *andare* + past participle. These can be traced in phase 2. For what concerns the others, there are few occurrences and each one of them is attested only

at one level: *stare a* + infinitive and dative pronoun + *toccare* + infinitive at B1-B2 level; and *avere da* + infinitive at C1-C2 level, which can be traced in phase 1.

5.5. Other phenomena

5.5.1. Agreement *ad sensum*

For what concerns agreement *ad sensum*, at A1-A2 level 1 occurrence was found in a reading comprehension from authentic material; at B1-B2 level 1 occurrence in written input (exercise for written production focused on norm - prepositions); at C1-C3, 7 occurrences were found (4 occurrences in written input, 2 occurrences in oral input, 1 in instructions – introduction to the textbook). The majority of the occurrences (6 out of 9) were found in authentic materials; among these, 4 occurrences were found in oral input, and more precisely in interviews; and 2 in written input (1 article; 1 excerpt from a novel). Here are the occurrences:

- 114. Ecco che il 33% delle persone occupate in lavoro dipendente o indipendente soffrono di mal di schiena
(Espresso 2:95; reading comprehension, authentic material, article)
- 115. e non ____ quella splendida famiglia di Marc e Audrey Mac Kinley che mi hanno ospitato come un figlio (Espresso 3:171; written production, exercise on prepositions)
- 116. una sezione di attività Video che offrono numerosi spunti
- 117. gli mancava un braccio e una gamba
- 118. un altro caratteristico filone di barzellette sono quelle che vedono come protagonisti personaggi
- 119. In una zona, in un paese dove c'è solo alberi e rocce, ho dovuto scrivere di rocce e di alberi e quindi di conseguenza di animali
- 120. per cui... di uomini non ce n'è.
- 121. quindi c'è... tanta gente che era a favore di lui...
- 122. ognuno con la sua ideologia, gente più conservatore, gente più socialista

Examples (114), (115), (116), and (118), display a lack of agreement between subject and verb, where the subject is a collective singular noun followed by a partitive; examples (117), (119), (120), (121), and (122), display a lack of agreement of the verb with the plural subject with the existential or locative form *c'è/ci sono*.

Due to the lack of occurrences, this feature can be considered in phase 1.

5.5.2. Interrogative and exclamatory sentences

The use of *cosa* as alternative of *che cosa* was already discussed in par.§. In addition to occurrences of *cosa*, *che cosa* and *che*, all occurrences of *perché* as interrogative pronoun, as well as *come mai*, *com'è che...* were reported. Table 27 represents data concerning interrogative sentences. No occurrences of *che* + verb + *a fare* as alternative to *perchè* were found.

Table 27. Interrogative sentences data (perchè; come mai; interrogative cleft sentences).

Interrogative forms	A1-A2	B1-B2	C1-C2	Tot.
Perchè	85	124	64	273 (93%)
Come mai	13	6	2	21 (7%)
Cleft sentences	2	9	4	15

Considering the rivalling forms *perchè* and *come mai*, from the percentages of occurrences it can be noticed that *come mai* consists only in the 7% of occurrences, while *perchè* (93%) is highly predominant. Therefore we may infer that *come mai* instead of *perchè* is still in phase 1, unlike *cosa* and *che cosa*, which are already in phase 2.

There are only 15 occurrences of interrogative – cleft sentences in the corpus, here are some examples:

123. prova a capire cos'è che fa ridere (Nuovo Magari C1/C2:136; instructions);

124. com'è che ci hai messo così tanto? (Espresso 3:83; oral input, dialogue);

125. senti, non è che per caso hai una grammatica? (Espresso 3:14; oral input, dialogue).

Also this feature can be considered as in phase 1.

5.5.3. Subordinate sentences and conjunctions

All the occurrences of purpose clauses, causal clauses and consecutive clauses were reported. The following table (table 28) summarizes data from the corpus.

For what concerns purpose clauses, the most frequent type is the purpose clause with *per* + infinitive, followed by *perchè* (12 occurrences in total) and *affinchè* (11 occurrences); as for causal clauses, the most used conjunction is *perchè*, followed by *siccome* (20 occurrences in total), and *poichè* (19 occurrences). In particular, 8 occurrences of *siccome* were found in oral

input, 9 occurrences in written input, 3 occurrences in instructions. It has to be noticed that *siccome* is more frequent from A1 to B2 level, which are more focused on oral and informal interaction. Occurrences of *poichè* were mainly found in written input or instructions, except 1 occurrence in oral input (an oral comprehension about Roman history, characterized by a formal language). For what concerns consecutive clauses, occurrences of consecutive realized by *tanto... che/da...* (19 occurrences) outnumber occurrences of *così...che/da...*(14 occurrences). Only at C1-C2 level, *così* is prevailing. It is remarkable that *per + infinitive* in purpose clauses and *perchè* in causal clauses are much more frequent than other connectors.

Table 28. Conjunctions per clauses, occurrences.

Clause	Level A1-A2		Level B1-B2		Level C1-C2	
Purpose clauses	Per (+ inf.)	178	Per (+ inf.)	349	Per (+ infinitive)	184
	Perchè	0	Perchè	5	Perchè	7
	Affinchè	0	Affinchè	11	Affinchè	0
			A che	2	In modo/maniera che	8
Causal clauses	Dato che	0	Dato che	1	Dato che	0
	Poiché	2	Poiché	12	Poiché	5
	Siccome	9	Siccome	9	Siccome	2
	Perchè	117	Perchè	251	Perchè	123
	Visto che	5	Visto che	7	Visto che	0
					Sicchè	1
				Ché	1	
consecutive	Così che/da	2	Così che/da	6	Così che/da	6
	Tanto che	2	Tanto che/da	14	Tanto che	3
			Tale che/da	4	In modo tale che	2
			Talmente che	1	Tale che	1
					Talmente che	2

Therefore, data confirm that a simplification of conjunctions is actually undergoing in contemporary Italian, as proved by the fact that *per + infinitive* and *perchè* (causal) are far more frequent than other connectors. However, results do not entirely confirm what expected (cfr. Chapter 3, §5.3).

Expectations are confirmed in the case of purpose clauses and in the case of causal clauses, because:

- as for purpose clauses, these are most frequently introduced by *per + infinitive* and *perchè*;

- as for causal clauses, the most frequent, after *perchè*, are *siccome* and *poichè*; the latter, *poichè*, is more frequent in formal language, while *siccome* is frequent in oral and informal language.

However, for what concerns consecutive clauses, expectations are not confirmed, because *così* does not seem to be particularly predominant.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the linguistic input in textbooks of Italian as second language. As textbooks focus on *norm* and *use* at the same time, it was assumed that the analysis of their linguistic input could help to shed some light on the linguistic features of contemporary Italian recently observed by linguists. In particular, morphosyntactic features observed in neo-standard Italian were considered. For each linguistic feature concerned, results were reported and analysed according to the model of language change proposed by Cardinaletti (2004). Overall, results confirm that features of neo-standard are well represented in the corpus. More specifically, features can be divided into two groups:

- A. neo-standard features rivalling with normative features: *lui, lei, loro* as subject pronouns; *te* as subject pronoun (instead of *tu*); dative pronouns: *gli* for *loro*, *gli* for *le*; *ci* as locative pronoun instead of *vi*; demonstrative pronouns: *questo/quello* (to replace *ciò*), *ciò*; relative pronouns: *che / il quale*; interrogative pronouns: *che cosa / cosa / che*; modal uses of *imperfetto*; use of *imperfetto* to replace the conditional; modal uses of the future; present for future; use of *passato prossimo* to replace *passato remoto*; replacement of the subjunctive with the indicative mood; agreement ad sensum; as for interrogative sentences: *come mai* to replace *perchè*, and interrogative cleft sentences;
- B. emerging neo-standard features, which have no counterparts in normative Italian: left and right dislocations, cleft sentences, presentational clefts; the increase of the pronouns *ne, lo, ci*; *ci attualizzante*; pronominal use of verbs; multipurpose *che*; development of verbal periphrases.

Table 29 summarizes what emerged from the analysis of data for what concerns features belonging to group A (cfr. Chapter 5). In particular, for what concerns group A:

- features in phase 3 are: *lui/lei/loro* as subject pronouns; *gli* for *loro* (dative pronouns), *ci* as locative pronoun;
- features in phase 2 are: as for pronouns, *questo/quello* to replace *ciò*; *cosa* as interrogative pronoun alternative to the standard *che cosa*; *che* as relative pronoun (VS *il quale*); modal uses of *imperfetto*, modal uses of the future; the increasing use of *passato prossimo* instead of *passato remoto*;

- features in phase 1 are: *te* instead of *tu* as subject pronoun; *gli* for *le* as dative pronoun; *questo/quello* as personal pronouns; *questo/quello* to replace the definite article; the use of *imperfetto* to replace a conditional; the use of present tense for future; the replacement of the subjunctive with the indicative; the use of *come mai* instead of *perchè* in interrogative questions; the use of cleft-sentences in interrogative questions.

Table 29. Group A, features and phases.

Group A, features	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Subject pronouns: <i>lui/lei loro</i> VS <i>egli/ella/essa, esso, essi, esse</i> <i>Te</i> instead of <i>tu</i>	X		X
Dative pronouns: <i>gli</i> for <i>loro</i> <i>gli</i> for <i>le</i>	X		X
<i>Ne, lo, ci: ci</i> locative VS <i>vi</i>			X
Demonstrative pronouns: <i>questo/quello</i> VS <i>ciò</i> <i>questo/quello</i> as personal pronouns <i>questo/quello</i> to replace definite article	X X	X	
Interrogative pronouns: <i>che cosa</i> VS <i>cosa</i>		X	
Relative pronouns: <i>che</i> VS <i>il quale</i>		X	
<i>Imperfetto</i> : modal uses To replace a conditional	X	X	
Future: modal uses Present for future	X	X	
<i>Passato prossimo</i> VS <i>passato remoto</i>		X	
Subjunctive: replacement of the subjunctive with indicative	X		
Interrogative sentences: <i>come mai</i> VS <i>perchè</i> Interrogative cleft sentences	X X		
Agreement ad sensum	X		

Table 30 summarizes what emerged from the analysis of data concerning features of group B (cfr. Chapter 5). In particular, for what concerns group B:

- features in phase 3: presentational clefts;
- features in phase 2: right and left dislocations, cleft sentences (but not interrogative cleft-sentences); multipurpose *che* with temporal, final or causative value, as connector in cleft sentences and exclamatory sentences; the verbal periphrases: *stare* + present gerund; *stare per* + infinitive; *andare* + past participle;
- features in phase 1: multipurpose *che* in pseudo-relative sentences and to replace the relative *cui* (indirect object); pronominal use of verbs; other periphrases (i.e. *stare a* + infinitive, dative pronoun + *toccare* + infinitive, *avere da* + infinitive).

Table 30 . Group B features and phases.

Group B, features	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Word order: right dislocations left dislocations cleft sentences presentational clefts		X X X	X
<i>Ci attualizzante</i>		X	
Multipurpose <i>che</i> : temporal value with final or causative value in exclamatory sentences in cleft sentences in pseudo-relative sentences to replace a relative pronoun (indirect object)	X X	X X X X	
Pronominal use of verbs	X		
Verbal periphrases: <i>stare per</i> + infinitive <i>stare</i> + present gerund <i>andare</i> + past participle other periphrases	X	X X X	

Therefore, it emerges from data that some features of *neo-standard* are more accepted and established in contemporary Italian than others, namely they already appear in formal language or they are likely to be accepted soon in formal language as well as in informal and/or oral language (phase 3). These features are:

- *lui/lei/loro* as subject pronouns;
- *gli* for *loro* (dative pronouns);
- *ci* as locative pronoun;
- presentational clefts;

Other features are established, but they are still linked to oral or informal language (phase 2).

They are:

- *questo/quello* to replace *ciò*;
- *cosa* as interrogative pronoun (instead of the standard *che cosa*);
- *che* as relative pronoun (VS *il quale*);
- modal uses of *imperfetto*, modal uses of the *future*;
- the increasing use of *passato prossimo* instead of *passato remoto*;
- right and left dislocations;
- cleft sentences (but not interrogative cleft-sentences);

- multipurpose *che* with temporal, final or causative value, as connector in cleft sentences and exclamatory sentences;
- the verbal periphrases: *stare* + present gerund; *stare per* + infinitive; *andare* + past participle;

Other features have started to appear but are not systematically present yet in contemporary Italian (phase 1):

- *te* instead of *tu* as subject pronoun;
- *gli* for *le* as dative pronoun;
- *questo/quello* as personal pronouns;
- *questo/quello* to replace the definite article;
- the use of *imperfetto* to replace a conditional;
- the use of present tense for future;
- the replacement of the subjunctive with the indicative;
- the use of *come mai* instead of *perchè* in interrogative questions;
- the use of cleft-sentences in interrogative questions;
- multipurpose *che* in pseudo-relative sentences and to replace the relative *cui* (indirect object);
- pronominal use of verbs;
- the periphrases *stare a* + infinitive, dative pronoun + *toccare* + infinitive, *avere da* + infinitive.

Appendixes

Appendix 1 (Corpus)

BALÌ, M., ZIGLIO, L. (2003). *Espresso 2*, Alma Edizioni, Firenze

BALÌ, M., ZIGLIO, L. (2003). *Espresso 3*, Alma Edizioni, Firenze

BOZZONE COSTA, R., PIANTONI, M., SCARAMELLI, E., GHEZZI, C. (2013). *Nuovo Contatto C1*, Loescher, Torino

DE GIULI, A., GUATALLA, C., NADDEO, C. M. (2014). *Nuovo Magari C1/C2*, Alma Edizioni, Firenze

GHEZZI, C., PIANTONI, M., BOZZONE COSTA, R. (2009). *Contatto 2B*, Loescher, Torino

MARIN, T., MAGNELLI, S. (2009). *Nuovo Progetto Italiano 1*, Edilingua, Roma, Atene

MARIN, T., MAGNELLI, S. (2009). *Nuovo Progetto Italiano 2*, Edilingua, Roma, Atene

RIZZO, G., ZIGLIO, L. (2014). *Nuovo Espresso 1*, Alma Edizioni, Firenze

Appendix 2 (Questionnaire results)

964406_questionnaire_results.xlsx

Appendix 3 (data collection, A1-A2 level)

964406_datacollection_A1A2level. xlsx

Appendix 4 (data collection, B1-B2 level)

964406_datacollection_B1B2level. xlsx

Appendix 5 (data collection, C1-C2 level)

964406_datacollection_C1C2level. xlsx

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